**MINISTRY**

***Giving financially to support Christ’s mission***

**Chief Bible passages:**

**Purpose and priority of giving**

* Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the **first fruits** of all your crops. Proverbs 3:9
* We also assume responsibility **for bringing to the house of the Lord** each year the first fruits of our crops and of every fruit tree. We will not neglect the house of our God. Nehemiah 10:35, 39
* Now about the **collection for the Lord’s people**: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2On the **first day of every week,** each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

**Attitudes of giving (cheerfully, with faith, contentment)**

* Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a **cheerful giver.** 2 Corinthians 9:7
* And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.
* 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. Malachi 3:10
* Keep your lives free from the **love of money and be content** with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” Hebrews 13:5

 Philippians 4:19

**Principles of giving**

* Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also **reap sparingly**, and he who sows bountifully will also **reap bountifully**. 2 Corinthians 9:6
* In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is **more blessed to give than to receive**.’ Acts 20:35
* **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. Matthew 6:24
* Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. **But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19-21
* Dishonest money dwindles away, but whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow. Proverbs 13:11

**Central teachings:**

* God should feel worshipped by our giving, communicating He is first in our lives.
* God is the owner of all we possess. We are His stewards and should be consulting Him on all giving decisions.
* Giving to the local church should be a top priority in our giving decisions.
* Giving should be in proportion to your income. One tenth (Hebrew word for tithe) is the floor not the ceiling. They gave much more than a tenth under the Old Covenant and Jesus always supercharged the laws.
* Being enslaved by debt can cripple our capacity to give and invest in eternity.
* Giving cheerfully pleases God.
* Financial giving is a journey of faith, trusting God will meet our needs and cultivate contentment in our lives.
* Generous people are the happiest people on earth! Choosing to be content frees us to be generous people.
* The Treasure Principle Keys (explained further in the book):
* You can’t take it with you, but you can send it on ahead
* My heart always goes where I put God’s money
* Heaven, not earth, is my home.
* I should not live for the dot but for the line
* Giving is the only antidote to materialism
* God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but to raise my standard of giving
* Whatever treasures we store up on earth will be left behind when we leave. Whatever treasures we store up in heaven will be waiting for us when we arrive.
* The money God entrusts to us here on earth is eternal investment capital. Every day is an opportunity to buy up more shares in His kingdom.

**Doer of the Word**

 **Note to leaders. Please share your journey of financial giving.**

* Does your financial giving send a strong message that God is first in your life?
* Do you pray, asking God to direct your spending, realizing that God is the owner and you are the steward of His riches?
* Is giving to the local church a priority? Are you giving as much as you should give?
* Would you describe your attitude of giving as generous and joyful? Is a lack of contentment affecting your giving? Expound.
* If married, are you and your spouse in agreement with spending decisions?
* Are struggling to give by faith trusting God will provided your needs?
* Has debt been a stranglehold of generosity? Do you have a family budget and are living by it?
* What are your thoughts and feelings about the priority of investing in eternity? Are you grieved over the amount of income invested in things and efforts that possess not eternal value?
* With the end in mind, have you considered simplifying your life so your capacity to give grows over the decades to come?

**Note to leaders** - please encourage members to consider taking the Financial Peace course by Dave Ramsely. Also, make yourself available to meet with them outside of group time.

**Resources best explaining truths and practices**

* The Treasure Principle: Unlocking The Secret of Joyful Giving, by Randy Alcorn. (Six chapters focused upon the joy of giving)
* Video – Interview of Randy Alcorn at Watermark Church in Dallas (9 min) – Outline of the 6 Treasure Principles https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J7gxx\_mu72w
* Audio Sermon by Dr. John McArthur (56 min) – Living For The Joy Of Giving
	+ https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/42-208/living-for-the-joy-of-giving
* Audio Sermon by Dr. John Piper (36 min) - He Who Sows Bountifully Will Reap Bountifully
	+ https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/he-who-sows-bountifully-will-reap-bountifully
* Fields of Gold, by Andy Stanley. (Seven chapters focused upon the joy of giving)

**Recommended Pace**: Complete in 3 sessions