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GOOD MORNING – Bobby Schuller (BS) and Hannah Schuller (HS)

BS: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Good morning, everyone.

HS: And hello, church family. It is great to see you. Thank you for taking the time to be here so we can gather together as a family and worship together.

You know Bobby is speaking on generosity today and I love the fact that even if you only have a wooden nickel to your name you can be a generous person and a generous person is a blessed person.

Turn around and shake the hand of the person next to you and say God loves you and so do I.

BS: We're so glad you're here and we believe in people here. We believe in the Lord but we believe in a Lord that believes in you. He made you and He loves you, He's got a plan for your life, He sent His son to die so that we can be reconciled to Him. He's filled you with the spirit. He has a plan and a purpose for your life. And a big part of coming to church and being the church is being reminded that life is so much more than the nine to five, the errands, the stuff we have to do every week; that we live for a greater purpose and that is for the kingdom of God.

And so I want you to know that your role in that is so important. You're important here at the church and we're so glad that you're rooted in God's house. I just believe that being rooted in God's house makes life better; makes it more rich.

It's too early to start my sermon so I'm just going to pray. Let's bow our heads. Father, we thank you that love us. We thank you that you're not angry at us. We thank you that you don't see our moral failings and blunders, you see the righteousness of Christ in us. Thank you for Him. Thank you for the cross, Lord. Thank you that you call us your beloved. Lord, we need your help, we need your spirit, we need your mind, we need your encouragement, we need your power, and Lord we trust you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

HS: Amen.

SCRIPTURE – Malachi 3:8-12 – Hannah Schuller

You may be seated. In preparation for Bobby's message, the words of our Lord found in Malachi 3:8.

Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask how are we robbing you? In tithes and offerings. You were under a curse, your whole nation, because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house. 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 there will not be room enough to store it.

I will prevent pests from devouring your crops and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before its ripe, says the Lord almighty. Then all the nations will call you blessed for yours will be a delightful land, says the Lord almighty.

Church family, as we give, we get to be a part of the incredible work God is doing. Amen.

INTERVIEW – Erin Weidemann (EW) – Bobby Schuller (BS)

BS: Our guest today is Erin Weidemann, an inspirational speaker, author, and chief encouragement officer of the Bible Bells book series. After battling and beating cancer five times over the course of a decade, she constantly encourages others who may be struggling in trusting God in uncertain situations. Please welcome with me, Erin Weidemann. Hi Erin, so glad you're here.

EW: I'm so excited to be here, thank you. Yes.

BS: Well first of all, this is like kind of a special thing for me because my daughter is a big fan.

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And of course you do all sorts of media and things, but children's books have been a big part of what you do.

And maybe we can just start there. Tell us a little bit about what fuels your ministry and your passion and why you're doing what you do.

EW: I spent a lot of years as a full-time teacher and just my heart was breaking for what girls were going through in terms of insecurity and just a lack of understanding who they are in the Lord, comparing themselves to everyone they see, and just desperately wanting to do something about it. So we created Bible Bells to help girls connect with the women, the stories of women in the Bible that can powerfully show them that God wants to use them for a plan and a purpose here on earth to build His kingdom.

BS: That's awesome. You know one of the great things about the church is that the church actually has its history in empowering women. It may not seem that way as much today, but in the first century, in the Roman Empire and other places, women were second rate citizens, they were often viewed as property, and the church started treating them as children of God. Paul says there is neither male nor female but we're all children of God etcetera, or Abraham's seed.

And this has been something that's really.. you guys have made a big impact and something that's really been important to you.

EW: We wanted to make the women of the Bible these stories accessible for girls, so we focused on five women in the Old Testament that we really thought could teach girls here's what God says, not only about beauty, but your plan and path and purpose to ignite a fire inside them to build confidence. I mean all the things we want girls to know about themselves because God crafted a leadership role; a role for influence for His kingdom for each and every girl.

So for me it's exciting to talk about and I'm the mother of a little girl and just getting to champion this cause and watching God work through it is really exciting, not just for girls here in the U.S. but literally girls all over the globe.

