

## I. Review

- A. We are currently in the section of the SOTM where Jesus is highlighting the arena of relational financial stewardship. This is one of the four activities that positions us to encounter Him.

**“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth and rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is there your heart will be also.” (Matt. 6:19-21)**

- B. In our last session we primarily focused upon the first portion of this exhortation, “Do not lay up treasures on the earth”, and looked extensively at the exhortations of Jesus concerning right perspective concerning wealth and possessions.
1. The Lamp of the Body is the Eye - We must understand the biblical truths of the nature of wealth and possessions in order to see and use them in a way that positions us to encounter God and grow in love and righteousness and to further the witness of the Kingdom. (Matt. 6:22-23)
  2. No One Can Serve Two Masters - Jesus reveals that the nature of desiring wealth and possessions will seek to gain all of our love and the ambition of our will. Jesus clearly tells us that we cannot have a full and complete love for God if we set even a small measure of our love upon wealth and possessions. (Matt. 6:24)
  3. Worry Seeks to Turn our Love towards Wealth and Possessions - The desire to gain wealth and possessions gets a foothold in our lives through our natural need for health and comforts and then seeks to maintain and make sure that our health and comforts will remain undisturbed. (Matt. 6:25-34)

## II. Positioning to Encounter Jesus in Giving

- A. The activity of giving under the leadership of Jesus and for the purpose of positioning ourselves to encounter Him and further the Kingdom of God through financial strength is the fourth positioning activity that Jesus gives us in the SOTM. The activity of giving produces a four-fold result. (2 Cor. 9:1-15)
1. Positions us for Intimacy- The foremost result God is looking to produce through our giving is dependency and intimacy with Him. What separates

the religious from the relational is the motivations of the heart. Many of us go through the motions of giving because that's what Christians do. We miss the work of the Holy Spirit to tenderize our hearts and draw us closer to our God through the activity of giving. (Ps. 51:16-17; Is. 29:13)

2. Works as an Antidote to the Seduction of Storing up Earthly Treasure - Within the SOTM Jesus spent a sizable amount of His time on the subject of encouraging us to wage war upon the desire to store up earthly treasure in order to maintain our comforts and experience of life. Every time He encountered someone trapped in the seduction of earthly wealth and possessions His counsel to them was to give it away. (Mk. 10:21-22)
3. Furtheres the Kingdom of God through the Strength of Resources - God gives us financial strength in His desire to partner with His bride in bringing the witness of the Kingdom to the earth. This is the principle of being His stewards. (Deut. 8:18)
4. Yields Eternal Rewards - Jesus desires to give us eternal rewards of intimacy through the activity of giving. It is essential that we have a clear hope of the realities of eternal existence or we will come up far short of the eternal rewards He wants to give us. (Col. 3:23-24)

### III. Principles of Giving

- A. Tithing - The word, tithe, literally means tenth. Under the law of Moses, God commanded His people to give 10% of their increase to the tribe of Levi. Levi had no inheritance in the land and was commanded not to work but rather to maintain the temple and its responsibilities. It is this command of giving 10% to the Lord that most people use as the reference point to the activity of giving. (Gen. 14:20; Num. 21:24)
  1. Not Under the Law - The principle of tithing is a righteous and Godly principle, however new covenant believers are not under the law and are not required to tithe. Actually upholding the command to tithe would be to give your tithe to the tribe of Levi. Under the New Covenant, Jesus tells us that we are to give and give generously but we are to give as the Spirit leads and give from our hearts. (Acts. 2:44-45, 4:32-37; 2 Cor. 8:3-4, 9:7)
- B. Offerings - There are two forms of offerings spoken of in the scriptures: One is the command to give God the firstborn of all your livestock for temple sacrifice. The other is a free-will gift given as a token of your love and devotion to God. The second is the meaning that is used in the New Testament. Our offerings that are given to others and to

ministries are primarily understood and seen as gifts of love to God and He receives them as such. (Ex. 35:5; Matt. 6:24; Mk 12:30; 2 Cor. 8:9; Phil. 4:15-18)

- C. Honoring the Poor and Those Who Minister to You - Some hold that churches with paid ministers are taking away from the support that should be used for the poor or evangelistic efforts. According to the scriptures, church staff are to receive twice the amount as what is being given for benevolence and missions. (1 Cor. 9:6-14; 1 Tim. 5:3-4, 17-18)
- D. Giving as a Formula for Wealth - Another very common teaching concerning financial stewardship is that if you give financially God will reward you financially in this age. This kind of teaching generally produces a greater focus upon gaining wealth and possessions in this age, which is the complete opposite of what Jesus is teaching us in the SOTM. This is based upon God's promise to bless and reward those who are wise stewards of what He has entrusted them with. The problem is that the only application of bless and reward they have in their mind is "financial" and this is simply not the correct application of blessing and reward. (Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 19:21; Lk. 6:38, 12:33, 14:12-14; 1 Cor. 9:6-15; 1 Tim. 6:18-19)

*The Prosperity of God - The most biblical definition that we can exegete from the scriptures concerning the promise of God to prosper us is the following...God will give us everything we need to accomplish the destiny and assignment He has predestined for us. - Chris Hayward*

- E. It is more Blessed to Give than to Receive - The pinnacle principle of positioning our hearts to encounter Jesus through giving is that He promised that we are blessed more when we give than when we receive. In other words, we don't give so we can receive the blessing; the blessing is in the giving. The giver is happier in God than the one who gets. (Ps. 112:5-9; Acts. 20:32-35)

*It is far better to give than to receive. Giving mandates love based obedience, and submits to His leadership. Giving exhibits His heart and illustrates the free gift of salvation. Giving activates trust in God's provision in you, and provides it for others. Giving brings Him pleasure and joy, and advances His kingdom. Giving fosters sanctification, testifies to His character and to His power and results in His praise and glory. - David Murry*