



LORDSHIP GENEROSITY

LEADER GUIDE | SESSION 3

Trusting God with my Tithe



SCRIPTURE TEXT Proverbs 3:5-6

SESSION IN A SENTENCE We are called to trust God with all of our heart, including our tithe.

BIBLE BACKGROUND Wisdom can be viewed as applied knowledge. If someone has knowledge about a subject, but does not apply the knowledge, then wisdom is not had. Solomon, the author of this text, was given wisdom from God. One means in which Solomon applied his God-given wisdom was by writing the book of Proverbs.

THE BIBLE SPEAKS TODAY The text being studied today is an invitation to trust the Lord with all of our heart. This trust is not limited to a certain act of obedience based on God's Word. Instead, our trust is to be applied in all areas of our lives, and this includes how we steward the tithe. To tithe means to give 10% of one's earnings back to the Lord through His church. When we are faithful to trust God with our whole heart, it becomes easier for us to trust Him with a small portion of our income.

BIBLE STUDY

Get Your Group Talking

ASK: “Who is the most trustworthy person you know?”

Transition to the Bible Study

SAY, “Trusting someone can be a scary proposition. The first time we jumped off the high dive at a pool, we had to trust someone to not let us drown. As soon as we believed the adult in the water was trustworthy, we were more confident to jump off the high dive. Today, we are learning about trusting God with all our heart, and this includes tithing. Our trust in God is not limited to our giving. We are called to trust Him and follow the path He has placed us on.”

INVITE your group members to fill in the missing blanks on their listening guide as you share each of the three main points in this study.

POINT 1: OUR CALL TO ACTION

Proverbs 3:5

ASK a group member to **read Proverbs 3:5 out loud.**

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own understanding.*

GUIDE group members to understand the text by sharing some of the following commentary notes:

Commentary

Solomon, in his wisdom, begins by calling God’s people to action. We are to trust in the Lord.

To trust means to place reliance or hope upon someone or something. If we were to exam our lives, we would quickly determine that we are trusting people. When we put an address into

our GPS, we are trusting the GPS to get us to our desired location. When we sit in a chair without examining it, we are trusting in the person who assembled it, along with the manufacturer who developed the parts. Solomon, however, did not call us to trust in our GPS or the people who assembled our chairs. Instead, he called us to trust in the Lord.

Trusting in the Lord, like trusting in our GPS, is an action. Furthermore, trusting in the Lord, like trusting in our GPS, calls us to respond to commands when given. If delay in our obedience, we may end up missing a turn, quickly finding ourselves lost and having to make changes along our journey.

The question now becomes, what does it look like to trust in the Lord with ten percent of our income? God, through the prophet Malachi said, “Bring the full tenth into the storehouse so that

there may be food in my house. Test me in this way, says the Lord of Armies. See if I will not open the flood gates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure.” (Malachi 3:10). This is the only place in all of Scripture in which God invites us to test Him. It is important to also point out that He stated that He would open the flood gates of heaven and pour out a blessing upon those who trust Him in this command.

Paul echoed a similar sentiment when he told the church at Corinth, “The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously. Each person should do as he has decided in his heart – not reluctantly or out of compulsion since God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:6-7). We can learn from both the Old and New Testament that God is aware of our giving and responds to those who trust Him.

Our next action, according to the passage, is to trust the Lord with all of heart. We can learn two things from this phrase. First, we are to trust Him with all our heart (emphasis added). While this may feel like a scary proposition, a study of our culture will show us the benefits of such an action. We all admire a couple that has been faithfully married to each other for 50+ years. Their lifelong commitment to each other started when they were both younger and made a commitment to God and each other. Neither the groom nor the bride was willing to give only ninety-nine percent. The father of the bride would not have accepted ninety-nine percent, either. Both the husband and wife went all in, and the journey was more than worth it. God calls us to this kind of commitment, too.

The second thing we learn is that we are to trust Him with all our heart (emphasis added). The heart represents the center of who we are. We love our family with our whole heart. We hear a special song or sermon at church, and it touches our heart. God wants us to trust Him with all our heart and this includes the way we handle the tithe. Our mind may tell us that we cannot give up ten percent of our income, but God did not call us to trust ourselves. When we trust Him with our heart, we trust in His goodness and promises outlined in His word.

DISCUSS: What might hinder someone from trusting God with the tithe and how can we help someone over these obstacles?

SAY: Trusting God with all our heart in tithing can be a scary proposition. The idea of giving ten percent to the church when things are already tight does not sound appealing, nor logical. If we are unable to give ten percent to the Lord, can we commit to giving one percent, or perhaps five percent to start? In time, and as our trust in God’s provision grows, we can ask Him to give us the faith to continue moving our tithe upward until we reach ten percent, or perhaps even beyond. The key is starting somewhere and beginning to live by faith.

TRANSITION TO POINT 2: Say, “Solomon outlined what we were supposed to do and that was to trust God with all our heart. He also outlined what we were not supposed to do. It is always helpful to know what to do as well as what not to do.”

POINT 2: OUR CALL TO INACTION

Proverbs 3:5

ASK a group member to **read Proverbs 3:5 out loud.**

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
and do not rely on your own understanding.*

GUIDE group members to understand the text by sharing some of the following commentary notes:

Commentary

Commands are a good thing. For example, if a parent is truly loving and sees a child moving towards something that is harmful or dangerous, that parent will command the child to stop immediately. If the parent merely offered a suggestion so that the child did not experience hurt feelings, the child could experience significant harm depending upon the action.

