

Tithing
3rd in a series of 5

Slide #1 Bucket Offering Video Clip: Drew & Cindy

Slide #2 Welcome to week three of 'Five Healthy Habits'. While preparing for this message... the following note appeared at the bottom of my computer screen in an e-mail.

Slide #3 'Do THIS before eating carbs; 1 easy tip to increase fat-burning, lower blood sugar & decrease fat storage'

Everywhere we turn... someone has an opinion about what is healthy and what is not healthy. So who can we trust... and what should we discard when it comes to our health?

Over the past several weeks we have been hearing from our own Dr. Ken... and so far we have heard about laughing and sleeping, two habits that are critical for healthy living.

So I was thinking about these two habits... laughing and sleeping... and I began to wonder...do any of you laugh while you are sleeping or do you have a spouse or sibling that laughs while they are sleeping? I was just thinking that if we would find a way to laugh and sleep at the same time... we could really maximize our health habits. So Ken... what do you have for us this morning... would you please welcome Ken with a thunderous applause!

Slide #4 Ken's Healthy Habit:

Slide #5 Margin Book:

Just a side note that has nothing to do with the message. On Sunday Afternoon, February 16, at 2 PM, here at TL, we are having a 'Movin On' party for Ken. It is not a secret, but since he is not here this morning... I can say several things...this is a great opportunity for us to show our support for Ken and to thank him for the many ways he has served the LORD and TL. We are going to provide a money tree with clips on it for your bills and a bucket for change.

There is no specific mission, no big trip or project... but let's all take the opportunity to bless Ken. If you want to contribute and are not able to attend... please talk to me about that.

Why should we be concerned about health and habits and what does it have to do with the spiritual aspect of our lives?

The Title of the message this morning is...

Slide #6 Habit #3... Tithing

Here is one way that we can be inspired to tithe... at the end of the service we are going to give you an opportunity to share how giving and tithing have impacted your life... there is nothing like real stories. I'm not going to guilt you into this or pressure you... but you will have the opportunity this morning to encourage others in this. So be thinking about what you might want to share.

In order for us to talk about 'Tithing' we need to first talk about 'Giving' because 'Giving' lays the foundation for 'Tithing'.

And in order for us to talk about 'Giving' we need to understand its connection to 'Spiritual Maturity' and 'Discipline'!

Slide #7 Rick Warren has provided a lot of background for these messages and he says: "The Bible is a book about 'Giving'. The Bible talks more about 'Giving' than it does about either heaven or hell. Jesus talked more about 'Giving' than almost any other subject. Over half of His parables have to do with money. There are more promises in the Bible related to 'Giving' than any other subject."

Rick goes on to say that in the Bible the word 'Believe' is used 272 times; the word 'Pray' is used 371 times; the word 'Love' is used 714 times; but the word 'Give' is used 2162 times. God is a 'giver' and he wants us to become like him and give... and it takes discipline to be a 'giver' because our default switch was originally set to be a 'taker'.

Slide #8 2 Corinthians 8:7 But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us — see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

Slide #9 The bottom line is this... giving reveals our Spiritual Maturity!

Slide #10 The non-negotiable truth is this: We cannot be a disciple without being disciplined!

This morning I want to share with you from the Word of God... truth that will be brand new for some of you... you have probably never heard it before... and for others it will just reaffirm what you already know. I'm kind of a 'list person'... so this morning we have some lists...let's turn to our notes.

Slide #11 Why does God want us to be givers?

1. It follows his example.

Slide #12 John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world that he gave...He loved... so he gave. Here is a thought you can take to the bank!

Slide #13 We can give without loving, but we cannot love without giving!

Christians should be the most giving people in the world because we should be the most loving people in the world.

Slide #14 Why does God want us to be givers?

2. It draws us closer to him.

Slide #15 Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Wherever we put our money shows our priorities. If we put our money in our house, that's where our heart is. If we put our money into eating out, that's where our heart is! If we put our money into clothes or into a hobby... that's where our heart is.

