

# *Proverbs*

## *The Liberal man*

*Ray Ewers*

*“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth;  
and there is that withholdeth more than is meet,  
but it tendeth to poverty” (Prov.11:24-25).*

*“The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth  
shall be watered also himself” (Prov.15:23)*

**W**hat a wonderful promise from God. Sadly many Christians are not only ignorant of it, but have allowed the world’s values, rather than Biblical principles, to govern the way in which they give to the Lord.

The Bible teaches that man is a steward and must give an account of his stewardship to God. I am ever grateful to my father who taught the following principles relating to Biblical stewardship:

1. God is the absolute owner of all.
2. Man as a steward must give an account of his stewardship.
3. God’s ownership and man’s stewardship are to be acknowledged by a definite portion of our time and money
4. All the rest spent or saved is to be treated as no less of a sacred trust from God
5. All giving is an act of grace.

These principles form the basis of living for the liberal man. He knows that *“it is more blessed to give than to receive”* (Acts 20:35). He knows that *“God loves a cheerful giver”* (2 Corinthians 9:7). Just as giving is an act of grace it is also an act of faith. As the farmer by faith spends thousands of dollars to scatter seed on prepared soil, believing that in God’s economy it shall increase manifold; so the liberal man gives generously, knowing that *“he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully”* (2 Corinthians 9:6).

The temptation is to guard what we have, and to withhold more than is fitting or justly due. The farmer who withholds his seed

and sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. A missionary told me of a Chinese elder who withheld a large amount of money rather than give it away, as the Lord had told him. The Communists came, inspected his bank balance, and arrested him for being a capitalist. He lost his life in the process. As our text reminds us *“there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”*

Our attitude should be that of the Psalmist *“What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?”* (Psalm 116:12). In helping people to manage their finances, I have suggested they work out a budget to cover their income and expenditure. As part of this process we also need to plan our giving. The first item to be set aside is the Lord’s portion. Prayerfully decide how much this is to be and faithfully lay it aside in store as the Lord has prospered you. Trust God to guide you as to how, and where, and when this is to be allocated.

Then, from all that remains, we have opportunity to give out of our abundance to meet the practical needs of those around us. Quite apart from money we can be generous in the giving of food, clothing, and furniture to render practical assistance to those in need.

Learn to listen to the promptings of God. Be observant and alert to act spontaneously in reaching out to others as well as giving the calculated gift we regularly set aside. Remember, we can never out-give God. The liberal man who waters others will be watered also himself.

The focus of the liberal man is to be upon the God of all grace. Reading 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9 encourages us to abound in the grace of giving by first giving ourselves to the Lord. Then as faithful steward we will trust our God who *“is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work”* (2 Corinthians 9:8).