



## Stewardship Motives of the Heart Lesson 2 1Q 2018

**I See, I Want, I Take** presented by Dr. Tim Jennings

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

**New Blogs**—If you don't follow us on Facebook, then be sure to visit our website we are posting new blogs again, the go up every Tuesday, recently we posted:

Jerusalem, Christians and End-Time Methods  
Suicide and the Myth of Lost Salvation  
What is Biblical Justice?  
Is God Punishing the World with Natural Disasters?

**January 10,11, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be conducting a two day seminar at Fort Leonard Wood, MO for military mental health professionals and law enforcement.

**January 19,20, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Tacoma Central SDA Church, Tacoma, Washington.

**March 24, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at the California Baptist University in San Bernadino CA, in conjunction with the AACC

**May 4-5, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentations at Grace Fellowship, York PA, in conjunction with the AACC

**July 27-28, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be doing two presentationat New Life Church, Colorado Springs CO, in conjunction with the AACC

**September 27-29, 2018:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Mega National Conference of the American Association of Christian Counselors in Dallas, TX

### SUNDAY

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Read first and fourth paragraphs, “A popular television...” What level moral development is this? This is level two, the marketplace exchange; let's make a deal with God. If we do this, then God does that.

Why is this not the right way to think? What is the problem with this type of thinking?

First—what is the motive? It is self-centered, all about what self can get for their good deed.

Second—what happens in the heart and mind when people give, but don't get back what they were expecting? Doubt, anger, further distortions about God.

But, in light of Bible promises isn't this the right way to think? Aren't we supposed to believe the Bible when it says:



Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. <sup>11</sup> I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,” says the Lord Almighty. <sup>12</sup> “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the Lord Almighty. Mal 3:10-12

Doesn't this say explicitly that if we pay our tithe God will give us more blessings? So what is wrong with believing the prosperity gospel?

The bottom green section asks “What examples can you find of those who are faithful to God but are not rich in the worldly possessions, and those who are not faithful to God but who are rich in worldly possessions?”

- Jesus—was He rich in worldly possessions?
- The Apostles?
- Job was rich but lost it all and then got more back, was job right with God only when wealthy and healthy?
- King Herod—wealthy, but unrighteous
- Caesar—wealthy but unrighteous

Is there a contradiction in the Bible between the passage in Malachi and the examples of some righteous people being poor and some unrighteous people being rich?

How do you harmonize these two ideas?

- What kind of law does God's kingdom operate upon? Design law,
- What is the primary principle or design protocol in God's government? Love
- How does love function—by giving
- And the more you give the more you will receive—why?
- Because it is how life is built to operate in God's design

Thus Malachi is describing God's design, God's intention, when we operate upon love. So, is it true that if you give in love you receive a great blessing of love in return, from God always, but from others often? Sometimes we might also get material returns on giving, but the promise isn't primarily material blessing.

But how does sin operate in the world? It is selfish—it seeks to take. And what do the selfish (unrighteous) generally do to the unselfish (righteous)? Abuse and mistreat them.

Is the world currently operating only upon God's principles, or is there an antagonistic principle fighting against God's design?

So, do we see righteous suffer in this world? Is it because God or God's law fails, or because an



enemy is at work?

What is it the enemy wants to achieve? Does he not want to undermine trust in God and get people to accept his evil methods instead of God's?

How do we conceive of the Malachi passage if we think through imposed law lenses? We think of level two, rules, deals, we do something and then God uses His power to make the reward happen.

What happens in the minds of people if they think this way when they see the righteous suffer? Do they have more trust in God or less?

So, again we see how Satan attacks God and His character by infecting our minds with imposed law constructs.

What about the sovereignty of God? Isn't He sovereign? This leads to the classic questions:

- If God is all-powerful and all good then why is there suffering and evil?
- A God that allows suffering to continue is either:
  - a) not all-powerful and is thus unable to prevent the suffering;
  - b) not loving because this God has the power to prevent suffering but is unwilling to do so; and/or
  - c) not all-knowing and only becomes aware of the suffering after it has already occurred and it's too late to prevent it.

What answers do you give to such questions?

Is God sovereign? Is God good or a mixture of good and evil? Is God all-powerful and all knowing? Then why does suffering happen?

Because of how God's law, design protocols, actually functions.

The difficulty most have had in answering these questions is that they almost always answer from the perspective that God's law functions like human law, imposed rules. Thus, it is a simple matter that if God is good then God should use His power to impose His will to make all things good. When God doesn't, then for many they conclude either there isn't a God, or He isn't good.

Others go the direction of shutting down thinking and believing and practicing the methods of the beast—God's ways aren't my ways I just accept that God was loving by....

