

**SO WHO
WILL PAY
FOR THIS?**

*Effective sowing and preserving the fruits
of your financial seeds*

PASTOR BANKIE

SO, WHO WILL PAY FOR THIS?

Effective sowing and preserving the fruit of your financial seeds

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About the Book

Why do you do what you do? You may be a great giver, but are you aware that the Lord does not reward the volume of your seed but rather the quality of the heart sowing the seed? Many people are throwing away their seeds but are expecting a harvest. It is time to learn the truth!

In this book Pastor Bankie shows from the Bible how to give so as not to waste your time and your money. Greedy giving is not rewarded by the Lord and we must be careful that we don't try to turn God into a slot machine. In reading this book you will learn how to work with God while walking with Him, and you will get answers to the following questions, among others:

- ***Must I give money to get money?***
- ***How true is it that nothing leaves God's hands until something leaves mine?***
- ***What do my Pastor and other ministers of the gospel deserve?***
- ***As a preacher, how do I and my ministry get money?***
- ***Does the gospel really require money to spread?***
- ***How does the preaching of the word of God move forward?***
- ***Am I called by God to sponsor the gospel?***
- ***What are the true seeds that bring forth a financial harvest?***

This book is about responsibility. It is about faithfulness. It is about preparing to hear on the last day, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

CONTENTS

i. Dedication

ii. Introduction

1. Have A Right Motive

2. How To Receive From God

3. The Spiritual Seed

4. Walking in the Light

5. We Have A Duty to Perform

6. Division of Labour

7. Your Righteousness Endures
Forever

8. The Prophet's Reward

9. The Wages of the Preacher 10.
Paying Your Preacher

11. Pride, Humility and Responsibility

12. The Work of Ministry

13. Shine Your Eyes

14. Basic Giving Principles

15. The Ministry of Giving

16. There is A Reward

DEDICATION

*This book is dedicated to all you who give to the cause of the
gospel of Jesus and do not tie strings to your offerings.
May God raise you high and secure you there.
May good never depart from your homes.*

INTRODUCTION

The word of God is sweet.

The word of God brings life. It is life itself.

In its pure form, the word of God is liberating. It loosens the bonds of the bound, frees the captives, heals the sick and gives hope to the hopeless.

The word of God should be preserved pure by everyone who handles it. Because of my profession as a doctor, I am acquainted with how surgeons and nurses keep their equipments clean and pure; I know how much trouble pharmacists go through to ensure that the medicines they deliver are impeccably pure. They know these things are meant to cure people, so they try to deliver them in the purest forms. How much more seriously should those who handle the word of God take care to ensure it is delivered in its pure form.

Many who listen to the word of God and who are sensitive are often alarmed when they see pollution of the word of God – and so should it be. It is upsetting when the word is used to manipulate people, especially when the preacher wants their money. Money-raising through pollution of the word is a sub-specialty now in many parts of the church, and this should not be.

Why is the word sometimes thus polluted?

We will see some of the reasons in this book. The truth is that sometimes we all unknowingly contribute to the temptations to pollute through our negligence. When we do not do our duties, we are culpable without knowing, even though we often sit down and judge. The love of money is a great motivator for pollution, but the lack of money follows somewhere behind. I do not address the matter of the love of money in this book, I seek only to tackle our duties in ensuring that the lack of it is not the reason why the word is polluted.

Also I want to help believers to the end that their labour is not in vain. Many people are great givers to their church and the work of the gospel, but they have received nothing from God for it and may get nothing eternally. There is a reason for this and I wish to help them solve it. The problem is usually that of wrong doctrines which encourage wrong motives for their giving. We all need to be corrected so that our works may not be in vain.

I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but I did so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain. Gal 2:2-3

I encourage you to open your heart to correction so that your labour for the Lord will not be in vain.
Please read and share with as many believers as you can.

CHAPTER ONE

HAVE A RIGHT MOTIVE

Let me start by examining the importance of motives in all that we do.

Motive counts with God; it is not just what we do but also the reason why we are doing them that He sees. The fact is that the outward work has no meaning in itself until the underlying thoughts of the heart are examined. No matter how good what we are doing is, if the motive is wrong we get no reward from the Lord.

*I, the LORD, search the heart,
I test the mind,
Even to give to each man according to his ways,
According to the results of his deeds. Jer 17:10*

Giving with a wrong motive is a very important way by which we lose our reward before the Lord. Please I want to challenge everybody to check his or her motives for the practise of giving.

Many people give just because of what they want to get from the Lord; that is a very wrong motivation. What registers in the realm of the spirit, which is what the Lord is judging by, is the selfishness of their hearts. Even though the law of seedtime and harvest they are operating is true, the real seeds they are sowing is

a bad seed in the realm of the spirit. Since the motivation is wrong, they get nothing from the Lord. Be careful that you do not have fleshly desire for self-preservation as the motive for your giving; if you do, you are wasting a lot of time and resources.

The real motive for giving, especially in the context of the subject of this book, is faithfulness. I will speak a lot about the matter of faithfulness in this book but I recommend that everyone read two other books in which I discussed the subject of money more generally. These are *Grace to Prosper* and *How to work for God*. Once after a Bible class, one of the students of the word there came up to me and asked what motives there are that remain for giving since I had taught that it is wrong to give because one wants to get something from God. I had explained that deliberately 'sowing a seed' towards a desired fruit is unscriptural and does not work. When I say 'sowing a seed' I refer to the practice of giving an offering as a way of persuading God to release something to us. I had also explained in the course of the teaching that it does not make a believer acceptable before the Lord because his faith is the primary way by which righteousness is judged. In summary, from the word of God, I showed that self-propagation and personal gain are never right motives for giving in the life of a true believer. This young man who came up to me wanted to know what else was there as a motive.

In answering, I asked him whether my ministrations had been blessing him and whether he would love them to continue. He answered in the affirmative. I asked whether he realized we had expenses in sustaining the work of the ministry and if he'll like to see the work sustained. Again he said yes. Then I asked whether

he would not want to be a part of keeping the work going as the Lord gives him the ability. Yet again he said yes. I told him that that would be a righteous motive for giving—to keep a good work going.

To explain to this man further, I wanted to know what his response would be if on his way back home from the Bible class he was to see an old man who was hungry and needed to be fed. I asked if he would be willing to give him some money to eat. Again he said yes.

I gave several other similar examples to point out to him that love is the most important motive for giving, as a believer. As children of God we must focus on what good we have the opportunity to do with our giving rather than giving because we want to get.

But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 1 John 3:17-18

If there is love for God and for people in our hearts, giving is a major way by which it is expressed. If indeed we are Christians, then *'the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us'* (Rom 5:5). God's love is in the heart of every true believer. Every Christian who is not a cheerful and continuous giver is walking below the level that God created him to walk in and can be stated simply and correctly as walking in sin.

I like to point out again clearly to everyone who claims to be a Christian: personal gain is not a right motive for giving. If we are

giving because of what we want to get, we are practising the 'labour of selfishness,' instead of the labour of love (1 Thess 1:3, Heb 6:10). We are also by this practising 'godliness without contentment.'

When I say godliness without contentment, I am reversing what Paul said in the first letter to Timothy (1 Tim 6:6) in which he described godliness with contentment as a means of great gain. Acts of godliness include giving, and when someone gives with strings attached, then it is not an act done in contentment. We must learn to do what is right for the sake of doing righteousness and leave the reward to God. We are not able to determine what reward our offerings will bring.

It is a common practice in today's Christianity to tie our offerings to something. People are often told to place a demand on God with their offerings by tying it to a desired personal gain. "Tell God what you want this offering to bring for you," people are often told, but unfortunately it does not work like that. The word of God never taught us to do that. The idea of speaking to your offering so that it might bring you a desired good, as we say, 'sending it on an errand,' is not good for Christians. It is very true that every act of righteousness has a reward, but we do not know what the reward is, and we cannot decide it.

Sow your seed in the morning, and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good. Eccl 11:6

What we are to do as believers to get the true power of God in our lives is to continually do good. The continuity and persistence in any act of righteousness is what the Bible calls patience. You are said to be walking in patience when you identify what is good and you continue to do it whether you see a reward quickly or not.

that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Heb 6:12

We must never get tired of doing good. We do not know when the reward will come or what the reward will be. We cannot dictate what the reward will be to the Lord. Once you tie something as a desired reward to your gift, it is no longer an act of love but rather an act of selfishness, and it profits nothing.

I believe it is clear now that we cannot continue to sow a seed towards things. “This offering is for my car, or my house, or my getting married” is not a good thing to say.

The switch of God's power and blessing is the continual doing of good works.

If you must speak to your offering, speak to it to go and prosper in the true act of righteousness. “Go feed the poor; go and oil the spread of the gospel. Go and make this man of God glad.” “As I release this money it will meet needs beyond its apparent value; it will not be lost; it will not be misappropriated but it will reveal the kindness of God to people.” These are better words to speak than those self-centred words that we have so often used.

CHAPTER TWO

HOW TO RECEIVE FROM GOD

I wish to make an important correction here in this chapter. As a matter of fact, what underlie our wrong practices are the wrong beliefs which we hold. The reason why most people give with a wrong motive is because they have been taught wrongly concerning how to receive from God. They have been taught that the basis for getting from God is what they have given to Him before coming to ask.

It is often said that "nothing leaves God's hand until something leaves your hand." I heard a preacher say once that he was asked to pray for supplies at a particular church and he refused. His reason for refusing was that "supply does not answer to prayers; it answers only to seed." He said it was wrong for the people to expect God to answer prayers for divine provisions unless they already had seed in the ground. He counselled them not to pray but rather to go and plant seeds, by which he meant they should go and give out money.

Many people believe these things. A brother told me once that he does not ask God for anything (I wonder how someone plans to survive like that). When I asked him why, he said that he did not think he had done anything for God so as to expect anything back

from Him. Obviously he did not know the true basis upon which we receive from the Lord.

Let us set this thing straight – we do not receive from the Lord because of what we have given to Him.

Who has given to Me that I should repay him? Job 41:11.

Supplies indeed answer to prayer—the prayer of faith. See what the Lord Himself said:

Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you. Mark 11:24-25

The key to receiving from God is asking, asking correctly. James explained it like this:

You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives. James 4:2-3

What we have done is never the basis upon which we make our requests to our Father God. We approach Him because we have a way through Christ Jesus and because we know He loves us.

In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father. John 16:26-27

We approach the Father in the name of Jesus. The knowledge of His love for us is what provokes the faith with which we approach. We never, ever, come to Him apart from our hope in His mercy. His mercy and grace are embodied in the name of Jesus. Jesus represents all the good works that we can ever need as credit with God. We cannot add to the sacrifice of Jesus in getting close to the Father. The Father loves us primarily because we have loved the Son, Jesus. Faith in the Son is the basis of our acceptance with God.

The answers we expect from prayer are free. They are given to us upon the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Rom 8:31-32

When we pray in the name of Jesus, we are saying to God the Father that we have not come on our own merit or in the power of the work we have done. We are saying we have come because Jesus did all there was to do in getting all that we need from Him. We are claiming the forgiveness of sins that is in His blood, so that no sin can hinder us.

For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. Col 1:13-14

In praying in the name of Jesus, we are again saying that the Father loves us because we believe in Jesus, and even before we

believed. We are ascribing all greatness to God and keeping none for ourselves. That is what it means to pray in His name.

Anytime we come to prayer with the good works we have done in our minds, we are insulting the blood of Jesus. We are saying that the blood is not enough. We are moving into the realm of the flesh and self-righteousness, and this is the area in which the devil gets the upper hand.

The Pharisees used to pray the wrong way, the way of self-righteousness, and the Lord Jesus warned about it in the parable in Luke 18.

In this parable we see the Pharisee praying in the power of his good works, and he was not justified.

I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get. Luke 18:12

How much he sounds like many Christians today; or rather we are the ones that sound like him.

The other man, even though seen as a sinner, asked the Lord for mercy and got it.

But the tax-gatherer, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted. Luke 18:13-14

Quoting your good works and self-righteousness before God in prayer is the way by which you exalt yourself, and the Lord Jesus said you will be frustrated and disappointed. That is what it means to be humbled in this context.

See, good works have their reward, but we are not to look to the reward or plead the good works with God in prayer. We are to do good works continually and trust that the Lord will apportion the reward as He sees fit.

I will explain more on this in subsequent chapters.

So please, if you need anything, go to the Lord simply in prayers and do not be deceived that nothing will leave His hands until something leaves yours. It is not true that you will not get an answer until you put seed in the ground. Sow your seeds continually and don't even think about quoting them for the Lord in prayer.

Jabez prayed and got an answer to his prayers.

Now Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, "Oh that Thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my border, and that Thy hand might be with me, and that Thou wouldst keep me from harm, that it may not pain me!" And God granted him what he requested. 1 Chron 4:10

Solomon prayed to God for one thing and got more than he asked.

