

Matthew 1:18-25 ¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins. ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). ²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus." (NIV)

The Point: The perfect gift we can give to God is one given out of TRUST!

THE CHALLENGE

Malachi 3:7-12 ⁷ Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the Lord Almighty. "But you ask, 'How are we to return?' ⁸ Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' **In tithes and offerings.** ⁹ You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. ¹⁰ Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. **Test me** in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be enough to store it. ¹¹ I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe," says the Lord Almighty. ¹² "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty." (NIV)

1. Giving is a reflection of my SPIRITUAL condition.
2. The Lord PLEADS with us to trust Him when it comes to giving!
3. We rob God of the joy of BLESSING us in response to our giving.

DEVELOPING MY TRUST IN GOD

Step 1: Trust God and give REGULARLY.

Deuteronomy 16:16-17 “¹⁶ Three times a year all your men must appear before the Lord your God at the place He will choose: at the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of Tabernacles. No one should appear before the Lord empty handed. ¹⁷ Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you.” (NIV)

1 Corinthians 16:2 “On the first day of the week of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.” (NIV)

2 Corinthians 9:7-8 “⁷ Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸ And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” (NIV)

Result: I LEARN to give.

Step 2: Trust God and give PROPORTIONATELY.

Leviticus 27:30 “A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, **belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.**” (NIV)

Deuteronomy 14:22-23 “²² Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. ²³ Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the Lord your God at the place He will choose as a dwelling for His Name, **so that you may learn to revere the Lord your God always.**” (NIV)

Luke 11:42 “Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice and the love of God. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone.” (NIV)

Result: I LOVE to give.

Step 3: Trust God by giving EXTRAVAGENTLY.

2 Samuel 24:24 “But the king (David) replied to Araunah, “No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.” (NIV)

2 Corinthians 8:3-4 “³ For I testify that **they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.** Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people.” (NIV)

Mark 12:41-44 “⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. ⁴³ Calling His disciples to Him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasure than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.” (NIV)

Result: I LIVE to give!

BOTTOM LINE:

Proverbs 3:5-6 “⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.” (NIV)

Proverbs 3:9-10 “⁹ Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; ¹⁰ then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.” (NIV)