The problem is the false premise regarding God's law. When we realize how love actually functions—love cannot be coerced, commanded, programmed like a computer; that love requires genuine freedom of the sentient being; that love must be freely given. Then we understand God is always sovereign, but administers His sovereignty through, and in harmony with, His character of love and His design laws



of love and freedom.

One other point on the idea that the more you give the more you receive. Only within the operational context of God's design laws. And one of those laws is the law of rest-oration.

This law states that for finite beings after expending a resource the individual must rest in harmony with God and God's design in order to receive more of the resource to expend.

If you give energy in helping others, you must rest and rejuvenate lest you burn out. Even Jesus, when living on earth, took time away from the needy masses to rest and recover.

One of Satan's tricks if he can't get people to simply rebel against God and live selfishly, is to get the good hearted people to never say no, never take time for healthy rest, recreation, recovery and thus burn themselves out into exhaustion.

Finite beings must first receive life, love, truth, energy, from God before it can be shared, and then as one shares one becomes fatigued and needs to rest in their relationship with God and recover and in so doing gradually becomes stronger with greater capacity and endurance, but always still with finite limits.

## **MONDAY**

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Read first paragraph, "We don't need..." What is "not seen" that you look upon?

- God—how and where do you look to see God?
  - Nature Rom 1:20—what do you see in nature? What law at work? Do you see God's design? Do you see an antagonistic force?
  - The Bible
    - Do some read the very same Bible but find a different god than you find?
  - People—can we see God in people? How? In the change that comes when someone accepts Jesus—they go from untrustworthy, fear-based, to other-centered reliable people who are kind, patient, merciful, compassionate, forgiving, honest. When we see such change do we see God?
- Jesus—how and where to you look upon Jesus?
  - The Bible?
  - What about in acts of selflessness in the world today—do we see Jesus there?
  - Can a person accomplish genuine acts of selfless love without Jesus? Or, are all acts of genuine selfless love evidence of Jesus working through the Holy Spirit in the person—even if the person doesn't claim to be a follower of Jesus?
  - Other Christian writings, talks?
  - Music—can we see God and Jesus in music?
  - Art—can we see God and music in art?



- The promised future without sin—where do you look to see this?
  - The Bible?
  - What does the promised future look like?
  - Does it inspire us toward better living now?

What do you think of Helen Keller’s statement: “The most pathetic person in the world is someone who has sight, but has no vision.”

What does it mean?

Jesus said in Mt 13:13-17:

“The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. <sup>12</sup> Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. <sup>13</sup> [Was Jesus making an arbitrary decision, I have decided that I will give more to those who have the most and take away from those the little they do have? Or is Jesus stating a design law—the law of both worship and exertion?] This is why I speak to them in parables:

“Though seeing, they do not see;  
though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

<sup>14</sup> In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

“ ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding;  
you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.  
<sup>15</sup> For this people’s heart has become calloused;  
they hardly hear with their ears,  
and they have closed their eyes.  
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their hearts  
and turn, and I would heal them.’

<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. <sup>17</sup> For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

What does this mean?

What type of law is Jesus describing here?

Is God restrictive with whom He shares truth? In other words, does God select some to receive truth and others not?



What was the parable associated with Jesus words above? The parable of the sower—and

- What does the soil represent? The hearts of people
- What does the seed represent—the truth
- Was the sower restrictive with where the seeds of truth were cast?
- Why did the seed grow in some hearts but not others?
- What made the difference? The quality of the soil, which means? The nature of hearts and minds. Some people don't want the truth, resisted it, reject it, didn't value it, didn't want to understand it and thus though seeing they do not see.

My wife gave me a T-shirt once that read:

“I can explain it to you: I can't understand it for you.”

People have to actually want truth in order for the truth to be understood, embraced, and applied.

Why would people not want truth? Because it would:

- Overturn some cherished idea or belief they currently value, which would result in something initially experienced as unpleasant:
  - loss of pride or ego if they were on public record and had to recant or retract a position
  - loss of relationship if they had to break off an engagement
  - loss of income if they had to quit a job
  - loss of power if they had to resign a position
  - loss of perceived security if they had to surrender a false belief
  - change in diet or lifestyle (quit smoking, give up marijuana, stop drinking sodas, start exercising, change sleep patterns)

The lesson states, “Blurred spiritual eyesight puts eternal salvation in jeopardy.” Any texts come to mind?

Christ speaking to the church at Laodicea states:

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! <sup>16</sup> So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. <sup>17</sup> You say, ‘I **am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.**’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. <sup>18</sup> I counsel you to **buy from me gold** refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and **salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.** Rev 3:15-18

What does this mean?

What does it mean to be lukewarm?



What causes lukewarmness? Is it not a mixture of hot and cold?

So, these people appear or proclaim to be on fire for the Lord, yet their hearts have not been renewed and remain cold with selfishness. They think they are pure and righteous and need nothing, but they are pitiful. This sounds a lot like the penal legal theologies to me, and by their own words they claim that justification is when we are declared to be righteous, even though we are not.

