

Life Group Notes 7/30/2023
Pastor Victoria Adewumi Tithing

[If you have observations or questions feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net.-Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to facilitate discussion and to discern the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Victoria has raised this week, 7/30. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** Do not be daunted by the number of pages. As an editorial decision, I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes, rather than having you, the reader, look up each reference. If your Bible is open beside you, you can transfer and annotate from these pages with ease. This week has several footnotes on vocabulary, doctrines and principles of the church. Footnotes are not meant to distract, but enhance the reading, and to help find answers to questions that arise. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On tithing.](#)
2. [On the Adamic curse.](#)
3. [On sowing sparingly or bountifully.](#)

***Please **Note:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling and further study during the week. ***

Victoria begins by summarizing the global economic situation we are experiencing today. Be careful with the following questions, and pray specifically for issues that arise:

1. What have you noticed?
2. What is the cause?
3. Does the Bible predict this? Where?
4. What is the solution?
5. Look up Romans 1: [28](#) Furthermore, since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, He gave them up to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. [29](#) They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, [30](#) slanderers, God-haters,

insolent, arrogant, and boastful. They invent new forms of evil; they disobey their parents. 31 They are senseless, faithless, heartless, merciless. 32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things are worthy of death, they not only continue to do these things, but also approve of those who practice them. What does Paul say the cause is? Is there a solution here suggested that could reverse the direction?

6. What must "they" do to get their minds back? What are ways we can acknowledge God practically?

Victoria says, "This volatility is not the best God has for us." God is stable, and consistent, a God that can be depended on. She clarifies that this is not the "Give and ye shall get" message of some TV evangelists, but she declares that "...lack is not the best God has for you either." We are not to live in poverty or a broken system.

1. Respond.
2. Victoria asks, "If you're bound up in poverty, how can you be a blessing to those in need around you as God intended?" Respond.
3. In these terms, what is the purpose of having the world's goods? Is it better to give? Or to receive?" Look up Acts 20:34-35
4. Is it hard for the poor to help the poor? Can the poor help the poor? What does it take? Do you have a testimony?

Look up Genesis 3:17 *17 And to Adam he said,
"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife
and have eaten of the tree
of which I commanded you,
'You shall not eat of it,'
cursed is the ground because of you;
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;
and you shall eat the plants of the field.
19 By the sweat of your face
you shall eat bread,
till you return to the ground,
for out of it you were taken;
for you are dust,
and to dust you shall return."*

1. What do you see?
2. What do you know of this passage?
3. Where did lack, pain, suffering and sweaty labor come from?
4. What can Adam expect from this day on?
5. What was life like before the curse? Make a guess.
6. Victoria points out that stress is the number one killer. Where does this stress come from?
7. What can reverse this curse?

Victoria did a word study on the word "sweat." Look up Luke 22: *43 Then an angel from heaven appeared to Him and strengthened Him. 44 And in His anguish, He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat became like drops of blood falling to the ground.*

1. Explain the stress. What was Jesus stressing from?

2. Did the angel's presence help?
3. Does strengthening take away the stress? What benefit does encouragement have?
4. What impact does Jesus' blood hitting the ground have upon the ground that was cursed with Adam's curse?
5. Look up the commandments for the priesthood in the New Temple of Ezekiel 44: [16](#)*They alone shall enter My sanctuary and draw near to My table to minister before Me. They will keep My charge.* [17](#)*When they enter the gates of the inner court, they are to wear linen garments; they must not wear anything made of wool when they minister at the gates of the inner court or inside the temple.* [18](#)*They are to wear linen turbans on their heads and linen undergarments around their waists. They must not wear anything that makes them perspire.* What happens to stress?
6. Answer Victoria's observation: If Jesus is the King of kings, who are the other kings? If Jesus is the Lord of lords, who are the other lords? Where does that put you?
7. If we are kings and lords, when does our authority begin? When does our rulership begin? What are you lord of? With this knowledge, what happens to stress?
8. If our work is now the work of the ministry, what happened to the "sweat of our brow" in our labor? How has the curse changed?
9. In Matthew 11, Jesus said, "...[29](#)Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. [30](#)[For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.](#)" How has Jesus transformed the yoke of the curse that Adam brought on us? Why is it significant to learn that Jesus brought an end to sweat?

Victoria moves on to tithing. **Look up 2 Corinthians 9:** [6](#)*Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.* [7](#)*Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not out of regret or compulsion. For God loves a cheerful giver.* [8](#)*And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.* [9](#)*As it is written:*

*"He has scattered abroad His gifts to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever."*

[10](#)*Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your store of seed and will increase the harvest of your righteousness.* [11](#)*You will be enriched in every way to be generous on every occasion, so that through us your giving will produce thanksgiving to God.* [12](#)*For this ministry of service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanksgiving to God.*

1. Summarize what Paul says here.
2. What is the difference between a cheerful giver and a grumpy giver? Do you have a testimony?
3. What does it mean to "sow sparingly?" What does it mean to "reap generously?" (See [footnote 3](#) below.) In Paul's letter, what is one sowing? What is one reaping?
4. Apply this verse to the farmer and the rains we've had in New Hampshire this summer: What insurance does the farmer have when he only plants in one field? What if he plants generously in many fields?
5. Look up Ecclesiastes 11: [1](#)*Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again.* [2](#)*Divide your portion among seven, or even eight, for you do*

not know what disaster may befall the land. [4](#)He who watches the wind will fail to sow, and he who observes the clouds will fail to reap. According to the preacher, why is it a good idea to give and not withhold?

