THE
Blessed
LIFE
UNLOCKING THE REWARDS
OF GENEROUS LIVING

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Robert Morris, The Blessed Life
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Robert Morris, The Blessed Life
Foreword

It was like a breath of fresh air to Betty and me when we heard Robert Morris, pastor of Gateway Church in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, teach so effectively, biblically and accurately on the subject of giving. I believe Robert has hit the target dead center and literally captured the heart of God.

Frankly, I have been so disappointed and shocked by the manipulative tactics of some ministries that I have been very reluctant to share in depth my own deep convictions concerning giving and receiving.

Please understand that the law of the harvest is irrefutable and that we unquestionably reap what we sow. However, I don’t believe in leading people to focus on their own gain without understanding the sheer joy of living to give and loving to share. Jesus clearly said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35), so it puzzles me when I hear ministers and evangelists place the major focus on how we can get, get, get. This kind of teaching leads people to believe that by giving or sowing seed, they are going to reap a money tree in their backyard. It’s like playing spiritual bingo or lottery.

Betty and I have spent our entire 40 years of marriage enjoying the thrill of giving, and I can say with no exaggeration that we have never given one time to any person, ministry or a specific need thinking we will surely get a return. Even if there was no return, the sheer joy of giving and seeing its positive effect should make us want to give.

Is there any question that those who give for the right reason and with the right heart do often gain or receive a return? No question about it. The problem is the focus of the heart. We put our treasure where our heart is (see Matt. 6:20-21).
God is interested in creating the heart of a farmer. A farmer prepares the soil, plows, plants, carefully oversees and seeks to protect what he has planted but trusts God for the increase in due season. If he doesn’t see it come at an expected time, he knows in due season it will come. If he’s hailed out, rained out, stormed out or droughted out, he still farms because he has the heart of a farmer. Many people talk about the promise of “a hundredfold” return (Matt. 13:8,23). The truth is, not every farmer receives that kind of return.

We often go through trials, tests and tribulations that are almost unbearable while we continue to be faithful to the Lord. However, we must recognize that everything we have belongs to God, and we are merely the stewards. It’s pretty easy to place what belongs to somebody else in the proper areas. If, however, we have the attitude of the rich fool and try to guard it, hoard it, protect it, keep it and think only of ourselves, we haven’t for one moment identified with the heart of God.

If you want to be set free in the area of giving and learn what it really means to discover the truth of “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over” (Luke 6:38), then read what Robert shares throughout these pages. Remember, the focus will be on God and others and very little on self.

Does it mean that we don’t care if we don’t have a return? Does it mean that we don’t ever hope to receive? As surely as a farmer hopes for the harvest and is confident it will come in due season, it does matter. But the focus can’t be there. We’ve got to lose sight of self and understand the value of giving and sharing in order to live like a river.

As one very successful businessman said to a small group at lunch one day, “I feel I’m like a river. No matter how much I give, I never have less; no matter how much I receive, I never have any...
more.” What he receives, he releases into the purposes of God. That does not mean that this individual could not have had a nicer car, a more expensive suit or a bigger house. . . . It simply means he is not controlled by what God has entrusted to him and what he has received. He is continually releasing what God gives him, and he has become a conduit and expression of God’s love.

May God bless you as you read this book.

James Robison
Founder and President
LIFE Outreach International
Fort Worth, Texas
I want to acknowledge and thank the One who touched the heart of a rebellious young man in Room 12 of Jakes Motel and saved him—the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to thank my best friend, Debbie—my precious wife—the one who always stands by me and supports me and is the greatest example of Christ I have ever known. I couldn’t be or do anything without you.

Thank you to my wonderful children, Josh, James and Elaine. I love you with all my heart, no matter what, and forever and always. I am so proud of each of you, watching you grow in your faith and love for the Lord.

Thank you to my parents, Jearl and Rosalie Morris. I am who I am because of the life you’ve lived before me. The words in this book mirror the principles you have lived and taught me.

Thank you, James and Betty Robison, for loving, helping and encouraging Debbie and me for more than 20 years. Thank you for exhorting me to write this book in order to reach as many people as I can. Thanks for your godly examples and servants’ hearts. Thanks for feeding the hungry of our world—physically and spiritually.

