

Did you do it? Gird your loins? Serve? Practice Prayer? How did it go?

- Look at the half sheet.

Did anyone try and repay God for all that God did for you? What would that look like?

It is actually a great definition of Stewardship, giving back to God, responding to God, for all that God does for us.

The problem is, we can never repay God. Not only does God give us everything – once we started to repay it, as God still gives to us, we would never catch up.

That's grace. That is God's currency in this divine economy. We can never repay God. And God never expects us to repay anything.

Acknowledging that is the beginning of gratitude. We still respond to God's lavish grace, by being part of this ministry, volunteering to the mission, offering our gifts to do God's work. Generosity in time and money, is how we disconnect with the power of the world, and trust in the power of God. That is why faith and finances are directly connected.

Chick lane quote – The Bible won't let us imagine a life in which faith and finances live separate lives. Faith should influence how we manage money. Faith should guide all our decisions.

In Faith Formation class we talked about separating our lives of faith from the other aspects of life – our social life, our political life, our work life. It was suggested by a confirmation student that Jesus could guide us when we needed it, but not all the time. “You wouldn’t go to vote with Jesus on your mind.” We had a good discussion!

Because faith in God should drive us – should impact our generosity, should guide our morals, and our voting, and sports life, and parenting. We can’t just separate God out from our life and use God when it is convenient. Faith and finances are directly connected, because we believe that God gives us everything.

One stewardship concept is that because God gives 100% to us, we should strive to give all our time, all our money back to God. That would be fair, right? I would probably be out of job.

Yet it is a faithful concept. But even if we could give **everything** we had back to God –as Jesus commands the young rich man – we still wouldn’t repay God. Ever. God doesn’t stop giving to us.

God’s promises, gifts and grace cannot be understood in some give and take algebraic formula. There is no concept of reward or blessing. David’s story reminds us of that. Nothing earned, nothing merited.

There is no transaction between God and us. Except for the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ – that gives us life for today and hope for tomorrow.

David is faithful. Chosen by Samuel - the baby dedicated to the temple by Hannah - to be a king. Raised in the court of Saul. Challenged the status quo for Israel. Fought valiantly for God's people. And he recognizes the discrepancy between he and God.

I live in a Mansion of cedar wood...and God camps out in a Tent? God seems to be just fine with the tabernacle (even though later – Solomon, David's son – who is not yet born – will be the next King, and the one to build a temple.)

David knows God has given him so much, and he can't figure out what to say or do.

God makes it abundantly clear that in addition to all that God has done for David, God will continue to do more. And God's promises never go unfulfilled.

He promises to build David a dynasty. To make David's household great among the nations.

How will God keep this promise? How will God make a son of David – King forever?

400 years of Kings. At the end of that dynasty, that lineage, that household we meet a baby in barn, and his mother names him Jesus.

A different king. An unexpected King.
But a King that will be the last king.
The only king really.

And about that King, God says to David, I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. Remember, Jesus addresses God as father....papa....Our father, in heaven, holy is your name....

God keeps God's promises. These promises, given to us daily, can never be bought, nor repaid. They never stop.

We start by giving thanks, returning thanks, not as we ought, but as we are able.

We give thanks, by returning to the concept of stewardship, or caretaking of one another. Of animals, environment, each other. Of faith directing our stewardship, instead of being separated from it.

With our generosity, our gifts – our resources – we give, we commit – to be part of God's mission, as God's people. To gird our loins, to serve, and to pray.

David's response to God is a grateful and humble prayer thanking God for what God promises to do, which is an interesting shift in prayer. David prays, Do what you have promised, which is pretty bold. Just as Jesus prayed in the garden. Not my will, but yours be done.

When we pray, we thank God for what God has done, ask God to do something for us and/or others, but rarely might we thank God for a future promise.

But we can.

Respond to God in prayer, not only for what God has given, and is giving – but for what God plans to give.

All that we have is from God, and we give back all we can, knowing we will fail and fall short of expectations, and can never repay in full. But we don't have to. God has already canceled all the debt we think we owe.