

### **Do Not Withhold Good: Proverbs 3:27**

It's Shoebox packing day at our church. Two factors should motivate our filling of shoeboxes, and all of our giving. One factor is given in Matthew 31-46 where we read that Jesus taught His disciples He was going to return and when He does, He will judge mankind, separating the sheep from the goats. Read Matthew 25:31-33 on what Jesus said would be a part of that judgment. Then in verses 34-36.

To that a righteous man asked, according to verses 37-39, "*When did we do any of that?*" Read the response of Jesus in verse 40. Dixon translation, "*When did we give you a gift?*" Jesus answers, "*When you sent a Shoebox in my name you did it unto me.*"

Collecting shoeboxes is fun but, in the end, they are about giving to those in need in the name of our Savior and thereby giving to Him. When we fill the Shoeboxes, we are filling them for Jesus, and we are filling them in response to the command of God. Read Proverbs 3:27-28. In Proverbs 3 we have Solomon's challenge to God's people. Read verse 21-35 that tell us to do good to others, especially one's neighbors.

We don't need to define "neighbor" because when Jesus was asked who our neighbor is, He made it very clear that our neighbor is anyone we come in contact with, regardless of where they may live. For us, our neighbor is anyone to whom the boxes go.

The first part of the challenge in verses 27-28 is to give that which is "**good.**" What is a "**good**" gift? Jesus answered that question when, as a part of the Sermon on the Mount. Read His answer in Matthew 7:9-12. Ultimately the issue dealt with the goodness of God but in illustrating what God considers good we have a picture of what we should view as good. In this case "**good**" is that which meets a **need**. God is good. Read James 1:17. A study of the Gospels clearly demonstrates how often Jesus gave a good gift to those who needed it and, of course, His greatest gift being the salvation He purchased on the Cross. Since Jesus gives good gifts to us, and we are to model our lives after Him, it logically follows that we should continually seek to give good gifts to others.

Note the way our responsibility is expressed. Solomon wrote, "**Do not withhold.**" The negative emphasizes the importance of it and in a sense the dangers of disregarding it. Solomon did not just write, "*Give to the needy*" but made it even stronger by writing, "**Do not withhold.**"

Proverbs 3:27 tells us not to withhold good "**from those to whom it is due.**" It is interesting that the terminology used here was first used to denote withholding that which you owed an individual. As time went on, however, the rabbis saw in this a larger implication, that of meeting the needs of others when they had a legitimate need. When the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek, the translators rendered this, "**Do not abstain to do well to the needy.**" Read Galatians 6:10.

Solomon went on to note we are to give “**when it is in your power to act.**” That says very clearly, we are to give as God enables. Giving is never about what one gives in comparison to another but what one gives out of the resources God has given him.

Of course, behind Solomon’s challenge is the realization that the resources we have not only came from God but they came to us so we can be stewards of them. The issue is not what of my possessions can I give to God. but what of the resources He has entrusted to me does He want me to re-distribute to those in need. Read I Timothy 6:18.

Read Proverbs 3: 28. Dixon translation, “*Do it without delay.*”

Read Matthew 22:34-40. One cannot say he loves God and does not in turn love his neighbor because from God’s perspective the two go hand in hand. One can hardly say he loves his neighbor if he is not willing to reach out to him in love and meet his neighbor’s needs whenever he can.

God’s Word teaches that when we give, we are really giving to Jesus. We give because He has commanded us to but more importantly, we give because we want to be faithful stewards of blessings He has already given to us. We give because our neighbors, regardless of where they may live, have needs and we can help with that.