

God's Kingdom Economy

In the kingdoms of this world, we are certainly in a time of economic famine...

But we as followers of Jesus can choose to live by faith in a different economy. We can choose to live in God's Kingdom economy. His economy works by the laws of His Kingdom principals and they are not limited by this world's economy. While the facts in the natural are that we are now in a time of economic recession, the exciting truth is that we as faith-filled, obedient believers can choose to live in God's Kingdom economy.

There have been three times in Joyce's and my marriage that we have experienced major financial challenges. Each of these times provided a learning experience, an opportunity for us to seek God and what His Word reveals about how we can live in the realm of His Kingdom abundance.

In the early days of our marriage it seemed we never had quite enough money to pay the bills. Joyce and I had been Christians since our early childhood. We were both born toward the end of the great depression. We were both raised at a time when a heavy spirit of fear of failure, lack and want prevailed. We knew that God's Word talked about tithing and giving offerings to the Lord, but we reasoned that certainly this didn't apply to us. We were too poor to give. There were many obviously prosperous people in our church who drove big expensive cars. God could and did use them to provide for the needs of the church and other missions giving. So they grew more wealthy, and we were becoming more and more in debt.

When I was thirty three years old trying to serve God with my own strength, I had worked myself into total exhaustion. My health broke and I could no longer work. The doctor said I was going to die, and we were gripped by depression and fear and found ourselves in a desperate financial situation.

It was at this time, that God first began to reveal His Kingdom principals into our lives. One morning I was so sick but I remember praying, "Lord, I have made a mess of my life! I've been trying to live by my own plans and strength. Lord, nothing is working! I just give up! ... If you can take what is left of my life, and do something with it, I ask you to take over my life, my marriage, my family, and my health. From this moment forward, I give my life 100% to you. I ask you to take over and be the Lord of my life.

That is what God was waiting on.

At that moment everything began to change. He said over and over to us, “You have not because you’ve asked not!” The following week we asked God to heal me and His healing power flowed into my body and I was instantly healed. The following week, I began a new job managing a Christian bookstore for the largest chain of Christian bookstores in the Western United States. God gave both Joyce and I supernatural health, strength, and wisdom. The spirit of fear of lack and heavy depression was gone

The first thing we did was to begin to tithe, not because we thought we were supposed to, but from hearts full of thanksgiving for all He had done. Soon we discovered the joy of generous giving and were able to put hundreds and even thousands into the Kingdom of God. God gave us great favor and prospered us. That was the last year we ever bought a car on time or paid interest on anything that historically depreciates in value.

We began to experience the freedom that comes with “debt-free” living. In less than two years I was appointed General Manager over the largest chain of Christian bookstores in the Western United States. God’s blessing and prosperity began to spread as these Christian bookstores and a new distributorship that we had opened, began to expand and grow. Soon millions of dollars were being added in sales and profits to the company. Our ability to give generously into the Kingdom of God kept increasing. Within four years of the beginning of this exciting journey, Joyce and I both received the baptism in the Holy Spirit and again our lives leaped ahead into an even greater level of God’s blessing as miracles began to happen in and through our lives.

But God had an even greater plan for our lives. A few years later, we left the business world and went on staff at a large 15,000 member Charismatic Church in Southern California. And then God took us to the next level of His exciting plan for our lives. And again there would be an opportunity to discover more about living in an even greater level of His Kingdom laws of blessing and prosperity. It always seems to be true, these learning experiences are not usually easy and they will provide opportunities for our faith to grow.

While looking for a new home nearer to the church, our thoughts were to find a smaller home that would fit our recently reduced income level now that I was on staff at the church.

But God kept leading us and confirming in so many ways that we were to buy a much larger home than we could afford in the natural realm. We had learned to live out of debt, very conservatively within the level of our income, and to purchase this large, prestigious home did not make sense. However, we stepped out in faith and purchased the home. After a few months of having to make most of our house payments out of our dwindling savings, we realized that in a few months our savings would be gone. It seemed we were back in a desperate financial situation for the second time.

As we look back now, we can see that again God was using another challenging situation to teach us – to take us to the next level of revelation of His Kingdom laws of provision, blessing and prosperity.

I knew that God had led us to purchase our home even though it was contrary to our natural wisdom. I knew that again, He had something He wanted to teach us through this seemingly impossible situation.

It was during this time of seeking God and listening for His voice, that He began to speak very clearly to my heart. He said: “There are three levels of provision found in My Word.

1. There is the level of provision as a slave in Egypt – Just enough to keep alive to make the bricks under the taskmasters of Egypt – Just enough to survive.