Thank you, Jimmy and Karen Evans, for pouring into Debbie and me and into Gateway Church. You have accelerated our growth and impact, and I will never be able to say thank you enough for the investment you have made in our lives. Thanks for being my mentors and my friends.

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Thank you, Rick and Cammi Patterson. I have never seen two people who obey God more quickly or desire to please Him more intensely.

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Thank you, Gateway Church. Never have I seen a group of people hungrier for the Lord and more willing to receive the Word and walk in it than you. You received these truths and allowed God to do a wonderful work in your hearts that was amazing to watch. You are an example to believers all over the world. I thank God every day for you and that He chose me to be your pastor.

Because of all of you that I have acknowledged, truly, I am living the blessed life!
Introduction

I can say with absolute confidence that Satan does not want you to read this book.

Without a doubt, the enemy of your soul would do anything to keep you from discovering God’s principles governing financial stewardship, giving and blessing. Why? Because once you do, it will transform your life for the better. It will bring you guaranteed financial results. But it will also do more than that: It will impact the kingdom of God.

You see, if every believer understood and applied the simple principles I am about to present, it would literally bring revival to the world. Every needed church facility could be built. Every missionary with a divine call and a willing heart could be sent and abundantly supplied. The gospel could saturate every culture on the planet.

Yes, as God’s people prospered, money would come into the Kingdom; but much more important, our hearts would be changed!

That’s why I am so pleased (and the devil isn’t!) that you have picked up this book. Through these extraordinary truths, God will do an amazing work in your heart. He will change you forever. And, I promise, you will like it.

No one is a natural-born giver. We are all born takers. We enter this world with a fallen sin nature, and at the heart of that nature is a tendency toward selfishness.

In contrast, God is a giver. The most widely known verse in the Bible tells us:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16).
God is generous beyond our ability to imagine. But it was selfishness and pride that caused Satan to be cast out of heaven. Many people in our culture have that exactly backwards. They see God as stingy and the devil as the one who likes to pass out favors. So, if you are ever prone to getting confused about this issue, remember it this way: God and generous both begin with the letter G. Satan and selfish both begin with S. That should help you keep it straight!

To be serious for a moment, I am very excited for you. You are about to begin a journey of discovery. I can tell you from personal experience, there is no greater adventure on Earth than simply living the life of generosity and abundance that is available to all of God’s people—but that so few ever dare to live. It is a journey of reward. It is the blessed life.

Read on, and let the adventure begin!
The Unexpected Adventure

The odometer on our “highly experienced” station wagon showed upwards of 130,000 miles as I rolled up to the pump at a little gas station in Oklahoma.

It was 1984, and I was a young evangelist. In those days, my wife, Debbie, and I would gladly drive to just about any place that would offer me an opportunity to preach.

We were on a journey that day in two senses of the word. Yes, we were on our way to minister the gospel. But this little filling station was also a stop on a voyage of discovery—one we had
embarked upon about a month earlier. It was a journey into the power and joy of Spirit-led giving.

As I walked into the station to pay for my gasoline, the lady behind the counter said, “It’s taken care of.”

“Excuse me?” I asked, a little confused.

“It’s taken care of,” she repeated. “You don’t owe anything for the gas.”

Now I was genuinely confused. “Why is that?”

Very matter-of-factly, she said, “When you pulled up, God told me that you were an evangelist and that I was to pay for your gas. So it’s taken care of.”

Grateful and still a little startled, I thanked her warmly and went on my way.

That stop was a small but significant milestone on this journey I mentioned. The idea that the Spirit of God would speak to someone and instruct them to give wasn’t a new concept for me. In fact, this incident was a perfect example of the very thing God had begun to make a centerpiece of my ministry and my walk as a Christian.

The Next Level

As a traveling evangelist, all of my income came from the love offerings I received from the churches in which I preached. In those years, my income from offerings might be $800 one week and $200 the next. Debbie and I just never knew. But early in our marriage, we had learned to trust God where our finances were concerned.

We were diligent tithers. God had spoken clearly to us about the principle of the tithe several years earlier. And ever since we began honoring the Lord by giving the first tenth of everything that came in, our needs have always been met—
sometimes miraculously. What we didn’t know was that God was about to take us to the next level.

