

“Principles of Multiplication”

Now let's turn our attention to two principles of multiplication we find in the familiar story of the five loaves and two fish. (Not rocket science but we overlook them.)

“Late in the afternoon the twelve disciples came to him and said, “Send the crowds away to the nearby villages and farms, so they can find food and lodging for the night. There is nothing to eat here in this remote place.”¹³ But Jesus said, “You feed them.” “But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered. “Or are you expecting us to go and buy enough food for this whole crowd?”¹⁴ For there were about 5,000 men there. Jesus replied, “Tell them to sit down in groups of about fifty each.”¹⁵ So the people all sat down.¹⁶ Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and blessed them. Then, breaking the loaves into pieces, he kept giving the bread and fish to the disciples so they could distribute it to the people.¹⁷ They all ate as much as they wanted, and afterward, the disciples picked up twelve baskets of leftovers!”

Luke 9:12-17 (NLT)

You have to catch this; the miracle did not happen in the Master's hands, it happened in the disciple's hands.

1. The gift has to be blessed before it can multiply.

What if they had taken the fish and the loaves and given them away without Jesus' blessing? They never would have multiplied. The reason they multiplied was because Jesus blessed them.

[In acts of blessing, the lesser is blessed by the greater.⁸ Or look at it this way: We pay our tithes to priests who die, but Abraham paid tithes to a priest who, the Scripture says, “lives.”⁹ Ultimately you could even say that since Levi descended from Abraham, who paid tithes to Melchizedek,¹⁰ when we pay tithes to the priestly tribe of Levi they end up with Melchizedek (Jesus).]
Hebrews 7:1-10 (MSG)

Hebrews alludes to the truth that when we tithe Jesus receives our tithe and blesses them. With the blessing of Jesus on it, it can multiply, but without the blessing of Jesus it can never multiply.

2. The gift has to be given away before it can multiply.

What if the disciples took the bread and the fish to Jesus and He blessed it and then they ate it? It never would have multiplied. They had to give it away. **There are people who tithe and bring the first to God, but they don't give over and above the tithe (sacrificially). In essence they're eating what's blessed. It's blessed because they brought the first to God, but they don't give over and above, so it never multiplies.**

Many people want their finances to multiply, but they won't bring the first to God, but they will give here and there (spontaneously). Their finances will never multiply, because it's not blessed.

Other people bring the first to God (strategically) but they don't give over and above and their finances will never multiply because it doesn't multiply until you give over and above.

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Remember what God asked Solomon in his dream ...

“The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the *night* in a dream, and God said, ‘Ask for whatever you want me to give you.’”

1 Kings 3:4-5 (NIV)

What happened that day to precipitate this? Solomon demonstrated the generosity within his heart. It was tradition for the king to sacrifice one bull but Solomon sacrificed 1,000 bulls!

God only says to extravagant givers, “Ask anything you want!” He would never say that to a selfish person, because He can’t trust selfish people.

Application: Give something away this week to someone you know in need. It doesn’t matter if your gift is big, medium or small. Your gift could be money, a possession or both. Pray and ask God to show you what He wants you to give and who He wants you to give it to. Don’t let this be a one-time act. Commit to making giving a regular part of your life.

Let’s Pray!

Resources: “Multiply” series by Robert Morris, Gateway Church, TX; Lifechurch.tv; “Be Rich” series by Andy Stanley & “Strapped” series by Craig Groeschel