

McCLAIN MINISTRIES

Since 2000 A Monthly Christian Newsletter Publication

November 2007

**Thanks
And
Thanksgiving**



This Months Issue

LIFE EVENTS



MELVA'S CORNER

Tradition or Transformation



McCLAIN MINISTRIES' AFRICAN SCHOOL PROJECT



PRAISE REPORTS



ANNOUNCEMENTS



HOME BIBLE WORKSHOP



NEW WEBSITE OFFERINGS ARTICLE

Living to Give!
(Financial Freedom)
Part II



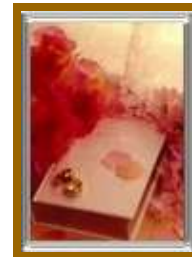
4th QUARTER PRAYER MONTHS

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Life Events

Happy Anniversary



May they continue to celebrate love and life as we wish happiness always for The Gilliams' & Hardys'

HAPPY THANKSGIVING TO OUR TROOPS



Prayer for those in the Armed Forces in Defense of our Country

Almighty God, we commend to your gracious care and keeping all the men and women of our armed forces at home and abroad. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils which beset them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Melva's Corner

Tradition or Transformation



(John: 5:1-46)

Central Truth: Unless we get over some of our "hung-upness" about religion, we are going to continue missing Jesus. We won't see Him. We won't understand His words. We won't be able to reveal Him to others - and will, indeed, get in the way of His effort to make Himself known to them.

In an interview with a nation news magazine several years ago, historian Jaroslav Pelikan – who taught on the faculty at Yale University from 1962-96 and authored more than 30 books related to his discipline – said:

Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living. Tradition lives in conversation with the past, while remembering we are where and when we are and that it is we who have to decide. Traditionalism supposes that nothing should ever be done for the first time, so all that is needed to solve any problem is to arrive at the supposedly unanimous testimony of this homogenized tradition.

I thought of that quote as I began reading, studying and preparing this message from the Gospel of John. To be sure, this information about the healing of a paralyzed man, the challenge to Jesus about what he had done, and his response to the

indictment can be appealed to for several important lessons.

One could simply stress the importance of our doing more to imitate Jesus' concern for the sick, vulnerable, and suffering. One could pursue the theme of spiritual sickness, blindness, and insensitivity over against unresponsive limbs. Or one could trace out with great profit the bold claims Jesus makes for Himself as the Son of God in the exchange with His critics. We'll give these only passing notice and focus instead on how easy it is for religion to get in God's way.

Religion Gets in God's Way

Every individual, every family, and every religious group develops traditions. From personal reading or TV habits to special holiday meals to focus areas for ministry, we evolve time-honored and customary ways of doing things. So far, so good. We need these habits and routines. They define us. They introduce our children into a culture. They help us know how to respond to challenges and new circumstances. They give us a sense of continuity with the past, a sense of depth, a sense of secure belonging. As Tevye says in *Fiddler on the Roof*: "Because of our traditions, everyone knows who he is and what God expects him to do." Ah, but Tevye puts his finger on the problem with evolved human traditions in that statement. They are valuable. They steady and comfort us. **But they are not sacred divine expectations. They must always yield to the exigency of new situations.** Family rituals may, for example, become onerous and divisive rather than stabilizing if they don't change as family members alter their life situations. Children go off to college. Marriage demands the blending of two sets of family traditions. Grandchildren are born. Each of these situations demands a reshaping of rituals - or there is trouble.

An inflexible soul who insists that everything must be kept as it has always been will soon be resented - even if catered to - by all parties involved.

Someone is making a valued tradition into a soul-shriveling, anger-generating, absence-fostering traditionalism. What once helped stabilize a family can become a medium to destabilize it.

The same thing can be said about tradition versus traditionalism in religion. Leith Anderson tells the story of a Danish Lutheran Church where people filed in, walked to the front of the center aisle, and - facing a plain white wall - reverently bowed. Then each worshipper took his or her regular seat. A visitor was curious enough about the ritual to ask for an explanation, but neither laity nor clergy in the church seemed to know the origin or justification for the practice.

With the curiosity of several aroused now, further research revealed that there was an elaborate painting of the Virgin Mary behind the layers of white paint on the blank wall. That painting dated back several hundred years to a time before the Protestant Reformation when the structure was a Roman Catholic worship center. When the church became Protestant and the painting was covered over, the worshipers just kept coming in and bowing. Generations later, the practice was still being perpetuated - even though the reason had long since been forgotten. Such is the power of religious tradition.

Some of the religious people in Jesus' time were so caught up in their traditions that they could no longer distinguish the event from its purpose, the original justification from its accustomed performance. Animal sacrifice, sabbath, and tithing were originally God's ideas taught to His human creatures. The mistake certain Jewish religionists made was to retain the form without the substance. And Jesus rebuked

them with these words: "Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice' " (Matt. 9:13; cf. Hos. 6:6).

