

Introduction:

We are all familiar with how Jesus answered Satan during his time in the wilderness, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’ But does God ever invite us to test him in regard to his promises? The answer lies in the text of this week’s sermon. Get Pastor Mark’s sermon notes [here](#)¹ and listen to the sermon by clicking [here](#).²



These verses point out the proper sequence—we give, and then God blesses. Too often, we get this backwards.

Scripture:

Please read [Mark 12:41-44](#), [Proverbs 3:9-10](#), and [Malachi 3:10-12](#) in your Bible, or [click here](#).

So What?

In Mark 12:41-44 Jesus sees the gift given by the widow who gave out of her poverty, and points out her attitude of generosity to his disciples. “Her gift illustrates that generosity is not determined by the amount, but by the attitude with which it is given. The question is not, “How much did you give?” but, “How much did it cost you to give?” Proverbs 3:9-10 explains that we are to give God our first and best. Far too often, we give God our leftovers. We honor ourselves with our wealth and give God what we can afford to do without. The command in Malachi 3:10, “put me to the test,” confuses us. We’ve been told never to test God, and yet this says it’s ok. The word for test (bahan) that is used in Malachi 3:10 means testing with the idea of proving the dependability of something. [This text says we are to test God in the area of giving, to prove he keeps his promises.] If we give, God will meet our needs. While this instruction is linked to Israel and the Old Testament Law, it is echoed in [Luke 6:38](#) and [2 Corinthians 9:6-8](#). This is a command and a promise for us today.

These verses point out the proper sequence—we give, and then God blesses. Too often, we get this backwards. We say, when God blesses me and meets my needs, then I will give. The proper order is ... Give ... honor God with the first and best ... then he will bless and meet needs.”³

What Now?

- In light of what we discovered through this Sunday’s message, Pastor Mark issued a challenge to all of us to put God to the test regarding his promise about giving. He challenges us to do the following between now and Dec 31st:
 - I will worship God with my giving.
 - I will give generously.
 - I will give my first and my best.
 - I will trust God to provide for my needs.
 - I will look to see how God meets my needs.
 - I will share the results so others can praise God.
- In order to meet this challenge it will take faith. The widow in Mark gave everything that she had. She believed that it was important to give to the Lord in faith (it would have taken great faith to give the last of her income to the Lord!). While God promises us that he will take care of our needs if we trust him in this way, there is yet another return: more faith. If we step out in faith through generous giving, and God proves himself true by keeping his promises, we will see how trustworthy he really is, and this increases our faith. Can you think of a time when you gave generously and God exceeded your expectations in meeting your needs? What effect did this have on your faith in him and in his word?

[Click here to get and sign the challenge commitment card, or go to: https://wheelsms.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/money-talks-mark-12-41-44-sermon-notes.pdf](https://wheelsms.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/money-talks-mark-12-41-44-sermon-notes.pdf)

¹ <https://wheelsms.wordpress.com/2015/09/27/money-talks/>

² <http://www.firstcentralbaptist.com/sermons/gospelofmark.html>

³ The full text of this excerpt can be found in Pastor Mark’s sermon notes.