

Better Way Apostolic Church- Bible Class

Subject: GOD'S GUIDELINES FOR GIVING: Proverbs 3:9-10

1. *God owns all things.*
2. *All things come from God.*
3. *We and all that we have belong to God.*

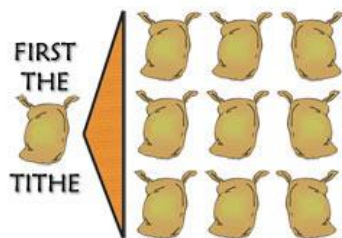
The Bible says that we are God's "stewards." A steward is one who manages the money or property belonging to another person. As God's stewards, we are accountable to Him for the way we manage what He entrusts to us. In this lesson we will learn how we can be good stewards, especially in the matter of giving. We will learn how we can use our money to make eternal friendships.

Giving to God

Dr. Adam Clarke once preached on the words, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). At the conclusion of the discourse he announced a collection. "How can you, Doctor," asked a lady afterwards, "connect the freeness of the water of life with the collection at the close?" "Oh, madam," answered the wise preacher. "God gives the water without money and without price; but you must pay for the waterworks, for the pipes, and the pitchers which convey the water to your neighborhood." Remember, you pay nothing to God; you are charged nothing for the water; but you cannot have convenient chapels to sit in without paying for them, nor a regular ministry to urge the water on your acceptance, without making a suitable provision for its support.

The Teaching of the Old Testament regarding Giving

When God brought His people out of slavery in Egypt and into Canaan, He gave them a rich and fertile land. Of all that they produced on this good land, God required that they give the first tenth to Him. This was called "*the tithe*." The word "*tithe*" means "*the tenth*."



The tithe belonged to God.

The purpose of the tithe was to remind the people of God's ownership of all things and to teach them to put God first in their lives. God is exceedingly generous. He allowed them to keep nine-tenths of all that they produced, but the tithe, or first tenth, belonged to Him. The Bible says,

"All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's; it is holy unto the Lord." Leviticus 27:30

In addition to their tithes, God's people gave free-will offerings. The tithes and offerings were given to the priests of God. This was the means by which they lived since they had no land of their own. God's people were told to bring their tithes and offerings when they came to worship God. God said,

"...they shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed. Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which He has given you." Deuteronomy 16:16-17 (NKJ)

God was teaching His people to give. When they gave freely to God, God gave them abundant crops. The Bible says,

"Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty...." Proverbs 3:9-10

Were God's people in the Old Testament always faithful in giving their tithes and offerings to Him? No, they were not. God said,

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings." Malachi 3:8

What happened when they robbed God? They came under God's chastening hand. God said,

"You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation." Malachi 3:9



When God's people repented of their disobedience and began once again to obey Him in the matter of tithes and offerings, God poured out His blessing upon them. God said,

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. And try Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, 'if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:10 (NKJ)

The Teaching of the New Testament regarding Giving

The great principle in the Bible regarding giving is this: When we give to God, God gives to us. The Lord Jesus said,

"Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom." Luke 6:38 (NKJ)



God gives generously.

When God gives, He gives bountifully. He is very generous. In Jesus' time, people bought their grain in bulk. Many sellers would pour the grain into a measure without allowing the buyer to shake it down. Not so with the Lord. He gives *"good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over."*

Giving enables God to give to us. The more we give, the more God gives to us; the less we give, the less God gives to us. Jesus said,

"For with the same measure that you use it will be measured back to you." Luke 6:38b (NKJ)

Both the Old and the New Testaments lay down the same teaching: When we give to God, God gives to us. God is not poor; neither is He stingy. He loves to give to His children, but we must fulfil His condition — *"Give, and it will be given to you."*

God does not ask us to give to Him because He is in need of anything we have. He says,

"If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine, and all its fulness." Psalm 50:12 (NKJ)

God tells us to give because He wants His children to be like Him. God is generous, and He wants us to be generous. Another reason why God asks us to give is that we might *"lay up treasure in heaven."* We cannot send our money to Heaven, but we can give it to win others to Christ. This is laying up treasure in Heaven.

Principle of Giving

God's Word gives us a number of principles regarding giving:



First, give yourself to God.



The first gift God wants from us is ourselves. The order is: First, give yourself to God, and then give a portion of that which God has given to you. The Christians in Macedonia did just this, and the Apostle Paul commended them for it. Paul wrote,

"...they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God." 2 Corinthians 8:5 (NKJ)



Give as God has prospered you.

In the Old Testament, God commanded His people to give the first tenth of all they earned to Him. God's Word says, ***"each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income [as God has prospered him]..." I Cor. 16:2 (NIV)***

What percentage of our income should we give? We can take the tithe (ten percent) as a guide to the minimum we should give, but our giving could be much more than this. It depends on how thankful we are for the way God has blessed us and how strongly we desire to *"lay up treasure in heaven."*

The Christian businessman, R.G. LeTourneau, made a practice of giving ninety percent of his earnings to God. One day someone asked him, *"Mr. LeTourneau, is it true that you give ninety percent of your income to the Lord?"*

He replied, *"No, I don't give God anything. It all belongs to Him. I just keep back ten percent."*



Give systematically.



Giving is an act of worship, and our giving must not be a *"hit or miss"* proposition. We are to give regularly and systematically "on the first day of the week" when we come to worship God. The Bible says,

"On the first day of every week each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income...." I Corinthians 16:2 (NIV)

No one is excluded. Old and young, rich and poor—all must be involved in giving. The Bible says, ***"EACH ONE OF YOU should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income."***



Give cheerfully and liberally.



Whatever we give to the Lord, He wants us to give it out of a willing heart. God does not want us to give grudgingly. The Bible says,

"Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7



Give wisely.

The Lord Jesus said that we were to be *"good and wise stewards."* Some Christians give liberally, but they are not wise in their giving. To give to a church or organization that is not faithfully preaching God's Word is not wise giving. We should be as careful in investing our Lord's money as we would be in investing in a business. We should invest it where it will bring the greatest spiritual returns.

How God Measures our Giving

You do not have to possess large sums of money to be a large giver in God's sight. God does not measure our giving by the size of our gifts. He measures our giving by how much we give out of what we have. God looks at how much sacrifice is involved in our giving. By God's way of measuring our giving, a poor person can give as much or more than a wealthy person.



Our giving should cost us something. On one occasion, the Lord Jesus stood at the temple watching as the people brought their gifts. Some were rich and gave much. Then a poor widow came by and put in two small copper coins. These coins were of little monetary value; yet in God's sight, this woman had given more than all who gave that day. Why? Because she had given all that she had, even her "living." Jesus said,

"I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the offering box than all the others. For they all gave out of their wealth. But she, out of her poverty, put in what she had to live on, everything she had." Mark 12:43-44 (NET Bible)