Traditions Over People

A case study to help us understand the meaning of this important principle involves a healing on the Jewish sabbath. John uses the episode with incredible skill to illustrate God's intention to use religion to bless rather than burden His creatures. Sabbath, worship rituals, tithing, sacrifice - all these external trappings of the faith taught via Moses were designed to bring God's love into the lives of people, not to regulate their behaviors and make God's words oppressive.

Understanding the design of the pool of Beth-zatha is important. Scholars had wondered for generations how it was configured so as to have "five porticoes" (5:2). When it was unearthed years ago, the mystery came clear. It was a huge, huge pool - bisected by an interior porch. In other words, it looked like two big rectangular pools put end to end. So the complete structure had the expected four porticoes, with one per side, plus a fifth that cut across and reduced the distance one would have to traverse to walk around it completely. Here is what happened there one day:

After this there was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids - blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me."

Jesus said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk. Now that day was a Sabbath (5:1-10).

What an event! A man paralyzed for 38 years was walking home under his own power, with his beggar's mat under his arm! But somebody from a Taliban-like Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Elimination of Vice saw him and challenged his right to be carrying anything on a holy day. When the poor fellow replied that he was just doing what the healer had told him to do, the orthodoxy-protector set out to get clear on his identity. When it was discovered that Jesus was the healer in question, John informs us: "Therefore the Jews started persecuting Jesus, because he was doing such things on the sabbath" (5:16).

Incredible! A man whose limbs had been powerless for 38 years was well, and the legalistic religionists of Jerusalem set out to persecute Jesus rather than to praise Him, learn from Him, and further His ministry of compassion! And try to visualize this from the perspective of the healed man. His life had just been transformed by Jesus, but the joy of that event is going to be overshadowed by the legalism he is called to debate.

Jesus began His response to the legalists by telling them, "My Father is still working, and I also am working" (5:17). God sustains the cosmos constantly. He is sovereign over all people and all things without taking any time off. So, since Jesus is God enfleshed, He has every right to be who He is and to do what His nature calls Him to do all the time. He wasn't "breaking the sabbath" but simply being who He was - and modeling the truth for mortal onlookers that the sabbath rules had never been designed to prohibit kindness.

But are we reading too much into this to see His "My Father" as a claim to deity for

Himself? Indeed not. The people present that day understood it so, and He didn't take it back or disclaim their interpretation of His words.

But Jesus answered them, "My Father is still working, and I also am working." For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God His own Father, thereby making Himself equal to God.

Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished. Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever he wishes . . ." (5:17-21).

Jesus or Religion?

Unless we get over some of our "hung-upness" - is that word? - about religion, we are going to continue missing Jesus. We won't see Him. We won't understand His words. We won't be able to reveal Him to others - and will, indeed, get in the way of His effort to make Himself known to them.

Yes, we must honor and live within the limits of Scripture. We must regard the written Word of God as authoritative. It is the single document in all the world that is God-breathed and capable of making known His will for our lives. Having said that, however, we must not forget that Scripture is not an end in itself. It is meant to point us to Jesus Himself and to call us to a personal relationship with Him. But if we are not very, very careful, Scripture will become an end instead of a means. We will fight scholarly battles over texts and tenses

and put out each other's eyes so that neither of us sees Jesus - but we both feel holy for having fought. That is what Jesus told the people present that day: **"You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life" (5:39-40).**

Jesus' fiercest opposition came from religious leaders who viewed Him as a threat to their ability to run the religious establishment. They were respected theologians who had studied for years and who had built up a following of sincere students. I suspect most of them had good motives - at least originally. But they became the enemies of Jesus. But I'm not bringing this up to pick on Judaism in general or the Pharisees in particular, for the toughest opposition to Jesus Christ still comes from the legalism inherent in human religion.

It is time for us to choose Jesus over religion. It is time for us to seek and affirm personal - relationship - with - Jesus spirituality over hide - bound - egalistic religion. It is high time to learn the meaning of Christ's challenge about mercy over sacrifice. Rather than leave the challenge of this text vague for you, let me close with three very practical consequences of receiving this lesson.

Conclusion

The Pharisees of Jesus' day and the legalists of every generation work to make sinners feel uncomfortable and unwanted; Jesus is eager to accept them. Jesus associated eagerly with people the religionists of His time considered untouchable. Jesus' church has not always followed His lead, choosing instead to be an ingrown community behind stained-glass walls. If Jesus is light and if He has sent us into the world bearing witness to Him, there is no need to fear darkness.

