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This booklet is for debate, discussion, feedback & action /response. We look forward to hearing from & assisting you. Please keep our service in your prayers, even as we pray for you

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"Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust him to help you do it, and he will."

- Psalm 37:5

TO GOD BE THE GLORY

To give you just 2 examples of how effective God's Givers has been in the fast 2 years - 8.000 booklets & 10,000 CDs distributed free !Just 2 Much ! A small beginning by a small group of Catholic Christians, who believe in tithing (donating 10% of income) & giving generous offerings to God's work. Even more has been achieved by prayers to the Father, in the name of Jesus, through the power of God, the Holy Spirit.

RICHES IN HEAVEN

Minimum Over 12,00,000 Readers Benefited from
THE TREASURE PRINCIPLE by RANDY ALCORN
Now you can too.... Read on

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

- Ephesians 4:29 Dear Friends,

Here am I, with another one of those fast-food booklets. The above passage is one I know & something the devil is challenging me, as he surely must be challenging you too. As a person in authority, I am often tempted with what the Bible calls 'unwholesome talk' and need you to pray for me on this count.

We are told that when Jesus was tempted by the devil after his 40 day fast, Jesus opposed the devil by quoting scripture, saying 'It is written...' The importance of the word of God can never be underestimated. In our case, it has saved us many a time.

I do not claim any originality in compiling this booklet, simply because apart from the first Introduction & Conclusion, all the remaining chapters 1 have paraphrased & adapted from one of my favourite writers -Randy Alcorn. However, being a westerner, his writing is a little bit difficult for the Indian audience. The original book is also much longer, like a micro novel & not available here.

So, I have taken most excerpts from his booklet, put it onto my own words, added the emphasis like bold or italics & present it to you. The short-n-sweet orcut-ndried style, I may boast lightly, is my own. My aim is that you may be helped, as I was, to give & give generously to God and in the process experience - a joy, none has known.

Praying that the Power of God, the Holy Spirit, be with you.

Your Servant in the Lord's Service Joe Dias

"How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?" (1 John 3;17)

INTRODUCTION

Have you thought of asking yourself -WHEN will I die ? When & not HOW ? Will it be today, next year or at the age of 80 ? One can never be sure & so we all have a need to leave behind a legacy- something we hope will last after we die, whenever that is. So that is why these days, I find myself in a hurry, to do as much as I can, for the Lord - in my own small way. Our free booklets or hymn CDs / VCDs are just a few ways to spread the Word around. For we believe more important than leaving money around in a trust for God's work, is the lives we have helped convert to God's way of living. Imagine thousands giving to God, competing to give to His work & rushing to help God's children ! Imagine a heavy shower of God's blessings on yourself -you & your family too. All because you gave - to your parish, church, missions, institutions.... But more important - It will make you a billionaire for eternity. God never forgets a generous giver.

The fact that you are reading this booklet, tells me you are already blessed in at least one way - you can see & are not blind, compared to lakhs of other people. God doesn't crib when blessing anyone. Think about it. He has blessed you in many ways -talents, wealth, family, friends, graces, health.... He has even made you a 'Christian' and you need to ask yourself-WHY ?

So that we can make an impact on the world,

beginning with our surroundings. That is why God put

you there in the first place. Each of us have a purpose in God's plan & the faster we get into a position, where He can make use of us, the better it is.

Most Christians I meet tell me that the televangelists are always talking about money, money, money... Some Catholics are happy the Catholic church is not so particular & leave it on to the individual to decide, how much to contribute. The truth is neither was the Catholic Church like this earlier, nor is it the right thing to do. The shepherd has a responsibility to the flock. Don't you think that, in not even mentioning, let alone emphasizing the 10% tithe, as stated in the Bible, the Church is to some extent failing in its duty ?

Often, I am told that Christians must not let the right hand know, what the left hand does, in the matter of giving. Is that what the Bible meant or is it that we should not give pompously, with pride or with the sole intention of being noticed ? Over the last 2000 years, because Christians were known to give generously to God's kingdom, we have so many churches /chapels / crosses /grottos... Today, the Christians of other denominations & not Catholics as much, are donating money to spread the Good News. The other Christians tithe (give 10% to God's work) faithfully & the result is

not far to see — N (God, TBN, CBN, Daystar, Miracenet...), Crusades (Joyce, Dollar, Jakes, Osteen, Bonke, Benny...), church planting (Asia, Africa, China, Latin America....) and making an impact on society —politically, economically & socially. Catholics are what they are today, because our earlier generations gave —of their land, gold, money & sweat — to send labourers into the missions & build churches. The contribution of the early Church was certainly more than 10% of the tithe. WHO has changed over these years —God or Man ? WHAT have we contributed to the Great Commission of Jesus — Go spread the Good News, in our own way.

In Matthew 5:14 - 16, Jesus said, "You are the light of the world. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds & praise your Father in heaven". Again in 1 John 1:5, it is said, "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all". Are we living in the light, who is God, and reflect His light, as Jesus expects us too: If we truly have the Light in us, there is no way darkness can overpower us. A tiny light can dispel any amount of darkness. It is never the other way around. The only way you can have darkness is by the absence of light. In the presence of light, darkness is subdued. It would seem followers of other religions, give more to God's work than Christians & the speak loudly about it, The Muslims for instance, donate

Zakat during the month of Ramzan & also organize the community well, with respect to their finances & investment. Recently, an advertisement appeared in major Indian national dailies on Islamic Investment Opportunities. It was a one day conference on

- Shari'ah (Muslim Law) approved opportunities for Muslim investors.
- Review the list of Shari'ah compliant stock investments.
- Islamic financial solutions & scope of investments.

Those of other religions apart, even the secular world has its own arrangements to take care of the lesser fortunate sections, like orphans, hungry, women, children, handicapped, etc. There are international clubs, like Lions, Rotary, Giants or NGOs like CRY and even many to take care

of animals, like WWF, SPCA or PETA. Does this not inspire us to act & help our suffering fellow-Christians, which would actually mean helping ourselves & living up to the true essence of our faith. Sad, but true, Christians often wait for the clergy or church hierarchy to start. In fact, even when the laity or ordinary lay persons start out on something, the others not only do nothing to help, but also criticize & don't contribute. The fields of politics & economics or finances are where Christians are the worst hit because of this mentality. Giving or donating generously to God's work, His kingdom, His children... has always taken a backseat. Today, we too not have examples or role models to look up to, even as there is need for transparency in the church's financial deals.

know- Randy Altom's church, whose missions pastor on returning from Sudan (Africa) told his congregation about the enslaved Christians there. Spontaneously, several families decided to forgo giving Christmas 'presents that year & instead decided to give towards setting these enslaved Christians free. The IV standard in the school rised thousands of dollars, through work projects. Another VI standard girl took 50 dollars, she had saved up to play on a basketball team & gave it to help the Sudanese believers..

One family had saved several hundred dollars to go to Disneyland. Their child asked if they could give the money to help the slaves instead. Before long, people had, given away US\$ 60,004 to bring joy to Sudanese slaves instead. 'They never took an offering or collection, because the giving was spontaneous. People told each other of their giving stories. And when they did, it thrilled & encouraged everybody to give more.

It caught on like an Epidemic flu -that is the way the Holy Spirit worked. It was one of that church's finest hours & an essential component was Christians sharing, how & how much. God prompted to them to give.

King David told the people exactly how much he had given to build the temple. The precise amounts of gold & precious stones given by the other leaders were also accounted & made public. Later, in 1 Chronicles 29:6-9 we learn that 'people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely & wholeheartedly to the Lord'. The people could rejoice only because they knew what their leaders had given. They could follow their leaders' example because they knew how much their leaders had given.

Unless, we learn to humbly tell each other our giving stories, listen & respond to Christian giving appeals, we & our churches will not learn to give. We need to know about the widow in our church, who lives on a low income & fasts every Friday, then gives the money to the hungry, that she would have spent on herself.

One agrees with Randy Alcorn as he says, "It would have been a an incalculable loss to my spiritual life, not to hear the stories of great givers — Hudson Taylor, George Mueller, Amy Carmichael & RG LeTourneau. They lived as they did to please God, not me, but knowing what did in them & through them, has been an inspiration to let God do the same or more in me".

God's Givers is service that promotes Christian giving in line with Biblical principles—Tithes & offerings. Our aim is to tell you what God's word says about giving, not to help Him, to give Him an expression of your love for Him & your desire to spend forever with the Lord. I am sure this booklet by will guide, as it has helped a minimum of over 12,00,000 readers. God's Givers does not solicit any donations & could at best advise you on how to invest in God's kingdom. or His work to multiply your riches in heaven. For further serious reading on the subject, you may log on to www.generousgiving.com

-Joe Dias

"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" (Matthew 25:23)

"Don't be misled; remember that you can't ignore God and get away with it: a man will always reap just the kind of crop he sows!" (Galatians 6:7)

Chapter 1

BURIED TREASURE

He is no fool, who gives what he cannot keep -to gain what he cannot lose.

-Jim Elliot.

If you are a serious Christian: -All your life you've been on a treasure hunt. You have been searching for a perfect person & a perfect place. Jesus is that person & heaven is that place. So - if you are a Christian, you already met the person & you are already headed for that place.

But there is a problem. You are not yet living with that person & you are not yet living in that place. You may attend Church regularly, pray & read the Bible. But life can still be dull-drudgery, can't it? You dutifully put one foot in front of the other, plodding across the hot, dry-barren ground, longing for a joy you cannot find - a treasure that eludes/escapes you. Jesus told a story like that. It's about a hidden treasure that once discovered, brings life-changing; joy -The Treasure Principle - It has long been buried.

It's time to unearth it. It's a simple yet profound idea. Once you grasp it & put it into practice, nothing

will ever look the same. And believe me, you will not too

When you discover the secret joy of the Treasure Principle, I guarantee you'll never be content with less.

Jesus Tells A Story

A first-century Hebrew walks alone on a hot afternoon, staff in hand. His shoulders are stooped, sandals covered with dirt, clothes stained with sweat. But he doesn't stop to rest. He has urgent business to attend to in the city.

He turns off the road into "a field, searching for a shortcut. The landlord didn't mind (tired travelers were allowed this relief) after all, the field was unused. It was uneven. To keep his balance, the traveler thrusts his stick into the ground. Thank. Thank. He goes on ...

THUNK. The stick strikes something hard... What could it be?

He steps, wipes off his sweat & pokes his stick once again. Think. Something's under there & it's not like a rock. The tired traveler tells himself that he can't afford to waste his time. But his inquisitiveness won't let him move further! He jabs of the ground once again. Something shiny appears.- He drops to his knees & starts digging. Five minutes later, he has it uncovered - a treasure trunk, lined with pure gold! By the look of it, seems like it has been there for decades.

May be a hundred years old! The traveler breaks open the lock & to behold! -Gold Coins, Jewellery;. Precious Stones....

A treasure more valuable than anything, he or

anyone could have ever imagined. Trembling & with hands shaking, he inspects it once more - he could not believe his eyes. He pinched himself to be doubly sure! He thought -Some very rich man or a prince must have buried the treasure & died suddenly. Or may be the wealthy man was killed & the secret location of the treasure died with him.

Surely, the present landlord did not know of the treasure lying in the field he owned. There was nobody, staying around the fields for miles. The traveler buries the treasure trunk he has just discovered and marks the spot carefully.

He turns around and starts heading for home! He has decided not to go to the city for his business & makes his way back -Only this time, he is no more tired! The traveler is not struggling along - he is almost jumping like a little boy or skipping like a small girl The tired traveler now, even has a big grin/smile on his face.

He mutters to himself -"What a lottery!

Unbelievable, but true! But, I can't just take it that I would be robbing. I could buy the field from the landlord. Then the treasure buried in the field would legally be mine. But I can't afford to buy it - I will

need to sell my farm, goods, stocks, machines... may be even have to use my savings of so many years. But Yes! If I sell everything, that should be just enough to buy that plot from the landlord!"

From the minute he discovered the treasure, the traveler's life was never the same. It changed completely. The treasure captured his imagination. It was all he could think of. It became the stuff of his dreams. He just couldn't forget it, even for a moment. Every step he took, he had the treasure on the top of his mind -till he could collect enough money, to buy the field.

Jesus captures this parable in a single verse: "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again. Then in great joy, he went & sold all he had & bought that field" (Matthew 13:44). The story presents a vividly clear picture of what one would do if he/she found such a treasure. Such behavior would come naturally to you too - wouldn't you do the same? Who wouldn't sell all one had, to get the treasure of greater value.

The Gospel's Money Connection

This story is just one of the many references & illustrations that Jesus made, referring to money & material possessions. In fact, 15% of everything Christ said relates to this topic. Why did Jesus put such an emphasis on money & possessions?

Because there is an important connection between our spiritual lives & how we think of or handle our money. You may try to separate our Christian faith & our finances, but God sees them as inseparable.

