



## DISCOVERING THE BLESSINGS AND FAVOR OF GOD – Pastor Alton Trimble Sunday, December 4, 2016

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### II Corinthians 8:7 (NLT)

*Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving.*

### **I. God must be first**

#### Matthew 6:31-33 (NKJV)

*“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’<sup>32</sup> For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.<sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

#### **A. God sets an important precedence with regards to first things in Exodus 13:2**

##### Exodus 13:2 (NKJV)

*“Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine.”*

##### Exodus 13:12-13 (NKJV)

*...that you shall set apart to the LORD all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males shall be the LORD’s.<sup>13</sup> But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.*

#### **1. Sacrificed or redeemed.**

- a. Remember what John the Baptist said when he saw Jesus as he baptized folks on the banks of the Jordan River.

##### John 1:29 (NKJV)

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”*

- b. John defined the role Jesus came to fulfill.

##### Exodus 13:12-13 (NKJV)

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*you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.*

Romans 5:8 (NKJV)

*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

- c. We give the same way God gave

Romans 8:29 (NLT)

*For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.*

- d. Holding versus losing

Exodus 12:3-7 (NKJV)

Matthew 16:25 (NKJV)

*For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.*

## **2. Understanding the Principle of First**

- a. The first belongs to God
- b. It always requires faith to give the first.
- c. Tithing is our primary way of acknowledging God as first in our lives.

Romans 11:16 (NKJV)

*For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches.*

## **B. The First of the First**

### **1. The first fruit, like the firstborn, belongs to God.**

Exodus 23:19 (NKJV)

*The first of the first fruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God.*

- a. Last of your first fruit is not acceptable

Exodus 23:19 (NKJV)

*The first of the first fruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God.*

- b. Note that the scripture designates the house of the Lord as the proper place to give your first fruits.
- c. There is a connection to first of fruits and you ‘Discovering God’s Blessings and Favor.’

Proverbs 3:9-10 (NKJV)

*Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase;  
<sup>10</sup> So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.*

**2. Jericho a first fruit reality**

- a. You got much to conquer but God must be first.

Joshua 6:18-19 (NKJV)

*<sup>18</sup> And you, by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it. <sup>19</sup> But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are consecrated to the LORD; they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.”*

- b. It takes faith to do what He asked them
- c. Israel’s failure to honor God’s principle of first.

Joshua 6:20-21 (NKJV)

*So the people shouted when the priests blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. <sup>21</sup> And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.*

- d. Serving God pays huge dividends

Joshua 6:22-25 (NKJV)

- e. Need and greed will destroy your seed.

Joshua 7:1 (NKJV)

*But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel.*

Joshua 7:2-5 (NKJV)

Joshua 7:6-9 (NKJV)

Joshua 7:10-11 (NKJV)

Joshua 7:12 (NKJV)

Joshua 7:20-21 (NKJV)

Joshua 8:1-2 (NKJV)

### 3. Consecrated or Cursed

- a. Your tithe is one or the other
- b. Malachi 3 is clear

Malachi 3:8-9 (NKJV)

*“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup> You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation.*

- c. So God has shown us that:

Exodus 13:2 (NKJV)

*“Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine.”*

Exodus 23:19 (NKJV)

*The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God.*

Malachi 3:8-9 (NKJV)

*“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup> You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation.*

### C. God clearly respects or rejects

- 1. Lining up with God’s principles brings His favor in our lives.

Genesis 4:1-5 (NKJV)

- a. “In the process of time it came to pass”

- b. God looks at our hearts

Leviticus 27:30 (NKJV)

- c. 10% does not necessarily mean tithe

- d. It's a matter of priority and our hearts to God if we pay everything else and then tithe if there's anything left.

Romans 11:16 (NKJV)

- e. Legacy related to tithe

Exodus 13:12-15 (NKJV)

#### **D. Tithing is a principle we live not a law we keep**

##### **1. What would you pay to have the confidence that God's got you?**

- a. It's a principle found throughout the word of God

Genesis 14:18-20 (NKJV)     Hebrews 5:5-7 (NKJV)

- b. The tithe principle can be seen in the principle of stewardship vs. ownership

Genesis 2:15-17 (NKJV)

- c. The tithe principle is the same

Romans 14:7-9 (NKJV)     1 Corinthians 6:19 (NKJV)     1 Timothy 6:17 (NKJV)

- d. So the tithe goes beyond the Old Testament like many other biblical principles

##### **2. Tithing is a test we all must pass**

Matthew 6:21 (NKJV)

- a. Tithing literally means a tenth or tenth part.

- b. The Tithe represents the ultimate heart test.

Malachi 3:10 (NIV)