

A painting depicting four individuals in traditional, possibly biblical, clothing. On the left, an older man with a long white beard and a red turban sits at a low table, looking towards the right. Behind him stand three other people: a man in a blue turban and purple robe, a woman in a red headscarf and blue dress, and a man in a grey turban and yellow robe. They are gathered around a table covered with a green cloth, which holds several small dice and two white cups. The word "STEWARDSHIP" is written in large, bold, white capital letters across the center of the image, with a black outline.

# ***STEWARDSHIP***

# YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN

- ❑ For us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. (1 Cor 8:6)
- ❑ You are not your own; you were bought at a price. (1 Cor 6:19-20)

# YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN

- Jesus owns us both by virtue of creation and of redemption. He is the source of both our biological and spiritual lives... The practical implications of this truth should be evident... the creator has the rights of ownership. God... owns everything that he has made, and he made everything that is. This has tremendous ramifications for how we live... If human life is simply an accident arising from millennia of human history, then we are free agents, accountable to no one but ourselves. But if we were created, then our Creator has full rights of ownership over our lives... **Either we are merely an accident of history and therefore completely at liberty to do whatever we want with our lives, or we are intentionally created beings who will be held accountable to our Creator.**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org)

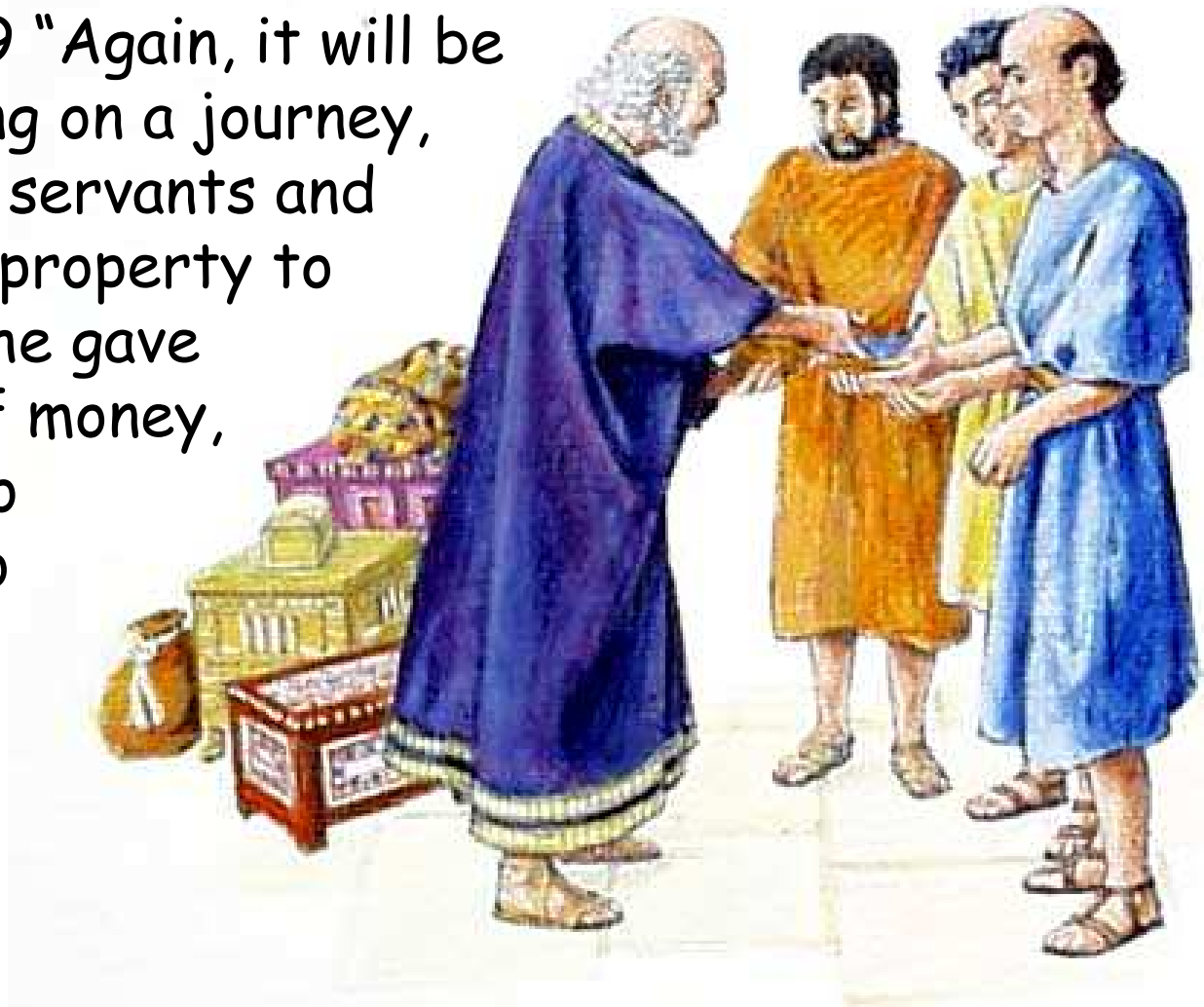
# STEWARDSHIP

- ❑ Stewardship is personal responsibility for taking care of another person's property or financial affairs or in religious orders taking care of finances... it is also used in a more general way to refer to **a responsibility to take care of something one does not own...** <sup>1</sup>
- ❑ Our talents, resources and money belong to God and we simply administer them.
  - Every faculty you have, your power of thinking or of moving your limbs from moment to moment, is given you by God. If you devoted every moment of your whole life exclusively to His service, you could not give Him anything that was not in a sense His own already. - C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia

# STEWARDSHIP

- ❑ Jesus indicates our responsibility as stewards or managers in his parable about the talents.
- Matt 25:14-29 "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability.



# STEWARDSHIP

- "Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'  
"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

