

Proverbs 3:9-10

*First Fruits: Key to Financial Blessing*

Heavenly Wisdom: ➀ Trust in the Lord = Guidance;
➁ Honor Him with your Firstfruits = Resources;
➂ Don’t despise the Lord’s Discipline = Correction and Growth.
A Wise person Trusts in the Lord, Accepts His wisdom,
including His discipline, and receives a Reward.

A. I give my First = My Best

* Don’t give God your Leftovers; Malachi 1:6-14
* Don’t wait until the Last Dollar
* God does not Need your money; He wants You
* Give God the 1st Check, not the Last one; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

B. I return to God what is Already His

* The Israelites were instructed to bring the 1st Crop to the Tabernacle
* 1st fruit is a reminder that the Entire harvest belongs to God
* We need to recognize that Everything belongs to God
* He should have Rulership over All we have

C. I hold my Hands Open before God

* I can’t come to God with Clenched Fists
* If our hands are closed, God can’t Receive but He also can’t Give; Proverbs 11:24
* Often we want our hands closed to Give but open to Receive; Luke 6:38
* With the Same measure you give, it will be given unto you
* It’s not about our Ability but about our Attitude

D. I submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ

* HE>i often becomes he<I; Self fights against Surrender
* Firstfruits fights against our natural tendency to Self
* Ultimately, Stewardship is not about Money
* We need to be in Alignment with God’s instruction

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**Tithing: A Biblical Foundation** (#2)

John Maxwell, Successful Stewardship

*Question:* **Where Should My Tithe Go?**

*Answer:* This question has no dogmatic, scriptural answer since the references to tithing aren’t specific as to where the tithe should be given. In the Old Testament, tithes were received at the place of worship, which today could be interpreted as the local church. This practice continued, even into the New Testament. Malachi 3:10 instructs us to “bring the tithe into the storehouse.” This is where the term “storehouse tithing” comes from. The storehouse represents God’s designated place of (corporate) worship; the place where His people are spiritually fed and nurtured. Again, this seems to imply the local church. The Apostle Paul argues that financial giving to the local church enables the elders or bishops to be supported, again implying that we should tithe to the body of believers where we are taught.

*Question:* **But What If I’m Not Able to Do This?**

*Answer:* Obviously, God calls us to give what we can, not what we can’t. Nothing more and nothing less. If someone is unemployed or in school – under the financial care of someone else – then there may be no income to tithe. But the challenge God gives us in Scripture is to become a liberal giver; to practice the principle of giving our first and our best to Him. Hence, tithing becomes less an issue of the wallet and more an issue of trust. Am I trusting God to meet my needs, as I put Him first with my finances? No doubt, we live in the age of grace. God calls us to freedom, not bondage. But formal membership in a local church calls us to live above our rights. It’s not an issue of being God’s child; it’s an issue of being God’s example for others.

*Question:* **But What If I Can’t Give “Cheerfully?”**

*Answer:* It is true 2 Corinthians 9:7 calls us to only give offerings that we have purposed to give; not grudgingly, but with a cheerful heart.
However, note two truths. The context of this chapter refers to a special offering for an outside need, not to tithing. Tithing is the base (which God owns anyway; Malachi 3:8). Offerings are what we give (or “offer”) to God over and above the tithe. Offerings are one of three ways we can invest in God’s kingdom, alongside tithing and giving to the poor (Proverbs 19:17). The second truth we should note is that if we cannot tithe with a cheerful heart – our goal ought to be to change our heart, not our tithing amount. God enables the Spirit-filled believer to live above rights and the flesh. We should be living supernaturally, not naturally.