

# THE KEYS TO LIVING ABUNDANTLY

## Part 1-Giving and Receiving

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*So in the 1800s, there were these two guys who were broke and kind of really down on their luck. And they heard that they could get a lot of money with wolf pelts. And so determined to become rich, they went wolf hunting, spending 16 to 18 hours a day tracking and searching and sitting there waiting ... hunting for these wolves. And in five days, they did not even see one.*

*And so they went to bed that night feeling a little bit discouraged and disheartened. And the next morning, the one guy -- Sam -- he woke up early, and his eyes opened really wide as he saw 60 or 70 wolves entirely circling them with their teeth showing. And in shock, he leaned over and reached to his partner, Ned.*

*And he said, "Ned, wake up! We're rich! We're rich!"*

[Laughs with congregation] I like that joke, not because it's funny, but because you think about the perspective that he had when he looked out at what was before them. And it begs the question for all of us: When you look at the landscape of your life, what do you see? Do you see abundance and opportunity? Do you see hope and possibilities? Or do you see lack and limitation? Do you see frustration? Do you see the world snarling back at you?

And so, what would you need to have in your life for you to wake up and say, "*I'm rich! I'm rich!*"? What would need to be different for you to feel more prosperous? And what would you need to achieve or change to say, "*I am living my abundant life!*"?

Like these two guys, Ned and Sam, we all want something better in our lives. And "better" looks different for all of us. It could be healing and harmony in our family; it could be more love in our relationships. It could be financial abundance; it could be success in our business. It could be feeling greater balance; or health or energy or vitality; more fulfillment. A greater sense of purpose and meaning or a deeper connection with the Living Spirit of God. But whatever it is, every one of us is seeking something greater. Seeking something better. Seeking something deeper.

There are numerous passages in the Bible that say how God provides for us and how abundance is available for us. Here are some of them:

Jesus said he came that we may have life and have it more abundant.

The 23rd Psalm says, "*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.*"

2 Corinthians said, "*God is able to bless you abundantly so that, in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*"

The Book of Jeremiah says, "*For surely I know the plans I have for you,' says the Lord, 'Plans to prosper you, not harm you; plans to give you hope and a future.'*"

Jesus also said, "*It is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom,*" and "*Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.*"

And finally, he said, "*With God all things are possible.*"

To me, these are some pretty big promises of prosperity. And I think they're powerful reminders of the level of abundance and goodness and blessings that are available to all of us.

How many people would say that you believe that these promises are true and available to you? How many people would agree to that? We all would!

You know, there was an interesting experiment that was done. I cite it in my prosperity class. And it was about having fish in this glass fish tank. And they were swimming around everywhere. And then, after a while, they put in a glass partition that cut off two-thirds of it, and the fish were only in the one-third area. And after a few weeks, then they took out the partition. But the fish kept swimming only in that one-third. Even though there was no barrier anymore, they still did not explore and swim all over the tank that was accessible to all of them.

And the truth is: Sometimes we, in our lives, are swimming in the little, limited, smaller area than what we really could that is available to us. Sometimes we live more limited versions of ourselves and our lives and our levels of happiness and success than what we really want and desire. And it's really unfortunate that we limit and restrict ourselves, because we are meant to live life and live it more abundantly.

As true and wonderful as those prosperity principles and promises are, the truth is: They require our participation to work! It takes mental work; it takes spiritual work; it takes spiritual practices to increase the flow and the movement and the abundance of God's blessings in our lives. We are here to live abundantly, but we have got to do the things to make that abundance move and flow in our lives.

So today, we're going to start at two-week series called "The Keys to Living Abundantly."

And the first one is to **DEVELOP A MINDSET OF ABUNDANCE**. Paul Zaiter said:

*"There's a natural law of abundance, which permeates the entire universe, but it will not flow through a doorway of belief in lack and limitation."*

The reality is: We live in abundance. We live in an abundant universe. And I always remind everybody in our prosperity class: There is more air than you can breathe. There is more love than your heart can hold. There are more ideas than your mind can conceive. There are more blessings and opportunities than you could possibly live. There's more sky than you can see; more stars than you can count. I mean, we live in an abundant universe!