There is certainly no justification for avoiding people who are in the clutches of sin. [Note: Although not all suffering is the direct consequence of sin in the sufferer's life, this paralyzed man's appears to have been (5:14; cf. 9:1-12; Luke 13:1-8). He had suffered for 38 years, and the attitude of some must have been that he was getting what he deserved. That wasn't the attitude our compassionate Savior had toward him.]

The Pharisees of Jesus' time valued traditions over people; Jesus always valued people for the image of God He saw in them. The Pharisees of then and now persist in stressing "the letter of the law" and trying to dispense the artesian well of God's redemptive grace through the soda straw of their neat theological systems. A prime example of this would be the way our human zeal to protect marriage has made divorced and remarried persons feel like second-class Christians - if they are convinced they can be Christians at all.


The Pharisee-spirit trusts rules; Jesus offers us a relationship. While the animal sacrifices of Hosea's time and during Jesus' earthly ministry were commanded by God, many of the worshippers were convinced sacrifice was a way to buy God's favor rather than merely a grateful response to His love. Sacrifice never was the basis for approaching God, and those who understood and practiced it as such were guilty of reducing an intimate relationship to a legalistic formula. A legalist fears that overemphasizing God's love and grace will lead to license, but they are the ones who - by focusing on formulas, right actions, and church rituals - are presuming on God's grace. And Jesus was incredibly stern with such persons.

Religion put Jesus to death once! Then again. And again and again over time.

It is time to put away human - controlled,

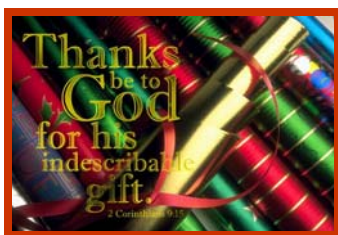
rule - bounded, life-stifling religion for the sake of letting Him live.

Scriptural References:

"Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished. Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomever he wishes . . ." (5:17-21). 



Together We Can



(Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)

Central Truth: ". . . when I got to the top, I was on the shoulders of lots and lots of people."

King Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes writes "You are better off to have a friend than to be all alone, because then you will get more enjoyment out of what you earn. If you fall, your friend can help you up. But if you fall without having a friend nearby, you are really in trouble. If you sleep alone, you won't have anyone to keep you warm on a cold night. Someone might be able to beat up one of you, but not both of you. As the saying goes, 'A rope made from three strands of cord is hard to break'" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

It has been six years ago now that Erik Weihenmayer did a most extraordinary thing. He stood atop the 29,035-foot peak of the world's highest mountain. He conquered Mount Everest as one member of a team of nineteen hardy, determined souls. Oh, yes. There's one other thing. Erik is blind.

In order to be the first blind person ever to achieve this feat, the 32-year-old American knew he had to be part of a larger group committed to the same goal. He put his full faith and confidence in sighted people such as Eric Alexander, Luis Benitez, and Jeff Evans. They arrived at their goal on May 25, 2001.

In an interview with a CNN reporter on the afternoon of his success, Erik spoke by phone of the "team accomplishment" he had shared. He spoke of sponsors, people who were on the mountain with him, and many who were not there but who had prayed for him. "I felt like, when I got to the top, I was on the shoulders of lots and lots of people," he said. "It wasn't just me standing there."

The same thing can be said of every great achievement. If a single researcher in her lab makes a monumental discovery, it was on the basis of what hundreds of others contributed through their work and publications in the field. Even if it is an athlete or musician whose great moment is unshared on the field or stage, there are hosts of people who inspired, taught, and otherwise made their contributions to that one bright, shining moment.

There are some worthwhile and challenging goals you have for your life that will be too much for you alone. It isn't a sign of weakness but wisdom to realize you will need help. So don't hesitate to surround yourself with people of similar goals, more extensive experience and skills superior to your own. The best way to learn is to attach

yourself to others who already know more about what is important to you. And here's a fact that may surprise you: Most of them will be eager to share their experience and insights with you.

Erik admits to be "scared all the time" on his ascent. But he continued to trust his partners — and kept putting one foot in front of the other.

In your career, family, or personal spiritual life, the notion of going it alone will be a mistake. If you are willing to stand on the shoulders of others, you can go places that otherwise would be out of reach.

If you doubt it, just ask Erik Weihenmayer how he got to the top.

Another story I would like to share occurred in the year 1904. People at the World's Fair in St. Louis had walked for hours in the hot sun, and they were ready for something to cool them off. That's why they lined up for what seemed like miles in front of the booth of Arnold Fornachou to get a taste of his frosty ice cream.