BS: And of course God really does use women all throughout the Bible and sometimes as solo people, doing their own thing, not supporting a man. But doing something that God's called them to do.

EW: Yes and God has carved out, I mean a unique set of steps; you need opportunities. And He's given us all these gifts and resources and time, and moments that He wants us to simply just say yes to. So it's exciting to be able to teach through it and to get people excited that this generation of people to come alongside the next generation of girls, and just simply speak truth to model these behaviors for them, and to just prioritize building God's kingdom because that's the most important job we all have as believers.

BS: There's a recent study that came out about this generation that's in college. So apparently the new incoming class at universities are not millennials. So millennials born before 1994, there's like a new generation born after 1994, and a really depressing study that came out is that suicide is way up in this generation. It's up twenty-five percent for men, but it's up seventy-five percent for girls. And one of the speculations about this is things like Instagram and Facebook where a girl will put a lot of effort into putting a great picture together and put it on Instagram, and then wait and see what people say and what people think; that there's this sort of training that my value is in how I look or how much of a response I get online.

What do we do as a church, as parents, as mentors of girls to help them break free from that bondage?

EW: I think for us we've got to prioritize connecting them to scripture. We know that the Bible is our manual, it's the book that has all the answers, like the last book they would ever read that literally will help them have an approach and a framework to tackle all of life's challenges. So we have to engage them with the stories of the Bible and the truth of God's word that reveal His character and what it says about their life, and prioritize that over everything else.

And the things like social media and technology that are weighing on girls and barraging them with all of this messaging will just take its rightful place in the backseat because God's priority and His character and His plan for their life becomes first.

BS: That's right, yes, and there's so much, too, in the scripture that just talk about our value is not in those vein things. There's nothing wrong with wanting to look nice, etcetera, but our value is in being children of God and also having a purpose. Like I love Romans 16, where Paul is just listing all of these women who are doing amazing things for the church including Junia who is an apostle.

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She's a church planter over a bunch of pastors. I mean there's just all these layers of wonderful things in which you just see women doing amazing things in the early church.

EW: Definitely and I think, you know, we started with the heard series to identify women and to elevate God's character and help girls understand what God says about beauty, and then ultimately where we're going as a series is to highlight these women of the New Testament, right? The women who were there, that had a specific message, whether it was the gospel message, or the importance of growing the early church and sharing the gospel with everybody that you could meet in your entire life. I mean that's the priority for our kids.

And I love the idea of making those stories accessible for a young girl who's just trying to come to understand who am I? What did you create me to do, Lord? It's exciting to be able to ask those questions as a parent for my own daughter and just to help parents and grandparents be able answer those questions for their kids and guide them along the path God wants to take them on.

BS: Amen. Erin Weidemann, we appreciate it. How can we get a hold of you and support your ministry? And get a hold of your media?

EW: The easiest way is just on the website. Its biblebelles.com. b-i-b-l-e-b-e-l-l-e-s.com.

BS: Thank you for all you do.

EW: Thank you so much for having us.

BS: We appreciate you so much. Erin Weidemann.

EW: Thank you guys. Thank you so much.

BS: Thank you.

PASTORAL PRAYER – Chad Blake

I was just reflecting this week about how the media loves scare tactics, and how everything is so divided, everything is so divisive. It's us against them, and when you boil it down, we are all people. We all eat dinner; we all love our families and our friends. And I think it's important as the church community that we recognize that we serve the King of all kings. We serve the one who every knee shall bow to His name and that our job as a church is to pray for a united country, and to pray for a united leadership, whoever those leaders might be; that we are called to pray for those in those roles. And so this morning as we spend time in prayer, would you join me in praying for our leaders of this country? Father, we come before you and we thank you that we serve a living God. We serve a God who is alive and active in the world today. And Lord we pray over these upcoming elections. We pray for the men and women who will serve this country. We pray that your peace fall upon them. We pray for your wisdom to fall upon them, and we pray that we as a community can support those who have been put in leadership above us.

Lord, we pray for unity. We pray for our brothers and sisters across the aisle to move closer to one another and work together for your good.

