**The Foundations**

**LESSON 1 THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF A BELIEVER**

**LESSON 2 SPIRITUAL WARFARE AND**

**THE BELEIVER’S AUTHORITY**

**LESSON 3 PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER**

**LESSON 4 THE STEWARDSHIP OF GIVING**

**Lesson 1: The Spiritual Growth of a Believer**

When we became born-again Christians, our spirit is rejuvenated by the Holy Spirit.

We move from a condition of being spiritually dead to a condition of

being spiritually alive. This new spiritual life is like a seed that

must be fed and nurtured in order to produce fruit.

1. As a Born-Again Believer You Must Grow Spiritually
2. The following statements refer to the growth and development of your born-again Spirit:
3. Until we all come in the unity of the faith and knowledge of Christ.

**Ephesians 4:13-15 -** ***13****till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ;****14****that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting,****15****but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.*

1. That we may grow up into Him in all things
2. As newborn babies, our spirit has a desire for the Word of God

**1 Peter 2:2** - *As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.*

1. We must now grow in grace and increase in the Knowledge of our

 Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The key to spiritual growth is that we advance into the depth of the Christ Life. Before someone is born spiritually, they are soul dominated and driven by their emotional makeup.
2. The Key to Spiritual Growth
3. Spiritual Growth is the process of being baptized into the Person and

 Character of Christ.

**Romans 6:3-4** - ***3****Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?****4****Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.*

1. This baptism referred to is not just the act of water baptism; it is a picture of being identified with Jesus Christ.
2. Water Baptism is the symbol of the spiritual union of Christ and the believer.
3. To grow in the Christ Life is to have your new nature become dominant in your lifestyle in order to reflect Jesus Christ.

**Philippians 3:10 (AMP)** - *And this, so that I may know Him [experientially, becoming more thoroughly acquainted with Him, understanding the remarkable wonders of His Person more completely] and [in that same way experience] the power of His resurrection [which overflows and is active in believers], and [that I may share] the fellowship of His sufferings, by being continually conformed [inwardly into His likeness even] to His death [dying as He did].*

1. Jesus gives us the invitation to learn of Him and to take His yoke.

**Matthew 11:28** - *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

1. How Do We Grow Spiritually?
2. In order to grow in Spirit, we must have spiritual food.
3. Just as bread nourishes the body, the Word of God nourishes the Spirit.

**Matthew 4:4** - *But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’”*

**John 6:63** - *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*

1. Spiritual growth will occur when you read and meditate on God’s Word.

**Joshua 1:8** - *This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.*

**Psalm 1:1-3** -*1Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful;* ***2****but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.* ***3****He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.*

Meditate – to muse over or to ponder

1. To grow spiritually, we must learn to apply the Word of God in our daily living.

**James 1:22-25** - ***22****But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.****23****For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;****24****for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.****25****But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

1. How much we grow and how fast we grow is determined by what we invest.

**2 Corinthians 9:6** - *But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.*

**Lesson 2: Spiritual Warfare and the Believer’s Authority**

1. Understanding Authority

The Christian, the disciple of Christ, has been given authority in this world. However, many believers either do not realize that they have this authority or they simply do not operate in it.

1. What is authority?

1. In Webster’s Ninth Collegiate Dictionary, the word “authority” is defined as the power to influence or command thought, opinion or behavior; persons in command.
2. Within the Greek language, the word “authority” means the right to exercise power.
3. Authority is the right to command or exercise power.
4. What is power?

Within the same dictionary, the word “power” is defined as the ability to act or produce an effect; physical might (strength).

1. So you see that authority is the right to exercise power, the right to exercise strength, and the right to use the ability to produce an effect.
2. Without authority, you have no right to exercise power.
3. Without power, authority has no ability or strength with which to produce something.
4. Believers have authority. Where did they get this authority?
5. The Believer’s Authority and Power are Found in the Name of Jesus
6. In Matthew 28:18, Jesus stated, “All power is given unto me in heaven in earth.”
7. The Greek word translated as “power” in this verse is the word for “authority.”
8. The New American Standard Bible reads, “…all authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” - Matthew 28:18
9. That authority to exercise power, given to Jesus, covers Heaven and earth and under the earth!
10. At the name of Jesus, every knee must bow and every tongue must confess that Jesus Christ is Lord! – Philippians 2:9-11

**Philippians 2:9-11**- *9Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10tThat at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

1. Your Position in Christ Jesus
2. The Father has delivered you from the power of darkness. – Colossians 1:12-13
3. Jesus Christ defeated Satan and his evil spirits. – Colossians 2:15

Because you are in Christ, you participate in His victory. As you live in Christ and use the power of His name, the enemy cannot defeat you.

