

CHRISTIAN FINANCE SERIES

PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD

How can we be partners with God, whether we are in the ministry or in the secular world? So let begin in the book of Numbers chapter 18. Last week we said that not only the tithes went to the Levites, the offering also went to the Levites. In fact everything went to the Levites. The Old Testament Jews do not divide between offerings and tithes.

Numbers 18:8 *And the Lord spoke to Aaron: "Here, I Myself have also given you charge of my heave offerings. It was the offering and not the tithe that He gave onto them. Then verse 21 Behold I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting.*

We have seen last week how it is more important not to say, "Since I am a Levite, I should receive the tithes of the people." But it is more important to see why the tithes went to the Levites than it is to see who gets the tithes. Not all Levites work in the tabernacle. Those who teach that offerings go to the building fund and tithes go to the Levites will confuse the issue. Not all Levites get all the tithes, but only those that function in the work of the tabernacle. The other Levites who dwell in their own cities and have their own common land around the cities were not entitled to receive the tithes. They already had an inheritance. They were scattered throughout the whole of Israel in cities. So it is more important to know why some Levites get to receive the tithes – because of their work in the tabernacle of meeting.

And that is the principle we bring over into the New Testament. In verse 21 *Behold I have given the children of Levi all the tithes of Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting.* So it is just not any Levites, but only the Levites who perform the work. Now that you can bring over in the New Testament in the new covenant where we see that even though we are all Levites, not all of us do the work of God. In proportion to the amount of work that we do in God's kingdom and ministry is the proportion that God will move the support for us.

Partnership with God Through Tributes

Then we turn over to Numbers 31. After the Israelites went forth to conquer their opposition that came against them to destroy them, they had spoils from the war, gold, silver, cattle etc. Do you know that God doesn't put all these details inside the Bible to fill up space? There is a reason for every chapter and verse. Numbers 31:25-27 *Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "Count up the plunder that was taken - of men and beast - you and Eleazar the priest and the chief fathers of the congregation and divide the plunder into two parts, between those who took part in the war, who went out to battle, and all the congregation.*

Remember here has nothing to do with the Levitical priesthood. In the Old Testament way in which when they went out to war, they divide the spoil. How was the spoil divided?

Numbers 31:28 *And levy a tribute for the Lord on the men of war who went out to battle: one of every five hundred of the persons, the cattle, the donkeys and the sheep.*

First God put a tax on the spoil. It was not the tithe. It was above the tithe. It was not an offering. God called it a tribute. And this is where we call it a partnership with God, where God was the one who helped them in the war. And God demands

a tribute from the men of war as an offering to Him in order to make them recognize that He is the source of their strength. He is the one who brought them the victory, not their own strength.

You can apply that to the working world in business that when you succeed you either take credit for yourself or you come back and give God the honor, the glory for what He has brought through in your life. So in war as in business, in any aspect of your life or in ministry, whenever you succeed you come back and give God the honor, the glory and the worship. Part of doing that is offering a tribute to Him. When we say we give tribute to God today we mean singing praises to Him. But it would involve an offering in the Old Testament time and in the New Testament too.

So God lays a tribute one out of five hundred. That is 0.2% that God levy on the Israelites. It is called a tribute. This tribute they were supposed to take and bring it into the tabernacle and half of the tribute was to go to Eleazar the priest as a gift offering. Numbers 31: 29 *Take it from their half, and give it to Eleazar the priest as a heave offering to the Lord.*

A tribute is an offering. It is not a tithe. This is an offering onto God. There are some offerings that God demands from them. We thought only tithes in the Old Testament were compulsory. You read carefully in the bible that an offering is also compulsory. You remember all those sacrifices where God said you must perform. Why did God ask them to offer these tributes? Because every time they offer these tributes, they acknowledge God. You are saying to God, "Lord, You are the one who helped us. It was not our wisdom or ability that secured this victory. You are the one who enabled us. You were the source of our strength. You were the source of our ability." God wants us to acknowledge it all the time. Every success they had they had to bring it to God and say, "You are the one who succeeded." So the tribute was an offering.