Lord, we also remember all the other parts of the world and the things that are going on, and we pray for peace to invade this world. We pray for your name to be lifted high, for your goodness to be proclaimed.

Lord, we pray also for our congregation and we pray and thank you for all the many great things that are happening in our midst. Lord, you are such a good God. Some of us are sick or battling things or have other burdens that we carry and that we bring into this place, and Lord I pray that we can lay them down at your feet. I pray for us to recognize those who are going through a hard time and to reach out and to extend God's love and God's care in their direction.

Lord, we love you and we're so thankful that we have the opportunity to gather here and declare your goodness. And so Lord, let everything that we do be pleasing unto you, in Jesus' name, amen.

PREP FOR OFFERING – Chad Blake

You know, we gather here each week and we worship God, and we do it through song, we do it through the reading of scripture, we do it through the preaching, and we also do it through our giving. By giving back, we are giving back to God's church and you're going to hear all about it later today. So at this time, I'd like to invite the ushers forward as we prepare to receive this morning's tithes and offerings.

WELCOME/COME VISIT – Bobby Schuller

Welcome, thank you for joining us today. We want you to know if you're here in the Irvine area, come down to Irvine Presbyterian and worship with us. We would love to meet you. We want you to know

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that if you've got kids, bring them, we'll teach them the things of God and that the Lord really does love you and we want to encourage you, so come by.

DECLARATION – Bobby Schuller

Friends, let's say this creed together. Will you hold your hands out like this as a way of receiving? I'm not what I do. I'm not what I have. I'm not what people say about me. I am the beloved of God. It's who I am. No one can take it from me. I don't have to worry, I don't have to hurry, I can trust my friend Jesus and share His love with the world.

Thanks, you can be seated.

MESSAGE – "Prosperity and Generosity" – Bobby Schuller

Well today I have the joy of doing something I do almost every November which is preaching on tithing, something I've practiced my whole life, even when I had just about nothing. And it's something that has blessed my life immensely. It's something my parent's grounded into me - this idea that it's not as much about the amount that we give as much as it is the percentage in God's eyes. That God really wants it to hurt when we give so that we can see that He responds to our giving, that we can train ourselves. A couple weeks ago I talked about anti-gravity, to train ourselves that when we experience that pain it actually is good for us. And to free ourselves from the bondage of thinking in terms of scarcity and move into generosity and abundance.

So I'm going to talk about that today. I'm often, especially as a televangelist, hesitant to talk about giving because it's the number one criticism people throw towards people like me and I'm hoping you can just look past that and understand that generosity is a good thing. It's something we're all supposed to practice. It's something that is a Christian characteristic, and that the most common discipline practice in the church to train us in this way is this moral command, to tithe. That is to give ten percent of your income.

So let's talk about that today, shall we? So first of all, Hannah and I just returned from Hong Kong. Thanks to Chad for preaching in our absence; always terrific to hear from you. While we were there, we had a party that was called a thanksgiving feast, and someone was there who was all excited, they thought thanksgiving because well we're Americans and it's close to Thanksgiving so we're going to have turkey and cranberry sauce, etc. But most Chinese people have no idea about the Thanksgiving holiday, and it was us giving thanks to our donors in Hong Kong was why our leader called that.

But anyway, I was talking to a Chinese person about the American holiday of Thanksgiving, since we're not too far from it, and I was explaining to them that in America, the way that we give thanks is by having a huge feast and just gorging ourselves to death so much so that we have to loosen our belt. We have this thing called appetizers and we eat appetizers first to make us more hungry; to really prime the pump to get it going.

And I thought about it for awhile, about how in this sort of Thanksgiving meal, our Thanksgiving is pounding down food. Of course the original Thanksgiving was a meal of generosity. And of course at your Thanksgiving meal, there's only one person being generous and that's mom. Right? Mom is the one that's really putting generosity and Thanksgiving into play. She's spending all of her money, spending all of her time, she's feeling emotional about this turkey, needs to go well, and everybody else is thanklessly pounding it down while they watch football.

