

## Give Regularly – Various Scriptures

1 Cor 16:1-2; This is the last message in our **Fully Engaged** series

Talking about what it means to be a fully engaged follower of Christ

The first part of which (**Review**) is going to church

**Fully engaged believers make church a priority**

**To obey the Lord; To learn about the Lord; To worship the Lord**

That was week one (**Summary**)

➤ Week 2, it was (**Review**) – Connect with others

**Fully engaged believers connect with others**

• **Just like the early church; Just like the apostles; And . .**

• **Just like Jesus; B/c that's God's design (Summary)**

And do so . . .

• **For encouragement; For support; For exhortation**

• **For accountability; For perseverance**

That was week 2 (**Summary**); And we included this **insert** to help you follow through – to get connected in a Small Group, Men's Ministry, or Women's Ministry

➤ Week 3 (**Review**), last week, was serve in a ministry

**Fully engaged believers serve in a ministry (1 Pet 4:10-11)**

They give of their time and effort, for the benefit of the church; And do so . . .

• **To use their giftedness (v10a)**

Even when they're afraid, and even if others don't . . .

• **To be a good steward (v10b)**

Making the *most* of their gift and opportunity . . .

• **With the strength God supplies (v11a)**

The strength that comes from his presence *within* you . . .

• **For the glory God deserves (v11b)**

The fame of his name

And I want to thank those of you who responded by turning in your bulletin **insert**, indicating your willingness and desire to serve; God bless you for that  
And I hope more of you do the same after thinking/praying about it; That was last week

➤ This week, it's give regularly

**Fully engaged believers give regularly (1 Cor 16:1-2)**

In fact, that's been the pattern of God's people and God's design for 3500 years

Like in Nehemiah's day (**Neh 10:35,39**), the Israelites said – *We obligate ourselves to bring the firstfruits of our ground and the firstfruits of all fruit of every tree, year by year [that's regularly] to the house of the LORD . . . We will not neglect the house of our God.* As often as they harvested, they gave; They committed themselves to it\*\*\*\*

And the Apostle Paul says in 1 Cor 16:1-2 – *Now concerning the collection for the saints [the special collection for the church in Jerusalem he was gathering]: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you [the church in Corinth] also are to do. [2] On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.*

Set something aside *regularly*, give *regularly* – so that a special appeal doesn't have to be made; That's the idea

And if that's Paul's instruction for a *special* offering, how much more should we do so with our *normal* offering? I think the implication is way more

So that appeals don't have to be made; And the work of ministry can go on uninterrupted; And the house of the Lord isn't neglected

Without the regular giving of God's people, the church stagnates or dies; But with it, it flourishes and grows; So fully engaged believers do it

Far from waiting for desperate appeals or severe needs – they give regularly

• **Starting with a tithe (Mal 3:10)**

God says in **Mal 3:10a** – *Bring the full tithe into the storehouse; Mal 3:10*

A tithe referring to the portion of our income that's to be dedicated to the Lord's work

And that portion, is a tenth – 10%

That's not only what the word means, but that's how it's used in Scripture

Like in **Lev 27:32** – *Every tithe of herds and flocks, every tenth animal of all that pass under the herdsman's staff, shall be holy to the Lord.* Dedicated to the Lord  
Tithe and tenth are used interchangeably, b/c that's what tithe means – a tenth

And fully engaged believers give it; That's where they start\*\*\*\*\*

Recognizing that it all comes from God, and to withhold it would be counter-productive anyway; Like **Prov 11:24** says . . .

*One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.* Far from defeating their purpose . . .

Fully engaged believers give, and give regularly, starting with a tithe\*\*\*\*\*

And they give it . . .

• **To their church (Mal 3:10)**

B/c Mal 3:10 says – *Bring the full tithe into the storehouse*

Which in Malachi's day was a literal room connected to the side of the *temple*, used to store the tithes of grain, oil, and money

So God was essentially saying, bring your tithes to the *temple*

Or as we saw in the previous verses – to *the house of the Lord*

Which in our day and age is the church

Just like the temple was God's primary source of discipleship and ministry *then* . . .

