

Unleash the Power of First Fruits

I. Love & Generosity is the Foundation for Life

A. Our Father Has Good Plans for Our Future

Jer 29:11 NIV For I know the **plans I have for you,**" declares the LORD, "plans to **prosper (SHALOM)** you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

3 John 2 NAS Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as **your soul prospers.**

Prosper — Go well, by led in a good way

It's a **wholesome way of thinking, feeling, deciding** about life, health, money, ... It reflects **Who** He Is and **How** He Is.

**W&T believed for a promotion and raise for W so T could be a stay-at-home mom. After they sowed their seed, W received a generous promotion and raise.*

B. RELATIONSHIP is the Essence of Righteousness —

That which maintains wholeness. Good Relationship & Plans

Mt 6:25 NKJ "Therefore I say to you, **do not worry** about your **life**,...
26 Look at the birds of the air, ...Are you not of more value than they? 28 Consider the lilies... 31 Therefore **do not worry**

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

RIGHTEOUSNESS IS RELATIONAL — Good Relationship & Plans

The **Essence of Sin is Separation** from our Good Father! **Taking ourselves TOO seriously.** Trying to make it on our own. The **Orphan.**

There was an older lady who was determined to be prepared if she ever felt physically threatened. So she signed up for a training course on us-

ing handguns, and completed it. One day after shopping, she returned to her car and found four men inside it. She immediately dropped her shopping bags, drew out her handgun and screamed, "I have a gun, and I know how to use it! Get out of the car!" The four men quickly got out and ran away.

Somewhat shaken, the lady loaded her bags and got into the car. But she wasn't able to get her key into the ignition. It slowly dawned on her that her similar car was parked several spaces away. So she did what she had to do. She loaded her bags into her own car and drove to the police station to turn herself in.

The desk sergeant nearly fell off his chair laughing. He pointed to the other end of the counter, where four men were reporting a carjacking by an old woman with thick glasses and curly white hair, carrying a large handgun. No charges were filed.

Like the old lady in this story, we all have a tendency to want to keep and defend what we think is ours.

II. First Fruits Given at the Beginning (Tithe after the Harvest)

A. 7 Principles

1. Through First fruits we **sanctify** our whole life and all we love. **Supernatural & Extraordinary**

Rom 11:16 NIV If the part of the dough offered as **firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy**; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

When something is **sanctified** to the Lord, He treats it as His own. It is kept, blessed, increased and enlarged to great capacities.

Ezek 44:30 NKJ The best of all firstfruits of any kind, ... you shall give to the priest the first of your ground meal, **to cause a blessing to rest on your house.**

2. It's a **Pattern not Legalism** - We honor the King of Kings with the First and the Best — and He honors us

Isa 51.2 NKJ Look to Abraham your father,
And to Sarah *who* bore you;
For I called him **alone**,
And **blessed** him and **increased** him."

A **Pattern** will appear multiple times in Scripture. It is a mystery, revealed by the Holy Spirit.

The **Pattern of Firstfruits** is that we honor the Lord with the first and the best and the whole or the rest is blessed.

Through Firstfruits we sanctify our whole life and all we love. Like a birthing of the promise...

3. **Generosity** Gives **Evidence of Grace and Love**

2 Cor 8:7 NIV But just as you excel in everything — **see that you also excel in this grace of giving.** 8 I am not commanding you, but **I want to test the sincerity of your love** by comparing it with the earnestness of others.

4. We **Give What We Have.** In offerings give part of ourselves— **our offerings take us beyond our present circumstances.**

2 Cor 8:12 NIV For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to **what one has**, not according to **what he does not have.**

Don't let what you DON'T HAVE keep you from giving!

Your **last** can be your **first.** Widow and Elijah

1 Kings 17:13 NIV Elijah said to her, "**Don't be afraid.** Go home and do as you have said. But **first** make a small cake of bread for me **from what you have** and bring it to me, **and then make something for yourself** and your son. 14 For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used

up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.”