So I want to say very plainly something that we all know and it's something that's a scriptural truth, and that is that generosity is an outflow of thanksgiving, not greed. If you're a thankful person, if you're thankful for what God has done for you, if you believe it's come from God, you're a generous person. It's like math. You can't be thankful and be stingy, be scarce, be greedy, be angry, be envious. And those are all basically words that describe the same thing: a heart that is afraid I won't have enough. That God won't do what He said He would do. He won't provide for me, He won't give me my daily bread, He won't meet my needs.

And so today I want to tell you this is something we all struggle with, whether you're wealthy or poor or somewhere in the middle, this is something all of us struggle with. All of us think about money, all of us talk about money every day. It's in the Bible a lot and there's a reason because money affects us, doesn't it. Money pays our bills, right? And money feeds us, but money can cause a lot of harm, can't it. Have you ever like when the bill comes when you're eating, you battle with your friend over who gets to pay. No I will pay. No I'll pay. Sometimes it's ostensible. It's like you're holding it but kind of lightly.

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Money can break up families. Don't raise your hand but how many of you have had a good friend, business partner, even a family member and you've had a falling out with them over money. I've seen it. People stay stuck in jobs that they hate, they don't pursue their dreams because they trust in money.

Look, money can cause a lot of harm, but money can do a lot of good, too, can't it. When we take risks that are calculated and smart, it can cause money to grow. When we bless others, we realize that we're making an impact on the world and leaving a legacy. Money builds hospitals. Money builds churches. Money builds schools. Money supports the arts. Lord knows artists can't support themselves. Right, artists? Some of you can, some of you can.

I asked permission if I could tell this joke again and a couple of people in the choir said I could. What's the difference between a music major and a pizza? A pizza can feed a family of four. Yep! One more? Can I do one more? How do you get a music major off your porch? But you were here in the first service. You pay them for the pizza. Oh, it's Russ. You pay them for the pizza. I got more pizza/music major jokes in the pipeline, but I'll just move on.

So music supports the arts, it supports artists. It helps our world be more beautiful, more lovely, more livable, more enjoyable. So when you give, you get to be a part of something bigger than yourself. This is why God talks about money. Money destroys lives, money heals lives. Money hurts, money blesses.

Let's talk about some statistics about money in the Bible. There are over 2,200 references in the Bible that discuss money and possessions. That's three times as many references to money as to love. Seven times as many references to money as to prayer. Eight times as many references to money as to belief. Money comprises fifteen percent of the Bible. Not literally or else this would be very valuable. One fifth of Jesus' teachings was on money and possessions. Seventeen of thirty eight parables deal with money and possessions. Jesus talked more about money than any single topic besides the kingdom of God.

There is this discipline that we practice in the church called tithing. And as I said before, my parents taught it to me and I'll teach it to my kids because it's a blessing. That no matter how much or how little you make, you remember that it all comes from the Lord by giving at least ten percent back to the Lord. It's the one place in the Bible that it's not a sin to test God. Did you know that? Testing the Lord is a sin.

It's written very clearly. Deuteronomy 6 chapter 16. It's become a core value in Orthodox Judaism. The scripture says "do not put the Lord your God to the test as you did in Massa." The context for that story is Moses and the people, God had brought them out of slavery, out of Egypt, and they were thirsty, and in Massa there was this rock that was full of water and the people were complaining. They said does God really care for us? Does God really love us? Will God really protect us? Will God really guide us? Moses hit that rock and give us some water! And this was considered evil in God's eyes.

And so it became a command – do not put the Lord your God to the test as you did in Massa. Don't say when you're in the desert is God really for me? Is God really with me? The only way we're going to know is if we hit this rock and see water come out. Right? The only way we're going to know is if He does what I want Him to do right now the way I want Him to do it. And God says don't do that.