But the Bible says we are to buy from Christ the gold refined in the fire, the white clothes and the eye salve. Does it say we are to buy a declaration?

How do we buy from Christ? Isn't salvation and the righteousness of Christ a free gift?

Yes it is; then how do we buy it? Not by money, not by work, but by barter, by trade. We trade our sinfulness for His righteousness, our terminal condition for His perfection, our death for His life, our blindness for His discernment.

- We cannot receive the righteousness of Christ as long as we hold to our selfishness.
- We cannot receive spiritual eyesight as long as we stay focused on self and refuse truth
- We cannot experience life as long as we cling to the law of sin and death—i.e. the survival of the fittest, me first, way of living.

We buy these things from Christ by surrendering in trust to Him acknowledging that we have no righteousness and we exchange our corruption for His purity. thoughts?

## **TUESDAY**

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The title of the lesson for Tuesday is The Steps of Covetousness. Is coveting bad?

1Corinthians 12:31 in multiple versions reads: “But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.”

Is coveting a bad thing, or does it depend on what one covets and the motive for the coveting—in other words if the motive is selfish, coveting what another has it is sinful. But if the motive is godly, coveting gifts from God in order to fulfill God's purpose of revealing Him and helping others then righteous?

Covet means to have a strong desire for something—so the commandment is stating that when you have a strong desire to possess something that is not yours, or not within God's design to be yours, this is diagnostic of selfishness in the heart.

Thus it is healthy to covet, or desire, anything that you don't currently possess that God has designed to be yours—like a new heart and right spirit, a spirit of confidence and peace, a mind of wisdom and



discernment, a deeper love relationship with Jesus, eternal life etc. But it is sinful (because it reveals selfishness in the heart) to covet or desire anything that is not within God's design to be yours—like anyone else's position, abilities, possessions—like the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Frist paragraph at the top states, "Like all sins, covetousness begins in the heart."

Now, I believe the authors were rightly trying to point out that all sin starts in the heart and then results in actions. Quite correct and very important to realize this, because realizing this we understand that sin is not a legal problem, and therefore legal solutions won't work. Sin is a heart condition problem and only God's plan to heal the hearts of people can resolve the sin problem.

So I really appreciate the authors pointing this out. But, I would have worded it differently because to me "Like all sins, covetousness begins in the heart" sounded silly because covetousness doesn't merely begin in the heart, it begins, lives and ends in the heart. In other words, covetousness is only a heart issue—which if unchecked leads to other sinful/selfish actions or behaviors.

This is the commandment that really helped the Apostle Paul, who wrote: "I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." Rom 7:7

Why?

Because all the other 9 commandments have behavioral aspects to them. But the 10<sup>th</sup>, is the one which happens only in the heart, not just begins in the heart.

The lesson asks what did Satan do to lure Eve into sin?

Read third paragraph, "If one didn't know better..." Why did Eve take the fruit, was it primarily covetousness or something else?

"Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors..." E.G. White, Review & Herald 1/9/1886

According to this author, what was the issue? Did the temptation start with the fruit? Or did the temptation start with an attack on God's trustworthiness? And broken love and trust resulted in what? Covetousness, or insecurity and fear, which results in selfishness, seeking to protect or advance oneself.

And in this context, having believed the lies of the serpent, having lost trust in God, having experienced fear, and having the fruit available which she now believed would make her like God, what would be the action? She took the fruit. Was this primarily covetousness? I don't think so. I think this was believing lies, which broke trust and incited fear and this was an act of self-protection,





survival, self-advancement.

The taking of the fruit was merely the acting out of broken love and trust because Eve believed lies about God.

So, I would not state this as “*I see, I want, I take.*” I would state this as, “*I fear, I need, I take.*”

What is the difference between wanting something and needing something?

When we want something, but don't need it, we retain discernment and the ability to walk away and say no. When we move from want to need, “I need it to feel whole, to be happy, to feel okay, to be liked etc. etc.” then we can't let go, can't walk away and seek to take at all costs. We begin to covet and become jealous.

The problem is the distrust in God to provide all anyone needs to be healthy, happy, and whole. And because there is not trust in God then the fear and insecurity take over in the heart and we allow ourselves to feel and believe that something other than Jesus will make us whole. Thus people think they “must have” some thing and will begin to fantasize about it, imagine it and covet it, ultimately plotting to exploit others to get it. They will even come to see other people who have what they think they must have as an enemy who is preventing them from realizing their full potential. An example is given in the lesson of King Ahab and Naboth's field.

## WEDNESDAY

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First two sentences say, “For us as fallen beings, greed can be as easy as breathing. And just as natural.”

I think I know what they mean, that our carnal natures are selfish and that without the regenerating power of the Spirit we automatically seek for self and become greedy.