The church is God's primary source of discipleship and ministry *now*

It's an analogy you can't avoid; Especially since the church, the people of God, are referred to *as* God's temple in the NT (1 Cor 3:16)

So when God says bring your tithe into the *storehouse*, the most direct application for us, is to give a tenth of our income *to the church* –

The body of believers to whom we belong

➤ Not only that, but in very practical terms – If we don't tithe, we don't thrive

If we don't give we don't live, and if we don't tithe we don't thrive

IOW if we don't give at *all* to our church – we won't even exist; We won't live

And if we don't tithe, we'll struggle; We won't thrive

And fully engaged believers, of all things – want the church of which they’re a part, to thrive; They want it to accomplish all that God desires and requires  
Taking advantage of opportunities, and making the most of situations

So they give regularly, starting with a tithe, to their local church  
Something Becky and I have done from the get-go in our lives, and continue to do  
We give 10% of our income, right here, to our church

➤ And do so for at least 5 reasons; The first of which, is . . .

• **B/c God commands it (Mal 3:10)**

*Bring the full tithe into the storehouse* God says (Mal 3:10); It’s a command  
And it still applies as a principle for living; Not a prerequisite for salvation (Gal 2:16),  
but a principle for living; That’s what the NT *teaches* regarding the OT Law

And there are 4 main reasons for it:

1. *Jesus* said it’s still operative; Like in **Lk 16:16-17** where he says that – *It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one dot of the Law to become void.*  
IOW it’s still applies in some sense\*\*\*\*\*  
We don’t know *how* from that statement, but we do know that it can’t be null and void

2. The Law still applies as a principle for living b/c – It’s part of Scripture  
And Paul said in 2 Tim 3:16 that – *All Scripture is profitable . . . for [among other things] training in righteousness*; Or godly living  
*All Scripture* including the OT Law; It’s profitable as a standard of godliness

3. It was written for *our sake* (1 Cor 9:10)  
That’s what the Apostle Paul said explicitly in 1 Cor 9  
It wasn’t written just for those on the *other* side of the cross – but for us, on *this* side  
Not as a means to be *justified before God* (Gal 3:11), he was clear about that – but as a standard to live by and *honor* God

And then 4<sup>th</sup>, the Law still applies in principle . . .

4. B/c that’s how Paul applied one – one of the individual laws  
Like in 1 Cor 9:8-10 when he applied the law about not muzzling an ox while it treads out the grain, to paying pastors for their labor in ministry  
He applied a law in principle, as a standard by which to live

So the Law still applies, not as a prerequisite for salvation, but a principle for living

➤ But does that mean we have to abide by all the *particulars* of the laws? Not at all  
B/c most of the time we can honor the principle without the particulars  
Just like I can honor the principle of the Sabbath, and still work on Sunday; Or Saturday  
B/c I take *Monday* off; 6 days I work, and a 7<sup>th</sup> I rest (Ex 20:8-11) – honoring the principle without the particulars

But sometimes, it’s impossible to separate the two; Sometimes, it’s impossible to honor the principle of the law, without also abiding by the particulars  
And tithing is one of them

You can’t separate the particulars from the principle, and still live by it

B/c the principle, the standard for living – is to provide for the work of ministry by giving a tithe; That’s clear  
So if you fail to honor the particulars by failing to tithe, you fail to honor the principle  
And that’s the *last* thing a fully engaged believer wants to do  
They tithe to honor the principle that God commands; 2<sup>nd</sup>, they tithe . . .

• **B/c Jesus affirmed it (Mt 23:23)**

Far from doing away with tithing, Jesus actually affirmed it

Saying in **Mt 23:23** – *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin [tiny seeds and herbs], and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.*”

You ought to have observed God’s standards of justice and mercy and faithfulness, *without* neglecting his other standards like tithing\*\*\*\*\*

Far from doing *away* with the tithe, Jesus actually affirmed it  
So fully engaged believers do it

3<sup>rd</sup>, is . . .