1. Jesus gave you His authority – Luke 10:19
2. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. – Luke 10:19 (NASB)
3. You have the authority now! You have the same authority, ability, responsibility, and position that the church had immediately after the mighty work of Christ, was completed and He ascended on high!
4. Jesus expects you to use the power of His name in doing His work here on earth – Mark 16:17-18; 2 Corinthians 5:20
5. There is great power in His name! (Philippians 2:9-11)
6. You, as a believer, have the authority (the right) to exercise the power that is in the name of Jesus.
7. In John 14:12-14, the original Greek word translated as “ask” means to ask for; demand.
8. This definition fits with John 14:12, where Jesus told you to do His work.
9. He commissioned you – verse 12
10. He gave you the right to use His name – verses 13-14.
11. As you use Jesus’ name to do His work, the enemy must flee and the work will be accomplished. (Also see James 4:7.)
12. The principle of demanding in John 14:12-14 is not referring to prayer; it is referring to doing the works of Jesus.
13. In Acts 3:6, Peter, at the Gate Beautiful, did not pray for the lame man; he commanded the man to rise and be healed in Jesus’ name. In doing so, Peter was demanding that the enemy’s sickness leave.
14. You are not demanding of God; you are demanding that the enemy leave.
15. Remember, the power is in the name of Jesus. You have the right or authority to use that Name and the power that is in it.
16. Understanding Your Adversary
17. Have you seen sickness, destruction, famine, or death? That is the work of the thief, Satan. – John 10:10

Satan is evil, but intelligent. His plans are subtle and right out of hell.

1. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood…” – Ephesians 6:12
2. You cannot use your authority against people. That does not work.
3. You deal with the evil spiritual forces of Satan.
4. Your adversary, the devil, walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. – 1 Peter 5:8-9

He cannot devour the Christian who uses the power of the name of Jesus to resist him. – James 4:7

1. Exercising Authority for Others
2. You can exercise authority on the behalf of your family.
3. You have the responsibility for your family.
4. You can break Satan’s power over those in your family.
5. If there is a problem or difficult situation in your family, ask the Lord to show you the problem from His viewpoint and how you should deal with it.

1. You have authority over your own life and within your own family, but you cannot cast the devil out of everyone you meet on the street. They have authority over their own lives.
2. You have authority over demonic forces but not over human wills. If someone has an evil spirit and they do not want to be free from it, you cannot cast it out.
3. If people want to be free, they can be free. If people truly do not want to be free, neither Jesus nor anyone else can set them free.
4. You can allow God to show you how to take authority and how to pray in a situation where a person says they do not want to be free.
5. Even though someone says he does not want to be free, through your prayers and authority, God may be able to make a way where the person is free from Satan’s influence to the point where he can make a decision for freedom.
6. Fast and pray to get the mind of God on what to do.
7. There is no distance in the spirit-world. Even if you use your authority over a situation that is taking place in another country, you are effective!
8. You can use the principle of binding and loosing – Matthew 16:19
9. Jesus declared that believers have been given the keys to the Kingdom.
10. When believers live in the Lordship of Christ, they have His authority to execute the Will of God on the earth.
11. The principle of binding and loosing is based upon praying the Word of God over every circumstance and situation in life.