And sometimes we don't think that because our mindset believes in lack. Our mindset believes in limitation. Our mindset believes that there is just not enough. And sometimes, even though abundance is natural, we think that lack and limitation is normal, because our minds have been conditioned.

Here are eight things that we condition ourselves with that make it hard for us to live more abundantly.

The first one is **worry**. Man, we worry about everything! We worry about the economy; we worry about the government. We worry about our money, our kids, our problems, our challenges. We worry about everything! You know, the word worry means "to choke off"; we choke off the flow of abundance and peace when we worry.

The second thing is **we tend to focus on what we don't have and what isn't working**. And that really limits our happiness, when our focus is only on what isn't working and what we don't have.

Another one: **we complain**. "Life is so unfair!" "The weather is so hot still!" "Gas prices are so high!" And we affirm lack: "I am always broke." "Things never work out for me." "I always end up on the short end of the stick." "I just can't afford it." And we say it so often -- like we're affirming the lack.

Another one is: **we don't feel worthy**. Sometimes we don't think we're worthy of great success or abundance. Sometimes we're cheap with ourselves, even when we have the money. And it's a sign that we don't think we're deserving of that kind of abundance.

Another one is **fear**. *"I'd better hold on to what I have before I lose it. I'd better hold on tight, because someone might take it."*

Another one: **We have a hard time giving and sharing**. Sometimes we're very protective of our stuff and don't want to give and share. Sometimes we're so stingy, we won't even let someone in in traffic. [Congregation laughs] We just will not share!

And then the last one is -- a sign that we've really blocked off abundance -- is when **we cannot be happy for other people's success**. Because immediately when someone succeeds, *"Oh, their success means I lose ... or that they have and I don't."*

Those are some unfortunate mindsets. But here is the foundation of abundance. And it is this in John 3, Verse 1 and 2. And it says:

*"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in good health, just as your soul prospers."*

What it's saying is: Life prospers when your soul prospers. That the foundation of all prosperity and abundance and goodness is spiritual; the foundation is spiritual, and it is through our own consciousness.

So my question is: How well do you prosper your soul? How well do you feed your spirit and nurture it? How much time do you spend sitting with Spirit? Sitting with God in the silence, seeking God with all your heart? Acknowledging, delighting yourself in God? Immersing yourself in the Mind of God? Listening and being still? Quieting ourselves?

When Scripture says, *"Seek ye first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be added,"* it means: When you fill your mind with the Spirit and presence of God, things will begin to flow easily, and the good you desire will attract.

But when you chase those things without centering in God, that's when life is a struggle. That is when life is difficult. Because as we prosper, we are filled with Spirit that begins to flow things in our lives with ease and grace. And what happens: The more we're filled with Spirit, guess what? The worry falls away. The anxiety and the fear -- they begin to fall away the more we fill we fill our consciousness with the Living Spirit of God.

One thing I think we all realize at some point in our spiritual path is that life is not about conditions; it's about our consciousness. That our consciousness dictates, not the conditions.

Let's go to the example of Jesus with the loaves and fishes. There's a condition of lack; a condition of not enough loaves and not enough fish. Something that could have been difficult. But it was Jesus' consciousness of abundance; that he absolutely knew that everything would work out. He knew there were possibilities and solutions to solve this and move through that situation.

And you know how Jesus built his consciousness of abundance? His God consciousness? It was by consistently praying five times a day. He prayed in the morning; he prayed mid-day; in the afternoon; in the evening; and at night. Consistently. He built up a consciousness of abundance, a mindset of abundance so that -- no matter what the situation was -- he stayed calm. No matter what the situation, he knew that God would have an answer. There were unlimited possibilities of how well that would work out. And there's a situation of lack -- because of his consciousness -- turned out to be positive, inspiring and miraculous.

Amazing things happen. The question is: Are we willing to commit ourselves to consistently keep building our consciousness by tapping into God and praying and meditating on a consistent, regular, daily basis? I mean, it's an important thing!