Years ago I came to this realization, while reading Luke 3. John, the Baptist is preaching to the crowds, who had gathered eager to be baptized. Three groups of people asked John the Baptist, what they would have to do, to be saved or in order to bear the fruit of their repentance. He gave them answers:

- Everyone should share clothes & food with the poor (Luke 3 v :11)
- Tax collectors shouldn't collect or keep extra money (Luke 3 v : 13)
- Soldiers should be satisfied with their salaries & not extort money (Luke 3 v.14)

Each answer relates to money & material possessions. But, no one questioned John about that! They had asked him what should they do to show that they were sorry, repented seriously & were changed spiritually. So then why didn't John tell them, other things to do? Things like fast, Pray, do penance, etc.

Why did John reply in a non-spiritual manner ?

He realized that one's approach to money & possessions is not just important ; it is central or vital to our spiritual lives. It is of such high priority to God that John the Baptist couldn't talk of spirituality without talking about how to handle money or possessions.

The same thing began to jump out at me in other passages too. Zacchaeus said to Jesus, "Look Lord! Here & now, I will give half of my possessions to the poor & if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back 4 times the amount (Luke 19:8),

Jesus' response? "Today, salvation has come to this house" (v.9). Zacchaeus's radical new approach to money proved that his heart had been transformed. He was a changed man. Then there were the Jerusalem converts, who eagerly sold their belongings to give to the needy (Acts 2:45; 4:32-35) and the Ephesian occultists (Acts 19:19), who proved that their conversion to Christianity was genuine, when they burnt their magic books —These books which were their livelihood & could have cost them millions.

The poor widow stands out in the pages of the Scripture by giving 2 small coins. Jesus praises her: "She, out of her poverty, put in everything" (Mark 12:44). In complete contrast, Jesus spoke of a rich man

who spent all his wealth on himself. The rich man planned to pull down his storehouses & build larger ones -storing for himself, so that he could retire early & take life easy.. But God called the man a fool, saying "This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what

you have prepared for yourself? (Luke 12:20). His greatest fault was that he was rich towards himself, but not rich towards God.

When a rich young man pleaded with Jesus, as to how he could gain eternal life, Jesus told him, "Sell your possessions & give to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven. Then come, follow me" (Matthew 19:21). The man was obsessed with earthly treasures. Jesus called him to something higher - heavenly Treasures. Jesus knew that money & possessions were that man's god. He realized that the man wouldn't serve God unless, he dethroned his money idol. But the young earthly rich man considered the price too great. Sadly, he walked away from the real & eternal heavenly treasures.

Smart or Stupid

This young rich man was not willing to give up everything for a greater treasure our traveler in the field was. Why? Because the traveler understood very well, what he would gain - if he sold all to get the treasure in the field.

Do you feel sorry for the traveler or the rich man? After all the traveler's discovery of the treasure cost him everything. But we don't pity the traveler - we envy him! His sacrifice of his possessions to buy the plot was nothing compared to his reward! Considering the costs-to-benefits ratio - the benefits were greater & permanent, compared to the costs, which were just temporary. So the traveler willingly made the sacrifice.

The traveler made the short-term sacrifices to obtain a long-term reward. It cost him, everything he ever had. But more importantly, he got everything that would ever matter. If we miss the words "in his (great) joy" we miss everything. The man was not exchanging his lesser possessions for greater treasures, as a matter of duty or with sadness - But rather out of great joy & happiness. The traveler would have been a fool not to do what he did. Jesus' story shows us now - no matter how great our earthly possessions might be, it's nothing compared to heavenly Treasure Mentality.

Jesus fully unveils the foundations of what call the Treasure Principle in Matthew 6:19-21 a "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy. And where thieves break in & steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth & rust do not destroy. And where thieves do not break in & steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will also be.

Consider what Jesus is saying - "Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth. Why Not? Is it because earthly treasures are bad? NO - But because earthly riches will not last. Jesus warns us not to store up treasures on earth, not because the riches MIGHT BE LOST; but it is because earthly treasures WILL DEFINITELY BE lost. Either, our riches will leave us while we live or we will leave it - when we die. There are no exceptions.

During the American Civil War, the country was divided into Northerners & Southerners. In the South, there was what was called Confederate money - currency that was not accepted in the North. After the war, the only money that had value was the \$ - US dollar currency. Now suppose you were caught-up working in the South during the war, but you are native of the North. The moment the war was over, you want to move back home North. While working in the South, you had accumulated Confederate money & you knew for a fact that it was only a question of time - North would win the war & the currency would then all be US dollars. What would you do with your Confederate money?

If you are smart, there is only one answer. You would immediately exchange your Confederate money for US dollar currency - the only money that would have true value, once the war was over. You would surely keep only as much Confederate cash, as you would need for basic or short-term needs - just enough to tide over emergencies or meet minimum requirements.

As a Christian, you have true inside knowledge of the end times - of the ultimate destruction of the world, followed by Christ's victorious return. isn't this like the best insider stock-market tip: Earth's riches, currency, et al will become worthless, when Jesus comes - or when you die, whichever comes first. And either could happen at any time. Investment experts & stock market specialists read the signs that the share market is about to fall & recommend selling stock/shares or shifting investment to more reliable assets, like -gold, deposits or property. And they have often found themselves to be wrong too!

Jesus functions here as the most excellent consultant ever known to man. He tells us to once & for all, switch/exchange our earthly investment or assets. He instructs us to transfer our funds/riches from earth (which is temporary & could end anytime forever) to heaven - where our treasures are insured by God Himself. A heaven that is coming soon to replace earth's economy. Christ's financial forecast for earth is bleak, but He is unreservedly bullish (strongly recommends) investing in heaven, where every market indicator is eternally positive.

There is nothing wrong with Confederate money or Earthly currency, as long as you understand its limitations. Realizing that its value is only temporary, should radically change/affect the way you invest or handle your earthly riches. To accumulate/collect/hoard earthly riches, that you can't possibly hold on for long is like / similar equivalent to stockpiling Confederate money - even though you know it is soon about to become worthless - and hence of no use to you. According to Jesus, storing up earthly treasures is not simply wrong. It is simply stupid. FOOLISH !

Professional /Best Sound Advice ,

Jesus doesn't just tell us where not to put our treasures. He also gives us the best investment advice as to where to put our treasures - "Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven"(Matthew 6:20).

If you stopped reading too soon, you would have thought Christ was against our storing up treasures for ourselves. No. He's all for it! In fact, He commands it. Jesus has a treasure mentality. He wants us to store up treasures - He's just telling us to stop storing our treasures in the wrong place. And start storing our treasures in the right place !

"Store up for yourselves". Doesn't it seem strange that Jesus commands us to do what is in our best interests? Wouldn't that be selfish? No. God expects & commands us to act out of enlightened self-interest. Selfishness is when we pursue gain at the expense of others. In the parable-story, Jesus is talking about delayed satisfaction - The traveler who finds the treasure in the field pays a heavy price now, by giving up all he has - but soon, he'll gain a great treasure. As long as the traveler's eyes are on the treasure & his mind is set on the field, he finds it very easy to make short-term sacrifices. And he does it with great joy. The joy is present, so the satisfaction is not exactly delayed - lie has some benefit, as the present joy comes from merely expecting unbelievable happiness - could be very soon.

What Treasures to Heaven?

It includes power (Luke 19:15-19), possessions (Matthew 19:21) and pleasures (Psalm 16:11), besides of course knowing the Holy Trinity, most intimately. Jesus promises that those who sacrifice on earth will receive a "hundred times as much" in heaven (Matthew 19:29). That's 10,000 % percent- a very impressive /excellent return! "Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven" Why? Because it is right? Not just that -but because it is smart. Because such treasures will last forever: Jesus argues from the bottom line point of view -which really matters. It is not an emotional appeal; it is a logical one

Invest in what has everlasting value. You'll never see a funeral hearse carrying treasures, with the body! Why? Because one can never take anything along with you.

Do not be overawed when a man grows rich, when the splendor of his house increases; for he will take nothing with him when he dies –his splendor will not descend with him –Psalm 49:16-17.

John D Rockefeller was one of the wealthiest men, who ever lived. After he died, someone asked his accountant, "How much money did John D leave behind?" The reply was classic: "He left... all of it

You just can't somehow take any of it away with you. If that point is clear in your mind, you are ready to hear the secret of the Treasure Principle.

The Treasure Principle

Jesus takes that profound truth, "You can't take it with you" and adds a stunning qualification. By telling us to store up treasures for ourselves in heaven, He is giving us a breathtaking corollary, which I call the

TREASURE PRINCIPLE:

You can't take it with you -

But you can send it on ahead of you

It's that simple. And if it doesn't take your breath away, you are not exactly understanding it! Anything we try to hang on to here will be lost. But anything we put into God's hand will be ours for eternity & insured by the real FDIC (Father's Eternal Life Insurance Corporation) for infinitely more than \$100,000 !

If we give instead of keeping, if we invest in the eternal instead of in the temporal, we store-up treasures in heaven -that will never stop paying returns - dividends. Whatever treasures we store-up on earth will be left behind, when we leave here. Whatever treasures we store up in heaven will be waiting for us when we arrive. financial/Insurance planners tell us, "When it comes to your money, don't think just 3 months or 3 years ahead. Think 30 years". Christ, the ultimate investment consultant takes it further. He says, not just thirty years. Ask how it will pay off in 30 million years for ETERNITY

Now suppose I offer you Rs./\$ 1,000/- today to spend it however you want. Not a bad deal. But suppose I give you a choice -you can either have Rs./\$ 1,000/-, today OR you can have \$10 million / a crore of rupees one year from now. And Rs./\$10 million / a crore of rupees each year after that till you die! Only a fool would take the Rs./\$1,000 today. Yet, that is exactly what we do when we grab & hold on to things that will last only for the moment. We forego something far more valuable that we could enjoy Eater for eternity.

Of course there are many good things God wants us to do with money that don't involve giving it away. It is essential for instance, that we provide for our family's basic material needs, besides our own comforts. But investing in good

things here, is only a small beginning. The money God entrusts to us here on earth is Eternal Investment Capital. Every day is an opportunity given by Him to invest in His Kingdom, buy more shares, fix more deposits for Eternal Rewards.

You can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead. It is a revolutionary concept. If you embrace it, I guarantee it will change your life. As you store-up heavenly treasures, you will gain an Everlasting Treasure - a heavenly version of what the traveler found hidden in the field. And you will go about making even sacrifices with JOY for as Jesus said in the parable, the Kingdom of God is like the story of a traveler, who found a great treasure.... What did he then do? And he did it with-Joy.

Chapter 2

COMPOUNDING JOY

The less I spent on myself and the more I gave to others, the fuller of happiness & blessing did my soul become.

-Hudson Taylor

In 1990, we went through heavy financial crises, which would require all the money I had collected to go to someone, who had won a court case against me, for my work against abortion clinics. Another court judgement followed, delivering yet another fatal blow. We had to pay an abortion clinic the largest amount awarded to any group of peaceful protestors - \$ 8.2 million. I was

stripped off -next to nothing. My source of income was royalties on the books Iliad written & we had thankfully just finally paid the last installment of a long housing loan. It seemed likely that we would even lose our house. By all one could see at certainly by the world's standard, our lives had taken a turn for the worst. Right?

Wrong. It was one of the best things that ever happened to us. What others intended for evil, God intended for good -Genesis 50:20. I was forced to take up a job for over 10 years at minimum wage or

whatever extra else I had earned would go towards paying the court penalty. Thank God the house & some assets were in my wife's name -but she had to work as a secretary & buy almost everything, since I couldn't Regally own anything. During this time we began this new ministry. Through this situation God taught me that-"Everything under heaven belongs to me" (Job 41:11). would 'have never been what I am today, if not for that experience.

God used my extreme difficulties to lake my understanding of His Ownership to another level. Scripture really began to hit home:

- The earth is the Lord's & everything in it-'the world & all who Live in it (Psalm 24:1).
- "The silver is mine & the gold 'is mine" declares the Lord Almighty (Haggai 2e8).
- Remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you 'the 'ability to ,produce wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18).
- You are not your own; you were bought at a price (Corinthians 6:19-20).

God was teaching ` me the first of six keys to understanding the Treasure Principle.

Treasure Principle Key # 1

God owns everything.

I am just HIS money manager -accountant

God was & is owner of everything. He even owns me. God never took back His ownership or surrendered His claim/right to any or all treasures. He didn't die & leave the earth to me or anyone else.

realized that our house belonged to God, not us. Why worry about whether or not we would keep it. He has no shortage of resources. He would easily provide us with another place to live.

