

THE LAWS OF BIBLICAL PROSPERITY

(Chapter Twelve)

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Chapter Twelve – The Role of Cheerful Giving

In the last lesson we showed you that one of the basic biblical principles interacting with prosperity is the *Law of Sowing and Reaping*. The Bible establishes seed time and harvest as both a fundamental and an eternal principle in God's Kingdom. In Mark 4:26, 29 we can see that it's fundamental: "*The Kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil... when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.*" The principle is also eternal: "*While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest...shall not cease*" (Genesis 8:22). Indeed, the entire Kingdom of God and everything that goes on within it is subject to the *Law of Sowing and Reaping* and there are numerous scriptures that talk about it. The Christian desiring biblical prosperity must understand and practice Spirit-led sowing and reaping.

The most difficult area of sowing for many Christians is the giving of our money and valuable possessions. The flesh wants to hold onto everything instead of trusting God to replenish whatever we might sow into the Kingdom. Intellectually we know that everything we possess came from God and that it all belongs to Him anyway. But once He has provided, once we have come into stewardship over His property, we tend to be reluctant to let go of it until we eventually come to that point in our walk with the Lord where we have learned to override the flesh and trust God for our finances. And so, around the Body of Christ, there are Believers who give their money eagerly and bountifully while others give grudgingly and sparingly if at all.

God Wants Willing Givers

The truth is God wants Believers to be willing givers, distributors of substance who release the money we have been given easily and enthusiastically. Why? Because through our giving we resemble Christ who gave everything He had. Indeed, it is God's objective that we all be conformed to His image (Romans 8:29). Also, by giving away what we hold valuable, other people are blessed and in that process we initiate the manifestation of love which is God's chief attribute. More importantly, since God is love (1 John 4:16), our Spirit-led giving actually manifests His presence and causes those receiving our gifts to give thanks to Him for their blessings (2 Corinthians 9:11).

The Bible shows us that from the beginning God wanted to work with people who would give willingly of their substance. For example, while Cain and Abel both brought offerings to the Lord (Genesis 4:3-4), God only had regard for Abel because he gave his best and because he gave in faith (Hebrews 11:4). Later on, Abram voluntarily gave a tithe to King Melchizedek and declared his faith for God's future provision (Genesis 14:20-23). God blessed Abram for being such a willing giver (Genesis 15:1). Then, after the Law was given to Moses, God described in several scriptures such as the following examples the kind of givers He preferred:

Exodus 25:2 *Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me, from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise My contribution.*

Exodus 35:4-5 *Moses spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying..."Take from among you a contribution to the Lord; whoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it ..."*

Exodus 35:21 *Everyone whose heart stirred him and everyone whose spirit moved him came and brought the Lord's contribution...*

Exodus 35:29 *...all the men and women, whose heart moved them...brought a freewill offering to the Lord.*

Exodus 36:3, 6 ...they continued bringing...freewill offerings every morning. So Moses issued a command, and...the people were restrained from bringing any more.

And so, from the beginning God has wanted to work with people who would give willingly and freely. He did not force them to give nor were they pressured to give. By His example, an expression of love must be voluntary or it isn't love. It must be given without "strings attached" or it isn't love. It must be given sacrificially or it isn't love. And when our giving is carried out in love and with a willing heart, God has demonstrated over and over again that He will respond with blessing, prosperity and abundance to those willing givers. It's all a matter of sowing and reaping: you will always reap in the same manner you have sowed.

God Loves Cheerful Givers

In terms of biblical prosperity many Believers are experiencing shortage in their lives and they wonder why. Why is God withholding His prosperity? Could it be they are merely reaping according to what they have sowed? Or according to the attitude they had when they sowed? Scripture has a lot to say about the relationship of the *Law of Sowing and Reaping* to our prosperity and this is expressed very clearly in 2 Corinthians 9:6-11:

He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. (6)

Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver. (7)

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; ..." (8-9)

Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness; you will be enriched in everything for all liberality, which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. (10-11)

Focus for a moment on the fact that the Bible says quite clearly that *God loves a cheerful giver*. A cheerful giver is someone who gives enthusiastically and quickly, who looks for opportunities to give of his/her substance and be God's blessing to others. Cheerful givers are full of joy when they are faced with an opportunity to disperse out of their valuable property even when personal sacrifice will be involved.