And throughout the Bible, you have examples of ways in which we're not supposed to do that. Putting God to the test is what the serpent does in the Garden of Eden when he says to Adam and Eve, did God really say don't eat from this tree? When Jesus is on the pillar being tempted by the devil, remember one of the temptations? Throw yourself off this pillar and angels will catch you and then all of those Pharisees and peers who don't know you're from God, they'll see! They'll see that you're the Son of God and then they'll believe. And what does Jesus say? It is written you shall not put the Lord your God to the test. Putting God to the test is bad, except in one case and in one case alone, there is one place where God literally commands us to put Him to the test, and that is tithing; giving ten percent of our income. It's in Malachi and we're going to read it in a second. Malachi is a beautiful book. It's the last book of the Old Testament in the Christian cannon. And it's there because the Christian people wanted Jewish believers to see there's a Messianic text in here about Christ coming back. He's the refiner's fire.

But the whole book begins with God saying to His people I love you. That's the first thing He says in the book. I love you. And you know how the Jewish people respond? They say no you don't. No you don't. You ever feel that way? I do. It's interesting because the choir was even singing that today: I

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love you, I love you, I love you. This just constant thing that God says to His people, I love you, I love you.

And the Jewish people say back to the Lord, how have you loved us? And God tells the story. I chose your father Abraham, and I brought you out of Egypt, and I brought you to the Promised Land, and even when you were in exile, I brought you back home. And this begins a hundred years after that. A hundred years after the Jews have returned from captivity. You know this amazing experience, they come back to the temple, they celebrate the Torah, and there's this amazing joyful thing, and it's like a hundred years later, about three generations later, they just completely forgot. And now the temple is in disrepair. There's cracks in the walls. There's stuff growing out of the ground. It hasn't been painted in awhile. I don't know if they had paint back then.

And the first person God criticizes is the priest. Look what you're doing. You're letting the people believe that that's okay. That it's okay to just ignore the temple and ignore God's house. They were also bringing like the worst animals, like blemished, sick animals. It's like, you know, Betsy's on her last leg, let's bring her in and sacrifice her before she's dead. And God says why are you doing that? Why have you forgotten me? Why do you bring me your leftovers? Why do you even bring me your sick animals? Why do you bring me the stuff you don't care about?

And then He finally says, there are these exchanges back and forth between God and Israel, talking back and forth. And then finally the Lord says in Malachi chapter 3 verse 8: "will a mere mortal rob God, yet you rob me. But you ask how are we robbing you? In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse. Your whole nation because you're robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house." Now everybody say this next line: "test me in this." Whoa! It's the one place you can do this. Test God in this and what will happen, according to the word of God.

"And see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe, says the Lord almighty. Then all nations will call you blessed for yours will be a delightful land, says the Lord almighty." God literally tells us just test me. Just try it, see what happens. See what happens.

I can attest that this is true. Recently I had the joy of spending some time with a gentleman named David Green, the founder of Hobby Lobby Empire, a believer and a very great man, a very sweet man. And I was talking to him. He has this amazing story. In the 1970's he was just working at a little craft shop in Oklahoma City, and one day he got a six hundred dollar loan and started his own craft shop out of his garage. And now today he's got all these businesses but his net worth is close to eight billion dollars. He's in the Forbes five hundred.

And I asked him, I said David, what's the key to success? And he says without a doubt, generosity. He's like generosity kept my heart right, made it where I could take appropriate risks where I wasn't living in fear, but more than anything, I just believe God blesses generosity.

And then he said this and I'll never forget it. He said I read that verse in Malachi that said test me this in your tithes and offerings and I believed it. And he said it's the Bible. He said, either believe it or throw it away! Either believe it or throw it away. It's either true or it isn't. And he said and I chose to believe. And I gave. And actually he gave away all of his money and then got it back again. He's an interesting and incredible guy.

But my point is simply this that God is asking us for ten percent, not because He needs it, but because we need it. Its training. It always hurts. That's why it's always a percentage and not an amount. There's no amount you can make to escape the ten percent requisite. Ten percent is almost painful for everybody because almost everybody lives just within their means. Am I right?

So He tells us to give ten percent and can I just tell you something? Its training wheels. You're going to give away so much more in your life and you're going to love it. You're going to bless so many people, you're going to have a financial legacy, but you're not going to get from here to there through stinginess, hoarding and a scarcity mindset. You're going to get there by loosening your heart, loosening your mind, opening your fists. When you open your fists to give, you also open your hands to receive. Something spiritual happens in your heart and in your existence when you become a generous person.