But understanding ownership was -only half of my lesson. If God was the owner, I was the manager. I needed to adopt a steward's accountant's / faithful servant's mentality / attitude towards the assets / things He had entrusted (made me responsible for), not given to me. A steward manages. / assists for the owner's benefit. The steward has no right or entitlement to the assets/things that the owner has asked him to manage. It is his job to find out what the owner wants done with his assets/wealth/talents and then carry out the owner's will.

Joyful Giving

Jerry Caven had a successful restaurant chain, two banks, a ranch, a farm & real estate ventures. Now at age 59, Jerry was searching for a nice lakeside retirement home. But the Owner had other plans. "God led us to put our money & time overseas" says Jerry. "Its been exciting: ,Before, we gave token amounts. Now we put substantial money into the missions. We often go to India". What changed the Cavens' attitude towards giving?

"It was realizing- God's ownership" Jerry explains. "Once we understood that we were giving away God's money to do God's work, we discovered a peace & joy, we never had back -when we thought it was our money!"

Once a troubled man rode his horse up to John Wesley, shouting "Mr. Wesley, something terrible happened. Your house burned to the ground!" Wesley weighed the news, then calmly replied, "No. The Lord's house burned to the ground: That means one less responsibility to me" Wesley's reaction wasn't a denial. Rather, it was a bold affirmation of reality-God is the Owner of all things & we are simply His stewards/money managers.

Whenever we think like owners, it's a red flag. We should be thinking like stewards /investment managers, always looking for the best place to invest the Owner's money. At the end of our term of service, we'll undergo a job performance evaluation: "For we will all stand before God's judgement seat.... So then, each of us will have to give an account of himself to God" (Romans 14:10- 12).

Our name is on God's account. We have unrestricted access to it — a privilege that is subject to abuse /misuse. As His money managers, God trusts us to set our own salaries. We draw the needed funds from His wealth to pay our living expenses. One of our central spiritual decisions is determining what is a reasonable amount to live on. Whatever that amount is (and it will legitimately be different from person to person) we should not hoard or spend the excess. After all it is His, not ours. And He has something to say about where to put it.

Recently I was attending a gathering of gives. We went around the room & told our stories. The words fun, joy, exciting, & wonderful kept surfacing. There were lots of smiles & laughter, along with tears of joy. One older couple eagerly shared how they are always traveling around the world, getting involved in the ministries they are giving to. Meanwhile their home

in the US was becoming run-down & in need of repair. They said, "Our children keep telling us - Fix up your house or buy a new one. You can afford it". We tell them, "Why would we do that? Its not what excites us!"

Ray Berryman, CEO of a national service company, says he & his wife give at least 50% of their income to God's work every year. "My joy in giving comes from serving God in a way that I know, He's called me to. And realizing that what I give is impacting people for Christ" Ray says The more we give, the more we delight in our giving & the more God delights in us. Our giving pleases us & the receiver - But more importantly, it pleases God.

God loves a cheerful giver - Corinthians 9:7. This does not mean we should give only when we are feeling cheerful. The cheerfulness comes during & after the act of obeying God in giving - not before it. So don't wait until you feel like giving - it could be a long wait! Just give & watch the joy follow. God delights in our cheerfulness in giving: He wants us to find joy. He even commands us to rejoice Philippians 4:4.

know a single man who came to Christ in his twenties, read the Scriptures & got so excited that he decided to sell his house & decided to give his money to God. But when he shared the plan with older believers in his Bible-study group, something tragic happened - They talked him out of it.

If you ever feel like talking a young believer out of giving, stop yourself. Don't prevent the Spirit of God & don't rob someone of the present joy & future rewards of giving. Instead, watch & learn - Then lay God's assets/things on the table & ask Him what He wants you to give away...

Giving In The Bible

The Macedonian Christians understood the joy of giving: "Out of severe trial, their overflowing joy & their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity" - 2 Corinthians 8:2. How do "severe trial & overflowing joy, extreme poverty & rich generosity" all fit together in one verse? Giving, isn't a luxury of the rich. It is the privilege of the poor. The Macedonians refused to let difficult circumstances .keep them from soya "They pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints" (v.4). They had to plead, possibly because Paul & the others were telling them that their poverty, had excused/exempted them from giving.

When the tabernacle was being built, people were so caught up in the excitement that they had to "restrained/stopped" from giving more - Exodus 36:5-7. That's what giving will do to you. David looked at what he & his people were giving to the Lord & it humbled him into saying : "But who am I & who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this Everything comes from you & we have given you, only what comes from your hand" 1 Chronicles 29:14.

God said, "I give to the Levites (priests) as their inheritance - the tithes that the Israelites present as are offering to the Lord" (Numbers- 18:24), Notice that God's people gave their money to God, not to the Levites/priests. It may have looked like the people were giving to their spiritual leaders, but they actually gave to God. And it was He who then gave His funds to the Levites. Christians should love their priests/pastors & support them financially (Galatians 6:6), but first & foremost, we give to God (2 Corinthians 8:5). Before anything else therefore, giving is an act of worship.

Giving jump-starts our relationships with God. It opens our hands so that we can receive what God has focus. When we see what it has done for others & for us, we open our hands sooner & wider, when the next chance comes.

If you haven't experienced this, you are really missing on something! God says, "If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out & I will not be able to answer him" (Proverbs 21:13). In Isaiah 58 : 6

10, God says that His willingness to answer our prayers is directly affected by whether we care for the needy, hungry & oppressed. Want to empower your prayer life or :want your prayers to be heard

GIVE.

It was said of Josiah, "He defended the cause of the poor & the needy. And so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?" declares the Lord (Jeremiah 22:16).

Caring for the needy flows out of knowing God & draws us closer to Him. Businessman Hal Thomas told me, "When I give, I am saying - I love you Lord" Paul told the Corinthians their financial gift was overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God -2Corinthians 9:12.

Another benefit of giving is freedom or release. It is a matter of basic physics. The greater the mass, the greater the hold that mass exerts. The more things we own =the greater their total mass -the more they grip us, setting us in an orbit around them. Finally, like a black hole, they suck us in: Giving changes all that. It breaks us' out of that orbit around our possessions. We escape their gravity, entering a new orbit around our treasures in heaven.

Chapter 3

EYES ON ETERNITY

For the Son of Man is going to come in His Father's glory with His angels. And then He will reward each person according to what he has done.

-Matthew 16:27

The streets of Cairo were hot & dusty. Pat & Rake' Thurman took us down an alley/a lane. We drove past Arabic signs to a gate that opens to a plot of overgrown :grass. It was a graveyard for American missionaries in the Gulf State. As my family & I followed, Pat pointed to a sun-scorched tombstone that read: William Borden, 1187-,1913. Borden, a prestigious Yale graduate & heir to great wealth, rejected a life of ease/comfort, in order to bring the gospel to the Muslims.

Refusing even to buy himself a car, Borden gave away" hundreds of thousands- of US \$dollars to the missions. After only 4 months of zealous ministry in Egypt, he contracted spinal/backbone meningitis & died at the age of 25 years. I dusted the stone on Borden's grave. After describing his love & sacrifices for the Kingdom of God & for the Muslim people, the writing on his gravestone ended with something I have never forgotten: "Apart from faith in Christ, there is no explanation for such a life".

The Thurmans then took us straight from

Borden's grave to the Egyptian National Museum. The King Tut exhibit/show-case was mind-boggling. He was the boy-king who was only 17 years when he died. The boy-King Tut was buried with solid gold chariots &

thousands of golden gifts. His gold coffin was found

within gold tombs, within gold tombs, within gold tombs. The burial place was filled with tons of gold.

The Egyptians believed in an afterlife -one where they could take their earthly treasures too. But all the treasures intended for King Tut's eternal enjoyment stayed right where they were kept. This was until Howard Carter discovered his burial chambers, in 1922 -They had not been touched for more than 3,000 years.

was struck by the contrast/difference between these two graves. Borden's was unknown; dusty & neglected, hidden off a street littered with garbage. On the other hand King Tut's tomb glittered/shone brightly with unimagirable wealth/riches.

Yet, where are these two young men now? One who lived in opulence/luxury & called himself a king is en the misery of a Christless eternity. The other -one, who lived a simple life on earth in service of the one true King is enjoying his everlasting reward, in the presence of his Master & Lord. Tut's life was tragic/sad because of an awful truth discovered too late - he couldn't take his treasures with him. Borden's life on the other hand was triumphant/victorious. Why? Because instead of leaving behind his treasures - he sent them on ahead of him to enjoy for eternity.

Eternal Rewards

Heaven is a great place to live in. Some of us will reign with Christ (Revelation 20:6). Faithful servants will be "put in charge of many things" (Matthew 25:21-23). Christ will grant some followers leadership over Cities, in proportion to their service on earth (Luke 19:12-19). We'll even command angels (1Corinthians 6:3). We are to be given eternal rewards for doing good works

(Ephesians 6:8; Romans 2:6,10), persevering under persecution / difficulties (Luke 14:13-14), treating our enemies kindly (Luke 6:35), etc. God also grants us rewards for generous giving: "Go sell all your possessions & give to the poor & you will have treasures in heaven" (Matthew 19:21). Jesus is keeping track of our smallest acts of kindness: "If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42). God is keeping a record of all we do for Him, including our giving: "A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence, concerning those who feared the Lord & honoured His name" (Malachi 3:16).

Imagine a writer in heaven retarding each of our gifts - The bike you gave to the neighbour's kid, the books to the prisoners, toys to the orphans, monthly cheques to the church contributions to the missions, gifts to the poor, need clothes to the naked.... all are being carefully noted. These are all meant to be read. someday - I look forward to hearing of your generous giving stories & meeting those who were touched by what you gave them.

Jesus said, "If you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?" (Luke 16:11-12). If you handle His money faithfully, Christ will give you true riches - eternal / heavenly ones. By clinging to what isn't ours, we forego the opportunity to be granted ownership in heaven. But by generously distributing God's property on earth, we will become property owners in heaven!
Heavenly Credit

Paul spoke about the Philippians financial giving & explained, "Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what maybe credited to your account" (Philippians 4:17). God keeps an account open for all of us in heaven & every gift given for His glory is a deposit in that account of yours. Not only God. Not only others, but it is we who get eternal benefits from our giving. Have you been regularly depositing in that heavenly account.

But isn't it wrong to be motivated by reward? No, it isn't. If it were, Christ wouldn't offer it to us as a motivation / encouragement. Reward is His Idea not ours. Our instinct is to give to those Who will give us something in return. But Jesus told us to give to "the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind... Although they cannot repay you - you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" (Luke 14:13-14). If we give to those who can't reward us, Christ guarantees, He will personally reward us in heaven.

God promises us generous heavenly rewards, in a magnificent New Heaven & New Earth, no longer under curse & no longer suffering (Revelations 21:16).

We'll forever be with the person (God) we were made for, in a place made for us (heaven), by Him. And

yet, many Christians are scared at the thought of leaving this world. Why? Because so many have stored-up their treasures on earth — not in heaven. Each day brings us closer to death - if your treasures are on earth, that means each day takes you away from your treasures & closer to losing it.

I recently spoke with Laverne a woman dying of cancer. She was crying - not because she was going to die, but because I asked her about giving. Through her tears she said, "Giving melts me. It blows me away to know that God has chosen me to give. It won't be long before I see Him face-to-face: And I just want to hear Him saying "Well done my good & faithful servant", Suddenly. Laverne laughed. "I mean, what else matters?" she said. "Why should I care about anything else?" Laverne's heart is focused on heavenly treasures. Because she is storing-up treasures in heaven~ each day brings her closer to those treasures. Jesus said, "Where your treasure is, your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). That's the second key-

By telling us that our hearts follow our treasure, Jesus is saying, "Show me your the cheque-book, your credit card statement, your receipts/expenses. And I will show you where your heart is". Suppose you buy shares of Reliance or Infosys. What happens? You check the financial pages.

When you see an article or write-up about the company or even people associated with it, like Ambani or Narayan Murthy, you read every word of it. Even though a month ago, you would have passed right over it, as you pass over the information on hundreds of other companies now.

Suppose you are giving help to spread the Good News in Africa or India or the Gulf. When you see an article on the any of these places, you are hooked/engrossed. If you are sending money to plant churches in a hostile territory & an earthquake or pray. As surely as the compass needle follows the north, Money leads; hearts follow.

I've heard people say, "I want more of a heart for missions". I always reply, "Jesus tells you exactly how to get it. Put your money in missions. And in your church. And to the poor or needy - and your heart will follow". Do you wish you cared more about eternal/heavenly things? Then shift/reallocate some of your money, maybe most of your money -from temporal/earthly things to eternal/heavenly things.

Watch what happens.

Moses left Egypt's treasures "because he was looking ahead of his reward" (Hebrews 11:26). He who lays up treasures on earth spends his life backing away from his treasures. To him, death is loss. He who lays up treasures in heaven. looks forward to eternity; he is moving daily towards his treasures. To him death is gain. He who spends his life moving away from his treasures, has reason to despair. He who spends his life moving towards his treasures has reason to rejoice. Are you despairing or rejoicing?

