

Dr. Ron Armstrong • April 18, 2021

A Generous Life: Unprepared and in the Dark

Matthew 25:3 “At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Five of them were foolish and five were wise. ³ The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. ⁴ The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. ⁵ The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

⁶ “At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

⁷ “Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

⁹ “‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

¹⁰ “But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

Malachi 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. ⁹ Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

¹⁰ Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Luke 6:38 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 to you.

A. Your spending plan should be simple, but not easy.

1. Let's tackle the hardest decisions first:
 - a. This will be my plan. It won't be my friend's, brother-in-law's, or parents' plan.
 - b. I will quit comparing myself to others. It'll steal my joy and ruin my plan.
 - c. I'm going to stop moving the goalposts as God blesses me.
 - d. I will be brave. Line 1 is God's and line 2 is for my family's future, no matter what. This is my equation:

Tithe	Save	Follow	Enjoy God's
faithfully	+ consistently	+ my plan	= blessing
(Line 1)	(Line 2)	(God's wisdom)	

2. A few key strategies:
 - a. Start with a list of your current expenses. Include the ones that are only occasional, but predictable.
 - b. Separate the needs from the wants. We're not eliminating wants; we're just being honest about them.
 - c. You have to divide the annual/occasional expenses and carry them forward each month.
 - d. If you are just beginning, your income and expenses are probably upside down. Don't quit. This will change over time.
 - e. A spending plan isn't a pair of shackles. It brings freedom and confidence.

B. Understanding “part” and “pressed.”

1. “Part” doesn't make people feel good if the “whole” belongs to them.
2. “Pressed” is part of the blessing. It means “more than we perceived.”