

How to be a Good Provider

Part II

Sunday, July 18, 2021

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Good morning Lighthouse! Are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Last week in Part I we looked at the most foundational aspects of what it takes for a Christian to be a good provider:

Seeing yourself as a servant and understanding that the Lord holds us accountable as such;

Understanding that it is the Lord we are really serving when we go to that job we hold or that business we run out there in the world. Even understanding that it is God Himself that chooses our rate of pay;

Also, what the attitude of a servant really looks like.

For our text today we're going to start out in:

Ecclesiastes 5:18-19

18 Behold *that* which I have seen: *it is* good and comely *for one* to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for *it is* his portion.

19 Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor; *this is* the gift of God.

As we expand today on what it takes to be a good provider, let us take note of perhaps the most important reason that we actually be one.

What kind of testimony for the Lord do we have when we praise Jesus and brag on what a great God we serve (which we should be doing a lot of) while we barely survive, our credit scores are in the tank, and we are not properly providing for ourselves and our families?

One night about 45 years ago, an unbeliever I was trying to witness to asked me, "If this Jesus of yours is so great, how come you can't even quit smoking?"

The truth is that if some of the people you stand before as a witness and example actually said what they were thinking you might hear, "If this Jesus of yours is so great, how come you are always broke?"

I know what the Bible says about the poor!

I know that Jesus did say in

Mark 14:7 For ye have the poor with you always, ...

And the Bible does say in

Proverbs 28:6 Better *is* the poor that walketh in his uprightness, than *he that is* perverse *in his ways*, though he *be* rich.

There are certainly many worse things than being poor; however, there is not a verse or a passage or a teaching in the Bible that commends Christians for being poor or that teaches that God's Children should be or stay poor.

Just the opposite is true; God wants you well provided for and has made complete provision for it in His Word.

As a Christian, your financial condition affects a lot more than your credit score: Solomon said in

Ecclesiastes 9:16 ...*Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard.*

Just for the record, that same night 45 years ago was the last time I ever smoked a cigarette, because my Jesus really is so great!

Today's message is not about how to become financially independent; as a matter of fact, Christians must get used to the idea that they will always be very financially dependent!

Today's message is a challenge for you to get serious about reading, studying, learning and particularly APPLYING what the Bible says about money.

The **Bible** offers about 500 verses on prayer, fewer than 500 verses on faith, and more than 2,000 verses on **money**.

In fact, roughly **15 percent** of everything Jesus taught was on the topic of **money** and possessions; more than His teachings on heaven and hell combined.

None of this will do you an ounce of good unless you both learn it and then actually apply it to your life.

You must act on it.

James 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

This means that every time you discover a principle of wisdom that you lack, financial or otherwise, you need to make that principle part of your life that very day.

What I have for you today is a general plan that will get you on the right road.

There is no quick fix.

There are situations; there are exceptions; there are certain things that God may be doing or teaching you that may cause finances to be withheld for a time even if you are doing all the right things.

For example, I know that God has withheld financial blessing from us on occasion so that I couldn't help my children avoid some of the hard financial lessons God was trying to teach them.

Just like last week, today's message is not about tithing or giving.

Without exception, I teach every believer under the sound of my voice to tithe faithfully and to give generously just like the Bible teaches, as Lisa and I also do so ourselves.

For you to be richly blessed and highly favored of God and then be unwilling to honor Him with it speaks volumes about you!

Today's message is about having something substantial to honor the Lord and minister to others with.

The universe operates according to laws; the law of gravity is not Isaac Newton's law, it's God's law.

The financial universe operates according to laws as well.

As we start out today, let's put things in their proper priorities.

I. Get your priorities right.

A. *About riches.* (Like giving, it's not about the money).

1. **Proverbs 23:4** Labor not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.

2. Becoming rich can never be a believer's priority!

3. **Ecclesiastes 5:10-12**

10 He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this *is* also vanity.

11 When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good *is there* to the owners thereof, saving the beholding *of them* with their eyes?

12 The sleep of a laboring man *is* sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep.

4. **Proverbs 30:8-9**

8 Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

9 Lest I be full, and deny *thee*, and say, *Who is the LORD?* or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God *in vain*.