Because you had this in mind... you have asked for yourself wisdom and knowledge, that you may rule My people, over whom

I have made you king, wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. And I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as none of the kings who were before you has possessed, nor those who will come after you." 2 Chron 1:11-12

Faith is what we need to get our prayers answered.

It is clear therefore that giving so as to get is not only wrong, it is unnecessary.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SPIRITUAL SEED

I want to continue what I was teaching in the first chapter about sowing our financial seeds correctly; I wish to explain an important principle about the law of sowing and reaping and by that help us to be established in the proper practices so as not to waste our seeds.

Indeed there is a law of sowing and reaping.

*While the earth remains,
Seedtime and harvest...
Shall not cease." Gen 8:22*

*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows,
this he will also reap. Gal 6:7*

This law of sowing and reaping applies to the physical realm, it applies to the moral realm, and it most certainly also applies to spiritual things. When we are applying this law in our lives and practices, it is important that we do not mix up the realms we are dealing with. By this I mean we should not apply the practices of the spiritual law to the physical realm and expect results. The physical realm has its practises which are different from those of the spiritual, even though it is the same law.

Let me explain.

People often say that since there is a law of sowing and reaping in which you reap what you sow, it therefore follows that when you give money (as in an offering) you will receive money. Unfortunately, this is a mixing up of applications. The law of sowing and reaping exists and it works but every seed has its own appropriate field. The law of sowing and reaping as it applies to giving is an operation of the spiritual field. When applying this law to the spiritual field, the seeds must necessarily be spiritual.

To illustrate, physical corn can only be planted into a physical soil. You cannot sow corn into the heavens and expect a harvest. In the same manner, money as a physical seed can only be sown into a financial field, like a fixed deposit account, the stock market and various forms of businesses. Money cannot be sown directly into the realm of the spirit as that is not its appropriate field. Money is not a recognized seed in the realm of the spirit. The simple reason is because physical things go into physical fields and spiritual things go into spiritual fields.

So, what are the spiritual seeds that can be planted in a spiritual field?

Spiritual seeds are spiritual attributes that can only be found in the heart and spirit of a person. These spiritual attributes prompt physical actions. As an example, mercy is a spiritual seed.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Matt 5:7

Honour is a spiritual seed.

...but now the LORD declares... those who honor Me I will honor. 1 Sam 2:30

Also, love is a spiritual seed and kindness is a spiritual seed. The Lord Jesus gave a long list of spiritual seeds in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. It is important I point out that negative attributes are also spiritual seeds.

Having said this however, I must also point out the fact that though spiritual seeds are spiritual attributes, they are usually expressed by physical acts and physical substances. Giving is a very common and important physical way by which spiritual seeds are communicated. When we give money, or any physical thing for that matter, we are conveying a spiritual seed. The motivation behind every physical act is the real spiritual seed it is carrying. When harvest time comes, God multiplies the true spiritual seed and gives it also an appropriate body for us when we will need it.

I may give money to a man of God; the money is good but the spiritual seed there is honour. The Lord will therefore multiply honour back to me. I may give money to the poor; the spiritual seed there is mercy and love, and God will reward me with mercy and love. Money in itself is not the spiritual seed; it is what is behind it, the motivation of my heart, that is the real seed.

Like I already mentioned, God's reward will also be encased in various kinds of physical things, and these we cannot decide. It therefore does not necessarily follow that I must get money for giving out money; the Lord may decide otherwise. A good

example to explain this is the story of the Shunammite woman in 2 Kings, chapter 4.

There was a time Elisha went to Shunem and he met this wealthy woman who showed him great hospitality. She was persuaded he was a true man of God and she decided to honour his office.

Now there came a day when Elisha passed over to Shunem, where there was a prominent woman, and she persuaded him to eat food. And so it was, as often as he passed by, he turned in there to eat food. And she said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God passing by us continually. Please, let us make a little walled upper chamber and let us set a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; and it shall be, when he comes to us, that he can turn in there." 2 Kings 4:8-10

After Elisha had enjoyed her hospitality for a while, he was concerned about showing appreciation for all she had been doing. The woman had no material needs and had all the human connections she needed. Then Gehazi, the prophet's servant, pointed out the fact that she did not have a son; this caused Elisha to prophesy and she indeed conceived and bore a son.

Then he said, "At this season next year you shall embrace a son." And she said, "No, my lord, O man of God, do not lie to your maidservant." And the woman conceived and bore a son at that season the next year, as Elisha had said to her. 2 Kings 4:16-17

The point I want us to see is that she sowed honour into the life of Elisha, a man of God, and she reaped God's honour. The honour she showed Elisha as a man of God was manifested outwardly by her giving to him material things like food and shelter. We know it was honour since she did it purely because he was a man of God. When the Lord was going to pay her back, what did He give? A son!

God did not decide to give her more rooms because that was what she gave Elisha. If the law worked the way many people try to apply it, then the only thing she should have gotten is more food, houses and land. The truth is that the physical seed did not enter the realm of the spirit; only the core content did. The core content is the spirit or motive behind what she did.

We can see more examples of application of the spiritual law of sowing and reaping from the teachings of the Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. There we see that the fruit for gentleness of spirit is inheriting the earth. The fruit for purity of heart is the privilege of seeing God. To see God describes the experience of His manifest presence and power in someone's life. We cannot by ourselves decide what the seeds we sow will produce; they have been set by divine laws and we are not able to alter them. The material manifestation is affected very much by what we need at various times.

Understanding all the things I have explained this far, it follows therefore that when spiritual fruit wants to manifest, it will take on various physical manifestations which may not necessarily be tied to the physical seed. This is the reason Paul wrote to the Philippians saying,

And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Phil 4:19-20

The manifestation of the fruit is determined by the need and not the seed. Their needs could be anything—money or anything else; the spiritual seed they sowed – honour and love for the word of God and the propagation of the word – would produce fruit manifested according to the need at the time. If the need is for the fruit of the womb, then a child will come. The fruit could manifest as promotion in their jobs or in ministry.

So, if the core of your gifts and offerings has been personal gain, all that has been entering the realm of the spirit as you were giving is selfishness, and you have not profited at all.

And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing. 1 Cor 13:3

Please read my book, *Grace to Prosper*, and you will see more explanations on this matter of the motive for giving.

CHAPTER FOUR

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

We must be careful not to walk in error. Many times I have heard people talk as if once you are sincere, it does not matter what you believe. But this is not true; it is possible to be sincere and be sincerely wrong. Sincerity before God only makes Him show you the mercy of correction. He will not necessarily bless the work done in error, even if the error was a sincere one. Walking in wrong doctrine makes us lose vital things in our walk with God.

Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, Col 2:18-19

It is our duty to pursue truth and to walk in it. This is why we must pray all the time that God will open our eyes and give us understanding. We must be ready all the time to learn the truth—truth that can be demonstrated from the word of God.

If we are not careful we can easily turn truth into error. One of the ways by which we can do this is when we place excessive emphasis on a truth without being careful to also observe the counterbalancing truths. Balance, it is said, is the key to life.

It is good that you grasp one thing, and also not let go of the other... Eccl 7:18

As a relevant example, the gospel of prosperity is very true. I believe it totally as being the will of God. I believe that God does not want his children to be poor nor does He want them to manage. I believe that Jesus died so that we may not remain poor. I know from the word of God by the mouth of Paul that God gives us richly everything to enjoy. I believe that poverty is not the plan of God. I believe that God still materially blesses those who obey Him.

I hope you believe it too.

However to speak as if that is all the Lord is doing makes such a beautiful truth become error. His main preoccupation in our lives is not wealth and riches but the development of the Christ-life in us. He is more interested in making us perform His pre-ordained will through the power of His Holy Spirit in us. To say God never does bad, when 'bad' means taking from us, is not true at all. The Lord gives and He does take. He still takes! To say that physical wealth is always a reward for righteousness is not true. To refuse that there is such a concept as a life of poverty for the sake of the gospel cannot possibly be true in its entirety. We must be careful not to carry the gospel of prosperity into error.

I was listening to Charles Stanley, an elder in the faith, an American pastor, and he said that blessing is not what marks out Christians but sacrifices. He explained that the mark of true apostleship is the ability to sacrifice. The ability to give up what is legitimately yours for a cause bigger than you is the mark of the true following of Jesus and not the ability to forcefully download

blessings by faith. If the cause of the gospel requires a life that appears like a life of poverty, then we must take it as true soldiers of Christ.

We all love to quote what Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." In quoting it we must be careful to note the context in which he said it. We like to say our own thus: "I can marry a rich and handsome man through Christ who gives me strength." "I can get a high paying job through Christ..., I can pass with flying colours through Christ..." Now, as much as these things are not wrong, that was not what Paul was implying. Please read it in context.

But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. Phil 4:10-13

Paul was talking about how to endure both in the time of prosperity and in the time of lack. He was saying I know how to get along with humble means through Christ who strengthens me.

It is so clear when you read the last two verses from the Today's English Version.

I have learned this secret, so that anywhere, at any time, I am content, whether I am full or hungry, whether I have too much or too little. I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me. Phil 4:12-13 TEV

So Paul was not talking about the ability to get things at all; rather he was teaching on the ability to endure both prosperity and adversity. The key word here is 'endure.' He said to Timothy,

Endure suffering along with me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 2 Tim 2:3 NLT

So we see that even though prosperity is the will of God, and Paul taught it as such, yet he showed us that there are things more than prosperity.

What am I saying?

When we start behaving like all God has called us into is enjoyment, we have stepped into error and have begun to believe lies. When sacrifice is no longer the mark of our Christianity, then we are setting the stage for apostasy. The ability to sacrifice is the mark of Christ, and that is what we are asked to follow.

Paul, still in his letter to the Philippians, described this mind of Christ (as expressed in the KJV). When we say 'mind' we mean the way He judged things and the motivation for His life. Paul said it is this mind, or attitude, that must be in us.

Have this attitude (or mind) in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not

regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Phil 2:5-8

Christ's attitude is that of sacrifice, not holding unto what we have but rather being ready to give up things for greater purposes. That is the heart of Christianity; once we start drifting from it we start drifting into error and apostasy.

Like I have pointed out here and there in this book and in others, it is not right to use selfish gain as a motive when we are giving. The reason that practice is so popular is because of the error of over-emphasis on the doctrine of blessing and prosperity. We have overlooked and denied the doctrine of self-denial. We are unable to do good for the sake of doing good and simply pleasing God. We have forgotten that we are to be servants of God also, not just sons. That is why preachers seem to have only one way to get money out of the people of God—the promise of more money. Many messages are now essentially lessons on financial transactions.

Focusing on the blessings from giving as a motivation to give is against the spirit of Christ. Yes, there is a blessing in giving, but anyone who gives for the sake of the blessing has missed the very blessing he is seeking.

See, our God is interesting. The widow of Zarephat gave to Elijah because she believed his word, and she prospered. I discussed extensively her motivation in my book, *Great Faith Can Be*

Yours. She activated a blessing by faith when she gave her last meal to Elijah, but any other widow with last-meal offerings that may have come because they heard that testimony would most likely have not received anything. It was not the offering; it was the faith. The testimony should teach them about the God of Elijah.

Copying acts of giving because you want to receive the same blessing someone else got is a waste of time. Your giving must first be in your heart before it manifests outside. Many people do not have a giving heart; they have hearts that actually only wants to get but is only using giving as the means to achieve the aim. No matter what they give they cannot be blessed because the giving is not from a good heart.

A lot of times I sit in congregations or I sit and watch Christian Television and I observe how preachers persuade people to release money for the ministry. The methods are almost always the same; all are promises of gain. Sadly it looks very similar to money doubling deals offered by the world's fraudsters. "Sow a seed for your child's education;" "sow a seed for your promotion;" "sow a seed for your healing or that of a loved one." I actually saw a man request grandmothers to sow a financial seed for the deliverance of their grandchildren who are on drugs. We are put under pressure to immediately do something. We are essentially being told that God never gives anything until we pay for it. In churches we have even closed our eyes to the injunction of Jesus to give in secret. I feel sad anytime I see these things because, sincerity or no sincerity, the greatest majority of those who respond to those pleas because of the promised gain will get

nothing. The sincere ones will get correction as a reward. The Lord will not encourage the perpetuation of errors.

The main issue is that we have forsaken the doctrine of sacrifice in the following of Christ. We are looking for emergency breakthrough, supernatural debt cancellation without moral repentance, financial discipline, and patience. Unfortunately, if we continue in practises based on wrong doctrines, we are building false hopes and we will eventually be disappointed.

CHAPTER FIVE

WE HAVE A DUTY TO PERFORM

Sometime ago I was watching a Christian TV network raise money for their operations. In the course of the money raising activities many preachers had come up and the primary message that most of them were preaching was the promise of more money for the seeds people would sow. The aim, of course, was to try to motivate the viewers to give to the work. It was in the course of the events that I heard one of the preachers ask grandmothers to give so that God could deliver their grandchildren from drug addiction.

