



## Dear Friends,

Back in 2008, Christopher Hitchens authored a book, *God is not Great*. Hitchens argues that belief in an all-knowing God has profoundly damaged humanity and that the world would be better off without him. Hitchens was an atheist, and so, he believed that God is merely a human invention rather than a real being. In a nutshell, he argues God is not good.

If the devil published a book, I dare say he would call it, *God is not Good*. He keeps using that line, in one form or another, whenever he has the chance to do so. In Genesis 3, the serpent tempts Eve and Adam to eat the fruit from the only forbidden tree in Eden. Eve responds by telling the serpent, God said “you will die” if you eat from that tree. The serpent then says to her:

*“You will not certainly die. For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Gen 3:4-5)*

The serpent not only lies to Eve about what will happen to her and Adam if they eat from the tree. He also questions God’s goodness. The serpent basically says, “The reason God doesn’t want you to eat from that tree is that you will be just like him.” The serpent slanders God. He claims that God is mean, not wanting what is good for Eve and Adam.

The devil does the same when tempting Jesus to turn stones into bread in Matthew 4. Jesus is hungry. He hasn’t eaten for forty days. The purpose of fasting in the wilderness is that Jesus, like Israel, is God’s Son. He must experience what Israel had wandering in the wilderness for forty years. As God’s Son, Jesus is the suffering servant prophesied by Isaiah (Is 42, 52-53). God’s servant must experience hardship to succeed as God’s King and to save his people.

By tempting Jesus to turn stones into bread, the devil questions God’s goodness. The devil is saying, “You’re God’s Son. You don’t need to go hungry. If God won’t feed you, feed yourself. You have the power!” The devil is basically saying, “God is not good.”

Years ago, I read a statement by the biblical scholar, Walter Brueggemann that in rich Western countries, we believe “the myth of scarcity.” What he meant was, people like me prefer to believe that we don’t have enough. I was convicted by his insight. I always want more. More books. More CDs. More money in the bank. More super.

If I believe the myth of scarcity, then I tell myself I don’t have enough. The result is that I excuse myself from the moral imperative to give more. Give more to support my local church. Give more to support mission partners. Give more to provide the basics of life to those who lack them. Give more to seek justice. Jesus said in Luke 12:48:

*“From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.”*

What lies beneath my belief in the myth of scarcity is that God is not good. To say, “I don’t have enough” is to believe, “God doesn’t give me enough.” That is a devilish lie. It robs God of the glory and praise that he is rightly due as our generous giver.

Do you believe the myth of scarcity? Or are you convinced that God generously provides for you? If you believe that God has richly blessed you, how is that reflected in your giving to support your local church, wider kingdom work, and to relieve poverty and to seek justice?

*Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (2 Cor 9:7-8)*

God Bless,  
Mark Adams