

THE FIRST-FRUIT PRINCIPLE

THE PASSAGE

Hebrews 7:1-10/ Genesis 14

THE FIRST-FRUIT PRINCIPLE

THE PRINCIPLE:

*The first & best **BELONGS TO GOD***

Genesis 14:8-20/ Exodus 13:1-13/ Joshua 6:18-19 & 7:1-12/ Numbers 18:26

THE REASON:

*God is the source of every **BLESSING IN MY LIFE***

James 1:16-17/ Matthew 5:45

WHO DOES THIS APPLY TO?

*Everyone who claims to **WORSHIP GOD***

Proverbs 3:9-10/ Philippians 4:15-19

TWO HARD QUESTIONS

1. Is God getting my **FIRSTFRUITS** or my **LEFTOVERS**?
2 Samuel 24:21-25/ Malachi 1:6-9
2. Who put the **HOLE IN MY POCKET**?
Haggai 1:2-11, 2:15-19 & Malachi 3:8-12

THREE IMPORTANT OBSERVATIONS

1. A tip is not a **TITHE**.
2. The tithe **BELONGS** to God - It's not **GIVEN** to God.
3. If I won't start **NOW** - I won't start when I **WIN THE LOTTERY**.
1 Corinthians 16:1-2

Growth Group Homework

For the week of March 11, 2018

This week is your last meeting of the Winter Quarter. We hope you've found your time over these past nine weeks to be spiritually and relationally encouraging. We'll take a two-week break, then the Spring Quarter begins the week of April 1 and runs through June 2. Please be sure to confirm your plans for the Spring Quarter with your group leader.

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. Let's say you won the lottery (\$20 million after taxes) and you were one of the rare people who decided to give away a large share of it (let's start with 25 percent) to non-profit organizations or missionaries. To whom would you give it?

2. Which of the following messages about money and financial security did you hear in your family growing up?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money can't buy you happiness | <input type="checkbox"/> The best part of having money is helping others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial security is the most important goal in life | <input type="checkbox"/> Debt is always bad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money is the root of all evil | <input type="checkbox"/> Debt is okay for things you really want |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wealth is a sign of God's favor and approval | <input type="checkbox"/> Never buy anything unless it's on sale |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Budgeting is a skill to master | <input type="checkbox"/> Saving for the future is very important |
| <input type="checkbox"/> We never talked about money | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

DIGGING DEEPER

1. The natural response to God being the source of every blessing in our lives is generosity. What insights about generosity, and what it looks like when we live it out, do the following passages give us?

Luke 21:1-4 *New International Version (NIV)*

The Widow's Offering

²¹ As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. ² He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ³ "Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. ⁴ All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

2 Corinthians 8:1-5 *New International Version (NIV)*

The Collection for the Lord's People

And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. ² In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³ For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. ⁵ And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 *New International Version (NIV)*

Generosity Encouraged

⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Leviticus 23:22 talks about how God wants the Israelites to build generosity into their daily lives. Since most of us aren't farmers, can you think of any simple and inexpensive ways to apply this principle?

Leviticus 23:22 *New International Version (NIV)*

²² "When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the Lord your God."

Understanding and being genuinely thankful for what Jesus has done for us is often a first step in developing a generous mindset. What has Jesus done for you that you're thankful for?

2. Ananias and Sapphira were two members of the first church in Jerusalem who met an untimely death. Their story is often used as an example of why we shouldn't lie, but it can also be viewed as a story about money and giving. In their story in Acts 4:32-5:11, what can we learn about God's view of money and how we handle it?

Acts 4:32-5:11 *New International Version (NIV)*

The Believers Share Their Possessions

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴ that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Ananias and Sapphira

Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property.² With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

³ Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴ Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God."

⁵ When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. ⁶ Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

⁷ About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?"

"Yes," she said, "that is the price."

⁹ Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."

¹⁰ At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

If you were to describe your attitude toward money in one word, what word would you choose?

3. Because of the recent fire in North County San Diego and the widespread evacuation notices that resulted from it, many of us were given the opportunity to re-evaluate our earthly possessions and the role they play in our lives. Too often we fall into the trap of thinking life is all about what we have. How could the following passages help us keep our earthly possessions in proper perspective?

1 Timothy 6:6-10 *New International Version (NIV)*

But godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. ⁸ But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. ⁹ Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 *New International Version (NIV)*

¹⁷ Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸ Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹ In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

What is most challenging for you about balancing the storing up of treasures in heaven with the pursuit and enjoyment of material possessions?

TAKING IT HOME

1. Larry talked about the steps to financial obedience being from nothing to something, from something to systematic, from systematic to tithing, from tithing to sacrifice. Looking at these steps, are there any changes you would like to make in your financial obedience?

2. Looking back on this week's sermon and study, what's most important for you to remember?

Praise/Prayer Requests:

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RESOURCES TO HELP YOU FOLLOW THE FIRST-FRUIT PRINCIPLE:

- **GIVING OFF THE TOP - Ways to Give at North Coast Church**
 - ✓ **Online & Automatic Withdrawal**
Go to northcoastchurch.com/give. No registration or account needed. One-time or repeat giving.
 - ✓ **Mobile App**
Download the North Coast Church App - [iphone](#) / [Android](#)
- **FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY**
Need resources to better manage your money? Watch for classes coming this summer and fall. This 9-week DVD-series will be facilitated by financial coaches as you learn techniques for squashing debt and living within your budget.
- **OTHER ONLINE FINANCIAL RESOURCES**
Dave Ramsey – daveramsey.com/category/tools/