

THE PRINCIPLE OF FIRST

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IF GOD IS FIRST IN YOUR LIFE, EVERYTHING WILL COME IN ORDER.

I'm not saying that you won't have troubles or struggles or problems....

- Jesus said in this world you'll have tribulations. (John 16:33)
- But would you rather go through tribulations with everything in order, or everything out of order?

If God is first, EVERYTHING will come in order in your life.

If He is NOT first..... then NOTHING will come in order in your life.

God has to be first for there to be an order in your life.

This is the Principle that runs through all Scriptures — from Genesis to Revelation.

EXODUS 13:1-2

CONSECRATE TO ME ALL THE FIRSTBORN, WHATEVER OPENS THE WOMB AMONG THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, BOTH OF MAN AND BEAST; IT IS MINE."

The FIRSTBORN — *"It is mine. It belongs to me. I'm the owner"*, God says.

Consecrate means setting something apart because it is HOLY, it is dedicated exclusively to God.

QUESTION: WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH THE FIRST THAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO YOU?

EXODUS 13:13

"THAT YOU SHALL SET APART TO THE LORD ALL THAT OPEN THE WOMB, THAT IS, EVERY FIRSTBORN THAT COMES FROM AN ANIMAL WHICH YOU HAVE; THE MALES SHALL BE THE LORD'S."

BUT EVERY FIRSTBORN OF A DONKEY YOU SHALL REDEEM WITH A LAMB; AND IF YOU WILL NOT REDEEM IT, THEN YOU SHALL BREAK ITS NECK.

AND ALL THE FIRSTBORN OF MAN AMONG YOUR SONS YOU SHALL REDEEM."

1. THE FIRSTBORN MUST BE SACRIFICED OR REDEEMED.

THAT'S THE PRINCIPLE HERE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT THAT IS REFERRING TO THE PRINCIPLE THAT GOES THROUGHOUT THE BIBLE.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHICH TO DO ---- WHICH TO SACRIFICE OR REDEEM ??

- HE GIVES 2 ANIMALS WHICH ARE EXEMPLARY OF CATEGORIES OF ANIMALS.
- DONKEY REPRESENTS UNCLEAN ANIMALS, THE LAMB REPRESENTS CLEAN ANIMALS.

- CLEAN ANIMAL - IT HAS TO BE SACRIFICED, THE FIRSTBORN.
- THE UNCLEAN ANIMAL - IT HAS TO BE REDEEMED WITH THE SACRIFICE OF THE CLEAN.

IF IT'S CLEAN AND ITS FIRSTBORN -- IT HAS TO BE SACRIFICED.

IF IT'S UNCLEAN, IT HAS TO BE REDEEMED WITH THE SACRIFICE OF THE CLEAN.

HOW IN THE WORLD IS THIS RELATED TO US TODAY???

LET ME ASK YOU 2 QUESTIONS.....

WERE YOU AND I SPIRITUALLY BORN CLEAN OR UNCLEAN?

- WHEN WE WERE BORN IN THE NATURAL.... OUR SPIRITUAL STATE BEFORE GOD, WERE WE BORN INTO THIS WORLD, CLEAN OR UNCLEAN?
- **UNCLEAN.**
- WE WERE ALL BORN IN SINFUL NATURE.

TO PARENTS: **"DID YOU HAVE TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO BE BAD?"**

- DID THAT COME NATURALLY FOR THEM?
- WE HAD TO TEACH THEM **TO BE GOOD**: TO SHARE WITH OTHERS, TO BE KIND
- BECAUSE WE'RE ALL BORN IN A SINFUL NATURE.
- THAT'S WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS.....
- SO WE WERE ALL BORN UNCLEAN.

WAS JESUS BORN UNCLEAN OR CLEAN? ---- CLEAN.

- THAT IS WHY...
- **THE CLEAN (JESUS) HAD TO BE SACRIFICED SO THAT THE UNCLEAN COULD BE REDEEMED.**
- THAT'S WHAT WE JUST READ.
- THAT'S HOW IMPORTANT THIS PRINCIPLE OF FIRST IS.