6. What is the purpose of sowing? What is it for the farmer? For the seed? For the ground in which the seed is sown? What is the fruit? Compare the fruit to the result of not sowing at all.
 7. Is a harvest guaranteed every time you sow? What is guaranteed when you do not sow? Which action has better hope?
 8. Victoria points out that Paul's emphasis is not on the "what," but on the "how" of giving. Explain.
 9. Look at verse 8. When does this promise run out? How much abundance is promised? What is the purpose of this promised plenty?
 10. Look at verse 10. Who has this system under control? Where does the seed come from? According to this verse, what does the harvest look like?
 11. Look at verse 12. Is the purpose of giving to get more stuff?
 12. What does Paul say the two purposes of giving are?
 13. How grateful are you when you receive at a time of great need? What changes in the atmosphere at the moment the gift arrives?
 14. Describe the power of thanksgiving? What does thanksgiving defeat?
 15. Look at verse 11. What is the purpose of prosperity?
 16. Is it possible to outgive God?
 17. What if you decided to outgive God. What would that competition look like? Who would benefit?
 18. Look up Haggai 1: [6](#)*You have planted much but harvested little. You eat but never have enough. You drink but never have your fill. You put on clothes but never get warm. You earn wages to put into a bag with holes in it.* [7](#)*This is what the LORD of Hosts says: "Consider carefully your ways.* [8](#)*Go up into the hills, bring down lumber, and build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified, says the LORD.* [9](#)*You expected much, but behold, it amounted to little. And what you brought home, I blew away. Why? Declares the LORD of Hosts. Because My house still lies in ruins, while each of you is busy with his own house. What happens when our priorities are off?*
 19. Look up Luke 6: [37](#)*Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.* [38](#)*Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.* What is the purpose of giving? What is the promised result from giving? Can one outgive God? Is it worth a try?
 20. What measure do you use when you give?
- Victoria addresses the controversy of tithing.
1. What do you think? Is tithing Old Testament law? Or did tithing happen before the Law came? (See the [footnote 1](#) below.)
 2. What is the promise that goes with faithful tithing? Whom are you imitating when you keep a vow? Why is it healthy to imitate God?
 3. Where was tithing first mentioned in the Bible (from the [footnote](#))? Why did Abraham tithe 10% to Melchizedek?

Look at where tithe is first mentioned in the Law of Moses, Leviticus 27: [30](#) *Thus any tithe from the land, whether from the seed of the land or the fruit of the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD. [31](#) If a man wishes to redeem part of his tithe, he must add a fifth to its value. [32](#) Every tenth animal from the herd or flock that passes under the shepherd's rod will be holy to the LORD. [33](#) He must not inspect whether it is good or bad, and he shall not make any substitution. But if he does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute shall become holy; they cannot be redeemed.' [34](#) These are the commandments that the LORD gave to Moses for the Israelites on Mount Sinai.*

1. If the Levites were not included in the division of land, and had neither land nor field, but their service to God was their inheritance, how were they compensated for their service?
2. If all the Israelites gave ten percent faithfully, how well were the Levites compensated? What happened to the Levites when the Israelites failed to keep their vows?
3. Look at Romans 11: [16](#) *If the first part of the dough is holy, so is the whole batch; if the root is holy, so are the branches.* Paul applies this to the first dough and the root of Israel. Abraham was holy, thus his offspring are likewise. Jacob was holy, making all of Israel holy with him. When Victoria applies this principle to income, what happens to your net income when you intentionally sanctify the first ten percent of your gross? What does this imply about your giving and the promise it brings?

The Follow-up Application

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Last week you did a "fruit inventory." Review what you found. Go over highlights from last week's message.
3. Take an inventory of your giving. Where are your priorities? Do they need to change?
4. Take the time to ask the Lord, concerning giving, to increase your understanding of purposeful generosity.

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's Notes:

1. **On tithing (read at your own risk)**—First of all the simple: Tithing is an often featured and sometimes too sensitive topic in the evangelical church when it comes to giving and benevolence. The root of the tithe means "the tenth," and tithing does indeed play a role in Old Testament law. It is not possible to cover all the ramifications of the term in a footnote like this, but there are several interesting points to be made.