The problem was that Arnold's ice cream was so popular he quickly ran out of paper bowls. The moonlighting teenager scrambled to keep his potential customers by washing and reusing the few ceramic bowls he had on hand. But no matter how hard he worked, many people grew tired of waiting and wandered off in search of another treat. That's when an unlikely partner emerged to save the day.


His name was Ernest Hamwi, a pastry chef who had grown up in Damascus, Syria. In the booth next to Arnold's, he was selling a wafer-thin Persian confection called a zalabia. That is . . . he was offering them, but no one was buying them.

When Ernest saw his neighbor's plight, he was struck with a great idea. Grabbing a

warm zalabia, he twisted it into a cornucopia shape and rolled it in sugar. Then he ran over to Arnold's booth and offered it to him. Still scrambling to wash bowls and wait on customers, Arnold didn't understand what the older man had in mind. But when Ernest handed an ice cream scoop atop a confection cone to a waiting customer, Arnold instantly got the message. A huge smile spread over his face, and in no time, the two men were working side by side— Ernest made "edible bowls", Arnold scooped ice cream. Back then, they were called "World's Fair Cornucopias," and they were the hit of the fair. Today, we simply call them ice cream cones — and they're still a hit.

Today, remember that we earn and enjoy more when we work with others, as well as experience comfort and strength when we need it.

Scriptural References:

"You are better off to have a friend than to be all alone, because then you will get more enjoyment out of what you earn. If you fall, your friend can help you up. But if you fall without having a friend nearby, you are really in trouble. If you sleep alone, you won't have anyone to keep you warm on a cold night. Someone might be able to beat up one of you, but not both of you. As the saying goes, 'A rope made from three strands of cord is hard to break'" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). 



Higher Mountains...Higher Praises

DIVINE APPOINTMENT & DIVINE PROTECTION

Sylvia Washington

10/13/07 on Sunday night, my sister-in-law, Lena and I left the movie theatre about 11:55 P.M. going home. I dropped Lena off at home and left to go home.

One mind said, go home by way of Watkins Drive, the other said, no, go I-220. So I went I-220. As I was traveling along I-220 going southbound, a black car came flying by me in the passing lane. The car was going so fast, it sounded like a car when it is racing in the auto races. I watched the car as it flew by. All of a sudden, the car fishtailed as the driver lost control. The car crashed into a left embankment on the highway and bounced all the way back on the right side of the highway. I slowed to a stop on the side of the road. I knew that I had to get help because I saw no one get out of the car and also the car crashed so hard.

I called *911 from my cell phone and told them that I would sit in my car with the blinkers on until they get there so that they would know where the crashed car was. The police finally got there. They would not let me leave until they got a statement from me about what I saw. It was very frightening. The policeman finally told me that the man died and that he was ejected from the vehicle when it crashed. I did not see that.

This was divine appointment and divine protection all at the same time. God had me in this area to call for help for this man and also he kept me out of harms way. This accident could have very easily gone in another direction, but God's saving grace protected me.

To GOD be the glory! I give praise to him at

all time. I give HIM continual praise because he is forever giving me grace and mercy.

I lift up a standard to say: I will forever PRAISE HIM.

BACK IN CONTROL

Jannice Horton

God keeps on doing great things for me. I started a new job in January 2007. I have two supervisors, so lately I have been getting much work from both sides and on every hand. I felt out of control. It seems like the more I did the less got accomplished.

This went on for weeks and finally I set down at my desk and decided to clean out my desk drawers.

Just get rid of the things that I did not need. Dust off the top of my desk the day before. All of a sudden things look brighter. I felt like things were in order and they were. I immediately told the lady sitting in front of me and thank God for organization.

And I thought something so simple as to clean out my desk drawers could put things back in prospective and less stressful. It was just unbelievable. God cares about the little things in your life. There is nothing too small or too big that He cannot handle. All Power is in His Hands.

So if you think that you do not have a big testimony to share, share with others what you do have. You never know who is reading this and find strength within your little testimony to overcome their big situation.

When Praises Goes Up, Blessings Comes Down declares the Word of God.



BLESSINGS VIA NETWORKING

Melva McClain

For some time now we have been working on a Ministry Computer Clinic and I am pleased to report that we have been awarded fourteen (14) computers from:



This wonderful source was discovered by Frances Meeks. You may recall that I ordered 20 computers from this source a few months ago. However, I didn't realize that when you order the computers that there are others who may be ordering the same computers at the same time . . . the computers are then awarded on a first come basis. The first computers we ordered were denied because other organizations ordered them first. Needless to say after a great deal of persistence we began to receive notification that our requests were granted. Praise God!

We also recently learned **Computers For Learning** provides printers and fax machines as well. So if you are a non-profit organization and would like to be blessed with **free** computers here is the link you need:

<https://computersforlearning.gov/>

Additional contact information includes.

