

Conceiving the Future

I. Thinking Like God

Wrong Thinking can get us in trouble. We can prime our thoughts toward power and love or toward fear.

We can mistake an opportunity for a demand.

The Beggar & the King - "Give me something." Resentfully, the beggar gave the king 2 grains of rice. Then the king reached into a pouch within his robes and with a smile, dropped 2 small diamonds into the beggars bowl.

If we could instruct the future how to treat us, how we would want to live, what we would hope for our children, would we do it?

The beggar could have, but he didn't.

Gideon & the prepared offering

Judges 6.18 NLT Don't go away until I come back and **bring my offering** to you." He answered, "I will stay here until you return."

19 Gideon hurried home. He cooked a **young goat**, and ... he baked some **bread** without yeast... and the **broth** in a pot, he brought them out and presented them to the angel...

Gideon could, and he did... change personal, national, & global history

II. The Potential of a Renewed Mind

Rom 12.2 ESV Do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed** by the **renewal**¹ of your mind, that **by testing** you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable (well pleasing) and perfect.

III. 7 First Fruits Principles FF at the Beginning (Tithe after the Harvest)

¹ anakainosis— return to the new, superior, unheard of

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

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.

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

Heb 11:4 *By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice* than Cain did...And *by faith he still speaks*, even though he is dead.

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

2 Cor 8:7 NIV But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us — **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.

Do you want this GRACE of GIVING?

4. We Give **According to 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**.

Mark 12:41 NKJ Now Jesus... **saw** (*theo-*) how the people put money into the treasury. ... 42 Then one **poor widow** came and threw in two mites...

Sometimes we think we have nothing, but we actually do

Elijah & the Widow 1 Kgs 17:12 ... I do not have bread

5. Giving is **Analogous to Planting Seeds**

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 an embryonic information capsule, carrying all the instructions needed for increase and multiplication. A seed is alive and packed with almost limitless potential.

Seeds are God's "future containers." Seeds contain 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.** The *Creator Himself became a seed* of His creation and **as a seed broke the bondage of decay** and released the power of an endless life!

Gen 3:15 NKJ And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your seed and **her Seed**;

b. **Seeds are part of the Time Structure** of creation!

Gen 8:22 "While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest,
Cold and heat, Winter and summer,
And day and night Shall not cease." NKJV

c. **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.**

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

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."

This is very personal. The same **measure** I use, is how it is measured back to me!

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

Gen 22:16 NKJ and said: “By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— 17 **blessing** I will bless you, and multiplying I will **multiply** your descendants ...; and your descendants shall **possess the gate** of their enemies. 18 **In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed**, because you have obeyed My voice.”

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**

OUR TESTIMONY — 1977 starving ... increased our giving... change began to overtake us. By 1984 built a house w/o debt

Be thankful and begin to joyfully use what you do have!

Gen 26:12 NKJ Then **Isaac sowed** in that land, and **reaped** in the same year a **hundredfold**; and the LORD **blessed** him. 13 The man **began to prosper**, and **continued prospering** until he **became very prosperous**; 14 ... the Philistines envied him.

IV. 4 Keys to First Fruits:

1. **Cyclical** —Annual basis or at the beginning of a new endeavor.
2. **In Faith** –
 - a) **Comfort** – you just do it, in the budget, etc.

- b) **Faith** – a stretch to that which is beyond our ability. We increase our “measure”
 - c) **Presumption**— trying to manipulate God
3. **Sacrificial** – 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.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen...
4. **Focused** — create a list of the areas you are sowing in for breakthrough.
- a. Reflects the godly passions of your heart
 - b. Based on God’s Word.
 - c. Pray, Believe, Decree, Stand. You will reap if you don’t faint. You have seed in the ground!
 - d. This is a time to sow, to consecrate the dreams for our lives and the promises of God we hold in our hearts.

(Anonymous Testimony – Wife had a new position created. Double the salary. Husband received awards, published creative efforts!)

V. Instructions for First Fruits Offering

1. Pray for God’s Direction (desire discipline delight)
Pray for hearing hearts.
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!

5. Bring it on First Fruits Sunday

Pray for Congregation: HEARING HEARTS

**Hear the Word of the Lord Regarding Your Household,
Your Goals for 2014.**

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.