**Notes:**

**Lesson 3: Principles of Prayer**

1. Why Should You Pray?
2. You need to communicate with God. Prayer is talking to God and also giving Him the opportunity to talk to you. Through prayer, you will come to know the mind of God.
3. You have fellowship and communication with God through prayer. God created you to fellowship with Him.
4. God has commanded you to pray –

**1 Thessalonians 5:17** - *Pray without ceasing*.

**Ephesians 6:18** - …*praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.*

**1 Peter 4:7** *- But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.*

1. Pray so that God can meet your needs and the needs of others.
2. Through prayer, God can work on the earth.
3. Prayer should be the foundation of everything you do for God.
4. There are Different Kinds of Prayer and Rules for Prayer
5. **Ephesians 6:18 (AMP)** - *With all prayer and petition pray [with specific requests] at all times [on every occasion and in every season] in the Spirit, and with this in view, stay alert with all perseverance and petition [interceding in prayer] for all God’s people.*
6. Different kinds of prayer:
7. The Prayer of Faith for yourself
8. The Prayer of Consecration and Dedication
9. The Prayer of Agreement
10. Spirit-led Prayer
11. Intercession
12. There are different rules which govern each type of prayer. If you interchange these rules, many times your prayer will be ineffective.
13. The Prayer of Faith for Yourself
14. This is the prayer which you pray concerning your own needs and desires.

**Mark 11:24** - *Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.*

1. Decide what you want from God.
2. “What things soever ye desire…(KJV)”

 What exactly do you desire from God?

1. Be specific in your request. Do not waver when deciding the desired result of your prayer.

**James 1:5-8** *-* ***5****If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.****6****But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.****7****For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;****8****he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

1. Search the Word for scriptures that definitely promise you things.
2. You cannot receive anything from God until you have knowledge

 of God’s Will.

**2 Peter 1:2-4** - ***2****Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,****3****as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,****4****by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

**1 John 5:14-15** - ***14****Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.****15****And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*

1. The key to receiving you request is to ask in faith.
2. You must “believe that ye receive them…” (Mark 11:24).

 “But let him ask in faith…” (James 1:6)

1. The way you gain and grow in faith is by hearing God’s Word.

**Romans 10:17** - *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

1. If you do not know what God’s Word says about your request, you cannot believe in faith.
2. Ask the Father in the Name of Jesus

**John 16:23-24** - ***23****And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.****24****Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*

1. Jesus said in John 16:23, “…in that day you will ask me nothing.” When praying to receive something from God, you are not to pray to Jesus.
2. Now, under the New Covenant, you are to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus.
3. Jesus said, “Ask and you will receive…” in verse 24. Jesus invites you to use His name in asking anything of the Father. Jesus promises that the Father will give you your request.

1. Believe that you will receive the answer to your prayer.
2. Believe that you receive the answer at the moment you pray. First, believe that you receive and then you will have it.
3. Everything that you need has been provided for you in the spiritual world, in heavenly places in Christ.

**Ephesians 1:3** - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*

1. That which you need becomes reality to you in the natural world through your faith.
2. Begin to thank and praise God for the answer.

**Philippians 4:6** - *Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*

The person who prays the prayer of faith believes that he receives. Instead of asking God over and over again for the same request, praise and thank Him that you have the answer to your prayer.

1. Refuse all doubt that comes to your mind. If doubt persists, tell it to leave in the name of Jesus.

**Philippians 4:6-8** - ***6****Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;****7****and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* ***8****Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.*

1. The Prayer of Consecration and Dedication
2. Consecration is setting yourself apart to do the will of God, whatever it may be.
3. Dedication is total willingness to do whatever God wants.

**Isaiah 1:19** - *If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land.*

1. The basic principles of this prayer:

**Luke 22:39-42** - ***39****Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him.****40****When He came to the place, He said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.”* ***41****And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed,****42****saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.”*

1. Some people have thought that because Jesus prayed, “Father, if it is Your will,” they should pray, “if it is Your will,” in every prayer.
2. Jesus was NOT praying to receive something from God. Jesus was consecrating and dedicating Himself to do exactly as the Father desired.
3. When you set your life apart for God to use, to go anywhere and do anything He wants, then this is how you should pray.
4. When we pray in the Holy Spirit, we have the assurance that we are praying the will of God.

**Romans 8:27** - *Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

1. The Prayer of Agreement

**Matthew 18:19-20** - ***19****“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.****20****For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”*

1. The Prayer of Agreement is operative when two or more people are in agreement on one prayer request, and together believe for the same outcome. This outcome is established by what they claimed with their mouths and believed in their hearts.
2. You must be in agreement.
3. You must agree with God, His Word. God’s Word is truth.

**John 17:17** - *Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*

1. You must join your faith with another believer in a spirit of unity for a specific prayer request.
2. The prayer of agreement is powerful because unity brings forth a commanded blessing.

