

Basic Training Lesson 8.1 A Faithful Steward – Part 1

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

I. Review/Introduction

A. Review

1. 5 12 5 5 12; 4 1 21 1
2. In our Basic Training series, we have explored the following topics:
 - a. (1) The importance of truth (February 1, 2023)
 - b. (2) Love and marriage were God's ideas
 - c. (3) Prayer and prayer warfare
 - d. (4) New Testament new birth experience, and the new life
 - e. (5) The Bible is God's Word
 - f. (6) Who is God?
 - g. (7) Restoring Worship (March 26, 2023)

- h. (8) Stewardship
- i. (9) Presenting our Bodies

B. Introduction

1. Looking at the current topic on stewardship, let's begin with some definitions.
2. First, a parable of Jesus helps us see what is involved in stewardship:

Luke 16:1-2

16 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

*2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? **give an account of thy stewardship;** for thou mayest be no longer steward.*

3. The parable goes on to describe how the steward had responsibility over the rich man's business dealings, including selling his farm produce like oil and wheat, as well as the business's accounting records.

4. What we also see is how that a steward is required to give an account of their stewardship. So the personal question that arises in this study in our basic training series, is, **[slide] How am I handling business?**
5. The word translated as steward comes from the Greek word **[definition], oik-o-no-mos**, which is made of two words: **oikos**, meaning house; and **no-mos** which has one definition to divide among or parcel out a possession, and the other definition usage, custom, law, the body of law.
6. So the person who has the job of the **[slide] oikonomos**, or **steward, is the manager of a household or estate, treasurer, administrator, an overseer.**
7. From the beginning of creation, God gave mankind the job of being stewards of God's property, which includes other creation like the earth and animals, our bodies, souls, even our time, family, job, finances, and

belongings. Hence the question, **How am I handling business?**

8. These things are given to us by the Lord and we must take careful and grateful care of them as God's stewards.
9. We often think of ourselves as owners, but in reality, we are just stewards.
10. All we have, we received from God:
*1 Cor 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and **what hast thou that thou didst not receive?** [What do you have that God hasn't given you?] *now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?**
11. Why boast about something given to you by another? We should be grateful for being a recipient. Even our money, God claims it is His:
Hag 2:8 The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the LORD of hosts.
12. Even our possessions, which in the Old Testament culture was measured by cattle,

God claims them:

Ps 50:10 For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

13. **So, How am I handling business?**

II. My attitude toward His kingdom

A. The attitude of gratitude

1. So to introduce the topic of stewardship, let us briefly look at how the attitude of gratitude shows up in our stewarding our finances and possessions (which are really God's). In the next lesson we will address the stewardship requirements with regard to our soul.

2. **[slide-principle #1] Because what I have comes from God, I give purposefully and cheerfully:**

2 Cor 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

3. That verse speaks of giving purposefully, which describes how we should prioritize giving by planning for it in our expense plan, or budget, but also how we give out of the abundance of gratitude from our heart.

4. Another scriptural principle associated with our giving is how **[slide-principle #2] God blesses us in proportion to the way we give:**

2 Cor 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

5. It is like how Jesus described in Matthew 7:2, the same sized cup you use to give it out, will be used to give back to you.

6. If you sow a little, you will grow a little, if you sow a lot, you will grow a lot.

7. He gave this to illustrate that **[slide-principle #3] God uses people to bless those who give liberally:**

Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto

you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

8. Summarizing these principles related to gratitude: Gratitude toward God expressed by planned and cheerful giving, yields blessings in proportion to our giving, and God often employs others to bless us.
 - B. The privilege of participating
 1. Another attitude we express when we give, is to **[slide-principle #4] Consider it a privilege to use God's blessings to participate (invest) in God's kingdom.**
 2. In other words, Getting ready for heaven and helping prepare the way for others to get to heaven, are the most important things I can do on earth.

3. What do you treasure on earth? Jesus discussed that question in Matthew 6, and mentioned laying up treasures in heaven.
4. He said the attitude of the Gentiles is to focus on building up earthly treasures, and possessing material things. But for us, He summed up our attitude this way:
Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
5. God promised He will take care of our needs when we invest our priorities in the kingdom of God. In other words, when we take care of God's business, He will take care of our business.
6. Look at it from this perspective. When people get saved, in other words, when God redeems a person from a hell-bound destiny and puts them on a heaven-bound destiny, where does that change often occur? In church, or in a ministry connected with a church.

7. The church does not save them—it's God who does that—but the church provides regularly opportunities for people to believe by presenting the gospel. And how can they hear without a preacher?
Rom 10:14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?
8. This attitude we are speaking of toward giving, counts it a privilege to be able to participate in God's plan of emptying hell and populating heaven by assuring that the doors will remain open at the church—that there are even doors to open—and a building to enter into;
9. That there will be lights in the building, a climate-controlled environment with seats to sit on, and that there will be a preacher/teacher there to lead the assembly.

10. Participating in giving then, is an investment in the kingdom of God that assures that the ministry of the kingdom of God continues here, which also yields eternal rewards there.

III. The Basic Plan – The Tithe

A. Introduction to the tithe

1. We have looked at scriptures that deal with the attitude of gratitude as expressed through our giving priorities to advance the kingdom of God.
2. Now let us consider some scriptures that address ways to give to the kingdom of God.
3. A plan that is laid out in scripture is quite simple. Those who benefit from ministry can participate in providing for the needs that sustain that ministry.
4. In the book of beginnings, Genesis, we are introduced to the concept of giving “tithes of all.”

