

KINGDOM STEWARDSHIP OF FINANCES LIVING & GIVING THAT PLEASES GOD

INTRODUCTION:

- The word Kingdom refers to the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God refers to the rule of God. We want God's principles from His Word to "rule" in all decisions we make and attitudes we have concerning finances. When we apply Kingdom principles, we reap Kingdom results.

-All that we have belongs to God.

-David declared this spiritual truth in I Chronicles 29:10-13:

" David praised thee Lord in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, "Praise be to you, O Lord, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. [11] Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. [12] Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. [13] Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.

-When we live by this spiritual truth that all that we have belongs to God, we will consider it a great privilege and joy to freely give our tithes and offerings to the Lord.

-Our obedience in giving as God desires will result in three blessings:

1. God is blessed by our recognition of His ownership of all that we have.
2. We are blessed because God is faithful to His promises.
3. The world is blessed by our obedience to freely release resources to expand God's Kingdom.

-The ultimate goal of faithful Christian stewardship is not for personal gain. The ultimate goal of faithful Christian stewardship is *EXPANSION OF GOD'S KINGDOM!*

"If a person gets his attitude towards money straight, it will help straighten out almost every other area of his life. Tell me what you think about money, and I can tell you what you think about God, for these two are closely related. A man's heart is closer to his wallet than almost anything else." - Billy Graham

-What is stewardship? “Stewardship is the practice of systematic and proportionate giving of time, abilities, and material possessions, based on the conviction that these are a trust from God to be used in His service for the benefit of His Kingdom.”

-A steward is not an owner but a manager. God is always the owner and we are the manager of that which he has allowed us to obtain.

-Today, our focus will be on the stewardship of finances.

A. BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDINGS CONCERNING STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCES

1. God is to be our master, not money

Jesus gave a parable about a dishonest manager in Luke 16. Verse 13 says, *"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."*

-When we practice Kingdom stewardship, it means that we will be reliable and dependable with the money in our control.

2. Our priorities must be correct concerning money

Jesus gave an example of a man whose priorities were not correct. – Matthew 19:16-22 – This story is not about tithing or giving. It is about stewardship.

-Does money hinder my relationship with God?

-Does money control me or do I have control over money?

3. We must guard our lives against greed

Luke 12:15 (Msg) – *Speaking to the people, he went on, "Take care! Protect yourself against the least bit of greed. Life is not defined by what you have, even when you have a lot."*

4. We are called to give our best with generosity

Luke 6:38 (NIV) - *"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."*

-When God sent His son Jesus to the world, he gave his best.

5. We will reap what we sow. When we give it must be with a joyful heart.

Paul gave this word of exhortation to the church at Corinth:

2 Cor. 9:6-8 - Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. [7] Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. [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.

B. BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF TITHING

What is a tithe? A tithe in the truest sense is the giving of at least 10% of one's income. "Tithing is scriptural, systematic, simple, successful, and right." –Frank Damazio

1. We rob God when we don't give what belongs to Him – Malachi 3:8-12

-Giving of tithes results in blessings from the Lord.

-In Biblical history, tithing and revival always went together.

2. Tithes are to be primarily used for the ministry of the local congregation, including the support of the pastor. 2 Chron. 31:4-5 - ***He (Hezekiah) ordered the people living in Jerusalem to give the portion due the priests and Levites so they could devote themselves to the Law of the Lord.*** [5] *As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything.*

This was a fulfillment of the original command in the Law of Moses in Numbers 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*

The Apostle Paul reaffirms this principle in I Corinthians 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? [14] In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.*

Additionally, the Apostle states in I Timothy 5:17 - *The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.*

It is very important that pastors receive adequate support so that they can carry out their work without the burden of financial pressure.

Here are some statistics: (survey of pastors in the U.S.)

- Each month more than 1200 pastors in the U.S. leave the ministry due to stress, church related issues, or burnout.
- 71% of pastors say they are having financial problems.
- Only 50% of pastors complete their ministry because of burnout

It is very important that pastors receive adequate support according to the Biblical commands.

Neh. 13:10-12 - Nehemiah learned that the leaders were not being supported. *I also learned that the portions assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and singers responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields. [11] So I rebuked the officials and asked them, "Why is the house of God neglected?" Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts. [12] All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and oil into the storerooms.*

3. Tithes were practiced by Abraham & Jacob ***before*** the law given by God to Moses – Genesis 14:17-20; 28:20-22

-Some people like to argue that tithing is not for today because that was part of the Law of Moses. This is not true

-Giving God back a tenth of what is already His anyway is acknowledging God's ownership of the entire earth's wealth.

4. Jesus endorsed tithing – Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:37 – (Jesus would not have been welcome in the home of a Pharisee if he would not have been tithing.)

Matthew 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.**"*

5. Tithing enables the Pastor to be adequately supported

6. Paul encouraged the church to give systematically 1 Cor. 16:1-2 -

Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. [2] On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

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 \$40.00 per week and tithing \$4.00. In a few years his income increased and he was tithing \$500.00 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 \$40.00 a week, then you'd have no problem tithing \$4.00." W. A. Criswell, *a Guidebook for Pastors*, p. 15

C. BIBLICAL UNDERSTANDING OF OFFERINGS

1. An offering is something that is given over and above a tithe. (We will not have time to look at all the references)

- a. Offerings were given to build the tabernacle, not the tithes – Exodus 25:1-8; Exodus 35 to 36:1-8

Exodus 36:5-7 - *"The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the Lord commanded to be done." [6] Then Moses gave an order and they sent this word throughout the camp: "No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." **And so the people were restrained from bringing more. [7] because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work.**"*

- b. Offerings were given freely to build the temple with the leaders setting the example – I Chronicles 9:1-9
1 Chron. 29:9 - *The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly.*
- c. Generous offerings are always associated with revival – II Chronicles 31:2-14
- d. The Early Church gave generously - Acts 4:32 - *All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.*

CONCLUSION:

- The church in Macedonia, although experiencing severe poverty, is a true example of a church that demonstrated Kingdom living and giving. II Corinthians 8:1-9
-Why? –Verse 5 – *“They gave themselves first to the Lord.”*
-Until we fully surrender our whole life to the Lord, it will be difficult to part with our money, at least in a generous way.
-Their sacrifice pleased the Lord. They were giving out of a heart full of grace and not out of obligation.
- When we understand the heart of love that God had for us in sending Jesus to be our Savior, then we will want to give freely from our hearts. (verse 9)
- Example of the church in the Philippines.

Today, when we celebrate the Lord’s Supper, and we remember Christ’s sacrifice for us, let this be a time of recommitment to live and give in a way that pleases the Lord. We do this, not from obligation, but from a heart of gratitude to the Lord for His love for us.