

Giving is Sowing



God's Plan for Your Money (Part 9)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we continue with our theme for the week, "God's Plan for Your Money."

In my previous talks this week, I've established five important facts in connection with giving and I just want to review those five facts briefly. First, the key to right giving is grace; it's not a matter of law, and grace is received only through Jesus, only through the cross and only by faith. Second, the first thing we must give to God is not our money but ourselves. We cannot buy God's favor—He requires that first we surrender ourselves to Him without reservation. Third, when we have surrendered ourselves then right giving completes and establishes our righteousness and it says of such a person his righteousness endures forever. Fourth, giving is a proof of the sincerity of our love for God and for the people of God. We have to put our money where our mouth is. And fifth, giving calls down God's favor upon us in a special way—especially cheerful giving. "God loves a hilarious giver."

Today I'm going to share another aspect of giving and that is, "Giving as Sowing Seed." I'm going to turn to 2 Corinthians 9:6–7, where Paul says this:

> "Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give…"

So, Paul is talking about giving our money but he uses the figure or the analogy of sowing and reaping. So he says, "…whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, whoever sows generously will also reap generously." But he's not talking about a farmer and his farm, he's talking about the Christian and his giving to God and the kingdom of God. But, the analogy is taken from agriculture.

Now, we all know today that there are certain basic principles of agriculture and if you want to succeed in agriculture you have to follow those basic principles. The possibility of success is there but achieving success depends upon following the principles or the laws of agriculture. When we think in terms of agriculture and of giving as sowing, this leads us to understand that we should expect an increase from our giving but only in proportion to what we sow. For example, and now we go to agriculture, a farmer sows one

bushel of wheat. His increase, which is a biblical proportion, is one hundred times. How much does he receive? One hundred bushels. That's easy. But, if he sows ten bushels and his increase is one hundred times, he receives back one thousand bushels. In other words the proportion in which he sows determines the proportion in which he reaps and Paul says the same is true with giving money to God and His kingdom. All right.

Let's give a little simple example. A person gives five dollars. The proportion of increase is ten times. So what is he going to receive back? Fifty dollars. But, if he gives fifty dollars and the proportion of increase is the same, he's going to get back five hundred dollars. So, the proportion in which he gives determines the proportion in which he will receive back.

Now, almost everybody can understand that in agriculture, but so few people understand it in the finances of the kingdom of God but the Bible makes it very clear that just the same kind of laws that apply in agriculture apply in the finances of the kingdom of God. There's a principle of sowing and of reaping.

However, in order to obtain the increase, a farmer has to follow certain basic rules and let me say I am no farmer, although I did teach agriculture for a little while in East Africa. And I would suggest these basic rules: they may not be complete, that's not important here. First of all, he has to choose good, suitable soil and he has to choose the right kind of crop for the right kind of soil. Second, he has to make proper preparation of the soil. And third, he has to take proper care of the crop as it grows. If he doesn't meet those conditions, he won't receive the increase that he ought to receive—not because there's anything wrong with the laws of agriculture, but because he hasn't applied some of the basic rules. Let me say this: a farmer does not walk down the street of the town casting his seed into the gutter on either side of the street and then expect a harvest. Now, you may say, "That's absurd." But I have observed many Christians do something that's analogous with their money. They cast it away without care or prayer in places where it will never bring an increase and then they wonder why God doesn't bless their finance. So, there are certain basic rules that we need to follow just like the basic rules the farmer needs to follow. We don't sow in the gutter, we choose good soil. We make sure the soil is properly prepared and we try to see that there's care taken of the crop as it grows.

So what are the things that we should look at when we consider giving, whether it's to a church or to a ministry or to an organization or what? I'll give you four questions which I think you need to ask.

1. Is the ministry anointed and fruitful? Is it bringing forth real fruit for the Kingdom of God?

2. Is it ethical? Are they ethical in the way they appeal for money? And, are they ethical in the way they handle money? Are they good and faithful stewards of the money in God's Kingdom?

3. Is it in line with Scripture? Is what they are doing in obedience to Scripture? That's very important because God blesses what's in line with His Word.

