

**God's Principles and Priorities on
Time, Talent and Treasure**
Part 1. Financial stewardship, money, giving and blessing
(A Biblical perspective taken from The Blessed Life by Robert Morris)

I. First Things First

A. What is one of the “first things” in which God tests us?

- Jesus taught about money-related principles in 16 of his 39 parables (40%)
- There are more than 500 verses in the Bible concerning **prayer**; nearly 500 verses concerning **faith**; but more than 2,000 verses on the subject of **money and possessions**.
- God must have wanted us to know His principles and priorities when it comes to money
- How we handle money reveals a great deal about our priorities, loyalties and affections (Luke 12:34)
 - Money should be considered both a blessing and, at times, a test from God

B. Sacrificed or Redeemed

- The firstborn must be either sacrificed or redeemed. (Exodus 12:1-5, 12-13, 29; 13:12-13)
 - The clean, unblemished *firstborn* lambs were sacrificed to redeem the *firstborn* of Israel
- Jesus was God's firstborn and born “clean” (Romans 8:29)
- Since the fall of Adam we are all born “unclean” (Romans 5:12, Romans 3:23)
- Something clean had to be sacrificed for the “unclean”
 - The “clean” had to be sacrificed
 - The “unclean” had to be redeemed
 - This is a picture of the Gospel
- By sacrificing His firstborn Son/first Lamb for us, God redeemed us (John 1:29)

C. The “First” Belongs to God

- We find this principle all through Scripture – the first portion belongs to God which in turn consecrates/redeems/blesses the remainder
- In Egypt, God had redeemed and was entitled to all the firstborn sons of Israel (Exodus 13:1-2)
- The *firstborn* animals were the sacrifices. God didn't say let your ewe produce 9 lambs and then give me the tenth one
- Jericho was the *first* city conquered in the Promised Land (Joshua 6:18-19) – God demanded all of the spoils. Achan kept some, Israel was therefore cursed and defeated at Ai (Joshua 7:1-5, 11-12)
 - It always requires faith to give the “first”
 - The first portion always carries the redemptive potential - everything after is either redeemed or blessed by it or cursed by it
 - Is observing and honoring the Lord's Day an example of giving God the “first” day of the week?

D. The Firstfruits - the “first” of the “first” (Exodus 23:19, Proverbs 3:9-10)

- Not only does the firstborn belong to God but so do the firstfruits
- They should be brought to the *House of the Lord* (i.e. we must give to the House of the Lord first)

- In the Old Testament times, most people were farmers therefore “increase” came as crops were harvested and livestock produced. In today’s world, “increase” comes primarily from our occupations.

E. The Tithe – Giving God the first of our increase (Leviticus 27:30, Malachi 3:10)

- The tithe must be first – *order* is just as important as *amount*
- Abel brought God the *firstborn* from his flock, Cain brought *some* of his crops (Genesis 4:3-5)
- Keeping the tithe is technically robbing God (Malachi 3:8-9)
- The firstborn, firstfruits and tithe all belong to God

Consecrated or Cursed

That is the theme surrounding the tithe, the firstborn and the firstfruits throughout the Bible. Putting God first, giving to Him first, and then trusting Him for the rest. The tithe is consecrated to the Lord and for the Lord’s house and His purposes. However, if we take it [keep it] for ourselves then it becomes cursed, because it is technically “stolen”.