

GOD THE GIVER

Stewardship Narrative Series presented by TENS

*Proper 23
Mark 10:17-31*

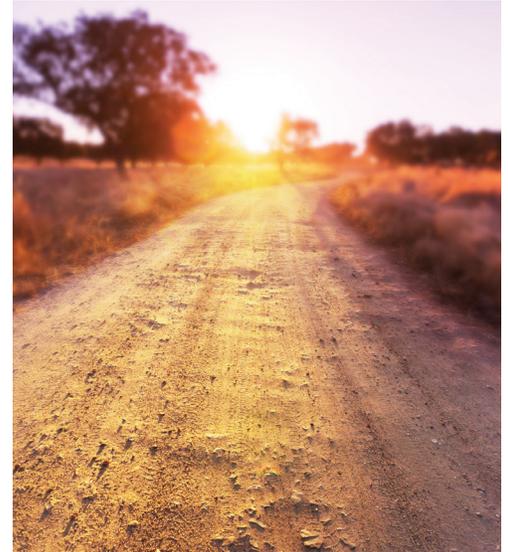
By worldly standards I'm rich; I have food, more than one pair of shoes, clothes for every season, good health care, reliable transportation, a comfortable place to sleep, and I owe no one. Yet, by U.S. standards I'm not at all rich. Years ago, while on the road to financial wealth, I listened to the wrong advice and was beaten to a financial pulp and landed in a ditch. While in the ditch I had a lucky break; I was on my church's stewardship committee (because I didn't mind making phone calls) and they sent me to a local stewardship conference where I heard Bishops Ted Jones and Cate Waynick describe their journeys to tithing and the joy and richness of life that journey brought them. I committed to tithe ... right then. On the way home from that conference in my \$70 car I figured out how I could do it. Just keep a log of every little bit I earned and on Sunday 10% of the week's earnings would go to church. I did it ... tithed to the penny every little bit of income for a year. What happened? My checkbook recovered, and I'm still giving with the tithe as the minimum.

What am I discovering on my journey of giving? When I started sharing what I had, worrying about the lack of money stopped. That's when my pocketbook began to heal. Most remarkable, though, has been the healing of my soul, the freedom reaped from the peace of mind gained from being a go-giver rather than a go-getter.

Have I sold everything? No. To sell all I own and follow Jesus is more than I can do! My failure at selling all I own is buffered a bit by recalling: "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

Here's what this mortal soul has done though: I've given it all away through the miracle of Planned Giving.

What did the rich man do after the suggestion to go sell what he owned? We don't know. One thing I do know for certain: I love me and my fellow man more after coming to grips with giving away what I have been given.



The road is wide enough for you to join me on my journey. Should you stay on the tithing road for a year, as I did, you may wish to continue. You'll never know 'til you try! Of this I'm certain: You'll not regret the journey.

Reflection Questions:

Do you consider yourself rich?

Make a list of all the ways that you are rich.

What events or memories mark your journey of giving?



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