10th Grade Devotional 1

ROPE
Rites Of Passage Experience

Romans
13:7-8

7 *Give therefore to everyone what you owe:* taxes *to whom* taxes *are due;* customs *to whom* customs; *respect to whom respect; honor to whom honor.*
8 *Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor* has *fulfilled the law.*

My mailbox is regularly filled with offers from folks who want to give me money. They tell me that I am already pre-approved and can gain access to large sums of money that I can spend on all sorts of wonderful things that will improve my life and make it more enjoyable. And as if that is not enough, my email inbox is filled with the same kinds of offers. With all of this money available, it seems there is nothing that I want that is out of reach.

However, I learned the hard way that you have to read the fine print. When I did, I realized that the people who seemed to want to do me a favor and be my friend actually wanted to make me their servant and put me in a situation where I was working to make money to put into their account.

The Bible has a plethora of warnings about the dangers of debt. We are warned in **Matthew 6:24** that we cannot serve two masters and Proverbs tells us that the borrower is the servant to the lender. **Romans 6:18** tells us that we have been set free from sin and now "slaves to righteous- ness."

Philippians 4:19 tells us that God will supply all our needs according to the riches of His glory in Christ Jesus. That provision is made as a result of the ongoing relationship we have with God. We talk to Him through prayer about the things we need and seek His will over the things we want and He provides in supernatural ways as He sees fit. He knows what is best for us and what we truly need and are capable of managing properly. However, going into debt to get the things we want can circumvent that process and allow us to "own" things that are not in our best interest.

So make it a priority to owe no one anything but to share the love that God has so freely given to you.

Parents:

Discuss with your student the difference between wants and needs. Share a time when God was faithful! and provided for you and your family. Pray together thanking God for the blessings he has given to your family.

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10th Grade Devotional 2

ROPE
Rites Of Passage Experience

My wife and I finished our anniversary dinner at a nice restaurant downtown and, after perfectly executing my gentlemanly car door duties in the dimly lit parking lot, I start back toward my side of the car. As I clear the back bumper, I am confronted by man who has obviously seen some rough times. He is blocking the access to my car door so I politely listen as he shares his story of hard times and a sick wife. As his story drags on, I hope that my wife can see or hear what is happening so she doesn't think I locked her in the car and left. I continue to edge my way toward the driver's side door when he finally reaches the punch line and asks for money so he can take his sick wife some dinner. I offer to buy some food from a nearby fried chicken joint but he's looking for cash. I'm close enough to my car door that I feel safe explaining to him that all the cash I have is a large denomination bill. I'm shocked when he replies, "that's great, it's about time I got a big bill handout, I'm tired of always getting small bills."

What do we do with the poor? This is a problem that we try to institutionalize and sanitize so we can sooth our conscience with an "I gave at the office" justification. I mean, after all, doesn't the government take care of that? And what they miss the church or the rescue mission picks up so as long as I pay taxes and give a little to the church, I'm golden, right! Well, .. sort of.

Yes, we should pay our taxes and yes we should give to the church and other organizations that minister to the needs of the poor. But God intends for each of us to directly interact with those in need. It changes who we are and how we feel about life when we help someone in need, person to person.

If you use a concordance or a Bible computer program and search the word "poor" you will find that God has a lot to say about the topic. Here are a few that indicate how serious He is about His people caring for the poor.

Read:

Proverbs 19:17

Luke 6:38

Matthew 25:37-40

He doesn't ask us to judge them or figure out if they deserve help or what they will do with what we give them. He simply says that if we will help those in need, he will reward us. His promise should be enough.

Parents:

Discuss with your student ways that your family can show generosity.

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10th Grade Devotional 3

Proverbs
30:7-9

7 *"Two things I have asked of you; don't deny* me *before I die:*
8 Remove far from me *falsehood and* lies. *Give* me *neither poverty nor riches. Feed* me *with the food that* is *needful for* me;
9 lest I be full, deny you, and say, *'Who* is *Yahweh?' or lest I be poor, and steal, and* so *dishonor the name of my God.*

"How much is enough?" Ask most anyone this question and regardless of their current situation, the response will be resemble this statement; "More than I already have!"

It seems to be part of human nature to never be satisfied with what we have and always long for more. And, as with most things in this life, the desire for more can be a good thing or a bad thing, depending on how we respond.

A strong Biblical case can be built that increase is good. There are many principles that include a promise of increase. Read the parable of the talents in **Matthew 25: 14-30** and it appears that increase is not only expected but rewarded in the life of a follower of Jesus.

