

Principles and passages:

1. God is a giving God. We learn about giving from God, who is “the giver of every good gift” (James 1:17). It is part of God’s character to give and provide for those He loves. In the big picture, we give because He gave. The whole Bible revolves around this principle, most clearly in the gospel of Jesus. God sent His Son, to provide a fair way for us to find forgiveness from sin and hope for our future and the future of the world (John 3:16-17).
2. Giving is part of our worship. We find giving early in the Bible, when Cain and Able bring their offerings to God (Genesis 4). In the story of Cain, giving shows his wrong heart before God. Our motivation in giving is of primary importance. When considering your heart and approach to giving consider the following passages and questions:
Give as God blesses. (Deuteronomy 16:17)
Use what we have been given for God well. (Matthew 25:14-30)
Giving is not chiefly about the amount. Giving is for everyone, *even the poor.* (Mark 10:17-25)
Giving should be joyful. (2 Corinthians 9:8)
3. Giving exercises our faith. Giving forces us to reorder our priorities and our trust around God. At the center of the tithing concept is the perspective that we are not our own, that we were bought with a price, and that all we have, we have because God allows it and chooses to bless. Tithing simply gives us the opportunity to recognize the reality of His generosity.
4. Giving involves the local church. God’s plans for the world revolve around the local church serving Him well. It takes faith to trust in a local church to manage tithing well. The local church makes mistakes. The New Testament is full of examples of churches with problems. While we do not promote blind trust, it is helpful to consider the tithe of the widow. Jesus applauded her gift as greater than the larger gifts of the religious elite. *This gift went into the coffers of a religious establishment that was mainly corrupt.* At Whitney, if you are a member our expectation is that you are committed in tithing. We work hard to be transparent about our finances. As leaders we prayerfully develop our budget and ministries, trusting God

to direct and bless. We welcome questions and input as we seek to use our resources for His glory.

5. Giving is more than a percentage. 2 Corinthians 8:9 trumps all other standards: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.” The standard for all gifts of money and service is the gift of Jesus Himself! The 10% guideline is a great guideline, but our goal is to reflect selfless giving. His sacrifice was costly.

6. Giving goes beyond the local church. Jesus spoke in a variety of ways about the responsibility we all bear for those around us in need. If God is at work in us, we should be moved by the needs of our neighbors and the world around us.