# STEWARDSHIP

- "The man with the two talents also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; see, I have gained two more.'  
"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"
- "Then the man who had received the one talent came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 'So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

# STEWARDSHIP



You wicked,  
lazy  
servant! ...  
you should  
have put my  
money on  
deposit with  
the bankers,  
so that  
when I  
returned I  
would have  
received it  
back with  
interest.



# STEWARDSHIP

- ❑ The talent as used in the parable is the origin of the sense of the word "talent" meaning "gift or skill" as used in English and other languages.<sup>1</sup>
- ❑ Stewardship pertains to all areas of our lives: money, resources, talents and ministry.
- ❑ 3 T's - What are you doing with the:
  1. Time?
  2. Talents?
  3. Treasure?that God has entrusted you with?

<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable\\_of\\_the\\_talents\\_or\\_minas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable_of_the_talents_or_minas)

# WE ALL HAVE A GIFT

- ❑ We all have gifts and thus something to offer:
  - 1 Peter 4:10 **As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace (ESV)**
  - Rom 12:6 **We have different gifts, according to the grace given us.**
- ❑ There are a couple of variables in this story. First, the master does not give each servant the same amount of talents. We don't have to look too closely to see that this is just the way things are. **Some people have gifts that are publicly celebrated. Others have gifts that are quiet and unseen. Not everyone is gifted in the same way, and that needs to be okay with us.**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid

# GOD'S INVESTMENT

□ God has made a great investment:

➤ A talent ... was worth about **6,000 denarii**. Since a denarius was the usual payment for a day's labour, a talent was roughly the value of **twenty years of work by an ordinary person**. By modern standards, the 2009 US minimum wage was \$7.25 per hour, which would amount to **over \$300,000 over 20 years**, while at the median wage of \$26,363, it would be a **half-million dollars**.<sup>1</sup>

□ This is not just an act of generosity; this is an act of trust. The master gave each of these servants the opportunity of a lifetime. This was their chance to prove themselves, test their skills and possibly rise to positions of greater influence and responsibility.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable\\_of\\_the\\_talents\\_or\\_minas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parable_of_the_talents_or_minas) <sup>2</sup> [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org)