As I mentioned, about a month before the surprise blessing at the gas station, God did something remarkable to get my attention where the matter of giving was concerned.

I was scheduled to preach at a church for only one night, and as it turned out, it was the only meeting I was scheduled to preach at all month. From a financial standpoint, that meant having only one opportunity to receive an offering instead of the usual four, five or six. Although Debbie and I had grown in our ability to trust and rest in God, this represented a major budgeting challenge in the making.

At the close of the service, the church received a love offering on my behalf. Shortly thereafter, the pastor approached me with an envelope.

He said, “Robert, I’m pleased and amazed to tell you that this is the largest love offering this little church has ever given. God used you to bless us tonight, and I’m so happy to be able to give this to you.”

When I opened the envelope, I found a check for roughly the same amount as our entire monthly budget. In one meeting, God had miraculously provided what it normally took several meetings to produce. It was quite a lesson for us. But the lesson wasn’t over yet.

As I stood there holding that check, basking in the warm glow of gratitude and wonder, something happened to me that forever changed the course and quality of my life.

Earlier in that evening’s service, a missionary had given a brief testimony and update for the congregation. Now, as I looked across the nearly empty sanctuary, I caught sight of him. As I did, the unmistakable voice of the Lord spoke in my heart, I want you to give him your offering—all of it.
In an instant, I went from euphoria to something approximating panic. *Lord, that can’t be Your voice! I mean . . . after all . . . I . . . You . . . You just did a miracle here to meet our needs!*

Once again, the instruction came through, gently but clearly. *I want you to give him your offering.*

Like a kid who doesn’t want to hear what his brother is saying, I wanted to stick my fingers in my ears and sing loudly, “La, La, La, La, La . . . ! What? I can’t hear you!”

*Give him the whole offering. Trust Me.*

I couldn’t shake it off. I tried to rationalize. I tried bargaining. I tried begging. The impression only grew stronger.

Ultimately, I waved the white flag and said, “Okay, Father, I trust You.” I endorsed the back of the check, folded it in half and took a quick glance around the room to make sure no one was watching.

Walking up to the missionary, I said something like, “I really appreciated your testimony tonight. Please, don’t tell anyone about this, but I would like you to have this offering. The check is made out to me, but I have signed it over to you.” I handed him the check and walked away.

An hour later, I found myself seated with about 20 members of the church at a pizza place. Across from me sat a well-dressed man I barely knew. (We had met briefly on one other occasion.)

After a while, he leaned across the table toward me, looked me straight in the eye and asked me a shockingly personal question, “How much was your offering tonight?”

Naturally, his question flustered me. I had never had anyone ask me that before, especially a near stranger! His boldness so caught me off guard that I didn’t know what else to do but answer him. So, I told him the amount of the offering. I remember hoping that was the end of it. It wasn’t.
In the same authoritative manner, he asked me another question, “Where is the check?” *What nerve!* I remember thinking. *What is he up to?*

Of course, I no longer had the check, but I wasn’t about to tell him that. So, I am not proud to tell you, this preacher lied through his teeth.

“Uh . . . my wife has it,” I said nervously. She was sitting at the other end of the long table—a nice, safe distance away. *Now can we change the subject?!*

“Go get it. I want to see it.” The man was relentless! Not knowing what else to do, I made a pretense of getting up to go ask her for the check. Bending down close to her ear, I asked, “How’s your pizza?” “Good,” she replied, giving me a perplexed look. “Great. Glad to hear it. Just checking,” I muttered and headed back down the table to my seat.

My ears heard another lie floating past my lips. “She left it out in the car,” I said, trying to make the car sound as if it was very, very far away. (At this point, not only was I trying to hide the fact that I had given my whole love offering away, but I was also covering the fact that this evangelist, who had just spent the evening proclaiming that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, had just lied!)

As tiny beads of perspiration began to pop out on my face, the gentleman leaned across the table and got uncomfortably close. “The check’s not in the car, Robert,” he stated in a low voice.

“How do you know that?” I responded, trying to sound a little offended.

“Because God told me—and He told me something else.”

At that point, the man spoke words that have rolled like thunder through my life ever since.

“God is about to teach you about giving so that you can teach the Body of Christ.” With that, he slid a folded piece of
paper across the table. It was a check. The amount—to the penny—was 10 times the amount of the one I had given away only an hour or so earlier.