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall, have them" (Mark 11:24). "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you...ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:23-24).

Chapter 4

ROADBLOCKS TO GIVING

"Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions"

-Luke 12:15

We know that Christ commands us to give. And we know that He offers us great rewards for giving. So why is it so hard to give? There are many roadblocks to giving: unbelief, insecurity, pride, idolatry, desire for power & control... What do you think is your obstacle to giving to God's work? Do you think it is justified?

But I am more convinced that the greatest difficulty to giving is this: the illusion that the earth is our home. This leads to the next key to the Treasure Principle:

Treasure Principle Key # 3 heaven, not earth is my home

The Bible says we are pilgrims/strangers/aliens on earth (Hebrews 11:13). We are ambassadors representing our true country (Hebrew 11:13) "Our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). We are citizens of a "better country - a heavenly one" (Hebrews 11:16). Where we choose to store our treasures depends largely on where we think our home is.

Suppose your home is in India & you are visiting or working in France/Gulf for a couple of months, living in a hotel. You are told that you can't bring anything back to India on your flight back home. But you can earn money & mail the deposits to your bank, back in India. Would you fill your hotel room in France/Gulf with expensive furniture or invest in things you would not be able to take back home of course not! You would send your money back to India, where your home is.

You would spend only on what you need on your temporary residence, sending your real treasures/wealth ahead - so that it would be waiting for you, when you got back home, back in India.

When the King's wedding day comes, the universe will screech to a halt (Revelation 19:7-9).

Everyday of our lives we are traveling forwards that wedding -our wedding! It is closer today than it was yesterday. Our Bridegroom, the Carpenter, has built a place for us in heaven. Everything we send on ahead, will be waiting for us there. It is our gift to Him

but in His generosity, He gives those treasures back in us. Paradoxically, our home is a place we have never been to. But it is a place we were made for -the place made for us. If we would let this reality sink in, it would forever change the way we think. &live. We would stop laying up treasures in our earthly hotel rooms &start sending more stuff, ahead to our true/real home-up in heaven.

Ever seen that famous American bumper sticker "He who dies with the most toys wins" Millions of people act as if it were true. The more accurate saying would be "He who dies with the most toys, still dies -and never takes his toys with him" When we die after devoting our lives to acquiring things, we don't win - we lose. We move into eternity, but our toys stay behind. The bumper sticker couldn't be more wrong.

think in terms of a dot & a line. Our lives have two phases a dot & a line, extending out from that dot towards eternity.

Our present life on earth is the dot Life begins & it ends. It is a brief full stop. But from that dot extends

a line that goes on forever -towards infinity/eternity. Right now we are living in the dot. But what are we living for ?The short-sighted person lives for the dot. The person with perspective /foresight / vision lives for the line. This earth & my time here is the dot. My beloved Bridegroom, the Great Wedding & Reunion, my eternal mansions prepared for me by Him, no pain or worry, blessings & happiness FOREVER are all on the line. So that leads us to the new key -

The person who lives for the dot lives for treasures on earth -that only ultimately land-up in the dump-yard -the earth has become & will be. The person who lives for the line, lives for a bright future in heaven -not just for a few years, but for eternity. Giving is living for the line. We will each have to part with our money & things. The only question is when. We have no choice, but to part with it sooner or later- It has

to happen sometime ! We can keep our earthly with it NOW get some goods/money for the moment & may get temporary enjoyment too. But, if we give them away -while we can - we will enjoy eternal treasures, that can never be taken away from us.

This is what Jim Elliot was talking about, when he said, "He is no fool, who gives what he cannot keep -to gain what he cannot afford to lose". If you hear those words & think - Oh, he was one of those super-spiritual missionary types, who did not think about gain -then you missed the point. Profit/Gain was exactly what Jim Elliot was thinking about! Only, he was clear, he wanted the kind of gain/profit - that he would not or could not lose. He wanted his real treasures in heaven, where it would last forever. He lived for the line, not for the dot.

Possession & Obsession

A US N program called Affluenza, addresses what it calls the "modern-day plague of materialism". Its claims show that Indians are not very much different. Check some of them out as below-

- In 90% of divorce cases, arguments about money played a prominent role.
- The average American shops six hours a week, while spending 40 minutes with the children.
- By age 20 years, Americans have seen 1 million advertisements .
- Recently, more Americans declared themselves

bankrupt, than the number that graduated from college.

What strikes me about this program is that it doesn't argue against materialism on a moral or religious basis. Instead, it argues against material riches from a practical point of view-Wealth does not make one happy.

Listen to what some of the world's, wealthiest people

have to say -

- have made many millions, but they have brought me no happiness -John D Rockefeller
- The care of \$ 200 million is enough to kill anyone. There is no pleasure in it-WH Vanderbilt
- I am the most miserable man on the earth -John Jacob Astor
- Millionaires seldom smile -Andrew Carnegie
- I was happier when doing a mechanic's job Henry Ford

Often we think that a little more money will make us happy or we need just a little more... But how much wealth is enough to make us & keep us happy ? The truth is that our possessions or whatever we own, enslaves us - We are servants of what we own.

A rich person does not just enjoy possessions, but is controlled by them - A wealthy person cannot just ignore possessions -they control him, capture his attention, remains in his imagination, takes-up his time & resources... The rich person does not own his worldly possessions -they possess him

The Tyranny Of Things

Nothing makes a journey more difficult than a heavy baggage, filled with nice, but unnecessary luggage. Pilgrims travel light. Nancy & I have lived in our house for 23 years. For the first 9 years we had an ugly orange carpet ! We never cared what happened to it. The day we finally installed a new carpet, someone lit a candle -The matchstick head fell off & burned a hole in the new carpet. The day before we would not have cared. Now we were terribly upset. It seemed now, we were better off & happier without our nice new possession. Every thing we buy or get is one more thing to think about, talk about, care about, fret over, Arrange, repair, clean & replace when it goes bad!

Let's say I get a television for free. Now what ? hook up the antenna, buy a set-top box, subscribe to cable, buy a new table to place it, maybe even buy another VCR or DVD player, surround-sound speakers, a home theatre or even a chair to watch N comfortably, rent movies... All this of course costs money. But perhaps more important, it draws out a lot of my time, energy, attention & other non-physical resources...The time I now devote to my N and its accessories (or my additions) just because I got it free, means less time for communicating with my family, personal reflection & prayer, reading the Bible, serving the needy, concentrating on work to increase my income, better forms of entertainment, interaction, hobbies, fitness, etc. So what is the true cost of my FREE television or for that matter, anything one purchases or even gets free.

Or suppose I buy a new car - It may mean, frequent trips away from the family/children or the church, spending time with friends rather than relatives or neighbours, missing out on helping the needy or doing a little part-time work....

The problem is not with the N or the car or any such thing. The problem is with the Tyranny of Things. It is slaw of life -Things enslave us. Things hold us captive.

Chasing The Wind

The wise old Solomon of the Bible, makes a series of insightful statements in Ecclesiastes 5:10-15. Here below, I point out some of them, along with some conclusions

- Whoever loves money never has money enough
(v10) The more you have, the more you want.
- Whoever loves wealth is never satisfied - with his income (v10) The more you have, the less you are satisfied.
- As goods increase, so do those who consume them
(v11) The more you have, the more people (including the tax officials, the politicians, anti-social elements...) will come after it.
- And what benefit are they to the owner, except to feast his eyes on them (v11) The more you have, the more you realize it does no good, other than just looking at them for a while.
- The sleep of a labourer is sweet, whether he eats little or much. But, the abundance of a rich man permits him no sleep (v12) The more you have, the more you have to worry & become restless about.
- I have seen a grievous evil under the sun: Wealth -hoarded to the harm of its owner (v13)
The more you

have, the more you can hurt yourself, if you hold on to it- rather than use it to bless others in need.

- Or wealth lost through some misfortune (v14) The more you have, the more you have to lose & greater the chances of great unfortunate losses.
- Naked a man comes from his mother's womb & as he comes so he departs. He takes nothing from his labour, that he can carry in his hand. (v15) The more you have, the more you'll leave behind.

As the richest & wealthiest man on earth, Solomon learned that affluence/ riches did not satisfy. All that riches did was give him many opportunities to chase many more mirages/false images. Ordinary people tend to have unlimited dreams & false images. In fact, they run out of money, but never out of mirages/images. So they cling to the myth/false belief that the things they can't afford will satisfy them. In the case of the wise king Solomon, money never ran out nor his riches ever got over, leading him to say, 'I denied myself. nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure' (Ecclesiastes 2:10). What was Solomon's conclusion? "When surveyed all that my hands had done & what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, like chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun" (v11). Why then do we keep getting fooled?

Its because our hearts long for treasure here & now. We are tempted to imagine that the earthly treasures we see around us are real, rather than mere shadows of genuine eternal treasures. However, as AW Tozer said, our earthly riches & treasures can become our heavenly wealth - "Even though money is an open abuse / ordinary thing, yet it can be changed easily into an everlasting treasure. It can be converted into food for the hungry & clothing for the poor. A contribution can keep a missionary active in winning lost men to the Gospel & thus money can transform itself into an everlasting wealth. Any worldly possession can be turned into eternal riches. God immediately changes whatever is placed at the Lord's disposal or used for His work or given freely to Christ into an eternal reward or into heavenly riches that can be encashed forever".

If affluenza is the disease, what is the cure? If worldly materialism is the poison, what is the antidote/cure? Paul offers us an answer in 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, to be generous & willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasures for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of life - that is truly life".

Notice, how Paul brings us right back to the Treasure Principle-When he speaks of giving to 'lay up treasures for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age', he is no doubt thinking of Christ's words in Matthew 6:19-21, "Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth, where moths & rust destroy or robbers break in & steal. Instead, store up riches for yourselves: in heaven, where moths & rust cannot destroy & robbers cannot break in or steal. For your heart will always be where your riches are".

carry in my wallet/purse a little card. On one side it says, "God owns every treasure. I am his investment/money manager" Under this are 3 scriptures to support it, while the other side says, "God wants me to use earthly treasures to store up heavenly treasures" and underneath it are the above 2 quotations from the Bible. Paul says that being generous, willing to share & being rich in good deeds allows us to take hold of that which is truly life -As against/opposed to what?

This is as against the second-class, so called ordinary life of materialism or of this worthless world. That leads us to the 5th Key of the Treasure Principle

Treasure Principle Key # 5

Giving is the only antidote to /cure for materialism

The act of giving is a vivid reminder that its all about God, not about us. Its saying that 'I am not the point, God is the point' and He does not exist for me -exist for Him. God's money has a higher purpose than my being rich here. Giving of my riches, to me is a joyful surrender to a greater person, for a greater purpose & a greater agenda or goal. Giving affirms the Lordship of Christ

over my life. It dethrone me, making me less important & Him most important - my giving exalts Him. My giving to Him or His work, breaks the chains that money could bind me into slavery & capture me.

As long as I still have something, I believe I own it. But, when I give it away, I let go of my control, power & prestige over it. The moment I release my hold over it - the light comes on and the magic spell is broken.

My mind clears. I recognize God as the real owner of everything & I begin to see myself as His servant. I consider others to be God's desired beneficiaries of the extra wealth God has given me. Giving doesn't strip me of my vested or my own interests; Rather, it shifts my vested interests & places my real good from earth to heaven -from myself to God & to heaven, .where I can enjoy my true riches for all eternity.

Of course, money & wealth isn't all that I can give God or His people. Time, Gifts, Talents Advise, Wisdom, Contacts, Influence, Expertise, Resources.... are all wonderful presents to the Lord God Almighty. Giving in any form breaks affluenza's fever. Giving or donating in any way breaks me free from the treacherous hold that greed, money, jealousy or selfishness has over me. Giving or contributing in whatever kind shifts me & my focus to a new center of gravity -HEAVEN -where it is meant to be, for my eternal good.

Where To Start

In Revelations 3:1\$, after exposing the Laodicean Church's spiritual poverty, hidden behind their worldly wealth, Jesus offers them real treasures - "(advise you to buy from me real gold, refined in the fire, so you can become _really rich':

When Christ returns (it could be anytime), 2 Peter 3:10 says, the world 'will be destroyed by fire & the earth & everything in it will be laid bare'. Does that sound depressing ? It certainly would, if we believed that this world is our home! But it isn't ! It would be depressing, if we couldn't use our lives & resources to make a difference for eternity. But we can !

CS Lewis puts it this way - "We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with ,drink, sex & ambition; when infinite joy is offered to us Like an arrogant/stubborn child, who wants to go on making mud pies/cakes in the slum (near a gutter), because he cannot imagine what is meant by (God's) offer of a holiday by the sea or the beach. We are (unfortunately) too easily pleased -with this world's nothings".