4. Are they prayerful, industrious, and efficient? One thing the Bible makes very clear is: God hates sloppiness, He hates waste and He hates extravagance. That doesn't mean we have to be stingy, but it does mean we cannot afford to be extravagant and we should not support extravagance in any ministry.

There are also some other practical safeguards, which I would like to offer you in connection with investing your money in the kingdom of God. People of this world, when they invest their money, like to get good advice from someone who is proficient in that field and I think God's children in their own way should be equally careful. Let me give you these four safeguards:

1. Be prayerful. Never give except after prayer.

2. Avoid impulsive, emotional giving. I have seen countless sums of money squandered by people who gave just out of emotion and impulse. I have to warn you there are people going around deliberately exploiting God's people to get money and there is no group of people in the world easier to exploit than American Christians. They're so generous but frankly they're so often impulsive.

3. Maintain contact with whatever it is that you're supporting. Get reports. Find out what's happening. Check on the fruit.

4. Stay within the proportion of your faith and allow God to increase it in a natural way. If you're used to thinking in terms of ten dollars, it's probably unrealistic immediately to think in terms of one thousand dollars. It may not be, but it often is. Faith grows in a natural way. If you've been thinking in terms of ten dollars, start it now with fifty and when you are comfortable with fifty, move up to a hundred. I have to say, in my own experience, I've been able to do this over the years.

And finally in this talk, I want to point out to you four results of wise sowing of your money. They're stated by Paul in 2 Corinthians 9:10:

> "Now he [that is, God] who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness."

So there are four results of wise sowing. Let me just pick them out and emphasize them.

1. Bread for you to eat. You'll get back all that you need for your own life.

2. You'll get more seed to sow in God's harvest field. If you've been giving in terms of fifty dollars, you'll find that you can move up to giving in terms of one hundred dollars. That's seed to sow back into God's harvest field—not to squander on your own selfishness.

3. You'll get increased store for sowing. Your barn will get bigger. You'll have more to give.

4. You'll get an increased harvest from increased sowing. It says there, "[God] will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness."

I want to tell you that learning to give prayerfully and in a scriptural way and in the guidance of the Holy Spirit is exciting. It's not a dreary duty. And it's exciting to see how God will come to your help. It's exciting to see how God will extend and increase your faith. God wants you to invest in His kingdom. If you'll seek His counsel, He'll make you a successful investor.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll continue and complete this theme of "God's Plan for Your Money." I'll be speaking about the level of God's provision.

Radio Program

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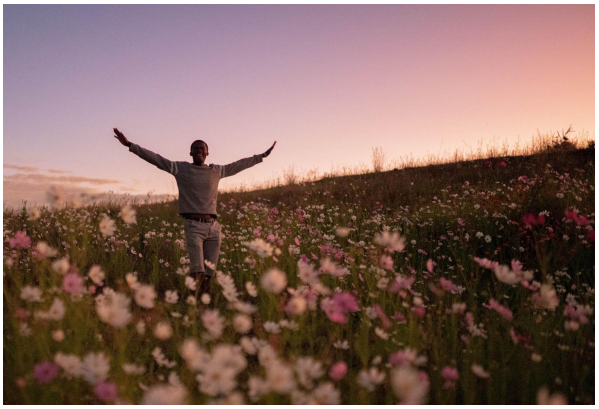

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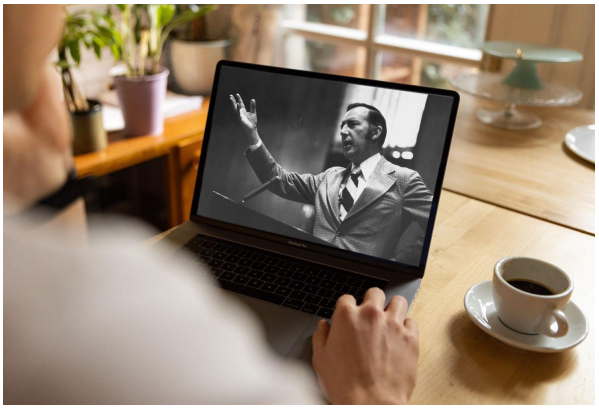

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