

God's principles of productivity and generosity

Every one of these is complicated enough to be a book.
But you can get the benefit if you believe them.

The Fun of Preaching:

Saying one thing to a group of people thinking different things.

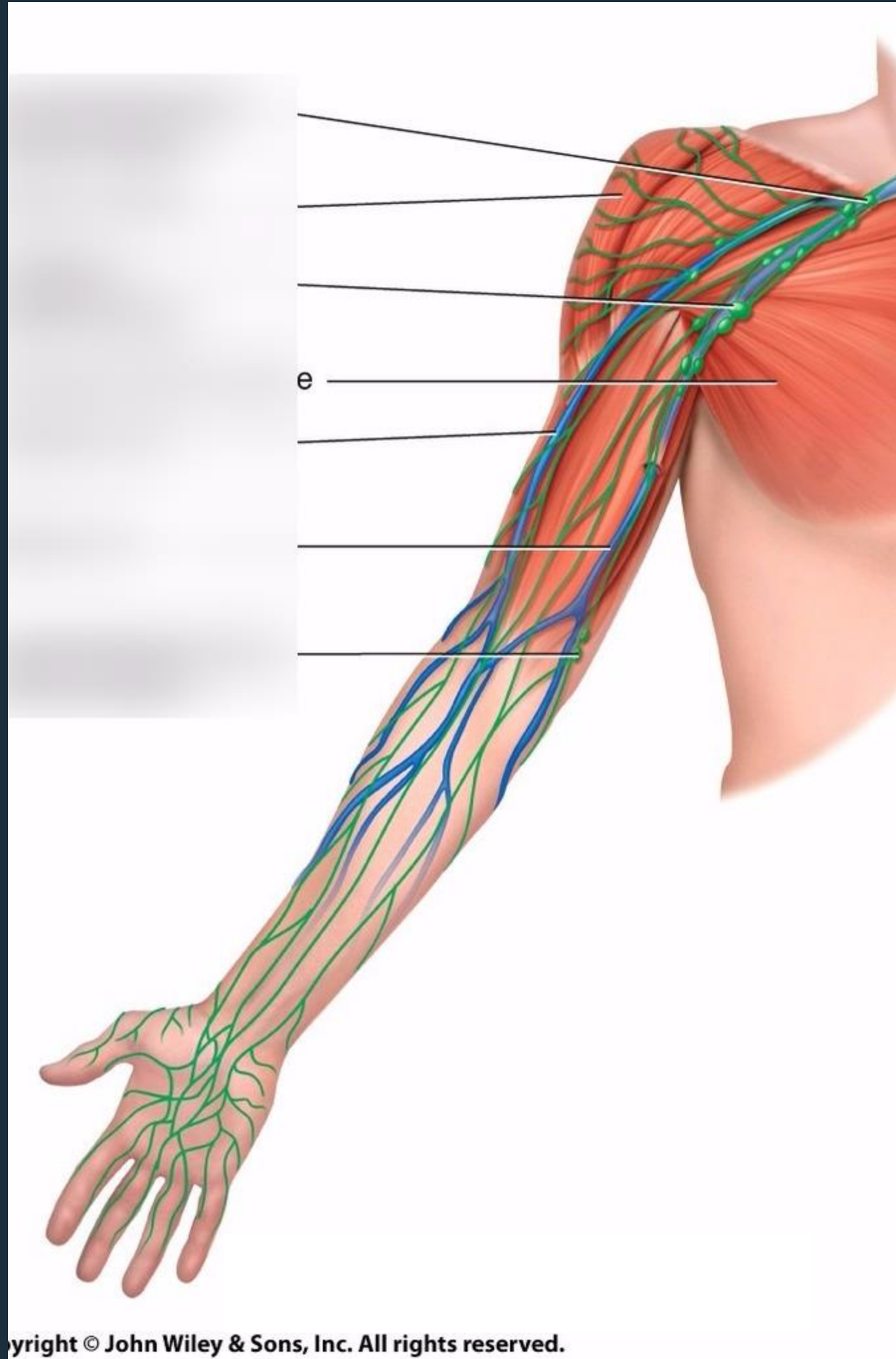
1. Remember this in how you listen
2. This is why we have personal devotions, mentors, small groups, advocates, pastoral counseling....

God is a person of unfathomable productivity, prosperity and generosity.

We are made to be like him in creation.

Whether we can REMEMBER this will determine our faith and virtue...and salvation. (& happiness)

Deuteronomy 8



Talking about giving/tithing
without the other principles
of productivity and
generosity feels like talking
about an arm without the
rest of the body.

Principle 1

God's generous creation is one of increase and abundance

*Genesis 1:20 "And God said,
'Let the water teem with living creatures...'"*

*Psalm 36:8 "They feast in the abundance of your house; you
give them drink from your river of delights."*

Principle 2

God calls humans to **His rule**
and **nature's fruitfulness**

Our purpose is a union of divine rule
and natural productivity.

Genesis 1:27-28

"So God created man[kind] in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"

Principle 3

**God's response to sin is to embed a
promise of blessing under a curse
on everything**

Embedded in the curse is a promise of blessing—only through the faith that produces righteousness.

