

THE PRINCIPLE OF FIRSTFRUITS

“For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy:
and if the root be holy, so are the branches” (Romans 11:16)

One of the most important laws of the Bible involves the principle of Firstfruits. It is the law of *first things first* and it has a fundamental impact on every thing in your life. Understanding and living by this law helps you position yourself to receive the promise God has for you.

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF FIRSTFRUITS

A *firstfruit* literally means “a promise to come.” Whatever you do with firstfruits governs the rest and sets the pattern, or the promise, to come for the rest of whatever you establish. And first things always belong to God. In Genesis 22:2, God told Abraham, “Give me thy son, thine only son, Isaac.” First Corinthians 15:23 says, “But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruit; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” Romans 8:29 says, “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Jesus was the firstborn and thus He was the firstfruit. God wanted a family, He sowed a Son. That’s why Jesus ascended from hell. He said to Mary Magdalene, “You can’t touch me because I have not ascended unto the Father yet” (John 20:17). He had to present Himself to God the Father as the firstfruit. Mary understandably wanted to grasp Jesus tightly and keep Him with her. But He had to be the spotless Lamb and without blemish. He couldn’t be tarnished. He became the firstfruit offering so we might become sons of God.

We can learn more about firstfruits in Exodus 13:11-13. It says:

“And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the LORD’S. And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.”

This verse is saying every firstborn thing is devoted to God in a covenantal way. In other words, when you get your breakthrough, when you get that increase at your job, when

anything new is established in your life, you must acknowledge the source of that increase. The first of that whole increase is devoted to God.

The firstfruit is *not* a tithe of the increase. It's the *whole* increase. What you must understand now is all first things belong to God, even the first part of your day. That's why the Bible says in Psalm 5:3:

"My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."

The first of every thing belongs to God. He lays claim to it. Any time something is called a "first thing," a "firstfruit," a "devoted thing," God always lays claim to it because God sees the first thing as representing what comes after it. The principle is that God sees all things according to how the first things are treated. Romans 11:16 says:

"For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches."

Exodus 22:29-30 says:

"Thou shalt not delay to offer the first of thy ripe fruits, and of thy liquors: the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me. Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me."

Jesus fulfilled this old covenant way of obeying this mandate. We don't sacrifice the firstlings of our sheep at the temple anymore or redeem our firstborn sons with gold. Jesus paid for all needed redemption. But, the principle established by the Exodus mandate remains. Today, we dedicate all our children to God, pleading the blessings of His new covenant over them. It may be appropriate, however, to make a special offering to the storehouse of God for your firstborn child just to acknowledge that all your children are a gift from God.

God says first things belong to Him and He pursues covenant with first things to establish redeeming covenant with everything that comes after it. God said it is better to destroy a firstfruit than to use it for your own personal gain. If you touch a holy thing, it will bring a curse on you and God says it is better to destroy that thing rather than let it curse you.

TITHE VS. FIRSTFRUITS

I believe the body of Christ has been misled. You may have been taught that firstfruit is your tithe. But your tithe is not your firstfruit.

Firstfruit is mentioned 32 times in the Bible. In Genesis 4, it is mentioned as “firstlings” or “firstfruits.” Tithe is also mentioned 32 times in the Bible but your tithe is first mentioned when Abram pays his tithe to Melchizedek in Genesis 14:20. The firstfruit is different.

The tithe is the first tenth of God’s daily provision (your regular paycheck or a bonus or any ordinary income or increase that comes as a regular part of God’s provision for you). The firstfruit is the whole of something given to you by God that represents all that comes after it. Let me give you an example. When I started this ministry, I received a substantial gift of money in support. Instead of using it to support the ministry, I firstfructed it to God in order to establish His covenant with the whole of my ministry. I gave the whole gift to Him and didn’t use any of it in my own ministry. I believe this act of obedience is the reason my ministry prospers.

If the firstfruits are sanctified to God—relinquished to Him in some way that worships Him—then all that comes after will be blessed. But if the firstfruits aren’t sanctified to God, then they are judged as withheld from Him and the fruit that comes after will be cursed. Proverbs 3:9-10 says,

“Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.”

God says your tithe and your firstfruits are not the same thing. The firstfruit is the first of every thing. After that, you tithe on everything else. This principle is not limited to only your money. It includes your family, your time, your talent, your gifts. It includes the first hours of your day, the first Sunday of every month, the first month of every year, the first of everything that sanctifies all that follows. The first belongs to God and the first establishes the blessing or cursing of everything else that follows. At Without Walls, we encourage our congregation to sacrifice their first week’s salary of each year. Some, like my husband and I, do as much as one month’s salary; while others can only give a day’s worth. The point is to sacrifice something significant to you to exemplify to God that you are dedicating the very first of each year to Him, so that He will bless all that follows.

First things first. That’s why the Bible says to remember the Lord thy God. Firstfruit the Lord thy God. That same Hebrew word, *zakar*, is found when Noah was spared. The Word says

the Lord remembered. The Lord firstfructed Noah for His covenant's sake. It says to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy. Zakar (firstfruit) the Sabbath and keep it holy. It's God's day.

I know you have a lot to do on the Sabbath. But it's not your shopping day. It's not your family entertainment day. It's not your play day. It's a holy day and you firstfruit it to the Lord. Do this and all your days will be holy in God's eyes.

What you do first thing in the morning sets the rest of the day. You don't need to get up, get your coffee, and start doing your own thing. You need to say, "Good morning, Holy Spirit. I bless You today." You need to worship your Lord and hear from Him. Then, go get your day started. Do as Matthew 6:33 declares and, *seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*, then all that you desire will be added to you.

First Fruits Quick Reference

Proverbs 3:9

Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops;

Leviticus 23:10

...When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest.

Deuteronomy 26:2-3

...take some of the first fruits of all that you produce... Then go to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name and say to the priest ... "I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come to the land the LORD swore to our forefathers to give us."

Deuteronomy 26:10

... I bring the first fruits of the soil that you, O LORD, have given me." Place the basket before the LORD your God and bow down before him.

Nehemiah 10:35

We also assume responsibility for bringing to the house of the LORD each year the first fruits of our crops and of every fruit tree.

Ezekiel 44:30

The best of all the first fruits and of all your special gifts will belong to the priests. You are to give them the first portion of your ground meal so that a blessing may rest on your household.

I Corinthians 15:20

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Revelation 14:4

These are those who did not defile themselves ... they kept themselves pure. ... They were purchased from among men and offered as first fruits to God and the Lamb.

Exodus 23:16

"Celebrate the Feast of Harvest with the first fruits of the crops you sow in your field.

Exodus 34:26

"Bring the best of the first fruits