    Ten times—to the penny.
    That was the night this journey started.

Wonders of Provision

“God wants to teach you about giving so that you can teach the Body of Christ.” Those words stayed at the forefront of our minds in the amazing months that followed. Debbie and I were wide open to anything God wanted to teach us. And, as a result, we saw God work wonders of provision over and over.

    Sometimes He would prompt us to trust Him and give. Other times, He would use someone else to bless us unexpectedly.

    For example, not long after that life-changing night, Debbie and I were at an in-home Bible study where we spoke with a couple who was about to leave on a missionary trip. They had asked us to pray for them before they left. They particularly requested prayer for their finances. “We don’t quite have all the money this trip will require,” they told us. They did not mention the amount needed but, as we prayed, I had a strong impression that the amount was $800.

    At that point in our lives, $800 sounded like a very large sum of money. But we had it, because of the amazing tenfold blessing we had received at the pizza place.

    That night, we were able to walk out to our car after the meeting and write a check. We caught them before they drove away and handed it to them. Of course, it was the precise amount they needed to be able to take that mission trip.
Frankly, it was the most exciting thing I had ever done. We were quickly beginning to discover how thrilling it is to be able to give when God tells you to do so.

Within the next few weeks, we had the encounter at the gas station I related at the beginning of this chapter.

Shortly after that, we went out to eat with a man who had just purchased a new van. We all rode in it to the restaurant and were talking about how nice the van was and how excited for him we were. When we returned to his home, he said, “Help me get my stuff out of my van,” so I began to gather up his cassette tapes and other items he pointed out. After several trips, I asked, “Do you even want that umbrella out of there? And, by the way, why are you moving all this stuff inside?”

His response was, “Because I’m giving you the van. But I need my umbrella!” “Excuse me?” I asked. He repeated, “I’m giving you this van. God told us to.”

Naturally, we were awestruck, grateful and thrilled. The brand-new van had a value of more than $25,000!

Of course, that blessing raised another question. Now that we have this van, what do we do with the station wagon? It wasn’t much to look at, but it was good, reliable transportation.

After some prayer, we felt the Lord instructing us to give the station wagon to a family that we knew didn’t have a vehicle.

Almost immediately, someone we didn’t even know gave us another vehicle! “God told us to” was the familiar explanation.

After more prayer, we gave that vehicle away as well. Soon, another one arrived to replace it. And then another one. And another one. Each time a vehicle landed in our driveway, we would give it away. And each time, another one would show up to take its place.

In the middle of this amazing sequence, God did something that, at first, puzzled us. In the case of one of the cars we were...
given, our prayer for direction brought this instruction from the Lord: *Don’t give this vehicle away. Sell it.*

At first, we weren’t sure we had heard God accurately. Seeking confirmation, we said, “Lord, are You sure You want us to sell this vehicle? We certainly have enjoyed giving them away.”

The clear reply came back, *No, I want you to sell the vehicle. I want you to sell it for $12,000.*

At church that weekend, a man walked up to me and said, “Hey Robert, would you like to sell that van?” Somewhat startled, I said, “Yes, as a matter of fact, I believe I’m supposed to sell it.” The man then said, “I think the Lord wants me to give you $12,000 for it. Is that acceptable?” Of course, I sold him the vehicle.

The very next week we were scheduled to go on a mission trip to Costa Rica, so we put the $12,000 in the bank, awaiting instructions from the Lord on what to do with it.

A few days later, we found ourselves in Costa Rica riding in a dilapidated old van owned by the missionary we were there to assist. I was genuinely concerned about whether we were going to make it to our destination.

At one point, I asked the missionary, “Why don’t you buy a new van? I think this one is about to die and go to be with the Lord!”

“As a matter of fact, I am about to get a new van!” the missionary said very excitedly. “Last week, I was driving by a car lot, and the Lord told me to stop. Then He pointed out a van to me and said, ‘I want to give you that van, so I want you to pray over it’; so I did! I don’t know how the Lord is going to give me that van,” he continued, “but I know He will!”

Sensing the hand of God, I asked him, “How much do they want for it?” I’m sure you have already guessed the answer:
$12,000. With great joy, my wife and I were able to write the check for $12,000 as soon as we got home.

