



# WEEK 1

# STUDY GUIDE

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*MAY 22-26, 2023*





# Monday, May 22, 2023

**Read:** Proverbs 3:9, 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, Mark 10:17-22, Malachi 3:10

**Scripture Verse:** *"Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce." Proverbs 3:9a*

## Today's Thought:

We read in Proverbs, 10:22 "It is the blessing of the Lord that enriches, and he does not follow it with sorrow." Are you ready for a fresh start with God. Are you ready to transform your life and honor God with your riches? This study on generosity with God will help you put the Lord first in everything and have a fresh start in your life to enjoy the benefits and blessings of God. When the Lord is first in our life and in our finances, it produces unexpected and extraordinary changes. First and foremost, what we need to know, our life is a gift from God. If our life is a gift from God, everything we are, everything we have comes from God.

Since we are of God, in all things we must apply the fundamental principle "God first." It is by keeping this basic principle in mind that we will enjoy the favor of God. To count the benefits of God, and to enjoy his blessings, we must also behave as a good steward of the goods and riches that God gives us. We are to function as good stewards of God's riches. I am convinced that it is not by chance that God gave us life and granted us riches. God did it to put them at his service and at the service of others. The purpose of these studies is to remind you that during your existence you are of God, and you must put God first in everything to enjoy God's blessings and benefits in abundance.

Our prayers are that God will give you spiritual intelligence so that you can fully understand these studies and apply the principles in your lives. We pray that you will put God first in your life and in your finances, to act as a good steward of God, and to put God to the test in your finances. By the way, putting God first in everything, and putting him to the test in everything as Malachi 3:10 tells us, is a good choice you are making with guaranteed results. I encourage you today to put God first in your life. I encourage you to put God first in your finances and test Him in your tithes and offerings. I tell you, if you and I keep these principles, the floodgates of heaven will truly open for us and blessings of all kinds will be poured out upon us until there will not be enough room to receive them (Malachi 3:10).

Lord, thank you for your word. It takes a lot of faith and a good understanding of your word to put you first in everything. Lord, I give myself to you; may all that is in me be yours from this day forward, and until the end of my days.

- How will this study help you?
- Where does our life come from?
- What are the fundamental principles that we should apply in our life?
- What is the point of applying these fundamental principles?

**Further Reading:** Deuteronomy 28:8-11

## Tuesday, May 23, 2023

**Read:** Proverbs 3:9, 2 Corinthians 9:6–11, Mark 10:17–22, Malachi 3:10

**Scripture Verse:** *“Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce.” Proverbs 3:9b*

### Today's Thought:

The God of Abraham and Jacob the creator of heaven and earth, the triune God; in a word, our God, our creator is worthy to receive glory and honor for all his benefits for us. This is why the psalmist said in Psalms 116:12 "How shall I render unto the Lord all his blessings unto me?" The author of the psalm realized that God has done so much in his life, in the life of his family, in his financial life and others, he asks himself the question, "how am I going to return to the Lord all his benefits towards Me?" I believe you are asking the same question the psalmist asked. This question is the expression of a grateful heart. The blessings of the Lord to us are so numerous that we are completely unable to enumerate them. What can we do to repay God for the blessings He has given us? We cannot do anything. What we can render to God is "glory and honor". It is to put our life, our possessions at his service, it is to affirm our love for God and his work.

How can we honor God? We can honor him by manifesting his character and glorious works in word and deed. The way we imitate Jesus Christ is also a way of honoring God. The word of God shows us many ways to honor him. For now, let's focus on Proverbs 3:9 which is the subject of our study. We can honor God by giving him our possessions. In all cultures, we have our way of honoring those who are dear to us, those to whom we give great importance, esteem and respect. If we know how important it is to honor those who are important to us, how much more should we honor our Creator. So, our understanding of things about God and the value we place on him prompts us to wholeheartedly honor him in word and deed. So, Proverbs 3:9 tells us to honor God with our possessions. As a servant of God, we must worship God pleasingly with our wealth. Everything we own has value. God created us for his honor, he gave us wealth and goods to honor him. We must put God first in everything. We can honor him with our goods and the first fruits of all our income by always taking the Lord's share first and returning it to him without murmuring or constraint (2 Cor 9, 7).

Sometimes we dishonor God without knowing it. We deceive him without

realizing it. When we withhold the Lord's portion, when the Holy Spirit asks us to give for His work, then we refuse to do so, we dishonor God. If we honor God wholeheartedly with our finances and possessions while giving God his part, God will honor us too. We read in 1 Samuel 2:30 "Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, says, I have promised that your house and the house of your father should come in and out before me forever", but now the LORD states, "Far be it from me, for I will honor those who honor me, and those who despise me will be despised." We must act in a way that does not dishonor or deceive God.

Perhaps you can ask this question: How am I deceiving God? We find the answer in Malachi 3:8 "Shall man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you say, 'How have you robbed us?' In your tithes and contributions."

