

Articles and Sermons :: Running the Business of Life within Heaven's Economy by Steve Gallagher

Running the Business of Life within Heaven's Economy by Steve Gallagher - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2012/12/1

“How can I find time to put God first?”

Most of the first 17 years of Pure Life Ministries were what I would characterize as a time of “happy bedlam.” All went fairly well until the year 2000, when the ministry began to explode and it seemed as though we suddenly found that our “mom-and-pop” managerial style was constantly leaving us “behind the 8-ball.” In other words, rather than being proactive in our decision-making, we continuously found ourselves in situations that required a reaction.

It was in 2003 that Tom Blangiardo brought his years of business experience into play as our new administrator. How ill-prepared we were for the agonies we would face once he began implementing systems and controls into the business end of the ministry. Yet, as difficult as that transition period was, I am convinced that the new disciplined work environment he established has allowed us to accomplish far more for the Kingdom of God during the few years than we ever could have under the ragtag style of those early years.

What Pure Life experienced as a growing ministry is very comparable to the typical new believer's life who has spent his entire life “flying by the seat of his pants.” Now he finds himself under the governorship of a new Administrator intent on introducing “systems and controls” into his life. In fact, he soon discovers that the Lord is now holding him accountable for the two most precious commodities he possesses—Time and Money. Not only will he be required to establish and adhere to a “budget,” but he also will be expected to “redeem his time.”

Most new believers learn quickly that they must give of their income. It seems that every time they turn around they are hearing some teaching about the crucial role donations plays in the Christian life. Those who resist this commandment soon find themselves buried under a rash of unexpected expenses such as car problems, doctor visits and so on. In spite of the fact that these unwanted difficulties only exacerbate their finances, they find the demand to give remains steadfast. “But I can't afford to tithe!” they often exclaim. “Yes, but I will make sure that you cannot afford NOT to tithe,” is the answer they hear from Heaven. All but the most rebellious quickly fall in line and soon discover the blessings of financial obedience. (Malachi 3:10)

The need to give of one's time is a lesson that isn't typically learned so quickly. People are generally more willing to donate money than time because, as painful as it can be to give of one's finances, the cost of giving oneself can seem even more painful. Someone rightly summed up this dilemma when he said, “Time is the substance of life. When anyone asks you to give your time, they're really asking for a chunk of your life.”

The most important time a believer can give to the Lord is in prayer. Of course, spending time in prayer, worship and the Word of God is not desirable to the flesh. It requires discipline to establish such a habit—the same kind of discipline a growing business must establish if it is ever to become a legitimate enterprise.

In the same way the Lord insists upon giving, He is also adamant that His children spend time with Him. He understands far better than we that no relationship can survive without ongoing communication and intimacy. It simply doesn't matter how much is on a person's plate. The Lord expects him to begin his day with a time of meaningful prayer and Bible study. If the person will persist in this new discipline, he will eventually discover this new habit has become effortless and even enjoyable. Not everyone is quick to learn this lesson, however.

The Jewish exiles who returned to Jerusalem from Babylon were taught a similar moral when they ignored their commission to rebuild the Temple. They couldn't understand why everything was going wrong in life. It was the prophet Haggai who introduced them to Heaven's economy: “You have sown much, but harvest little; you eat, but there is not enough to be satisfied; you drink, but there is not enough to become drunk; you put on clothing, but no one is warm enough; and he who earns, earns wages to put into a purse with holes... You look for much, but behold, it comes to little.” (Haggai 1:6-9) In other words, because they put their personal interests before God's directive, a divine curse was looming over their lives.

In the same way that the Jewish people faced constant frustration, so too will the believer who attempts to sidestep the economy of Heaven. A.W. Tozer put it this way: “The Christian who is satisfied to give God His ‘minute’ and to have

'a little talk with Jesus' is the same one who shows up at the evangelistic service weeping over his retarded spiritual growth and begging the evangelist to show him the way out of his difficulty."

The truth of the matter is that God loves us too much to allow slothfulness to thwart the precious relationship He desires to enjoy with us. If we won't willingly seek His face, He will allow the barrenness of a carnal life to drive us to His throne in search of help.

Tithing one's finances and giving God the firstfruits of one's time both represent what it means to live by faith. What is faith if it isn't obeying Him in the face of our capricious feelings and challenging circumstances? To "live by faith" means that God's presence, God's will, and God's promised blessings and threatened curses all loom larger in a person's thinking than the bills and activities of earth life.

Of course, any heathen can donate some time and money when there is plenty to go around, but it is a sign of a righteous life when a believer takes a stand for his life with God even when it requires sacrifice.

The ultimate question each of us must face is who we are going to live for. If we consecrate our time to God, He will prove Himself faithful to bless our resources and make the business of our personal lives one of bounding success! But if we claim to be Christians and yet are intent upon spend our time living for Self, Heaven's economy will demand that our lives are unfruitful and unrewarding.

Are you one of those Christians who simply are too busy to maintain a vibrant devotional life with God? Then I think I can assure you that the only thing you are likely to hear from Heaven will be, "Yes, but I will make sure that you cannot afford NOT to spend time with Me."

from: <http://www.eternalweight.com/running-the-business-of-life-within-heavens-economy>

Re: Running the Business of Life within Heaven's Economy by Steve Gallagher - posted by murrcolr (), on: 2012/12/2

Quote: The ultimate question each of us must face is who we are going to live for. If we consecrate our time to God, He will prove Himself faithful to bless our resources and make the business of our personal lives one of bounding success! But if we claim to be Christians and yet are intent upon spend our time living for Self, Heaven's economy will demand that our lives are unfruitful and unrewarding.

I don't think he goes deep enough, in that it's not only our time we need to "consecrate" I think it should be our whole being self if you like that should be "consecrated" to God...