

The word "economy" comes from the Greek word *oikonomia*, which combines *oikos* (meaning "house" or "household") and *nomos* (meaning "management," "law," or "rule"). Originally, it referred to the management of a household. **Oikos** : From the ancient Greek word for "house" or "household," which originally included the land, property, and all the people within it. **Nomos** : From the Greek word for "law," "rule," or "management". **Combined meaning**: Together, *oikos* and *nomos* meant **"household management"**.

Believers in Jesus are members of God's household, Ephesians 2:19. God wants us to enjoy our privilege of kingdom citizenship, but also to be **wise stewards** / managers of all that He gives us. God wants his people to remember that it is He who gives us the ability to produce wealth. - Deuteronomy 8:18. Jesus reminded his disciples to lay up treasures in heaven, not on earth. God's kingdom operates different from earthly kingdoms which operate on a visible and material system of buying and selling. God's economy is rooted in the unseen spiritual realm of sowing and reaping, giving and receiving. Adam and Eve sinned when they failed to operate according to God's plan. They **'took' (stole)** the fruit that was not theirs to take. God had freely given them all they would ever need in Edens paradise but they were not content with that. The world system descended into a pattern of 'getting' instead of giving, greed instead of contentment. God's way is generosity instead of hoarding.

God is interested in motives.

- **God loves cheerful givers**, not those who give reluctantly or under compulsion. 2 Corinthians 9:7. God created the wonders of nature out of His love and good pleasure so that mankind could enjoy their beauty and other benefits. God desires that we give to Him and others because of love and compassion, not because of duty. - 1 Corinthians 13:3. The law of sowing and reaping is part of this physical world but also in the spiritual realm. - 2 Corinthians 9:6 (which we will explore in another message). It is not wrong to expect a harvest from seed that we sow (farmers know that), but in our giving to God that should not be our primary motive. Jesus taught his disciples.....' **Give and it shall be given unto you.....'** - Luke 6:38a

You can tell a lot about a ministry on how they raise money. Those who make appeals on how their ministry reaches others for Christ and His kingdom purposes have the right focus. Those who focus on how it benefits the givers to their ministry are off track. They appeal to the carnal desires of the givers to be blessed and generally use the money for their own worldly comforts and luxuries. Those type of ministries often bring on what I call 'economic hit men' to manipulate people to give so that the ministers can live in mansions etc. Jesus did not teach us to **give so that** we will receive, but just to **give and** we will receive.

Not all 'prosperity' preachers use gimmicks, although they may live quite extravagantly. Kenneth C. has a daily teaching broadcast, but he usually only mentions giving at the end of the Friday broadcast by quoting the following scripture.

'Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with Him who teaches'. - Galatians 6:6 NKJV

If we eat food at restaurant it is only proper to pay for the meal. If we receive spiritual food we should not be spiritual freeloaders but give back to the source. Faith teacher Fred Price would teach for an hour on his TV program and then briefly mention giving right at the end. People like Rod Parsley, Paula White, Mike Murdock and others use all sorts of gimmicks to extract money from their viewers. Kenneth Hagin wrote a book, *The Midas Touch*, nearly 25 years ago that exposed all sorts of non-Biblical money gimmicks by fellow Word of Faith teachers. He realized that many had become totally unbalanced in their teachings.

In my teachings, my aim is to be **balanced**; to hold on to the good but scrap the bad. Giving is about treasure, time, talents, energy, affections, spiritual/ material resources. God wants our focus to be less on the temporal but more upon the eternal. Amen.