

#7: Miracle Grow: Giving Your Life Away

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed planted in a field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants; it grows into a tree, and birds come and make nests in its branches." Matthew 13:31-32 NLT

Jesus replied, "Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. Anyone who wants to be my disciple must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me. John 12:23–26, NLT

Give Your Time Away

Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom. Psalm 90:12, NLT

So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Ephesians 5:15–17, NLT

Give Your Money Away

Jesus told this story to his disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a manager handling his affairs. One day a report came that the manager was wasting his employer's money. So the employer called him in and said, 'What's this I hear about you? Get your report in order, because you are going to be fired.' "The manager thought to himself, 'Now what? My boss has fired me. I don't have the strength to dig ditches, and I'm too proud to beg. Ah, I know how to ensure that I'll have plenty of friends who will give me a home when I am fired.' So he invited each person who owed money to his employer to come and discuss the situation. He asked the first one, 'How much do you owe him?' The man replied, 'I owe him 800 gallons of olive oil.' So

the manager told him, 'Take the bill and quickly change it to 400 gallons.' 'And how much do you owe my employer?' he asked the next man. 'I owe him 1,000 bushels of wheat,' was the reply. 'Here,' the manager said, 'take the bill and change it to 800 bushels.' The rich man had to admire the dishonest rascal for being so shrewd. And it is true that the children of this world are more shrewd in dealing with the world around them than are the children of the light."
"Here's the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your earthly possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home. If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities. And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven? And if you are not faithful with other people's things, why should you be trusted with things of your own?" Luke 16:1–12, NLT

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR GIVING MONEY

1. God is honored when we give to Him first.

Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. Proverbs 3:9–10, NIV

2. Giving to God is to be proportionate giving.

On the first day of each week, you should each put aside a portion of the money you have earned. Don't wait until I get there and then try to collect it all at once. 1 Corinthians 16:2, NLT

3. The tithe is the only revealed proportion in the Bible.

One tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain from the fields or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD and must be set apart to him as holy. Leviticus 27:30

"Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?' 'You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me." Malachi 3:8, NLT

- "Tithe" literally means "tenth" or "10%"

4. The purpose of the tithe is to support the local church.

The tithe in the Old Testament supported the priests to work at the temple. See Numbers 18:24–26. Paul makes that connection to the workers of the gospel in the church in 1 Corinthians 9:8–13.

Those who are taught the word of God should provide for their teachers, sharing all good things with them. Galatians 6:6, NLT

5. Freewill offerings are offerings beyond the tithe. Lev. 22:17-22.

- People in need. Duet. 14:28-29; 2 Cor. 8-9 or,
- Special projects. 1 Chron. 29 (for example, building fund, missions, other ministries)

Give Your Spiritual Gifts and Talents Away

Now there are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but it is the same Holy Spirit who is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service in the church, but it is the same Lord we are serving. There are different ways God works in our lives, but it is the same God who does the work through all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us as a means of helping the entire church. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 NLT

- **You are completely unique.**
- **You are great at something.**

Your response this week:

"Don't tell me where your priorities are. Show me where you spend your money and I'll tell you what they are." – James W. Frick

1. Where can you give your time?
2. How much money should you give?
3. How can you serve according to your gift?
4. Is there anyone you know who needs to hear this lesson?