Many Christians have settled for a life of unsatisfying material acquisitions,. like making mud pies/cakes in the slum (near a gutter), because.... There is however, something so much better than anything the world can offer -eternal treasures & exhilarating joy - an eternal holiday on the beach !You want these heavenly treasures & this exhilarating joy -Don't you ? But may be you have some practical questions about giving or you are not sure -

Where to start ?Keep Reading.....

Chapter 5

GETTING STARTED

I have many things in my hands & I have lost them all. But, whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.

-Martin Luther

To everyone's amazement, Sam Houston (colorful soldier & famous politician) came to Christ & after his baptism, Houston said he wanted to pay half of the local pastor's/priest's salary. When someone asked him why, he replied -When I was baptized, my purse/bankbook was baptized too. Like Sam Houston, you now understand that Christian life is inseparable from giving. But you might be wondering, Where do start from ? How do I begin ?

A logical place is where God started His Old Testament children (Leviticus 27:30), where He said - "A tithe (10%) of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the tree, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD". A tenth part (10%) of what one received was to be given back to God. There were freewill offerings too, over & above the 10 %, but a tenth part was mandatory /compulsory. Further, Proverbs 3:9 says, 'Honour the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops'. God's children gave to Him from the first, not the last or from what is remaining.

When God's children were not giving as they should have, He asked - "Will a man rob God ?Yet, you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you ?' In tithes & offerings. You are under a curse -the

whole nation of you -because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house" (Malachi 3:8-10).

New Testament Giving

Jesus in Matthew 23:23 confirms that one needs to tithe, approving even tithes on small things as mint, cumin & herbs. For those who are of the opinion that Jesus said nothing about tithe, in this verse, speaking to the teachers of the Law, he makes Himself amply clear - "You give to God a tenth even of seasoning herbs.... But you neglect to obey the really important teachings... These you should practice, without neglecting the others."

However, it seems that the New Testament goes even further, as every giving mentioned here, goes for beyond the Old Testament. In fact, Jesus always raised the standard of spirituality & giving. He never reduced it. For instance, in Matthew 5:27-28, He said that the Law says, 'do not commit adultery' but tell you: anyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her. We are God's children by the New Covenant, sealed by the Blood of Christ. Are we then expected to give God more or less? Should we then give God the minimum i.e. tithes (10%), offerings or first fruits

The Church fathers Origin, Jerome & Augustine: taught that the tithe was the minimum-giving requirement for Christians. Are we living up to this teaching? Further, is it not fair to ask our Heavenly Father - "God, do You expect less from me? Do you expect less or more from me, Your child, who has Your Holy Spirit within me & who has been saved by Your Son, Jesus? Do You require less from me who 'lives in one of the wealthiest societies of human history, than what you commanded of the poor Israelite?"

How much do you give? What percentage of your income does it amount to? Is it not troubling that in today's times, where comfort or luxuries are not hard to come by, Christians are giving lesser than what the Israelites or Early Christians gave, under extremely difficult circumstances? It seems clear that either this teaching on tithes, offerings, giving first fruits... is not Scriptural/Biblical or that we are disobeying God. In fact, when John, the Baptist was asked by the sinners, what could they do to be forgiven, he said - If you have 2 coats, give away 1 to the needy. That is 50% and Zacheus, when he encountered Jesus, gave 4 times to make amends & Jesus replied - Today, salvation has come to this house. After the resurrection, the Early Christians shared all that they had in common & no one was in need.

The tithe is God's historical method to get us on the road to giving - it is our gateway to God. -in fact, it would be unhealthy to view tithing- as a place to stop, but rather it is a good place to start giving. Tithing, is not the ceiling of giving - it is its floor. It is not the finishing line of giving; it is just the starting blocks. Tithes can be the training wheels to launch us into the mind-set, skills & habits of true Christian giving. Malachi in the Bible says that according to God, the Israelites robbed Him by giving less than they were supposed to or not giving at all. Are we not doing the same today? Robbing God by not giving the way, we are expected to. If Christians gave the way God intended us to, there would not be a single one in need - Book of Acts in the New Testament.

How Much & Why To Give?

Of course, God does not expect us all to give the same amount. We are to give in proportion to how He has blessed us (Deuteronomy 16 : 10, 16-17). Some may say, we will start gradually, 'Let's begin with 5%' but Thai's like saying - "I used to rob 10 general stores a year; But this year, with the grace of God in me, I am going to rob only 5 stores. The point is not to rob God less - it is not to rob God at all. True, some would be sacrificing more by giving 5% of their income, than others who would be tithing or even giving 50/100 or 90% of their income. Certainly, the affluent/rich should not be happy that giving 10% suffices or fulfills their obligation. For our belief & faith in God is not about keeping rules. In fact, the entire 100% belongs to Him & would never be ours, if not for His love, grace, mercy, kindness, forgiveness... God does not look at just what we give. He also looks at what we keep or what is left behind. And how we use the remaining.

I have had the privilege of interviewing many givers. In a great majority of cases, they mentioned tithing as the practice, that first stretched them to give more.

They tithed & then watched God provide. They saw their hearts move deeper into His kingdom. Now, years later, they are giving 60%, 80% or even 95% of their incomes! But it was tithing that set them on the road to giving to God in love.

When God's people were robbing Him by withholding their tithes & offerings, God said in Malachi 3:10, "Test me in this... and see if I will not throw open, the floodgates of heaven & pour out so much blessing, that you will not have room enough for it! Many people find they can't afford to give precisely because they are not giving. If we pay our debt to God first, then He will not only bless us, but also help us pay our debts to men. But when we rob God to pay men, we rob ourselves of God's blessings & prevent Him from blessing us. No wonder we don't have enough. It is a vicious circle & it takes obedient faithful giving to break out of it..

As God in Haggai 1:9-11 says, 'You hoped for large harvests, but they turned to be small. And when you brought the harvest home, I blew it away. Why did I do that? Because my Temple lies in ruins, while everyone of you is busy working on his own house. That is why there is no rain & nothing can grow. I have brought drought on the land.... On everything you try to grow'. If you are one of

those who don't tithe & are facing in similar situation, may be God is showing you a way to get His blessings-Start Now.

When people tell me they can't afford to tithe, I ask them, 'If your income was reduced by 10% would you die?' They say, 'No'. And I say, 'Then you have just admitted that you can afford to tithe. It's just that you don't want to'. I am not saying that it is easy to give. I am saying -and there are thousands who will agree-that it is much easier to live on 90% or 50% or 10% of your income within/inside the will of God; than it is to live on 100% outside it, disobeying Him.

Tithing is like a child toddler's first steps :They aren't his last or best steps, but they are a good start. From there on the child will learn to walk, jump, run... Once you learn to ride a bicycle, don't need the training/third wheel nor your feet to touch the ground. Once you learn to give, tithing becomes irrelevant. And if you can ride the bicycle without ever using the training/third wheel support =nothing can be better for you!

I have no problem with people who say 'we are not into tithing', just as long as they are not using that to justify or excuse giving 'less to God. Give more than your tithes. But in my mind the current giving statistics among Christians clearly indicate that most of

us need a giving jump-start or kick-start. If you find a gateway to giving that is better than tithing - its great, its wonderful. But if not, why not start with a measure that God started or where He started His First Covenant children. And Praise God, that we Christians have a better Covenant in Christ. So we can do better.

Excellent Giving

Paul in 2 Corinthians 8:7 said, 'See that you also excel in this grace of giving'. Like playing the guitar or a game, giving is a skill that needs to be learnt. And the more we practice, the better we get at giving. We can learn to give more, give more often & give more strategically or in order to maximize its effect. We teach & learn the pursuit of excellence or perfection in our vocations/jobs. Why then don't we do the same with giving -something that God has asked us to. Giving is something we can study seriously, discuss & debate, sharpen & strive for... till we succeed in becoming experts at the skill

The Macedonian Christians in 2 Corinthians 8:3 gave 'as much as they were able. & even beyond their ability'. What does it mean to give beyond our ability & It means pushing our giving well past the pons, where the figures add up. It means giving, when the bottom line says we can't. Scott Lewis attended a conference where Bill Bright challenged people to give 100,000 \$ to help fulfill the great commission or take the Gospel to the ends of the earth. This amount was laughable for Scott Lewis-fns beyond anything that he could ever imagine. His machinery business was generating an income of hardly less than 50,000 \$ per year. Bill asked, 'How much did you give last year?' Scott felt pretty good about the answer he gave -'We gave 17,000 \$ - about 35% of our income'.

Without blinking an eye, Bill then replied, 'Over the next year, why don't you make a goal of giving 50,000 \$ of your income' Scott thought Bill had not understood him - 50,000 \$ was more than what he had made all the year !But, Scott & his wife decided to trust God with Bill's challenge, praying to God to do the impossible. God provided them business in amazing ways that year. By 31st December, Scott & his wife were able to give 50,000 \$ and the next year set the goal of giving 100,000 \$ -True to His nature, God provided again. Scott wrote me a note saying that in 2001, they passed the 1 million \$ mark in their giving. But the best part is that they are not stepping at it now- That's what it means to excel at giving.

Give Now or Give Later ?

People ask, 'Should I give now or should I hang on to the money for some time ? May be I could invest it & then I will have more to give in a year or two'. I reply to this with two questions of my own :How soon do you want to experience God's blessings ? Do you want to be sure the money will go to God's work or are you willing to take the risk that it might not happen

How can we be so sure. I don't believe God will scold us when we meet, for giving Him money, the moment, we received it !Now seems always the best time to give, particularly if we go by the returns on investment (upto 10,000 %), that the Lord promises in Matthew 19:29 - "And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake, will receive a 100 times more &will be given eternal life. But many who are now first will be last & many who are now last will be first".

Where are we in the eyes of God ?If we don't give now, we could run many real risks

- We may meet with unfortunate circumstances, like an accident, make losses, be cheated, or get robbed... The future is full of uncertainties.
- The economy may change & we might have less to give, as the amount accumulated may have to go in to meeting the new situation, like increased or fresh taxes, which are unavoidable.
- Our hearts may change & we might change our minds about giving. You might convince yourself later that may be God does not want you to give & justify using the money for something else.
- By postponing your giving, you build on your earthly interests, while decreasing your chances in heaven. You may think, I am putting some amount for the Church or God's Work in my will &final testament. But how can you be sure what will happen, when you die !

Why not give when you are alive ?Why not do so, when you can see your wealth/riches being invested for eternity ? Why not do something, when you can, because when you are dead, what control do you have over the situation ? Do you have any choice or role, after you are no more ? Death is not your best opportunity to give; it is the last or end of your opportunities to give.

Do you really have faith in someone or some trust today, with all the government regulations & nature of people, to be sure that your money is put, to the use you intended it to ? Even while you are alive, you need to examine whether your tithes/giving is being properly utilized &check its misuse. Financial adviser, Ron Blue says, 'Do your giving while you are living, so you're knowing where its going'. The great John Wesley said, 'Money never stays with me.

It would burn me, if it did. throw it out of my hands, as soon as possible -lest it should find its way to my heart'.

Wesley earned significant book royalties during his life &much earnings from his published works. Yet, his goal was to give so generously, as to leave virtually nothing behind, when he died. He achieved his goal -While, his earthly money or 'confederate currency' still had worth on earth, he exchanged it for eternal riches/treasures in heaven. When the Lord returns or when you return to the lord - What will happen to all the money sitting in the bank accounts, fixed in deposits, retirement benefits, possessions, investments, foundations, - estates, assets, trusts, land, cash.... It will all burn like wood/paper/hay -when it all could have been all exchanged for heavenly riches, where you will live forever.

Money that could have been used to spread the Good News, help the needy, save the lost, bless the unfortunate, sow eternal seeds... will all go up in smoke -unless you act now.

Have you ever played one of those card games, where the winner is the one, who runs out/finishes all his cards first ? At the end of the game, every card left in your hand counts against you. The worldly dream is to die with as many cards with you, as possible -even if you don't need or use them. This is called hoarding/'accumulating, what can well be used to bless someone else. It seems, we've got it all wrong. Maybe our strategy should be like John Wesley - not to get stuck with all those cards/cash in our hands, at life's end or while we are living.

What About The Kids

What do we leave for the children ?you may ask. Are we not supposed to leave them all our money ? The answer is NO. Nancy & I will leave to our daughters only enough to be of modest/sufficient assistance/help. But certainly not enough to change their lifestyles/living or cut on the need to plan &work. We would not leave enough money for the children to reduce their dependence on God or make them lazy. We have communicated this to them &they understand &agree with our plan to give most of our wealth to God's work. Leaving a large amount of

inheritance/wealth to children is not just a missed opportunity to invest in God's Kingdom, but it is also rarely in the children's best interest.

