

Excerpts from a book I have written Tithing and Giving

As I got out of my car one morning at the downtown post office the Holy Spirit pointed out a “street type” person and told me to meet his needs. He was neat and clean, but I could tell he had spent a lot of time on the street. He probably had recently become a Christian after spending years on the street. He had a pleasant smile, but I noticed a lot of wear in his face.

After the Holy Spirit spoke to me, my thoughts were about how little money I had. It was during a tough financial time and we were on a very tight budget. I did not feel like I could afford to give the guy any money. I knew God wanted me to help him but I didn’t think I could do anything.

Then these Bible verses started coming out of my spirit: **Proverbs 19:17 He who has pity on the poor lends to the Lord; and the Lord will repay. / 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. / 2 Corinthians 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.** I was about to pass up the best business deal I had received in a long time. In fact, I couldn’t afford NOT to help this guy.

He had spotted me too. He came up to me and said he was trying to get money to buy a bus ticket to Los Angeles and could I help? I then asked him how much he needed. He said, “About fifty dollars.” Remembering the verses that went through my head, I gave him \$60. All I had was four twenties. If I ask God for money, I would like for Him to round up also. This is how things work, God tells you to do something and then, when you hesitate, He gives you promises to help you complete what He wants you to do.

Giving is tied in to the 30, 60 or 100 times teaching. Let’s build up our faith in the giving lifestyle. Even though I have gone through the giving verses many times in the past, my faith always needs to be renewed. Any time I feel like holding on to something, I re-read these giving verses.

Proverbs 3:9. Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

Proverbs 3:10. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

We can look at firstfruits as the first paycheck after a raise, the first paycheck on a new job or the first income of a new business venture. Years ago I saw firstfruits in the Bible but never practiced the special offering of the firstfruits; somehow I just let it go by. There is no set amount or percentage that God gives as a guideline or command, so view it as a measure of our thankfulness and dependence on God and expect God to respond in the same manner we give.

We need to meditate on the promise God gives us in verse 10 and read it daily along with the other references we will be looking at. After some time has passed, we will go looking for people to bless materially.

We should use all our wealth as a benefit to others. Pray about who does any home repairs you might need and don't argue about the price. We can give away the things we do not need or use anymore and always leave a big tip. My daughter, working as a waitress, was left a gospel tract with a small tip. If we pray in a restaurant or leave a tract, we should leave a lot of money. God does not get honor when we are cheap. We always name God as our source of money, income and stuff. It has always been amazing to me how, when I go to buy something, it's on sale.

I have never known how to start a teaching on giving, but maybe Luke 12:13-48 is appropriate. Verses 27-28 teaches that God wants us to dress like someone who measures his gold in tons. In verse 33, Jesus says sell everything you have and give to the poor. God told me in verse 42 to be smart in my giving (**give them their food allowance at the proper time**). I am going to give you how I put these verses together and try to give you the correct attitude (in my opinion) toward "things".

Jesus did not walk around without any clothes, and we have no record of him selling his tools when he was a carpenter, so we must keep something. It appears that the things we use should be the best. God does not want us to have a bunch of junk (old beat up car, worn out clothes, etc). A good rule of thumb is "is this something I am using?" Then God wants us to be ready to give away those nice clothes or car the minute He asks. He wants us to own the stuff, not the stuff to own us.

There are two principles of financial success: hard work and giving. Let's talk about giving.

In Luke 12:33-34, we learn to make Heaven our savings bank. Some have added to the Bible with their churchy pencil "and you will not get a nickel of it until you get to Heaven". We don't need any money in Heaven, we need it now. **Proverbs 19:17 He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and He will pay back what he has given. NKJV** We get a much better interest rate and our money is safer in heaven.

Walking out of church one Sunday, a friend had a tie I really liked and I complimented him. He started pulling off the tie to give to me and it so embarrassed me. I said "No, no". So he kept his tie. Now I realize my pride kept me from getting a tie I liked, and I kept him from receiving the blessings of the giver. Had I received from him, I would have had a tie I liked, and God would have given him a lot of ties for giving me one. A radio preacher offered to send a free book to anyone who asked for it and I wanted one. When I went to send off and ask for the book, I started to write a check that I felt would cover the cost of the book (pride again). God stopped me and said, "Why do you want to deprive that man of a blessing? Do you not like him or something?" I saw what God was saying and took the free book and prayed that God would return the money the preacher had spent on me one hundred times.