Generous people are also better at taking risks which is the core, is at the core of succeeding financially in life. You want to succeed in a business? You want to get a better job? You want to ask for a raise? All of those things require risk. But if you're just like this all the time, you're not going to get anywhere. God wants to free you up from this calcified heart depending on money, and learning and believing that everything you have comes from Him.

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You ask almost any ultra-successful entrepreneur in here, and they're going to tell you that there were some key moments in their life that just looked like utter luck. Like incredible opportunity that fell in their lap. You want to generate some of those opportunities in your life? Become a generous person.

Maybe you've gotten in a hard time in your business or in your life and you haven't had many opportunities like that. Give. Give. Give ten percent. Give more than ten percent. The more you need, the more you should give, as crazy as that sounds. That's how the kingdom of God is.

God also says like when you don't tithe you're stealing from Him. Imagine like you took your car to a mechanic shop and you just had some spare change in the cup holder, but you had like a video camera in your car and you saw the mechanic take that change and put it in his pocket. It wouldn't affect you that much, right? Who cares? It was in the cup because it wasn't that big of a deal to you anyway. But would you ever, ever, ever bring your car back to that mechanic shop ever again? Let me ask you.

And maybe you don't make a lot of money, you don't have a lot of money, but you also don't give. You know now that is how God views this. It's not necessarily that He needs the money it's that you trust in the money more than you trust in Him. If you read this and you don't tithe, it feels like, and I'm talking to Bobby now, that you don't really believe the Bible. That you don't really believe what it says. Believe it.

Look I'm so grateful my parents taught me to tithe. I'm grateful that even when I had no money in college, even when I walked to Wal-Mart in just a towel, nothing underneath to go to Wal-Mart and ask for shampoo on a twenty dollar bet from Gabe Swaggert, that's right, Jimmy Swaggert's grandson, and I won because I was hungry and needed food, I still tithed on that twenty bucks, I gave two dollars to the church. I'm glad that my family taught me that.

The kingdom of God is like a Chinese finger trap. Do you guys remember these? You get these at like arcades or Chuck E. Cheese. Chinese fire trap is usually the first kinetic riddle kids get to play with. And basically you give this to your little sister and you tell her to put your fingers in it and so she does this and then you say pull your fingers out. She goes. The harder you pull, the tighter it gets, right? Then everybody knows there's only one way to get out of a Chinese finger trap is to push in. Right? That's it.

It's like a seat belt. When you tug on a seat belt, it doesn't come through, but when you just, you know. This is a Chinese fire trap. You've got to lean into it. Or as a friend of mine, Caleb, likes to say, you got to lean into the knife. That a part of training into generosity is that if we need new opportunity, if we need something, we should give, we should give, not become scarce. And that trains us into this abundance mindset.

That's why if you have nothing, if you're poor, if you're homeless, if you're broke, if you're in debt, and somebody today gives you ten dollars, you give one dollar back to the church or to someone in need. Just do it. You think that's not that much, can I tell you that will touch God's heart. That's what the widow's mite teaches us. And just watch, God will open up the gates and pour out opportunity, knowledge, wisdom, and in many cases even some money get you through what you need to get through.

Giving opens up heaven. It opens up blessing and that's why we should be tithing people, giving people. Its training wheels, guys. Its training wheels to get us to where we're supposed to go. When we give, we prime the pump, as John Maynard Keynes might have said, right? You remember on farms when you have these pumps? Any of you farm? I'm not a farmer, I grew up in Southern California, but we actually had one of these pumps at Rancho Capistrano and the only way to get the water going was you got to pour water in before water will come out. And that's what giving does, it primes the pump in your life.

Okay. So when I was a kid, every November, my dad was a preacher, we were at a little church in Rancho and then he was at the Crystal Cathedral, he did this every year usually with oranges because California has the best oranges in the world, sorry Florida. Just kidding, Florida is good.