5. Yes, it means quit buying those stupid lottery tickets, which if God did let you win, would destroy you.

6. There is a giant category called “having enough and to spare” lying right there in the middle between poverty and riches.

7. Seeking to be rich is wrong; it is not so much a sin as it is just stupid; it’s living your life for the wrong things... being rich, however, is not.

8. There is also a need and a place for certain rare and special very rich believers (chosen of God) who can and will use what they have for the glory of God; it was one of those who provided the tomb for our Lord.

9. Your financial priorities cannot be about the money; money, although important, is the least part of the equation. Jesus said in

Luke 16:10-11

10 He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon [money], who will commit to your trust the true *riches*?

Next get let's get our priorities right:

B. About responsibility.

1. Men, much of what God says about financial responsibility is directed straight at you.

2. Remember our text from last week?

1 Timothy 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

3. God has placed you men as the head of your home and requires your wife and children to be subject to you.

4. God has also placed us in leadership over His Church.

5. With that authority also comes responsibility.

6. Your wife is given to be a help to you in whatever way is needful, but it is your responsibility to see to the provision of your home, not hers.

7. Ladies, there is something here for you as well.
8. You want your husband to subject to the Lord, right?
9. What would you call it when a wife wants her husband to be subject to Christ but she is not willing to be subject to him?

Next get let's get our priorities right:

C. About our reputation.

1. **Proverbs 22:1** A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold.

2. What kind of reputation do you have at your bank?
3. What kind of reputation do you have with those to whom you pay 'the bills'?
4. What kind of reputation do you have with those over you at your work?
5. God requires your Pastor to have a good reputation:

1 Timothy 3:7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

6. Why do you think he requires something less of you?
7. This is what we started out with today; you really cannot be a proper testimony for Christ without a good reputation; that means we must become a good provider.

Once you get your priorities right, then it's time to:

II. Prepare for success.

A. There may be some personal habits and traits that need to change.

1. If you are not in high demand in your field; it could be that you are lazy.
2. **Proverbs 26:14** As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed.
3. How are you with that snooze button?
4. How often do you oversleep?
5. **Proverbs 24:30-31**

30 I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding;

31 And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, *and* nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.

6. What does your yard look like?

7. **Proverbs 12:27** The slothful *man* roasteth not that which he took in hunting: but the substance of a diligent man *is* precious.

Do you take care of what God gives you?

8. **Proverbs 22:13** The slothful *man* saith, *There is* a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets.

9. Are excuses not to get up and go to work easy for you?

B. There are also some practical things that need to change.

1. Get up early. **Proverbs 24:33-34**

33 *Yef* a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

34 So shall thy poverty come as one that traveleth; and thy want as an armed man.

2. Get a jump on the day; you don't know what God has for you and you won't if you don't get up and get out there.

a. Being out of work is not a reason to sleep in; you need more than ever to get up early and spend a full day out finding a job.

b. **Luke 11:9** *And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*

c. Spend a full 8-10 hour day every day doing this and see how long you remain unemployed.

3. Don't be late.

Colossians 4:5 *Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.*

It's not just a matter of punctuality; if you agree to be somewhere at a certain time and you don't keep your word; it's a matter of integrity.

4. Learn how to get the job done. Employers do not pay you to be on the job and put in your time; they pay you to get the job done. You need to gain the education, the expertise and the skills to do just that; and while you are at it, you might just as well be the best!

5. It's the same with customers. Rarely does a customer care how much sweat you personally put into a job; they care about one thing: turning out a good job well done.

C. May I also say, you need to look the part.

1. **1 Corinthians 13:11** When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

2. I'm your Pastor who loves you and I'm not going to condemn you for your long hair or your tattoos or your skirt length or whatever your preferences are (within reason).

3. But this message is about how to be a good provider and the fact is that most employers or customers who pay well won't even take a second look if you are not presenting yourself as a professional.

4. If you want to be paid like a professional, you need to look and act like one.

5. Don't come across like some fad chaser who refused to grow up.

6. So pull your pants up and wear a belt, get a haircut; dress more than modestly, dress tastefully!

7. Sexy may be pretty to look at but it doesn't get the job done.

Next,

III. Become open to the possibilities.

Ecclesiastes 5:18-19

18 Behold *that* which I have seen: *it is good and comely for one* to eat and to drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life, which God giveth him: for *it is his portion*.