Verse 30 *And from the children of Israel's half, you shall take one of every fifty, drawn from the persons, the cattle, the donkeys, the sheep and from all the livestock, and give them to the*

Levites who keep charge of the tabernacle of the Lord. For those who didn't go out to war, the tribute demanded from them is higher, one out of every fifty. They also had the spoil. When the spoil came to them, God taxed them in a certain sense a tribute of 2%. That was a compulsory offering. And there were certain compulsory offering like the offering for the firstborn.

Notice that in all these offerings gold and silver is not mentioned. When God talks in term of tithes and offerings most of the time He talks only of the increase and the produce of the land and their livestock and the spoil, as in Numbers 31:50 *Therefore we have brought an offering for the Lord, what every man found of ornaments of gold: armlets, bracelets and signets rings and earrings and necklaces to make atonement for ourselves before the Lord.* They brought all the gold and silver to the Lord because they were obtained from among the first few battles that they fought in Moses' time. They brought them as an offering. They said to make atonement for themselves because they have sinned against God. And they reckoned that all these things belonged to God.

Notice that the silver and gold were classified under offering. In our case today it would have been classified under tithes since today we take the principle of the tithe and apply it to every area. In those days there are principles of tithing that apply to the increase of the land, the increase of the cattle. These were principles of the firstfruits that apply to the first spoil and the conquest that they made. And the firstfruits apply also to a new harvest that comes in. Then there is certain compulsory offering that was applicable to them such as the animals they were supposed to bring in. Remember we do not follow the religious ceremony. We draw the principles behind their tithing out of their culture and ceremonial laws in their time and see how these principles of tithing apply in the New Testament. Then we draw out principles behind the law of offering and see how these principles also apply in the New Testament. We do not follow a method. You can follow a method and not know what the principle is. So we discover what is the principle and draw out a new method of sacrificing onto God, of moving in the things of God.

So in those days silver and gold were not mentioned as a tithe. They were mentioned as an offering. Now principle-wise in the New Testament not many of

us rear cattle. Not many plant rice fields. We are not so much an agricultural society. We are based on a different set-up. So we need to draw the Old Testament principles of tithing and offering and firstfruits out and see how they apply in today's times. Your cattle today is different. Your harvest is different. So we had to take those Old Testament principles and apply them differently today. We cannot go round and say God talks about silver and gold. Even today's money is not even silver and gold. Today's money is paper and ink. We take the principle and see how it applies today. So today our cattle, our land and our increase that we have would apply to our remuneration. That is the earning that we have. Today's commodity is all based on dollars and cents. So that is how we bring the principle of tithing into this realm and see how it applies in all these areas where in the Old Testament it did not apply.

That is why I have been showing you last week that it is wrong for us to say that all the silver and gold that came into the temple and the tabernacle were only the offerings. It was actually a part of the tithe in our present day's terminology. For them in the Old Testament it was partly firstfruits, tribute and offering. It was all a mixture. But for us we have divided it in a different sense. Now the law of tribute we are going to see how it applies in the New Testament sense. There are many forms of worshiping God with their increase and their tithe and all their property. In those days firstfruits and tribute were related together. They are related on the principle of what I call partnership with God.

In the New Testament you do not find this principle of accepting tithes emphasized by Paul as that would make him say, "I demand all the tithes." Lets look at 1 Cor. 9 Remember, the Levites were given the tithe because of the work of the tabernacle that they were involved in. And in the same manner today these tithes and offerings that Paul refer to generally. We have seen how that the word offering was a very general word used in the Old Testament and where you find that God talks about the offering of tithe.

I Cor.9: 1 Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others yet I am doubtless to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. Paul was answering a question

from those who accused him to be a false apostle and those who accused him of having received offerings and probably tithes from the church of God.

