

Our Power for Good



SABBATH—MARCH 24

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: 2 Timothy 3:1–9; Ezekiel 14:14; Philippians 4:4–13; Proverbs 3:5.

MEMORY VERSE: “People who do not believe are living all [everywhere] around you. They might say that you are doing wrong. So live good lives. Then they will see the good things you do, and they will give glory [praise] to God on the day when Christ [Jesus] comes again” (1 Peter 2:12, ICB).

WE ARE GOD'S servants. So, we should be good witnesses for Him. We have the power to change lives around us for the better. How do we do that?

First, we must not cut ourselves off from people who do not know God. We must not live separate lives from them. Instead, we should show them a better way of living. Second, we must be wise managers of God's gifts to us. God gives us power to live lives that are different from the lives of any other people on earth (2 Corinthians 6:17). Third, people should notice that our lives are different and even ask us about it. That is why the Bible says, “Always be ready to tell everyone who asks you why you believe as you do. Be gentle [kind] as you speak and show respect” (1 Peter 3:15, NLV).

In this last lesson, we will look at the gifts God gives to good managers. We also will look at the power for good that God gives us to change people's lives for the better. What is the secret to this success and power for good? “The secret is this: Christ [Jesus] in you brings hope of all the great [wonderful] things to come” (Colossians 1:27, NLV).



We have the power to change lives around us for the better.

GOOD MANAGERS ARE HOLY (2 Timothy 3:1–9)

What does it mean to be holy? This topic is very big. Part of this topic includes what it means to live a holy life. The Bible shows us that holy people live holy lives (Titus 1:1). God chooses these people to be His special people from all the people on the earth (Psalm 4:3). Being holy also means becoming the same as Jesus in what we do. It means having deep feelings of love and loyalty for God the Father (Titus 2:12).

Read 2 Timothy 3:1–9. What does Paul warn us about in these verses? What does his warning have to do with being a good manager of God’s gifts?

The book of Job tells us about Job’s good actions. It shows how a holy life is lived. Job suffered awful pain. But he stayed loyal to God. The book of Job also shows that Satan hates people who live holy lives. Satan hates people who stay loyal to God while they suffer pain. Job is a perfect example of a person who lived a holy life during hard times. Even God says that there was no one else who had the same faith or loyalty that Job had (Job 2:3).

“There was a man who lived in the land of Uz. His name was Job. He was honest. He did what was right. He had respect for God and avoided evil” (Job 1:1, NIV). This verse shows us that Job’s faith did not include empty words or acts of worship that had no meaning. Yes, honest praise to God and true worship were part of Job’s life (Job 1:5). But Job’s loyalty to God was shown in every part of his life. Being holy does not mean we are perfect. It only means we do our very best in everything we do in life.

Read Ezekiel 14:14. What does this verse tell us about the lives of these men? What do we see in their lives that should be seen in all of us?

Being good managers of God’s gifts means we must live holy lives. Loyal managers do not only act holy. They are also holy in their hearts. Their holy hearts are shown in how they live. Good managers also show their hearts are holy by how they take care of the gifts God gives them. Their faith is shown not only in what they do. Their faith also is shown in what they choose *not* to do.



Faith is shown not only by what we do. Faith is shown by what we choose *not* to do.

HOW TO BE HAPPY WITH WHAT YOU HAVE (Philippians 4:11)

Paul writes: “I am telling you this, but it is not because I need anything. I have learned to be satisfied [happy] with the things I have and with everything that happens” (Philippians 4:11). Where does Paul’s happiness come from? How can we have this happiness too?

Paul describes an evil group of people in a letter to Timothy. These men “think that serving God is a way to get rich” (1 Timothy 6:5, ICB). This verse is a perfect picture of many preachers on TV today. They make a lot of money from the people who watch their shows. These preachers tell their audience to be loyal to God by giving them money. Then those people who watch their shows will be rich too. These false preachers connect riches with loyalty to God. That false idea is one more way of making a love for riches more important than a love for God.

