

Adapted from Robert Morris –“The Blessed Life”

Our theme for this year is Transformation! We are being transformed into the image of Christ Jesus! Today, we begin a series about another very important transformation and that the transformation of our money from cursed to blessed.

We all know that money in and of itself is an inanimate object and doesn't really change; it is a printed piece of paper, but what really gets changed is our attitude towards money, or how we see our money. The real transformation that occurs is a heart transformation.

Giving is all about the heart and is one of the keys to the Blessed Life. In his book “The Blessed Life”, which we will be giving away, Robert Morris states it's all about the Blessed Life, not the blessed wallet or pocket book. Your heart, your life, is what is blessed transformed and changed.

**Next Life Transformation Step – I will attend all three X-Form My \$ teachings, check it on my Communication Card, turn it in and receive a free copy of “The Blessed Life” by Robert Morris. (3-25-18)**

Let's begin with two parallel texts today. Matthew 7:1-2 and Luke 6:37

*Matthew 7:1-2 Do not judge, or you too will be judged.<sup>2</sup> For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*

Notice there is nothing about money in this verse.

Everyone say: *Do not judge, or you too will be judged.*

Everyone say, *“with the measure you use, it will be measured to you”.*

Now to the parallel text.

*Luke 6:37-38 “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.<sup>38</sup> Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

Most of the time verse 38 is used to talk about giving money, I've used it that way myself.

Most of the time when we read this verse we think about money, and most of the time when we read the word “give” we think about money.

- I can't talk about grace and not talk about giving, because God so loved the world He ..... gave.
- I can't teach on marriage without talking about giving, because a marriage won't work if you are not both givers.

Giving applies to every area of our life, so we have to understand giving is about the heart.

Jesus said, *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:21)*

Some people say, “The church is only after my money.” Let me explain something to you, God, yes, not the church, is after your money because He is after your heart! Your heart is attached to your money.

There seems to be an invisible string attaching your wallet or purse to your heart.

Bottom line: If God can get your wallet, He can get your heart. Jesus said it, not me, where your treasure is, your heart will be. Your heart follows your treasure. (EX: Stock) You want your heart in God's kingdom, but your treasure in this kingdom, so this is a heart issue.

The context is about giving Judgement, Condemnation, and Forgiveness. Jesus is saying, “The way you measure these three out to others, it will be measured back to you. These are heart issues; judgement, condemnation, and forgiveness.

What you give to others will be given back to you. Judgement, condemnation, forgiveness, pressed down, and shaken together will it be given back to you.

Can this text be applied to giving money, sure it can because of the laws of sowing and reaping. If you plant one seed, you don't get back just one seed, you get back a plant or tree with many seeds.

Whatever you give, you are going to get more of it back, so it's better to give good things rather than bad things, because you are going to get it back in a greater measure. Whatever it is.

Genuine gratitude is powerful, and a heart of gratitude is vital for creating a lifestyle of generosity.

One of our “We Choose” Statements here at Believers Church is: **WE CHOOSE TO LIVE A LIFE OF GENEROSITY.**

Jesus said, “Give and it will be given back to you.” This principle of giving applies to all areas of our life.

### **Four Things We Need to Do to X-form Our Hearts**

#### **1. Deal with a Selfish Heart.**

*Deuteronomy 15:7–9 If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the Lord your God is giving you, (notice everything you have is a gift from the Lord) do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them<sup>8</sup> Rather, be openhanded (Not selfish) and freely lend them whatever they need. <sup>9</sup> Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: “The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near,” so that you do not show ill will toward the needy among your fellow Israelites and give them nothing. They may then appeal to the Lord against you, and you will be found guilty of sin.*

Now in the Old Testament, God implemented an economic system in which every 7<sup>th</sup> Year is the Year of Jubilee, and at the end of every seven years all debts are canceled.

How many of you would like to go to that system today?

The lender was tempted to estimate if the person who needed the money would be able to pay it back before that 7<sup>th</sup> year, and if they didn't think they could, the lender may selfishly hold that money back.

God said that was a wicked thought. God is saying, “Selfishness is wicked and a sin!”

Question? Why did God invent giving? (Most say, “To support His work on the earth.”) What?

Does God really need your money to further His work? Is the light bill too big in heaven?

Do the streets of Gold need to be repaved, or are the cattle on a thousand hills running low?

Answer: God invented giving for you. Giving is not for His sake; giving is for your sake.

Giving works sinful selfishness and greed out of our lives.

The Lord is concerned with our hearts. God does not bless giving, rather, He blesses giving from a right heart attitude.

It is true that when we give, we receive; however, that should not be our motivation for giving.

Giving more than anything else drives selfishness out of our lives.

## **2. Deal with a Grieving and Grudging Heart.**

*Deuteronomy 15:10 Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart (grieving heart NKJ); then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to.*

We shouldn't give with a grudging heart, or give and then grieve over that decision.

Selfishness attacks us before we give, and grief attacks us after we give.

If we realize that we are simply stewards, and everything belongs to the Lord anyway, we will have a correct perspective and we won't grieve over giving.

We grieve when we give or give grudgingly without joy. It's because we think the money is ours.

We forget that *...the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it...Psalms 24:1*

When we give back to God what is His, we don't grieve over it.

## **3. Develop a Generous Heart.**

*Deuteronomy 15:14 Supply them liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to them as the Lord your God has blessed you.*

Give to them, just like the Lord gives to you. Wow!

God said He wants us to not just give, but to be generous like He is generous.

- The first time we are born in the natural; we are born selfish.
- When we are born again, we are born generous.

God, is saying, “When are you going to grow up and be like your Father.”

God wants us to be generous like He is generous.

When are we going to grow up and become mature like our Father, who loved so much he... gave.

## **4. Develop a Grateful Heart.**

*Deuteronomy 15:15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today.*

God is saying, “I command you to be generous! The authority that I'm commanding you is that everything you have comes from me.”

If we allow God to remind us every now and then that we were once slaves, and that everything we have is by His grace, it will help us to be grateful.

All we have is the Lord's, and we can be more generous when we are grateful.

When we give and are generous, it helps to remind us where we came from; where we had nothing, and were given everything!

***Next Life Transformation Step: This week, I will take time to really think about and honestly reflect upon having a heart of gratitude in my treasure, time, and talent.***

**Life App Group and Family Devotional Application**

1. What does having a heart of gratitude mean to you?
2. What have you been taught in the past about giving? Did these teachings have a positive or negative affect on you? Explain.
3. Why do you think we sometimes struggle with selfishness before we give and grief after we give? Can you think of a time you struggled with either selfishness or grief when giving?
4. What are some practical ways we can work through those initial heart struggles and choose generosity with a grateful heart?
5. Why does God want us to give from a heart of gratitude? What is an example of giving from a right heart attitude versus a wrong heart attitude? What are the results of both?