He continues in verse 2-5, *“My defense to those who examined me is this: Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles and Cephas?”* (So he talks about their right in the ministry.)

Verses 6-10, *“Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? Whoever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruits? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.” Is it the oxen the God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes?”*

So Paul is using scriptures from the Old Testament law. Paul is an expert on the law. He was brought up under Gamaliel the best teacher in town. And they know all these things. The principle in the New Testament he brought out was that you should not muzzle the ox. So that is why I say that there are some ministries going around saying they do not have sufficient money because people are holding back their tithes. I think they have to examine themselves. What I believe is that they are not practicing all the laws of prosperity since you only receive based on what you give. The bible says in Acts 20 It is more blessed to give than to receive. The reason is all our receiving is based on our giving. If you think people can receive without giving, then you are fooling yourselves. You are just like that unfaithful servant who hid the talent and told the master that came back, “You reap where you don’t sow.” That is no such thing at all. You only receive what you have given because receiving is based on giving.

Then Paul talks about how the ministry is supported. He talks about the ox. I have always wondered why Paul compared the ministry to an ox. God says don’t muzzle the ox. Don’t prevent the ox from eating. So God says release the mouth of the oxen when it is hungry. Let the oxen eat as he wants to while he is treading the grain. He says that is compared to the ministry. And this is the application to all

the five-fold ministry, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Here is the principle where we bring forth from the Old Testament. According to the work of the tabernacle. According to the measure of their work. According to the measure of their ministry, which is also according to the measure of the grace. That's how it is based in the new covenant.

In verse 10-12 *For our sake no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be a partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual thing for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things. If others are partaker of this right over you, are we not even more?* Verse 13 he is referring back to the Old Testament: *Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?* The words *offerings of the altar* are not mentioned in the Greek. That is why they are in italics in the New King James version. Now *partake of the altar* means that they partake of both the tithes and the offerings.

So here again we see that in the ministry of God they do not separate the tithe from the offering. They put everything as all on the altar of God in the Temple in those days. All the tithes that came in go for the work of the tabernacle. All the offerings also went into the ministry of God. In the bible time in the book of Acts they don't have a church building like we do. And ministries do not rent offices like ministries do today. Ministries do not get registered with the Roman Government and pay their registration fees like ministries today. So you must see clearly that the building and all that goes with the ministries like renting of offices and printing of magazines today is supposed to be part and parcel of a person's ministry and work. Just like you can separate a person from a book and say they are two different entities. But the book is from that person. And that person produced the book. They are still related. If the book ministry increases, the person's personal ministry also increases. You do not separate the two. So those who teach that the tithes just go to the personal expenses of the ministers and the offerings go to the building fund are fooling themselves. This is because in the bible the offerings also went to the Levites' personal expenses and their personal daily food. Remember in the Old Testament they eat of the offerings.

So the principle is not taught clearly. How then is it applied today? See in the

ministry the renting of the office, the publication and tape ministry and all these things that go along must come from that person's personal expenses. They are not supposed to take everything and say all these tithes are not to be used for these offices and are just for the minister's personal expenses whereas offerings go into the ministry expenses. They cannot divide it that way. For example, an evangelist may receive some tithes and some offerings. And the evangelist is supposed to pay for the office expenses and other ministerial expenses. See there is no separation at all. It is part and parcel of their ministry.

1 Tim.5:17-18 *Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who minister in the word and doctrine. For the scripture say, you shall not muzzle an ox while it tread out the grain and the laborer is worthy of its wages.* He didn't mention tithe and offering. He just lumped it all together. But he brought forth the principle that according to the measure of the work that a person performed in the work and ministry of God according to that measure they are supposed to be blessed.