For questions:

computers.learning@gsa.gov

Phone (866) 472-9161

Criteria: If you are a school, you must supply a valid NCES number; if you are an educational nonprofit organization you must supply a valid 501C number on the registration form. After you successfully complete the registration, the system will instantly assign and send you a User ID via email.

ANOTHER NETWORK PRAISE REPORT

Melva McClain

As some of you know on October 19th I took a trip back to Chicago to visit some friends. The trip was fantastic of course but what's more fantastic is the cost of the tickets for the trip.

Recently, Loretta House shared with me a wonderful resource provided by Southwest Airline called "DING." I saved \$100 by using this incredible resource.

With "Ding" you can choose up to 10 airports and get live updates from your selected cities directly to your desktop.

Here is the link you need to get started:

www.southwest.com/ding/what_is_ding.html

Let's keep sharing both our tangible & intangible knowledge for it is truly the road to victory for us all.

WELCOME TO PLANET EARTH

Samuel Blake Bender



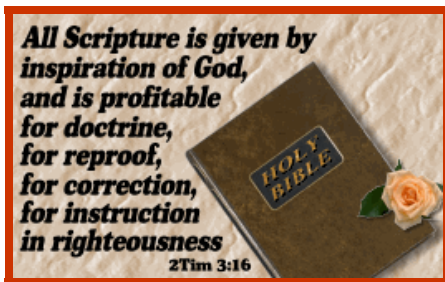
Samuel was born Friday, October 26th at 1:27 PM (7lbs. & 19 3/4 inches long). He is the first grandchild of Ricky & Denise Jones, the son of Sam and Anitra and the great - nephew of Sylvia Washington & Melva McClain.

"Samuel you have a great heritage to live up to - so wake up young man and get started!"

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Home Bible Workshop Schedule

Home Bible Workshop



Mark your calendars for the months of **November and December** 2007. Please join us and take the next step in your walk with God.



November 3

Home Bible Workshop
5:00 P.M. CST

“From Meditation To Manifestation”
Includes Nationwide Video Conferencing



November 17

Home Bible Workshop
5:00 P.M. CST

“From Meditation To Manifestation”
Includes Nationwide Video Conferencing



December 8

Home Bible Workshop
5:00 P.M. CST

“From Meditation To Manifestation”
Includes Nationwide Video Conferencing

THE GOD EFFECT OF PRAYER

6:00 P.M. HOUR OF PRAYER



SPEND TIME PRAYING FOR OTHERS

Use this wonderful supernatural tool the Lord has blessed us with **the 6 o'clock hour of power**. This is the time to intercede for the needs of others, the concerns of the ministry, and to pray for the leadership within our community, our nation, and our world.

Hearts throbbing as one, prayers ascending to heaven multiplied by those praying in **one accord**. Sharing burdens, joys, and petitions to bear. Lay all your cares at the foot of the cross and encourage others to do the same. Lives are being changed. Breakthroughs are happening.

WEBSITE OFFERINGS

(Mini Message)

www.mcclainministries.org

**Living to Give!
(Financial Freedom)
Part II**

As we continue our study on giving let me share six steps you can take to appropriate God's abundant blessings through your faithful stewardship.

**1. Recognize That Everything You "Own"
Actually Belongs to God**

All that we have, we possess by the grace and gift of God.

Everything belongs to Him. The psalmist records, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." God's ownership is eternal and unchanging. He never has given up this right - and never will.

As Christian stewards we must realize that in Christ "we live and move and have our being." Jesus Christ created us. He bought us with His precious blood. And God anointed Him as our Lord. Thus, the whole of our life - our personality, influence, material substance, everything - is His, even our successes.

God has placed in our trust a measure of time, a unique set of talents and sufficient treasure to carry out His will for our lives. Our task as faithful stewards is to manage those blessings to bring the maximum glory to His name.

2. Realize It Is More Blessed to Give Than Receive

The Book of Acts records the words of the Lord, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." I first heard this as a growing girl, then as a young Christian. Then, I could not comprehend how giving could be better than receiving. Now that I have been a Christian for many years, I truly understand from my own experience and through observing many others why it is "more blessed to give" than receive.

Giving produces abundance. When you give freely of yourself and of your possessions as a material expression of your spiritual obedience to Christ, God in turn meets your needs abundantly. This is true whether you are "rich or poor," whether you serve God in a land that is blessed with great material wealth or in a poverty-stricken part of the world. The apostle Paul records:

"If you give little, you will get little. A farmer who plants just a few seeds will get only a

small crop, but if he plants much, he will reap much. Everyone must make up his own mind as to how much he should give. Don't force anyone to give more than he really wants to, for cheerful givers are the ones God prizes. God is able to make it up to you by giving you everything you need and more, so that there will not only be enough for your own needs, but plenty left over to give joyfully to others.