Almost every one of the preachers would come with statements like, “this is not about this network but about your future.” “This is a special need that God has created for your blessing and you have to start tapping into it right now.” “This is your doorway out of poverty.”

Please I want you to bear in mind that giving to Christian TV networks is a good and necessary thing which will indeed produce a blessing when done with the right motive. I think we should always state that directly. It is good to command Christians to give, and stating the need of a network that propagates the gospel of Christ is not bad at all. But to use personal gain as the main

motivation is to live below the glory of God and to reject the mind of Christ.

As I watched that day, a time came when Dr. Myles Munroe came up. Initially I was worried because this is a man I have immense respect for his ministry and the knowledge of God that he has. His teachings have been a mighty blessing to me. I was worried because everyone who had come up before him had done about the same thing, and I was afraid that he might just tow the same line.

But he did not.

What Dr. Myles Munroe preached that day was different from what everybody else was preaching. His emphasis was so different. Indeed he invited people to give to the TV network as an important way to spread the gospel as every other preacher was trying to do, but in the matter of motivation he preached a totally different message. What he preached, to me, is what the word of God teaches and the spirit of it is what this book is about.

Dr. Munroe reminded us about the story of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as told in the book of Matthew chapter 28. He explained that the Roman soldiers were witnesses of what happened as they could not have been asleep when things began to happen. His main point was that their testimony was corrupted by the elders of the Jews who wanted to kill the story. The means of the corruption was money.

And when they had assembled with the elders and counseled together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, and

said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' "And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble. And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day. Matt 28:12-15

These men were paid to spread a lie instead of the truth.

The true believers are witnesses of the resurrection and are commanded to spread the truth. Myles Munroe explained that if spreading a lie costs money, spreading the truth will cost more money. It is our responsibility to spread the truth, he said, therefore we will have to spend the money.

Please notice what he was saying, that it is a matter of responsibility. That, my brethren, is the word of God.

That day, as I watched the programme, relief came to my soul. I realized that I was not alone in seeing this thing as the Lord made it clear. Jesus said, "the harvest is plenty and the labourers are few." He said to pray the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into the harvest field. We are labourers, not investors. We have been called by God to do this work and if we are truly children of God we will do what He commanded.

Let me say it again. We do not give because we want to get; we give because it is our responsibility to give towards the spread of the gospel. If we do not do it, nobody will. It is just like parents providing for their children. They do not do it because of what they will get but simple because it is their duty; if they do not do

it nobody will do it for them. Paul said everyone should bear his own load (Gal 6:5). The preaching of the gospel is our load and we must carry it, reward or no reward.

But there is a reward.

I have not spoken in secret, in a corner of the land of darkness; I did not call the descendants of Jacob [to a fruitless service], saying, Seek Me for nothing [but I promised them a just reward]. Isa 45:19 AMP

Yes there is a reward for serving the Lord, if we do the service with the proper motives and in the proper way.

Let me state it again: when we serve God primarily because of what we are going to get, we get nothing. However when we do serve the Lord for the right reasons, we can rest assured that there is a reward. Like I said in the book, Grace to Prosper, the knowledge of the principle of sowing and reaping was not designed to be an incentive for the selfish heart but to be an encouragement for the giving heart.

The right motives for giving to the work of God are love and the knowledge of the fact that we all have a duty to do.

CHAPTER SIX

DIVISION OF LABOUR

A few years ago I was in a church service when a senior worker in the church called me out to see a young man who wanted to speak with me. It was a special service that day in my home church and so it was a long service. For this reason the worker felt if I didn't mind I could leave the service for a while and attend to this young man who had been waiting for a while. I agreed to see the fellow.

I had never met him before that day; our only contact was that he listened to me on the radio programme *The Way of Success*. By this time the broadcasts had been on the air for many months. According to him he had been to the ministry office seeking to see me a few times but always met it locked (At that time our ministry office only opened when we had activities and we had no full-time staff). He crossed that hurdle by locating the church I attended, which was some effort since I did not pastor a church. He did not live in the same city as I but travelled each time about 80 kilometres from another place. Well, there I was and wanting to know why he so much wanted to speak with me.

He said he wanted to talk about himself, and I remember wondering to myself why a stranger should think anyone would be interested in hearing about him on a Sunday morning. Well, I told him to go ahead and he began.

He told a very long story about his family problems, how he did not have a father or his father was not financially capable of helping with education fees or something like that. He said his brother who was able was not helping much, and he was trying to make it on his own through involvement in a network marketing business. He went on and on as he told me his story of lack and the challenges of life. Looking at him I estimated his age to be in the twenties zone.

After a while I had to make him summarize since the story was getting to be lengthy. I requested of him to quickly get to the part where he would tell me what he wanted from me. The truth was that I could not easily see what he was driving at. Well, he came up with the summary: he needed accommodation and he needed me to help introduce him to clients for his business.

I looked at him calmly, trying not to get angry at him for pulling me out of a church service for this. I asked him again how we got to know each other (I just wanted him to repeat it so he could hear it himself). He said he listened to me on the radio.

Then I asked him what I ever said in all the messages he heard me preach that indicated that I was a man to meet when one needed accommodation or business connections. He knew nothing about me more than the fact that I was the preacher who taught the word of God on radio. He did not have any idea whether I was rich or poor or whether I was indebted to the radio station that aired the programmes or not. All he knew was that I was the preacher on radio who preached powerfully. Why on earth he decided to travel

severally to come look for me would have been a shock to me except that I was already used to such things by then.

Many times people hear me on radio, or watch me on TV, then decide to send a mail asking me for money. It irritates me quite a bit, and I generally ignore those requests. In fact my assistants do not forward the mails to me anymore. It beats me why the man who is preaching free of charge to them should be the one that they will beg money from. They just assume that he or his ministry must be rich; that must be the reason why he is on air.

When I asked this young man what I said in my many teachings which he had heard that made him come seek me out for such assistance, he had no answer. I asked him if he studied Economics in Secondary School (High School in some countries) and he said he did. I asked him whether he ever heard of the concept of division of labour. He knew about that. I told him simply that I had discharged my duties to him (my co-workers participating) by preaching and delivering the word into his home free of charge. I told him in many words that after all we had done, it was unfair on his part to expect me to start sourcing money for every stranger who listens to me on radio who needs help.

Many people are surprised at the response I gave this young man, but I told him a gospel that few people understand.

Anytime we would get on a new broadcast medium, like radio or TV, to teach the word of God, prominent among the first mails we would get were from all kinds of people needing help. Some claim to be widows, others are students needing money, and even

ministers and pastors claiming to need financial help. I always ask my co-workers, 'who do they think will pay for all these?' Sometimes people would call one of the ministry phone lines and ask that we should call them back. Calls were not cheap those days and the people wanted the ministry to pick the bill when they wanted to speak to us. (There were no toll-free lines in Nigeria except to the phone companies). One of my men used to answer simply, "I am not calling you back."

What have I not seen? There were these two young men who travelled down to Enugu to attend a seminar I was teaching at the ministry. After the day's session they asked to see me because they heard I helped people get visas and travel abroad. When I heard that, and considering what I teach, I just assumed that someone played a joke on them which they unfortunately took literally. Or maybe that someone was hoping that I would cure them of their crazy quest to go abroad. I have seen strange things!

The truth about the whole thing is that most people never ask themselves who is paying for what they are already getting. Unconsciously, they assume the preacher does not need money since he has a money-yielding tree behind his house or that people just give him those broadcasting services at no cost. I think they actually think more in the line of the money-bearing tree phenomenon and that is why they want their part of it. The fact that he is on TV or radio must be proof that his money tree is indeed planted by rivers of water and its leaves do not wither. "C'mon, let him share a bit of it around!"

I call it a poverty mentality.

Since this book is about setting the hearts of believers right, please let me state some truths.

Ministry is expensive and it is forbidden that you put extra burdens on the minister and the ministry organization beyond that which the Lord has placed upon them.

Please I am not saying ministries do not do charity work. If it is part of their own commission, then they must. In Kingdom-Word Ministries we engage is propagating the teaching of the word of God alone. When people would write us asking for free Bibles, I ask them to look for Gideons International. We do not stock free Bibles, or any Bibles at all. As a family, very separate from the organization called Kingdom-Word Ministries, my wife and I are actively involved in charity work. This is not done as part of my preaching ministry but because we are Christians. We endeavour to help the poor and needy, support charity organizations and give to many churches and ministries. There are organizations set up for charity and bible distribution, but Kingdom-Word Ministries is not one of them.

I have an opinion about the origin of this poverty mentality that causes people to beg ministers for money. I think that the major problem is historical, though this is not to excuse the poverty mentality and beggars' attitude of people. I think the reason why people look to preaching ministries for all kinds of support is because of the history of missions to Africa.

There was a time that most mission work was funded by Europeans and Americans and most activities of evangelism came

to us free of charge. We got free Bibles, free books, free tapes and free everything. Many even gave free food to those who came to hear the gospel. I believe that one of the by-products of these mission works is that they printed a mentality into our minds as a society that the things of God do not cost. We have come to expect that the ministries should give us everything. The 'mission-project' mentality was thus born into our minds. Babbie Mason said we are either missionaries or mission projects.

Yes these things may have been free for us the recipients, but they did have a cost, great costs most certainly. It's just that someone else was paying those costs. The time has come now for growing up. The fact now is that Nigeria is a net exporter and giver of gospel sponsorship. The mission project mentality is however still in the minds of a lot of people. No, we are now the missionaries, not the mission projects – not just Nigeria, but the whole of black Africa.

But there are brethren who get the point.

CHAPTER SEVEN

YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER

I thank God for brethren who have a right spirit about these things. I thank God they understand.

I run a ministry in which as a matter of principle we never make any drive for money. And it is against my personal religion to ask for money on our television and radio broadcasts. We hold Bible classes twice a week and we never announce ‘offering time.’ As at the time of writing this book, our expenses run into several millions of naira every year. Many people have noticed our attitude and work and decided by themselves that I, the pastor, must have enough personal funds to take care of it all. Meanwhile, others have bothered to ask how the resources come. To those who ask I give the same simple answer—the people of God give as God moves their hearts.

God's children are good people. If they are taught right, and they see a good cause, they will give. In Kingdom-Word Ministries we have experienced the goodness that God produces in the heart of His children. The only thing we do during our meetings in relation with offerings is to, as part of our usual announcements, inform people that offerings are accepted and that they are the means God has used to give us money, and we tell those who wish to how they may make their financial contributions.

And brethren have yielded to God and have been delivering financial supplies to us.

If we preachers can trust God to do this thing we will never lack money for the genuine work that we are doing. Please note the word 'genuine.'

I thank God for the brethren with the right spirit.

Among the first mails we got after going on radio was one which had a cheque for 5000 naira included; it was from a student. May God increase him and people like him.

Many times people have walked up to me and asked, 'how do you pay for all these?' and they have done what they could.

We often check the ministry bank accounts to find lodgements from people we do not know and who do not come near Enugu, our base. I pray that the Lord will greatly increase such people.

I am constantly thankful to God for the lives of all those who have laboured with me financially in the cause of this gospel. God will bless you all. The Lord will make all grace abound towards you so that you will have all sufficiency in all things and super-abound to greater good deeds. You will be enriched in all things and your works of righteousness will cause more thanksgiving to rise up to the Father. My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

You who have freely laboured financially in the cause of the gospel everywhere without tying strings to their sacrifices, God will bless and increase you abundantly. You will never lack. Your descendants will be great on this earth. Your case will be like that of Solomon who was blessed for the sake of David. May grace never depart from your home and may your head never lack oil.

Many have by their acts of giving put a smile on my face; my God will always be with you and cause your sorrows to be turned to gladness. He will dry every tear from your eyes.

There are those whose gifts to me or to the ministry came just as a need was arising; may my God send supply ahead of your needs in Jesus' name.

I want you all to know that you have a part in the prophet's reward.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE PROPHET'S REWARD

What is a prophet's reward?

"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. Matt 10:40-42

Obviously here the Lord was talking about receiving a prophet as a matter of showing hospitality to the prophet. A good example of someone receiving a prophet is found with the Shunammite woman whose story we have already examined in this book. Let us see a verse or two again so as to highlight her reason for giving to Elisha.

And she said to her husband, "Behold now, I perceive that this is a holy man of God passing by us continually. Please, let us make a little walled upper chamber and let us set a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; and it shall be, when he comes to us, that he can turn in there." 2 Kings 4:9-10

Her reason was purely because he was, in her words, a holy man of God. She did not show him hospitality because she needed something or because she was trying to impress somebody. In fact when the man of God asked her later what she would like, she

said, 'nothing' (vs 13). She did not even bother to ask concerning the child she did not have and which she finally got. It is obvious that her motivation was simply because of her regard for his ministerial office.

When the Lord Jesus was speaking about the motivation for giving to a prophet (which stands for all ministers of the word of God), He emphasized that the motivation must be 'because he is a prophet.' No other motivation gets a prophet's reward.

