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In one of your more honest moments, have you ever asked yourself,

“Why should I give part of what I get to God?”

Everything that exists belongs to Him anyway—if He wanted it, He could just take it all back. Wouldn't that be awful?

Think about it. What would be left if God took back everything He has provided for you? Everything that you own does belong to God, even if you kept the receipts. There are no trailers on the back of hearses; you go back to God with as much as you had when you came. He's the one who supplies all your stuff in between.

Take a look out the window. Do you see anything good out there that doesn't find its origin in God? Even all the “human-made” things were built by people whose ability and talents were given to them by God. As James said, “Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above” (Jas. 1:16-17a). Why does James warn us not to be deceived?



What would be left if God took back everything?

So that we don't start thinking that the good gifts around us came from somewhere else—somewhere other than the hand of God. It's easy to get fooled.

So giving to God is a way of saying thanks to Him for giving it to us in the first place. It's a way of saying that you recognize Him as the true giver of all that you have, the ultimate owner of all that you possess. As King David (a wealthy man) said, "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand" (1 Chron. 29:14). Giving back to God has a way of reminding us that He is the provider of all that we have.

Consider those people in the Bible who gave back to God. One of the first illustrations of someone setting aside a portion was Abraham giving to Melchizedek in Genesis 14. Jacob followed his granddad's example in Genesis 28. And on it went—Moses, David, Solomon, even the apostle Paul encouraged Christians to set

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How's your image these days? You're a pretty decent kid, grades are okay, you stay out of trouble—not bad, eh?

Here's a piece of news: not bad doesn't cut it with God. Neither does pretty good.

Just ask the rich young ruler. Jesus put him under the scope of His love, diagnosed the problem, and prescribed a solution. But the young man found the prescription a little hard to swallow.

U N D E R

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Scope

- 1. Read Mark 10:17-21.** What clues can you find about the young man's attitude as he approached Jesus? Why do you think he felt this way?
- 2.** Jesus answered the question with another question. What was His purpose in doing that?



3. Why isn't it good enough just to keep all the rules?
4. Does Jesus' command to sell everything and give to the poor apply to everyone who wants to be a Christian? Why or why not?
5. Why do you think Jesus made it so tough on the young man?
6. Do you think it was fair of Jesus to ask him to do such a hard thing?
7. Scripture says that the rich young man went away after he heard Jesus' answer. Tell what the rich young man might have been thinking when he walked away.

A purple banner with white triangles along its edges, containing the text "Today's Scripture" in orange.

Today's Scripture

Mark 10:17-21

¹⁷As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

¹⁸"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. ¹⁹You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not give false testimony, You shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.' "

²⁰"Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

²¹Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

Rex Bohn



aside sum of money in keeping with your income (1 Cor. 16:2).

Malachi records for us God's challenge to anyone who is willing to join the ranks of those who trust Him to provide: " 'Bring the whole

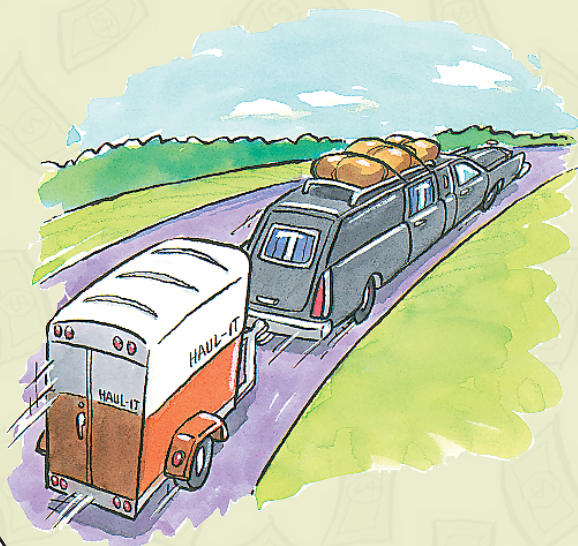
tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,' says the LORD Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it' " (3:10).

