

Trust

“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 room enough to store it.” (Malachi 3:10)

Scripture: Malachi 3:7–12

Song: “Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus”

Lisa Randolph of Richmond, Virginia, shares a powerful story of trust. Her son was born prematurely, and one day, while changing his diaper, she found blood in his stool. Though a doctor visit minimized the problem, she was still concerned. A second opinion revealed her son had necrotizing enterocolitis, a serious intestinal illness common in premature infants. Trusting her maternal instinct and that doctor, she acted on it. In 2023, her son celebrated his thirteenth birthday.

Trust that prompts action makes the difference. R.C. Sproul noted, “It is one thing to believe in God. It is quite another to believe God.” Long before Sproul made that observation, Malachi challenged God’s people to believe His promise.

From finances to family, all of us face uncertainty. Our giving to God isn’t about money or material things. It’s about trust. God’s promise is sure. Our needs will be met in ways we cannot imagine, and we will be blessed. Believe God and act upon that belief. Take Him at His word.

Father, thank You for Your faithfulness and the many ways You demonstrate it. Help me to trust You. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

February 16–22. **Bill Thomas** lives in Moberly, Missouri, and works at Central Christian College of the Bible and Higbee Baptist Church.

Dedication

And [the workers] said to Moses, “The people are bringing more than enough for doing the work the Lord commanded to be done.” (Exodus 36:5)

Scripture: Exodus 36:2–7

Song: “The Doxology”

Higbee Baptist Church is a small church in the middle of Missouri, and I have been blessed to serve there for the past two years. One of our favorite activities is Operation Christmas Child, a ministry of Samaritan’s Purse. Most churches in which I have served participate in this ministry, but none of them do it quite like HBC. For the second year in a row, Higbee Baptist has prepared almost two hundred boxes. That may not sound like much, but for the size of our church, it is incredible. The people bring in so much stuff that we can’t help but get more boxes.

“The people are bringing more than enough.” I get that at Higbee, and I think Moses and the leaders of the Israelites understood it too.

God does not need us to give, but He allows us the opportunity to partner with Him. Hudson Taylor once said, “God’s work is not man working for God; it is God’s own work, though often wrought through man’s hands.” We have the chance to partner with the Lord to see great things done in a world that needs it. Will we bring our all? Will we give the task everything we have? May it be said that we “are bringing more than enough.”

Father, thank You for the opportunity to work with and for You. May I give my all to the cause You set before me. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Blessed

“May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face shine on us.” (Psalm 67:1)

Scripture: Psalm 67

Song: “Count Your Blessings”

One of my favorite television shows was *The Jeffersons*, starring Sherman Hemsley. I always enjoyed George Jefferson, but one of my favorite episodes is “Change of a Dollar.” It shows a side of George that’s not always seen. On the night of a big banquet for Tom, George runs out at the last minute to do an errand at his store in Queens. We then see George demonstrate incredible kindness, love, and respect to a customer who was down on her luck.

Alexander MacLaren wrote, “Seek to cultivate a buoyant, joyous sense of the crowded kindness of God in your daily life.” Like MacLaren, the psalmist knew the warmth of God’s goodness and grace and asked Him to share it with His people.

Sometimes it is hard to grasp how good God is to us. God’s blessing is all around us. We see it in nature. We see it in the sunshine and rain. We see it in the harvest of crops. We see it in the salvation He offers us through His Son, Jesus Christ. The outcome of God’s goodness to us is praise and rejoicing. We can sing for joy for the blessings of God. “Count your blessings, name them one by one. Count your blessings, see what God has done.”

Father, thank You for the many acts of kindness and blessing You give me each day. May I be aware of them and always express my gratitude. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Supplied

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.” (2 Corinthians 9:6)

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:1–6

Song: “I Surrender All”

R.G. LeTourneau was 81 years old when he passed away in 1969. He was a businessman who, in his own words, tried to be a “businessman for God.” In his career he invented over three hundred new items for which he got patents. He always had a heart to give to God’s work but was convicted to give increasing percentages until, at the time of his death, he was giving away almost 90 percent of his income.

