

Practising Spiritual Disciplines



TITHING

Giving • Investing • Kingdom-Building

As materialism and consumerism infiltrate our lives, it is tempting to drift from biblical teachings on Christian giving. The concept of tithing (giving 10 percent of one's income to finance God's work) is a biblical principle for helping believers to keep their values in check. It's part of a worldview which acknowledges that God is the source, giver and sustainer of all life.

Here are six biblically based and practical reasons to make tithing a priority:

- 1. It gives the Lord first place in your life.** Close examination of your financial records will quickly reveal who or what you value. By giving the best of what you have to God, you express your allegiance to Him. You grow in your respect for the Lord and will see him working more actively in your life (see Deuteronomy 14:23; Malachi 1:6-8).
- 2. It brings God's wisdom and order to your finances.** When it comes to finances, the first thing to get in place is your giving. When you get this area in order, everything else follows. Giving is the best antidote for "affluenza"—the desire for more things (see Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Timothy 6:6-10).
- 3. It serves as a practical reminder that God is the owner of everything in your life.** By faithfully giving the Lord 10 percent or more of all you receive, you acknowledge that you are only a temporary possessor and manager of what God entrusts (see 1 Chronicles 29:11-18; Psalm 24:1-2).
- 4. It allows you to experience God as your provider.** One amazing thing about learning to faithfully give to the Lord is the joy of seeing God provide for you in creative ways (see Malachi 3:7-15; Luke 6:38).
- 5. It encourages your spiritual growth and trust in God.** Tithing helps you grow in grace because it teaches dependence on God, lifts your faith to claim God's promises and implants a desire to do more for him (see Proverbs 3:5-6; 2 Corinthians 8:5).
- 6. It strengthens the work and outreach of your local church.** Many churches struggle due to lack of finances. However, when people faithfully give, the spirit of a church begins to change—needs are met, people are cared for, outreach takes place and long-awaited improvements start to happen (see Acts 2:42-47; 2 Corinthians 9:12-13).

An unknown author has written....

- I tithe because God commands me to (see Malachi 3:8-10).
- I tithe because it is not mine, but God's (see Leviticus 27:30).
- I tithe because it is God's financial plan for his church.
- I tithe because I owe that much, and more, to God.
- I tithe because I want to have a share in giving the gospel to others.
- I tithe because I love God who gave the greatest offering—his Son.
- I tithe and give offerings because I enjoy giving back to God.

My Action Plan

→ Acknowledge that every good and perfect gift comes from God. Take an inventory of all God's good gifts and start giving back to God in proportion to the way the Lord has blessed you (see

Deuteronomy 16:17).

→ Show God how much you love him. Your giving tests the sincerity of your love (see 2 Corinthians 8:8). You can give without loving but you cannot love without giving. Jesus said,

"If you love me, keep my commands" (John 14:15 NIV).

→ Give God first place (see Matthew 6:33). If God does not have first priority in our finances, he isn't first in our life.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

Cut out and keep in your Bible or journal. Allow these verses to mould your idea of Scripture reading.

"God loves a cheerful giver"
(2 Corinthians 9:7 NIV).

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21 NIV).

"Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honour come from you; you are the ruler of all things ... Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand"
(1 Chronicles 29: 11-14 NIV).

"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 there will not be room enough to store it'" (Malachi 3:10 NIV).

"A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord"
(Leviticus 27:30 NIV).

"Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you"
(Luke 6:38 NIV).