• **B/c the church needs it (Mal 3:10)**

Once again, God says in Mal 3:10 – *Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.*

Which in Mal’s day, meant both the *physical* food to sustain the priests and temple workers, and the *spiritual* food to sustain people

And the same is true in our day, right here in *our* church; Our tithes are necessary to support the work of ministry, and provide for those who lead it  
And when fully engaged believers give it, one of the results is changed lives and heart-felt thanks for all God is doing  
Like this note I received recently from a couple in our church; They wrote . . .

*Dear Pastor Rob: Our family started coming to Harvest a little over 2 years ago, and we cannot express to you how thankful we are for this church. We both grew up going to church, but lacked a relationship with Christ. We were Sunday Christians and weekday sinners, lacking the strength to change on our own. Finally, after 3 churches (who didn’t teach the Bible) and 7 years of marriage, we have found a church we’re humbled to call home. Not only that, but my husband has embraced his role as spiritual head, and it is so awesome! He was baptized recently, and a week later began tithing – something he said we could never do.*

Those are changed lives; And now, fully engaged believers who tithe  
B/c other fully engaged believers tithed before them, ensuring that there was spiritual food in the house; The church needs it, and ours is no exception

4<sup>th</sup>, fully engaged believers tithe . . .

• **B/c their blessing depends on it (Mal 3:10; Lk 6:38)**

After telling us to tithe for the sake of the church, it says in Mal 3:10b . . .

*And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.*

One of the reasons fully engaged believers tithe, is b/c their blessing depends on it – personally *and* corporately

It's like what Jesus said in **Lk 6:38** – *Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.*  
IOW give generously, and you'll get generously  
It may not come in the form of *money*, and it may not come right away, but blessing will come\*\*\*\*\*

➤ Our family is a living example – immediate and extended  
We've been blessed exceedingly and abundantly  
From knowing that we're doing exactly what God wants . . .  
To having a front-row seat as he builds his church . . .  
To receiving his faithful provision, and the security of his love in our marriage, and the fullness of joy in our hearts . . .  
We're a living example of God's blessing in response to our giving – his faithfulness to *us*, when we're faithful to him

Fully engaged believers do that; They give regularly b/c their *blessing* depends on it . . .

• **And so does their devotion (Mt 6:19-21)**

And I think this aspect of giving is far too often overlooked

Jesus says in **Mt 6:19-21** – “*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal [i.e. don't invest in temporal things, things that bear only short-term fruit, worldly gain], [20] but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal [as in, invest in things of eternal value, things that bear long-term fruit]. // [21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*  
*Where* you invest, and in *what*, determines to a large degree, what you're devoted to

If you *give* sparingly to the work of the Lord, your *devotion* to the work of the Lord will be sparing

If you give *inconsistently*, your *devotion* will be inconsistent

If you give *randomly*, your *devotion* will be random

But if you give generously and regularly – starting with a tithe to your local church . . .

You're *devotion* to your church will be generous and regular\*\*\*\*\*

Your money may follow your heart, but your heart will *always* follow your money; Every single time; And the more you invest, the more devoted you'll be  
*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

So fully engaged believers give, and give regularly, starting with a tithe – b/c their devotion depends on it (**Summary**)

And they're not about to let that wane

➤ let me commend these principles to you, and encourage you to apply them in your life; To make a commitment and fully engage  
To change your priorities and alter your habits  
To go to church, connect with others, serve in a ministry, and give regularly There's no better time to fully engage, than when we reflect on the fact that the Lord fully engaged with us

Pray – Lord, thank you for fully engaging with us, so that we can fully engage with you  
So that we can gather in your name, connect in your love, serve in your strength, and give for your glory; That's what we do now, God  
We give of our tithes and offerings – wanting nothing more than to further your work in our church, and fuel our devotion