



Links Players

THERE'S FREEDOM IN OBEDIENCE

As Viktor Hovland made his way down the stretch at the Tour Championship last month, Jim Nantz said this of the \$18 million paycheck that awaited the winner: "It's not going to change their lives, as crazy as that sounds."

With more than 60 percent of Americans living paycheck-to-paycheck these days, according to research from Lending Club, the idea that PGA Tour players can be so well off that an eight-figure check isn't life-changing sounds Greek to most folks.

Many U.S. families are only one unexpected bill away from catastrophe. How can anyone find peace in such a place?

I didn't grow up in a church that taught about the principles of tithing. I learned about it in my 20s but didn't start faithfully giving the Lord my first fruits until I met my husband. It wasn't lost on me that I was giving away more money than ever as we tackled sizable student loans together. To an outsider, it seemed like the opposite thing to do. Even to most Christians probably, given that studies show only 5 percent of believers give at least 10 percent.

But I've learned that there's tremendous freedom in obedience. The word tithe means "tenth" in Hebrew. Returning to the Lord, what's already his, allows him to bless and use us more. God doesn't need our money.

"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 there will not be room enough to store it." – Malachi 3:10 (NIV)

Does this mean we'll all be rich like Viktor if we tithe? Of course not! Blessings aren't always tied to finances; we operate on an eternal mindset.

But it does promise a major shift in how we view the world and everything in it while fostering discipline in how we spend.

As Pastor Robert Morris writes in his book, "Beyond Blessed," understanding that God owns and we steward represents a paradigm shift.

"You are not an owner," Morris writes. "You are a steward of many things entrusted to your care by a loving, generous God."

To steward well, one must constantly communicate with the Lord of lords over what he desires in how we use our talents, time, and resources.

My husband and I could write chapters on how God has miraculously met our needs. We still have a long way to go in learning how to better trust and obey, but the foundation of discipline was laid more than a decade ago, and we count it as a joy to give as the Lord desires.

As Pastor Morris writes, "God is a giver, and you're never more like your heavenly Father than when you give."

PRAYER: God, we thank you for being such a generous father. We commit to faithfully steward that which you have given us so that we can further advance your Kingdom.

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