Outgive God?

Throughout this remarkable season of giving, we experienced tremendous blessing. Our income had skyrocketed. It seemed the more we gave, the more God gave to us. It was as if we were truly living out the old saying: You can’t outgive God.

Over the course of those 18 months, it was our privilege to give away nine vehicles. What’s more, we were able to increase our giving to 70 percent of our gross income. We found ourselves living more comfortably on 30 percent than we previously had on 90 percent.

We simply encountered God’s blessings everywhere we turned. And around each corner, we learned new lessons in the power of Spirit-led giving. Just when we thought we were as radical about giving as we could possibly be, God would stretch us a little bit more.

For example, toward the end of that 18-month period, the Lord spoke to us about giving both of our vehicles away. He said, “I want you to give them both away. I’ll show you the couple to whom you are to give them; and another thing, I also want you to give your house away; and I also want you to take every bit of money that you have in the bank and give it away, too.”

Needless to say, we wrestled with this one. When we prayed, we said, “Lord, You’re asking us to give everything away that we
own. Are You sure this is what You’re saying?” And the Lord kept saying, “I’m sure, I’m sure.”

So we did. As the Lord showed us the recipients, we gave the vehicles away. We gave away all the money in our bank accounts. And we looked and listened diligently for instructions about giving away the house. In our hearts, we had already given the house away. We had fully released it. We just needed to know to what family we were to hand the title and the keys.

There we were—without transportation and without a dollar with which to buy any. As I sat in my house (which I no longer considered to be mine), I have to admit, I was having some carnal thoughts.

I remember thinking to myself, Ah! I’ve got Him. This time I’ve outgiven the Lord!

I recall having a very frank and honest discussion with God, saying, “Lord, You know, I think I’ve outgiven You this time. Yes, every time we gave a car away, You gave us another car. Well, this time, I’ve given both my vehicles and all my money away! This time, I think I’ve got You, Lord. I’ve outgiven You.”

Even as I said that, I sensed in my heart the Lord saying, Oh, really! At that moment, the telephone rang. On the other end of the line was a man who said, “Robert, God has spoken to me about helping you with your transportation.” (You need to know that, besides the recipients, no one on Earth knew of what Debbie and I had given. This man did not know we had given our vehicles away.)

My immediate thought was, Well, that’s a blessing. This man is going to give us a car. My assumption was that the pattern we had seen repeat itself so many times was about to play out once more. I must also admit that I thought, Well, Lord, even if he gives us a car, the fact remains that we gave away two cars, all of our money and, in effect, our house. So I think I’ve still got You.
So I asked the man on the phone, “What did the Lord tell you to do?” He answered, “The Lord told me to buy you an airplane.” I was speechless.

He continued, “As a matter of fact, I bought the plane today; and I’ve parked it at the airport; and I’m going to pay for the hangar; and I’m going to pay for the fuel; and I’m going to pay for the insurance and maintenance on the airplane; and I’ve hired a pilot. I’m going to pay his salary, so anytime you want to go somewhere, just call him and he’ll fly you there. I’ll take care of all the expenses!”

As I stood there stammering and stunned, I heard the still, small voice of the Lord whisper in my spirit, “Gotcha.”

My friend, you can’t outgive God.

God offers the only true guaranteed financial results available on Earth. There are principles, however, that we have to follow in order to experience God’s highest rewards.

They are the keys to living the blessed life.

Blessed or Cursed?

Before we continue, I should probably define terms. What do I mean by “the blessed life?” What does a life filled with blessing look like?

Being “blessed” means having supernatural power working for you. By contrast, being “cursed” means having supernatural power working against you.
The days of the blessed person are filled with divine “coincidences” and heavenly meaning. A blessed man may or may not be wealthy by the world’s standards, but he enjoys a quality of life that most billionaires would envy.

At four separate points in the book of Deuteronomy, God tells those who will obey Him that He will bless everything to which they put their hands (see 14:29; 15:10; 23:20; 28:8,12). That’s what the blessed life is like. Everything you touch does well.

Blessing permeates every aspect of a person’s life—health, relationships, work, family, emotions and thoughts.

Sound good? Then read on. You’re about to discover how to live a life of blessing.