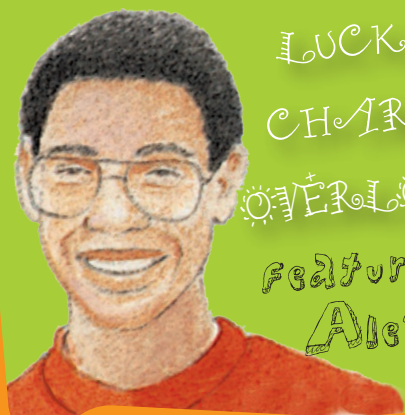
Lastly, giving to God will

take the bite out of materialism in your life. It really makes you think twice about what you do with the rest of your money. As Jesus said, "You cannot serve both God and money" (Matt. 6:24). In a culture like ours, it's easy to measure the value of something by how much you can get for it. Giving back to God some of our money reminds us where the real power lies. It's a way of making money serve you—that's its proper place.

The bottom line is not that God wants your money— He wants your heart. But He knows that where He finds the one, He'll find the other. Jesus said it this way, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21). Keep putting your treasure back into God's hands.

There are no trailers on the back of hearses.



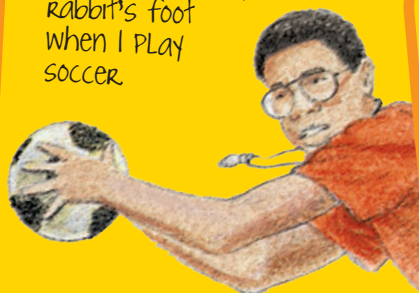


LUCKY
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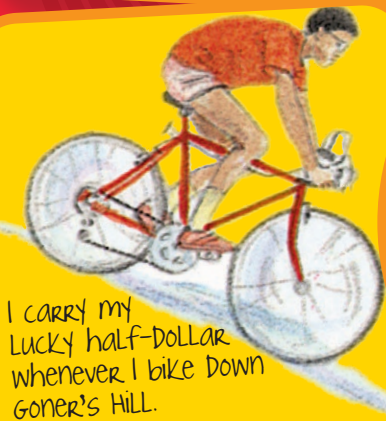
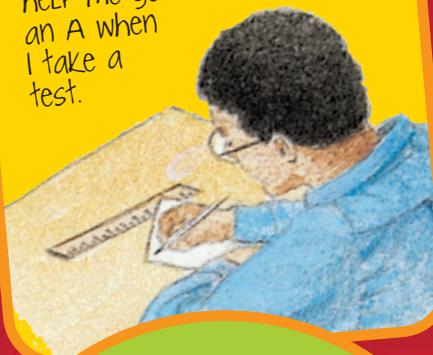


Just in case God doesn't hear my prayers, I take my lucky charms with me.

I carry my lucky rabbit's foot when I play soccer.



I use my lucky pen to help me get an A when I take a test.



I carry my lucky half-dollar whenever I bike down Goner's Hill.

I wear my lucky button whenever I . . .

What they trust in
is **Fragile**
What they rely on
is a spider's web.

Job 8:14

every
day
devos

Words to Live By

For the word of God

is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

None of us likes to hear what we're doing wrong. But if we want to do what's right, we need to honestly face the truth about ourselves and try to correct the problem. God's Word is just what we need to do that.

MONDAY Read Hebrews 4:12. Has reading the Bible ever made you aware of something you did wrong? Think about the Bible's purpose in your life. Are you willing to do what it says?

TUESDAY Read Psalm 119:105. How does this verse compare with Hebrews 4:12? How has God's Word been a light for your path?

WEDNESDAY Look at Psalm 119:9. Write your own psalm or prayer asking God to use His Word to keep you from sin.

THURSDAY Read Psalm 119:11. Take inventory of Scripture verses you have memorized. David found that memorized Scripture helped keep him from giving in to temptation. Start by memorizing Hebrews 4:12.

FRIDAY Take a look at your thoughts and attitudes. How do they line up with God's Word? Ask God to judge the thoughts and attitudes of your heart and to bring them into line with His Word.

SATURDAY It isn't easy to have someone correct us. But God loves us enough to want the best for us—even when the truth hurts. Say thanks to God for setting a standard to live by.

