

Journey CHURCH

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Session 6 Leader Guide

Read

Multiplication is a mathematical term like addition, subtraction, or division. But multiplication is better than addition when it comes to our resources. And our God is a God of multiplication. He is a God who can multiply. Would it be acceptable if God multiplied your resources?

The Gospel of Luke includes the account of one of those miraculous multiplications-the feeding of the 5,000 families. Luke tells us that there were 5,000 men. Additionally, there were women and children. Because of this, most Bible scholars estimate the crowd was easily more than 20,000 people.

Luke 9:12-17 - When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here." But He said to them, "You give them something to eat." And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people." For there were about five thousand men. Then He said to His disciples, "Make them sit down in groups of fifty." And they did so, and made them all sit down. Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them.

Jesus first blessed the food, and then He gave it to the disciples to hand out to the crowd. The first principle of multiplication is that our resources must first be blessed by Jesus before they multiply. When we give the first of our increase-the tithe-to the Lord, the rest of it is blessed.

Many believers have never seen their finances multiply. Often, the reason is that their money hasn't been blessed. When you give it to the Lord first and the Lord puts His blessing on it, then-and only then-does it have the ability to multiply. Jesus-the One who receives our tithes-is the only One who has the power to bless our money so it can multiply.

The second principle is this: Only what is given away can multiply. In the example of the miraculous feeding in the Galilean countryside, the disciples held the bread and the fish. It

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had been blessed, so it had the potential to multiply. But if they had just eaten it themselves, it would have remained five loaves and two fish. It would never have multiplied-even though Jesus Himself had blessed it! Each of the disciples would have taken a couple of bites of food instead of everyone having full stomachs and twelve baskets of leftovers.

In the same way the disciples had to give away what they had for it to be multiplied, we have to give away what we have for it to multiply. This is another reason many believers never see the miracle of multiplication in their finances. Sometimes those who are tithing give little or nothing over and above the tithe. They don't realize that only that which is given away can multiply.

There is a difference between tithing and giving. Tithing is simply returning to God that which He said is His. Giving our firstfruits-our first ten percent to the Lord through a local church-is what causes that which is ours to be blessed.

You can't "give" something that doesn't really belong to you. The firstfruits belong to the Lord. The rest is yours to keep or give as you choose. It is from this account that you give what the Bible often refers to as offerings. Tithing isn't really giving-it's returning. It is bringing back to the Lord what is already His. Thus, the second principle of multiplication is that finances must be shared if they are to multiply.

Often God wants to bless our finances, but they are out of order. God cannot bless things that are out of order. When God spoke to Robert and Debbie Morris about getting their finances in order, this included getting out of debt, not manipulating, and giving.

In order for them to get out of debt, they had to sell a car they were driving that included a payment they couldn't afford. They bought another car for \$750 and drove it in order to live below their means. It took them several years, but they were able to pay off all their debt.

When Robert was a full-time traveling evangelist, God spoke to him about not manipulating his finances. Whenever a church asked what his expenses were for coming to preach, God told him to tell the churches: "I have no financial requirements for coming." During this time, God taught Robert and Debbie to rely completely on the Lord for all their provision. They were diligent tithers, but God was about to teach them something new about giving and being generous.

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During this season of their life, Robert and Debbie's entire income came from the love offerings that he received from the churches where he preached. One particular month, he was only scheduled to preach at one church. Thankfully, the love offering that evening was enough to cover their entire month's expenses. Earlier in that evening's worship service, a missionary had given a brief testimony and an update for the congregation. As he looked across the nearly empty sanctuary, Robert caught a glimpse of the missionary. As he did, the unmistakable voice of the Lord spoke in his heart: "I want you to give him your offering-all of it."

In obedience, Robert signed the check he had just received over to the missionary and asked the missionary not to say anything. Later that evening, they were eating pizza with some people from the church and a man asked to see the check he had just received. Robert responded that perhaps it was in the car, but the man insisted. The man then looked at him in the eyes and said, "I know you don't have the check. The Lord told me." Then the man handed Robert a check he had written before he came that was exactly ten times the amount of the first check. He said to Robert, "God is about to teach you about giving so that you can teach the Body of Christ."

A few years later, Robert was reading his Bible in the book of Philippians where Paul says Jesus gave up everything. Robert felt God speak to him: "Would you give Me everything?" So Robert and Debbie emptied out all their savings accounts, checking accounts, and retirement accounts. They gave away their two cars. And they gave away their house. They gave away every asset they owned.

God did pour out His blessing on them after they gave extravagantly. However, the greatest blessing came when Robert was reading about Solomon a few weeks later. After Solomon gave an extravagant offering to the Lord (1,000 bulls rather than the tradition of 1 bull), God told Solomon, "Ask anything you want." Robert felt God tell him that same thing after his extravagant offering of giving all he owned. Robert's request was to stay passionately in love with Debbie for the rest of their lives. At the time of the message in this video, they have been married for 35 years! That is a gift from God!

Discussion

1. Read Hebrews 7:8. Only that which has been "blessed" by the Lord can multiply. The disciples put the loaves and fish into Jesus' hands so He could bless those things. How can we put the money that comes to us into Jesus' hands so He can bless it?

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2. Why do you think Jesus instructed the disciples to divide the huge crowd into groups of 50? What areas of your life might require some organization and order before God can bring increase to them?
3. Tithing is bringing to God that which is rightfully His. It is when we give over and above the tithe that the miracle of multiplication takes place. How do you decide when, where, and how much to give?
4. Describe a time when you have seen the principle of multiplication at work in your life or in someone else's life.
5. Hearing the Lord instruct you to give something—a car, a specific sum of money, or some other possession—obviously requires the ability to hear God's voice. Do you currently hear His voice in that way? In what ways can we become more sensitive to prompting and instructions from the Lord?