

## First Fruits 2 - Engaging the Possibilities

### I. God is FOR you!

#### A. He Delights in Your Success

Ps 35:27 NKJ Let them **shout for joy** and be glad,  
Who favor my righteous cause;  
And let them say **continually**,  
“Let the LORD be magnified, (exalted, made huge)  
Who has **pleasure**<sup>1</sup> in the **prosperity**<sup>2</sup> of His servant.”

#### B. He Leaps for Joy When You are Set Free

Zeph 3:14 Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! ....  
15 The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; ...  
The King ... is in your midst;  
17 The LORD your God is in your midst,  
a mighty one who will save;  
he will **rejoice**<sup>3</sup> over you with gladness; (happy song)  
he will quiet\* you by his love; \***renew** LXX  
he will **exult**<sup>4</sup> over you with loud singing.

NJB **he will dance with shouts of joy** for you,

#### C. He Plans for Your Abundance

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.

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<sup>1</sup> or delights in, bends toward

<sup>2</sup> Heb. SHALOM - completeness, soundness

<sup>3</sup> Heb. SUS - שׂוּשׁוּ to rejoice, to be glad (prop. to leap, to spring.)

<sup>4</sup> Heb. GIYL - prop. to go in a circle, dance, to *leap* for joy

3 John 2 NAS Beloved, I pray that ***in all respects*** you may prosper and be in good health, just as **your soul prospers**. [Slide 1]

Prosper — Go 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.

## II. 7 First Fruits Principles – (**Tithe** after the Harvest)

1. Given at the Beginning – Through firstfruits we **sanctify** our whole life and all we love. [Slide 2]

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 Law** - We honor the Lord with the First and the Best — and He honors us [Slide 3]

Heb 11:4 Abel

Acts 10:1 At Caesarea ... **Cornelius**, a **centurion** of what was known as the Italian Cohort, **2 a devout ... feared God ... , gave alms generously...**, and **prayed continually** to God. **3** About the ninth hour of the day he **saw clearly** in a vision **an angel of God come in** and say to him, "Cornelius." **4** And he stared at him in terror and said, "What is it, Lord?" And he said to him, "**Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.**"

3. Generosity Indicates **Grace and Love** at Work in our lives

[Slide 4] 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**.

***Grace flows from Joy***

*Do you want 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.

**God isn't after our money, he's after our hearts.** Giving will change your heart.

**Our Treasure locates our Hearts [Slide 5]**

Matt. 6:20 ... lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, ... 21

For where your **treasure** is, there your **heart** will be also. .

If you buy a new car, truck, boat, Harley, piano you will be drawn to gaze upon it. Check on investments.

**Your heart follows your treasure.**

This is really important! There are about **500 verses** concerning **prayer**, about the same on **faith**.

**2000 verses** dealing with **money** and **possessions**.

Your finances tell a story of where your heart is going!

**4. We Give According to What We Have. [Slide 6]**

**We give part of ourselves— our offerings take us beyond our present circumstances. FEAR NOT!**

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**.

Sometimes we think we have nothing, but we actually do.

**Elijah & the Widow** 1 Kgs 17:12 ... Our last can be a **new FIRST**

**Elisha & the Widow** 2 Kgs 4:2 Nothing except

Sometimes we aren't aware of the potential to INCREASE

2 Kgs 4:1 ... **"Your servant my husband is dead, ... the creditor has come.."** 2 And Elisha said to her, **"What shall I do**

for you? Tell me; **what have you in the house?**” And she said, ... **nothing** ... **except a jar of oil.**” 3 Then he said, **“Go outside, borrow vessels from all** your neighbors, **empty vessels and not too few.** 4 Then **go in** and **shut the door** behind yourself and your sons and **pour** into **all** these vessels. And when one is full, set it aside.” 5 So she went from him and shut the door behind herself and her sons. And **as she poured** they brought the vessels to her. 6 When the vessels were full, she said to her son, **“Bring me another vessel.”** And he said to her, **“There is not another.”** Then the oil **stopped flowing.** 7 She came and told the man of God, and he said, **“Go, sell the oil and pay your debts, and you and your sons can live on the rest.”**

What she thought was nothing, turned into **more than enough!**

## 5. Giving is **Analogous to Planting Seeds** [Slide 7]

2 Cor 9:6 NIV Remember this: Whoever **sows**... sparingly, generously. ESV — “bountifully”

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.

PT Let giving flow from your heart, not from a sense of religious duty. Let it spring up freely from the joy of giving—all because God loves hilarious generosity!

**SEED** - embryonic information capsule, **carrying** all the **instructions needed for increase.** A seed alive is packed with limitless potential.

Seeds are God’s **“future containers”** with a blueprint for the future. Apple seed -- not just an apple, but a tree that gives for years and contains future generations of trees!

- a. **Our children are seeds.** The *Creator Himself became a seed* and *as a seed broke the bondage of decay* and released the power of an endless life!      **Gen 3:15**
- 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.*
- c. **Offerings are Seeds** Every offering contains in a future reality in an immature form.      ***Instructing the future.***

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

You generally can’t eat dirt, yet all our food grows in dirt. The life in the seed can grow and capture the power of the Sun, transforming dirt and water into food, into clothing, into housing, into fuel!

**slide 8 - Planting for the Future**

**slide 9 & 10 - Small Seed, Big Structure**

**slide 11 - Instructions for the future Generation to Generation.**

**6. Receiving is PROPORTIONAL. [slide 12]**

Luke 6:38 NKJ Give, and it will be given to you:... good...pressed, shaken, running over... put into your lap. For with the **same measure** that you use, it will be **measured back** to you.”

This is very personal. When I use a teaspoon... 100 Wheelbarrow... 10 Ton Truck ...

If you give, you will **always get back more.**

Apple seed → apple tree with multiplied apples and FUTURE trees!

This is the **BENEFIT** of giving, not the **MOTIVE**. That easily turns into greed. We don’t give to GET. That’s greed.

We give just to GIVE. That's the motive. The benefit is, we will get back.

## 7. Our Giving Releases God's Creative Ability [slide 13]

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

Moving into the realm of OFFERINGS. 1977 26 years old.  
Anne pregnant. No money. Bicycle to work. No food.  
Read a book, **Your Money Matters**.

The real power in offerings. Increased from 12% to 15%, began budgeting. Within a year, down payment on ugly fixer upper. Sold it 4 years later, built a house CASH. Late model used car given to us. Many other blessings. 4 years later sold it and came to Pennsylvania.

1. Be thankful and begin to **joyfully** use what you do have!
2. Partner with God - He's rejoicing over you and will renew you with His affection

#### IV. 4 Key Concepts: [slide 14]

1. **Cyclical** —Annual basis or at the beginning of a new endeavor. [slide 15]
2. **In Faith** – [slide 16]
  - 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. [slide 17]

2 Sam 24:24 ...I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing.” So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen...

You can **deeply move** the Creator!

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 only son— 17 **blessing** I will **bless** you, and **multiplying** I will **multiply** your descendants ...stars... sand; 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**.”

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.

## 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, use Push Pay, Credit Card or make a pledge (next two months)

**No Fear — Refunds for 2 weeks!**

### 5. Bring it on First Fruits Sunday

**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.**