19 Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor; *this is the gift of God*.

A. Every good thing you have is a gift from God.

1. How does that work?

2. What does the Bible say that God actually gives us; is it stuff? Money? A husband or a wife?

3. What God actually gives us is power; power to get wealth, power to eat thereof, power to take our portion; even power to rejoice over our labor; **this is the gift of God.**

B. May I remind you of who you are?

1. You are a child of the living God!
2. You are a joint heir with Christ.

Romans 8:16-17

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:
17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ...

B. May I remind you of who your Father is?

1. 57 times in Scripture God reminds us that He is the Almighty!
2. He can do anything; nothing is beyond His power.
3. That means that nothing that is according to His will for your life is impossible for you!
4. **Philippians 4:13** I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

What part of this verse do you not believe?

5. You need to become a possibility thinker; forget about what is; think about what can be!

C. Who knows best what you would be good at or be happy doing; you or God?

1. So why then do you only look for employment or business opportunity in the same field you have always been in?
2. Why would you say, "But, it's the only thing I know how to do".
3. That rut you are in is really just a grave with the ends kicked out.
4. Quit waiting around for God to send you an opportunity, and open your eyes!
5. Opportunities are everywhere. As long as there are people who have needs there will be paying work for those willing to fill those needs.
6. What God gives us is the power to see those opportunities.
7. Why would a Philippians 4:13 Christian who can do all things limit him or herself to only one vocational source of income.
8. Which is another Biblical financial principle; establishing multiple sources of income, which is worth a whole sermon just by itself.

9. Jesus didn't save you because of who you are, He saved you because of who you are going to be!

10. If Jesus believes in you, maybe you ought to start believing in yourself as well.

IV. Go begin your adventure.

A. Go and find what God has for you.

1. There is a program in place for this:

Matthew 7:7-11

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

2. Don't be so foolish to just ask and then wait by the phone; the asking is to be followed up by seeking: in the paper, online, people you know, but mostly just open your eyes.

3. God is almost certainly going to answer your prayer by giving you the power to see an opportunity.

4. Along with the seeking, don't forget to do the knocking.

5. That means being out there in person with a firm handshake, looking them in the eye, believing in yourself, stating with confidence what you can do and do well.

6. When you do this, you can certainly expect the enemy to get involved; thus, you must also:

B. Learn to discern what is and is not from God.

1. Except for perhaps the early stages when you are young and learning to bear the yoke; what comes from God is something you will love to do.

2. God said a man should 'enjoy the good of all his labor' and that he should 'rejoice in his labor'.

3. It will come with substantial rewards equal to your skills and ability to get the job done well.

4. It will NOT keep you out of Church!
5. Your first priority in life is to faithfully worship God; your first command that follows is to bring Him glory in the Church.
6. A job that keeps you from that can hardly be blamed on God.
7. Don't settle; stay busy at what you are doing but rest not until you find what God has for you.
8. And then keep looking, there will likely be even more!

Conclusion:

I was in Kroger yesterday and I saw the store manager moving a whole endcap of cases of bottled water onto the shelves so the guys in the back could bring in a fresh pallet. He was working as fast as he could go while two other Kroger employees stood there watching him just chatting away nonstop without lifting a finger to help.

I strolled by there with my cart, and I asked him, "Is this how it works here; the manager stocks the shelves while the employees just stand there and watch him do it"? I told the three of them that I would be preaching tomorrow on how to be a good provider and I would like to use this as an illustration.

The manager smiled agreeably; the other two, not so much. That manager looked the part, he acted the part, he got the job done and done well. He was obviously worth about ten of those other two and no doubt will be paid accordingly; especially if he is one of God's kids.

Go out there and keep asking, seeking, and knocking! Find what God has for you; it's out there! Beware of the enemy; he will most definitely try to trip you up.

Beware of the carrot (illustrate).

When you find it, be the best; be worth more than you are getting paid and don't worry, your Father will adjust your pay!