2. And then there is the level of provision in the wilderness – Just enough for each day.

There was supernatural water and manna as food for each day. Their shoes and clothes didn't wear out. They saw the faithfulness of God continue for forty years.

We hear wonderful stories of this type of provision. In the nineteenth century in England, George Muller had an orphanage and they had run out of food. George was a praying and believing man. He had all the children gather around the breakfast table that morning and he began to thank the Lord for their provision. There was a knock on the door. A delivery truck had broken down in front of their building. The food was all going to spoil. Could they use the eggs, the bacon, and many other items of food?

In the wilderness there was enough for each day.

3. But, God said there is a third level of provision. “There is a higher level of provision. It’s the level of provision in the Promised Land.

In the Promised Land there is an abundance of good things. It’s a land that flows with milk and honey. And in my land, you will enter into an even greater revelation of How to live in My Kingdom, how to live by my Kingdom laws of blessing and prosperity.”

“Yes,” I said, “Lord, teach me!”

And then I learned that in the land, we live by the laws of sowing and reaping.”

“But, God,” I said, “We have been tithing the ten percent that belongs to You. We have been giving another ten percent offering over and above that. You know that we have been faithful in both our tithing and giving our offerings on all that you have blessed us with for many years.”

God said, “In the Old Testament they gave on the last day of the week based on what God had blessed them with that past week. But in the New Testament they gave on the first day of the week.

1 Corinthians 16:2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him...

I replied, “What are you trying to teach me?”

And He replied, “One was by sight and the other is by faith. The highest of my Kingdom principals is giving by faith before you receive. It’s the principal of obedience to Me in your finances. It’s the principal of sowing and reaping. If you sow in faith and obedience, you will reap the harvest. It’s my law!”

I was sitting there trying to comprehend what I had heard. Giving the tithe is something we do in obedience to God’s word, but giving by faith is moving into the realm of the spirit where we hear and obey his voice and give over and above the tithe.

And then I heard Him ask, “Would you believe me to give you an amount to believe me for as your income for this coming year.”

I quickly answered, “Yes Lord!” But suddenly, my natural thoughts took over. ... “We need enough to pay the mortgage and the utilities ... if there’s no repairs on the house or the cars ... We need enough for food and clothing ... I think we could probably make it on this amount of money ...

God interrupted me, “I didn’t ask you to figure out the amount I’m going to give you. I asked you to believe me to give you a figure and then to believe me to provide that amount for you this coming year?”

Again, I said “Yes Lord,” ... but I was still hoping it would be at least enough to meet our needs.

As I listened, God’s voice was so clear. To my surprise, He gave me a figure that was twice what my present income was. I said, “Lord. That would be great!”

He said: “Will you believe me for that amount?” I said, “Yes Lord!”

Again He said: “Will you really believe me for that amount?” Again I said with even more certainty: “Yes, Lord, I will believe you for that amount as our income for the coming year!”

Then He said, “Now, start giving on that amount.” And in our time of greatest need, in a time when it seemed we were back in a desperate time of financial need and famine, in obedience to God we doubled our giving.

In the natural, it was impossible. All our savings would be gone in a matter of weeks. But we obeyed God and because He had taught us to sow in times of famine, we can testify that the windows of heaven were opened and God’s heavenly finances began to pour in from many unexpected sources.

I was promoted to being the Assistant to the Pastor of the church. And, yes, God did double our income that year! And not only that – when we sold our house to move back to Texas in less than two years, we sold it for twice what we paid for it.

But in preparation for the international ministry that God had ahead for us, there was more that God wanted to teach us about His Kingdom principals of heavenly finances.

We moved back to our home town of Houston, Texas, where I became Executive Vice President of a large and growing healing ministry. After a couple of years we

went on staff working closely with Pastor John Osteen at Lakewood Church which is now the largest church in America. Traveling with Pastor John, I began to go to the mission fields beginning with the nation of India. The church was going through a dynamic growth stage. God gave me a vision and I launched our new Lakewood Bible Institute with a hundred and twenty full time students that first year. I loved my work as founding Director of the Bible School. I loved teaching the students that had come from many nations. I felt that this would be my life's work.

And then, through a series of circumstances, God led us to once again step out of our "comfort zone" and start Gill Ministries to prepare a curriculum that we could provide as the tools to equip believers to reach their own nations with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our ministry has now taken us to 85 nations. Yes, this all sounds exciting now. However, at the time we stepped out in obedience to God and resigned our paid positions at Lakewood Church, there was not one person, family, ministry or church that had said they would help support us. This was another "growing time" in our walk of faith in believing God for His supernatural provision.