Life Lesson – Be quick to give and quick to receive.

Genesis 14:18-24 18 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.

19 And he blessed him, 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 gave him tithes (10%) of all.

21 And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.

22 And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth,

23 That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich:

24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion

Abram gave Melchizedek a tithe (or a tenth) of everything. Abram would not accept anything unless it was from God. He did not want anyone to say that someone other than God made him rich. What does that say about the lottery? Why can't God make someone win the lottery or at Las Vegas? He can, but in gambling there are winners and losers. In God's financial system there are only winners. We give to God and receive from God. Tithing is a Godly operation, not just a legal one; it predates the law.

Genesis 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. If you want to see an example of God's blessing, read about Jacob in Genesis. Again we see that the tithe predates the law. It is a heavenly operation, not just a legal or priestly operation.

Leviticus 27:30 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD. Read the whole chapter.

Deuteronomy 14:22 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.

24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:

25 Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose:

26 And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household,

27 And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.

28 At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates:

29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

We will get to the blessings, but I want to make certain everyone is convinced that 10% of our income belongs to God, not us. Is that the net of my paycheck or the gross? When I started tithing and that question came up, my attitude was that if it is the gross and I tithed on the net, I wasn't tithing, so I tithe on the gross. Later, I realized that the part the government took was for my benefit. (No comment if that is really for my benefit.) One preacher's response to that question was that he wanted God around at tax time.

Can we not tithe and still go to Heaven? Of course; Jesus walked into paradise with a thief.

One person said he can prove we should give 30%. If that's true, I haven't figured it out yet. I believe 10% keeps us from becoming a thief, but God will desire more from us as we grow in giving. God talks in terms of percentages, not total amounts. It does not matter whether we made one dollar or a million, 10% is still required.

Deuteronomy 26:1-15

1 And it shall be, when thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance, and possessest it, and dwellest therein;

2 That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there.

3 And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days, and say unto him, I profess this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD sware unto our fathers for to give us.

4 And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand, and set it down before the altar of the LORD thy God.

5 And thou shalt speak and say before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous:

6 And the Egyptians evil entreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage:

7 And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression:

8 And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders:

9 And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, even a land that floweth with milk and honey.

10 And now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land, which thou, O LORD, hast given me. And thou shalt set it before the LORD thy God, and worship before the LORD thy God:

11 And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house, thou, and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you.

12 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled;

13 Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them.

14 I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead: but I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me.

15 Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

I like the boldness of the prayer (verses 13-15), not asking God to bless us but telling God to bless us. "I've done my part, now you do yours." Remember God is the one who wrote it and told us to pray in that way. Our tithe goes to the **Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow**. If we want to give to the Red Cross or United Way, that's fine, but it's not to be part of the tithe. We can get the blessings of the giver, but only if it is money above the tithe. The Levite is the church worker, minister or other groups ministering in the name of Jesus. The stranger is a sojourner, a temporary inhabitant, a newcomer, or a foreigner.

God spends the tithe money on us.

Malachi 3:6-12

6 For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

We are sons of Jacob by our blood covenant with God. God will not abandon the Jews; they are His chosen people and we can partake of the blessings of Abraham by faith and our relationship with Jesus. God does not change!

7 Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

When my wife and I were living in Virginia, during my time with the Army, we went to our first charismatic church. We made the decision to start regular church attendance. Before it had been hit or miss, and we had been trying different denominations. I said to my wife, "I don't know much, but I do know that to be financially successful in life we must tithe." Growing up in a Baptist church, we had tithing testimonies each year. We made the decision to begin tithing at that point and have not backed off since. That was November 1972. I don't brag about that because it is the best business deal I have ever made, and I started with the attitude of "What's in it for me?" I expected monetary blessings, but God also began pouring the Word into us. Over about the next year, my wife and I received much of the basic Christian teaching that we have been living by and giving to our children over the years. God revealed Himself to us in a big way. So an increase in revelation is another blessing to the person who tithes.