I have heard of countless inheritance horror stories -the lives of people, who inherited much wealth & in vast majority of cases have found - It made them

lazy, sick, greedy, cynical, unhappy, sinful, suicidal

addictive... Who wants to work hard, when you've got all that easy money ? Money finds new temptations -giving money to a careless spender is like throwing kerosene on fire. And nothing divides children or the family more quickly than a large inheritance. Leaving more to God & less to financially independent children is not just an act of love towards God, but also a great act of love & caring towards the children, ensuring their bright future.

In Old Testament times; leaving an inheritance. was critical (Proverbs 13:22), because children could not afford to buy their own land & could end-up becoming ;slaves or unable to'; care for their old/handicapped parents. But today, inheritances are often lotteries/windfalls coming to people, who do not need it & often already have more than they need. Andrew Carnegie said, 'The almighty dollar given to a child is an almighty curse. No one has the right to handicap his son with such a burden, as great wealth'. Your children should- love the Lord, work hard & experience the joy of trusting God.

More important than leaving your children much inheritance, is leaving them a spiritual heritage/wealth in terms of morals, ethics, values... If you left your children money, that they didn't need & if they were thinking correctly, wouldn't they give it to God anyway ?

Then, why not give it to God yourself, since He entrusted/gave it to you first. And spare your children the temptation of abuse the wealth you left them. You • are God's money manager/accountant. Let God decide how much to provide for your adult children. Once they are on their own, the money you've generated

accumulated, under God's provision I blessing doesn't belong to your children. It belongs to HIM - after all, if as a businessperson, your money manager/accountant died, what would you think,. if he left all your money to his children ?

Why Has God Entrusted so Much To You ?

Luke 6:38 quotes Jesus as saying, "Give & it will be given to you - A good measure, pressed down, shaken together & running over, will it be poured back into your lap. For the measure you use to give, the same will be used to measure back to you".

The more you give, the more comes back to you because God is the greatest giver in the universe & of all times. And He won't let you or you can't out-give/win against Him. Go ahead & try. See what happens. RG LeTourneau invented earthmoving machines. He gave away 90% of his income to God's work. But the money came in faster than he could give it away. LeTourneau said, I shovel/throw it out &

God shovels/throws it back in -but God has a bigger shovel!'

Prosperity theology is built on a half-truth. God often does prosper us materially. But God will not allow us to take Him for granted or treat Him like a ATM/slot vending machine or Alladin's genie, who is only there to do our bidding/attend to our wants/whims & fancies. Giving is a sacrifice & sometimes it is necessary that we feel the sacrifice. God's pay back is very real, .but it comes at His 'proper time', which maybe today or tomorrow, but certainly in eternity - 'Galatians 6:9. God:: has given you considerable material/earthly blessings, over millions of others. Have you ever asked yourself, Why has God provided so much for you ?

You don't ' need to wonder.' Paul in 2Corinthians 9:10-11 tells us 'exactly why God provides us with more wealth/riches than we really need - "Now he who supplies seed to the sower & bread for food will also supply- & increase your store of seed & will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that.... So that what ?How does Paul finish the sentence ?Prosperity theology would finish it - so that we might live in wealth, showing the world how much God blesses those, who love Him !But that is not how

Paul finishes it. He says, God will make you rich enough to be generous at all times/on every occasion, so that many will thank God for your gifts.... For this service you perform not only meets the needs of God's people, but also produces an 'outpouring of gratitude to God - v.12. Paul is thus relating to the 6th & final key to the Treasure Principle.

Treasure Principle Key # 6

God prospers me -not to raise the standard of my living, but to raise my standard of giving.

God comes right out & tells us why He gives us more money or makes us rich in mind, body, spirit, talents... than we -will ever need: It is not so that we can find more ways to spend it or let it remain idle. It is not so that we can indulge/pamper ourselves & spoil our children. It is not so that we become self-centered/selfish & care not for those in need. God gives us seed/money/wealth, so that we give & as He says -Give Generously.

When God provides more money, 'we often think, 'This is a great blessing'. Well yes, but it would be only Biblical to think of it as -This is a test. The money manager/accountant has legitimate needs & the Almighty Owner/Boss is generous.

God does not want His stewards/managers/staff to live in poverty & God doesn't resent us making reasonably comfortable expenses on ourselves.

But suppose the Almighty Owner/Boss sees us living luxurious in a mansion, driving only the best cars & flying first-class? Or suppose He sees us buying only the most expensive clothes, ..., & electronic appliances or dining at the best restaurants/bars?

Isn't there a point when we as God's managers / accountants, cross the line of reasonable necessary expenses? Won't the Almighty Owner/Boss then be expected to ask us for an account of the riches, He placed in our care? Or won't He call us to account for squandering the money, that is not ours?

We are called God's servants & we are told that it is required of us that we prove faithful -1 Corinthians 4:2. In fact, in Colossians 3:23, we are told "Work hard and cheerfully at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord, rather than for people". We are God's errand boys & delivery girls/managers or staff. We should keep that in mind, when we set out / expenses / salaries

allowances/benefits/ perks. Let us not have an inflated view of our own value or think that all our worth is because of our own efforts. We don't own the store. We just work here for the Almighty Owner/Boss

God's Courier Or Distributor

Suppose you have something important, you want to reach urgently to someone who needs it desperately. What do you do? You wrap it well & hand it over to the FedEx/DHL courier man. What would you think if instead of delivering the package, he took it home, opened it & kept it for himself? Apart from getting very angry, you would certainly say, 'Look at this guy! Who does he think he is? The package does not belong to him: His responsibility is just to take it across to the person, I want to give it to'. Just because God put His money into our hands, it doesn't mean it is ours to do with it as we please. Or even that He intends all of the money to stay with us. That is what Paul told Christians in 2 Corinthians 8:14-15, encouraging them to give to the needy Church in Jerusalem - "At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in return, their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, as it is written - He who gathered much did not have too much & he who gathered little, did not have too little".

Why does God give some of His children, more than they need & others less than they need? So that God may use His children to bless & help one another.

As Proverbs 30:8 - 9 says, He does not want us to have too little or too much. When we as God's children, who have too much, give to our fellow brothers/sisters, who have a little, two problems get solved. And when we don't give to those who have little, the two problems get worse.

God distributes wealth more unevenly/unequally, not because He loves some of His children more than His other children. But, so that as a Good Father, God can teach & His children can learn to distribute their Father's wealth/riches on His behalf among the brothers & sisters. Paul said that God who supplies seed to the sower, will increase our storehouse of seed. Why? So that we can scatter the seed & spread it out, for our seed to bear fruit in the Kingdom of God. Abundance/great amount of wealth/riches is not God's provision for me to live in luxury.

It is His provision for me to help others less fortunate to live. God entrusts me with this money not to build my kingdom or palace on earth, but to build His Kingdom & riches for me in heaven.

Are you eager to plant God's money in the field of a world that needs Christ? Does the thought of giving to what will count for eternity make your spine tingle?

Doesn't it excite you to think of a heaven of luxury for ever - treasure that you can pile up now for yourself in heaven? Does storing up your riches for eternity make your heart skip a beat? If we had understood it 'well, this out of the world / heavenly returns on our investment, like the

Macedonians in the Bible's New Testament, we would be begging for the privilege to give or to be given the chance to give.

Nancy & I have a certain amount we live on & we are comfortable.. We have made our decision. We don't need a better house or car. We don't need more. insurance... So with joy in our heart we say, 'No Thanks', when offers come our way. We have a certain amount that we live on comfortably. The rest of the money we earn goes God's Kingdom. We don't need the hundred thousand dollars more, that we. could easily get. We do fine on a lot less - in fact, even better off with a lot less !God provides for us faithfully & we get to experience on of Life's greatest thrills - The Joy of Giving.

"We went through fire and through water: but thou.. broughtest us out into a wealthy place."

- Psalm 66 :12

Chapter 6

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

It ought to be the business of every day,
to prepare for the last day -Matthew Henry

Alfred Nobel dropped the newspaper &put his head in his hands. It was 1888. Nobel was a Swedish chemist, who made his fortune inventing &producing dynamite. His brother':Ludvig had just died in France. But now Alfred's sorrow was made even worse. He had just read in the newspaper an obituary/death tribute - Not his brother's but his own !'The editor had confused the two brothers &mistook one for the other. The headline read -The Merchant of Death is Dead. Alfred Nobel's obituary described a man &spoke of him, as one who had gotten rich by helping kill one another.

Shaken by, this appraisal of his. life & of how nobel would be referred to, he resolved to use his wealth to change the way; he would be referred to in the future. When Alfred 'Nobel really died 8 years after this incident, he had left more than \$ 9 million to fund awards for people, whose work benefitted humanity &

not destroyed it. To this day, these awards are known by his name -The Nobel Prizes. Alfred Nobel had a rare opportunity - to look at the assessment/preview of how people would see him. Even better, he had the opportunity to change it for the better. Before he died, Nobel made sure that he invested his wealth in something good of lasting value. You have the chance now to do the same. In fact, you have the opportunity to do better -Invest your resources Jwealth /talents / money / riches for eternity in heaven.

Five Minutes After We die

At the end of the hit movie Schindler's List, there is a heart wrenching/tearing scene in which Oscar Schindler (who brought/purchased °from the Nazis the lives of many Jews), looks at his car &his gold tie-pin; regretting that he did not give more or even the last few pieces of his money &'possessions to save more lives. Schindler had used all he had,. but these few remnants -& his best influence to help his fellow Israelites, than many of us do. Yet, in the end he longed for a chance to go back ` & make still better choices. We do not get a second chance to live life over, this time doing more to help the needy & invest in God's Kingdom. We must do it now, in this life.

We have one very brief opportunity while we are alive - to use our money &resources, to make a difference, that will last us forever.

John Wesley said, 'I judge all things only by the price they shall gain in eternity': Missionary CT Studd said, `One life will soon be past; only what is done for Christ will last'. Five minutes after we die, we'll know exactly how we should have lived. But God has given us His Word so we don't have to wait till then to find out. And He has given us His Spirit to enable /empower / strengthen us to live the way we rightly should -NOW.

Ask yourself, 'Minutes after 1 die, what will I wish I would have given away or done, while still had a chance alive. When you come up with the answer, why not give .it away now ?Why not spend the rest of our lives closing the gap between, what we wish we would have given/done & we really are giving/doing today ?

Nobel managed to change his legacy in this world. We have a great strategic opportunity to change, what we will leave behind when we go -our legacy in this world & in heaven. When you die, will you be known as one who accumulated/collected treasures on earth, that you could not take with you to the next ? Or will you be recognized as one who invested your riches/talents in God's Kingdom, to claim it for all eternity in heaven ?

Put yourself in Alfred Nobel's shoes. Take a paper & pen. Sit down & think about it for a while. Then write your own obituary/tribute/lifestyle, as people would describe you after you die. Make a list of all the things, you will be remembered for? Go Ahead. Finished? Slowly read what you have written. How do you feel about it? Now try *thing it again -This time, with heaven on your mind / as if you were in heaven. May be you.....can Assume that your guardian angel was happily reading it - Do you think God is pleased with your earthly life?

Are you living a life that is Christ-centered, with a few regrets? Then may be you are daily laying up treasures in heaven. Or may be not...If you are like me, you would wish that heaven's summary/notes about your life, were more pleasing to God. You may be discouraged, by what you have written, like I was. If so, lose hope. The good news is that you 'are still here' Alive! Like Alfred

you have the opportunity. - with God's help/strength. to edit/change/correct your life. And thereby controlling what the guardian angel will read about, when you die.

The Gift Of Giving

In Romans 12 :6-8, Paul lists spiritual gifts, including prophecy, teaching, service, mercy & giving. I am convinced that of all these gifts, giving generously is the one least thought/taught about in the Church. Of course all of us are called to serve, show mercy & give, even if we don't have these specific gifts. But I believe that in different times of history, God has sovereignly distributed certain gifts more widely to meet the needs of the time - such as the gift of mercy & service during plagues & natural disasters.

Suppose God wanted to fulfill His plan of world evangelization that the Gospel might be preached to ends of the modern world. Or that God wanted to reach help to the maximum number of His needy children, suffering & uncared for in the jet age. What gift would you expect God to distribute widely to His few children, whom He blessed with money? Perhaps the gift of giving generously? And what resources/talents would you expect God to provide those of His children, to whom He gave this gift? Perhaps unprecedented wealth / money / riches & spirituality/love, for His so blessed children to meet all those needs & further His Kingdom.?

Look around! -Isn't that exactly what the Lord has done or is doing these days. People are now drawing salaries or presently have inheritance, more than in any other age. Never has the distribution of resource/wealth been so uneven, with a privileged few & masses in need. Opportunities galore exist, to send or take the Good News to the ends of the earth, with organizations & individuals prepared to reach out, new mission-centers, services, retreats, churches, NGOs... now increasingly available.

