

**Word Notes Sunday 09/11/14**  
**Simon Matthews – Living a giving life – echoing the heart of God**

**Summary** (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

**Key Texts: John 3:16, Luke 18:19-23, Luke 6:37-38, Malachi 3:8-12**

Christians have different views on money, from living in poverty as nuns for example, at the other end multimillionaires, sometimes people say that to be spiritual is to be poor others say it's to be rich. Most of us are somewhere in between. The story of the rich young ruler in Luke 18 is not a rule for everyone but a principle that we will be willing to give all to God then be stewards of all our resources to use or give away for Him as required. Although we may major on money, the principle also applies to time and talents. We should answer in our heart "is Jesus lord of all of my resources"?

God loves us and wants to prosper us (Luke 6:37-38) but beware of prosperity teaching that says give away so that you can get. On the other hand some of us are better at giving than receiving, be ready to receive the blessings of God, don't be too proud, and don't hold back from sharing how things are with you. Have balance in your life and be careful not to go off on one extreme or the other! We live a fine balance of sacrifice and blessing. All are called to live sacrificially but not all are called to live poor. All are called to prosper but not all are called to live rich

**God provides:**

1. Through our hard work (God doesn't bless laziness). If not employed do voluntary work. When we are engaged in practical service God can both use us and provide.
2. Through wise investments – making wise decisions about our money time & talents too.
3. Through supernatural provision, God can supply what we need.

**Giving to God:**

Beware of robbing God. In Malachi 3:8 God rebukes a nation because of withholding tithes and offerings. Try me now says God – a direct challenge to us to test God must show us he wants to bless us. How much do we give, should our tithe be a set % or as led by the Spirit, before or after tax, to a local church or elsewhere?

Some argue 10% is Old Testament so do we need to do it? Well, we don't murder and that is Old Testament! Jesus fulfils the law by calling us to something greater (where anger is as bad as actual murder – Matt 25:21,22). In this new life our desire should be to give more than 10%, the principle is "as much as I can for God".

How do we work that out, pre or post tax? Well who comes first in our lives, God or the taxman? Note that we live in a complicated world and process of being paid these days is not always simple, even so the principle is honour God and put Him first.

Should tithes go to our local church? That is your spiritual storehouse, where God calls us to give so that we might be blessed, indeed so that the "nation" (the family of God?) might be blessed.

As for offerings, these are giving beyond where we tithe eg to missionaries. Always seek to bless where we can.

There are challenges to giving, for example "I'd love to give to God but I can't, I am in so much debt". Silly to add to debt, but over the years I have seen people come out of debt and continue to give. Also seen people who just get further into debt. This is between you and God how you respond to God but if you can't afford to give, start somewhere and watch to see what God can do.

**Application** (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

Share times when God has provided directly for you. Did you feel encouraged, embarrassed blessed? Did it change your attitude towards receiving and giving?

Are there testimonies of how attitudes to giving was challenged or changed, how God lived up to is promise to "try Him"?

Does anyone feel they are burdened with poverty or living under a curse, is life “just an endless bucket” into which your money pours? Share and pray.

**Witness** (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

What giving project can the cell get involved in to bless others – local, national or abroad? Perhaps you might start some regular giving or set up a way to help people practically or with your time.