For God, who gives seed to the farmer to plant, and later on, good crops to harvest and eat, will give you more and more seed to plant and will make it grow so that you can give away more and more fruit from your harvest.

Yes, God will give you much so that you can give away much, and when we take your gifts to those who need them they will break out into thanksgiving and praise to God for your help."

Most Christians have not learned to give, either out of their abundance or out of their poverty, and therefore, are not experiencing the reality of that promise. As a result, they feel unfulfilled and don't understand why.

You can never outgive God. It is a law of God that His blessings back to you always greatly exceed what you give to Him.

The truths of God's holy, inspired Word are universal. The principle of abundant blessing is not just for the rich and famous or for those who live in a land of wealth and opportunity; it is for everyone everywhere who obeys God and follows the principles of blessing given in His Word. I will share more on this later.

Giving begins an endless circle of joy. God gives; you receive. You give; He receives, He then multiplies your gift back to you in the form of additional supply. It is important to remember that God is the one who initiates this process of blessing.

The purpose of the return is not just to reward you for giving, thus completing the circle again and again.

Although God owns all the wealth in the universe, few people are willing to share the portion of resources which He has entrusted to them. When someone does begin to give, God releases additional abundance to them so they can give even more. If we break this process on the receiving end of the circle, He is likely to look for someone else whom He can trust and through whom He can channel His blessings. The Book of Proverbs records:

“One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed.”

I know a man who considers himself an average person. At the age of twelve, he found his first job working in a small grocery store after school. From the beginning, he gave at least 10 percent of his income to the work of the Lord. Through the years, he worked hard, and God blessed him abundantly.

This same man married young and he and his wife raised their three children while he grew in his career. At age 29, after eleven years of managing supermarket meat departments, he began his own wholesale /retail meat business. At that time, he and his wife and children made a family decision to give at least 15 percent of their \$6,000 yearly earnings to the Lord.

God began to increase their income immediately from \$6,000 to \$21,000, then \$37,000, \$62,000, \$85,000, \$100,000 and more a year.

"Fifteen years later we sold the meat business to a larger company, wrapped up our assets in nice, investments and went

into self-supported Christian ministry for two years," He says. "We later heard of the evangelistic work of a Christian ministry in foreign countries. Their work is flourishing, and it takes little to maintain these missionary families in full time ministry compared to our own - less than \$100 per month in some countries.

"A little fast meat-market math convinced me that I could go back into business, earn money to support these missionaries and multiply myself fifty to one hundred times. By giving \$12,000 a year, I could contribute \$240,000 to God's work within just twenty years."

Things worked out much better than he expected. He fulfilled his \$240,000 commitment in just ten years, channeling the bulk of his funds into a comprehensive plan for world evangelism designed to help reach the millions who have not yet heard about Christ.

God's promise in Proverbs 11:24, 25 is for everyone. Whether rich or poor, you, too, can give to receive, to receive to give again. God knows your heart and whether He can trust you to end of the process, as the above example emphasizes.

Permit me to give you a word of caution here. Do not be disappointed if God doesn't work in your life the same as the example. The various possibilities of Gods' blessings are endless. He may have a different plan for you. God knows your true needs and you must give Him the freedom to do His very best work in your life. He may give you improved health and strength to do your work. He may lead you to a better job, help you decrease your expenses, or change your spending habits so you can live better on your present income. Or He may teach you to be content with what you have so you can enjoy a greater sense of fulfillment in life. Paul affirms this: "I know what it is to be in need and I know what it is to have plenty.

I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”

Many Christians misunderstand the meaning of blessing. Like Paul, Job was a man who experienced both prosperity and deprivation. True prosperity is living and giving at the level to which God has called you with all your needs met by His supply.

3. Give By Faith

Simply defined, giving by faith is taking God at His Word and giving generously in anticipation of His faithful provision.

The premise of this concept is three-fold. First, God is the absolute source for your supply. Second, giving is based on His resources, not your own. Third, Christ is your link to God's inexhaustible riches.

The apostle Paul includes these precepts in his letter to the Christians at Philippi in which he says:

“My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Let's look at each for a moment.

God shall supply. Living in a humanistic society, it is easy to believe that man is your source of wealth. When in need, it's easy to look to people and institutions for help. Indeed, God uses them in His process of provision, but they are only the instruments - not the source - of your supply.

According to His riches. Our heavenly Father holds the treasures for heaven and earth in His hands. Jesus Christ claimed all authority in heaven and on earth. Our Lord's supply is not based on the size of your need, but on the enormity of His riches and

His authority to disburse them. In good times and bad, His reserves remain stable By Christ Jesus. You claim God's abundant blessings through Christ. Our Lord laid aside His riches in heaven to identify with you in every area of your human need, ultimately dying on the cross for your sins. When He returned to His Father, God reinvested Him with all that He had laid aside, including His inexhaustible riches.