WE'RE GOING TO SEE THAT THIS PRINCIPLE OF FIRST REFERS TO CONCEPT OF **TITHING**— IT IS SUCH IMPORTANT ASPECT IN A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

ABOVE ALL THE BLESSINGS, PROVISION — IT IS THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISE OF FAITH.

WHEN WE HEAR THE WORD 'TITHING' // WHENEVER MONEY COMES UP, STRAIGHTAWAY WE COULD BECOME DEFENSIVE.

BUT GOD DOESN'T NEED YOUR MONEY, GOD NEEDS THE HEART BEHIND THE TITHING.

WHY 'FIRST'?

THE FAITH EXERCISE OF GIVING OUR FAITH.....'FIRST'.....

- YOU DON'T PAY YOUR BILLS AND THEN SEE IF YOU HAVE ENOUGH LEFTOVER TO TITHE.
- YOU GIVE YOUR TITHE FIRST.
- IT'S THE FIRST 10% --- NOT JUST ANY 10%
- BECAUSE **IT TAKES FAITH TO GIVE THE FIRST.**

- *GOD SAID, "WHEN YOUR SHEEP HAS A LAMB, GIVE ME THE FIRST ONE."*
- IT TAKES FAITH TO GIVE THE FIRST ONE BEFORE YOU HAVE ANYMORE.
- YOU DON'T KNOW IF THE SHEEP IS GOING TO PRODUCE ANYMORE.....THAT TAKES FAITH.

- *GOD DIDN'T SAY.... "WAIT UNTIL YOUR SHEEP HAS 10 AND GIVE ME 1 OF THEM.*
- *AND YOU GIVE ME THE ONE THAT KEEPS EATING YOUR GARDEN THAT YOU DON'T LIKE / THE DEFECT ONE"*
- HE SAID *"YOU GIVE ME THE FIRST ONE BEFORE YOU HAVE ANY OTHERS."*

- IT'S NOT THE 10% THAT ENACTS THE BLESSING.
- IT'S FAITH THAT ENACTS THE BLESSING.

ITS GIVING THE FIRST 10%

BUT DO YOU KNOW THAT EVEN GOD GAVE AN EXAMPLE OF GIVING HIS BEST FIRST... HIS NAME IS JESUS.

AND THE REASON I SAID **JESUS IS GOD'S TITHE**....

- GOD GAVE JESUS FIRST
- **JOHN 3:16 — "FOR GOD SO LOVES THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONE AND ONLY SON...."**
- **COLOSSIANS 1:15 — "THE SON IS THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD, THE FIRSTBORN OVER ALL CREATION."**

- HE DIDN'T WAIT TO SEE IF WE WOULD CLEAN UP, OR STRAIGHTEN UP....
- TO GIVE HIS SON.
- GOD GAVE JESUS WHEN WE WERE MOCKING HIM, SPITTING ON HIM AND NAILING HIM TO THE CROSS.

- ROMANS SAID IT THIS WAY...
- **ROMANS 5:8 — "WHILE WE WERE YET A SINNER....CHRIST DIED FOR US."**
- "THAT GOD GAVE JESUS IN HOPE."
- THE ROOT WORD IS FAITH.

IN FAITH WE GIVE OUR TITHE.

IT TAKES FAITH TO GIVE THE BEST FIRST, BECAUSE THAT FAITH SETS THE TONE FOR THE REST.

WHEN THE FIRST IS SACRIFICED....THE REST IS REDEEMED AND BLESSED.

2. THE FIRSTFRUITS MUST BE OFFERED.

PROVERBS 3:9-10

"HONOUR THE LORD WITH YOUR POSSESSIONS, AND WITH THE FIRSTFRUITS OF ALL YOUR INCREASE; SO YOUR BARN WILL BE FILLED WITH PLENTY, AND YOUR VATS WILL OVERFLOW WITH NEW WINE."

THIS IS IN PROVERBS, THIS IS NOT UNDER THE LAW --- THIS IS HUNDREDS OF YEARS AFTER THE LAW. THIS IS A PRINCIPLE THAT RUNS THROUGH ALL SCRIPTURES.

