

commitment of life and goods to people, causes, and especially to God. The chapter argues against a reluctance to trust God and for such a trust that will allow one to give of himself wisely but honestly for the outreach of truth.

2. Analyzing the Text

a. vss 1-3 remind us that investment is the only "sure" way of keeping or "finding" what we have. The idea is very close to that of Jesus in John 12...the kernel of wheat. What is lost for God is found...what is kept for ourselves is more often lost. The figure of "bread" means life substance (as I see it) and the giving of portions is a figure for the endowing of your goods, skills, etc., on the community of which one is a part.

b. vss 4-6 remind us that those who are reluctant or hesitant to trust God on these lines are not likely to gain much. The writer emphasizes that there are many things we do not know...so we plant and harvest in hope. If we must have guaranteed outcomes before giving ourselves to a task, we may never get around to it. If we are willing rather to put ourselves at God's control and exercise ourselves as He gives opportunity...we will be effective.

c. vss 7-10 constituted a challenge to live life honestly in the face of God's requirement. It is assumed that the "ways of the heart" are not evil ways but that a concerned reader is giving himself to the book. Take full advantage of all God gives us...that is the picture and live as those who will be ready to give an account for (to) him. The idea is consistent with 2 Corinthians 5 and Romans 14.

3. The Lessons of the Passage

a. Live generously...giving (wisely) of yourself to others..not knowing what will happen in life and wanting to give the best stewardship account possible. Don't throw your things away...use them in an investing sense and just as surely as rain comes from full clouds you will be benefitted in God's will.