**Psalms 133:1-3** -*1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!* ***2****It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments.* ***3****It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing— life forevermore.*

1. Spirit-led Prayer
2. Praying in other tongues

**1 Corinthians 14:2** - *For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.*

1. You are speaking to God “in the Spirit.” This is your spirit speaking the words of the Holy Spirit to the Father.
2. The Holy Spirit gives you the words to say.

**Acts 2:4** - *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

* 1. Every Christian who has been filled with the Holy Spirit can expect Him to help them in prayer.
	2. You and the Holy Spirit work together.
	3. At times, you may not understand how to pray or what to pray, especially when praying for others. The Holy Spirit has knowledge of people and their situations, and He can help you to pray effectively in these cases as you pray in other tongues.
1. You are speaking mysteries as seen in 1 Corinthians 14:2
2. It is a mystery to the devil.
	* + 1. Although Satan understands languages, he does not understand spiritual truths or he would not have crucified Jesus.

**1 Corinthians 2:7-8** - ***7****But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,****8****which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

* + - 1. He did not even understand the prophets when they spoke of the coming of Jesus, the Savior.
1. Praying in tongues does not need to be a mystery to you. You can pray that you may interpret it.

**1 Corinthians 14:13-15** - ***13****Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.****14****For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.****15****What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.*

1. The interpretation does not come out of your mind, but out of your spirit, and is given to you by the Holy Spirit. This is not something that you have already thought about; it is given by the Holy Spirit at that moment.
2. You speak out the interpretation from you spirit in the same manner that you speak with tongues.
3. It is not always necessary to interpret the tongues.
4. The Holy Spirit helps you to pray.

**1 Corinthians 14:2** - *For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.*

**Acts 2:4** - *And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

**Romans 8:26-27** - ***26****Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.****27****Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

1. We do not understand the deep things of the Spirit of God, so we must have help to pray out these mysteries or groanings.

**Romans 8:26 AMP** - *In the same way the Spirit [comes to us and] helps us in our weakness. We do not know what prayer to offer or how to offer it as we should, but the Spirit Himself [knows our need and at the right time] intercedes on our behalf with sighs and groanings too deep for words.*

1. The Holy Spirit desires to help you pray effectively.
2. The Holy Spirit makes intercession on your behalf within your spirit. Romans 8:26 calls this “groanings which cannot be uttered,” “inexpressible yearnings,” or “sighs too deep for words.”
3. The Holy Spirit is your helper. He wants to help you pray what needs to be prayed.
4. God searches the hearts of the saints. He knows what is needed. The believer needs a way to pray according to the will of God. The Holy Spirit provides that perfect prayer.
5. Travail is part of Spirit-led prayer. Spiritual travail is not something that you bring upon yourself; it is given by the Spirit of God, as He wills.
	* + - 1. It may or may not come as you dedicate yourself to pray for others.
				2. At times, you may have an urge to begin to cry or groan. This is travail. It is a form of intercession. This is the Holy Spirit helping you to intercede for others (Romans 8:26-27).

Note: Sometimes the travail may become so deep that it is impossible to make any sounds at all.

* + - * 1. It is best to withdraw from others when you pray in this way. Others present may not understand, or it may be distracting to them.
				2. Persist in prayer in this manner until you begin to praise and joy comes.
				3. The Holy Spirit will never force you to travail. For you to operate in travail, you must yield to His leading.
1. Intercession

**1Timothy 2:1-2** - *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,****2****for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.*

1. Intercession is praying for others and pulling down the strongholds of Satan on the behalf of others.
2. Intercession includes both prayer and spiritual warfare.
3. You are standing on behalf of the other person between God and the devil.
4. You bind the devil away from the person.
5. You bring the person to God in prayer.
6. You are taking the place of another in prayer and warfare.
7. Continue in prayer and warfare until the victory is won.
8. Every believer can intercede. (1 Timothy 2:1)

**Notes:**

**Lesson 4: The Stewardship of Giving**

1. The Concept of Stewardship

The Gospel teaches us the concept of faithfulness and wisdom. A faithful and wise steward is someone who manages well the things that have been entrusted to him. One of the greatest tests of our faith is how we manage resources. The level of our giving reveals the level of our spirituality. Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

1. The word “steward” means manager, overseer, or treasurer. A steward is not an owner; he is a manager for the owner.

**Luke 12:42** - *And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?”*

1. God is the owner of the earth and everything in it. The reality is that God owns everything and we own nothing. We are allowed to enjoy the blessings of God on this earth, but ultimately, we die and nothing goes with us.

