

BEATING THE ODDS

WEEK 3: IN OUR FINANCES

DAY 1: READ DEUTERONOMY 8

Our behavior of generosity is to mimic the kind compassion of the Lord Most High. If we really take time to dwell on the ways we've seen the Lord provide for us and those who've come before us, we see a much broader, more beautiful display of His heart and ways His generosity stirs us, blesses the world and compels us to yearn for Him. He led the Israelites through impossible times of great terror and difficulty, providing for them, testing them and blessing them. In verse 18, Moses tells us we are to remember His character and continually recognize the source of our blessing. While the world can reward sound financial decisions, good practices and savvy business strategy, God inspires the mind, stirs the heart and equips the giftings. We must treat money the same way the Israelites were to remember the mana, milk and honey: a great demonstration of God's continual faithfulness, power and promise. How do you view your finances? How can you more accurately point toward God's faithfulness, generosity and love with "your" finances?

DAY 2: READ MATTHEW 6:19-24

Building off of yesterday's passage in Deuteronomy, when we place our priorities and focus on money or the lack thereof, we forget God's character and authority as the author of all blessings. Are you focusing on the creation or the Creator? Are you investing more in His temporary creations on earth or on Him, from which all blessings are brought forth? Do your finances reflect your heart's focus on God and obedience to His mission? What's the first change you'd make to better express it?

DAY 3: READ 1 PETER 5

As elders in the church, these leaders are called to shepherd the flock, caring for the other believers, demonstrating the great qualities of Christ as they administrate and lead. Peter explicitly tells these "leader Christians" to fulfill their duties willingly, eager, generously and not out of selfish interest or gain. Do our finances reflect the same priorities? Are we eager and generous, but lacking careful oversight? Do we view our money as tools for coercion or advancement? When presented with God's mission, do we act out of eagerness or because we feel guilty?

DAY 4: READ ACTS 20:17-36

A life dead set on the Father means all the tastes, preferences, priorities, resources and purpose conforming to His will. A life prioritizing obedience to God's mission is not swayed by circumstance, freedom or wealth. Everything is subdued to be used for the things that please God and matter to Him. As we continue to learn about beating the odds in our finances, Paul demonstrates the ways his finances reflect commitment to the mission of Jesus. As Paul admits in verse 27, it was more important for Him to obey the call of Christ in sharing the truth. Why? Because, in the eyes of the Father, the Church is an investment purchased with the precious blood of Jesus. In the Father's eyes, Paul's mission is to steward this beautiful inheritance well, preaching the Gospel selflessly, demonstrating the generosity of the Father and spurring the believers to be better, more prolific imitators of Christ to the world. When we keep our eyes on God instead of temporal creations like wealth, He shows us what is most important. By Paul viewing God's mission through the eyes of the Father, his status, freedom, legal standing, financial resources and relationships were conformed to be used by God for His mission. Financially, Paul's focus on the Father meant that wealth was a resource, a tool to better steward and pursue the things that matter to God, not a pile of silver, gold or apparel to be sought, built or guarded. Do you find yourself focusing on a lesser investment?

DAY 5: READ 1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19

Again, when our eyes are fixed on God, we have all we need. We have purpose, sustenance in the wilderness, joy in any season of abundance or drought and wealth transforms from haphazard tangible vessels of temporal pleasure into opportunities to better experience blessing, joy, purpose and greater fellowship with the Father because of your increasing obedience to His word and abounding desire to please Him. God is faithful to show us His better path, so if you're struggling to understand or shift your perspective on money, purpose, etc., let's pray to Him. Ask Him to help you see things through His eyes. Ask Him to help you understand or affirm. He is faithful to confirm the righteous path for us if we are faithful to keep our eyes on Him and obediently, prayerfully move, behave, speak and utilize our resources for His glory.

DAY 6: READ MATTHEW 25:1-30, LUKE 12:13-40 & MATTHEW 14:13-21

Don't be wary to sacrifice your material resources for God's glory. God is pleased by sacrificial giving and rewards those whose hope, trust and faith yield everything to Him for His glory, His purpose and His pleasure. Your mind, body, soul and all the physical things around you can be beautiful sacrificial offerings to the Lord. Just like the Lord used the sacrificial blood of Jesus to bring us an eternal hope and life in Him, He uses our sacrifices to multiply His ministry to the earth, feeding the 5,000, raising the dead, casting out demons, healing the sick, spreading the good news of Jesus Christ to a hungry world. Will you choose to manage your finances in a way that brings glory to God and furthers His mission on earth? Nothing is wasted.