This is very true, selfishness, greed, is natural to the sinful heart. However, how is it NOT like breathing?

Breathing requires, with every breath, the giving back of CO2 to the plants in order to receive oxygen in return. Breathing is, in fact, the physical acting out of the law of love which brings life. Greed is just the opposite, it is taking for self without giving in return, which breaks the law of love and results in death. It would be like tying a plastic bag over your head and hoarding all your CO2 for yourself. This is what greed does.

Read third paragraph, “Notice Judas' words...” Was this a simple case of greed, i.e. Judas merely wanted 30 silver coins? Or was Judas' greed more complex? Was Judas seeking a larger payout and the 30 coins were simply another reward he could get along the way?



Do you think Judas believed Jesus was a fraud, a conman and by turning Him over to authorities he was doing a righteous act?

Do you think Judas, having seen all the miracles, including the raising of Lazarus from the dead, believed Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah?

Yes, Judas did, then why did Judas betray Jesus?

Because Judas, while believing Jesus was the Son of God, did not understand the nature of God's character, His methods, nor His law. In other words, Judas didn't understand God's kingdom. Judas viewed God's government as operating like the earthly governments and thought that Jesus needed a little help to finally wield all His power to take the throne. Judas, having accepted the imposed law construct and thinking that the use of force to overthrow evil and punish wrongdoing was correct, thought that by betraying Jesus He would force Jesus to stop the unrighteous action of killing Him. Then Judas could step up to Jesus and say—"your welcome—I had faith in you all along, I knew you only needed a little nudge in the right direction."

Yes, what Judas did was for greed, his own personal self-advancement, but it wasn't simply for 30 silver coins—that's why he threw them back. He didn't want the money; he wanted Jesus to take the throne and rule the world with a rod of iron punishing the evil Herod, Jewish leaders, Roman powers and set up a kingdom that operates no differently that Rome was operating.

How many Christians today are in the very same mindset of Judas?

The message of the gospel from the lips of Jesus Himself is "“My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.” Jn 18:36NIV

Any version of God that has God and Jesus running their universe like human governments, imposed rules, legal actions, infliction of punishment—is a lie and obstructs God from healing hearts and minds. Sadly, many will be just like Judas in then end, "“Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?”” But Jesus says to them, "“I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!”” MT 7:22,23

They will do just as Judas did, cry for the mountains to fall on them. They don't want to live in the presence of Jesus.

## **THURSDAY**

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Read Galatians 5:22-25: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,<sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.<sup>24</sup> Those who belong to



Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.<sup>25</sup> Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”

Read second paragraph, “These texts...”

- From where does self-control come?
- If it is a fruit of the Spirit why is it not called Spirit control?
- How does surrendering to the Spirit of God result in self-control?
- What does the Spirit do in us?
  - Reveals truth
  - Convicts of deviations from design which destroy (sin)
  - Instills new desires and longings
  - Brings us to decision points
  - Leaves us free to decide to choose the truth or reject
  - When we choose the truth the Spirit provides the power to succeed in the choice
  - In so doing we are changed and transformed by the working of the Spirit while retaining our individuality and thus we develop self-control, just like the mature develop *by practice* the ability to discern right from wrong Heb 5:14
- Why is self-control a requirement for God’s kingdom?
- Can love exist without freedom?
- If the Spirit were actually in control of your choices would you be free or a puppet?
- Will the Spirit ever take control of your choices?

Here is a quote from one of the founders of the SDA church, what do you think?

The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

## FRIDAY

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First sentence states, “The ultimate human goal is to be happy and satisfied.” From where does happiness come?

Happiness is a by-product of something else. Like sawdust is a by-product of woodworking. This means it cannot get happiness by pursuing it directly.



**Happiness is a by-product of healthiness in all domains:**

- If you are physically unwell are you happy?
- If you are relationally unwell, conflicts with spouse or children, are you happy?
- If you are psychologically unwell, “I’m no good, “I can’t do anything right...” are you happy?
- If you are spiritually unwell weighed down with guilt and shame, are you happy?

While you cannot achieve happiness by seeking happiness, you can make choices to be healthy. You can take an inventory of your life and ask where am I engaged in activities that are unhealthy and start choosing to move toward health. The results will be increasing happiness and satisfaction.

The devil tricks people to substitute pleasure for happiness and thus many people who are longing for happiness instead destroy themselves in pleasure seeking:

- Alcohol and drugs
- Thrill seeking
- Entertainments
- Sex and porn
- Shopping
- Gambling

Behaviors that stimulate the pleasure circuits, but in ways that violate God’s design and thus rather than bringing health with more happiness, such actions bring damage with more misery and typically more engagement in pleasure seeking, a spiral down.

The way out is to recognize the truth and follow the truth where it leads, always back to God and harmony with His designs.