# GOD WANTS A RETURN

- ❑ Like the master in the story, **God expects a return** on what he has entrusted to his servants:
  - "... you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest."
  - Matt 22:21 Then He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's." (NASB)
- ❑ Upon his return the master discovered that two of the servants had invested the money, and that one had buried it. He took the greatest gift he would ever be given and buried it in a field, forgetting - or choosing not to believe - that the master would return. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid

# GOD WANTS A RETURN

- ❑ In a day when most people lived day to day, he ought to rejoice that he was given such a great gift. Jesus makes it clear that **the size of the gift is not the important variable**. The variable that matters is **what each servant does with what he's been given**. While the first servant is given more than double what the second servant is given, they are both commended with the exact same words: "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness". In the final analysis, on the day of reckoning, **the master will not ask why you didn't invest someone else's gifts. He won't ask what you did with what you didn't have. He will only be concerned with what you did with your gift.** <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid

# JUDGED ON STEWARDSHIP

- ❑ We will be judged on our stewardship:
  - 1 Cor 4:2 Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful. (KJV)
  - Luke 12:42-44 The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.
  - Luke 12:48 From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked."

# JUDGED ON STEWARDSHIP

❑ God won't accept excuses

- When the servant who had buried the money began offering excuses, the master refused to accept them. Instead, he rebuked the lazy servant and punished him severely. Meanwhile, the faithful servants enjoyed the rewards they had received for their diligent labour. The master is generous beyond belief, but **he is also going to hold his servants accountable**. He will reward diligence and faithfulness; he will punish laziness. Here is perhaps the most sobering point of this parable: **The third servant is not judged for doing bad things; he is judged for doing nothing. He did not lie or cheat or steal; he simply sat on his hands.** <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org)

# ***FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP***





# FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

- ❑ Financial stewardship is based on the belief that God is the true owner of each person's possessions, and that one is accountable to God for the acceptable care and use of those possessions. <sup>1</sup>
- ❑ Herein lies the fundamental principle of biblical stewardship... **We own nothing. God owns everything; we are simply managers.** <sup>2</sup>
  - Deut 8:17-18 You may say to yourself, 'My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is **he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.**

<sup>1</sup> Wikipedia

<sup>2</sup> [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org)

# FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

- ❑ When the people towards the building of God's temple, David prays:
  - 1 Chron 29:14-16 "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? **Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. We are foreigners and strangers in your sight, as were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.**"

# FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

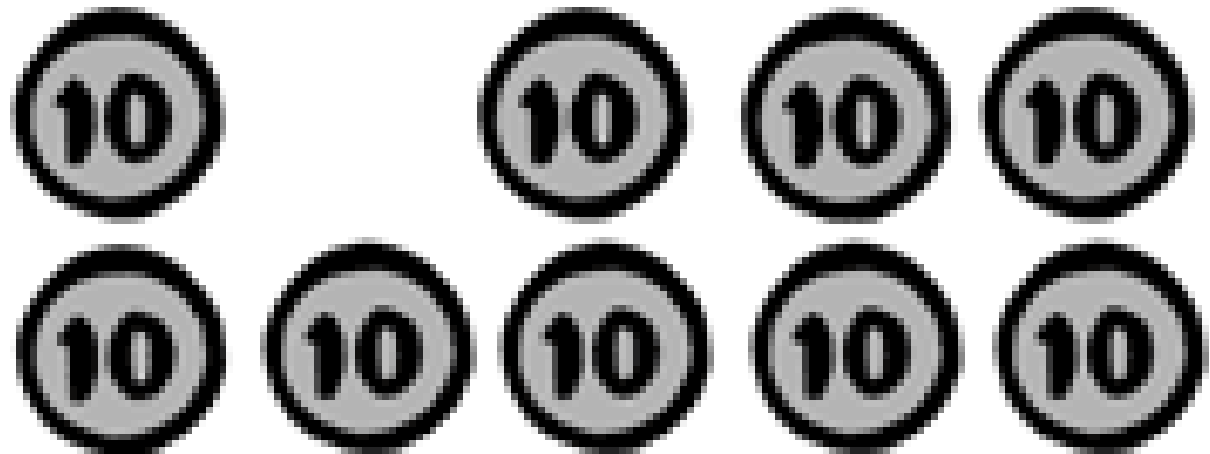
- ❑ Jesus uses the parable of the shrewd manager to emphasize our stewardship with regards to "our money":
  - Luke 16:10-12 Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. **So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?**

# FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

- ❑ We should not be engrossed in our possessions:
  - 1 Cor 7:30-31 ...those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.
- ❑ After telling the parable of the rich fool, Jesus refers to the fact that we are stewards:
  - Luke 12:21 But God said to him, "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?"  
This is how it will be with anyone who **stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.**

# TITHING

- ❑ Lets look at stewardship now specifically in the area of giving.
- ❑ Q: What is a tithe?
- ❑ A: A tenth



# TITHING

## ❑ Commanded in the OT

- Deut 12:8-11 You are not to do as we do here today, everyone as he sees fit, since you have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the LORD your God is giving you. But you will cross the Jordan and settle in the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and he will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety. Then to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name—there you are to bring everything I command you: your burnt offerings and sacrifices, **your tithes** and special gifts, and all the choice possessions you have vowed to the LORD.

# TITHING

- ❑ Q: Isn't tithing part of the Law and not applicable to us?
- ❑ A: No - Abraham paid a tithe to Melchizedek years before the Law was given.
  - Gen 14:18-20 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram... Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.





And of all that  
you give me I  
will give you a  
tenth.

See  
NOTE 1



Jacob paid tithes before the Law was given (Genesis 28:22)



# TITHING

- ❑ Does the NT tell us to tithe?
  - Matt 23:23 Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. **You should have practiced the latter**, without neglecting the former.
- ❑ Note that Jesus doesn't reprimand them for tithing - he says "You should have practiced the latter". He rebukes them for neglecting "justice, mercy and faithfulness".

# TITHING

- ❑ Paul teaches about the financial support of God's work using commands from the Law as guidelines - 1 Cor 9:8 "Doesn't the Law say the same thing?"
  - 1 Cor 9:13-14 Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.
- ❑ Q: Where did the Lord command this?
- ❑ A: In the OT (yet Paul accepts it as a NT principle)

# PURPOSE

## ❑ DOES GOD NEED OUR MONEY?

- Psalm 24:1 The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;
- Psalm 50:8-15 "I do not rebuke you for your sacrifices or your burnt offerings, which are ever before me. I have no need of a bull from your stall or of goats from your pens, for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it. Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfil your vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honour me."

# PURPOSE

- ❑ So if God doesn't need our money, what is the purpose of tithing?

## (1) SUPPORT GOD'S WORKERS

- ❑ In the OT the tithe was the inheritance of the Levites:
  - Num 18:21 "I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting..."



# PURPOSE

- ❑ In the NT, Paul indicates that full time ministers are entitled to support.
- ❑ 1 Cor 9:4-14 Don't we have the right to food and drink?... Or is it only I and Barnabas who must work for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain."



# PURPOSE

- Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the ploughman ploughs and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? ... Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, **the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.**

# PURPOSE

## (2) SUPPORT MISSIONS

- ❑ "God is not glorified when we keep for ourselves (no matter how thankfully) what we ought to be using to alleviate the misery of unevangelized, uneducated, unmedicated, and unfed millions." (John Piper)
- ❑ "Today Christians spend more money on dog food than missions." (Leonard Ravenhill)
- ❑ "If God wills the evangelization of the world, and you refuse to support missions, then you are opposed to the will of God." (Oswald J. Smith)



# PURPOSE

## (3) UPKEEP OF THE HOUSE OF GOD

- Neh 10:38-39... the Levites are to bring a tenth of the tithes up to the house of our God, to the storerooms of the treasury. The people of Israel, including the Levites, are to bring their contributions of grain, new wine and oil to the storerooms where the articles for the sanctuary are kept and where the ministering priests, the gatekeepers and the singers stay. **"We will not neglect the house of our God."**





# PURPOSE

## (4) HELPING NEEDY CHRISTIANS

- ❑ 2 Cor 9:12 This service that you perform is not only **supplying the needs of God's people** but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.
- ❑ Acts 11:27-30 During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) **The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea.** This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

# PURPOSE

## (5) PREVENT MONEY FROM BECOMING A GOD

- ❑ Luke 16:13 "No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."
- ❑ You can judge a man's priorities by:
  1. What he spends his time doing.
  2. What he talks about most.
  3. Where he invests his money or what he spends his money on.