4. Realize That What You Sow, You Will Reap

On the third day of creation God commanded, "Let the earth burst forth with every sort of grass and seed-bearing plant, and fruit trees with seeds inside the fruit, so that these seeds will produce the kinds of plants and fruits they came from."

This principle applies spiritually as well as physically. Paul writes, "A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."

The apostle makes it clear that the law of sowing and reaping applies to the use of our material goods as well, as previously examined in II Corinthians 9. This law embraces four basic principles.

First, to reap anything, you must first plant a seed. Whether your gift is measured in cash or goods or any other medium of exchange, whatever you give will return to you because what you give is a seed that you sow.

Second, to reap a bountiful harvest you must sow your best seed. Merely sowing for the sake of reaping is not enough. God asks for your finest because He uses what you give as the basis of His supply. There is no second best with God. His provision in response to your obedience is per-

petually perfect and always abundant. Since He gave you His very best - His only Son - you grieve the Spirit of God when you do not give Him your best.

This means that the best of your life - the best of your time, the best of your talents, the best of your treasure, the best of everything you have - should be on the altar of sacrifice to God.

In some cultures, the seed may be the first and best of one's produce or other tangible foods. For example, Abraham willingly gave a tenth of all his spoils of war to Melchizedek, the king of Salem and high priest of the Most High God, as a testimony to God's faithfulness in giving him the victory. No doubt these spoils included a wide variety of valuable treasures. On another occasion, after Moses sanctified the Tabernacle in the wilderness, the leaders of Israel brought covered wagons drawn by oxen as gifts to the Lord.

Third, whatever you give, you reap according to the amount you sow. This biblical principle is basic to life and it applies in every culture and economic custom, whether free enterprise, socialism, or a system where tangible foods are bartered.

Fourth, an abundant harvest springs from the most fertile soil. No intelligent farmer would think of planting inferior seed in poorly prepared soil using worn-out equipment. Rather, he would buy the choicest seed and prepare the soil thoroughly with the finest equipment and fertilizers he could afford.

Like planting good seed in fertile ground, your task as a steward is to seek the greatest possible return for the sake of God's kingdom. You cannot appraise good stewardship by the amount of your gifts, but by how wisely you invest your resources. Good stewardship of any gift is determined by how well it reflects the will of God.

given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

The "sound mind" referred to in this verse means a well-balanced mind, one that is under the control for the Holy Spirit, "remade" according to Romans 12:1, 2:

"Therefore, my brother, I implore you by God's mercies to offer your very selves to Him, a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for His acceptance, the worship offered by mind and heart. Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern for the present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed. Then you will be able to discern the will of God and to know it is good, acceptable, and perfect."

There is a vast difference between the inclination of the natural or carnal man to use "common sense" and that of the spiritual man to follow the "sound mind" principle. One depends upon the wisdom of man without benefit of God's wisdom and power; the other, having the mind of Christ, receives wisdom and guidance from God moment by moment through faith.

I encourage you to use the "sound mind" principle to help determine where to invest in Christ's kingdom. Avoid emotional giving. Giving on impulse just for the sake of giving or contributing where your gifts are likely to be misused or wasted is not only poor stewardship, but is also contrary to the will of God and grieves the Spirit. Perhaps you have received requests from organizations inviting you to invest in their various projects. Carefully evaluate the worthiness of the ministry you choose and the sincerity of the people involved, and respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Don't be afraid to ask questions. Find out the conditions of the "soil." Investigate the financial soundness and integrity of the organization soliciting your support; determine what percentage of your donation

will actually go to the project and whether your gift will really be used for the glory of God. I also encourage you to evaluate - in terms of discipleship and evangelism - the fruitfulness of the church or other organizations which invite your contributions.

5. Give to Glorify God

As a steward for God's resources, you have but one purpose - to glorify Him. It is easy to let the day-to-day demands on your finances turn your eyes from this aim unless you clearly define your priorities. God's holy Word does this for you.

Your number one priority is God. Your second priority is your family. Since the family was the first institution formed by our Creator, no conflict exists between the preeminence of God and the priority of family. Rather, meeting the needs of your family is a scriptural mandate and an evidence of faith. Helping nonbelievers see the life-changing power for Jesus Christ as a result of your caring for the poor, the orphans and the widows and your gifts of time, talent and treasure to agencies concerned for the welfare of the community glorify God as well.