As we continue to study this verse, we see a distinct command to not rely upon one's own understanding. This command is not meant to harm us. Instead, like a parent commanding a child to not engage in harmful actions, this command is meant to protect us from our own limited understanding.

To better understand and thereby apply this portion of verse five, we need to understand a couple of principles. First, we are not to rely on our own understanding (emphasis added). The phrase rely on is like trusting someone. Once again, when we follow the commands given via our GPS, we are relying on someone or something else to get us to

our desired destination. This fact reveals the truth that we are willing to rely on something.

The application is found in the second principle to study. We are not to rely on our own understanding (emphasis added). Given the fact that we are human, we are limited to what we see and know. God, however, is not limited by anything or anyone. God stated through the prophet Isaiah, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways" (Isaiah 55:8). Since His thoughts and ways are not ours, obedience is found in relying upon Him and not self.

Once again, this can be a scary proposition. Our understanding might be to say that we cannot afford to tithe. Yet, the command is not to rely upon our own understanding. True application, be that in tithing or any other aspect of our lives, is found in trusting God and not self.

ASK: What does it look like to trust God with our tithe, and other aspects of our lives?

DO: If possible, share a personal story, or ask someone in the class to share a personal story of trusting God with the tithe even when it was difficult and did not make sense. In sharing the story, make sure to point others to God's faithfulness to provide as opposed to attracting personal attention.

TRANSITION TO POINT 3: Say, "As we move into our last section, we can be encouraged to learn that God responds to our obedience. The text shows that as we trust in the Lord with all our heart, He responds by making a straight path for us. The straight path is an indication of Him inviting us to a journey with Him as we trust Him more and more."

POINT 3:

OUR CALL TO A JOURNEY

Proverbs 3:6

ASK a group member to **read Proverbs 3:6 out loud.**

*in all your ways know him,
and he will make your paths straight.*

GUIDE group members to understand the text by sharing some of the following commentary notes:

Commentary

Most would agree that it is better to live and operate with facts than assumptions. When we know something to be a fact, we are less apt to encounter unforeseen surprises. With this as a backdrop, we find a fact stated in verse 6. Solomon said that when someone chooses to know God in all their ways, He will make their path straight (emphasis added). The phrase, will make, is written as a factual statement. It is also important to point out that the Bible says that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). The reason God is unable to lie is because if He did, He would no longer be holy and perfect in nature and character. Therefore, when God says that He will do something, His statement is just as factual as $1+1=2$.

The promise that God is making is that He will make a straight path for those who trust Him with all their heart, do not rely upon their own understanding and know Him in all their ways. Reflecting upon the meaning, we can see that God is inviting us to journey with Him as we learn to trust Him more. When a dignitary in Old Testament times would travel from one place

to the next, servants would go in front of the dignitary to remove any impediments between the starting point and the destination. It would be like a presidential motorcade. Someone travels in front of the dignitary while making a straight path between the two points.

Yes, God is offering to make a straight path for us, and He cannot do something contrary to His Word. As we journey from our time on earth into our eternal home with Him, He has invited us to trust Him, rely on Him and know Him. This is not done in a one-time event, but rather through a consistent and ongoing relationship. He first and foremost wants us to trust Him with our hearts. As we trust Him with our hearts, we learn to trust Him with the tithe. As we walk with Him in faith, He is faithful to make our paths straight.

DISCUSS: When has God shown Himself faithful in making a straight path for you?

DO: Lead the class in a brief time of prayer. Ask God to give each class member the faith and courage needed to not only understand their gifts, but to also steward them well.

TRANSITION TO NEXT STEPS: The outcome of studying God's word is not merely to gain additional knowledge for the sake of knowing something. The outcome should be to study and apply God's word so that we can live transformational lives in the world and thereby test and prove God's perfect and pleasing will. The next steps listed below are ways to apply what we have learned in today's study.

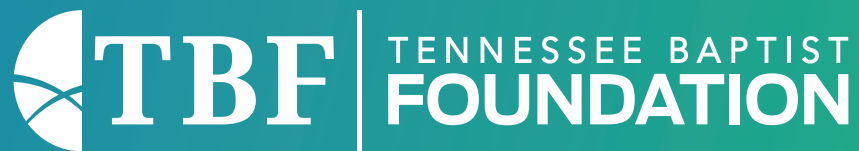


MY NEXT STEP

GUIDE group members to identify which of the following steps they will attempt before the group's next study. There is one step that is easiest, another that is more challenging, and a final one that will challenge even a spiritually mature group member. They are in random order in each session.

- 1. Trust the Lord with your heart** – If we learn to trust the Lord with our tithe, but fail to trust Him with our heart, we will eventually experience eternal consequences. If you do not know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior, then let today be the day that you trust Him as Lord and ask Him to save you from your sins.
- 2. Trust the Lord with your finances** – Some are already giving to God's kingdom. Can you trust Him with another percent of your income? Some are not giving to God's kingdom at all. What does it look like to trust Him with at least one percent of your income this week?
- 3. Thank God for His faithfulness** – The Bible tells us that God is faithful to make a straight path for us. When has God done this for you and have you thanked Him for it. Before the end of the week, take time to thank God for His faithfulness to make a straight path for you.

SUMMARIZE the session: Trusting God begins with trusting Him with all our heart and not trusting our own understanding. As we do this, we learn to trust Him with giving 10% of our income back to the local church. We have also learned that trusting God this way is not an event, but rather a journey. As we walk with Him, He is faithful to go before us and make a straight path. While the straight path does not guarantee an easy life, He does promise to go before us.



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