

## Proverbs 3:9-10

***Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.***

Reading today's proverb, I read of two things we are to honor God with.

First we are to honor God "***with (y)our possessions***". This is not speaking of our paycheck, but rather the things we have obtained from the Lord through our paychecks, jobs or other means.

If you have a car, you can honor the Lord with that car by using it to go to church, go to work, or to help out others. Or you can dishonor God by using that same car to go places that a Christian should not be going, like a bar or a strip joint, an "R" rated movie etc. or even by driving it recklessly.

For me as a musician, I can honor God with my keyboards by playing, writing and recording Christian music to the Lord that draws others into His presence to worship God. Or I can use these same keyboards to write and record songs full of sins, which would dishonor God.

We can also honor or dishonor God with the things we watch on TV. Yet our possessions, our cars, our TV's, my keyboards, your \_\_\_\_\_, do not dictate how they are used, we do. So we can use our possessions as a blessing from God or turn them into possessions that dishonor God.

The second thing is "***the firstfruits of all your increase.***" Here is what we would consider our paychecks as our firstfruits. But when it comes to tithe, one very common question is, "*Do I tithe before taxes or after taxes?*"

I will answer with two things.

First, we can't look to be legalistic in our giving back to the Lord, because when we ask that question (before or after taxes) we can turn that into legalism rather than thanks to the Lord for His provision.

Second, instead of asking "*Before or after taxes*" put it more into perspective and ask, "*Should I give to God first or the Government first?*" because that's what it truly boils down to. Whichever you give to first will be the God, or god that you decide to honor. Even ask yourself, "*Who will bless me more by giving or honoring first, God or the government?*" We know that God gives the increase, but He can't increase what you are not giving Him. And do you really think Uncle Sam will bless you by giving it to him first? I don't think so.

But today's proverb tells us the results of honoring God with our firstfruits, and not the government. "***So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.***" I know this firsthand as my "***barns will be filled with plenty***" I have money in my savings in the bank (barn), "***And your vats will overflow with new wine.***" I have plenty of food in my cupboards and frig (vats).

I am almost 65 years old, and for 65 years, God has always supplied for me the things I needed. And at times I had very, very little, or at times nothing, but that was my fault, not God's, because I didn't honor Him with my firstfruits, or any fruit at all, and used it wastefully. Just as I try to

honor God with the keyboards He has given me, I also want to honor Him with everything else He has given to me as well.

So we can't use today's proverb as a get rich scheme, or some will try to use:

† **Malachi 3:10** *Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this," Says the LORD of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven And pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it.*

**“Try Me now in this”** The NLT version says **“Try it! Put Me to the test.”** God was speaking to Israel on this, because they were thinking of self, and not God and they allowed God's house (the temple) to become ruined, because they did not take care of it, and did not support it financially. So it wasn't a **“Hey Israel, here's a get rich quick scheme for you.”** But rather a wake up call for them to get right with God, and to return to Him with their tithe and possessions giving back to God from their hearts, not to get rich.

So, we too must honor God, and we do so with us being in His word every day, singing songs of praise to Him, doing for and helping out others, but also with our tithe and possessions. You may not get rich here on the earth, but you will be storing up treasures in heaven for all eternity. Something Uncle Sam or our banks can't promise us.

So let's take God and Jesus' words of wisdom on this, and let's examine our own hearts in this matter.

God says,

† **Proverbs 3:9-10** *Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase; So your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.*

Jesus says,

† **Matthew 6:19-21** *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*