

HONORING GOD BY MY GIVING

2 Corinthians 8:7 (NIV): “But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also *excel in this grace of giving.*” (*italics added*)

WHY DOES GOD WANT ME TO GIVE?

1. Giving makes me more like God.

John 3:16 (ESV): “For God so loved the world, that *he gave* his only Son....” (*italics added*)

2. Giving draws me closer to God.

Matthew 6:21 (ESV): “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

3. Giving is the antidote to materialism.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NIV): “¹⁷Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. ¹⁸Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life this is truly life.”

Quote: “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

4. Giving strengthens my faith.

Proverbs 3:5,9-10 (NIV): “⁵Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.... ⁹Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; ¹⁰then your barns will be filled to overflowing....”

Luke 6:38 (NLT): “Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full.... The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.”

5. Giving is an investment in eternity.

1 Timothy 6:18-19 (NIV): “¹⁸Command them... to be generous and willing to share. ¹⁹*In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life this is truly life.*” (*italics added*)

6. Giving brings blessings into my life.

Proverbs 22:9 (NIV11): “The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.”

Proverbs 11:25 (NIV): “A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.”

Psalms 112:5 (NIV11): “Good will come to those who are generous....”

Jesus: “...It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (**Acts 20:35** ESV)

Psychiatrist Carl Menninger: “Giving is a criterion of mental health. Generous people are rarely mentally ill.”

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT TITHING

A **tithe** is giving ten percent of my income.

An **offering** is anything I give in addition to my tithe.

1. God Commanded It.

Leviticus 27:30: ““A tithe of everything from the land... belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.””

2. Jesus Commended It.

Matthew 23:23 (NLT): “...You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.”

3. Tithing Reminds Me That Everything Was Given To Me By God.

Deuteronomy 8:18 (NIV): “But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth....”

4. Tithing Expresses My Gratitude To God For The Blessings He’s Given Me.

Psalms 116:12 (NIV): “How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me?”

Deuteronomy 16:17 (NIV): “Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.”

5. God Says That Refusing To Tithe Is Stealing From Him.

Malachi 3:8-10 (ESV): ““⁸Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me! [says the LORD] But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions.... ¹⁰Bring the full tithe into the storehouse....”

6. Tithing Gives God A Chance To Prove He Exists And Wants To Bless You.

Malachi 3:10-11 (NIV): ““¹⁰Bring your whole tithe into my storehouse.... *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!* ¹¹I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,’ says the LORD Almighty.” *(italics added)*

7. Tithing Proves That I Really Love God.

Jesus: ““If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”” (**John 14:15** ESV)

2 Corinthians 8:7-8 (NLT): ““⁷...I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving. ⁸I am not commanding you to do this. But I am testing how genuine your love is by comparing it with the eagerness of the other churches.”

What should I tithe?

Proverbs 3:9 (NIV): “Honor the LORD with your wealth, with *the firstfruits of all your crops*” *(italics added)*

Where should I give my tithe?

Malachi 3:10 (NIV): ““Bring the whole tithe into the *storehouse...*” (where you worship) *(italics added)*

When should I tithe?

1 Corinthians 16:2 (NIV11): “*On the first day of every week*, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income....” *(italics added)*

How should I tithe?

2 Corinthians 9:7 (ESV): “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, *not reluctantly or under compulsion*, for God loves a *cheerful giver*.” *(italics added)*

SOME ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ABOUT TITHING

Should I tithe the *gross* or *net* of my income?

Dave Ramsey: "I tithe on the business profit after I take it home. I tithe before I take taxes out. There's a lot of discussion and a lot of teaching both ways on that. I'm not a big doctrinal hairsplitter with people. I just don't think you can out-give God." (www.daveramsey.com)

GotQuestions.org: "The Bible does not specifically say whether we should give 10% off our gross or net income. The Old Testament teaches the principle of firstfruits (Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Leviticus 2:12-14; 2 Chronicles 31:5). Old Testament believers gave from the best of their crops, not the leftovers. The same principle should apply to our giving today. Again, a believer should give what he believes God would have him give. It all goes back to the attitude of the heart. Are we giving out of reverence for God or out of selfishness for our own wealth? 'Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver' (2 Corinthians 9:7)." (www.gotquestions.org)

Should I tithe if I can't pay my bills?

Steve Scalici (Certified Financial Planner™): "If you can't afford the necessities of food, clothing, and shelter, I would advise refraining from tithing for a short time. But make it your goal to tithe as soon as possible. Not being able to pay your bills should only be a short-term excuse for the new Christian or for someone who has just come to understand his need to give at this level. Get out of debt as soon as possible. In the meantime, immediately begin giving whatever you can to God every week - even if it seems minuscule - to show your obedience and your intention. I believe you will begin to see the blessings of God." (www.crosswalk.com)

Should I pause my tithing during tough financial times?

Dave Ramsey: "The Bible doesn't mention anything about 'pausing' tithing. And it doesn't say we'll go to hell if we don't tithe. But get this: Many people have observed that after they stopped tithing, their finances seemed to get worse. In Malachi 3:8-11, God says that if you tithe instead of keeping it for yourself, He will pour out blessing and rebuke your devourers. In other words, He'll keep you safe from those who might harm you. So keep tithing.... If you sit down and look at your budget, you'll see you can make it while giving away at least 10%. That might mean cutting some fun money or increasing your income, but it can be done. Read the Bible and take from it what you will, but remember this: If you tithe, do it out of love for God, not out of guilt." (www.daveramsey.com)

Should I tithe if my spouse is against it?

Crown Financial Ministries: "Giving the tithe is the outward expression of inner commitment - or lack of it. It is material and financial surrender prompted by spiritual surrender. However, if couples do not tithe because one spouse objects to tithing, the subject should be placed 'on the back burner,' until they are able to discuss and study the principles of tithing together." (www.focusonthefamily.com)