There's a parable called the Parable of the Talents. Everybody know the Parable of the Talents? The master gives five talents to one of his servants; three to one; and then one. And the first two [servants] double theirs, but the third one hid his, because he was afraid to lose it. And then the parable ends with this line: *"To he who has, more will be given. And they will have an abundance. But to he who has not, even that which they have will be taken away."*

To he who has, more will be given and he'll have abundance. And to he who has not, even that which he has will be taken away. The first time I read that I thought, *"That sounds like the rich get richer and the poor get poorer!"* [Congregation laughs] That doesn't sound right!

But here's what it was talking about. It was saying: To those who have a consciousness of abundance and a consciousness of God, that they will have and they will have an abundance. Their consciousness will attract more good to them. But to those who have a consciousness of lack, and a fear that they will lose, and a mindset that there's never enough, that by the Law of Attraction, they will lose what they have. Does that make sense, everybody?

Okay, the only answer is "Yes," because that is basically all that I have. [Congregation laughs]

My question for you is: If you really want to live a more abundant life, and this is the very foundation and the source of all abundance, how much time a day would you be willing to commit to prospering your soul? Feeding your spirit? And sitting and spending time with God's Spirit, the source of all good? Because I would say that is the foundation and that is the springboard for a better life and a more abundant life if you want to live it.

Our prosperity affirmation for the prosperity class is today's:

*"I live in God's abundance, and God's abundance lives in me."*

Together: [with congregation] *"I live in God's abundance, and God's abundance lives in me."*

Take a deep breath. I want you to say it with even more commitment, but let's go down to a half-voice and just feel it when you say it.

Together: [with congregation] *"I live in God's abundance, and God's abundance lives in me."*

Deep breath. Take it just even quieter; just speak it and affirm it to yourself: *"I live in God's abundance, and God's abundance lives in me."*

The first key to living abundantly is to maintain a mindset of abundance.

The second one is to **BE A CHEERFUL GIVER**. Jesus in Luke 6, Verse 38, says this:

*"Give and it will be given to you: a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over shall be poured into your life. For the measure you give will be the measure you receive."*

Deepak Chopra said, *"The Universe operates through a dynamic exchange ... and it's called giving and receiving."* That is the thing that circulates the flow of abundance in our lives and in our world. And it's our willingness to give and to receive that keeps that abundance flowing in our lives.

I love when Scripture says, *"Give and you will receive."* Not "you might" or "you could," but "you will." And what that's saying is: That is the Law. Giving is a Law. Giving is the activating force that gets the energy of life moving. Gets the abundance in our lives moving. And it opens pathways and possibilities for the increased flow of good in all areas of our lives.

The reason we get stuck and stagnant -- the reason we experience lack and limitation -- is because of our relationship with giving. We think that giving is scary, because giving means depleting or losing the good that we have. We have this fear of giving; that we just won't have enough. And that is not the

truth! Because giving is not depleting; it's enriching. That it will increase and expand in our lives. But we've got to utilize and get in the flow of that Law and that consciousness.

Proverbs 11, Verse 24 says this:

*"One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, and only comes to poverty."*

Dr. Norman Vincent Peale -- who wrote the book, *The Power of Positive Thinking* -- had a sermon called, "Give First." And Jim Henson, the Muppet guy, had heard it. And he was really struggling, because he had just developed the Muppets, and things weren't going very well. And he took that sermon to heart: give first. So he started giving away all these puppet shows to kids and different festivals. He just started giving, giving. A year later, he got invited to be on a show called *Sesame Street*. And I would say his giving expanded and increased the flow of opportunities and abundance in his life. It made a difference!

Cami Walker was really struggling with her life. Her business wasn't going well; her relationship wasn't going well; and physically she really wasn't feeling that good. A friend of hers said, *"Every day for the next month, I want you to give something to someone. Even if it's a smile; if it's a compliment; if it's an encouraging word; or buying them a coffee; or opening a door for them. Any way you can give, give every single day."*

By the 14th day, things had started changing. She felt better. Her relationship fell away and opened a space for something better. Her job: her clients picked up. She absolutely believes and says we can all make a 30-day challenge of giving something every single day. Because she believes giving will change your life, because it opens your life to greater possibilities. It opens your life to greater good.

The happiest people I know are people who give. Are people who are generous in all ways.