In 1 Tim.5:17-18 here the word elders in those days refers to the pastoral ministry. They are in fulltime ministry. So we have shown how in 1 Cor.9 Paul himself as an apostle used the same principle. So I have given you enough scriptures to see that from apostle to pastor, the principle of their support is based on: *you shall not muzzle the ox.* The principle of their support is not based on whether they are Levites and the other Christians are not Levites. We have shown how in the book of Revelations the bible says we are all kings and priests. So the measurement of their upkeep and support is according to the work they have done.

Now another question is asked too. What about those who are in the secular work and who do part ministry? Do they receive the tithes too? Here the bible says that those who minister the word and doctrine are to receive double honor. That means that there is a priority for those who are in the five-fold over those who are in the ministry of helps. If you pray about it and check your inward witness and check with the Holy Spirit, you will find that this is the more balanced principle. Otherwise the whole set up of the ministry today all over the world would be up side down. These are the principles that you can base for the five-fold ministry.

According to the measure of the work in the ministry of God. And your measure of work is not according to your strength but according to the grace you receive from God to perform the work. So again it comes back to grace. The amount of grace you function in.

We have emphasized that those who have the wrong teaching of tithes go round looking to people for their tithes instead of looking to God. Every time they have a need in their ministry, they say somebody is holding back their tithe. Every time you have a need this is what you must do. Paul says in 1 Cor.9 as they sow spiritually, they reap materially. So the principle of harvesting is you must give forth of your ministry. In proportion to the ministry you give out God is going to make sure you will be paid your wages. The bible says you are on God's payroll. It is in proportion to the amount of spiritual work you do in the ministry. The more you do, I can assure you God is not a respecter of person, if you obey His word He will bring back blessings to you. If the elders in the church minister in Word and doctrine they are worthy of double honor. So you have to be faithful in the Word and in doctrine and in prayer in the ministry of God. Then God will cause you to have a harvest back. That is the principle of God. So those who are starting off in the ministry would have to establish themselves in their ministry of the Word and doctrine. So as they start off with a little bit of the Word and doctrine, they would have a little bit of material blessing coming in. But as they do more, they will have more coming in. And so there will be a point of time where they could do so much ministry work that they could leave their secular jobs and go into fulltime ministry.

But that is where some people think that they can just resign their jobs and just go into full time ministry and say they are Levites now. Then they expect the tithes to come to them. You see what happens in this kind of unbalanced teaching? It causes some people to resign from their jobs, claiming to be Levites and then expecting to receive all the tithes. And the people who bring all the tithes to them will not be blessed. They won't receive the law of reciprocal return on the blessings they have sacrificially given. Not every one who resigns a job and does some ministry is having a ministry. See the ministry to the Body of Christ must make demands on your life. That means there is a demand made on your ministry so that you just have to give yourself fully into that. Sometimes some people resign from their jobs and come into the ministry and say, "I have got nothing to do."

If you have a call of God, you will come out and you will know what to do. If you are not sure what to do, then don't come out yet. Don't go into a ministry yet. When you get into ministry, remember you have to fight in the forefront. You don't go to the battle front take your weapon and the devil is hammering you, and you ask, "What shall I do?" You better get back into the rank where you are protected to a certain extent. And figure it out what you shall do before you go into battlefield. That's exactly what happens when people get shot down. And the so-called ministers get upheavals in their ministries and they go back to their secular work because they could not produce results in their ministry. They have not established in the ministry of the Word and doctrine. Establish yourself first. When you give forth yourself to the Word and doctrine, God will bring it back to you. For example, let's say I am publishing a book. The book is part of me and I am part of the book. What I would receive I would have to sacrificially put into a book. See I am sowing into the Word. Then when the Word goes out, I would expect a return based on the printed word, as it is through the spoken word. But I cannot make demands for people's tithes and say that this is supposed to be for the expenses of publishing this book. You cannot divide your personal expenses and your ministry expenses. You are one person and all the paraphernalia of your office, your books and your ministry are a part of you. They come from your personal life and ministry.