The question then becomes; where do we want our heart to be? Wherever we want our heart to be, that's where we need to put our money. The fact is, every time we give back to God, we are drawing closer to him.

Slide #16 Why does God want us to be givers?

3. It is the solution to materialism.

We live in a materialistic world. Do you remember this from last week?

Slide #17 'Gimme this, I want that, bless me Lord I pray, grant me what I think I need to make it through the day!'

Its get, get, get! Get all I can, can all I get, sit on the can, and who cares what is left! What is the opposite of getting? Giving! The only way I can know if I'm having victory over materialism is this.... am I willing to give things away! Giving is the solution to materialism.

Slide #18 1 Timothy 6:17-19 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

Notice he says, 'Command those who are rich'. Paul is talking to us. Everyone in this room this morning is rich. We are! Everyone who lives in America is rich... compared to the rest of the world in general. Most of the world would love to have our problems. Many in the world would love to have our bills, because bills indicate that we have things!

Countless numbers of people around the world go to bed without enough to eat. What kind of car they drive or whether they can afford an I-phone 5 or whether their clothes match their skin or their make up or their purse... is far from their minds... because they are hungry! They would love to have our problems!

God provides us with some great stuff and we don't need to feel guilty about it... but he makes it very clear that true living comes from giving. Someone once said...

Slide #19 We make a living by what we get but we make a life by what we give.

Giving things away is one of the very best solutions to materialism.

Slide #20 Why does God want us to be givers?

4. It strengthens our faith.

Slide #21 Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;

And then the writer goes on to explain how...

Proverbs 3:9-10 Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

God says that the way we prove our trust, the way we demonstrate our faith, is by giving the first part of our income back to Him. Jesus said it this way...

Slide #22 Luke 6:38 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.

God says, I dare you! Try me! Let me see how much you really want me to bless you! You give me a cup full; you will get a cup of blessing. You give me a barrel full; you will get a barrel of blessing. You give me a dump truck full; you will get a dump truck full of blessing!

The measure we use... is the measure we are going to get. Giving strengthens our faith. Check this out!

Slide #23 The real reason many people don't give... is that they don't believe.

They really don't believe that God will take care of them.

Slide #24 Why does God want us to be givers?

5. It is an investment in eternity.

Slide #25 1 Timothy 6:18-19 TLB Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and should give happily to those in need, always being ready to share with others whatever God has given them. By doing this they will be storing up real treasure for themselves in heaven-it is the only safe investment for eternity! And they will be living a fruitful Christian life down here as well.

This is what 'paying it forward' is all about. We can't take it with us but we can send it on ahead. We send it on ahead by investing in people!

Slide #26 Why does God want us to be givers?

6. It brings happiness.

Slide #27 Acts 20:35 Msg You'll not likely go wrong here if you keep remembering that our Master said, 'You're far happier giving than getting.'

Do we really believe this verse? Are we really more interested in giving than we are in receiving? There are two kinds of people in life... givers and takers. I find it interesting that the happiest people in life are not the takers. The happiest people in life are the givers. Carl Menniger, once a top psychiatrist in America, died in July of 1990, but he left a legacy in books, articles and quotes. He once said...

Slide #28 'Giving is a criterion of mental health. Generous people are rarely mentally ill.'

So what does all this conversation about 'Giving' have to do with 'Tithing'? Giving and Tithing are obviously two different words, so what is the connection?

Slide #29 What is tithing?

The word 'Tithe' means 'to give or take a tenth'.

In both the Hebrew of the OT and the Greek of the NT, tithing is instructed and it means a tenth. A 'tithe' is giving the first 10th of our income.

Slide #30 1 Corinthians 16:2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

Slide #31 Why should we tithe?

1. Because God commands it.

Slide #32 Leviticus 27:30 A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.

Slide #33 Why should we tithe?

2. Because Jesus commended it.

Slide #34 Matthew 23:23-24 NLT What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. Blind guides! You strain your water so you won't accidentally swallow a gnat, but you swallow a camel!

This verse isn't about tithing! Explain!

Slide #35 Why should we tithe?