You ever find it feels really good when you give a helping hand? And you help and support? You know why that is? Because giving connects us with our true nature. When Jesus said, "It's the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom" -- it's God's pleasure to give -- we're created in the image and likeness of God. It gives us pleasure to give! When we allow ourselves to give ... And when we allow our selves to give consistently and systematically, it is an important and powerful thing that lifts our lives.

**You know, the hardest part of giving -- we all know! -- is tithing.** Because giving of money ... money's the thing that makes us survive. And we're thinking, *"Hey, if I don't have enough money now, why is giving more money. making me have less money, going to help me?"*

And it's because the Law: give and you shall receive. There is a spiritual law that is beyond the condition, because it is about consciousness. And when we get in the movement of that, things began to change. Things begin to open up and transform. Tithing 10% of our income and our good scares us; and I totally understand!

There's a powerful passage in Malachi 3, Verses 8-10. I'm going to read you the first part, which I'm sure you've never heard before. And the second part's about tithing. But I want to read the first part for a reason, then I'll explain what it really means. Here's what it says -- God speaking:

*"Should people cheat god? Yet you have cheated me! But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?' You have cheated me out of the tithes and offerings due to me. You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me."*

That sounds a little harsh and surprising to hear from God! However ... I mean, it almost sounds like a loan shark coming for their money! [Congregation laughs] Or you could almost see, like, *Goodfellas* with Joe Pesci. [Laughs with congregation] I find that's a little intimidating. But here's what that passage means spiritually.

What it's saying is ... You can't cheat God means you can't cheat the Law. You cannot cheat the Law of Circulation. You can't short it and expect to be getting more. Does this make sense? And it's saying that, when you cheat the Law and you cheat God, you cheat yourself. Because by withholding our good and not having faith in God, that we actually limit the good and the abundance in our lives.

And so it's a powerful, powerful thing. The thing I find is scary is: When you first learn tithing, and you say 10% ... It's like, *"My God! Ten percent is so much!"* Yet I go to a restaurant and a waiter or waitress gives me food; I give them 15%, 18%, 20%. God's only saying 10; I'm thinking that's a smokin' deal!  
[Congregation laughs]

And think about it this way. If God is the source of 100% of the good that I get in my life, and I keep 90 of it, and then I give 10% to allow the 100% to keep flowing, I think that's a pretty smart business move. And it's a smart spiritual move. And I know it's scary and intimidating, but it's a powerful and important thing. Because tithing is the scariest form of giving. And if we can master the scariest form of giving, guess what? We relax and we absolutely trust the flow of God the same way that Jesus trusted the flow of God in that situation of lack and limitation.

Here's the second part that God spoke:

*"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so that there will be food in my house. If you do, I will open the windows of heaven and pour down for you an overflowing blessing that there will not be enough room to receive. Try it and put me to the test."*

And so it's saying: This thing works. Nowhere else in the Bible does it say, *"Put me to the test."* And here's a beautiful Scripture in 2 Corinthians that really shows how we are in control of the flow of abundance in our lives. Here's what it says:

*"Whoever sows sparingly shall reap sparingly. But if you sow abundantly, you will reap abundantly. Each must give as he has decided to give in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."*

When we're able to do any giving in our lives -- in all of the forms across the board, including tithing -- and we do it cheerfully, joyously and with great faith, amazing things will begin to increase and flow in our lives.

If you look at the two foundations so far, it's saying that abundance comes by a consciousness that built by consistently praying and meditating on a regular basis to build that consciousness; and then the second is to get into the Law of Circulation by giving -- systematically and consistently. But really, all God's laws are saying: Do them consistently and systematically. Gratitude should be done consistently and systematically. Forgiveness should be done consistently. Compassion should be done consistently. Love should be done consistently.

And the more we get in that flow, the more we are in the flow of abundance in all areas of life.

*"I am a cheerful giver."*

Together: [with congregation] *"I am a cheerful giver."*

*"I give in love, because I love to give."*

[Congregation]: *"I give in love, because I love to give."*

*"I sow abundantly and I reap abundantly."*

[With congregation]: *"I sow abundantly and I reap abundantly."*

And the final thing we're going to talk about today is to **BE A JOYFUL RECEIVER**. You know, the Law of Circulation is giving AND receiving. While giving activates the flow, receiving continues it in that process.