Partnership with God Through Firstfruits

Having clarified that, we want to go on to show how to be a partner with God both in the ministry and in business. And it is based on the principle of the firstfruits. Lets talk about those in the ministry first. God demands that you be in partnership with God. Your ministry came from God. You must learn how to be a partner with God not only in prayer but also with all your total resources and finances.

Joshua 7 shows the consequences of the sin of Achan. Joshua 6:24 *But they burned the city and all that is in it with fire. Only the silver and gold and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord.* So the first city they conquered all the silver and gold were supposed to come into God's treasure house. The

firstfruits is not the tithe. The firstfruits is the first of their partnership with God for them in that time in battle. So it is applicable to those in the ministry and those in the secular world. They were going out to war. And God is their partner. Remember Joshua saw the angel. See God was helping them all the time. God could have done it Himself. But He chose to do it through man. They could not do it themselves. So they needed God, it was the partnership where they went forth to conquer and bring forth the fulfillment of the Word of God. And God said the firstfruits is mine. That is called the firstfruits.

Let me illustrate if they had conquered about 100 cities in their time of warfare. The first city they conquered only is the firstfruits. That would have been 1%. It cannot be tithe. The word tithe in Hebrew and Greek means one tenth. The word tenth itself means tithe and the word tithe means tenth both in Hebrew and Greek. So it would not have been a tenth. If they conquered 100 cities the firstfruits would be the first city they would only have to give to God. But of the remaining 99 cities they would have to give the tithe. So the firstfruits are different from the tithe. The giving of the firstfruits is acknowledging partnership with God, where God says, "Since I did it with you, you must acknowledge that I am the One who helped you by bringing it all back to me."

But Achan in Joshua 7 was greedy. He saw the silver and gold and kept part of the firstfruits. And as a result in the next battle the Israelites went out to, they could not succeed. Part of the camp of Israel, namely Achan, held back part of the firstfruits and consequently didn't acknowledge God as partner.

When we first registered our first work called the Alleluia Christian Mission, the firstfruits and the first offering that came in amounted to \$1,000.00. We took the firstfruits and we gave it all away. See by doing that we acknowledge God as our partner. It's the offering of the firstfruits onto God. The rest of the time I personally covenanted with the Lord that a certain percentage of the gross that comes in will go to Him. That maintains my partnership with God in my ministry. He is my senior partner and I am the junior partner. He is the major shareholder. I am just one of the tiny board member of God's company. If you want God to come into your ministry, or into your company business, you have to somehow organize a partnership with God. Then you will bring all of God's resources to bear upon your

ministry or business. Who doesn't want God to be his or her partner? He has unlimited resources, unlimited wisdom. He has unlimited ability. He has unlimited servants of angels. Do you know that many people exclude God from being partner in their lives because they don't have a personal partnership plan with God? There are two forms of partnership, individual with God and individual with individual.

Then in Joshua 8 God tells them in return. After the fall of Ai in verse 27 *Only the livestock and the spoil of the city, Israel took as booty according to the word of the Lord which He commanded Joshua.* So from the second city onwards all the booty was theirs. It was only in the first city Jericho that God claimed all the booty. Now from Ai onwards the second city the booty was theirs. Achan got it all mixed up, grabbed some of the firstfruits for himself and as a result the Jews didn't have any blessings in their next battle. They didn't learn the law of the firstfruits.

Leviticus 23 Something that God said on the firstfruits. Verses 9 - 12, *And the Lord spoke to Moses saying, "Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: "When you come into the land which I give to you and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. (In other words they were supposed to bring the first stock that ripens. They have to do it every year and every harvest and bring it to the priest.) He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted on your behalf. On the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the Lord.*

They had to bring some offerings. For them it was a lamb but for us it would have been finances. The Jews offered a male lamb of the first year without defect as a burnt offering to the Lord. The burnt offering is also to atone for their sins. See it is recognition that says, "God you did it, not me." When God helps you to do something, you and God are in partnership. You must acknowledge it, not once but every time over and over again.

