

Excerpt from the forthcoming book: *Living as Giving*

While growing up in the church in the 80's as a young boy, there was prevailing attitude that money, success, prosperity, and wealth were signs of not having a close relationship with God. These were considered the trappings of the world, only. Period. Some years later I learned that financial increase is a gift from God and to be enjoyed by His children as an expression of His love. The presence of the prosperity message, or simply the gospel, did not automatically guarantee a manifestation of increase in the life of the reader. Understanding and subsequent manifestation required a steady feeding on teaching and preaching about the subject coupled with Biblically correct actions. Preaching and teaching on prosperity, giving and receiving, sowing and reaping, over time a greater number of Christian's embraced what had been blindly, ignorantly, or defiantly overlooked in scripture.

When I first started hearing the Word on prosperity I felt as if I was being attacked. As if my love for God and service in ministry was being diminished because I did not have a mansion. Thankfully, I kept listening and realized the Word of God was not written to embarrass me about my wanton situation it was a resolve from Heaven. Even if I had never heard anyone preach the good news of the blessing it was still in the Bible. Beyond that, I already had memorized more than 90% of the scriptures being used to teach me. But, I had not learned or trained myself to hear the Word as a lifestyle guide not a storybook.

... When we look at giving in the Bible, any offering of something of value to God, we can clearly see a strong correlation to living. By living in this context I am referring to – food, eating, and overall health. This correlation is seen from the very beginning:

Gen. 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

The command from God to Adam concerning the trees of the garden was a direct parallel to the tithe. Adam was responsible for the care of every tree including the one he was not to eat from. The same way a believer works a job and gets paid for each hour worked. In honor and love for God we bring ten cents from every dollar to God. The first command that God gives Adam is to live as giving!

In the next chapter Adam and Eve eat of that tree God commanded them not. This is the introduction of evil in man's life.

Gen. 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever:

Paul confirms how our living and our giving are closely intertwined in God's eyes and therefore and understanding or revelation on one side helps us on the other. Look at what he writes in his second letter to Timothy:

II Tim. 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

In Genesis evil originates clearly from a wrong relationship with food. The word here translated money is 'Philarguria' a combination of two words association and money. Paul says a wrong relationship with money is the root to all evil. If we go back and substitute relationship and food, we get the following:

The wrong relationship with food is the root to evil (as seen in the garden), which while some covet after (as seen in the Garden), have erred from the faith (as seen in the garden), and pierced themselves through with many sorrows (as seen in the garden and lives anyone with an unhealthy relationship with money and/or food)