

GOD IS NOT OUR "BUDDY" And He Doesn't Do "Leftovers"

THE PASSAGE

Exodus 13:1-16 Proverbs 9:10 Revelation 1:17-18
Numbers 3:5-51 Luke 2:22-24 & Leviticus 12:7-8

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO US TODAY?

Six Things We Don't Want To Forget

(1) We are no longer under the **OLD TESTAMENT LAWS**.

John 19:30 Matthew 27:51 Hebrews 10:1-18

(2) But the principle of honoring God for **WHO HE IS**
and **WHAT HE'S DONE** still applies.

1 Corinthians 6:20 1 Corinthians 10:31 Luke 18:18-23

(3) Every blessing I have is a **GIFT FROM GOD**.

Ephesians 2:8-10 James 1:16-17 Deuteronomy 8:17-18 1 Corinthians 4:7 Psalm 24:1

(4) We've been blessed to **BE A BLESSING**.

2 Corinthians 9:11 & Matthew 25:14-30 1 Timothy 6:17-19

(5) If I dishonor God with **LEFTOVERS**,
he'll make sure I have nothing **LEFT OVER**.

Proverbs 3:9-10 Exodus 13:2 Malachi 1:8
2 Corinthians 9:6-8 Haggai 1:3-11 Philippians 4:15-19

(6) If I don't start **NOW**, I won't start **TOMORROW**.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of February 14, 2016

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. Did you have an example of giving or any encouragement to be generous or a blessing to others while you were growing up? If so, explain.

2. It's natural to think that if we made more money (or won the lottery), we would be more generous. But studies show that a rise in income doesn't necessarily mean a rise in giving. Why do you think this is true for most people?

What's something you heard in the sermon that would help you reverse this trend and be more generous as your income increased?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Larry reminded us that we are managers, not owners of the blessings and gifts that God has given us. One of the biggest challenges in our role as managers is not falling into the mindset that financial success is more rewarding than the pursuit of God and serving him. In what ways could Psalm 112:1-9 be helpful in motivating a person to want to focus more on pursuing God and serving him instead of seeking to accumulate more material stuff?

Psalm 112:1-9 New International Version (NIV)

¹ Praise the LORD.

Blessed are those who fear the LORD,
who find great delight in his commands.

² Their children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

³ Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.

⁴ Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,
for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous.

⁵ Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely,
who conduct their affairs with justice.

⁶ Surely the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be remembered forever.

⁷ They will have no fear of bad news;
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the LORD.

⁸ Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.

⁹ They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor,
their righteousness endures forever;
their horn will be lifted high in honor.

Which of the blessings mentioned in this passage stood out to you the most?

2. Larry talked about how God has full claim to your life and everything you have because you've been bought with a price (Christ's death). In response, God wants us to honor him with our bodies and do all things for his glory. How do you see Romans 12:1-2 expanding on how he wants us to live in light of all he's done for us?

Romans 12:1-2 New International Version (NIV)

A Living Sacrifice

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

“Renewing our minds” can take on a variety of forms based on our personality and season of life. Can you think of anything specific you have done to “renew your mind” and grow your connection to God? If so, explain.

3. The “first-fruits principle” of giving that Larry introduced this weekend is both an act of thanking God for his current provision AND a way of trusting him for future provision. Yet many of God's people throughout history (both in the Old Testament and today) have given to God out of their leftovers. What surprises or challenges you about God's attitude toward this practice in Malachi 3:7-12?

Malachi 3:7-12 New International Version (NIV)

⁷ Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD Almighty.

“But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’

⁸ “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

“But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’

“In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. ¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. ¹¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the LORD Almighty. ¹² “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the LORD Almighty.

What are some of the biggest challenges people face when giving their first-fruits instead of giving out of their leftovers?

How could the following passages be of encouragement to you to become more of a generous, first-fruits giver?

Proverbs 11:24-28 New International Version (NIV)

- ²⁴ One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.
- ²⁵ A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.
- ²⁶ People curse the one who hoards grain, but they pray God's blessing on the one who is willing to sell.
- ²⁷ Whoever seeks good finds favor, but evil comes to one who searches for it.
- ²⁸ Those who trust in their riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.

Matthew 6:19-24 New International Version (NIV)

Treasures in Heaven

- ¹⁹ "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
- ²² "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!
- ²⁴ "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

TAKING IT HOME

Looking back on this week's teaching and homework, what's most important for you to remember?

Prayer Requests:

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