The question is, what are we doing with the resources / wealth /talents /money, God has blessed us with or entrusted to us, with a responsibility - to reach millions who don't know about the Father, Son & Spirit. Or to help the needy & suffering, many of whom are Christians. Many a time, a great sacrifice is even needed.

We regularly see the gift of teaching / preaching & know what it looks like. We hear powerful testimonies of miraculous healings, restored marriages, freedom from tension, birth of children, recovery from debt, success in exams, meeting partners, good health/job... We hear of prayer warriors, missionaries, pastors/priests... We hear of the activities of organizations such as, Cry, Greens, Rotarians, Lions Club, World Wildlife, Help-a-Cause....

And nearly everything else -other than the Gift of Giving to God's work or to His needy children. But rarely do hear great stories of the blessed children of God, giving most of their income/ riches (over & above, what they need to comfortably live) to the Lord.

It is more common for us laity & clergy to ask one another, (particularly at Church) such questions How is your marriage? Have you been spending time with the Word/Bible? How is that child you are having trouble with? Have you been sharing your faith? How about attending this or the other service? Have you given your testimony? What about sexual purity? But how often do we ask, 'How much are you giving to the Lord? or Are you hoarding/keeping what you don't need? or Is it the world that decides, how much you keep? Are you depriving God's church/children of gifts, He has made you responsible to share? or Have you been tabbing God? Carefully observing your lifestyle & pattern of giving, will give you the answers to such questions.

When it comes to giving, many churches operate under a 'don't ask, don't tell' policy. We lack communication, accountability & role-modelling. It is as if we have an unspoken agreement : 'I won't talk about it, if you won't -sows can go right on living, as we are'. Think about it.

How does a young Christian in the church learn to give ? What & how much to give ? Where can a Christian go to see what giving looks like in the life of a believer influenced/captivated by Christ ? Why are we surprised then, when seeing no other example, a Christian takes his/her idea about giving from the world - A society that is materialistic & unconcerned about eternity, that preaches I-Me-Mine-Myself selfishness, is commercial & self-centered.

The Bible tells us in Hebrews 10:24 to 'consider how we may spur one another.. on towards love & good deeds' and again in Hebrews 12:13 to 'share your belongings with your needy fellow-Christians' and also open your homes to others in need. Shouldn't we then be asking, how.. can we spur/encourage one another on towards giving ? Some may object, to comparing each other's giving. Paul tells the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 8 : 7 - 8) of the Macedonians' giving, saying he is making a comparison to motivate them. Dixie Fraley told me about some friends of hers. She said, They are such an example of the art of giving. Every year we try to out give each other ! Why not ? Isn't that spurring one another on in life's race ? Don't we need to help each other to raise the bar /standard of giving, so that we can learn to jump higher ?

Scripture rightly tells us not to give in order to be seen by others. But here it is the motive that is important. We should be careful to avoid pride.. Surely, there is no harm in being seen giving, out of love for God or reaching out in service to his lesser fortunate children. Besides, Jesus also said (Matthew 5:16), "Let your light shine before me, that they may see your good deeds & praise your Father in heaven". It seems through an unfortunate misinterpretation of this biblical teaching, we have hidden giving to a point that we are either not giving at all or giving in the wrong manner. As a result, we are not teaching Christians to give & they are lacking the joy & purpose that comes from giving.

King David told the people exactly how much he had given to build the temple. The precise amounts of gold & precious stones given by the leaders were also made public. The people rejoiced (1 Chronicles 29:6-9) only because they knew what their leaders had given. They could follow their leaders' example in giving only because they knew how much they had given.

Unless we learn how to humbly tell each other our giving stories, our churches will not learn to give. We need to know about the widow at church who lives on a low income & fasts every Friday; Then gives the

money to the hungry, that she would have spent on food. It would have been an incalculable/huge loss to my spiritual life not to hear the stories of Hudson Taylor, George Mueller, Amy Carmichael & RG LeTourneau. They lived & gave, as they did to please God, not me. But knowing what God did in/through them & their fine example, has been an inspiration to let him do the same or more in me.

A Sense of Destiny

The fact that you are reading these words is likely part of God's plan to change your life & in turn to change history & eternity. Remember (Esther 4:14) what Mordecai said to Esther, 'If you remain silent at this time, help/relief & deliverance for God's people will arise from another place; But you & your father's family will perish. And who knows that you may have come/God may have sent you, to a royal position for a time such as this ? Just as Esther was in a position of privilege (to influence the king or blessed by God do something for her people), so is every one reading this book. Are you educated, talented & literate ? Do you have food, clothing & shelter ? Electronic appliances, a vehicle, parents/children who can take care of themselves ? If you have any of these, then you are among the privileged few, the world's wealthy & God's favourite child -chosen by Him to help His other children & spread His Kingdom.

Why has God entrusted you with the privilege of wealth ? For a time such as this. God has sovereignly/carefully raised you up for a time as this. When I think of our family's resources & the giving opportunities the Lord repeatedly blesses us with, I can't help but feel that we are part of something much larger, than our little corner house, in God's great master plan. One ministry calls a group of its key donors History's Handful. Is there an exaggerated sense of significance/importance in this title ? I don't think so. Giving to God's great causes infuses/gives us a sense of destiny. It is no accident that you live in this time & place in history. Remind yourself again, why the God of providence has entrusted you with so much. The Bible in

2Corinthians 8:14 & 9:11 says, 'Your plenty will supply, what they need... You will be made rich...so that you can be generous on every occasion'. Is that your destiny ? Is God calling you to be a more generous giver ? Is He calling you to share with others the liberating joy of the Treasure Principle ? You have heard of prayer warriors. But, the Bible tells us prayer without works is dead. What About giving warriors ? God has entrusted us with so much. Perhaps He is raising an army of givers & He is calling us to enroll/enlist in it.

Today many are praying like Jabez did in 1 Chronicles 4 c 10, Lord bless me & enlarge my territory ! or a wish-list prayer. Why not pray for the grace of giving ? Why, not set an amount/figure you can live comfortably on & then tell God that everything He provides you from beyond that amount, you will give back to Him -for God's people & His work.

We have no way of being sure of how long our nation's prosperity will last or knowing of how long we will live. So, why not give away the abundance, while we still can ? Let us give until our hearts are more in touch with God's Kingdom, than with our exclusive worldly projects, retirement, assignments, business, dreams... for a bigger & costlier apartments / appliances / vehicles / clothes / food -all that we can well do without. And gain eternity.

Let us pray to God & ask Him, if He wants us to hold our expenses, on things we do not exactly need here, realizing fully well that our Bridegroom (Jesus) is already in heaven preparing for us to join Him. And the Father has mansions, with many rooms in His house for us. Meanwhile, we can use God's funds to build something that won't go up in smoke, but will last for ever ! Treasures in heaven for eternity

Thoughts to Consider

How much is God leading/prompting me to give to the Church or as a voluntary/free-will offering ? Only God can answer that question. That means we need to ask Him. God has not established a set amount (above the minimum 10% tithe, practiced since Abraham's time, going down to Jesus' & even today) or percentage for such giving. May be that is exactly why we need to pray & seek His guidance, which in James 1:5, He promises to give us. Giving should start with your local Bible-believing & practicing church -the parish clergy & community (Galatians 6:6 & 1 Corinthians 9:9-12) to which you are accountable, where God has placed you. Beyond that, you can generously support the diocesan causes that God calls you to. Or priests/pastors, missions, ministries, individuals, retreat centers... Or groups/persons serving with music/books/VCD/CD...

People ask me, Should I support secular organizations ? It is fair to ask whether, the Humane Society/Lions or Rotary Club; as good as they may be comes close to God's heart as evangelism, church planting/support or helping God's children in Christ's name. Some support so-called Christian colleges/institutions or social services, that no longer propagate their Christian foundations &

are like many of the other secular organizations. With all the godly ministries & outlets, that desperately need our support, why give God's money to those that might sometimes actively oppose His agenda.

For every good secular organization, there is a Christian organization that does the same work - but with an eternal/heavenly point of view. Often one joins or supports such activities/groups because of pressure from friends/relatives or as it would help one's job/business prospects. This should make such persons give to God's work & His children even more generously. For others, when there is a choice, why not support organizations characterized by prayer, biblical standards & the supernatural work of God, the Holy Spirit.

Why not ask God, how you might share the Treasure Principle with others ? Perhaps you will be like the people who led DL Moody & Billy Graham to Christ-You may influence others or give Yourself, more than you ever can. Consider gassing or this bacA. Sit down with your spouse/partner/friend and

discuss these issues. Contact the following

information on how you can reach your father. Ask God to provide you with the information you need to reach the circle, whom you can speak to or pray with -

important subject of Giving, as God wants you to. Then, step out in faith & act on what God has prompted you to do.

The Greatest Principle

There is one statement of Jesus recorded in Acts, that doesn't appear in the Gospels. Perhaps God added it later, so that it would stand out -The Lord Jesus himself said in Acts 20:35, "It is

more blessed to give than to receive". We are so absorbed with 'getting what is ours' that we miss what brings the real blessing & joy - giving God what is His. Giving is doing what we were made for, as stated by Jesus in Matthew 22:36-40 - Love God & Love your neighbour. Obeying the Jesus in this way, confirm His Lordship in our life. And all this leads to multiple blessings promised by God, the Father, who says in Deuteronomy 28:20 "And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hear & obey the voice of the Lord thy God". It is a blessed act that leads to joy.

~ urge you to embrace Christ's invitation, from Luke 6:38, „Give freely; Every measure God will give back for you, indeed, you will receive a 11 measure, a generous helping overflowing, poured into your hands - all &

more than you can hold.. The measure you use for

others is the one that God will use for you". When God gives you more, remind yourself why - that you maybe generous on every occasion. I invite you to send your treasures on to heaven, where they will safely await you. Send your earthly riches to where they will be kept safe until to return back to God, to live with Him forever. When you do so, you will feel the freedom, experience the joy & sense the smile of God. When you give, you will feel His pleasure. And you can expect God to welcome you when you die, as Jesus says in Matthew 25:23, He will with the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things;) will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"

Finally, something I have shared earlier - a small, but classic example of this joy is found in Charles Dickens' story - A Christmas Carol, When the story begins, Ebenezer Scrooge is a wealthy, but miserable miser. He is caustic/rough, rude/grumbling & terribly greedy. He almost dies & encounters three spirits on Christmas Day - and he is given a second chance at life.

I read this story again recently & was struck by the description of the new/changed/transformed Ebenezer Scrooge "Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh & little heeded them... His own heart laughed & that was quite enough for him. And it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well - if any man alive possessed that knowledge"

What was the source of Ebenezer Scrooge's change? Gaining an eternal/heavenly perspective. Through supernatural intervention, Scrooge was able to see his past, present & still-chargeable future. Let's ask God for the same insight into our lives this Easter. Ebenezer Scrooge danced for joy on the streets because he had discovered the life-giving cure for materialism, which had poisoned his soul. He learnt Randy Alcorn's Treasure Principle - The secret of joyful giving. Do you want to experience this kind of joy? We invite you to "He went to church & walked about the streets. And watched the people hurrying to & fro. And patted children on the head & questioned beggars. And looked down into the kitchens of houses & up to the windows. And found that everything (or anything) could yield him pleasure. He had never dreamed that any walk - that anything - could give him, so much happiness".

After his transformation/change, Ebenezer Scrooge walks through the streets of London, freely distributing his wealth to the needy. He is giddy with delight. He who only yesterday had scoffed at the idea of charity - now gets his greatest pleasure in giving. On the story's final page, Dickens says of Scrooge:

transfer your gifts from earth to heaven - by giving not just to those who have, but more to those who don't - Begining of come with your local church. We invite you to give humbly, generously & frequently to God's work - Compete & excel in giving, so that it may be your gift to the risen Jesus. You will please God, serve others & enjoy treasures in heaven.

MY GIVING COVENANT

In conclusion, here is a six-step plan, that will help you keep on the Treasure Principle track. It is a giving covenant between you & God - I encourage you to read it, talk it over with your spouse/partner/friend or others & pray seriously about it. If you sense that God is leading you to sign on the dotted line at the end of this chapter, do it. It will help, if you have a witness too, while making this commitment - one whom you love & can trust. And God will ensure great times are ahead of you, now & forever.

- affirm/confirm God's full ownership of me (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) and everything entrusted to me, as in Psalm 24:1. I recognize that my money & possessions - are in fact - HIS. I am His money manager/accountant or His delivery/courier person.

will ask Him what He wants me to do with His money.'• 1 will set aside my voluntary first-fruits / offerings, starting with at least the 10% tithe, of all I receive, treating these gifts of mine, as holy & belonging exclusively to God. I do this in obedience to Him & also desiring His blessings, as promised in Malachi 3:6-12. In humility & with faith, I take God upon His challenge to test Him in this.

