



Money & Tithing

a spiritual habits resource

It's A Question of Priority

It has been said that by examining a person's day planner and checkbook, you could accurately determine what is important to him. If you were to look at your calendar and where your money has gone over the last 3 months, what conclusion would you come to in regard to what is important to you? Luke 12:34 says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

The discussion of money often brings with it a strong emotional response. When churches bring up the subject of tithing, people often become uncomfortable. Some might say, "Pastor! You can tell me what the Bible says about how I should live my life, raise my kids, and treat my wife, but don't tell me what the Bible says about how I should spend my money. That's MY business!" Well, Jesus spoke more about money than He did heaven, hell, or love. Jesus must have thought the topic of money was very important, one with eternal consequences.

Matthew 6:24 says, "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." This verse is not saying you cannot have money; it is declaring that you cannot put your trust in money (or anything other than God Himself). When push comes to shove, where do you place your trust? Do you really trust that God will meet your needs? Or have you placed your trust in other things to meet your needs? Money is not inherently "good" or "bad," it is an inanimate object. It comes down to how we use it and whether or not we place an unhealthy level of importance on it. Will we allow our families to suffer to obtain it? Do we place too much confidence or trust in it? Are we generous with it in regard to helping those in need and furthering God's kingdom, or is it about fulfilling our own selfish pleasures?

With God, it is never a "money" issue; it is always a "heart" issue.

One of the greatest injustices that many pastors have done to the church is to insist that God demands one-tenth of our income and one-seventh of our week. The implication is that the other nine-tenths of our income and the other six days of the week are ours to do with as we please. The real truth is that everything belongs to God! Not only the tithe, but everything else completely belongs to Him. We are simply stewards being obedient to our Heavenly Master, Jesus Christ, our LORD and Savior. The tithe is simply the basic starting point in our Christian financial commitment. It helps us to break the stronghold of self-centeredness, and it is a reminder that God owns it all anyway.

We should not look at tithing as a burden, or something that we must do, but we should give cheerfully as we remember that we are presenting an offering of thanksgiving to the Lord as part of our worship. It is amazing how connected the heart is to the checkbook! It has been said, "You can give without loving, but you can not love without giving."

"Remember this, whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written, "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." 2 Corinthians 9:6-9

What is Tithing?

The Old Testament law required God's people to give a tenth of their income, or their harvest, which was known as a tithe. In Old Testament times tithing was not a suggestion, it was mandatory under the law. Even though it was mandated, it was considered to be part of worship, something we still believe today. We are to worship God with everything we are and everything we have, holding nothing back. Our worship is looked upon by God as an offering to Him, and our hearts should bear that out. At every point of worship we are giving back to God that which He has already graciously given to us. We are to give back with

open hands and thankful hearts.

Is Tithing Required in the New Testament?

Many people argue that Christians are living under grace and are no longer bound by the law, therefore tithing is no longer required. It is true that we can do nothing under the law to gain favor from God. But Jesus also brought into the equation something much more troubling than simple obedience to the law; He brought into question our hearts, and the motives behind our actions. When one reflects upon what was given to us at the cross, could anyone now, while living under grace, consider giving less than what was expected under the law? We should be more giving, more generous, and more trusting, knowing what God has done on our behalf.

God Makes Promises To Those Who Tithe

Malachi 3:10, "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." This is the only passage in the entire Bible where God asks us to test Him. Tithing is one of God's means to bring us into maturity and prosperity because tithing honors the LORD! Tithing demonstrates our faith in God's power to supply all our needs, and we receive peace of mind knowing we are obeying God's Word.

God Considers it Stealing to Not Tithe

Malachi 3:8 says, "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you? In tithes and offerings.'" We may find that our lack of giving to the Lord, or the inability to tithe, comes from the fact that we are not, or have not been, practicing biblical principles with our finances. We may have spent money we did not have and find ourselves carrying a substantial amount of debt. Therefore, because our priorities have been misplaced we have become a slave to the lender (Proverbs 22:7).

Because of this you might be in a position where you cannot give 10% but you want to be faithful. Remember, God loves a cheerful giver and then simply determine a percentage of your income that you can give. Then give that amount with a faithful and joyful heart, full of thanksgiving. Pray that the Lord will bless your offering and as He does, give Him the increase.

Ownership or Stewardship?

In God's statement that we have robbed Him, He is also declaring His ownership because you can only steal something when it belongs to another. It is important for us to recognize that we are not owners but stewards. A steward is someone who oversees the affairs and property of another person and acts in a manner that reflects their values. We are to be stewards of everything God has given us and so we must manage those resources in a manner consistent with who God is.

Whatsoever I thankfully receive, as a token of God's love to me, I part with contentedly as a token of my love to Him.

- Theophilus Gale

Further Resources

Your Money Map by Howard Dayton

Finding your way to a travel destination requires a map and the same is going to be true for reaching your financial destination. Based on the phenomenally popular Money Map concept created by Crown Ministries, this is a simple roadmap for organizing one's finances through life. Howard Dayton's expertise and financial experience come to light as he guides readers on a journey toward Biblically based, true financial freedom...

Financial Peace University

FPU is a 13-week life-changing program that empowers and teaches you how to make the right money decisions to achieve your financial goals. It applies biblical principles to our lives through a step-by-step process taught by best-selling author and financial counselor Dave Ramsey. The course includes practical lessons on how to beat debt, build wealth, find bargains, invest for the future, give like never before, and much more! It's for EVERYONE...from the financially secure to the financially distressed.

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