

Mind Your Own Business
Profit Sharing
Leviticus 27:30 & Matthew 23:23

Opener

Take a moment to reflect on your current management practices as they relate to giving. After all the bills are paid and groceries are purchased are you left with... well, not much of anything? Do you feel like you are pulled in a million different directions when it comes to your financial commitments? Would it be scary to take a tenth right off the top of your harvest and bring back to God regularly before you addressed any other financial obligation?

Introduction

Throughout the Mind Your Own Business series we have looked at several things. We all have a business and our business is God's business. We have discussed the importance of having a plan for how we will manage the business God has given us. We then embarked on the specifics of planning a budget and beginning a debt snowball to free us from the enslavement of constantly owing to others and having more month than money. We addressed the idea of investing wisely as God lays out over and over again in His love letter to us, the Bible.

This last week of our Mind Your Own Business series we will look at giving. God tells us that there are basically two ways in which we can describe our business, cursed or blessed. As we examine the following passages, can we get crazy enough to ask for God to make the changes within us needed to run a blessed life business?

Let's jump back in time for a moment and look at the book of Leviticus. At the point in history that Leviticus was written, God wanted to give His people a way to start from scratch. He wanted them set apart from the culture around them. He wanted to teach them a whole new way of life. God wanted a Holy people. Although we may look at a book like Leviticus and get bogged down in all the details and overwhelmed with what we perceive as obsolescence, it is critical for us to understand the larger point behind these details. Gods wanted a special way of life for His people. He wanted a way of life for them that kept Him at the center of everything they did and would crate a community of people who reflected His love to one another.

“Giving liberates the soul of the giver. You never walk away feeling badly. Whether through a tithe, charitable contribution or gift to a friend in need, give away at least some of your money. Not only does it generate good feelings, but it generates contentment. Remember, no one has ever become poor by giving.” *–Dave Ramsey, financial counselor*

Digging In !

Read Leviticus 27:30

1. What is the difference in your mind between “giving” and “bringing back” a portion of your money?
2. Upon reading this verse, is there any part of it that stands out to you? Translate “harvest” into today’s terms.
3. According to the directive in Leviticus, is there any part of the harvest that is not to be counted in figuring the amount to be brought back? Why do you think that is?
4. For the people of Moses’ time to whom did their “harvest” belong? Why do we find it so hard to “bring back” a tenth?
5. Why would it be so important for the people God had set apart to learn to set themselves apart from their surroundings by their practices? In what way might it be important for us to do the same?

Read Matthew 23:23

We find in the New Testament that Jesus calls us into a way of living that comes from the heart. In Matthew 23:23, Jesus is face to face with the religious leaders of the day. Pharisees were notorious for attending to the smallest details, yet not realizing any growth in their hearts. Jesus sees through them every time and in this case he knows that although they are obedient in their actions, they are disobedient in their general behavior. Despite being meticulous in their bringing back one-tenth to God, the Pharisees could not see through to show any amount of mercy or grace toward others.

6. How is it possible to be obedient to the law but still be disobedient in matters of the heart?
7. After you read Matthew 23:23 how did you feel? Is God saying something to you that you needed to hear? What now?
8. Does giving back to God financially relieve you in any way from the responsibility of giving your heart? Where are you on the mercy meter? In your way of thinking, is justice available to all or only a select few?

⁶ Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop ⁷ You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.”^[a] ⁸ And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.—2 Corinthians 9:6-8

9. What does Jesus say awaits us if we continue with this double standard? What do you think you would receive from God if you were to make a change? How different would your life look if you lived your life with 90% of your harvest plus blessings rather than 100% without blessings?

Getting Real!

As we dive into the book of Leviticus, it may be difficult to see how an Old Testament book full of laws written somewhere between 1410-1450 B.C. has any relevance for us in today's high tech culture. If we dig in, though, we will find that indeed God has not changed, and his principles are for all time. "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*" Hebrews 13:8. Even as people and society change, we must seek to understand how to apply the principles of God's law to our present time.

Holy For something to be "holy" it means that it is "separated" or "devoted" to God and His purpose. Something "holy" is set apart from the rest.

10. The one-tenth that we set aside is to be counted as holy. What does that mean? Have you ever thought of it that way? How difficult would it be to change thought patterns and actions to reflect this?
11. When we bring back to God, it should be a sacrifice. What kind of picture comes to mind when you read that? What happens when we make this kind of sacrifice?
12. What does it mean to bring back to God? How do we do that?

Impact!

Let's go back to the Old Testament for a minute. Take a look at Malachi 3:10.

13. What is the storehouse? Why are we to bring back our tithes to the storehouse? Who will benefit from the food in the temple?
14. Specifically, how can bringing back to God through Tithes benefit others? What is the impact we could make for God's Kingdom?
15. What will happen when we bring back our tithes to God? Are you ready to be the recipient of this kind of blessing? Can you feel the excitement of anticipation? Can you imagine "a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in?" Are you ready to make a change? Then start now. Reflect now on your current "bringing back" and make a decision to bring your harvest to the storehouse. What do you have to lose?

What kind of IMPACT could you make?