- Out of the remaining treasures God entrusts to me, will seek to make generous additional offerings/gifts. I recognize that God has given me responsibility for this wealth, so that 1 can be "generous on every occasion" as stated in 2 Corinthians 9:11. I realize that (can be robbing God of what is His, by holding back or selfishly using His riches for other purposes. Therefore, I ask God to make His will clear to me & keep away from temptation on the giving track.

- I ask God to teach me to sacrifice & give first to His work/kingdom/children locally & then if such giving is fulfilled, then to reach out to others elsewhere. 1 commit myself to avoid getting in debt/loans, so that I don't tie-up God's funds & can therefore feel greater freedom to follow God, the Holy Spirit's promptings; whispers to give.

- Recognizing that I cannot take earthly treasures from this world, I determine to send/store them up as heavenly riches -for Christ's glory, the good of others & to eternally benefit me forever. Thus, confirm that heaven & not earth is my real home & Jesus is my Lord ..- so I commit to lay out His assets before Him regularly, leaving nothing out. I will ask God what to _do with His money/wealth -where & how to give; I will start with asking myself- Lord show me what am I hanging on to, that you want me to give away ?

- I recognize/accept that it is God, who has given me my church/family/children/friends/relatives and made me responsible to them, in a little or big way. ask God to help me share the Treasure Principle with them, so that they too may experience the greatest joy & eternal reward, being with me in our heavenly home forever.

- I put my signature willingly, having faith that God will help me all along- the way to fulfill this Giving Covenant, to the best of my abilities & forgiving my mistakes

Name & Signature

Treasure Principle Summary

You can't take wealth/money with you, but you can send it on ahead to heaven to be used forever God owns everything. I am His Money Manager. We are managers (not owners) of the riches /talents / resources God has entrusted (not given) to us.

2 My heart always goes, where I put God's money. Watch what happens when you re-allocate your money :from earthly/temporary things to eternal/heavenly things

3 Heaven, not earth is my home We, ambassadors of the King of Kings don't belong here. We are citizens of a :better country, a heavenly one -Hebrews 11:16

4 I should: live not for the dot (•), but for the line

) The dot represents

our life on earth, while the line- extending from it speaks of our eternal life after death. Where would you rather spend life forever- in heaven or hell.

5 Giving is the only antidote/medicine/cure for earthly materialism/obsession/greed When .you give, it is a joyful surrender to a greater person & for a greater purpose /plan. It dethrones my me, my selfishness, brings benefits to me & others; But more importantly, it glorifies God - my Lord & Master.

Date & Place

6 God prospers me not to raise my standard of living, but my standard of giving God always supplies us with more than our needful of resources /money / wealth, so that we can give generously - Not so that we can accumulate or hoard. God makes us rich in many ways, so that we in return become His channel/pipeline to reach/deliver His wealth to others, not consume/waste it ourselves.

"And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God." (Deuteronomy 28:2)

1 Timothy 6:17 "He giveth us richly all things to enjoy."

"Return to the stronghold, O prisoners who have hope. This very day I am declaring that I will restore double to you." (Zechariah 9:12) --

When the devil came to tempt Him, He didn't fight him off with a special legion of angels who'd been assigned to protect Him because He was God's Son. He fought him off with the phrase, "It is written

CONCLUSION

- Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers.
- God can pour on the blessings in astonishing ways, so that you're ready for anything and everything, more than just ready to do what needs to be done.
- God richly gives us all things to enjoy. Dear Friends in Christ,

The above words are not mine, though I pray the same for you. They are from the Bible. The first is picked straight out of 3 John 2, where the apostle wishes not merely that we just prosper, but that we prosper, to the same extent as our soul prospers -not lesser or greater. And let us not miss the good health part too. The other scriptures are from 2 Corinthians 9:8 and 1 Timothy 6:17 to assure you that God wants to flood you with abundant blessings. Perhaps you are wondering, if that is true, how come you are not receiving some of it ? If you ask me, I would suggest you checkout your relationship with Him.

One thing that can clearly indicate this is -How much time (if not money) in the day, do you spend with Him or His word or His work or His people.... anything that concerns God -including your family, which is His too.

Recently, the electricity went out in Mumbai & we were all forced into a situation, most of us have grown to avoid -Spending some time to ourselves: God apart, whom we think of, may be on Sunday, we do not even have a few moments to ourselves. Think about it. Sound, lights & action surround us. We just must be doing something - no time to stop &:,do as Jesus invites us, "Come away & rest a little while' for even our 'love' or entertainment gets fixed. As one day is through, we are getting ready for the next.>, until death do us apart. So if you are waiting .for the electricity to go out next & think of spending some time to seriously be with yourself or with God - Forget it. Do it now. Stop &pray.

Ask God to help°; you commit some rich communion time with Him every day.' Believe me, it will do wonders for you. Spend a few minutes'- thanking Him for who He is &has been to you. Thank Him for all his gifts to you. Then tell Him about issues of the, past or what you are going through. Take another few minutes tell Him your needs &ask Him to strengthen you during the day. And don't forget a few lines from His Word -The Bible.

The first few days, it might be difficult. You might also skip some days too. But, don't let that trouble you. It only means that the devil is working overtime to deny you a closer relationship, with the great, big, wonderful God. Just rise up from the fall, ask God's forgiveness &continue again.

After all Jesus fell thrice &rose too, didn't He

I've had the devil attacking me many times & in many different ways. Now I have learnt to recognize moments when the devil is around. The Bible tells us, Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work -James 3:16. What could every evil work mean ? Everything from debt, disease, danger, depression... -notice they all start with D -for Devil !Jealousy is just one of the weapons, the devil uses well against the children of God & I have been victim of it on many occasion. Beware, even Murder, the first case of which, we read of in Genesis 4, where Cain murdered his brother Abel because he was envious of him. Tiredness, Laziness, distraction, addiction, wealth, work... are some other weapons the devil uses to deprive you of your time with God.

But, you can tackle these &much more, with the power of the Holy Spirit, which comes to you, when you just spend enough time with God. And of course, I firmly believe in the tackling the devil with the Blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony. So I am always looking to tell the world of how the Lord prospered me. And the more we thank Him &tell others of how good God has been to us, the more God supplies us. To give you the most recent example -

As you probably know, we were in great debt, to the tune of lakhs of rupees, a few years ago &the Lord not only rescued us (me &the family), but He also drew

us very close to Himself. God gave me particularly; I feel a calling to tell as many to give generously to Him,. His work, His kingdom & His children, And thus invite many to His abundant grace & blessings, like we received from Him. Don't misunderstand, I do not mean that God literally put bundles of money in our pockets. He didn't. But, He certainly sent us opportunities, like we never had before. He blessed our efforts & unlike so many, who do not get sufficient for their work, He gave us more than enough.

But most importantly, God gave us the heart to be content & satisfied with enough for our needs. He also gave us the strength to go through challenges the devil threw at us & continues to throw at us, to hurt us. And God gave us so many graces, that were more valuable & useful than money -any day. Check these instances out

was praying daily in my personal prayer for a little more financial blessings, which would make life slightly more comfortable. I claimed all God's promises related to financial blessings. I gave my tithe (10% of our income to God) in advance ! I also tried my best to live a good life. Made as fewer mistakes, as I could. Asked for forgiveness, as .soon as I realized my mistakes. God must have seen my earnestness or desperateness to get a little more comfortable.

knew God would answer my prayers, but I only did not know when ! I had faith, if I stayed in this manner long enough, God would bless me, but I was wondering how ! Would God send me an influential person or some great clients ?

We are in the business of organizing international trade fairs & had an event coming up, which was our flagship show, where God had blessed one of us, Cecil abundantly to do a great job. It couldn't get any better on that count-where else then could the money come from ? I pictured myself as a modern-day Abraham going uphill and repeated to myself -the Lord will provide. One of those days, I was attracted to an advertisement in the newspapers of an exhibition happening in a far away city & it occurred to me that it was a good subject for us to consider. But, we were already working on this major event & we did not have much time on hand.

The next day & the few days that followed during my personal prayer, I was constantly disturbed by this new theme & brushed it aside, trying my best to concentrate on my prayer. But the thought wouldn't leave me. So I decided to seek the Lord's help to do away with this distraction. It then struck me that like the little boy Samuel may be God was putting this thought into my mind - so I needed to check it out. I decided that since time was short, I would take the first early morning flight & return by the late night flight. This I thought would settle it. The exhibition I went to was excellent, the images just grew on me & the scenes refused to leave me.

So, I flirted with the idea of trying it out, by putting the idea to major companies in the industry. Surprisingly, with such less time, the response was good. To cut a long story short, we did not just one great event, but two and obviously made a little bit more money in the process ! Praise the Lord ! This also placed on us a responsibility to increase our (from a tithe of 10%) giving, putting us in a position to receive more, yet again, sometime in the future, as the Lord decides.

To do so much of work, the Lord needed to bless us not just with the companies saying 'Yes', but also on a whole lot of other fronts — a change in family attitude (who doesn't know what a bad family attitude can be !), a motivated staff (what can one do if the employees are not sold on the idea), drop in airfares, good bargains, etc. And these are some blessings that will last longer Or to give you another instance, where God blessed us with protection against danger. It was election time & being politically connected, I needed to take a stand. Also there was a candidate, who I knew had to be opposed, since if elected, he would not be help the community. I felt it was my responsibility to get the wrong man out. Again, to cut a long story short — The candidate was defeated & his henchmen threatened to finish me off. The tension, mixed with fear was unbelievable. As it happens in such situations, those who are expected to stand by you were nowhere to be found.

But, not the great Good Lord — He is always there, waiting for His prodigal son to call. We prayed fervently, besides complaining to the police. And we believe God worked in calming down tempers — we haven't heard from the henchmen since. Praise the Lord

Yet another incident for us to say, "Thanks be to God, who always leads us in victory through Christ." (2 Corinthians 2:14) was Discovery's Jesus Tomb issue. We raised a protest since among other things the N channel was hinting at was that the Bible was a lie, Jesus did not rise & ascend to heaven, Jesus & Magdalene had a son named Judah, Mother Mary was not a virgin,

Jesus had brothers & sisters.... Can you take all this ? We could not & protested against the film. Praise the Lord ! Prayers & representation worked, Jesus Tomb was not screened in India & saved Indian Christians, yet another embarrassing moment.

Often we hear of healing, marriage or job testimonies. But the Lord works all kinds of miracles, for with God all things are possible" as recorded in "Matthew 19:26. You can ask Him for just about anything & He will give it to you — it is good & the time is right for you. Other scriptures that comes to mind are — "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7) and "Fear not; only believe" (Luke 8:50). One really could never imagine the amount of strength, just REPEATING these words can get for you. Try it & experience the power of His word.

.....Joe Dias

GOD'S GIVERS OBJECTIVES

Provide for yourselves purses that don't wear out & save your riches in heaven, where they will never decrease.

and (c) to bring together the needs of the body and solutions provided through these, resulting in resources flowing + into ushering in of Christ's kingdom..

How does one do this

God's Givers aims to

1) Bring givers together, in the Christian spirit of love and educate them about the biblical principles of stewardship & giving. Thus, promoting tithing and other such giving possibilities among every community member. It will enable them to live a fuller Christian life, according to God's word & Christ's example.

2) Give opportunities and empower those givers who seek to - (a) develop a serious Christian personal strategy for giving, (b) maximize their giving and tax saving by donating appreciated assets, in addition to cash, (c) time their giving and the distribution of their gifts for the greatest benefit and advantage. Thus, cultivating a giving lifestyle.

3) Motivate business persons & professionals serve the body of Christ, by utilizing God-given resources. The vision is threefold : (a) to make the body of Christ aware of competent /capable Christian business & professional members: (b) to enable these to live-out their Christian commitment, resulting in them, accumulating their riches in heaven, as per their call;

- By encouraging givers at all levels, - as well as ministry leaders, priests, pastors, laity and others - to experience the joy of giving and embrace a lifestyle of generosity.
- By instructing the community of what the Bible has to say on issues like ,riches, living, giving, etc. and identifying ways for them to invest wisely in God's Kingdom, so that things of eternal value: will result,
- By raising the quality & effectiveness of Christian non-profit / NGO management & Belief to the largest number of deserving causes & candidates. Thus maximizing the impact of their gifts.
- By producing & distributing media, besides maintaining a library of publications and audiovisual drafts, newsletters, databases, legal / managerial /accounting assistance, etc
- By making all understand that their 'business / service /practice' is not merely a job, but rather a ministry in which the Lord has chosen to place them. They are Therefore expected to integrating biblical principles in their work.
- By serving a limited number of high -capacity givers, who desire greater impact and satisfaction in their stewardship and are looking for leveraged opportunities to serve God, in building His kingdom.
- By equipping special interest groups, as children, women, youth, adults professionals to become confident & competent in investing their treasures, time & talents for the Kingdom by providing a network
- By hosting fund -raising activities & events meet the aims and objectives of the organization.

Contact God's Givers for how you can help

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