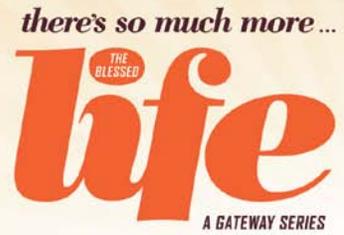


The Principles of Multiplication



Focus That which is blessed by God has the potential to be multiplied when it is given away.

Open Would you rather work on complex math-related problems, such as calculating estimates for a building project, or serve as a counselor at a camp for kids or teens? Why?

Read In the story of the feeding of the five thousand found in Luke 9:12–17, the disciples approached Jesus with a problem: There were over 20,000 people who had gathered to hear Him preach and they were hungry. There was no food except a boy's five loaves and two fish. Jesus took the small amount of food, blessed it, and instructed the disciples to distribute it to the people. As they did, miraculously there was enough for everyone and twelve basketfuls of food were left over.

There are two important principles of multiplication that are demonstrated in the story. First, something must be blessed before it can multiply. The first portion, the tithe, must be given to God for the rest to have the potential to be multiplied. Many people give but do not give the *first* portion to Jesus.

Second, it has to be given to be multiplied. It's important to notice that the miracle of multiplication did not happen in the hands of Jesus, but in the hands of the disciples as they *gave away* the food. For there to be multiplication, we must not consume that which is blessed, but give over and above the tithe. The tithe is not giving, but returning to God what is already His.

Giving over and above what is "required" opens the door to a fun, adventurous life of generosity with God.

Talk

1. Read the story of the feeding of the five thousand in Luke 9:12–17. Imagine yourself on that hillside, one of Jesus' disciples. How would you have responded to the need of the people and to Jesus' instructions that day? What would you have thought or felt when He instructed you to distribute the five loaves and two fish to thousands of people?
2. Describe a time when you, or someone you know, experienced a miracle of multiplication. Did you or the other person face any fears when God's leading was followed? What happened?
3. The miracle happened in the hands of the disciples. Why do you think God multiplies *as* or *after* we give, and not before?
4. When the multitudes were fed, which do you think made a bigger impact on the people—their full stomachs or witnessing the miracle?
 - a. What can you learn from this concerning the needs in your life or the places in which God wants you to step out in faith?
 - b. What do you think God is most concerned about—meeting your specific needs or allowing you to see His power at work? Does this change your perspective about any circumstances you are facing? How?

Live

- Is there a place in your life in which you need a miracle—financial or otherwise?
- a. What do you sense Jesus is asking you to do? Why?
 - b. What do you think or feel about His instructions concerning this situation?

Pray

Thank God that He is a miracle-working God. Ask Him to help you follow His instructions, obeying His word and giving as He directs. Ask Him to show His power through your life that He may be glorified to others.