

Giving Is a Blessing

“I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive”
(Acts 20:35).

Admit it or not we live in a prosperity-seeking society. Few, if any, possess a desire for poverty (me included). What is the secret to prosperity? Sorry. There are no quick fixes that effortlessly transport you from rags to riches or poverty to prosperity.

Prosperity and blessings are based on God’s unchanging principles. He provides the promises and the conditions. He stands ready to act or should I say, “react.” God is waiting for us to act in obedience. Like any other contract, two parties are involved. Both have responsibility to fulfill.

Rev. Nick Sisco mentions two facts in his lesson “Pursuing Principles; Possessing Promises.”

1. God promises. Man possesses.
2. Most of God’s promises are conditional.

He goes through an impressive list of scriptural promises where he shows if we do our part, then God fulfills His promises now. Check it out with 2 Chronicles 7:14-15.

“IF my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; THEN will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. NOW mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attentive unto the prayer that is made in this place.”

Someone has offered this advice.

If you wish to be poor—grasp.
If you wish to be needy—hoard.
If you wish to be rich—give.

“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, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 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” (2 Corinthians 9:6-8, *NIV*).

The principle: “it is more blessed to give than to receive” is a close brother to “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

Our world and culture thinks, "It is more blessed to receive than to give." God's wisdom is the opposite. Paul quoting the words of Jesus in Acts 20:35 provokes a question. Why is it more blessed to give than to receive?

"Lord, bless those that have to give and those that have not..." Ever hear anyone pray over the offering like that? It is a deficient, pointless prayer. God does not promise to bless those that give and those that do not give the same. He blesses those that give.

Try: "Lord, bless those that have given, and for those that do not have to give; bless them so that they can give."

Giving releases the *flow* of God's blessings on the giver. A stream that is not flowing will become stagnant. In giving, there needs to be an *outflow* before there can be an *inflow*. Your generosity flows out, and God's blessings flow in.

Consider this. A person must *breathe out* in order to *breathe in*. It's the only way to stay alive. There is only so much breathing in you can do before you'll explode, smother or collapse. *Outflow* determines *inflow*.

David Holdaway in his book *Never Enough: How to Achieve Financial and Spiritual Breakthrough* explains we are born "with fingers curled and grasping, crying and clutching for what we want." He advises that we "walk through life with *open hands*, learning to give, so we are in a place to receive. *Clenched fists* make it impossible for us to receive what God wants to give us. Only to the extent that we open our hands will we be in a place to receive." After all, poverty is keeping what we have with clenched fists, fearing that if we give, we will have nothing. To break out of the poverty bondage the opposite spirit must be employed.

Holdaway tells of a farmer known for his giving. The man said, "I just take my shovel and shovel into God's barn, and He takes His shovel and shovels into my barn. I have discovered that God has the bigger shovel."

Speaking of barns: "Honor the Lord with your capital and sufficiency [from righteous labors] and with the firstfruits of all your income; [Deuteronomy 26:2; Malachi 3:10; Luke 14:13,14.] So shall your storage places be filled with plenty, and your vats shall be overflowing with new wine [Deuteronomy 28:8]" (Proverbs 3:9-10, AMP). Give and your barns will be filled with plenty and your vessels will be overflowing. No wonder churches proclaim, "Offering time is blessing time!"

Get the picture? Outflow determines inflow. Open hands beat clenched fists. You have a little spoon. God has a huge shovel. You are blessed to be a blessing. When you bless, you receive a blessing.

“If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted...Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs...Give generously to him and do so without a grudging heart; then *because of this* the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to” (Deuteronomy 15:7-10, *NIV*). I hoped you noticed the: if, then, and now promised in those verses. It’s all in the contract.

God will fully supply and satisfy our needs. Take a look at the following Scriptures that prove this.

“And my God will liberally supply (fill to the full) your every need according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19, *AMP*).

“Will a man rob or defraud God? Yet you rob and defraud Me. But you say, In what way do we rob or defraud You? [You have withheld your] tithes and offerings. You are cursed with the curse, for you are robbing Me, even this whole nation. [Leviticus 26:14-17.] Bring all the tithes (the whole tenth of your income) into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now by it, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. [Malachi 2:2.] And I will rebuke the devourer [insects and plagues] for your sakes and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground, neither shall your vine drop its fruit before the time in the field, says the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you happy and blessed, for you shall be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 3:8-12, *AMP*).

“The wicked borrow and never repay, but the godly are generous givers. Those blessed by the LORD will inherit the land, but those cursed by him will die” (Psalms 37:21-22, *NLT*).

“I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the [uncompromisingly] righteous forsaken or their seed begging bread. All day long they are merciful and deal graciously; they lend, and their offspring are blessed” (Psalms 37:25-26, *AMP*).

“How blessed is he who considers the helpless; The LORD will deliver him in a day of trouble. The LORD will protect him and keep him alive, And he shall be called blessed upon the earth; And do not give him over to the desire of his enemies. The LORD will sustain him upon his sickbed; In his illness, You restore him to health” (Psalms 41:1-3, *NASU*).

“His children shall be honored everywhere, for good men's sons have a special heritage. He himself shall be wealthy, and his good deeds will never be forgotten. When darkness overtakes him, light will come bursting in. He is kind and merciful- and all goes well for the generous man who conducts his business fairly. Such a man will not be overthrown by evil circumstances. God's constant care of him will make a deep impression on all who see it. He does not fear bad news, nor live in dread of what may happen. For he is settled in his mind that Jehovah will take care of him. That is why he is not afraid but can calmly face his foes. He gives generously to

those in need. His deeds will never be forgotten. He shall have influence and honor” (Psalms 112:2-9, *TLB*).

“But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly” (Matthew 6:3-4, *NKJV*). See also Matthew 10:42; 19:21.

“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you” (Luke 6:38, *NIV*).

Study Questions

1. Prosperity and blessing are based upon what? _____

2. What two facts does Nick Sisco mention, as recorded in this lesson? _____

3. What is the advice someone offered in this lesson? _____

4. What happens when one sows sparingly? _____

5. Clenched fists make it impossible for God to do what? _____

6. What did the farmer (in this lesson) say about giving? _____