LeTourneau once said, “I shovel out the money, and God shovels it back. God has a bigger shovel.” We’ve all heard the expression, “You can’t outgive God.” It is as true as it is widely used. Paul understood that principle as he challenged the Corinthians to give generously.

Giving our time, talent, or resources is not an easy thing. There are so many needs, and our time and resources are finite. While the act of giving is tough, the blessing of giving is indescribable. When we are willing to give to the Lord, we see Him give back to us in ways we could not imagine. Whether it be money, energy, or opportunity, God gives back far more than we could ever dream. “All to Jesus I surrender.” Is that true?

Father, thank You for the opportunity to share in Your work and for blessing me with more than I can imagine. Help me serve You more and better. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Impact

This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. (2 Corinthians 6:12)

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:6–15

Song: “Goodness of God”

A California man was driving down the highway when he saw a man begging. Remembering he'd been given extra cash in a card and feeling prompted by the Holy Spirit, he decided to give. He opened the card, which contained \$100 bills. He took one, pulled over in the lane by the man, and told him, “Take this before someone honks at me.” Looking in his rearview mirror as he drove away, he saw the man stunned and mouthing the words, “Thank God.”

When we obey and give, God can be praised. Whether it be a simple roadside transaction or a contribution to a big ministry, God is glorified in our act. Paul wanted the Corinthians to understand that when they gave, it resulted in praise to God.

God has been good to us, and we enjoy His blessings every day. Because we are blessed, we get to be a blessing to others. We know we are to give generously, but we need to remember that giving is impactful. It affects the lives of those to whom we give. It is good for us, and it brings glory and thanks to God. May our giving create a chorus of praise to God.

Father, thank You for the opportunity I have to give. May my giving point to Your goodness and bring You praise. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Commissioned

“Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19)

Scripture: Matthew 28:16–20

Song: “Mighty to Save”

In 2013, I had the privilege of seeing my son-in-law receive his formal commission as an officer in the United States Army. It was an inspiring experience to watch so many young men and women pledge their allegiance to their country and receive the challenge and responsibility of their commission. Those men and women were duty-bound to defend their nation with honor.

The United States Naval Institute website notes, “The commission binds both the officer to the state to serve lawfully and defend the Constitution.” Being commissioned for a task is something to be taken seriously. Similarly, Jesus commissions His disciples just before ascending into heaven.

Commissioning is about responsibility. When we become followers of Jesus, our lives have purpose. We have responsibilities. Jesus made that clear before returning to His Father. Because of our faith in Jesus, we have the privilege of giving our whole lives to Him, making disciples of those around us and around the world. Is there anything more important than that? We have the opportunity to make a difference for Jesus by what we do, what we say, and how we act. It is our gift to Him who gave His life for us. What can we do today that demonstrates our faithfulness to our commission?

Father, thank You for sending Your Son to give me life and purpose. May I use the opportunities You give me to make a difference. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.

Excel

“But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” (2 Corinthians 8:7)

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 8:3–9

Song: “Give Thanks”

Alex Smith was the quarterback for the Kansas City Chiefs before Patrick Mahomes. When Mahomes took over the Chiefs in 2018, Smith went to Washington to play for the Commanders. On November 18, 2018, Smith was injured in a horrific play that threatened his ability to walk. With his family at his side, he pushed hard to rehab his leg. There wasn't a dry eye at Commanders Field the fifth week of the 2020 season when Smith played against the Rams.

Smith gave as much as he could and even beyond his ability. That kind of giving makes a difference.

Paul commends the Macedonian churches for going above and beyond in their giving, and he challenges the Corinthian believers (and all of us) to excel in giving too. Most of the time we want to do our best for the Lord. We have received so much from Jesus, which compels us to want to give back. What matters is our determination. Are we dedicated to giving what we can and even going beyond what we think? Whether we are giving money, time, energy, or encouragement, are we seeking to excel at it?

As Rick Warren once wrote, “As you give God your best and follow His calling, God will bring out the best in you too.”

Father, thank You for the opportunity to serve. Give me the strength to give You my all. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.