Brothers and sisters, do our best not to dishonor or deceive God. Give with all your heart to God. Give to God without compulsion. Give with joy. If the Holy Spirit urges you to give to God now, do it and He will surely shower you with abundant blessings.

Heavenly Father, your works and your benefits to me rejoice my heart. You saved me from death, you gave me life, you protected me from dangers, you gave me eternal life in Jesus Christ, you enabled me to understand your grace and you allowed me to enjoy your blessings. For this, receive my gratitude.

- Can we reward God for his grace toward us?
- What should we give to God for his benefits to us?
- How can we glorify and honor God?
- How can we dishonor God?

**Further Reading:** Exodus 23:19

## Wednesday, May 24, 2023

**Read:** Proverbs 3:9, 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, Mark 10:17-22, Malachi 3:10

**Scripture Verse:** *"Remember this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously." 2 Corinthians 9:6*

### Today's Thought:

My father was a farmer. When I was young, I accompanied him to the garden to plant maize, rice and beans. I once asked him why he planted all those things. Isn't it better to only plant maize? The reason I said that is because I was going to spend all day with him sowing the seeds; something I didn't like. I encouraged him to sow a little because I didn't want to work under the sun, I considered his work a waste of time. My father often said to me, "I have to sow in quantity to have a good harvest, which will allow me to find plenty of grain during the harvest season."

This verse reminds me of the answer my father gave me. This verse tells us: "Know that he who sows little will reap little..." In the eyes of God, giving for his work is not a sacrifice, it is not a waste, it is not throwing away our money or possessions to the sea. To give, or, in other words, to give for the work of God, is an investment. As the farmer gives his grain to the earth and reaps what he sows, giving something to God for the advancement of his kingdom is a guaranteed investment. As far as we are concerned, we must sow generously in the field of God. The church is God's field. When you sow in God's field, you become an inexhaustible source of blessing. In earlier verses of the same chapter, the apostle Paul commended the Corinthian Christians for their generosity. "For I know your promptness, of which I boast to the people of Macedonia, saying that Achaia has been ready since last year. And your zeal has sparked most of them." 2 Corinthians 9:2.

The apostle considers their gift, their generosity as a thanksgiving to God, a contribution to the advancement of the gospel of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 9: 12-13). Giving to the cause of the gospel is therefore a blessing and it comes back to you in a way you never imagined. We read in Proverbs 11:24-25: "One gives freely yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered." God's blessings are many and can take many forms. For example, the Lord will guard your departure and your arrival. He will give

you victory over your enemies. He will command the blessing to be with you in your barns and in all businesses (Deuteronomy 28:8). He will open his good treasury to you to bless all the work of your hands. He will make you the head and not the tail, you will always be above, and you will never be below. Is it not a flourishing harvest? Is it not necessary to sow in the work of God?

Jesus our Lord made this statement "Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." Luke 6:38. The principle is simple. We must invest in the house of God for our good. It's not about compensating God for your salvation. To understand it like this is an aberration and an insult to the creator.

God has shown us his grace by giving us Jesus Christ his Son as the greatest gift. God has saved us as poor sinners to serve him and put our wealth at his service and further his kingdom. By accepting Jesus Christ, God has done a good work in us. Being saved, we are called to do good works for the propagation of his gospel of grace. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10. So let's invest our goods and our finances in the work of God, knowing that our investment will not be in vain.

Lord, thank you for your word. Help me to sow in your fields whatever the weather conditions, and whatever the season. Because sowing in your fields is a guaranteed and eternal investment.

- How can we consider "giving for the work of God"?
- How should we give to God's work?
- What does the apostle Paul do because of the generosity of the Christians in Corinth?
- How did Paul view their offerings? In what forms can God's blessings come?

**Further Reading:** 2 Corinthians 9:12-13



## Thursday, May 25, 2023

**Read:** Proverbs 3:9, 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, Mark 10:17-22, Malachi 3:10

**Scripture Verse:** *"Each one must give as he has decided in his own heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7*

### Today's Thought:

In the previous lesson we saw that giving to God from what He has given to us is for our good. God always blesses generous hands. When we give money or when we put what God gives us at his service, he blesses us abundantly. We have seen that the blessings of God are not only limited to physical, visible and material things, they also consist of immaterial and invisible things, such as: the protection of God, the power of God in us, peace, joy, etc. In this lesson we will see that God loves a cheerful giver.

Giving with joy is the very expression of God. Our God is not only the expression of love, but he is also the giver par excellence. He knows what to give, when to give. "But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8. He knows why to give, and he knows how to give. In his grace, in his love, in his inexpressible generosity, he gave us his Son Jesus. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16. God has given us the best, the most beautiful gift. In his generosity, he gave his Son in our place. Why did he give his Son? He gave his Son for our salvation, to deliver us from the curse of sin. The Word of God tells us in Hebrews 10:14 that by an offering He perfects those who are sanctified. He offered us his Son with joy. "God so loved the world..." John 3:16. As Christians, we are called to imitate Christ who gave himself as a ransom to save us. He voluntarily, generously and joyfully agreed to lay down his life for us sinners. When it comes to giving to God's work, we must do so wholeheartedly, without complaining, and we must give the best of our resources.