EXODUS 23:19

THE FIRST OF THE FIRSTFRUITS OF YOUR LAND YOU SHALL BRING INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD YOUR GOD."

MALACHI **"BRING THE TITHES INTO THE STOREHOUSE"** - THE TITHES ALWAYS GO TO THE CHURCH.... YOU CAN'T DIVIDE, DESIGNATE THEM SOMEWHERE ELSE.

- **"BRING"** - THE REASON GOD USES THE WRONG "BRING", INSTEAD OF THE WORD "GIVE" WHEN IT COMES TO TITHING....
- **BECAUSE YOU CAN'T GIVE WHAT DOESN'T BELONG TO YOU!!**

GOD'S STRATEGY FOR THE ISRAELITES TO EXPERIENCE REDEMPTION IS BRINGING THE TITHING — THE FIRST AND THE BEST WE HAVE BELONG TO GOD.

WHEN THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL WENT INTO THE PROMISED LAND.....

- GOD SAID.....**"BRING ALL OF THE SILVER AND GOLD FROM JERICO INTO THE HOUSE OF GOD."**— **JOSHUA 6:17** (THE HOUSE OF GOD: ALWAYS WHERE THE TITHE GOES.....)

- WHY DIDN'T HE SAY 10% OF JERICO??
- BECAUSE **JERICO WAS THE FIRST CITY.**
- HE SAID, BRING THE FIRST INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD, AND THE **REST ARE REDEEMED**.... THEY'RE OUT FROM UNDER THE CURSE, THEY'RE BLESSED.

- **THE FIRST PORTION IS THE REDEMPTIVE PORTION.**
- WHEN YOU GIVE THE FIRST TO GOD.... THE REST ARE REDEEMED.

- DON'T GIVE THE FIRST PORTION TO THE MORTGAGE COMPANY.
- DON'T GIVE THE FIRST PORTION TO VISA AND MASTERCARD.
- BECAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE THE POWER TO BLESS YOUR FINANCES.
- BUT GOD DOES.

- THE FIRST PORTION / 10% GOES TO GOD.
- IT TAKES FAITH TO GIVE THE BEST FIRST.
- BECAUSE THAT FAITH SETS THE TONE FOR THE REST.

- YOU HAVE TWO CHOICES WHEN IT COMES TO TITHING ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURES.
- YOU CAN BRING IT TO GOD, OR YOU CAN STEAL IT.

- WHEN GOD SAID TO ISRAEL **"BRING ALL THE SILVER AND GOLD FROM JERICO..."**
- BUT ACHAN KEPT SOME...
- AND OF COURSE, ON THE NEXT CITY THEY LOST THE BATTLE.....UNTIL THEY BROUGHT IT TO THE HOUSE OF GOD.

BUT HERE'S THE POINT:

- JOSHUA 6 - GOD CALLS THE TITHE **"CONSECRATED" OR SET APART** (SAME THING HE CALLED THE FIRSTBORN).
- JOSHUA 7 - AFTER ACHAN TOOK IT, HE SAID "ISRAEL HAS **STOLEN** FROM ME, AND THEY'RE **CURSED**."

- IT'S CONSECRATED WHEN YOU BRING IT TO THE HOUSE OF GOD.
- IT'S CURSED IF YOU LEAVE IT IN YOUR TREASURE CHEST.

- WHY WOULD YOU WANT SOMETHING CURSE IN YOUR BANK ACCOUNT?
- WHY WOULDN'T YOU WANT YOUR BANK ACCOUNT BLESSED?
- IT TAKES FAITH TO GIVE HE FIRST
- IT TAKES FAITH TO BELIEVE THAT 90% REDEEMED AND BLESSED, WILL GO FURTHER THAN 100% CURSED.

WHEN WE HEAR CAIN AND ABEL'S STORY....

WHY DID GOD ACCEPT ABEL'S OFFERING AND HE DID NOT ACCEPT CAIN'S??

GENESIS 4:3-5

AND IN THE PROCESS OF TIME IT CAME TO PASS THAT CAIN BROUGHT AN OFFERING OF THE FRUIT OF THE GROUND TO THE LORD.

