

TRUSTED WITH THINGS

Proverbs 3:9-10 Deuteronomy 8:18 Malachi 3:8-12 Luke 6:38 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Introductions: "Mine, mine, mine, mine..." is what little children say about whatever they have in their hands. Grown ups are not so different. All of us have "things." Something that we call ours, after all we worked for it, we bought it, we built it, we grew it, we, we, we, we. So, are Christians supposed to have a different attitude about their "things" compared to those who are not Christians? What does God say about His Children and the "things" they call theirs?

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty and thy presses shall burst out with new wine..."

I. WHAT EXACTLY IS "SUBSTANCE"?

1. "Substance" covers all that we call "ours" from the least to the lavish wealth of some.
 - All material objects that have economic value, house, car, clothing, all possessions.
 - Job said that everything gotten since his birth was wealth.
 - Everything we have is a trust from God. He has entrusted us with what we have.
2. Everything does belong to God in the first place but God has turned over to us certain "substance" to care for, therefore the commandment, *"Thou shalt not steal..."*
3. Feelings we have about things were formed during our early years of life, think about it.
4. "Substance" is any personal possession that you call yours.

II. HOW MUCH OF OUR "SUBSTANCE" ARE WE TO USE FOR GOD'S HONOR?

1. 100% of it. All of it, of course. Most Christians focus on the 10% mentioned in the Bible as a tithe God wants and think that's it.
 - To try to honor God with some and not all puts one in the category of the Pharisee hypocrites who tithed to the penny but refused to honor God by taking care of their aging parents with what they had left over after their tithing.
2. Everything we have comes from God's provision and we are accountable to God for ALL of it.

III. WHY SHOULD WE HONOR GOD WITH WHAT IS "OURS?"

1. God deserves to be honored simply because HE has supplied/given us all of what we have.
 - Donors of money, property, things are honored, their names are attached to that given.
 - The story is told of a man who charged his mother rent for one of his apartment complexes and when she got behind in paying the rent, he evicted her. Horrible we say, he should have taken care of her for nothing.
 - Why do we have difficulty in honoring God with all that we have? Is it because we forget where it really comes from and who really owns what we call ours?

- There are some dangers from having things: a proud heart, forgetting God, taking all the credit for what you have, and even turning to "gods" of our own making.
2. Others need to see Christians loving God enough to honor Him with their possessions/substance.
 - What people do with their possessions and money reveal their true/real nature.
 - Honoring God is contrary to how the world sees using possessions.
 - The world's system is get and get all you can, any way you can and spend it on SELF.
 - God system is based on GIVING.
 - God gave life to this world, to man, and eventually His Son's life.
 - Christians honor God by giving their possessions to God and managing them according to God's plan.
 - So, which is your plan? Getting or getting? The world's or God's?
 - Giving develops a likeness to God. Of course we all give - some.

IV. HOW THEN CAN WE HONOR GOD WITH "OUR" SUBSTANCE?

1. We honor God by making and using our substance in obedience to His plan.
2. We honor God by making money and gaining possessions in honorable ways.
 - How does our job honor God and His cause? Does it have a positive effect on others?
3. We honor God by enjoying what God has supplied/given to us.
 - We should never use what we have to damage others.
 - We should never allow it to take God's place.
 - We should never allow it to turn God-given joy into selfish indulgence.
4. We honor God by using His gifts to us to provide the necessities of life.
 - Failure to provide for our own family makes us worse than any unbeliever.
 - Jesus told of scribes and Pharisees who refused to provide for their aging parents.
5. We honor God by paying our debts with our substance.
 - We are to pay on time.
 - Our witness for Him is damaged if we are neglectful in paying our debts on time.
6. We honor God when we give back to Him of our substance.
 - We are told to honor God with the "firstfruits" or giving to God first before we do anything else with what He has given to us.
 - The tithe (10%) belongs to the Lord and nowhere in the Bible is this law ever revoked.
 - Malachi 3:9* indicates that using God's tithe for ourselves will bring a curse. How many Christians are living "under God's curse"?
 - But God also promised a blessing to those who would bring the tithe into the storehouse.
 - Christians are not to stop at just the 10%, the tithe, **2 Corinthians 9:6-15**
 - They are to sow (give) bountifully and therefore reap bountifully.
 - They are to be cheerful in giving as much so as God is cheerful in giving.

- God will enable one to give generously.
- God will increase one's righteousness.
- The needs of others will be supplied.
- Others will glorify God because of your giving back to God.

V. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE HONOR GOD WITH OUR "SUBSTANCE?"

1. *"So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and the presses shall burst out with new wine.."*
 - Your needs and the needs of your family will be met.
 - Your work will take on a new meaning.
 - Managing your possessions will become more interesting and exciting.
 - Your Church will have money to finance that which God leads it to do.
 - You will enjoy real fellowship with the Lord in your daily life.
 - All your possessions will take on a sacred meaning.
 - At the end you will hear the Lord say, *"...Well done!."*

CONCLUSION:

1. What has God entrusted to you? (What do you call "yours"?)
2. What have you been doing with it?
3. Do you think God is pleased with how you have been handling what you call yours?
4. Do you think it is about time for you to begin to honor God as He deserves?
5. Will you not resolve from this day forward to handle possessions, substance, which God entrusts to you, in the way He wants?