There are several funny reasons why people give to prophets. Commonest these days is the idea of tapping into their anointing or connecting with their grace. As nice sounding as these things are they are totally not in accordance with the will of God. The idea of giving to a man or ministry so that their spiritual substance will flow towards you is not only unscriptural, it does not work. The only person in the Bible that tried a thing close to this was Simon in the book of Acts (Chapter 18), and he was sharply rebuked by Peter. These days it is practised widely and encouraged by many preachers, but it is not right. We may want to argue that we are not trying to buy it but our practices involve pure batter and that is a form of buying too. Once it was not commanded by God it has become batter. The way to get spiritual power and grace is to pray for it and to be faithful with what you currently have.

There are two scriptural and appropriate reasons why you are to give to a minister of the word of God. The first is because he has been a blessing to you, and the Lord commands that you should therefore share with him the good things of life.

And let the one who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches. Gal 6:6

...the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you? 1 Cor 9:10-12

If a teacher of the word has touched you with God's word, then you must reciprocate with material things.

The second reason we are to give to a preacher is simply because he is a minister of the gospel. The Lord said if you do it for this reason, you will participate in the prophet's reward.

Let me explain the concept of a prophet's reward.

Any time the Lord commissions an assignment, He ties certain rewards to the fulfilment of that job. These rewards are both spiritual and material. They represent all forms of blessings. For example, the Lord might commission a job of evangelizing a community and say that the reward attached to that job includes certain places in heaven, 500 years of health and prosperity on the earth, 50 godly children, 25 houses, etc. All these put together constitute what is called the prophet's reward.

The point man in the centre of the assignment is called the prophet. He is the preacher who will use the word of God to convert many to righteousness. He is God's mouthpiece in this work. But the reward is not his alone; he only has a part to play. As prominent and as crucial as his part may be, he is not for that

reason guaranteed any special portion of the reward. He rather receives only according to his labour.

...but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers. 1 Cor 3:8-9

The prophet's reward belongs to the prophet and anyone who will participate in one way or another in the execution of that assignment. The principle of sharing is according to each person's faithfulness, and not according to the office they occupy. A man who goes around announcing the meetings may get more than the prophet if he is more faithful than him. It is not about the office but about faithfulness. Many people praying and giving to the work of God are receiving more reward than the preacher who is so prominent.

Now there are those who are not even consciously participating in the work but who are giving to the prophet because they know the work he does of preaching the word of God. These people, the Lord Jesus said, will get their own portion of that reward. If they give to the prophet because he is hungry, the reward is a totally different kind; there is certainly a reward for giving to a broke person. To qualify for a prophet's reward, the motivation for the hospitality must be tied to the office of preaching that the man is occupying.

There are many people who give to pastors only because they, the pastors, are broke. To them the man of God is just another hungry man. They have no respect for the office and actually think they should be thanked specially for that act of giving. No, it is not

right. They will not get a prophets' reward. Unfortunately a great number of Christians are in this category.

There are many I have encountered. They are tremendously blessed by the word I preach, and they know of people being reached by my ministry work, but they are of the opinion that Pastor Bankie is not poor and so does not need their offerings. Yes they are right, I do not need it; I made up my mind long ago never to need anything from anybody. Like Paul I have coveted no man's goods. But even though I do not need it, God says I deserve it according to His commandments.

As I mentioned earlier, there are those who give to the prophet just to tap into his anointing. Those ones get nothing. I do not have to say anything about those who are trying to buy prayers or visions from the prophet. Those ones are just confused and they get absolutely no good thing.

No one, not even the prophet, knows exactly what rewards attached to each assignment really might be, unless God decides to show it supernaturally. For this reason we cannot tie any demand to the act of giving to the work of the ministry and to the minister of the work. The switch that releases God's power into our lives is the continual doing of these works. Note the keyword there please – continual.

Many people have been misled into believing that they must specifically sow this seed towards that reward. But, apart from the fact that this is not right, it is not possible. I explained about this in the book *Grace to Prosper*. Seeds deliberately tied to personal

expected rewards are dead on planting. They produce nothing. The reason is that in doing that we automatically contravene the proper order taught by the Lord Jesus. The motivation is no longer 'because he is a prophet' but because of selfish gain. It fails to produce anything. We cannot sow into the life of a prophet because of a particular reward. We cannot!

Many sow to certain ministries because the preacher claims, or they believe, the place is fertile. By this they mean that the pastor prays and prophesies hard for his givers or that the ministry confers prosperity on people. Again, this is nothing but confusion of motives. The truly fertile place is where the true word of God is being preached. To tap into that fertility, the motive must be purely because of the love for the work of God and not because one is looking for where to get maximum profit from the investment. Let me say it again, the switch that releases God's power into our lives is the continual doing of good works, and not a targeted-for-blessing-me approach to giving.

CHAPTER NINE

THE WAGES OF THE PREACHER

Still on this prophet's reward thing, I'll like to speak about the wages of the preacher.

This is a very important subject and we all must understand what God says about it. It is important we realize that God has thoughts about everything and we must not let the society out there teach us its own ideas – ideas that may not be in agreement with God's order. I say this because the wages of a preacher have generated a lot of controversy.

Let me first say something about myself.

I am a specialist doctor; I work in the university as a lecturer and in the hospital as a consultant pathologist. Now, these are apart from the work of the ministry which I do and which actually consumes about as much time as all my academic/medical works put together. Let us now not discuss whether it is a good thing or a bad thing as it all depends on the season involved, but one thing is sure, that is how the Lord has led me till now.

What is my point here? Many have seen this as being an illustrious example for other preachers, and on that point I totally

disagree. It is like saying that overworking the donkey is a good thing.

What I am doing may be good for now, but it is not perfect. It is not wrong in itself but I hate for brethren to see it as the perfect thing to do. I think it is only a good example for certain people and preachers in certain phases of life. It is just like Paul who made tents at certain times.

The fact that Paul did secular jobs, like making tents, to support himself severally has been stated by many as to prove that it is the right thing for preachers to do. However that is not the case. See, we must be careful when copying actions; we must take the time to look at the underlying doctrine. Yes Paul did secular jobs severally, but let us look at the underlying theories.

Before I go on to show the references, let me first summarize that Paul stated clearly that it was an abnormal thing he was doing but that it was done only because the believers were either not ready in their hearts or were unable to do the proper thing. The proper thing was that the people that Paul ministered to were supposed to support him. The situations in which he worked were the aberrations and not the normal.

Allow me to quote a lengthy portion of the letter he wrote to the Corinthians, and please read it through patiently, noting where I have highlighted with bold characters.

...Am I not an apostle?...2 Even if others think I am not an apostle, I certainly am to you, for you are living proof that I am the Lord's apostle.

This is my answer to those who question my authority as an apostle. 4 Don't we have the right to live in your homes and share your meals? 5 Don't we have the right to bring a Christian wife along with us as the other disciples and the Lord's brothers and Peter do? 6 Or is it only Barnabas and I who have to work to support ourselves? 7 What soldier has to pay his own expenses? And have you ever heard of a farmer who harvests his crop and doesn't have the right to eat some of it? What shepherd takes care of a flock of sheep and isn't allowed to drink some of the milk? 8 And this isn't merely human opinion. Doesn't God's law say the same thing? 9 For the law of Moses says, "Do not keep an ox from eating as it treads out the grain." Do you suppose God was thinking only about oxen when he said this? 10 Wasn't he also speaking to us? Of course he was. Just as farm workers who plow fields and thresh the grain expect a share of the harvest, Christian workers should be paid by those they serve.

11 We have planted good spiritual seed among you. Is it too much to ask, in return, for mere food and clothing? 12 If you support others who preach to you, shouldn't we have an even greater right to be supported? Yet we have never used this right. We would rather put up with anything than put an obstacle in the way of the Good News about Christ.

13 Don't you know that those who work in the Temple get their meals from the food brought to the Temple as offerings? And

those who serve at the altar get a share of the sacrificial offerings. 14 In the same way, the Lord gave orders that those who preach the Good News should be supported by those who benefit from it. 15 Yet I have never used any of these rights. 1 Cor 9:1-15 NLT

One of the things I highlighted is about the right of preachers (note verses 12 and 15). Paul explained in plain language that it is the right of the preachers to be paid by those they minister to. For certain reasons he and his co-workers often overlooked those rights, but they were their rights. One of the major reasons he let go of his rights was because of the immaturity of those churches he was planting. Just like today, a lot of lazy bones and fraudsters would hang around in ministry or as priests of other religions and prey on the people. To avoid being misunderstood as being one of such people Paul and his co-workers refused to depend on the churches so that their mission may not be hindered in any way (see verse 12). If the churches were better informed and mature enough, that would not have been the case. This latter point we can easily see displayed in the case of the Philippians.

What am I saying? It is your duty to remunerate the preacher who ministers to you. It is a duty. If a man has been a blessing to you, you owe him.

CHAPTER TEN

PAYING YOUR PREACHER

Let me develop further something I briefly discussed earlier on giving to the preacher because he has blessed you with the word. Let us see that portion of Paul's letter to the Corinthians again.

For it is written in the Law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher to thresh in hope of sharing the crops. If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we should reap material things from you? 1 Cor 9:9-11

What Paul was saying simply here is that when I plant the word of God in your life, I expect that word to bear fruit, and it is your duty to make sure a part of the fruit gets to me so I can share in it.

Once I went to see a fellow preacher for something not related to ministry (he is also a professional colleague). That day I met a number of people in his place, including one brother who was very happy to see me. Why was he so happy? He said seeing me meant that he would obtain at least two tapes from me that day. He looked really eager to receive the tapes.

This man had heard me minister in their church before and was very blessed by my ministrations. Also he was an ardent listener to

my radio programme and was practising the things I taught. The word of God I had been preaching was really affecting his life. His latest testimony was concerning a job he did at one government house. When it came to costing the job he remembered what I taught and he worked by it and the people paid him more than he was willing to ask for. Let's make a long story very short; I had blessed him tremendously with the ministrations of the word of God.

What was the reward this man felt was perfect for me? He wanted me to give him at least two tapes! Why? Because those tapes would further bless him.

I felt sorry for him, deeply sorry. I had no tapes with me there and then to give to anybody, but even if I had, I most certainly wasn't going to give an ingrate like that. Here was a man I ministered the word to and who gave me the testimony of the result, then he jumped a major step and went ahead to request more blessings. He had not bothered to appreciate the last one.

What should he have done?
Simple; apportion me a gift.

He should have taken a small portion of all the breakthroughs that the Lord granted him by my preaching and given it to me. That is what is called turning back to give God glory.

TURNING BACK

I observed the spiritual principle of turning back to give God glory from the account of Jesus and the ten lepers that were

healed in the book of Luke chapter 17. Even though he healed all ten, yet only one returned to give God glory.

And Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But the nine — where are they? Was no one found who turned back to give glory to God, except this foreigner?" Luke 17:17-19

The immediate question that comes to mind is, “how did He know the others were not somewhere else giving God glory?” They could have gone home to do praise/worship with Don Moen and Donnie McClurkin. Yes that is true, but it wouldn’t have been acceptable enough. The truth is that the proper place to give God glory is the place from where the virtue issued forth. It was necessary that they returned to Jesus as He was the one used by God. That is the proper thing to do. When you are blessed from a place, send your testimony back there. If you were blessed materially and financially, send a portion to the one God used. It is the proper thing to do.

This man I am speaking of should have done that. I can imagine if it was me; I would have gone to every length possible to take advantage of the opportunity of meeting the man to bless him with material substance because that is what the Bible teaches. God gave him an opportunity that few of those I minister to will ever have – personal meeting with a preacher who pointedly blessed him. Yet he bungled it, I guess because of a poverty mentality. I can just imagine him saying to himself in his heart, “He is richer than I am; He does not need anything from me.”

In that he is certainly right. I do not need anything from him. I am only saying it is the right thing to do. We often only look at the matter of need, when there is also a matter of what is simply right. You do not pay the doctor or lawyer because he needs your money; you pay him because he rendered you a service.

The truth is that God taught me never to need anybody's money. I never beg for money, either directly or stylishly, but if I have been a blessing to you and you have material resources, then you owe me.

I like the way Paul said it,

Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity... Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. Phil 4:11,12,17

I am not saying this for any other reason other than because it is right.

See, there was a time I went to preach for a fellow minister who was doing a lot of work among young people. I had financially supported him in the past but for this particular programme he was having I was unable to be of financial assistance. So when I finished preaching that day, as they gave me an envelope as appreciation for coming, I took it with one hand, blessed them, and turned around and gave it back with the other hand. I think the envelope contained five or ten thousand naira. My reasoning

was that it was now the money I would have helped them with. They protested but I explained that since it was my money (they gave it to me), I was free to do as I wished with it. So I gave it back.