- IT DID NOT SPECIFICALLY SAID HE BROUGHT THE FIRST FRUIT
- HE JUST BROUGHT AN OFFERING, IN THE PROCESS OF TIME.

V4 ABEL ALSO BROUGHT OF THE FIRSTBORN OF HIS FLOCK AND OF THEIR FAT. AND THE LORD RESPECTED ABEL AND HIS OFFERING.

- THE PERSON RECEIVED TOO, NOT JUST THE OFFERING.

V5 BUT HE DID NOT RESPECT CAIN AND HIS OFFERING.

- CAIN WAS A FARMER, HE DIDN'T BRING FIRSTFRUIT.
- ABEL WAS A RANCHER, HE BROUGHT FIRSTBORN.
- GOD SAID I WILL ACCEPT THAT (ABEL'S).....I WON'T ACCEPT THAT (CAIN'S).

JESUS IS GOD'S TITHE ---TITHING IS MORE PERSONAL TO JESUS THAN WE THINK.

IF JESUS IS GOD'S TITHE --- TITHING MIGHT BE MORE PERSONAL TO THE FATHER ALSO THAN WHAT WE THINK.

IT REPRESENTS WHO IS FIRST IN YOUR LIFE.

THE BEST INDICATION OF **"WHO'S FIRST IN OUR LIFE"** IS OUR BANK ACCOUNT, DOESN'T MATTER WHAT WE SAY.

--- AMAZON? EBAY? BILLS? OR GOD.....

DO WE GIVE THE BEST AND THE FIRST TO GOD.....OR DO WE GIVE HIM THE LEFTOVERS?

3. THE TITHE MUST BE FIRST

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 TO THE LORD."

ROMANS 11:16

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."

THE FIRST PORTION IS HOLY.

YOUR TITHE IS HOLY - THAT'S WHY IT HAS TO BE **SET APART TO THE LORD.**

IT HAS TO BE FIRST IS BECAUSE GOD IS FIRST, AND HE OWNS IT.

IF WE'RE GOING TO RETURN IT.....WE HAVE TO RETURN IT FIRST.

THE PRINCIPLE OF FIRST.

"IS GOD FIRST IN YOUR LIFE?"

FAQ

"TITHING IS AN OLD TESTAMENT THING, WE DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ANYMORE NOW UNDER NEW TESTAMENT."

Matthew 23:23 (NIV)

23 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.

IT IS NOT ABOUT DOING ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER, JESUS TEACHES US TO APPLY EVERYTHING / BOTH.

MAYBE IN THAT TIME, JESUS WAS CHALLENGING THE PHARISEES ABOUT GIVING (ABIDING TO THE LAW) AND NOT NEGLECTING JUSTICE, MERCY AND FAITHFULNESS.

BUT MAYBE IN THIS TIME...ARE WE FOCUSING TOO MUCH ON JUSTICE, MERCY AND FAITHFULNESS...AND NEGLECTING OUR TITHING??

"DO WE GIVE PRE-TAX OR AFTER-TAX?"

"WHEN PRECISELY SHOULD I TITHE? BEGINNING / END OF MONTH? MONTHLY / WEEKLY?"

PRACTICALLY: WHENEVER WE GET PAID — THE FIRST THING WE DO.

IN OUR FAMILY, EITHER IT'S ALREADY SET AS AUTOMATIC DIRECT DEBIT, OR GO ONLINE & TRANSFER IT FIRST THING.

GOD'S NOT LEGALISTIC.

IT'S THE PRINCIPLE. "WHERE'S YOUR HEART?"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

The principle of first is giving to God before we see if we're going to have enough.

IT TAKES FAITH TO GIVE THE BEST FIRST.

- What are some things in your life that might conflict with the principle of first?
- What types of fears or concerns, if any, do you wrestle with most when thinking about the principle of first?
- What does your bank account say about who or what is first in your life?
- Are you bringing to God all of the tithe, which belongs to Him?
- It's blessed when you bring it to God! It's cursed when you leave it in your bank account.