# THE GIFT OF GIVING

- ❑ "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt 6:21)
  - Where is your heart - in heaven or on earth? Look at where you invest your treasure.
- ❑ We mustn't let the excesses of the prosperity message detract from the fact that God does bless some materially so that they can have a special gift of giving:
  - Rom 12:6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift... is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously...
- ❑ You cannot give generously unless God has given you the financial means.

# THE GIFT OF GIVING

- ❑ After having warned Timothy about the dangers of “the love of money”, Paul then gives this instruction showing that there were also some wealthy Christians in the Ephesian church:
  - 1 Tim 6:17-19 Command those who are rich ... to be generous and willing to share.
- ❑ **God doesn't bless us to increase our standard of living, God blesses us to increase our standard of giving.**

# THE GIFT OF GIVING

- ❑ Paul shows that when God blesses us financially it is so that we “can be generous on every occasion” i.e. it is **not so that we can self-indulge in extravagant lifestyles**, but for “supplying the needs of God’s people” and helping the poor.
- 2 Cor 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work...

# THE GIFT OF GIVING

- 2 Cor 9:10-13 Now he 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. **You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion,** and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

# STATISTICS

- ❑ Survey of "Evangelical" Christians:
  - 40% say they overspend each month
  - 60% state serious marital problems are money related
  - 40% pay \$2,000 per year in credit card interest
- ❑ The "Average" American:
  - Spends 6 hours a week shopping but only 40 minutes a week playing with their children
  - Gave 1.12% of their income for charitable purposes in 2003
- ❑ In 90% of divorce cases, arguments about money played a prominent role

# STATISTICS

- ❑ In 1983 U.S. churchgoers donated \$21.5 billion. But if they had donated 10% of income, they would have given \$134 billion.<sup>1</sup>
- ❑ Increasingly, those with lower incomes give a higher proportion of their income to charity than higher income individuals.
  - Percentage of personal income the poorest households in America gave to charity in 1992: 5.5 %. Wealthiest households: 2.9 %.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/g/giving.htm](http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/g/giving.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Youthworker Update, quoted in Signs of the Times, March, 1993



# STATISTICS

- ❑ It's not what you do with the million if fortune should ere be your lot, but what are you doing at present with the dollar and quarter you got.
- ❑ Persons 65-74 years of age donated the largest percentage of their income (3.1 %) and those 18-24 the least (0.6 %). <sup>1</sup>
- ❑ Who gives to the church on a monthly basis?
  - Seniors = 68%
  - Boomers = 58%
  - Busters = 36% <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The U.S. Department of Commerce statistics on American churches, clergy and church schools (Church Law & Tax Report).

<sup>2</sup> (Barna Research, Empty Tomb Surveys and The Treasure Principle

# STATISTICS

- ❑ Sobering Statistics on Finances Spending & Giving: (Barna Research, Empty Tomb Surveys and The Treasure Principle)
  - 17% of Americans claim to tithe
  - 6% actually do tithe
  - 23% of "born again" believers give nothing to church
- ❑ Church giving percentages:
  - The average per-member giving percentage in 1933 (during the Great Depression) was 3.3%
  - The average per member giving in 2000 was 2.6%

# PRINCIPLES FOR GIVING

- ❑ In 2 Cor 8-9 giving was:
  - Church centred (8:1)
  - From the heart (8:2-9)
  - Proportionate (8: 10-15)
  - Handled honestly (8:16-24)
- ❑ and it:
  - Blessed others (9:1-5)
  - Blessed the giver (9:6-11)
  - Glorified God (9:12-15) <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lloyd Perry, *Getting the Church on Target*, Moody, 1977.