Gen 14:20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

5. **[slide] Tithe:** from the Hebrew word, ma`aser; and the Greek word dekate, which both simply mean a "tenth", so with regard to giving tithes of all, it means to give a 10th, or 10% of all.
 6. People who earn little or people who earn more give in proportion to their ability.
 7. And in the church, history shows it works. Churches are able to continue their ministry because individuals of all ages with varying degrees of income, faithfully gave their tithe plus other offerings besides.
- IV. Origin of tithing
- A. Abram and the King of Salem, Melchizedek
 1. We just mentioned the first time *giving tithes of all* is mentioned in the Bible, so let's examine that passage briefly.

2. Following a victorious battle, Abram met a priest named Melchizedek, called the king of Salem (Jerusalem) and priest of the Most High God.
3. Melchizedek came out to congratulate Abram, and provided him food and drink, and spoke a blessing over him.
4. And in response, Abram gave a tithe of the spoils of war.

Gen 14:19-20

*19 And he [Melchizedek] blessed him [Abram], and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, **possessor** of heaven and earth:*

*20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he [Abram] gave him [Melchizedek] **tithes of all.***

5. The principle established here in the Book of Beginnings, is that when God blesses us, we should return to God a percentage of that blessing.

- B. Jacob
 - 1. Abraham's grandson also picked on that lesson.
 - 2. In a critical juncture of Jacob's life, he had a dream of a ladder coming down from heaven and saw angels ministering to him. After awaking, he made some promises to God:

*Gen 28:22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and **of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.***
 - 3. Jacob was lonely, broke, and fleeing for his life at this point. But perhaps he had heard how his grandfather had given tithes of all, so now, Jacob promised God that when God blessed him, he would honor God by giving Him his tithe.
 - 4. And notice again the principle restated of giving tithes of all.
- c. Jesus on tithes

1. Tithing was a practiced that continued into Jesus' day, and Jesus spoke on the subject.
2. In an encounter with the Pharisees, Jesus pointed out how they paid tithes on even the smallest plants growing in their gardens, like mint, anise, and cumin.
3. **[image of mint plant]**
4. Imagine someone counting out these small stems and dividing out their tithe to bring to the temple!
5. Jesus made note of their carefulness toward tithing of all, and commended them for it. However, He also pointed out how they were out of balance with other important principles.

*Matt 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: **these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.***

*Matthew 23:23 NLT "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law--justice, mercy, and faith. **You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.***

6. So from Father Abraham who became the father of the Hebrews, to Jacob who became the head of all the tribes of Israel, and on down through Jesus, our High Priest and example, each recommending tithing of all.
 7. And the Book of Hebrews chapter 7, a New Testament book, makes a passing reference to the present when tithes were being received according to the commandment.
- D. Special offerings
1. Another kind of giving spoken about in the New Testament is receiving special

offerings for special needs. Like for the poor saints in Jerusalem:

Romans 15:26-27

26 For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

2. Paul also referred to that offering in:

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.

2 Upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as [God] hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

3. So these special offerings, like those for building repairs, are not given instead of the

tithe, but are given over and above the tithe as God has prospered.

4. The tithe can be compared to bus fare. Everyone who rides the bus contributes to the bus fare so that we are not expecting a free ride, but intend to share the cost of the journey.
 5. Even though my part may be small compared to someone else's part, it is the proportionate generosity of all that help us keep going ahead on this journey.
- E. What is the meaning of the tithe of all?
1. It is 10% of what? We find the example defined in several places.
 2. As we read earlier, Abraham gave "tithes of all":
*Gen 14:20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of **all**.*
 3. That principle was continued in the law:
Deut 14:22-23

*22 Thou shalt truly tithe **all** the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.*

*23 And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the **firstlings** of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always.*

4. *2 Chron 31:5 And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the **firstfruits** of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of **all the increase** of the fields; and **the tithe of all things** brought they in abundantly.*
5. The tithe was a ten percent gift of all things received, the first fruits off of the top and not what was left over.
6. These scriptures help us answer the question about whether we should

compute our tithe based on our gross income or net income.

7. The modern convenience of payroll deduction sometimes leaves some confused about what “all the increase” means on pay day.
8. We pay some of our bills directly out of our paycheck, like taxes, maybe life or health insurance, maybe even our car or mortgage payment.
9. But because my taxes or insurance or other things are withheld from my paycheck to help me pay those bills on time, it is still that original sum of my gross pay that is used to calculate “tithes of all.”

v. Conclusion

1. When we participate in God’s financial plan, we reap God’s blessings on our finances.
1. Again, it all boils down to the verse we began with:

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom

of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

2. We no doubt remember Malachi's warning to those who fell away from the practice of tithing:

Malachi 3:8-9

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

3. We would not think of holding up our neighbor and robbing from him because "thou shalt not steal" is still the 8th commandment. And we need to consider robbing God in that same way.
4. Notice that same passage in Malachi continues by revealing the blessings God has in store for those who do bring the tithe. And notice the challenge here:

Malachi 3:10-12

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the

storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

5. When we take care of God's business, God takes care of our business.