



In all the world there are only two religions: (1) God is the measure of all things, or (2) humanity is. God created us in his image to spend today and forever in the joyous fellowship of his glory, but we separate ourselves from this fellowship with him when we choose a life that revolves around us.

Through the Holy Spirit, God calls us back to a reconciled relationship through Jesus the Messiah, and to a restored understanding of life centered on God. At the heart of this

God-centered life is an understanding of stewardship—God owns everything and calls his people to be stewards of his possessions. When we choose the mindset and lifestyle of a steward, we choose life as it was originally designed and forever intended.

Stewardship is fellowship that is grounded and developed through trust. We learn to trust God more today than we did yesterday and in doing so, we recognize more and more the many blessings we have been entrusted with by God. Trusting God financially is one of the best ways to learn to trust God in everything.

As we continue to grow in our understanding of God's revelation, we will see that giving is not an obligation but a lifestyle of worship before God. As Jesus generously gave of himself so that we could be reconciled to God and restored to living life in his glory, we too ought to give consistently, sacrificially, generously, gratefully, and cheerfully.

The following sets of scripture will help outline the biblical picture of giving.

Firstfruits

Exodus 23:19; Deuteronomy 18:3-4; Leviticus 2:12; Nehemiah 10:35-39; Numbers 15:17-21 & 18:12-14; Proverbs 3:9; 2 Chronicles 31:4-6; Ezekiel 44:30; 2 Corinthians 9:6-12

Firstfruits is an attitude of the heart that purposes to joyfully give God the first of our income rather than any possible leftovers. Farmers would give God the first of their harvest trusting that God would protect their remaining crops and provide through them. However you set up your personal system for giving, give to God first.

Tithe

Genesis 28:18-22; Deuteronomy 14:22-29; Genesis 14:20 (w/ Hebrews 7:1-3); Nehemiah 13:10-12; Numbers 18:21; Malachi 3:6-12; Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42; 18:12

Tithe is a biblical precedent of giving that establishes 10% of individual income as honoring to God and his representatives. It was historically how God provided for the ministers and ministries of his people. 10% is a great starting point for honoring God through systematic giving, but we must be cautious of a legalistic and self-centered motive that would derail the discipline of trust that giving provides.

Wealth: An Old Testament Perspective

Genesis 1-2; 1 Chronicles 29:10-13; Psalm 89:11; Deuteronomy 8:11-20; Isaiah 58:6-10; Genesis 12:1-3; Psalm 52:7; Psalm 73:1-28

Everything in this world belongs to God, and he calls his children to be stewards of all that he owns. This stewardship is covenantal in that God wants to bless us so that through us he can call the world to the blessings that are only found in him. His generosity toward us must result in our generosity toward others. The wealth entrusted to us is to be used in our life pursuit of worshiping God with all of who we are, but can so easily become the idol that leads us away from him.

Wealth: The Proverbs Perspective

Slothfulness and laziness condemned: 6:6-11; 10:4-5; 12:11-14, 24, 27; 13:11; 15:19; 18:9; 20:4 & 13; 21:25; 24:30-34; 26:13-16

Poverty vs. riches & righteousness vs. wickedness: 11:27-28; 13:7; 15:16-17; 28:19-20

Wisdom is far greater than riches: 3:13-15; 8:1, 8-11, 18-21; 13:18; 20:15

Warnings: 6:1-5; 11:15; 17:18; 22:26-27; 1:9; 10:2; 11:1; 13:11; 20:10 & 23; 21:6; 22:16 & 22; 28:8; 22:7; 23:4-5; 11:4; 14:20; 19:4

Admonitions: 11:24-26; 17:5; 22:9; 28:27 16:8; 28:6; 30:7-9; 14:31; 19:17

Wealth: A New Testament Perspective

Jesus' perspective: Matthew 6:24, 13:22, 19:23; Luke 12:15-21, 33-34; Revelation 3:17-18; Matthew 6:11, 19-34; Luke 12:29-32; Matthew 23:25; Mark 12:38-40

Paul's (Proverb-like) perspective: Galatians 6:7-10; Acts 20:33-35; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:8, 11-12; 1 Timothy 5:8; 1 Timothy 3:3 & 8, 6:10; Titus 1:7; Hebrews 13:5

Paul's (Jesus-like) perspective: 1 Corinthians 7:30-31; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Philippians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 6:6-10

Understanding the Biblical picture of giving brings us back to the simple yet profound distinction between a world revolving around humanity and a world centered on God. This is God's creation and his storehouses of wealth, and in his love, he has designed, created, sustained, and called us to enjoy him in the fellowship of all his glory. Give like it all belongs to God, and thus learn to trust God in all of his provisions.

Two Case Studies on Giving:

Matthew 25:14-30

What stood out in the passage to me?

What was difficult? (Either to understand or to put into practice.)

What did I learn about God? (The Father, the Son, & the Holy Spirit.)

What did I learn about discipleship? (Continually learning from Jesus.)

What did I learn about giving?

What's something I want to do in response to what I've learned?

Matthew 25:31-46

What stood out in the passage to me?

What was difficult? (Either to understand or to put into practice.)

What did I learn about God? (The Father, the Son, & the Holy Spirit.)

What did I learn about discipleship? (Continually learning from Jesus.)

What did I learn about giving?

What's something I want to do in response to what I've learned?



To continue the conversation, email
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