3. It demonstrates that God has 1st Place in our lives.

Slide #36 Deuteronomy 14:22-24 LB You must tithe all of your crops every year. Bring this tithe to eat before the Lord your God at the place he shall choose as his sanctuary; this applies to your tithes of grain, new wine, olive oil, and the firstborn of your flocks and herds. The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives.

We don't tithe because God wants or needs our money... he doesn't need our money! We tithe in order to prioritize!

Slide #37 Why should we tithe?

4. It reminds us that everything we have is from God!

Slide #38 Deuteronomy 8:18 But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

Slide #39 Why should we tithe?

5. Not tithing is stealing from God.

Slide #40 Malachi 3:8-9 Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' 'In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse — the whole nation of you — because you are robbing me.'

Slide #41 Why should we tithe?

6. It gives God an opportunity to prove he will bless us.

Slide #42 Malachi 3:10-11 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

Some of us have experienced this blessing and can attest to it.

Slide #43 What should we tithe?

The 1st part of what we earn, not the leftovers.

Slide #44 Proverbs 3:9-10 Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

There are probably many ways we could interpret this... but one possible way in today's economy is to tithe from our gross income... not from our net income.

Slide #45 Where should we give our tithe?

The place we worship!

Slide #46 Malachi 3:10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.

The Bible is real specific about this. Malachi is talking here about God's house... the place of worship. In the OT, the place of worship was called the Temple. In the NT it was known as the synagogue. As the believers in Acts began to come together it was referred to as the Church (the called out ones). We are to bring our tithes to where we worship God.

When we give to the United Way, Crop Walk, World Vision, Compassion International or Wycliffe... that's fantastic... but that's not tithing. The Bible says tithing goes to our place of worship... to the storehouse.

I'm aware that some of you may not agree with this and may give part of your tithe to other mission organizations. And I just want you to know, we are not legalistic or judgmental about this, but do want you to know what the Bible teaches.

We encourage you to give your tithe to TL and support other mission organizations from above your tithe. Just so you know, TL gives regularly to missions, benevolent needs, local ministries etc and if any of you ever wonder... where... ask us... it's no secret. If any of you ever want to become involved in the distribution of benevolence needs or missions... talk to us about it... there is always room to serve in these areas.

Slide #47 When should we tithe?

Weekly!

Slide #48 1 Corinthians 16:2 On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

Again, we are not legalistic about what... where... or when... the most important thing is that we are obedient to God, consistent and generous... and then each one of us needs to decide and fill in the amount!

In the OT the tithe was the focus. In the NT Jesus also commands us to tithe but he also came and bought us with His blood so we are 100% his...not 10% his... so actually everything we have is his... so in one sense tithing is just a starting place and this is why it takes discipline to tithe!

Slide #49 The non-negotiable truth is this: We cannot be a disciple without being disciplined!

Share Time: Here is one way that we can be inspired to tithe. I want to give you an opportunity to share how tithing and giving have impacted your life... There is nothing like real stories from real people.

I'm not going to guilt you into this or pressure you... but this is an opportunity to encourage others. This mic is available to be passed around.

Prayer and reflection: Take my life and let it be – from I-tunes Chris Tomlin

Slide #50 Practical Application: Let's all tithe next Sunday. All of us! Even if you have never done it before, let's do it this week.

Next week we are going for Habit #4 'Fasting' and I'm going to challenge TL to a week of Fasting. I will be sending out an e-mail describing a number of ways to fast and if anyone has any stories you want to share about 'how fasting has impacted your life'... please let me know.

Invite Prayer Team Up:

9:00 Dave King and Elsie Beiler

10:30 Michel Beyer and Vince King

Benediction:

What are our small offerings to the King of the Universe?

They are as the scent of a flower in the nostrils of its gardener.

Are not our gifts like a drop in the vast ocean of God's riches?

Yes, but the well placed drop can enliven the driest seed.

Consider your gifts and trust the One who receives them.

Sow them as seed, sprinkle them as rain, enjoy the garden of our Lord.