So it's like hey, all right, you get your ten oranges. So I can never forget this, right? I know this is extremely boring, but you're never going to forget this. All right, you get your ten oranges, then what do you do? Dad taught us this every single November. You take one orange of your ten and who do you give it to? Right there Chad Blake, nice. That was fast! I even snuck it over. One orange goes to the church, two oranges.. I'm looking for somebody who can catch.. two oranges, here Chad again, two oranges go to your savings and your investments. And your seven oranges, you eat those; you do what you want with them. Right?

Prosperity and Generosity

Let me tell you, this principle, I've done it my whole life, I've seen other people do it. One of the easiest things that can lead to a generally successful life, this is it right here. It's amazing how this small principle will make such a big difference in your life. Live by it, teach it to your children, teach it to your grandchildren, teach it to the people you mentor because you'll make a huge difference in the way they experience money and the way they experience God and the way they experience their neighbor. Tithing teaches us to love generosity. It forces us to experience the pain of giving away in order to experience the joy of leaving a legacy, of leaving something behind that will make a difference that's bigger than ourselves.

The way that you tithe is like this. Now this is a Bobby Schuller thing. But I believe that you make your church your default, okay? That means when you're not sure what to give to, you give to your church, that whole ten percent. But if the Lord puts something in your path that you know is a need, you give to that thing.

For example, if you have a next door neighbor who just lost their job and they got another job but they have that weird gap where you have to wait two weeks to get your rent. Do you know anybody been there before? I have. How am I going to make my rent? You pay the rent. And you take it from your tithe and you don't give it to the church. If you see that another friend of yours, they have a bunch of kids and you just look at this couple and you're like my goodness, they need a date night. They need to just get out. You know, offer to babysit their kids and buy them like movie tickets and a meal. This is important! You give to your neighbor to help their marriage.

I just want you to know that this church is very good at helping people, but nobody is as good at helping your neighbor as you are. So you give to your neighbor. And I know what some of you are thinking, Bobby that's not Biblical, it's not scriptural. Wrong again, friend.

Deuteronomy chapter 14 verse 22. Just follow along, I'll read: "Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the first born of your herds and flocks in the presence of the Lord your God at the place He will choose as a dwelling for His name so that you may learn to reveal the Lord your God always." So you give away ten percent as an act of worship.

"But if that place is too distant and you have been blessed by the Lord your God and cannot carry your tithe because that place that the Lord will choose to put in His name is too far away, then exchange your tithe for silver and take the silver with you and go to the place the Lord your God will choose. Use the silver to buy whatever you like." That's kind of a cool line in the Bible, isn't it? "Cattle, sheep, wine, or other fermented drink, or anything you wish, then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice. And do not neglect the Levites living in your towns for they have no allotment or inheritance of their own. At the end of every three years bring all the tithes of that years produce store in your towns so that the Levites who have no allotment or inheritance of their own, and the foreigners, the fatherless, and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, so that the Lord your God may bless you and all the work of your hands." Do you hear it? The purpose of the tithe is to bless people, is to proclaim the presence of the kingdom of God on earth.

And so I want to encourage you, set aside ten percent of all your income and give it away to God's mission to what He wants you to do and watch as He blesses you. And by the way, when you give to this church, you are making a difference. Last year this church fed thousands of hungry people around the world. This church has led thousands of people to Christ. We have a pretty good music department too, I think. And we love encouraging people, too.

Tithing is a thing that blesses you and it blesses the Lord's heart. Watch as it will totally and utterly transform your life.

Lord, we love you and we thank you that everything we have is yours. And Lord I just want say thank you for the generous people that have given to this church, people that have given to me when I was a kid and didn't have anything, or when I was suffering, or when people in our community: widows and orphans and homeless were hurting and they gave to those people. Lord, teach us the joy of generosity that it's not foolish to be generous it's actually wise, it's prudent. And Lord, give us wisdom in our giving. Teach us how to give in a smart way. And Lord, help us to always tithe and to teach it to our children and our grandchildren. Lord, we love you, it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

BENEDICTION – Bobby Schuller

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And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift His countenance upon you and give you His peace in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.