The truth is that being holy has nothing to do with getting rich. Stop and think about what these preachers are really saying. What if being holy really did make a person rich? There are some very bad people on this earth who are also very rich. Are these bad people holy just because they have a lot of money? That idea is very crazy! Paul says, “You gain a lot when you live a godly [holy] life. But you must be happy with what you have” (1 Timothy 6:6, NIV). Being happy with what you have is the best treasure you can have. God’s loving-favor is far more valuable than being rich. So, we should be happy with the “food and clothing” we have (1 Timothy 6:8, NIV). We may have a little or a lot. But we can get caught easily in the trap of wanting more and more.

“We should be happy in every time and in every place. Being happy in this way is an important skill. It is one we should learn. . . . Christian happiness comes from having a sweet and quiet spirit that freely surrenders to God’s wisdom at every moment. . . . This spirit within us is the same as a box of precious perfume.”—Jeremiah Burroughs, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment* [Happiness] (London: printed by W. Bentley, 1651), pages 1, 3, adapted.

Read Romans 8:28; Hebrews 13:5; and Philippians 4:4–13. How do these verses teach us to be happy with what we have?



“Christian happiness comes from having a sweet and quiet spirit that freely surrenders to God’s wisdom at every moment. . . . This spirit within us is the same as a box of precious perfume.”—Jeremiah Burroughs, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*, pages 1, 3, adapted.

TRUST (Proverbs 3:5)

Read Proverbs 3:5. What important message is there for us in this verse? Look carefully at the last part. What does it mean not to “depend on your own understanding” (NirV)? Read also Isaiah 55:9; 1 Corinthians 4:5; and 1 Corinthians 13:12).

Proverbs 3:5 are the words that every wise manager of God should live by. “Trust in the LORD with all your heart. Do not depend on your own understanding” (NirV).

Of course, that advice is easier to say than to follow. Often, we believe in God only with our minds. We believe in His love and care for us. But then we worry ourselves sick over hard times or some trouble. Sometimes the future can look very scary. Our worrying can cause us to think that bad things will happen.

So then, how do we as managers learn to trust in God? We do it by having faith in God and obeying Him in everything we do now. Trust is something we do. It is an action of the mind. The more we trust in God, the more our trust will grow. We must live as loyal managers. Then other people will see our trust in God. This trust is the beginning of everything we do as managers.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart” (Proverbs 3:5, NirV). The wording “your heart” always is used as a word picture in the Bible. It means that our decisions come from that part of us that can choose between following good or evil. These choices make us who we are (Matthew 22:37). We become who we are not only by our choices. But our reasons for doing things also make us who we are.

It is easier to trust God with things that we cannot control. Then we have no choice but to trust in God. But real trust from the heart comes when we need to make a choice about something we can control.

We can learn what it means to trust God with all our hearts by looking at the behavior of the apostles. Apostles were leaders. Jesus chose 12 apostles to lead His church after He went back to heaven. Ellen G. White says: “The apostles were as weak and helpless as anyone now doing God’s work. But these men put their whole trust in the Lord. They had riches. But it was riches of the mind and the soul. Everyone can have these riches too if they will put God first and last and best in everything.”—*Gospel [The Good News] Workers*, page 25, adapted.



Often, we believe in God only with our minds. But we worry ourselves sick over hard times or some trouble.

OUR POWER TO CHANGE PEOPLE'S LIVES (Titus 2:7)

“At one time you lived in darkness. Now you are living in the light that comes from the Lord” (Ephesians 5:8, NLV). In this verse, Paul says that a full change of heart is something other people can see. So, “we should live in the light, where God is” (1 John 1:7, ERV). Then our work as managers of God’s gifts will have the power to bring good and the light of God’s truth to other people.

Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world [to everyone who lives on the earth]” (John 8:12, NLV). We show the light of God by who we are and what we do every day.

Read Matthew 5:16; Titus 2:7; and 1 Peter 2:11, 12. As we see in these verses, how do we show others we are God’s managers? Also, how does that work bring praise to God? How does what we do have the power to change lives for the better?

