

**“First Fruits Giving” (January 13, 2013)**

**Core Value: “Living from Heaven’s perspective—w/ God all things possible”**

**Proverbs 3:9- “Honor the Lord with your wealth; with the first fruits of all your crops.”**

**“First Fruits” refers to the “first portion” given to God. (i.e., giving Him our “first” and our “best”)**

- **The first fruits of their crops (Ex. 23)**
- **The first batch of dough as they were about to make bread (Num. 15)**
- **The first fruits of their grain, wine, and oil; as well as the first fleece of their sheep (Deut. 18)**
- **Their firstborn son (Ex. 13)**

**First Fruits Giving was an expression of:**

- **GRATITUDE-** acknowledging that everything comes from God
- **DEDICATION-** declaring: “This—and everything that follows—belongs to You.”
- **TRUST-** expressing faith in His continued provision (NOTE: The “Feast of First Fruits” was instituted when Israel was in the wilderness—without land or crops—faith that He would lead them into the Land of Promise)

### **1. GOD LOVES TO GIVE**

**He is the God of the “open hand”.**

*(“You open Your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing” Psalm 145:16) (The Message- “Generous to a fault, You lavish Your favor on all creatures”)*

- **He “gives us richly all things to enjoy” (1 Tim. 6:17)**
- **There are 25,000 varieties of orchids—one of over 270,000 species of flowers**
- **Our galaxy has 400 billion stars in our galaxy—there are 10 billion galaxies we can see with our most powerful telescopes. In all of these, there are 70 sextillion stars (7 with 22 zeroes). (10 times as many stars as all the grains of sand on all the world’s beaches & on all the world’s deserts)!!!**
- **“The earth is drenched in God’s affectionate satisfaction” (Psalm 33:5)**
- **“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us—that we should be called children of God!” (1 John 3:1)**
- **We will “not lack any spiritual gift” (1 Cor. 1:7)**
- **SEE Ephesians 1:3-8**

## 2. HE LOVES IT WHEN WE ENJOY GIVING, TOO

**“God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7) (*Those who give spontaneously and hilariously—without reserve; holding nothing back*)**

**BECAUSE HE LOVES WHAT HAPPENS IN US!**

### **a. How we THINK**

**2 Cor. 9:7-11**

**“A generous man will prosper. He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed” (Proverbs 11:25)**

**The “spirit of our mind” gets “renewed”:**

- **Anticipation**- He will bring “increase” of resources (“seed”) AND He will “enlarge” our sphere of influence
- **Gratitude**- GIVING thanks connects us with the heart of the Giver—the Extravagantly Generous One!

### **b. How we TALK**

**Hebrews 13:5- “Your conversation is so free from the love of money, that you are guarded (Lit.- *put up a barrier*) from fear and distrust because you stand in His promise: ‘I will never leave you or neglect you!’”**

- **We stop talking “poor” (*i.e., We can’t decide. We can’t find people. We don’t have enough. This will never happen.*)**

### **c. How we LIVE (Moves us out of ISOLATION)**

**Psalm 37:25-26- “GENEROUS”- *to twine; bound together with— contribute to & join with***

**[Nani- “A man wrapped up in himself makes a pretty small package”]**

## **RESPONSE**

**The tithe belongs to the Lord (Malachi 3:10)**

**First Fruits Giving is our choice (beyond the tithe):**

- **To declare our trust in His promises & provisions**
- **To dedicate “the whole” of who we are and all we have**