15 She went away and did as Elijah had told her. **So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family.**

**J&K had to wait a couple weeks before they were able to give their first fruits offering. They were eager to sow because their accountant had told them they wouldn't be receiving an IRS refund in 2014. About 2 weeks after they gave their first fruits offering, their bank notified them that the IRS gave them a \$7000 federal tax refund as well as a refund from their state tax return.*

5. Giving is **Planting Seeds** for **Future Harvest**

2 Cor 9:6 NIV Remember this: Whoever **sows**...⁷ Each man should **give** what he has decided in his heart to **give**, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

The seed we sow **connects our lives to the soil of God's love** — and His Great and Precious Promises

A seed is an **information capsule, carrying all the instructions needed for increase and multiplication.** A seed is alive and contains God's blueprint for the future.

Apple seed -- not just an apple, but a tree that gives for years and years!

a. **Our children are seeds.**

b. **Words are Seeds**, containing a potential future. Every word contains in a future reality in an immature form:

Luke 8:11 NKJ “... **The seed is the word of God.**

When God gives you a word, He plants a seed for the future in your heart.

Luke 5:1 On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the **word** of God, he was standing by the lake of Genesaret, 2 and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 Getting

into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

4 And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." 5 And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your **word** I will let down the nets." 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. 7 They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

One of the harvests LM wrote down on her first fruits offering envelope: a "miraculous healing for her eyes." Soon after the offering, she received her healing.

c. **Offerings are Seeds**, containing a potential future. **Every offering contains in a future reality in an immature form.**

2 Cor 9.6 ESV The point is this: whoever **sows** sparingly will also **reap** sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

6. Receiving is PROPORTIONAL.

Luke 6:38 NKJ Give, and it will be given to you:... For with the **same measure** that you use, it will be **measured back** to you."

When I use a teaspoon... 100 Wheelbarrow... 10 Ton Truck ...

7. Our Giving Releases God's Creative Ability

2 Cor 9:8 NKJ And **God is able** to make **all grace abound** toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance **for every good work**.

God works with what we **have!** **Don't let what you don't have overrule what you do have!** Mustard Seed has all the instructions.

Our sowing can **initiate the Miracle**

**B&M had a lot of family expense due to college age children. They sowed sacrificially believing for breakthrough. The older child was hired for a dream job right after graduation. The other received a full internship with a stipend that includes free housing and meals!*

WHAT DO WE HAVE? SOMETIMES we have more than we THINK!

2K 4:2 NKJ So Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, **what do you have** in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has **nothing** in the house **but a jar of oil.**"

3 Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors—empty vessels; do not gather just a few.

6 Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel." And he said to her, "There is not another vessel." So **the oil ceased.**

She had **initiative and relationship**

**Our own story...*

Be thankful and begin to joyfully use what you have!

B. 4 Keys to First Fruits:

1. **Cyclical** — Annual basis or at the beginning of a new endeavor.
2. **In Faith** — a stretch to that which is beyond our ability. We increase our “measure”
3. **Sacrificial** – a sacrifice is costly, if it doesn’t move you, it probably won’t move God.
2 Sam 24:24 ESV “...I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing.”
4. **Focused** — list the areas you are sowing in for **break-through**. destinies, careers, ministries
 - a. Pray, Believe, Decree, Stand. You have **seed in the ground!**
 - b. This is a time to sow, to **consecrate the dreams, and the promises** of God we hold in our hearts.

III. Instructions

1. Pray for God’s Direction (desire discipline delight)
2. Have a Target, or Ask God for One (Gates held by the enemy)
3. Set an amount, or ask for one.
4. Write a check or a pledge (next two months)

No Fear — Refunds for 2 weeks!

Kingdom of God released. All the “added to” things.

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

There are **NO LIMITS** on the effects of even a **SMALL CHANGE** in our thinking and behavior.

What we contribute to life today can fill eternity.

PRAYER FOR HEARING HEARTS!