Genesis 18:18-19

*“Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and **all nations on earth will be blessed through him**. For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him **to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just**, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”*

God creates for productivity, increase and abundance.

God curses creation when men become devourers instead of co-creators.

God promises to bless those that regain his way in creation through faith: called "righteousness" and "justice".

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Principle 4

“sacrifice”

**The first and best of our increase is
the first principle of worship**

2 Samuel 24:24b *“I will not sacrifice to the LORD my
God...offerings that cost me nothing.”*

Genesis 4:2-7

*"Later [Eve] gave birth to [Cain's] brother Abel. Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In **the course of time** Cain brought **some of the fruits of the soil** as an offering to the LORD. But Abel brought **fat portions from** some of the **firstborn of his flock**. The **LORD looked with favor** on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he **did not look with favor**. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the LORD said to Cain, 'Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? **If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?** But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.'"*

First and best of the increase:

- Abel and Cain (Gen 4:2-7)
- Abram tithes to Melchizedek (14:20)
- Jacob promises Tithe @ Bethel (28:20-22)
- Tithe of first fruits (Lev 27:30)
- Redemption of firstborn and flock (Lev 27:26)
- Tithe of land's increase (27:30)
- "Unblemished" offerings (Ex 12:5, Lev 1:3, 3:1, 4:3)

Introduction of worship and ministry:

What is given to remember God is used to remember God.

The tithe was a practical, reliable funding for ministry.

Principle 5

Prosperity has natural
principles of **productivity**

Proverbs 22:29 *"Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will serve before kings; he will not serve before obscure men."*

Proverbs 10:1-6

"A wise son brings joy to his father, but a foolish son grief to his mother.

Ill-gotten treasures are of no value, but righteousness delivers from death.

The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.

Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.

He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.

Blessings crown the head of the righteous, but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked."

Principle 6

**Prosperity is unique in its
blessing and peril**

Prosperity is an incredible honor to steward, and it is among the most dangerous situations for any person

Prosperity is a unique blessing and peril

Unique Blessing

Proverbs 29:2

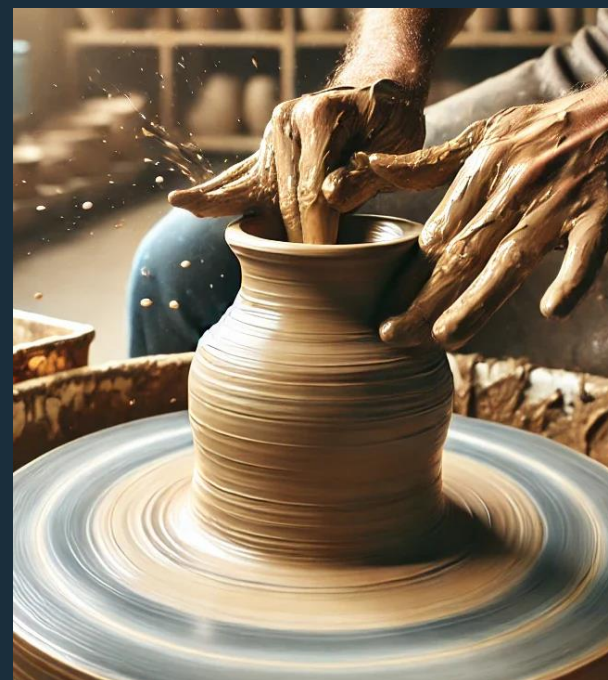
"When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan."



Unique Peril

Proverbs 30:8b-9

"Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the LORD?'..."



Principle 7

**Productivity and generosity are
the only acts in which **we are
invited to test God****

Malachi 3:10 *“Test me in this,” says the LORD...*”

Productivity Test: Sabbath

Stop working one day, 3 weeks, one year out of 7 and 2 years out of 50.
See if I do not give you plenty if you rest and remember me.

Lev 25:20-21

Generosity Test: Malachi 3:7-12

“‘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 you will not have room enough for it.’”

Deuteronomy 6:16 *“Do not put the LORD your God to the test...”*

Principle 8

**God spiritually tests us around
productivity and generosity**

5 key tests of faith are centered on
productivity and generosity

5 Key Spiritual Tests: Productivity and Generosity (in every test are blessings)

1. Productivity:

Will you work
for others?
(out there
and at home)

2. Justice:

Will you treat
others fairly
as people?

3. The Poor:

Proverbs 17:5 *"He
who mocks the poor
shows contempt for
their Maker;
whoever gloats over
disaster will not go
unpunished."*

4. Worship and mission:

Is your heart bound up
with God's reputation and
mission?

5. Rest/Sabbath:

Is God a slave driver?
Are you? Are you of
yourself?

Principle 9

**God's principles are the same,
though his new law is love**

2 Corinthians 8:8 *"I am **not commanding you**, but I want to **test the sincerity of your love** by comparing it with the earnestness of others."*

Provide for others needs

2 Corinthians 8:13-15/ Exodus 16:18



Support those who serve you spiritually

1 Corinthians 9:9-14/ Deuteronomy 25:4



Generosity produces righteousness

2 Corinthians 9:8-9/ Psalm 112:9

Principle 10

**Your heart and money are
in the same place.**

Matthew 6:20-21 *"...store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.
For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*