

Digging Deeper

1. How has God met your needs in the past? Did you have faith that He would, or did it take you by surprise? This may feel repetitive, but it isn't. This is the difference between finding the shoes you've always wanted on clearance for \$5 and the stories we hear about orphans being fed because God worked a miracle on their behalf. Said another way, when has God worked a miracle in your finances?
2. Read Matthew 19:29. What does Jesus promise here? Who does He promise it to? What do we have to do to participate in that promise? Some people believe it's wrong to say God will give back to us when we give to Him. Invitations like the one found in this passage are there to encourage us to trust Him. When we read the Bible, we ought to come away asking ourselves, "Why would I ever doubt a God who promises so profusely to provide?"
3. Next, read Philippians 4:19. Is this a familiar verse? How have you heard it applied? Now read Philippians 4:10-20. What insight comes from reading this passage in context? This verse is often quoted out of context by Christians—and the context is clearly financial. God does not just provide a blank-check promise to "supply all your needs." This promise is in direct response to our faithful stewardship of the resources God has already entrusted to us. Paul makes this promise to the Philippians in response to their sacrificial investment of God's provision in his life, at a time when he had great need. Bonus: There is another often-quoted verse early in this passage. What is it? How does the context shed new light on it for you?

4. Read Proverbs 3:9-10. The promise is simple: Give to God and your life will be filled...even to overflowing. When have you experienced the fulfillment of this pledge from God? **This passage comes from an agricultural setting, and its meaning to the Israelites was clear: bring to the Lord the tithe of your harvest, and your barns and vats will overflow. God will pay back the ten percent and more from His own reserves.**

5. Now, read Luke 6:38. God promises to be reliable to each of us. Describe your continuing journey of relying on God. When have you seen Him show up for you, in a big way, as you have obeyed Him in little things? **This verse presents an interesting answer to the question, "How much should I give?" The answer seems to be, "How much do you want to be blessed?" Jesus says God will use the same measure to give back to us that which we use to give to others. Our blessing will be determined by our giving. Or, to put it another way, the more you give the more you will be blessed. Before you object to that possibility, remember whose words these are!**

6. Finally, read Galatians 6:7-9. Discuss the law of sowing and reaping. How does this apply to the way we steward the resources God has given us? **You always reap more than you sow. Sow one seed in the ground and you will reap many, many seeds from the fruit of the one seed you sowed. But here's the part of sowing and reaping people struggle with: You always reap after you sow. You don't sow and reap the same day. There is a germination process that has to take place. A warning from this passage: Anyone who chooses to maintain his fear that God will not provide for him when he gives is living in direct disregard to the clear Word of God. He has promised to give in response to our giving.**

Applying the Message

1. Pastor Jeremiah provided four steps to knowing God's blessing. Which one of these feels like your next step of faith regarding stewardship?
 - a. Examine the Evidence **Read the Scriptures and see if they do not promise what you heard in the sermon.**
 - b. Exercise Your Faith **Act on what God says. Write a check for your tithe and give it to God. The study of God's Word has to end at some point and action must take its place.**
 - c. Expect God to Respond **Remember there is a delay between sowing and reaping. During that delay, live in an attitude of expectancy that all your needs will be met.**
 - d. Experience God's Blessing **Receive and enjoy God's blessing, and remember the cycle of giving. Out of His overflow of blessing to you, return your gifts to Him.**

2. How does your next step of faith look in the real world? What action step can you take today? Tomorrow? This week?