True, a wise manager takes good care of what belongs to God. But a wise manager also does much more than that. Our families see our work as managers. Our neighbors see our work too. Angels and people who live far away on other planets see our work (1 Corinthians 4:9)! Our lives show the power for good that comes from following the rules of God’s kingdom. We also show this power for good in our jobs. We have the power to change the lives of people we work with. We also show Jesus to people when we are kind to them and make good choices. God blesses us when we do these things.

How we do our jobs also shows our beliefs. We can show the people we work with that we wish to lead holy and good lives (Psalm 37:6). We do not try to hide the good we do at work (Luke 11:33). Instead, our power for good is seen by everyone (Matthew 5:14). But we must try every day to live this way at home and at work. Then we will have the power to change the minds and hearts of the people around us.

“God trusts each person with some of His gifts. One day He will ask all of us to explain to Him what we did with the things He gave us. . . . Jesus has every reason to ask us to serve Him. So, we should hold no part of our lives back from Him.”
—Ellen G. White, *This Day With God*, page 243, adapted.



We have the power to change the lives of people we work with.

What power for good do you show at work and home?

THE WORDS WE WANT TO HEAR (Matthew 25:21)

We are strangers on earth. Heaven is our home (Hebrews 11:13, 14). But we must live on this earth for now. Here, we must choose whom we will live for: God or Satan. “Anyone who is not with me is against me. Anyone who does not gather sheep with me scatters them” (Matthew 12:30, NIV). Everyone will see the side we are on when Jesus comes back.

One day, Jesus will come back to this earth. Then Jesus will say something to the people who say they are His followers. As we see in Matthew 25:21 and Matthew 7:23, there are two different things Jesus could say. What are they? What does each set of words mean?

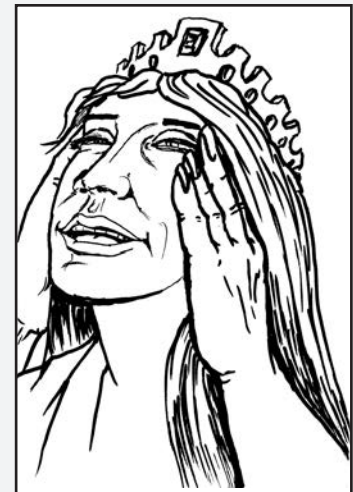
Jesus’ words, “ ‘You did well [a good job]’ ” (Matthew 25:21, ICB) are the best words a good manager ever will hear. To hear God say that He accepts our work as His managers will give us much joy. He will say these words to His followers who did their best to manage His belongings with the skills they had. The wise managers who hear these words from Jesus have known all along that being saved does not come from their own good works but from Jesus and what He did for us on the cross (read Romans 3:21; Romans 4:6).

A loyal manager’s life shows his or her faith. Loyal managers will not try to make themselves right with God by their own works or good behavior (Matthew 7:21, 22). Matthew 7:23 shows it is wrong to do that.

“Those who follow Jesus must give back to Him the gifts that belong to Him. They give these gifts back by using them for Jesus. Then they will be saving treasure in heaven. This treasure will be given to them when they hear the words, ‘ “You did well [a good job]. You are a good servant who can be trusted. You did well with small things. So I will let you care for much greater things. Come and share my happiness with me” ’ [Matthew 25:21, ICB].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 523, adapted.

Being a wise manager of God’s gifts means living a life that puts God’s two greatest commandments first: (1) love for God and (2) love for our neighbors. This love should be the reason why we do good things.

How much does your life and your work as a manager of God’s gifts show your love for God and your love for other people?



Heaven is our home.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “Jesus came to this earth to show God’s love. Jesus’ followers are to continue the work He began. Let us help each other and make each other strong. We find true happiness by doing good to other people. Man does not work against his own health and happiness by loving God and his fellow men. The more giving man is, the happier he is. Why? Because he is fully living God’s purpose for his life.”—Ellen G. White, *Counsels [Advice] on Stewardship [Managing God’s property]*, pages 24, 25, adapted.