# SOWING & REAPING

- ❑ In 1 Corinthians 9, Paul uses the principle of sowing and reaping to refer to a material harvest:
- 1 Cor 9:11 If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?



# SOWING & REAPING

- ❑ Likewise in 2 Corinthians 9, Paul uses the seed analogy when collecting money to help the struggling church in Jerusalem.
- 2 Cor 9:5-6 So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given. Remember this: **Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.**

# SOWING & REAPING

- ❑ Give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving. <sup>1</sup>
- ❑ W.A. Criswell tells of an ambitious young man who told his pastor he'd promised God a tithe of his income. They prayed for God to bless his career. At that time he was making \$40 per week and tithing \$4. In a few years his income increased and he was tithing \$500 per week. He called on the pastor to see if he could be released from his tithing promise, it was too costly now. The pastor replied, "I don't see how you can be released from your promise, but we can ask God to reduce your income to \$40 a week, then you'd have no problem tithing \$4." <sup>2</sup>
- ❑ SO DEPENDING ON WHAT WE SOW, WE EITHER REAP A BLESSING OR A CURSE.

<sup>1</sup>Peter Marshall   <sup>2</sup> W. A. Criswell, A Guidebook for Pastors

# OPTION 1: A CURSE

- ❑ You might not like to think of yourself as a thief, but God says that is what you are if you don't give to his kingdom.
- Mal 3:7-9 "Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty.  
"But you ask, 'How are we to return?' Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me.  
"But you ask, 'How do we rob you?'  
**"In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse - the whole nation of you - because you are robbing me."**





# OPTION 1: A CURSE

- Haggai 3:4-11 "Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your panelled houses, while this house remains a ruin?" Now this is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it." This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured," says the Lord.

# OPTION 1: A CURSE

- "You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?" declares the Lord Almighty. "Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with your own house. Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the olive oil and everything else the ground produces, on people and livestock, and on all the labour of your hands."

# OPTION 2: A BLESSING

- ❑ Tithing is the only area where God says we may 'test' him.
  - Mal 3:10-12 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty. "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty.



# OPTION 2: A BLESSING

- ❑ It is in the context of giving, that Paul says "God will meet all your needs":
  - Phil 4:15-19 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, **you sent me aid again and again when I was in need.** Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And **my God will meet all your needs** according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

# OPTION 2: A BLESSING

- ❑ Acts 20:35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is **more blessed** to give than to receive.'
- ❑ A generous man **will himself be blessed** (Proverbs 22:9).
- ❑ "I have tried to keep things in my hands and lost them all, but **what I have given into God's hands I still possess.**" (Martin Luther)



**Martin Luther (1483 – 1546)**

# LAME SACRIFICES

- ❑ God isn't to be given a useless sacrifice:
  - Lev 27:32-33 The entire tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod—will be holy to the LORD. He must not pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution. If he does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed.
  - Mal 1:8-14 "When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty.

# LAME SACRIFICES

- "Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"—says the LORD Almighty.  
"Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands."  
... When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" says the LORD.  
"Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations."



# LAME SACRIFICES

- ❑ When David wanted to buy the threshing floor of Araunah to build an altar to sacrifice to God, Araunah offered to give it to him. To which David replied, "No, I insist on paying you for it. **I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.**" (2 Sam 24:18-24)



# LEFTOVERS

Leftovers are such humble things,  
We would not serve to a guest,  
And yet we serve them to our Lord  
Who deserves the very best.

We give to Him leftover time,  
Stray minutes here and there.  
Leftover cash we give to Him,  
Such few coins as we can spare.

We give our youth unto the world,  
To hatred, lust and strife;  
Then in declining years we give  
To him the remnant of our life.

# FIRSTFRUITS

- ❑ Give God the "firstfruits," not the leftovers!
  - Prov 3:9 Honour the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops;
- ❑ How should we give?
  1. Cheerfully
    - 2 Cor 9:7 Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.
  2. Out of love:
    - 1 Cor 13:3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

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