As the first month was coming to a close, we knew our house payment of \$1200 would be due in a little over a week. I had been invited to be the main speaker at a conference in Tennessee. There were hundreds of people at the conference and offerings were taken at every meeting. God moved in a powerful way and I assumed I would be given an honorarium that would exceed the \$1200 that I needed for the house payment that was now due the following Tuesday.

After getting on the plane to fly back to Houston in time for the Sunday morning service at our church, I opened the envelope I had been handed before boarding the plane. To my disappointment, it was for only \$500. I thought. "How am I going to tell Joyce when she meets me at the airport?"

As we drove to church from the airport, our conversation was something like, "We'll just have to believe God for another \$700 between now and Tuesday. Well, we should tithe on the \$500 this morning. So how much harder is it to believe God for \$700 or for \$750 in the next two days?"

After the praise and worship that morning, it was now time for the offering. It was now our habit, and Joyce and I both asked the Lord how much we should give in the offering. Of course, we were expecting Him to say give the \$50 tithe on what had just come in. But to our surprise, He told us both the same thing. "Give it all!"

Joy sprang up within us as I quickly endorsed the back of the check and put the whole amount in the offering for the church. We both knew we had heard from God.

With great joy, we began to thank God for His supernatural provision that we knew was coming. In fact, we hardly even thought about the need the rest of the day or on Monday. Soon after we got up on Tuesday morning, the day the house payment was due, someone was knocking on our front door. It was a lady that we had known casually for a couple of years. She lived a long distance from our church and had no way in the natural of knowing what we had put in the offering on Sunday morning.

She exclaimed: "I am so sorry to bother you so early in the morning. But God has been speaking to me all night long and I just had to obey Him. If this is not God, please tell me." Then she handed us a check for \$5000. Wow!

Again, our faith leaped within us. Again, God had taught us an even greater Kingdom principal, If what you have in your hand is not enough to meet your need, then it must be your seed!

In another time of need, we had given everything. In obedience, we had sowed all that we had. We had sowed in obedience and in joy, and He had provided exceeding, abundantly above all that we could have ever asked or thought.

Over the past twenty-five years of our ministry, it has been an exciting walk of faith. It has been a time when our faith has had to keep growing in the area of God's supernatural provision as we have kept reaching out to the nations of the world.

We have often been reminded of how Jacob sowed in a time of famine and reaped 100 fold. We have learned the principal of "first day giving." We no longer wait to see what comes in so we can tithe and give offerings on that. Instead, we have learned to walk by faith as we listen, hear and obey God in giving first, believing God for the harvest. As we have sought first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, all the "things" have been added to us. He has blessed us in so many ways as He has proven that His Kingdom laws of blessing and prosperity will work in any economy.

Yes, we know that in the natural, our nation's economy looks bad. They say we are in a "recession." But we know that we now live in a different economy. We live in

the economy of the Kingdom of God. We know: “Our God shall supply all of our need (not by the measure of our need, but) by “the measure of the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus”.

The Word says in the Book of Ecclesiastes that there is “A time and a season for all things.... There is a time to sow and there is a time to reap!” God has shown us that this is not a time to shrink back in fear and reduce our giving into the Kingdom of God. Instead this is a time to ask God what He would have us to sow in obedience to what He tells us to do, expecting our Kingdom harvest during this coming year.

In Proverbs 8:21 we read, *That I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, that I may fill their treasuries.*

KINGDOM FINANCE Verses

Fear of Lack?

Matthew 6:28-34 *"So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

"Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"

"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Philipians 4:19 *And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

God wants us to prosper

3 John 1:2 *Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.*

Deuteronomy 8:18 *But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.*

Proverb 8:21 *That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures.*

Living Debt Free

Proverb 22:7 *The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.*

Abraham

Genesis 12:1-3 *Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*

Genesis 13:2 *And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.*

Isaac

Genesis 26:1,3-5 *And there was a famine in the land,*

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

Genesis 26:12-14 *Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: For he had*

possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him.

The Blessings of Abraham

Galatians 3:13-14 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The Tithe

Leviticus 27:30 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD.

Genesis 14:18-20 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

Malachi 3:8-12 "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me!

"But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings.

"You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," says the LORD of hosts; And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land," says the LORD of hosts.

Heart Felt Giving

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

1 Corinthians 16:2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him,

Sowing/Reaping

Galatians 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

2 Corinthians 9:6-14 But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, have an abundance for every good work.

As it is written: "He has dispersed abroad, He has given to the poor; His righteousness remains forever."

Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.

For the administration of this service not only supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, while, through the proof of this ministry, they glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal sharing with them and all men, and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding grace of God in you.

Giving to God

Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.