“God gives us many gifts. We give back to the Lord from the things that belong to Him. This give and take is going on all the time in a healthy church. God gives light and His loving-favor to every true believer. The believer gives to other people from the gifts and work God gives to him to do. The more a believer gives, then the more God can give the believer His mercy and truth. God also gives the believer clearer light and more knowledge. The life of the church depends on this give and take. But what if someone takes but never gives? Then he will soon stop getting gifts from God. This person must share the truth with other people. Or he will lose his chance to get more. We must give to others the gifts of heaven. Then God will give us more gifts.”—Page 36, adapted.



“The more giving man is, then the happier he is.”
—Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship*, pages 24, 25, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

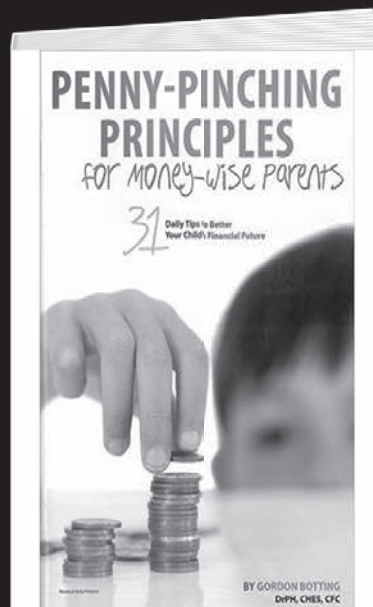
- ① How does trusting in the Lord give us happiness? As we see in 2 Corinthians 10:5, how do we trust God with all our hearts? It is very easy to say, “In everything God works for the good of those who love him” (Romans 8:28, ICB). But why is it so hard to believe that? We say we trust God. So, why are we afraid of the future?
- ② Say in a few words what you think it means to be a good manager of God’s gifts. Why is being a good manager an important part of the Christian’s life?
- ③ Why do the people in Matthew 7:21–23 say the things they say? What do their words show about who they really are? How can we make sure that we do not fall into the same trap of lying to ourselves?
- ④ What power for good does your church have in your community?

PENNY-PINCHING PRINCIPLES

for money-wise parents

31 Daily Tips to Better Your Child's Financial Future

Communicating with your kids about your family finances is one of the best ways to ensure that your children will live a financially liberated lifestyle. A deficient understanding of money management is the reason many adult children end up living in their parents' basement. As parents, you can help your children secure a healthy financial future by implementing these easy, practical tips.



US\$4.95
UPC 6433300469999

For eBooks, go to:
Adventist-eBooks.com

 Pacific Press®

©2017 Pacific Press®
Publishing Association
Please contact your ABC
for pricing in Canada.
1755902092

Three ways to order:

1 Local	Adventist Book Center®
2 Call	1-800-765-6955
3 Shop	AdventistBookCenter.com



AdventistBookCenter.com



[AdventistBookCenter](https://www.facebook.com/AdventistBookCenter)



[@AdventistBooks](https://twitter.com/AdventistBooks)

[YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/AdventistBooks)

[AdventistBooks](https://www.youtube.com/AdventistBooks)

Edited by NIKOLAUS SATELMAJER • JOHN MATHEWS

Giving is a volatile topic for most of us. But it is a biblical principle that needs more attention. For some, talking about faithful stewardship is like walking on thin ice. Reactions range from “All you want is my money!” to “Isn’t that trying to strike a bargain with God?” Where is the truth? Where is the blessing? Is there a balance?



One thing is certain—we either steward our possessions faithfully or allow them to become a spiritual barrier between us and God.

BEYOND BLESSINGS

Celebrating the Joys of Stewardship



©2016 Pacific Press® Publishing Association
Please contact your ABC for pricing in Canada.
1555901200

Three ways to order:

1 Local	Adventist Book Center®
2 Call	1-800-765-6955
3 Shop	AdventistBookCenter.com

Beyond Blessings
978-0-8163-4509-0
US\$7.97

Beyond Blessings 2
978-0-8163-5765-9
US\$12.99



AdventistBookCenter.com



AdventistBookCenter



@AdventistBooks



AdventistBooks