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

We must be honest and say that if we do not give God His 10%, we are stealing. Recently, I have felt that there may be something regarding "in offerings" I have been missing. It seems to teach that we are robbing God if we do not make special offerings. I would think the other required offerings under the old covenant are covered by the blood of Jesus because He is our sacrifice and offering.

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

Remember about this curse stuff that Jesus took that curse of not tithing to the cross; however, when we steal, we are in Satan's territory, which is not a good place to be.

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.

Remember in John 6:25-70, Jesus spoke on eating his body and drinking his blood. When the people began leaving him, he did not run after them saying, "Hey, let me explain better." No, he put out the Word and they could take it or leave it. When people asked for a sign, he said that a wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign (Matthew 12:39). His family came to get him because they thought he was out of his mind (Mark 3:21). Jesus put the Word out: take it or leave it. Zechariah, John the Baptist's dad, asked for a sign about the birth of his child. He should have kept his mouth shut (Luke 1:18-20). Gideon asked for a sign, but since he had no access to the Word, God let him get away with it. Mary only asked how it was going to happen and the angel told her how.

Everything about signs I just said is true except when it comes to tithing. We can make God prove His Word, and He wants to. He wants us to put pressure on Him to fulfill His Word. We can say, "OK God, I'll tithe for a month and if you bless financially, great, I'll keep doing it and if not, I will stop." And God will love that prayer because it is based on His Word. Hebrews 4:16 says to come boldly to God's throne.

The Hebrew word for prove means examine, try, tempt. The storehouse is usually the local church where you are being spiritually fed. When in doubt, tithe to the church you are attending.

That is always correct. I like the New American Version: “blessing you cannot measure”. Other translations have “cannot contain”. God invites us to let Him prove He blesses the tither.

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.

God will prevent Satan from eating and destroying our stuff. God will keep our things from wearing out before they should. God is not going to let Satan mess with our stuff.

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

This is a good time for testimony. My favorite God blessing story happened when we went to Disneyland. When we went to check in at the Disneyland Hotel, the lady at the desk went to check our reservation and tried to enter the information twice, and then finally said, “They ran out of your room (we had reserved the cheapest room for five of us) and have booked you into the Royal Suite all week.” This room had a kitchen, dining area, and sofa beds that made up to a couch during the day. A similar thing happened to a pastor friend and his wife in Mexico. Also, I paid \$138 for the most recent suit I bought, originally priced at \$450. I went to a department store because they had advertised a sale on clearance suits. They had one suit my size on sale and it would have been the suit I would have picked if I had many choices.

Any time we feel that tithing is costing us anything, we can re-read Malachi over and over until our faith is built back up. Do not tithe or give because I say to, develop your own faith. In fact, don't do anything because someone says to do it; do it because God says do it. Don't believe anything without finding it in the Word of God.

1 Kings 17

I want to take a little time to tell you about someone who might seem to be the biggest slimeball in the Bible. First thing this guy did was to stop all the rain in Israel. (He and God, that is.) While famine gripped the land, he sat by a stream and God had ravens bring him bread. Then when the stream went dry, God told him to go to Zarephath of Sidon. There he saw a widow and her son. He asked them what they were doing. She said that she was going to find some sticks, make a fire and fix cakes with their last flour and oil for her and her son to eat and then die. Now here comes the slime part, he said "First, make me a cake." Can you believe that? After he had been eating well, he wants the starving widow to feed him first. She must have known he was a man of God and a prophet because she did it. You can read the rest yourself. By doing what the prophet said, she planted a seed for a miracle and got it.

Never, never, never tell a poor person he or she should not give. It is just as important for them to tithe and give as it is for a rich person. It is a percentage, not a total amount that God looks at and responds to. Never judge by outward appearances, do what the Word says. We see Jesus doing this all the time. He wants to get a faith response from the people he ministers to. In fact, sometimes it is required to allow a miracle to happen.

Deuteronomy 8:18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

God wants us to put money into the gospel to win people to Jesus. (That's right He wants us to give to televangelists.) We find one or two ministries we like and give to them and pray for them. Tithing to our local church is usually best and always correct. He wants the world to know that He loves us and cares for us. We will see later that He wants us to have money to give on every occasion.