But that is not the main story. The main story is about what happened as I went to my car. As I was leaving, a young girl intercepted me, told me how much I had been a blessing and inspiration to her through my life and preaching. She was meeting me physically for the first time. She was about to enter the university to study to be a doctor like me, and she wanted me to pray and bless her. This I was very glad to do. After praying, the young girl gave me an offering of 100 naira, and I took it, blessed her, and pocketed the money. Wait, I just returned a ten thousand naira offering and was accepting a hundred naira offering! Why? It was not because of me; I accepted the offering for the girl's sake.

I did not need her money, she had little to give me, but she gave what she had and I accepted it like a servant of God. God will bless her and multiply her. It was not about my need at all.

Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. Phil 4:17

Whichever way she learnt it, she did what was right.

Most other people I meet love to tell me all the good things that I have done for them by my preaching. After that they are glad to shake my hands and walk away. Yet God gave them enough material resources to share.

For those who do realize it that was why Paul had to work. It was a shame he had to, but with brethren like these all over the place, the guy had better find something else to do or he would starve. Unless there are mitigating circumstances, and many times they are, for a minister of the gospel who labours in word and in doctrine and who ministers to a good number of capable people to also need to work other jobs to take care of himself and his family is an indictment on the believers he is ministering to. If he chooses to do this, there is no problem, but it must not be because he has no other choice, unless there are serious mitigating issues.

We have often used our negligence to push men into iniquity as many ministers in desperation have resorted to all manners of less-than-godly means of getting supplies, including begging and adulterating the word of God. To such preachers however I have a word of caution.

It is better to be out of the will of God working a secular job and earning than to be out of the will of God in anger towards the brethren or out of the will of God in using His word to manipulate people. This last option is what many preachers chose to do, but that is the very thing not to do as God never accepts excuses for adulterating His word.

"Behold, I am against the prophets," declares the LORD, "who use their tongues and declare, 'The Lord declares.' "Behold, I am against those who have prophesied false dreams," declares the LORD, "and related them, and led My people astray by their falsehoods and reckless boasting; yet I did not send them or

command them, nor do they furnish this people the slightest benefit," declares the LORD. Jer 23:30-32

By twisting the word of God, you are not helping yourself and you are not furnishing the people the slightest benefit.

Paul refused to do this; rather he renounced the things hidden because of shame (camouflaging real motives with sweet sounding words, because the real thing is shameful), refused to walk in craftiness or adulterate the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God (2 Cor 4:2).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PRIDE, HUMILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Many years ago, as a much younger and budding preacher, I used to be embarrassed when monetary gifts were given to me for preaching. In fact, I used to refuse them. Later the Holy Spirit taught me the right thing and I realized that it is a matter of what is right. It has less to do with me as a person but was more about what is right.

That is a very common error among people who God called into the ministry of the word. They often have in mind never to depend on the ministry for their daily bread. Many insist on having something on the side that will provide for them and also that they will have the money to do the ministry effectively. Those days, many of us would say that we would first build a successful business, and after that is done, we would then go into the ministry. The reason, we often would say, is that we didn't want anybody to think that we came into ministry for money, and also that we would be able to sponsor the work by the money our businesses would be bringing in. I still remember a brother powerfully expounding those words.

My fellow ministers, it is all foolishness. I repented from those thoughts even before I stepped into the ministry fully because they are not right. There is what is right. Even though I currently

still practise as a doctor, my motivation is far removed from those thoughts.

Many of our talk those days stemmed from nothing but pride. We were too proud to want to depend on offerings because in our hearts we think it would equate us with beggars. The truth is that we truly did not understand the dignity in supporting the work of the ministry ourselves. In our hearts we were looking at preachers as if they were men who are too lazy to work and were only leeching on hard-working people. For this reason we became ashamed to become like one of them and so started to harbour thoughts against divine order.

The Lord has had a lot of work in removing those thoughts from the hearts of a lot of men and women He called into the ministry of the word. They did businesses, instead of focusing primarily on their ministries, and the businesses failed. They tried paid employment, at the risk of neglecting their assignments, but nobody would employ them. They failed at virtually everything they did until in frustration they finally gave up and properly answered the call to ministry. It was the Lord frustrating many of them!

Why did the Lord treat them like that?

It was not because He was against the concept of working a secular job or doing business in itself, it is rather because He was against the thoughts of their hearts. It is because He has thoughts that are different from theirs, and since He is the law-giver, they must learn his ways, one way or another. I chose the easier way; I

dropped pride and started accepting offerings early. And God has been merciful.* [**Please note that I am not at all inferring that business failure is how the Lord calls people to ministry. Most people He called were successful in their businesses when they answered the call. Even though business failure may occur because of disobedience to the call of God, it is a rare thing for failure to be used to call men into ministry. Most businesses fail for reasons far removed from the call to ministry; therefore ministry should never be used as an escape from failure in secular things. It is a common error these days for 'dedicated' Christians to turn to ministry when other things fail. In most of such cases, the ministry still does not succeed. There are many more causes of business failure that they have not bothered to correct in their lives. It is definitely more glorifying to God to walk away from a successful business into ministry than otherwise. Maybe that is why the Lord Jesus gave Peter and the other fishermen with him a breakthrough in fishing before calling them into ministry (Luke 5:8).*]

There is a divine order for ministry work, and the following are some points in that order.

- A preacher is entitled to offerings. Any child of God who loves the Lord and His word, and who wants to see the kingdom of God spread should accept to pay the preacher. It is a privilege to be allowed to thus participate in the preaching of the word of life. If you are not doing this it may just be a sign to you that you actually do not believe that word contains the life that the world and even the

church needs. The preacher should accept the offerings because it is God's way of paying him.

- Accepting offerings is not a sign that you are lazy and leeching on people; rather, it is a sign that you are working in the ministry of preaching of the Word. Refusal is not humility; it is pride. You think you are too big for the offering of the Lord. I must however point out that it is not good judgement to demand the offerings; that would be a spirit like that of Hophni and Phinehas. Just be willing to accept them as they come. For those who do not know, Hophni and Phinehas were the sons of Eli, the high priest in Israel before the time of Samuel (1 Sam 1). The men, priests they were, used to take offerings forcefully and inappropriately from the people who came to offer sacrifices.
- It is not correct for a preacher to labour so as to earn money to support the ministry. There is division of labour; those who labour in word and in doctrine are not supposed to be the ones to earn money from other things so as to pay for the spread of the word. They will be overlaboured and the people of God will not be blessed. For a preacher to want to first earn money, save it up and then start the ministry based on monies thus gathered is total mockery. It is not right and it does not work. The work will not be blessed. The body of Christ is to inject a good spirit into the work by giving money to it. Their money carries their spirits of goodwill. Every work needs this goodwill spirit like it needs prayers.

- A preacher should not go around begging for money. For his personal sustenance, or in times of need, God permits him to do things here and there in the area of other skills he has, but this must not ever distract him from the work of the ministry. This we can easily see from the life of Paul. He and his co-workers often did this on the side for various reasons (Acts 20:34-35, 1 Cor 9:6, 1 Thess 2:9). Another reason why a preacher may work is to use his skills to bless people when this is necessary (Eccl 5:9). For example, a preacher in a local community who is also a school teacher or nurse or doctor may be of immense help to them. In all these there must be no distraction from the primary work of the ministry of the word.
- Begging so as to fund projects is also out of order. Projects that the money won't come without stress are not necessary. It is particularly unfortunate to beg non-believers. Inviting non-believers to church must always be so that we can reach them with the gospel, and not so that we will overtly or tactfully beg money from them.
- Preachers must never manipulate people with the power of their preaching so as to persuade people to give to them or support them. The preacher is to reject all shameful and underhanded methods. He must not try to trick anyone, and must not distort the word of God. He must tell the truth before God simply (2 Cor 4:2).

Refusal to accept gifts is not a thing to be praised in the life of a minister. It does not show he is spiritual at all.

Please understand me; I am not saying preachers should be grabby. Many times I return offerings given to me after ministering, but it is not because I do not accept offerings. It is oftentimes because I personally want to contribute something to the work that is going on, in which I came to minister, and so I remove the burden of my own expenses from the people. I accept offering usually and I absolutely reject any reputation that makes it look like I don't because it is not the right thing. A preacher who does that is not allowing the people to be blessed because of his own pride. Paul stated clearly that it was because of the blessing that the Philippians would get that he was pleased to receive the support.

Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. Phil 4:16-17

Like I mentioned when explaining about the prophet's reward, each minister and his commission carry a specific blessing (which is a specific prophet's reward), and those who minister to that minister will partake of the blessing. That is why Paul used an unusual terminology when praying for the Philippians.

And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Phil 4:19

MY GOD

Note that he said, 'my God.' Is it not the same God he had preached to the Philippians, and indeed everybody else, and whom they had believed in? Yes it is! But the reason he said 'my God' is that he was describing God as related to his own prophet's reward. I mean there is a unique blessing tied to his ministry that only cooperating with him would release. Oh, many people miss the blessings they are looking for because they are not doing the duties which God commissioned them to do. That woman of Shunem, her child-bearing was apparently tied to giving to Elisha. Please don't forget that you don't know which blessing is tied where and to what, and you cannot download the blessing by focusing primarily on them. Again I say, the switch for the release of God's blessings into your life is the continual doing of good works. Solomon said,

Sow your seed in the morning, and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed, or whether both of them alike will be good. Eccl 11:6

There is a story I wish to use to illustrate.

John Alexander Dowie was a great man of God, a mighty teacher of faith and an anointed healing minister. He ran a great ministry that shook the USA, affected the world and challenged evil in the society in his days. He built Zion City, a Christian community, near Chicago, Illinois. His ministry in the USA was towards the end of the 19th century. Towards the end of his days, because of some financial and organizational crises, he lost his place in the

ministry and city he built and would often be alone at home. He was forgotten by most people and was often without any money.

It was in those days that a man who had always loved and admired this man of God from a distance had his opportunity to get acquainted with him personally; everybody had deserted him by then. He gladly gave of his time and substance to minister to Alexander Dowie. One day, in which Dowie was in financial need, he gave him fifty dollars; this money he himself needed to make a crucial mortgage payment and that was a huge amount in those times. Dowie accepted the money and prayed that God would supply all his needs. The very next week, to his intense surprise the man got a message from his brother who pledged to pay up the whole mortgage for him, and he paid. It was a miracle of divine supply.

When I read that story in the book *John Alexander Dowie* by Gordon Lindsay, I remembered that Paul prayed for the Philippians, “my God shall supply all your needs...” That man got a prophet's reward.

I need to emphasize again that the man was not doing those things he did because he needed his house paid for; he did what he did as honouring a true prophet of God. God decided and released the reward. We must be careful not to get our motives wrong. If you are not persuaded about the man of God or his cause, it will be a useless activity to give to him simply because you desire a supernatural visitation like this one. Give to him either because you have been blessed by him or because you are persuaded that he is a man truly working for God in the preaching of the word.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

I need to emphasize something about the work of ministry.

We often speak about whether it is right or wrong for ministers to work, and by this we mean doing a secular job apart from the work of preaching the word. I also have used the expression severally up to this point in this book. Even though we know what we intend by the concept of ministers working, there is however something very wrong with it. The expression implicitly connotes that ministry is not work. I have had arguments with people who say that “these preachers should work,” and a lot of those people love me because they see my doing academic and hospital work as a doctor as a good example for others to follow. I have always tried to correct them by pointing out that ministry is work. I am not referring to church administration, which is what constitutes a major chunk of what many pastors do, and which no one will argue that it is not work. I am referring to the matter of studying, preparing and delivering sermons. It is work, hard work.

Paul used the word 'labour' to describe what it is. He told the people to honour those who labour in word and doctrine (1 Tim 5:17 KJV). In another translation this is how it goes:

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. 1 Tim 5:17

I think this one makes it even clearer. Preaching and teaching is really hard work, when done properly. Ministering to people the power of God is hard work. It is such hard work that Jesus had to tell the apostles who he sent out to be careful to take the time to rest (Mark 6:31). There was a time virtue left the body of Jesus into a sick woman and He was drained immediately. He had to pause to recover. Channelling the power of God consumes energy. It is hard work.

It is an insult to the call of the ministry of the word to speak of it as if it is a product of idleness. You can recommend to a preacher to find other works to supplement his life if he is having financial challenges, but you must never look at a messenger of the gospel as if he is jobless.

I am a preacher and teacher of the word of God and I can tell you it is hard work. Those who do this work are worthy of good pay and honour, naturally speaking. In the natural world we pay teachers and business trainers huge amounts of money and there is nothing wrong with it, but when it is a preacher, whose output is the foundation of life itself, people begin to complain. Yes, preachers cannot charge fees because they are forbidden by God to do so, but that does not mean they are not worth every dime given to the teachers in the world. (Just for emphasis, preachers are forbidden from charging for their services, but I do expect those who use their services to be reasonable.)

For anyone to speak disparagingly of the work of the ministry is to come close to blaspheming the word of God. He is showing disrespect, not for the preacher, but for the word of God. He is sowing seeds of unbelief in his life and will find faith hard when the time of need comes. Your attitude towards the word of God determines what you will receive from it. What you do not value you do not attract.