A preacher approaching this subject cautioned us listeners, “The most sensitive part of the anatomy in a man is the three-foot stretch that runs from the head to the wallet.” Because it’s such a personal, and difficult subject, and because most of us have seen the doctrine abused and sometimes egregiously abused, I will simply put here “fun facts” to look at, because there are fathers of the faith who did not abuse the subject but set the example. First, the question is, where did the concept of tithing first appear in the Old Testament? Did the tithe come from the Law of Moses? Or did tithing precede the law? Do you know? Look up Genesis 14:20. Abraham is returning from the rescue of his nephew Lot, and the king of Sodom, and he encounters Melchizedek, the enigmatic “priest of the Most High God,” who, as Hebrews points out, has neither lineage nor precedent, but whose name means “King of Righteousness” and he’s called the “King of Peace.” He blesses Abraham, and Abraham, without any written law to obey, immediately gives him a tithe of the spoils of the battle he’d won...although Abraham himself had rejected any of the goods the king of Sodom had offered him. The next time a tithe/tenth is mentioned is when Abraham’s grandson Jacob makes a conditional vow to the Lord, “If you bring me back safely, I’ll give you a tenth of all I possess.” There is no record in the Bible that this vow was ever kept, but the vow is recorded. Finally, in Moses’ law, tithes concern the produce of the land, and there are specific dates, times and seasons that tithes are collected, because the priests, who had no inheritance in the land, their inheritance being their service to God, needed to eat and were to be fed through the tithes of those whom they served, and that tithe was ten percent. When the tithes were given, the priests were cared for, and the land was blessed. Malachi 3 contains perhaps the most often quoted verses on the tithe, too often quoted to extract by guilt more money from stingy givers. Malachi tells us what happens when the people stop bringing their tithes: *8Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you ask, ‘How do we rob You?’ In tithes and offerings. 9You are cursed with a curse, yet you—the whole nation—are still robbing Me. 10Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this,” says the LORD of Hosts. “See if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour out for you blessing without measure. 11I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your land, and the vine in your field will not fail to produce fruit,” says the LORD of Hosts.* Take a moment and re-read this passage slowly. Who is robbed when tithes are not paid? Who suffers when the tithe is not paid? Why do the priests alone suffer? What is their sole source of sustenance, according to the Law? What is the practical purpose of tithing? The Law says, “Do not put the Lord your God to the test,” yet what does Malachi say in verse 10 above? Is there any other place in the Bible where God allows us to put Him to the test? What is the supernatural promise attached to faithful tithing? Now decide, is this promise Old Testament only, or valid for today as Victoria pointed out? (Remember, Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 1:20 that *all* the promises of God are “Yes” in Christ Jesus, so the “Amen” can be spoken?) Now read 2 Corinthians 9 again: *2Corinthians 9:6Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not out of regret or compulsion. For God loves a cheerful giver, 8And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things, at all*

times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹As it is written: "He has scattered abroad His gifts to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." ¹⁰Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your store of seed and will increase the harvest of your righteousness. ¹¹You will be enriched in every way to be generous on every occasion, so that through us your giving will produce thanksgiving to God. ¹²For this ministry of service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanksgiving to God. The Old Testament required ten percent. Is ten percent the limit? Or just a good beginning? Look again at verse 10 in terms of the tithe. What can you be sure of? According to Malachi, is less than ten percent acceptable? What if one vows more than ten percent? If a man promises to give God 90%, what do you think the return will be?

2. **On the Adamic curse**—Something that is not often noticed, but that bears a second glance in light of Mark's most recent teaching on the kingdom is this portion of the Adamic curse in Genesis 3: "¹⁹By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Remembering that we are, like God Himself, tripartite, body and soul and spirit, which part of us bears the curse? Which parts do not? Why is it important to remember that, as Ecclesiastes 12 instructs us, "The spirit returns to the Lord," and we know that the soul rests in "sheol," because God is the God of the living and not of the dead. The serpent is told in verse 14, "...on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life..." Can the serpent touch any other part of man than the dust of his flesh? Explain why it is so dangerous to allow the flesh to rule our lives, will and actions?
3. **On sowing sparingly or bountifully**—Victoria pointed out that the Paul's language points to sowing with an eye upon blessing, ἐπ' εὐλογίαις (*ep'eulogiais*) as opposed to sowing sparingly, φειδομένως/*phaidomenos*, begrudgingly, with restraint. The eye of the giver is upon blessing the recipient of the gift, and not the impact of the gift on the giver.

For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the SOAP... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: Genesis 14:18-20, Genesis 28:22 Hebrews 7:4
Tuesday: Acts 20:34-35
Wednesday: Matthew 11:29-30
Thursday: 2 Corinthians 9:7-8
Friday: 2 Corinthians 9:10-12
Saturday: Haggai 1:6-9
Sunday: Luke 6:37-38

(Scribe's note: I have been told that the SOAP method is most effective when limited to two to four verses. Study is most effective when context is clear. At times, I might include more verses for the purpose of clarity and context. You are free to take the verses that speak to you and respond in the context of that verse. As with the notes themselves, this task is to be a joy for you. If at any point you feel you are not "doing it correctly," your grade has already been determined. You ARE A+ already because you are reading these words.)