Ecclesiastes 11:1 Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days.

If we want money coming in all the time, give all the time. We should develop a giving attitude and lifestyle, always be looking for someone to bless. Any seed we plant takes time to grow and then harvest. There is a passing of time from planting our seed and receiving the harvest.

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.

This deals with everything in life, not just money. Whatever measure we use, that is the measure God is going to return to us. If we give ones, God gives us back more ones; if we give tens, we get back tens, etc. Think about cornflakes. If we give a bowl of cornflakes, God will take that bowl, fill it with cornflakes, then press down and put more in. After He has filled the bowl with pressed-down cornflakes, He will then shake it some and see if he can get any more in and continue filling until it runs over. Instead of a bowl, we can use a 55-gallon drum; instead of cornflakes, we can use hundred dollar bills. Jesus says people will pour the return into our lap. We will not need money in heaven, but we do here on earth, and that is where it will be returned to us.

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

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

The whole kingdom of God, and really everything that happens on Earth, is governed by sowing and reaping. Again we deal with percentages and how much we are willing to sow. If we put one seed in the ground, we get 50-100 seeds back. If we put 100 seeds in the ground, we get 5,000-10,000 seeds back. The choice is ours; we can plant as much seed as we have, in all the ground we can find. Always be planting and we can always be harvesting. The whole process takes time just like planting crops. Again Chapter 4 of Mark relates to this.

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.

If we find our pastor putting a lot of pressure on people to give, or if there is a special collection, we should decide ahead of time what we want to give or what the Holy Spirit is

leading us to give and give that amount and not respond to pressure. The Holy Spirit can tell us at home just as easily as he can at church what to give, and it takes the pressure off of us. As we begin meditating on the giving verses, we will find ourselves looking for chances to give and will do so joyfully. If we feel pressured to give or a ministry says it is not going to make it without us giving, back off. Just because there is a need does not mean we are to meet that need. "Jesus said to give to them that asks you", but don't be dumb (Luke 14). I had a guy come up to me and say, "I won't lie to you mister, I need a drink." I asked how much he needed. He said three dollars. So I gave it to him. Then I said, "I want to tell you something, God loves you and Jesus died for you." He looked like I had slapped him. I later saw that man working at the local Christian homeless outreach shelter. I don't know if I did any good or not, but I like to think I helped him.

8 And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:

God wants us to have His grace to give to others. He wants us to have all we can use to promote the Gospel. He wants to give us a lot so that we will always have enough to give to others. We need to minister God's salvation and love when we give to the poor. The Red Cross is a good group of people, but they do not lift up Jesus as they help people. It is not wrong to give to the Red Cross, but it is always best to give to groups that proclaim the Word as they minister to the poor. The Word is what people need. Jesus and His Word is what will get people out of poverty.

9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.

God really likes people who give to the poor and their work will be an everlasting memory.

10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)

God will give us stuff to give, either money or things. We can ask God for some seed and then sow it, not eat it. When we get our crop in, we will have more to sow. He will increase our store of seed and enlarge our harvest.

11 Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.

God will make us rich so we can give anytime somebody needs something. We will be made rich spiritually so that as we minister financially, we can also minister spiritually and God will get the glory.

Read the context of these verses and understand what Paul is doing. He felt he should be accountable to the Corinthian church. Most good ministries will be accountable to a group of overseers and will be willing to share financial information with its contributors.

Life Lesson - Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and to other people, but also use your head and don't throw your money down a hole. When in doubt give.

Philippians 4:10-19

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last your care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. NKJV

11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: NKJV

12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. NKJV

Jesus does not want us to run around and try to fill our emptiness with things. He wants us to fill ourselves with the Word and the Holy Spirit. This gives contentment. There is a place in Jesus where there is no worry about anything. Love and the giving lifestyle are central to this. It is impossible to steal from me because I will give a thing to a person faster than he can steal it. The blessings of giving will come to me when I do this. Satan tries to steal our things, but here is a way to turn it to blessing.

13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. NKJV

Like most people I liked the Serenity Prayer, “help me accept the things I cannot change.” Then a man pointed out that there isn’t anything I cannot change. Mark 11:23 says I can move any mountain. God and I can change anything.