However, in **Mark 10:17-27** we read the story of a rich young man whose wealth becomes a major stumbling block to his entering the kingdom of God.

In **I Timothy 6:10** we are warned, "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil."

So, is having money and the things it can buy a good thing or a bad thing? After a thorough study of the topic it seems the answer to that question is, "yes".

Your probably saying, "wait, that question can't be answered with a yes or a no, you have to choose good or bad. But clearly, it can be either depending on the condition and motivation of our heart. God's intention is for us to be part of a cycle of provision. He provides for us so that we can help provide for others, who will help provide for others, who will… etc. Learn to use things and love people, instead of the other way around. Remember to hold all that God provides with an open hand, not a clinched fist.

How much is enough? Enough is whatever it takes to be fully obedient to the commands of God and His call on your life without becoming distracted by the things it can provide.

Parents:

Discuss with your student the things that can distract you in life from being obedient to God's will. Pray that you will use the blessings God has given you in ways that glorify Him.

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0th Grade Devotional 4

ROPE
Rites Of Passage Experience

The story is often told about the man who schedules a meeting with his pastor. After some small talk the man cuts to the chase with the reason he is there. "Pastor," he says, I have a dilemma. After one of your sermons on tithing I decided to give it a try. And I have to say, God has blessed me. My income is to the point now that my tithe check last week was more than my weeks salary was when I started this."

That's great!" says the pastor. "So, what's the dilemma?"

Well," he begins, "when it dawned on me how large my tithe check has become, I just couldn't write it. I mean, that's a lot of money to just give away. When I first started tithing it wasn't that much, but now . . . I don't know, do you think it will be alright if I continue to give but just not the full ten percent, maybe, half that."

The pastor pauses a moment and then does what any good pastor would do. He says, "I tell you what, let's pray about it. Lord, you have blessed my friend here so much that he's now having a problem tithing because it's so much money.

So I ask you to please reduce his income to a point that he will once again feel comfortable obeying your word and returning a full ten percent to You."

Not exactly the answer the guy was looking for, I'm sure! And if you are asking others what they believe about tithing you'll most likely hear some answers that aren't what you are looking for. So, let's just see what the Bible says about it and go with that.

Read Malachi 3:8-12

Those are some pretty awesome promises God makes. And did you notice that He says we are robbing Him when we don't tithe? We don't GIVE a tithe, we RETURN a tithe because it actually belongs to God. Some say it's like our rent payment for living on His earth and breathing His air. Now, obviously, God does not need our money. The tithe is to remind us of our place in this world, who is really in charge and just how much we really owe Him.

Parents:

Discuss tithing with your student. If they don't already give a regular offering, encourage them to start. Share with them what tithing has meant in your life. This may be a time for you both to commit to regularly tithing.

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10th Grade Devotional 5

ROPE
Rites Of Passage Experience

It's the middle of the afternoon so it comes as no surprise that the fast food restaurant I enter is void of customers. As I approach the counter to place my order, I am confronted by an employee who obviously wishes to be elsewhere.

"What can I get for you," he huffs.

Trying to lighten the mood, I cheerfully reply, "I hope your doing well today."

"I'll be a lot better in about fifteen minutes when I'm on my way out of this dump," he grumbles. "I've been here since 5 A.M. because some jerk decided not to show up lunch shift. Can't say that I blame him. I didn't want to come in today either."

Makes you wonder if you really want to eat there doesn't it? Think about this, instead of this attitude what if everyone approached their daily work for the God they love?

In the Hebrew culture of the Old Testament, life was viewed in a holistic way. That means that every aspect of a person's life was considered to be a part of their relationship with God.

A person's life was not compartmentalized into sacred and is one reason that books like Leviticus and Numbers contain teaching and commands about everything from how to treat your neighbor to personal hygiene. It is all considered art of worshipping God.

One outcome of this understanding of life is the concept that our daily work is an expression of worship toward God. It is God who has created us, God who has gifted us and God who has called us to the work that we do. Through this work we honor Him and serve one another.

We see that this mindset is carried over into the new covenant when Paul says in **Colossians 3:17 and** 23, Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father, through him. (23) And whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord, and not for men,

Imagine what it would be like if everyone did their job as if it were an act of worship for the God they love. Imagine what a difference it will make for you if you do that.

Parents:

Discuss with your student how they can make every part of their life an act of worship. From school to home life, to work, let them know their attitude and focus are important in all that we do.

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