

The Path to Blessing

This lesson will teach you about God, money, and the *path to blessing* for each person.

Complete the following discipleship lesson using a pen and a Bible. Look up the verses below in Scripture and fill in the blanks when necessary.

Many times, when the subject of God and money comes up, fear can arise.

The fear can be understandable. At the time of writing this lesson, the average American carries over \$15k in credit card debt (2010 US Census). We live in a country that seems out of control financially and yet at the same time are confronted each day with messages that tell us to buy more, do more, and have more. *But, does God really care about our financial lives? Is He that practical?*

It's interesting that over 800 Scriptures in the Bible deal with finances. Jesus himself told 11 of his 39 "parables" in the Bible about money. Money is a big deal to God because it shows the state of our hearts.

The Bible says that God has made known to us the "path of life" (Psalm 16:11). This lesson will teach you God's **path to blessing** for us by learning *God's promises* for blessing, *God's plan* for blessing, and *our part* to obey.

The Promise of Blessing

What does God think about people? What does He want for us? The first chapter of the Bible tells us God's heart.

Genesis 1:28

And God _____ them and said to them be _____ and _____; fill the earth and subdue it.

In the same manner that God blessed Adam and Eve, God is wanting to give us opportunities to be blessed today. Jesus said it this way:

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy; I have come that they may have new life, and have it to the _____.

Many times people are afraid to surrender their finances to God. They worry that God won't take care of them, or worse, curse them and make them suffer. In this parable of Jesus, the "thief" is the Devil. The Devil is the one who does not want you to be blessed and have a full life. Jesus declared that we would have life to the "full." Some translations of the Bible call this life "abundant." God wants you to have an abundant life, which means having more than you need.

God's promise through our life is not only that *we* would be blessed, but that He would also use that blessing and influence to impact others. God wants to bless us and He also wants us to bless others.

Genesis 12:1-3

The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples of the earth will be _____ through you.

God's Plan for Blessing

God will trust us with blessing when we follow His plan. "Blessed are those who keep his statutes" (Psalm 119:2). Listed here are the elements of God's plan for blessing: *Working Diligently - Living Simply - Giving Generously*.

Working Diligently

When we work diligently, we are good stewards of God's blessing. Read Jesus's parable together in Matthew 25:14-30.

Matthew 25:23

You have been faithful with a _____ things; I will put you in charge of _____ things.

Questions for Discussion: Which steward in Matthew 25 do you identify with? How can you become a better steward?

Living Simply

God wants to bless us. At the same time, He knows of the deceitfulness of wealth. Jesus said it this way:

Mark 8:36

What good is it for someone to gain the whole _____, yet forfeit their _____?

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10. Lack of contentment leads many people into debt, which is a dangerous trap that can keep us from fulfilling the will of God. These Bible verses address debt: Deut. 28:12; Proverbs 17:18, 22:7; and Romans 13:8.

Questions for Discussion: Are you content? Are you living within your means or are you in debt?

Giving Generously

It is more blessed to "give than receive" (Acts 20:35). God doesn't need our money, He already owns everything... but He does challenge us to worship Him generously with our resources. Read Malachi 3:8-12 together as we explore God's plan for generous giving.

Malachi 3:10

Bring the whole _____ into the storehouse.

In the Bible people who worshipped the Lord gave God a **tenth of their income**, the "tithe" (Genesis 14:18-20, Genesis 28:20-22, Leviticus 27:30). Jesus said "when you tithe..." (Matthew 23:23). Tithing is part of God's path to blessing.

Also, we are also called to be generous to the poor. Read Jesus's parable in Matthew 25:34-40.

Questions for Discussion: What are some of the promises Malachi contains regarding tithing? How could you grow in generosity today?

Our Part to Obey: Practical Response

Circle the practical steps below you will take to begin obeying God's commands about money.

Steps Towards Diligence

- Begin keeping a calendar in order to become a better steward of your time.
- Evaluate your work life. Are you diligent at work? Do you work enough hours?

Steps Towards Simplicity

- Begin developing a budget to keep better track of your spending.
- Begin a plan to get out of debt. Start by paying off the smallest loans or highest interest loans first.

Steps Towards Generosity

- Begin to tithe 10% of your income to the local church as worship to the Lord.
- Begin to look for ways to practically serve the poor in your community.

God's heart is to bless you.

As you walk down the "path to blessing" you can trust, in faith, that God will "meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).