The ministry of the word is to be valued, respected, honoured and financially supported. Honour involves financial and material commitment. The Lord Jesus explained, in commenting on the commandment of Moses that says to honour the father and mother, that it involves giving (Mark 7:8-12). You cannot claim to be honouring the ministry of the word if you will not give to it. That is probably why your faith has been lacking. You have not truly honoured the word of God. You have said you did by word of mouth but your real being, your heart, has been far from it. This people honors Me with their lips,

But their heart is far away from Me. Matt.15:8

Don't forget that you will know where your heart really is when you check where your treasure is going (Matt 6:21). If your financial resources are not going to the work of the ministry of the word, then you are not honouring the word in truth. You cannot claim to believe that the gospel of Jesus is the hope of the world and not act like it.

What most of us have done is to run about our own lives alone or foremost. We are more concerned about making the future secure,

acquiring material things so as to enjoy life and we have in the process forsaken the kingdom of God and the spread of it. We have not been careful to help spread the word of God as a priority.

Thus says the LORD of hosts, "This people says, "The time has not come, even the time for the house of the LORD to be rebuilt." Then the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet saying, "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses while this house lies desolate?" Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts, "Consider your ways! Hag 1:2-6

Yes, consider your ways!

Make allowance first for the word of God. If we all did this there will be so much resources to fund the ministry of the word, and the work of God will progress and there will be no need for ministers to go around begging.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

SHINE YOUR EYES!

Paul taught in his letter to the Corinthians that God loves a cheerful giver.

*Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.
2 Cor 9:7*

Now, a cheerful giver is not just a person who dances when giving an offering in church. He is not just one who smiles when he gives. Being a cheerful giver is a matter of the attitude of the heart. It describes how we see things, our sense of responsibility and a heart of faith that trusts totally in God. It is an attribute of the spirit of Christ, and we must all imbibe it.

Like I have already explained, it is an attitude. Let me illustrate.

There is a practice that is prevalent in our society; when someone buys something or acquires a new addition of any sort, we ask them to 'wash' it. 'Washing it' simply means that the person should spend money to entertain us so as to celebrate the increase.

I teach people to look at life from a different perspective. Why don't you wash it for them? That is what my wife and I do and what my students in the word do. My attitude is that if you have spent money and energy, true friends and the ones who claim to

love you should relieve you the much they can. So I celebrate by buying you a meal, a drink, or giving you some money (which the Bible says answers all things). If it is an on-going project, like building a house, I contribute a small amount. The Lord Jesus taught us plainly that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

Being a giver is an attitude. People see things as their characters dictate. A thief will immediately see opportunities to steal when he gets into a new environment. There was a time I moved into a new house, then a day came that a friend of mine stayed over with me. In the morning he was lying down on a couch in my living room and we were chatting, then he said to me, “if you ever buy this house let me know, because we can make adjustments for you to bring it to a high level.” You can easily guess his line of business. Even though I was not complaining, he was seeing opportunities to make improvements in the house because he is a builder and developer. In a similar manner the giver always sees the opportunity to give something.

When it comes to ministries I am encouraging believers to look out for how to be a blessing. That is what the Nigerian slang 'shine your eyes' means. It means to look out with keenness.

Ministry costs money. Things that come to us free actually cost money. The costs of those TV programmes and radio broadcasts come to millions of naira yearly. They are not free. Let me state that again: they are not free! It may seem odd but the fact is that preachers actually have to pay so that they can bless people. Without a sense of ministry it does not make sense that the

preacher has to pay to bless people, but that is what the situation is. Now because of the paradox in the situation, most believers do not readily think the preachers are paying; they think that the stations actually are giving the airtimes free. Several times I have talked with people and seen them express shock when I inform them of how much we pay to be on TV and several radio stations.

In a discussion with a brother recently, I informed him that Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) spends lots of millions of dollars monthly to maintain their network globally. I also told him how much we spend for our broadcasts even though Kingdom-Word Ministries is relatively small, and pointed out to him how TBN does not do advertising to get money the way secular networks do (I was informed that the advert rate on the leading American TV networks runs at about one million US dollars for a minute; that is how they get money). I told this dear brother that this is the reason why these Christian stations do fund raising programmes because that is where they get funds from. I may disagree with some of the methods I see some people employ, but the need is real.

Until our talk he had no idea ministries had to pay to broadcast the word. He thought all you needed was to be good at preaching and your messages will make it unto the airwaves (I wish it was so). He said he was going to commence making provision for contributions to ministries on TV and radio in his budget. Now, that is the right spirit.

Many other people who know that ministries pay think they are gaining something by remaining on air. That may be true for

some, but for most it is not true. Even when some ministries resort to selling and begging on air, most are just trying to keep the programme going. They are actually trying to fulfil the commission of the Lord that they should go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. They are endeavouring to teach everything the Lord taught them just as He commanded they should. It is a divine assignment and we should assist.

Because I teach the word of God on radio and TV I have had some experiences in these areas. I remember once that someone sent us a mail that we should try to extend our radio broadcasts to one full hour instead of the thirty minutes we were doing. His reason was that he had noticed that the radio station only plays music after our broadcasts and that since the programme was such a blessing it should be extended. I smiled to myself; the young man did not realize that availability of time was secondary to the availability of money. I have the capacity to preach many more messages and put them on air for longer times; it is the money that is the rate-limiting factor, like we say in Chemistry. Like Paul used to say, we are hindered.

Others have written that we should bring the programmes to stations covering their respective areas, but they do not offer any support or even prayers for finances. They are not wicked; they just do not realize these things cost so much. I am writing this book so that we will all 'shine our eyes' and just bear it in mind that heavy amounts of money are involved.

Effective ministry costs money. The ministry has to pay staff and it is not right to have a reputation of being poor-paying. If a

preacher brings a programme into your town or city and you were blessed by it, never forget that it cost the organizers a lot of money. When you enter a hall for a meeting and it is a nice place, well air-conditioned with a good sound system, never overlook the fact that those things cost money.

I remember once when we organized a programme on a university campus. I asked the young man who travelled with me to estimate the money we spent for the 3-day programme. He got it very wrong and was amazed when I gave him the correct figures. I reminded the brother that neither he nor I was paid a dime, and we had free food and lodging in my wife's parents' home. The cost was just for the nice facility used, for publicity and to help the young men who helped organize the meetings with some communication and sundry expenses. Yes, regular offerings were taken at the meetings but the total came to just about one-tenth of all the money spent. Just about ten percent was it all, and I was neither surprised nor disappointed. This is because I have never operated with the hope that the crowd will pay the bills. I see it just as a mission. I told him all of that because he was such a dedicated fellow-worker who served with me diligently in the cause of the gospel.

See, this is why a lot of preachers start using all kinds of gimmicks to try and get the money. Granted that there may be some who are greedy, but most just want to pay their bills – nothing more! If you read the biography of Oral Roberts you will see that there was a time, as a young evangelist, when he refused to come out to preach in a meeting he organised until the crowd contributed enough money to pay all outstanding bills. The

meetings had been going on for days and the people were being tremendously blessed, but the bills were also accumulating. The man was not about to let the crowd go and leave him saddled with the unpaid bills. His wife had to beg the people to give so that the programme could continue. I had a very different teaching concerning this and so never start a meeting until we have the funds to cover all costs. It is one of the ways the Lord has kept me sane.

I am sure you can understand my irritation when somebody approaches me that we should help with funds for personal matters or even another ministry. Such people should try and go to people who God called for such purposes as settling strange financial problems. I know it is mostly ignorance, but sometimes it borders on frank wickedness.

Why am I saying all these things?

I want to educate the people of God so that they might change their attitudes and be more of partners in the work of God rather than destructive bystanders. I used the word 'destructive' because of Solomon's description in Proverbs 18:9.

*He also who is slack in his work is brother to him who destroys.
Prov 18:9*

If you are doing nothing to help, you are close to those actively doing something to destroy the ministry of the word.

IMPORTANT WORD

Before we leave this chapter I wish to add a few words directed at those who host ministers of the gospel. Many of these are other ministers or church councils.

There have been many situations I have heard of, and been a victim of, in which the visiting preacher is treated with carelessness. I was listening to Ravi Zacharias who described how he held a week-long programme in a church in the US where he is based, and at the end of the week the Pastor and Deacons allowed him to go away with nothing. They did not give him a dime. As he was about to leave, the Pastor suddenly remarked that they forgot to take an offering for him and promised to speak about it the next Sunday. The next 15 years passed and apparently that next Sunday never came.

Like I said, 'Shine your eyes!' You know this is the job this man does, so from where do you expect him to eat? Paul said clearly that a labourer is worthy of his wages.

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." 1 Tim 5:17-18

Even though we call it in modern times honorarium, the truth is that any money a preacher is given is a well deserved wage, even though it is not fixed. Many preachers have been treated so badly

that they have resorted to charging fees. As much as I disagree with charging fees I think hosts should be more responsible. There are many cases in which the hosts do not even bother to cover the cost of transportation for their guest ministers, and this is very bad. If you invited him why should he cover his own costs? Like I mentioned earlier, I work in the university, and here when we invite external examiners we follow the government rules of first reimbursing them their airfares and then paying a daily rate to cover their stay, before adding the honorarium according to the rank of the examiner. I think we should take a cue from that. If you can't afford to invite the man, tell him, and if he still chooses to come at his own expense because he loves you so much, then it is all well and good. But please do not take it for granted. It is wrong!

When your guest minister arrives, take good care of him. the fact that he is a preacher does not mean you should treat him like a beggar. David Yonggi Cho described how once he was invited all the way to Australia from South Korea and the hosts checked him into a YMCA room. He called home, told his wife about it and she begged him to take the next flight and return home. He chose to stay but I think he asked her to send him money and he checked himself into a decent hotel.

Christians sometimes behave like God called us to a life of suffering. Please we are not Buddhist monks as preachers. We are ready to suffer when we go to the jungles but why should you invite a man half way across the globe, from the capital of one developed country to another, Seoul to Sydney, and check him into a YMCA room? Something is wrong there. A friend of mine

was actually checked by his hosts into something more like a brothel – those low-level hotels that are very cheap and people also rent them by the hour. He said the room had only one light bulb and it was red! My beloved brethren, Christianity and stupidity are two different religions please!

Having said these, let the guest minister also be moderate in his expectations and not be a burden to his hosts. This whole thing is still the ministry of the word of God. It is good to let your hosts know that they should take care of your transport costs and provide decent accommodation. Discuss in a spirit of brotherhood if you are not sure of the kind of thing to expect from them. That will leave no room for offence. Please avoid putting a specific charge on your anointing; it does not have a good aroma.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

BASIC GIVING PRINCIPLES

I want to begin to conclude the teaching of this book by bringing suggestions to us on practical steps which we may take so as to fulfil the work of ministering with the preachers of the word.

Like we referred to earlier, what someone does with his material possessions shows where his heart is. Having read everything in this book so far, we must be careful to respond accordingly.

The word of Paul to the Corinthians is instructive to note in preparing ourselves for the good works we speak of.

Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 2 Cor 9:10

Please notice that Paul was teaching that in every material thing of your life there is seed and there is bread.

Seed, in the context of the subject of this book, is that which you give to support the work of God. I am aware that there are other kinds of seed but we are focusing on the type used to support the ministry of the word in this teaching at this time. I discussed more about the other kinds of seed in the books *Grace to Prosper* and *How to Work for God*.

In every money that God gives you there is a part that belongs to the preaching of the word of God. My wife and I created a special account for this and we set certain proportions of our incomes to be credited into that account. We keep a detailed book on this account. A huge chunk of our income is paid into this account regularly; the proportion was determined by us in accordance with the understanding we have of things. From this we give purely to the preaching of the word of God in various ways. Other kinds of charity work are done from other monies we have, and not from this account.

I recommend that EVERY believer prepare ahead of time how much of the money that the Lord affords them will be given to the preaching of the word. I do not believe that we should leave this matter to impulse alone. We must plan ahead and disburse these monies as soon as they come.

I mentioned earlier that at Kingdom-Word Ministries we never announce 'offering time;' the reason is because we try to discourage the practise of people giving to the work of the ministry as an obligation that must be performed every time they attend a meeting. Ministers even preach it that you must never come to a service without an offering. I don't believe that is a scriptural law. All we have to do is look at the meetings that were run by the Lord Jesus and the early apostles and we will see that it was never commanded. It is just an overzealous adaptation of Exodus 34:20. There was a time one of my seniors, a senior military officer, said that he leaves any church service he attends once the preacher has finished preaching and he has paid money. Paid, that was his opinion of giving offerings, and it was

obviously born out of the fact that we have made it a kind of obligation. No, it should not be so.

PLAN TO GIVE

What we do at the ministry is to encourage people to plan and do as they have so purposed.

*Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver.
2 Cor 9:7*

We do not buy cars by impulse, neither do we buy valuable household items so, why then do we leave the matter of giving to God's work as an impulsive thing? No, that is not right. We must plan. I teach that everyone should prayerfully set aside what they want to give to us as a ministry and give it. For those who are my co-workers it is compulsory that they determine it at the beginning of every year and give it regularly. The amount is totally voluntary but it must be regular.

Most of the people who give to our ministry do so once a month. We don't need to spend our time counting change because we don't encourage the give-to-a-beggar attitude that is generated by contemporary practice. We are not beggars and so we don't behave as such.

We all know what we earn and when we get paid. Even if you are not a salaried worker you have a general idea of how much you average as income. Plan based on that and give accordingly.

Giving to the preaching of the work of God is a compulsory Christian obligation and we must all participate.

I am of the opinion that you cannot spread yourself too thin and therefore you should locate a few ministries and ministers that you will give to regularly, first of which should be your local church. In this book I am not talking about charity work generally but specifically about the preaching of the word of God. You may wish to follow my example and set a specific amount or proportion of your income to give for this purpose and then share it to those places that you have decided.

Some people say that ten percent must be given to your local church. It is a good thing if you decide that but it is not a commandment of the Bible. The word 'storehouse' which is used to support this injunction is taken from the book of Malachi (Mal 3:10), but the proper application actually refers to giving to ministers of the gospel, the needy and strangers. The storehouse was the place in the community where the priesthood, the poor, the widows and the strangers were sustained. The storehouse therefore describes charity work generally. (For more on this, please read my book, *Grace to Prosper*).

Please I am not saying you must not give ten percent to your church if you desire; only note that it is a personal decision and not a commandment. You can even do much higher than that (a tenth is not much in the life of a true Christian). I am emphasizing that you should decide how you want to do it and that it is necessary that you give to other places also and so fulfil the desire

of God. As a matter of fact you must give regularly to your local church.

My personal recommendation (not a commandment of scripture, please) is that not less than a tenth of an average believer's income should be set aside for the work of preaching the gospel alone. Other charitable works should be added above this. As God blesses the individual this proportion should increase.

Please let me explain this last point I made, that of increasing proportions.

MULTIPLIED SEED

Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 2 Cor 9:10

The main thing that God does as He increases you in life is not to increase your bread; rather He is increasing your seed. When God causes harvest to come into your life in promotions and greater revenue, the main component of that increase is more seed to sow. God is always multiplying your seed for sowing. If you were giving about one-tenth of your income to the work of the word today, when God increases you many times over, your proportion should reach far beyond the tenth of today.

Giving is the life of a believer. The main reason why God gave you resources is so that you can be a blessing to others. Giving to the work of the ministry is a crucial part of your giving life. You

cannot afford to make the primary reason why God created something a second place expenditure. Many people give to the work of the ministry only after they have settled other things. People will in their heart make promises to the work of the word but will wait until after they have gone on holidays abroad, built a house, bought a car or such things before fulfilling those promises. It is not right at all. Listen my brethren; the word of God is priority. We must do it. It is a matter of responsibility.

Give regularly to your local church. Give to special projects that are propagating the gospel. Turn back to the place and person from which the word of God came to bless you and give to them. Let the man who regularly feeds you with the word also regularly receive something from you. Give to a ministry you know is propagating the truth of God. Help them by giving them money. Do the little you can; no one expects that you will solve all their problems. Contribute your portion and leave the rest. If the ministry announces a 20 million naira project and all you have is one thousand naira to give, give that and give God thanks, but don't say the money needed is too much and that your contribution will be insignificant. Don't forget, little drops of water make the mighty ocean.

Please don't forget that there is beauty in consistency. Try to be consistent in your giving life.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE MINISTRY OF GIVING

This book is to every Christian and describes an area of the operation of the spirit of Christ – the area of generously giving to the work of the gospel. I pray that all of us will take up our responsibilities in providing finances for the work of the ministry. Myles Munroe has given the word, that it was a matter of money to spread a lie about the resurrection of Jesus, and that it will cost more money to tell the truth about it.

We all have ministries and callings given to us by our Lord and Master. Many people know theirs while many are confused. Part of the confusion is a result of the fact that we may not even know about the existence of the ministry we are called to. There is a ministry that exists but which is not often emphasized. I want to teach briefly about it.

And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith... he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality... Rom 12:6-8

There is a ministry called the giving ministry. Looking at the words of Paul above we easily see that he listed giving just like he listed teaching and exhortation. Leadership is also a ministry and so is visitations and caring for people (he who shows mercy).

Every believer will participate to varying degrees in performing all these functions, but there is specialization in a specific area for each person, and that is what we call a gift and a calling.

There is a specialization called giving, and there are people called into that ministry. These people give with aggression and with intense faithfulness. As a preacher I labour in the word and in doctrine. I teach in my ministry hall twice a week; I teach on radio, write books, edit messages, circulate sermons by emails, and I honour preaching invitations. I also go around organizing and teaching seminars. This sounds appropriate because I am a preacher; it is to be expected of me. But it is the same faithfulness that God intends for some people to have in financially empowering the preaching of the gospel and the discipling of the people. Every Christian should give, but for the people with this giving ministry, it is not just about “I have given a tithe and an offering;” it is rather a matter of “it is my personal financial duty to make sure this work is done.”

Many times some of us preachers demand this kind of financial faithfulness from every believer; we often celebrate the few people who God sent to us as co-labourers to take charge in the area of finances, and so try to set them up as examples for every member of the church. But it is not possible for everybody to be so committed; those people are in their own areas of ministry and that is why the spirit that is so financially committed is found with them. Other people will give but their own remarkable degree of commitment will be in other areas as their gifts indicate. We must recognize this fact.

Please don't get me wrong; I am not saying Christians should not be very generous, but I am talking about a kind of faithfulness in giving that is so unusual. To demand it of every believer is the same as saying that every Christian should be faithful in preaching as some of us preachers. It is not possible! Every Christian should give in proportion to how they have prospered, but those who have this calling do not act so; for them, to give to a particular cause like a ministry activity is a matter of life and faithfulness. Sometimes they will even borrow to give, when what they have does not seem to be enough. They are difficult to emulate unless you have their calling because there is a spirit pushing them, and that spirit is what we call grace. If you don't have that grace, don't even try. Just be faithful in the little way that you can.

People called into the giving ministry are usually gifted to earn more money than others, and invariably this is part of the call for any Christian that is legitimately rich in life.

Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches...Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share... 1 Tim 6:17-18

THE ABILITY TO GATHER

Now let me explain the concept of 'the ability to gather.' I picked this expression concerning gathering from the experience with the collection of manna by the nation of Israel in the wilderness. We see in Exodus chapter 16 that manna used to fall in the morning.

The Israelites were meant to gather only what they could consume in a day. They were forbidden to gather and store (a sign that Christians must not worry about tomorrow but must depend always on God). Anybody who stored only woke up to find worms in the container. The only exception was on the day before Sabbath in which they were allowed to gather for two days and there was no decay of whatever was then stored. There was absolutely no advantage to gathering excessively since any unused excess was lost to worms immediately.

The main point is from the following verse.

When they measured it with an omer, he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no lack; every man gathered as much as he should eat. Ex 16:18

What happened was that each person gathered as much and as fast as they could before the sun would melt the stuff. People were not trying to limit their gathering; they were just packing the stuff. For this reason at the end of the collection many had more than they needed but some did not have enough. There are different reasons why some would gather little while others would gather much. It could be because of physical abilities or maybe some were busy attending to the 'affairs of state.'

Now, imagine that some had large families and others had small families. Because there was no incentive for keeping it, those with excess freely gave to those who did not have enough, so that when every bowl of manna was distributed, each man had enough

for his household. Paul applied this when collecting relief money for the trouble in Jerusalem as follows.

For this is not for the ease of others and for your affliction, but by way of equality — at this present time your abundance being a supply for their want, that their abundance also may become a supply for your want, that there may be equality. 2 Cor 8:13-14

So we see that equality is the aim. Not equality in poverty that was the result of communism, but equality in prosperity and abundant supplies.

One of the obvious facts about life is that fingers are not equal. People simply have differing abilities to gather wealth and material resources. A set of three most brilliant young men may graduate from the university with identical degrees and grades, yet at the end of five years one of them is earning ten times what the other two are earning combined. The other two are not necessarily lazy; wealth just seems to have a mind of its own. One thing that often happens is that all the income of the three bright chaps may be less than half of one little guy who was their friend in secondary school who didn't go beyond that level. Having observed this kind of thing again and again, Solomon wrote

I have observed something else in this world of ours. The fastest runner doesn't always win the race, and the strongest warrior doesn't always win the battle. The wise are often poor, and the skillful are not necessarily wealthy. And those who are educated don't always lead successful lives. It is all decided by chance, by being at the right place at the right time. Eccl 9:11

We definitely have different graces and abilities when it comes to financial matters, just like we have in other areas. In the matters of money this is so obvious in life; if we all put in the same effort, some will still end up with more money than others, no matter how many times you try to change the picture. That was the way the gathering of manna was.

We must understand that God does not see money the way we see it. He sees money as a tool and not a reflection of superiority. We believers must learn the way God thinks and operate according to it. His ways are higher than the ways of the world. With God there is little more to money than its being a tool, a means for doing the purpose of God, and so He gives it in proportion to the duties assigned.

In the world, money is a sign of the ability to enjoy, a sign of power and a licence to oppress. With God, money is a tool and is just like a piece of machinery. He expects us all to learn how to use it and He tests our faithfulness in the use of it. He does not expect that we consume our lives running after something that is just a tool. When we behave so, we turn it into what every other tool becomes under these circumstances – an idol; the god called mammon. Money is a tool that we use for the purposes that God ordained for us.

Because of these facts, God gives more money to some people than to others. This is beyond the one He gives for meeting general needs. It therefore stands to reason that the more the

amount of money that flows toward you as a child of God, the greater the responsibility that you must carry financially.

The error that the world sold to us is that we think ourselves lucky when we are rich and so take advantage of that luck to enjoy. We drive very costly cars, take expensive trips and holidays, wear costly perfumes while fooling ourselves that since we have tithed, we have settled God and the devourer is out of the picture, therefore more shall flow. Actually that is one of the problems I have with the doctrine of tithing that is common today in the body of Christ. Apart from the fact that it is not an accurate doctrine in most of the application (see my book *Grace to Prosper* for more on that), it makes a lot of believers irresponsible by giving them a false sense of divine approval when they are absolutely unfaithful. Giving one tenth of one's income is not sacrosanct; for some people who God has channelled a lot of resources into their hands, anything less than 60% may end up being a sin – a personal sin. Ten percent may be a good guide for general giving for every believer, but it is not compulsory and not commanded; it may only serve as a guide. If you have plenty, please give plenty. The one with little may not be able to give as much.

Let me explain further. Even in natural matters of taxation there is no equality in the proportion given as tax. The percentage people pay as tax increases as their total income increases. A man earning 50,000 naira a month may pay 15%, while a man earning 500,000 may pay 30%. It may look unfair initially but the logic is simple: once basic needs are taken care of, the proportion that can be parted with to other people increases as the total increases.

As an illustration, Ted Turner, founder of CNN, gave out a billion dollars to a United Nations agency in 1998. His reason was that since his wealth had just increased by about a billion dollars, (he was previously worth about 2 billion), and his experience, according to him, was that a man can be absolutely comfortable with 200 million US dollars, he saw no use for the new addition except to use it to try and solve the problems in the world.

My point in the context of this book about this matter is that God has specially given to a lot of Christians the ability to gather financially more than others and to those people He committed the special duties of giving to the work of the ministry.

CALLED WITH ME

One of the reasons why I do not beg for money or press for offerings at my meetings is because I recognize that God will never call and send a man without sending provisions. I realize that just as He called me to preach He also called some people to pay. The Bible says that God can save by a multitude and can just as easily save by a few (1 Sam 14:6). I am persuaded that when it comes to the matter of ministry He particularly prefers using the few. I reasoned about it, prayed about it and came to the conclusion that there are a few people that God called to pay for the work that I am doing. I may not know them all, but they keep coming. I am aware that the money we will spend in Kingdom-Word Ministries will come into millions and millions of dollars, but I am strongly inclined to believe that, despite the fact that we will be reaching millions of people, the greater proportion of the

money will come from a maximum of twelve people. These are people that He called to give just as I am called to teach.

There is an example of this in the life of Jesus. As we have discovered, at least from our study in this book, ministry costs money, and even though emphasis was not laid on the cost of it, the ministry of Jesus was not an exception. It was expensive to hire boats, feed and take care of a complement of full-time staff, and take care of many other ministry needs. They used to buy things. We often unconsciously think things were always given to them free, but several examples shows us they used to pay for things (see Jn 4:8; Mk 6:37). That was one major reason why they needed a treasurer, and that was what Judas was. The Lord Jesus used a lot of money and so had to have a lot of it too.

So where did the money come from? The Bible did not tell us He used to call for offerings like we do in our meetings today, including when we are at crusades to reach unbelievers. I believe He never did that.*

The funds in the ministry of Jesus funds came from a few people who made it their own ministries to keep Him fully supplied. Some of them were mentioned in the book of Luke.