Another point is this: since without faith it's impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6), for God to *love* someone for the manner of their giving means that faith has to be involved. Therefore, cheerful givers are those people who give in faith trusting God for the replenishing of their seed and for multiplication back to them to produce a future harvest, a harvest of favor and blessing, a harvest of biblical prosperity. Sometimes we forget to attach faith to our giving but the truth is without faith it isn't possible to be a cheerful giver. Without faith you can't give freely unencumbered with concern and anxiety for the future.

Notice also that for the cheerful giver, God will make all grace hasten to come to you, that you will have all sufficiency for all things and that He will increase your harvest, return abundance back to you and enrich you in everything. Certainly this is describing the biblical prosperity we have been considering in this bible study series where nothing is missing and nothing is broken anywhere in one's life: spirit, soul or body. In essence then, cheerful giving is one of the keys that unlocks the door to the harvest of the abundance Jesus came to give us (John 10:10). Through cheerful giving we begin to receive the inheritance He won for us at the Cross of Calvary.

Conclusions

So, ***in order to experience the manifestation of biblical prosperity, you must be a cheerful giver.*** In fact if you are a Believer, God is already in the process of training you to be one. He is working on it so in time you can come to look more like Jesus. If you are already an accomplished cheerful giver, then God is working to insure that you don't lose what you've achieved and that you continue to grow in your giving until you are willing to give up your very life for the sake of the Kingdom of God just as Jesus did.

Being a cheerful giver is not something you can work up. It starts out with the faith that God will bless you in return for your giving. After a time you come to the place where you give because you enjoy it. And God gives the cheerfulness; it doesn't come from your own strength or effort. All you have to do is open yourself to His Word, do what It says and let Him take care of the rest.

Ask the Lord to make you a cheerful giver. Then, start looking for opportunities to bless others with your substance. Resist the temptation to be cynical about the motives of your Pastor when the offering plate comes around or when other ministries ask you for God's money. You're not giving it to them anyway; rather, you are sowing seeds in faith directly into the Kingdom of God. Just ask Him where you are to sow His money and then give it where He leads you.

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BIBLE STUDY

Lesson Twelve – The Role of Cheerful Giving

1. The Law of Sowing and Reaping is both a _____ and _____ principle in the Kingdom of God.
2. The Christian desiring to receive biblical prosperity must understand and _____ Spirit-led sowing and reaping.
3. The most difficult area of sowing for many Christians is the _____ of our money and valuable possessions.
4. God wants us to be willing givers because through our giving we _____ who gave everything He had.
5. Willing givers are _____ of substance who _____ the money they have been given easily and enthusiastically into the Kingdom of God.
6. We must give _____ and willingly, not grudgingly or reluctantly, so that our giving can be an expression of our _____.
7. Believers who are experiencing shortage in their lives should consider the possibility that they are merely _____ according to what they have sowed.
8. He who sows _____ will also reap sparingly, and he who sows _____ will also reap bountifully.
9. God loves a _____ giver. For this to happen we must learn to attach _____ to our giving as a conscious part of the process of giving and receiving.
10. If you are a cheerful giver, God will make all _____ abound to you and you will have all _____ for all things. In fact, He will return a harvest of _____ back to you.

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1. The Law of Sowing and Reaping is both a fundamental and eternal principle in the Kingdom of God.
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5. Willing givers are distributors of substance who release the money they have been given easily and enthusiastically into the Kingdom of God.
6. We must give voluntarily and willingly, not grudgingly or reluctantly, so that our giving can be an expression of our love.
7. Believers who are experiencing shortage in their lives should consider the possibility that they are merely reaping according to what they have sowed.
8. He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.
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