14 Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. NKJV

15 Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. NKJV

Paul expected the Philippians to receive as well as give. Harvesting our crop is as important as planting. What if a man planted a field of corn and then instead of picking the corn, he let it rot? That would be a sin. What if he said, “Oh, I wouldn’t ask the ground or the plant to give me anything back.” We would figure he had been in the sun too long. We expect pay for the work we do. So why throw that principle out when it comes to spiritual matters? One preacher told God when he was called to full-time ministry, “OK, but the day I don’t have three suits is the day I am going back to plumbing.”

16 For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities. NKJV

17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. NKJV

How would we like to be able to give to Paul and have the good he did go to our account? This is why giving to the Red Cross is not as good as putting money into the gospel. We can be a part of any good ministry and get the credit for what they have done by giving to that ministry.

18 Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. NKJV

Giving is a fragrant offering and pleasing to God.

19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. NKJV

God will meet our needs not according to the stock market or any earthly institution, but by His riches in glory. God's street is gold that is so refined it is transparent. A little gravel from His

street will take care of you and me both. Poor old Jesus ain't poor no more. There is a lot of good stuff in this passage.

Proverbs 11:24. There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.

I like this idea of scattering. To me it seems to be more than just giving to your local church and another ministry or two. It seems more like looking for places to give and always being ready to give. When in doubt, give. It is an attitude of, "who can I bless today". We can give anything, not just money. Ask Jesus and sometimes he will tell you to leave a ridiculously large tip at a restaurant. One time he told me to leave a \$20 tip at a drive-in hamburger place. I was so embarrassed for leaving a \$20 tip for a \$5 meal; I quickly drove away before anyone saw me.

A minister once went to a minister's alliance meeting, held at a restaurant, in which the churches were looking for a way to communicate so that each poor family would only get one Christmas basket. That was bad enough but then one of the preachers said, "Do you think we should leave a tip?" He exploded.

It is OK to save for something in particular, but if you just save "for a rainy day" you'll get rain. If you will be honest with yourself, you can tell if you are holding on to money out of fear. Life Lesson - When in doubt, give. Both people and Satan will tell us that we are giving out of pride or to show off. Give anyway; let God sort out our motives. We should stand in faith and expect God to return the money to us; that way we will have money to give the next time.

Proverbs 11:25. The generous soul will be made rich, And he who waters will also be watered himself. NKJV

People bad-mouth the "prosperity gospel" without understanding the whole concept. When a person is born-again, he is made righteous. He or she is as righteous as the Pope or Kenneth Copeland or St. Francis or anyone. It is our position; we are a child of God. (Jesus said we are greater than anyone in the Old Testament.) The new believer is at zero, no sin, completely 100% righteous. The difference between Billy Graham and a new Christian is Billy Graham knows how to operate in the promises better. The promises of the righteous belong to all God's children. There are many things we can do to have a more enjoyable life. There are promises in the Bible that if we do certain things we will get certain results.

All the "prosperity gospel" says is, "Be generous and you will prosper." If you want to be refreshed, refresh others; you know - Sow and Reap. If you would like to go deeper then take a look at the love walk.

Proverbs 22:9. He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor.

"Bountiful eye" is an attitude. Eye can be physical or spiritual. Bountiful can mean: good, pleasant, agreeable, appropriate, rich, happy, prosperous, kind and right. It is a feeling of

contentment and that all's right with our life. This positive attitude will overflow by the person giving to the poor and thanking God for all he has done for us.

Finally, I want to bring us full circle on giving. As I was preparing for this verse, I saw how my own attitudes need to change. I have become money-minded and not giving-minded. I have grown by going over the giving scriptures again, or I should say, I have a renewed commitment to the giving lifestyle.

Ephesians 4:28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

We work to make money to give to others. Man, I thought we worked for a better house or food or to pay the bills. God wants us to work hard and do the best job we can. We do this because that is what God wants us to do. One way God gets us money is through our work. God, not our employer, is our source of income.

Life Lesson – God wants us to work hard, be smart, and make a lot of money so that we have a lot to give. To quote one person, “View your job as a way to get seed to sow into the gospel or other peoples’ lives.”