And it came about soon afterwards, that He began going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with Him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and

Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means. Luke 8:1-3

The ministry of Jesus did not depend on begging those he was reaching out to for offerings. He had followers who God blessed and called into the giving ministry.

DEDICATED TO THE CALL

People with the ministry of giving don't calculate percentage. Imagine a preacher tithing his time to preach; that would be absurd. In the same manner giver-ministers do not calculate. They are the types of people that give even before they eat. They give with the same passion that a teacher will teach. They do not need or want recognition; they simply take pride in the fact that the money they are giving is producing fruit in the spread of the gospel. When they do not give, pressure builds inside them; giving for them is to release that pressure just like preaching is a release of pressure to the preacher. Jeremiah described this experience as fire shut up inside the bones, to which relief came to him only by preaching (Jer 20:9).

The lives of these givers are full of mouth-watering testimonies of breakthrough. But they are not to think of themselves as being smarter than others. Many of them have been confused into thinking that the reason why they get so much money is because they are great givers, and preachers have often used their testimonies to persuade other Christians to follow their examples of sacrificial giving. They preach that God will also bless you as He blessed them with finances. But that is not the whole truth.

It is true that faithfulness in using their gifts will make the grace increase, but it is not true that their giving is the primary reason for such abundance. The real reason for that degree of financial favour is because of their calling. Think about it in the life of the teacher. The anointing to teach will most certainly increase as the teacher exercises himself in teaching, but the calling was there first, and a certain degree of grace was given to him to start. The primary thing is the calling.

So it is with the ministry of giving.

There are many who are called to this office but who do not realize it. God has given them resources beyond the normal. That may be why you always get those high paying jobs even in the midst of economic downturn. That is likely the reason why your business ideas always do well. You find money making quite easy and you cannot readily understand why others can't do these things just as easily. No, it is not just you or plain old luck; it is the Lord your God that is giving you the power to get wealth so as to furnish you with the resources necessary to fulfil the call for your life. It is called grace. Grace is the divine ability given so that we can fulfil His call. You are called to give.

FULFIL YOUR MINISTRY

If you are one of such your spirit is speaking to you as you are reading this. Many have been unfaithful and have used the monies for their own needs. They have bought cars and built houses and travelled all over the world. They are just having a good time.

Meanwhile the work of God that should have prospered by their hands is suffering. They are being very unfaithful. But because the gifts and calling of God are without repentance, they still have the grace to get. They are still rich and are still making money. But there will be a day of divine judgment when we will all give account of what we did with the gifts of God in our lives.

The pastor-teacher will be judged for how much he waited on his teaching.

The giver will be judged on how much he was careful to fulfil the ministry of giving.

Judgement day is coming for us all.

If you are rich, having far beyond your peers and beyond all that you need, it is very likely you have a giving ministry.

You must exercise yourself in your grace of giving.

And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each exercise them accordingly... he who gives, with liberality. Rom 12:6-8

You should not expect that every Christian will contribute to the sponsorship of the work of God. Take it as if without you it will not be done. Take a whole programme or project as if it was yours alone to complete financially; that way you are building up your anointing, which will become financial ability, to do more.

There are many who sense this gift in them, but they are not rich enough yet in their own estimation. To such people I say this: Start where you are because it is unlikely you will ever be rich enough in your eyes. The Bible says it is acceptable according to

your current level. God will give you a place where your little money will count. But you will increase.

A man who I read of and who I believe has this kind of grace is Peter J. Daniels, the Australian Christian and businessman. He said one of his goals in life is to see how much a man who came out of poverty can give in a lifetime. He said there was a time he gave all he had, then he borrowed on his company and gave the money. After this he borrowed on his name and gave the money. The zeal to give was just consuming him.

I also remember the story of R. G. Letourneau who sold his big earth-moving machinery manufacturing company and gave virtually all the money to missions. That is a giver in action.

I know people who have made it a rule to give half of all profits taken out of their businesses to the preaching of the gospel alone. That is a giving ministry.

This is the reason why I am displeased when I see pastors swell neck veins over the issue of tithe as if that is all God came to collect after the resurrection of Jesus. The truth is that the life of believers is far superior to the doctrines founded upon the codes of Hammurabi or Judaism. Real Christians are committed beyond laws.

I pray that many who are so called will move into this ministry. Just like the preacher has the word already, you too already have the resources.
Step into your gift.

Let the work of God prosper by your hand.
God will make you so rich you will wonder why.
I have come today to tell you why.
It is for the sponsorship of the gospel!

Thus saith the LORD of hosts; My cities through prosperity shall yet be spread abroad; and the LORD shall yet comfort Zion, and shall yet choose Jerusalem. Zech 1:17 KJV

SUMMARY

There are a number of things I want to point out from these last things I discussed.

1. If you have the call to be a ministry-giver, you will become very rich. You may start very small, but if you are faithful you will become very rich. It does not mean you are smarter than other people or that you have sown more seeds. It only means that you have a ministry that others may not have. Please don't wait to be rich before you start. Just start with faithful giving as is good for every Christian, and you will soon discover that you have the grace and the ability to gather. You will become as rich as you will be able to use for the purposes of God.
2. If you discover that you have the ability to gather, it is almost certain that you have a ministry-giver assignment, in addition to whatever else you may have as a call. You must take up more responsibilities than other believers and never see yourself as deserving of any praise for it. You were blessed for a certain reason. You have no right to

live large and expect the responsibilities to be shared equally, either in your natural family or in the church of God.* [*Just by the way, preachers, it is not appropriate to be taking offerings during your outreaches to unbelievers. It erodes your credibility to some extent. I think it is totally wrong for us pastors to invite non-believers to church so we can raise money from them. That brings down the quality of the message we have. God has placed enough resources in our midst; once these are harnessed properly we will discover that our God is indeed all-sufficient. Let us restrict the call for offerings to the circle of believers. That is more dignifying for our gospel and our God.*]

3. Note that there is no reason to desire to be very rich in life as a Christian unless you have a ministry-giving mission in your desires. If this is not so you are dabbling into iniquity and you will pierce yourself through with many sorrows (1 Tim 6: 9, 10). Great wealth is not necessary for personal enjoyment and fulfilment. It is an idol if used as security for tomorrow. Manna used to decay when stored and this is a lesson for us today. It is a sign that believers must not lay up treasure as security for tomorrow.

A WORD FOR PREACHERS

If you are a minister of the gospel, pray to the Lord of the harvest that He might send financial labourers into your harvest field (Matt 9:38). Pray that God will bless them, keep them and make them be of a willing heart. Pray for those who financially work

with you so that they might prosper much more. That is part of your duties. Just preach and pray; there is no need to put pressure on anybody.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THERE IS A REWARD

I am sure you have noticed me emphasizing again and again that it is wrong for Christians to give because they want to receive, and that is the truth of God. He said to Job, “Who has given to Me that I should repay him?” Job 41:11. The Lord said we are to be continually service oriented and not demand compensation from the Lord (Luke 17:7-10).

In the same way, when you obey me you should say, 'We are not worthy of praise. We are servants who have simply done our duty.' Luke 17:10 NLT

Also I have explained that to tie a desired personal reward as fruit to a gift or an offering being given is more of witchcraft than Christianity. I have gone further to say again and again that to quote the good works you have done for the Lord in prayer as the basis for receiving His blessings is very wrong and actually kills the power of the good works. It is a spirit of the Pharisees.

You can never demand a blessing from God because of something good that you have done. As believers we hope in His mercy at all times. His mercy means that He always does the best for us under every circumstance because of the atoning power of the blood of Jesus. Whenever we pray in the name of Jesus we are saying to Him that we have not come in the power of our own righteousness or claiming a debt He owes us for the good we have

done, but that we have come trusting that our sins are forgiven and that Jesus has enough credit with the Father that we can draw on.

So, we do not do things for the reward.

Now please note this: Even though we do not give so that it will be given to us, the Lord however said, “give and it shall be given...”

Yes, it shall be given.

What am I saying?

Even though we do not do good works for the reward, yet there is indeed a reward. Cheerful giving always brings a reward!

The Lord Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35); this means there is a special blessing that only a giver gets.

Paul said God loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor 9:7). When God loves someone, He gives to the person. He takes care of everything that concerns the person. With God, love is not an emotional feeling; it is a description for the priority that God places on blessing the person He loves.

For God so loved the world that He gave...

So if you are a cheerful giver, God will bless you, increase you and make all good things flow towards you.

You will notice that Paul prayed special prayers for those who helped him financially in ministry. The scripture which we love to quote often is this:

And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Phil 4:19

Notice the 'and' at the beginning of that sentence. It shows that there was something going on before it. That prayer was prayed particularly for the Philippians because they had been so active in supporting Paul and his ministry.

...you have done well to share with me in my affliction. And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. But I have received everything in full, and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. Phil 4:14-18

These were the things he said before he went on to bless the people with the supplies of God according to God's riches in glory in Christ. It was not to people who were only looking and not getting involved. There is indeed a reward for helping the preacher-man here.

That was the case of the Shunammite woman. She gave once and again to Elisha, and his God supplied her a son according to His riches in glory. She did not give so as to get, but when she did with a clean heart, she got a mighty reward. God indeed loves a cheerful giver.

The person who gives to the work of the gospel is sharing in the reward of the prophet, which we discussed earlier. Don't forget the story I told of the man who gave to John A. Dowie; the man gave to this man of God out of the position of need he himself was in, and Dowie prayed for him that God would supply his needs. The money he gave was previously meant for a mortgage payment but God supernaturally paid up the whole outstanding bill on the house for him.

We may not know what the reward is, but there is a reward.

We cannot decide what the reward will be, but there is a reward. The reward is bigger and better than what we can ever imagine.

If you read my book *Great Faith Can Be Yours*, I discussed extensively about the widow of Zarephat and how people have often misunderstood her case and so now think that they can give one offering in the time of their crisis and reap a deliverance harvest. I explained that great faith is a manifestation of God's grace and is given often to a habitual giver. The widow in question had two characteristics that a discerning eye would see: she was a generous woman and a woman who prayed to God. She actually really received Elijah first and foremost as a prophet; she was willing to give to him because he was needy and not because she was needy. We have often missed the point. She was not focusing on her personal issues as much as she was just being generous to a man of God.

There are many people who want to give one sudden offering and then get a great reward, thinking they are following the example of this widow. I always want such people to ask themselves how Elijah got there in the first place. We must never forget that he was specifically sent to her, like the Lord Jesus explained; the meeting was not a chance thing.

Certainly there were many widows in Israel who needed help in Elijah's time... yet Elijah was not sent to any of them. He was sent instead to a widow of Zarephath — a foreigner in the land of Sidon. Luke 4:25-26 NLT

So why did God send Elijah to her?

The truth is that the woman would have given to Elijah even if he did not promise anything. It was her nature to help people and that is very likely the reason why God sent Elijah to her. It pays to be a habitual giver.

I tell you the truth: we are not all on the same level with God. Those who demonstrate their love for God habitually, not for selfish motives of bribing a blessing out of Him, are special in His eyes. A generous giver motivated by love gets special attention with the Father. Please see an illustration of this in the lives of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. It was in their home that the Lord Jesus used to take his rest and have his meals anytime He came near that town. When Lazarus was sick later, the sisters testified that he was a man Jesus loved.

A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. This is the Mary who poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, the one you love is very sick." John 11:1-3 NLT

This Lazarus became the man that Jesus raised from the dead as a sign of His Sonship!

Selfless giving is a sign of true love and devotion; it is indeed a sign of faith.

Abraham's gift of Isaac was a sign of his faith, and it caused God to pronounce huge blessings on him. One of the major ways by which we express our faith in the word of God, that it contains the power of God, is how committed we are to the propagation of that word. Our faith must not be in words alone but in deed also. A person who does not actively give to the ministry of the word is saying in effect that he or she does not really believe much in that word. If you really believed it you would have a high regard for those who have truly committed their lives to the propagation of it and you will be in serious financial support.

There is a great reward in being financially involved with the word of God. I am not talking about selfish giving and trying to cleanse away iniquity by giving. No, please. Iniquity is cleansed by confession of sin and repentance. It does not work with God to continue in sin and then be a great giver, hoping that God will overlook it all. No, that is one of the ways by which we

effectively mock God. I am talking about the heart of righteousness that loves the Lord and expresses that love in devotion to His work of the gospel. There is a great reward for it.

It is not everything that you need that you can ask for. Many of the things that you really need in this life you do not even know you need them. Many of these things will come to you only as rewards for acts of faithful giving. You don't know them and you don't know which acts of giving will produce what results. Therefore I follow the injunction of Solomon which says,

Sow your seed in the morning, and do not be idle in the evening, for you do not know whether morning or evening sowing will succeed... Eccl 11:6

I follow that and I say to you that,

The key to the release of God's favour is the continual doing of good works.

The key word is 'continual.'



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