We must learn to give joyfully by following the life of the greatest giver the world has ever known: "Jesus Christ," who gave up the riches and glory of his heavenly kingdom to come to earth and lay down his life for us. The best way to imitate Jesus Christ is to give generously as he did. The word of God tells us in Acts 20:35: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." In order to give generously and with joy, you must retain the

will to please the Lord and to reflect his gift of salvation.

Note that our Lord always provides for those who are cheerful givers.

We read in Philippians 4:19, "And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." It is indeed about all our needs, including humiliation, exposure to shame, diseases of all kinds, so-called failure, and a wasted life, defeats, oppressions, broken homes, broken hearts, freak accidents, anxiety, depression, suicidal tendencies, premature death. Our Lord can protect us and cover us with his feathers as we gladly and joyfully give ourselves and our riches to him.

Lord, thank you for your word. Joyfully, I give myself entirely to you. I dedicate every part of me to you, and may you be the faithful steward of my life. Lord, help me to hand over to you Joyfully the management of my goods and my finances. Help me to give you the part that suits you without sadness or constraint; because you love generous people, precisely those who give joyfully.

- Who gave to us first?
- What did he give us first?
- Of all the gifts you have received, how do you see this gift?
- Can you mention a little of what God can provide according to his wealth?

**Further Reading:** Philippians 4:16-20

## Friday, May 26, 2023

**Read:** Proverbs 3:9, 2 Corinthians 9:6-11, Mark 10:17-22, Malachi 3:10

**Scripture Verse:** *"Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need." Malachi 3:10*

### Today's Thought:

When I was in elementary school, if there was one thing I hated, it was tests. I hated them not because they were difficult, not because the professor wanted to ensnare me, not because the institution wanted me to fail, but because I did not understand the purpose of the tests. I never prepared my mind to take tests. The teacher often told us: "We make you take tests to assess your level of learning, and if you pass them, it will allow you to move on to a higher class." I didn't really like taking the tests. Sometimes when I knew I was going to take a test, I would pretend to be sick, so I didn't go to school to escape the test. One of my classmates was so good at taking the tests that the school principal skipped class for him, while I doubled the class 2 times because I was afraid to take the tests.

In Malachi 3:10, which is the subject of our study, when we analyze the text, we see that the Lord gives us a test when he asks us to test him. The test the Lord gives us is at the beginning of the verse. "Bring the tithes to the house of the Lord." So, what is tithing? According to the word of God, tithing is the tenth of our income that we give to God's church. So, every time you get paid for your work, you pass a test. In this text, the prophet Malachi taught us the importance of tithing and the blessings that come from obeying this law. We can say our tithing is sacred to God, so we glorify and honor Him by tithing. This payment is an act of faith and obedience to God and his word.

Sometimes it is a great challenge for us to have faith in the word of God and to obey him. In this verse, the Lord challenges us and gives us a test that will enable us to excel in our lives. We must always be ready to pass God's test. God's tests are not beyond our abilities. Our lives belong to God, and everything we have comes from God. When we refuse to tithe, we are robbing God. When we rob God, we prevent him from blessing us. We read in Malachi 3:8, "Shall a mere mortal rob God? Yet you steal from

me. 'In tithes and offerings.'

Someone said, "God doesn't need our money to pay the bill in heaven, or to pay the upkeep in heaven. God wants our money to test our faithfulness with him." Sometimes we sing: "I give myself away, my life does not belong to me, I belong to you so you can use me." But some of us, when we come to the test, don't pass it. The word of God declares, "The Lord said, When this people come near to me, they honor me with mouth and lips; but their heart is far from me.." Isaiah 29:13. These are people who worship the Lord with their lips, but their hearts, lives and possessions have nothing to do with God. This same word is also valid for us Christians today. We should be true worshipers. Our lips, our heart, our pocket, and our purse belong to God.

Lord, thank you for your word. Help me put it into practice. I give myself entirely to you. Take control of my life, my worries and my regrets. Take control of my property; and help me to put them at your service. Help me to be faithful in my tithes and my offerings because you love the one who is faithful and who gives with joy.

- Where do we find the test that the Lord has given us?
- What test did he give us? What is tithing?
- When does the Lord test us?
- What does tithing mean to you?
- As we approach God, how should we honor him?

**Further Reading:** Hebrew 7:1-2

Today is Friday. Saturday and Sunday are coming. "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!" Psalms 133:1. Therefore, let's gather to praise the Lord together!



## NOTES





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