How many people ever had a harder time receiving than giving? Anybody? I see some hands out there. Sometimes we have a hard time receiving! We've been taught things like, *"It is better to give than to receive."* *"It's better to love others than ourselves."* We hear these things to the point that we get conditioned into thinking that receiving is selfish. Or it's needy or narcissistic or inconsiderate. And sometimes we feel guilty receiving. Sometimes we feel guilty having more abundance in our lives, and it creates a weird paradox.

And here's the paradox: We all talk about, *"Oh, I want to live an abundant life; I want more wealth, more prosperity. I want to win the lottery."* We're hoping for millions. Then someone says, *"Here; I've got a gift for you,"* and it's like, *"No; no! You really shouldn't have!"*

I mean, somebody says, *"Hey, that's a really beautiful dress."* *"Oh; I got it on a discount rack."*

*"Your hair looks great!"* *"Aw, it's just a mess."*

*"You really did a good job!"* *"Oh, I could do a lot better than that!"*

Isn't that interesting? We say, *"I want abundance! Bring it on, God! I want it all!"* But a little thing comes, *"No thanks!"* Anybody ever give you a gift and you say, *"No; no; I can't accept it. That's too expensive. That's too much!"*

What kind of signal are we sending to the Universe when we're saying, *"Bring on this abundance!"* and as soon as little bits of it start coming we say, *"No; no; no; no?"*

And so: Are you a good receiver? Where in your life are you having a hard time receiving? And can you begin to open a space to be a better receiver?

One of the interesting things is: When you don't receive AND accept what someone's trying to give, you're denying them the blessings of the good feeling of giving. And you are stopping the flow of your own good. And setting the exact opposite message of what we say we want to experience in living a more abundant life.

Mary Kupferle, a Unity minister, wrote a book called *God Never Fails*, and said this:

*"It is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom. Nothing so delights God as the willingness of his children to receive. Nothing pleases the Giver more than to find an open and receptive channel through which to pour His blessings for manifestation."*

To me, receiving is about opening your heart to God. Opening your heart to the abundance and the love and the joy and the peace and the wisdom and goodness of God.

The next time someone gives you something, practice being a joyful receiver. A compliment or a gift; I just want you to say, *"Thank you! I appreciate that."*

Have I ever told you that you are a wonderful congregation? [Points to the congregation]

[Congregation:] *"Thank you! I appreciate that!"*

You know, your hair is really looking gorgeous today!"

[Congregation:] *"Thank you! I appreciate that!"*

And that's a rockin' outfit you've got on!

[Congregation:] *"Thank you! I appreciate that!"*

I have a gift I want to give you later!

[Congregation:] *"Thank you! I appreciate that!"*

Giving AND receiving ... and the receiving part is equally as important. This week I want you to practice being a joyful, accepting, open receiver. Because you're worthy of it! Open your heart; open your mind and your life to the abundance of God by being a joyful receiver.

*"I am a joyful receiver!"*

Together: [with congregation]: *"I am a joyful receiver."*

*"I am pleased to receive!"*

[Congregation:] *"I am pleased to receive!"*

*"I am worthy of living abundantly."*

[Congregation:] *"I am worthy of living abundantly."*

*"I am a cheerful giver."*

[Congregation:] *"I am a cheerful giver!"*

*"I live in God's abundance, and God's abundance lives in me!"*

Together: [congregation] *"I live in God's abundance, and God's abundance lives in me."*

So we don't need to be swimming in a small area of the large pool of life that we're here to live. We aren't here to dummy down; to play to some smaller version of who we came to be, and the life that we came to live. But we have to bring these principles to life.

So this week, I invite you to spend 20, 30, 40 minutes a day prospering your soul to build a mindset of abundance. Be a cheerful giver: systematically give consistently. It will make a difference and open the flow in your life. And finally, be a joyful receiver. Open a space for more God, for more love, for more goodness.

We all want a better life. And these three practices are truly the first keys to living abundantly.

God bless you all! [Applause]

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