But your top priority is to love, obey and glorify God. Putting God and the fulfillment of our Lord's Great Commission first in your time, talents and treasure must be the priority goal of your stewardship. This involves giving to the kingdom of God through your local church and mission organizations which faithfully exalt our Lord, proclaim His holy, inspired Word and actively work toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

It is poor stewardship to invest resources which God has entrusted to you in any church or mission cause which is not directly related to discipleship, evangelism, and the fulfillment of our Lord's commands, including the Great Commission.

6. Give From the Heart

Good stewardship involves more than the mere knowledge and application of the principles and priorities of giving. Motives are an essential part of the picture as well, for they determine your reasons for giving.

Godly motives stem from a cheerful, loving heart for God. We give to please God and express our love to Him. We give out of obedience to our Lord's command to lay up treasures in heaven. We give to be a channel of God's abundant resources to a desperately needy world. We give to help fulfill the Great Commission and, thus, help reach the world for Christ.

Maintaining right motives through the power of the Holy Spirit is essential if we are to accomplish this objective to the glory of God.

Why is it, then, that we so often fail in this goal? It is because we follow our deceitful hearts and live self-centered lives. Bowing to this materialistic world, we fail to use the keys which unlock God's abundant blessings in our lives and as a result, plunge into financial bondage.

How can you avoid this? In the next message I want to show you how to manage your finances and release your faith to experience the adventure in giving which God intended for every Christian

Scriptural References:

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:21)



CATCH THE VISION OF OUR GIRL'S SCHOOL IN AFRICA

Thanks to Loretta House (Left) our African School Project has caught the attention of Former President Clinton & Dr. Papa Kwesi Nduom who is running for President of Ghana



Now is the time to get your network of friends & associates involved!



McCLAIN MINISTRIES

AFRICAN SCHOOL PROJECT

Our goal is fourfold:

1. Build a school that includes 4 classrooms, 2 bathrooms and 1 administration office at a cost of approximately \$25,000.
2. Provide 300 Girl's Secondary School Scholarships at a cost of \$117,000
3. Supply 160 benches for the new school at a cost of \$6400
4. Supply 100 benches for existing schools at a cost of \$4000

Our total target goal for this project amounts to \$152,400

Here is how you can help with this vital project:

School contributions: \$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 other _____

Scholarships:

\$75 (1 year of secondary school including uniforms)

\$450 (6 years of secondary school)

other _____

Benches:

Bench for school \$40 (*specify no. of benches*) _____

Thank you in advance for your support!

Please send to:

**McClain Ministries
1050 Ridgeside Drive
Brandon, Ms 39042**

4th QUARTER PRAYER MONTHS

October – November – December
“Dedicated Prayer Time”

McClain Ministries has decided to continue our dedicated prayer time into the 4th quarter. For the months of **October, November and December** we will continue to turn up the prayer volume.

Here are the instructions for our designated prayer time once again; we will start with the Covenant Prayer and Declaration . . . this prayer is done each morning **before starting your day**. Second, we will all pray the Hedge of Protection prayer **at noon** each day. And third we will post our angels around our beds **each night** and ask God to give us Divine Revelation regarding our destinies.

When you pray the "Hedge of Protection" prayer use the pronouns of "we" & "us" . . . I am so excited about the subsequent praise reports that will continue to manifest as a result of the time we assemble together this quarter. So spread the word the "Jubilee" has come!

A COVENANT PRAYER AND DECLARATION

PRAYER-HEDGE OF PROTECTION

CHRISTIAN WORD MINISTRIES-FREE PRAYER BOOKS

Many of the prayers we designate during the 4th Quarter will come from the **FREE PRAYER BOOK** distributed by Christian Word Ministries. I encourage you to check out their website and order the prayer book. I suggest you order two (2); One to keep and one to share. The book includes prayers on a number of powerful subjects. Please use the link below to place your order today:

CHRISTIAN WORD MINISTRIES-FREE PRAYER BOOKS

You can also find the entire PRAYER BOOK online and ready to print:

http://www.christianword.org/php/default.php?page_id=dp

You can also call to order your FREE PRAYER BOOK:
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McClain Ministries National Bulletin Board

Entrepreneur Party

October 2007



McClain Ministries 1050 Ridgeside Drive, Brandon, MS 39042



McCLAIN MINISTRIES



Deuteronomy 16:17: Every man shall give as he is able according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee.

This Ministry has been such a blessing to me I want to share in reaching others with a **monthly gift** of:

\$30 \$40 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

Enclosed is my ministry **additional financial donation** of: \$ _____

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

Home Number _____

Work Number _____

Fax Number _____

Email _____

Please send to:

McClain Ministries
1050 Ridgeside Drive
Brandon, Ms 39042

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Fill in the information below and mail using the self addressed envelope enclosed.

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