

**Series: Blessed to Be a Blessing**  
**"How Should I Use God's Blessings?"**  
**Acts 20:33-35**

**Introduction:**

1. In our text, the apostle Paul is meeting with the leaders of the church at Ephesus. He is reviewing his ministry among them and admonishing them in several areas. Paul realizes he will probably never see their faces again.
2. Understanding this context, let's read verses 33-35. In these three verses Paul teaches them the proper attitude they are to possess towards material gain, prosperity, and money.
3. Paul gives a direct quote from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus said, "**It is more blessed to give than to receive.**"
  - What does the word "blessed" mean? I think we know what it means. We say, "I sure was blessed the other day. Let me tell you about my blessing."
  - Something happened that brought joy and happiness to you.
4. "*More blessed*" indicates that I've **already** been blessed. So Jesus teaches that I am more blessed when I learn how to take my existing blessings and share them with others.
5. In other words, I am blessed in order that I might be a blessing to someone else!
6. Many people are blessed, but they live their lives using all of those blessings on themselves and then they die. What a wasted life. Christian, this is not God's plan for your life.
7. You may ask, "You mean I have to take my blessings and give them all away?" Certainly not. But what is God's plan for the believer today? Let's look into this text and learn.

**First, God has blessed you to provide for your needs. vs. 34a**

1. Paul had needs just like all of us do. Paul says that he worked with his hands (**Acts 18:3**) to minister unto his necessities.
2. There is nothing wrong with believers taking a portion of God's blessings and using them to meet their physical needs. This is valid.
3. If we are physically able to work and God blesses our work with income, God allows and even expects for us to meet our physical needs out of that income. **2 Thessalonians 3:10** (Get out and get a job if you expect to eat.)
4. Here is the obvious question - what are our needs? As Americans I think we have a problem defining "needs" (satellite TV, NFL package, eating out two or three times a week, a new car, big screen TV, cell phones, computers, brand name clothes, Ipods, etc.).
5. Because we live in a land of prosperity, we have a real problem distinguishing between "needs" and "wants" (needs and creature comforts.)
6. The Bible defines what "needs" are in **1 Timothy 6:6-8**.
  - Food to sustain your physical life.
  - Clothing to cover your physical nakedness.

### **Second, God has blessed you to provide for your loved ones. vs. 34b**

1. Paul worked to provide for his own necessities, but also to provide for those that were with him.
2. Are there people who are dependent on you? It is God-honoring when you provide for their needs, also. **1 Timothy 5:8**
3. Again, as Americans, we have a distorted view of what it means to provide for the needs of our children. This doesn't mean spoiling them with the latest toys, video games, trendy clothes and gadgets, TVs in their rooms, cell phones, and an all expense paid college education.
4. Meeting their needs is making sure they have proper food, clothing, time, attention, and spiritual instruction. It also means teaching them a proper work ethic so that you aren't still providing for them when they are adults.

### **Third, God has blessed you so that you can bless others. vs. 35**

1. Up to this point in our study it has been all about us and our families. Here is the danger. We spend so much of God's blessings on ourselves that we have nothing or very little left to be a blessing to others (give example of a stretched budget).
2. This is a tragic mistake. According to Jesus, God has blessed you so that you could, in turn, be a blessing to others. vs. 35
3. According to the Bible, one of the prime motivations we should have for working (getting up Monday and going in) and making money is so that we can give.  
**Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 6:17-18**
4. Paul says that we labor, not so that we can hoard God's blessings and spend them all on ourselves, but so that we can help the weak.
5. This is what the local church should be all about - helping those who are struggling and weak (weak in the faith, weak through infirmities, weak in mind, weak through trials, weakened and crippled by sin and in desperate need of the gospel).
6. As we give through our local church, we are impacting lives eternally. It is our blessing and privilege to be able to give.
7. Why is it more blessed to give than to receive? Think about it - if you are on the receiving end, it means there is some sort of weakness whereby you **can't** give.
  - You are physically sick and unable to provide for yourself, or mentally weakened and no longer have the mental capability to provide for yourself. It could be you are weakened through unforeseen trials and unable to provide for yourself.
  - But, by the grace of God, this could be any of us next week.
8. Paul says when you are able to give you are "*more blessed.*" Giving should never be viewed as drudgery or something **I have** to do.
  - During offering time, if we have had the physical, mental and emotional ability to be able to work and provide for our needs the past week, we should be hopping up and down, praising God, and can't wait to give to show our appreciation to God for His blessings.
  - This is what Paul meant when he said that God loveth a cheerful giver.

### **In Conclusion:**

1. God has blessed you to be a blessing.

2. What we hoard and spend on ourselves will all be left behind and forever gone when we die.
3. What we give away will impact lives on this earth after we are dead and gone, and throughout eternity.