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Treasures in Heaven Series: How to Be More Generous

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Thank you for your continued prayers for me. How am I doing? It's been a year since my stroke, kidney failure, and dialysis. Aging is a mystery. So I speak de-aging over myself and Mona.

Speaking of old, here's one of my favorite old jokes: pastor who visits an old Filipina lady.

But Remember, don't think of me as an aged person, but as someone with ageless wisdom from walking the Earth for 65 years!

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Theme verse for our Treasures in Heaven series.

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal” (Matthew 6:19-20).

We're not passively waiting around hopelessly waiting to die so we can go to Heaven and receive our treasure. We are contending for heaven on Earth, remember? So when we say treasures in heaven” we are believing for that now not just in the afterlife. And for the past several weeks our hearts and minds have been shifting towards our attitude towards our time, talent, and treasures. We are growing in generosity and becoming an even more generous people in every dimension of life.

So the question I was given to teach on today was “how do I become a more generous person? We know we don't want to live from scarcity, but these are scarce times. Inflation is making us work longer. We have less time, less treasure, and we're pushing our talents to the brink. Mike, we

can't give anymore. We're just barely making it. So don't talk to me about generosity.

So that's how poor people think. And you can have a lot of money and still have an impoverished mindset. So here are some simple biblical principles that will set you free today.

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God owns everything

"All the earth is Mine" (Exodus 19:5)

"The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains" (Psalm 24:1).

The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness therein (Hebrew "melo" = "handful")

What does that mean?

Fullness therein is the Hebrew word "melo" which means "handful." So remember the Checkers and Pogo jar of coins? What if a kid pulls up a handful of coins. But amidst the pennies, nickels, and quarters, there was a Philippine 10 centavos and a Canadian loonie? All of it is yours. If there was an old button in your hand, that's yours too. All the Earth is the Lord's including everything in it—all the people, every nation, all the oceans, trees and mountains are His. This means all of us belong to Him, including all our homes, our property, cars, and money actually belong to Him.

What if we saw ourselves not as the owner of our house but the butler or steward in charge of taking care of it for God?

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Shift from an “OWNER” mindset to a “STEWARD”

“In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy” (1 Corinthians 4:2).

Everyone take out your wallets.

No don't worry we're not taking an offering.

Now I want you to hand your wallet to the person next to you.

If anyone gets up and starts running, our ushers are trained to tackle you.

Ok someone else is holding all your cash and cards.

Now we're going to take that offering! Just kidding 🤡

That's how we need to look at everything we own. This is how God feels about all of HIS stuff that He is graciously letting you borrow for the time being. Just like you want this person not to pilfer your wallet, so too the Lord doesn't want you to squander the time, talent, and treasure He has blessed you with. If you're married, your spouse belongs to the Lord. He let you marry His precious daughter! How are you treating the daughter of the King? Wives, how are you treating the son of the King?

Ok, now you can give them back their wallet. Ho, some of you was sweatin' yeah? Hopefully, some of that sweat was from conviction on how you are stewarding all the Lord is letting you borrow for now.

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TALENT

“The Holy Spirit is within me for my sake, but He is upon me for yours.”

Pastor Bill Johnson

Let me just break a mindset first to kick us off. I know as soon as I start talking about talent of spiritual gifts what do people say? I don't have any

talent. Because in the Church context we think the only truly usable people are teachers and musicians. And if you can't do either of those, then you get sent off to work with junior high or some other Gulag. That is not how we think here at New Hope Central Oahu. Instead, each one of you has talent on loan from God.

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“At New Hope, we believe God made everyone a 10 in something.”

Pastor Wayne Cordeiro

Now let's talk about for time a little bit. Remember, I'm not aged but I have ageless wisdom. How many of us wish we had more time? Everyone has the same 24-hour day, but why does it seem some people just accomplish so much more? So there are some obvious things like check your screen time, tv time, etc. But here's my biggest piece of ageless advice when it comes to time management. Ready?

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TIME

“Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8).

Wait a minute, Mike. I'm super busy trying to work hard and you're telling me to rest??? How does that make sense?

Listen the Lord created the world in what? 6 days. On the seventh day He what? Now why would God do that? Was God exhausted after creating the universe? Of course not, God is omnipotent and never gets tired.

God created the 7th day to enjoy everything He had created and to live in shalom and harmony with His children, Adam and Eve.

On the 7th Day, the Earth is complete. Remember, everything in the Earth belongs to whom? We were made by God for God. And this is exactly the biblical concept of Heaven—a perfect creation with God and mankind living in perfect shalom. So when you are at rest in the Manifest Presence of God, you exist in Heaven space. When sin enters the equation we work by the sweat of our brow. But isn't it interesting that Paradise is characterized by rest?

Now when you figure out how to rest, you are more alive, more energetic. You actually want to talk with your wife and your children. Aren't they a huge part of the reason why you're working so hard? Isn't it ironic then that you spend such little quality time with your family?

Being well-rested also makes you more productive, creative. When you're burnt out all you want to do is play games, scroll social media and watch TV.

Finally, let's talk about your treasure.

How can you give yourself a raise?

Remember, who's money is it again?

Credit cards are not income
I can't be broke, I still have checks!

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TREASURE

Two things you should do to become a better steward of God's money:

1. Sign up for Financial Peace University in the Spring.
2. Use EveryDollar

Questions for Meditation and Discussion

1. How does shifting from “owner” to “steward” alter your heart toward your time, talent, and treasure?
2. What practical changes is the Lord asking you to make in each of the three areas if any?
3. Pray and ask Holy Spirit for a vision for what can happen if you steward all three in obedience with all your heart. (A vision is an instant mental image of the future God has planned for you.)