If God uses you in the healing ministry, every time you finish the service you get

back into your prayer closet. You bow down before God and make an offering to Him. Making an offering doesn't mean sacrificing a lamb. For you today it means your praise and worship. Giving Him your time and your songs and singing it from your heart. So that is bringing the law of the firstfruits into your life, an acknowledgement unto God.

Leviticus 23 verse 13 Its grain offering shall be two-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the Lord, for a sweet aroma; and its drink offering shall be of wine, one-fourth of a hin. Verse 15 And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf or the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed.

Count fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath, then you shall offer a new grain offering to the Lord. See they have to bring a grain offering after the firstfruits offering. That means the harvest. After they brought the first sheaf, the first ripened grain as the firstfruits, that is the symbol of the rest that is coming. They bring an offering of a lamb and they sacrifice it to God. That's acknowledging God thank you for the harvest that's coming. They only see one sheaf but they give it onto God. When you begin your ministry your first offering could be \$20.00. But you are so excited you bring it like a first sheaf to God. Or when you are in business your first deal could be \$1,000.00 and you are so excited you bring it back before God. It's acknowledging that God and you are partners. And you are excited because that is only the first sheaf and there is more to come, and God is going to protect all the rest that is coming in. The devil is not going to steal it from you because in advance, in anticipation, in expectation of what is to come you are bringing an offering to God. This is not a tithe yet. It is just the firstfruits offering. And after 50 days they probably got all the harvest in. They bring a new grain offering. And also they would have to bring their tithe of their grain.

Verse 18 And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year without blemish, one young bull and two rams. They shall be as a burnt offering to the Lord with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for sweet aroma to the Lord. What happen when those lambs and bulls get killed? Blood is shed. Remember the reason for bloodshed. When blood is shed it is a symbol of the covering of the blood on their lives. Remember anything you do in God it is possible because of the

Blood of the Lamb of God Jesus Christ. And whatever happens in your life, in your ministry is not because of who you are or what you have done or your great wisdom. When you come back onto God you must come back on the Blood. There is power in the Blood. I stand in the realm of the Blood because the Blood of Jesus means my sins are cleansed and His righteousness is on my life. Every time God has worked in your ministry or your business, you are coming back to God and saying thank you Jesus it is you. Thank you Jesus for what you have done. It was your grace that has made me rich. Thank you Jesus it is through your Blood that I have been made righteousness of God. You are acknowledging over and over again.

God says in Lev.23: 14 *It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.* Remember God sometimes called it a testimony. God call it the word. God calls it a commandment. A statute is an ordained ceremonial act whereas a commandment could cover the principles behind the act. For example, today we have statutes too. James 5 says that if anyone is sick, let the elders from the church take oil and anoint them with oil in the name of Jesus. That is a statute. Mk.16 tells us they shall lay hands on the sick. Laying hands is a method. It is a methodology. But behind the method is the principle. And the principle is the power in the name of Jesus. And behind the method is the commandment. That is in the Name of Jesus. So this is an ordained statute.

God says it shall be a statute for you throughout all generations. Every time they had a harvest, every time they had an increase it is a statute for them to give the firstfruits on to their harvest. That is the principle of the firstfruits.

Prov. 3:9 *Honor the Lord with your possession, with the firstfruits of all your increase.* When proverbs says honor the Lord with your possession, in the first line he is talking about your tithe. The second line is your firstfruits, *and with the firstfruits of your increase.* Every time you increase, every time you prosper whether it be in the ministry or in business, you must in some way come and acknowledge God. It may not only be a financial offering for you but you must give Him a lamb, seven lambs after 50 days. What does he means? You must give Him worship and praise. What is your offering and sacrifices today? Your worship. Remember Heb.13: 15 says

Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. Bless God that we don't have to bring animals any more. But many people are not even bringing the fruit of their lips. Do it for it is demanded of you so that God could bless you more.