**Psalm 24:1** - *The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.*

**Psalm 10:10** - *So he crouches, he lies low, that the helpless may fall by his strength.*

**Haggai 2:8** - *‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts.*

**Job 1:21** - *And he said: “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord.”*

1. Believers are considered stewards who must demonstrate faithfulness. A faithful steward is someone who is concerned about pleasing the One who has entrusted him with the responsibility of management.

**1 Corinthians 4:1-2** - *1Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.****2****Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.*

1. Christ has given us a great trust of time, gifts, talents, and monetary resources. We must demonstrate our faith and commitment if we want to advance to a greater level of anointing and resources.

**Matthew 25:21 -** *His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’*

**Luke 16:10** - *He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.*

1. The concept of stewardship is that we no longer belong to ourselves, so we no longer live for ourselves. We have been purchased by the blood of Christ and we now live to bring glory to God.

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** - ***19****Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?****20****For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.*

1. The Stewardship of Giving

The Scripture teaches us the principle of the tithe. The word “tithe” speaks of the first-fruits, or in the Old Testament, it was the first crops harvested that were put into a storehouse. The best crop went into the storehouse.

**Malachi 3:10** - *Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.*

1. The tithe, which means tenth, was acknowledgement of God’s ownership as well as His blessing and favor

**Proverbs 3:9-10** - ***9****Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase;* ***10****so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.*

1. Tithing did not begin with Old Testament law. It began with Abraham. Abraham thanked God for victory in battle and he presented a tithe of all the spoils.

**Genesis 14:17-20 (NIV)** - ***17****After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King’s Valley).* ***18****Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High,****19****and he blessed Abram, saying, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.* ***20****And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand.” Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.*

1. So tithing began with Abraham, but it was affirmed by the Law of Moses. In the Old Testament Law, the tithe was presented in different forms as grain offerings, sheep and livestock offerings. It was always to acknowledge God and His blessings.

**Leviticus 27:30-32** *-* ***30****And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s. It is holy to the Lord.****31****If a man wants at all to redeem any of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it.****32****And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord.*

1. It’s interesting to note that when the people were living in right relationship with God, they presented the tithe joyfully and faithfully. When they would back-slide, they stopped giving their best. The crops were not the cream of the crop, the animals they were giving were flawed and imperfect. Notice what David said in reference to giving!
2. **2 Samuel 24:24 (AMP)** - *But the king said to Araunah, “No, but I will certainly buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing.” So David purchased the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.*
3. The tithe is an opportunity to sow financial seed into the Work of God. To tithe is to honor God and to acknowledge His ownership and favor.

**Matthew 22:37-38** - ***37****Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’****38****This is the first and great commandment.*

**1 Samuel 2:30** - *Therefore the Lord God of Israel says: ‘I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.’ But now the Lord says: ‘Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.*

1. How to Put God First
2. When we give God our money, we are worshipping Him through our giving. Giving is motivated through our heart because money represents a part of our heart.

**2 Corinthians 9:7** - *So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.*

1. When we put God’s Kingdom first in our lives, then our finances follow the principle of first fruits. We cannot put money ahead of God for then it would be our master.

**Luke 16:13 (AMP)** - *No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stand devotedly by the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and mammon [that is, your earthly possessions or anything else you trust in and rely on instead of God].”*

1. A simple way to honor God and to put Him first is to consistently set apart the first tenth of you income for God.

**Genesis 28:20-22** - ***20****Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on,****21****so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God.****22****And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”*

1. When we consistently honor God with our money, we have a promise that He takes notice and that He blesses us with increase…the blessing of a faithful steward!

**Luke 6:38** - *Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.*

**2 Corinthians 9:6** - *But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.*

1. We are instructed to bring our finances into the local church on Sunday, the first day of the week. We find the storehouse principle in the New Testament that was given to us in the Old Testament.

**Malachi 3:10** – *“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it.*

**1 Corinthians 16:2** - *On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.*

**Notes:**