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When we receive from God and hold on to what we have received selfishly, we die spiritually. The clenched fist is an appropriate symbol of the race of Adam - grabbing whatever it can get and holding on tightly to what it has. Jesus had an open palm on Calvary's cross and so must we. The Israelites were told, "The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives" (Deut. 14:23 LB). Under the new covenant, there is no command to tithe, for Jesus said that one had to forsake 100% (and not just 10%) to be His disciple (Lk. 14:33). No part of our money is now our own. It is all God's. This does not mean that we have to give all our money for God's work. But we must recognise that everything belongs to God. Whatever we spend on ourselves also must be done for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31). But we must still give to God and His work. How much should we give? As much as we can give cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7). The quality of our giving is what is emphasised under the new covenant, unlike the quantity as under the old covenant.

But we will reap according to what we sow (2 Cor. 9:6). What we give to the Lord is like seed sown. If we sow little, we will reap little. This could be one reason why many believers are in perpetual financial difficulties: They have not been 'rich' towards God (Lk. 12:21). It is impossible for a man to be rich toward God and for God to be in debt to him in his time of need.

Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Do we love to receive gifts from others? Then we are like all the children of Adam. One characteristic of the truly godly is that they prefer to give rather than to receive. "The godly love to give" (Prov. 21:26 - LB). The Bible says "He who hates gifts will live" (Prov. 15:27). Our mind must be renewed to hate receiving gifts and to love giving gifts.

Another reason for financial difficulties could be our unwillingness to give to our fellow-believers in their need. "He who shuts his ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in his own time of need" (Prov. 21:13). On the other hand, "when you help the poor, you are actually lending to the Lord - and He pays wonderful interest on your loan" (Prov. 19:17 - LB). Of course, one must do this wisely. If you do not have the wisdom for this, then it is best to give the money to the elders (in whom you have confidence) and to ask them to distribute it wisely. This was the practice followed in the early church (Acts 4:34, 35).

"Give and it will be given to you... for whatever measure you deal out to others, it will be dealt to you in return" (Lk. 6:38) is a law of God that will determine whether we will have an abundance or a shortage. If we are generous towards others, God will be generous towards us. If we are stingy towards others, God will be stingy towards us.

The love of money is a factor that causes many Christians to be in need. All people love money. When we are born-again, that love of money does not disappear. But if we are faithful to judge ourselves and cleanse ourselves from it, then it can gradually disappear from our lives totally.