What happens when you have done something for God like conducting a healing service? Many people just head for the nearest or best restaurants and have a good feed. But they don't come back to God and acknowledge that He was the one who helped them. It is better to come down and bow before God and give Him an offering of praise and worship. It is the sacrifice of your lamb. And for 50 days just keep praising and worshipping God, acknowledging that the anointing, the healing, the miracles, the drawing of people to the salvation calls and everything else came from Him. It may also involve giving of your finances. But it may not necessarily be. You have to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. We can only give you the general principles. You apply them as the Spirit of God gives you leading and wisdom. It may just require of you to bring an offering of praise and worship. But if you want God to be continually in partnership with you, you must have a partnership plan with Him.

My partnership and personal covenant with God is that I take 20% of the gross that comes into the ministry and give it all to God. In doing that God becomes a partner with me. And our church gives the tithes raised during meetings to other ministries. So we bring God into partnership. If you are in business and you give God the net salary and not your gross salary, then God is not a partner with you in your business. God is only a partner with you in your family life but if you haven't allowed God to step into your company's board of directors. You have to take from the gross salary (before deducting for expenses) and then God becomes our partner. You determine according to your faith level. You could start from 10% of the gross and slowly move to 20, 30 and 40%. The purpose of money is so that you could use it to bless others and have your reward in heaven and on earth. In this way you can reap God's partnership whether in business or in your ministry. Determine it in your heart how you apply this principle.

Some people are very haphazard. They give to a ministry when that ministry comes along. But when another ministry comes along, they take the same offering

from their gross and give it to that second ministry. Then after sometime another ministry comes and they give to that third ministry. They are very haphazard with their giving. Those ministries that I entered into partnership with, they can become assured of my being one with them in spirit, my being one with in prayer and my being one with them in finances. Sometimes other ministries come along I do give to them also. That is above my partnership plan with God. It would not be fair for me to pull out from some ministries that I have been giving to. If I give it to ministries here and there without any planned purpose or partnership, then I am giving based on my whims and fancy.

Phil. 4 The Greek word for *share* is the Greek word *partner*. Phil.4: 15 *And you Philippians yourself will know that in the early days of the gospel ministry, when I left Macedonia, no church entered into partnership with me and opened up a debit and credit account in giving and receiving except you only.* So Paul talks about the Macedonian churches entering into partnership with God and then they entered into partnership with Paul's ministry. In other words it was a constant giving to his ministry that they entered into partnership with God.

It is important for us to note that the partnership plan with God comes from the firstfruits plan that God ordained. Your firstfruits may come in every month when there is an increase in your salary or earnings. In some countries wages are paid monthly, but in others weekly. You cannot afford to be haphazard in your giving. You cannot get a good return on your giving if you do not observe the laws of God and are haphazard. Many people are very haphazard. Their tithes and offerings are not entering regularly to the ministry. If you have been giving regularly to this church or this ministry, then you would have been very planned. Some people go church hopping or hopping from meetings to meetings according to their whims and fancy. Whenever an appeal is made, their tithes go there. These haphazard givers are always in financial need. They don't know why they never had a return on their giving. You know why? God is not a partner with them. Neither are they receiving any return for being a partner of another ministry. Notice it is a partnership in receiving and giving. You cannot give without receiving.

Did the Macedonian Christians receive from Paul? The only thing they received

from Paul was the ministry of the Word. Guess whom did they receive from? The Lord. Because Paul says in verse 19 *My God shall supply all your needs*. When they became a partner with Paul, Paul declared a blessing on them that God can supply back to them. They are giving here to Paul and receiving the return from God. It's a partnership program of giving and receiving. You have to pray before you enter into all these partnerships. God will say these are the ministries and works that I would like you to move into partnership with Me. Then you just flow along with God.