

## GIVING, OFFERINGS, AND TITHING

### *The Challenge of Giving to the Lord*

Giving to the Lord is part of the stewardship and faith walk of every true believer in Jesus Christ. For many people, giving to the Lord through their local church is a very challenging concept. Sometimes the challenge comes from a disorganized or undisciplined approach to personal finances. Other times, it's because of the comfort level we derive from thoughts of keeping everything we earn.

Yet the Bible is very clear: we are to trust God in all areas of our lives, including with our finances. In fact, the Lord uses this area to test us and grow us up in Him! The Bible contains more than 2,000 Bible verses on the subject of money, stewardship, and giving. Time and again, the Bible associates our money with our commitment and relationship to the Lord.

### *What Is Giving?*

The word give has been defined as 'to make a present of.' One of the many ways we can help others is to give financially. Through giving, the early church helped one another and invested in what God was doing. Sadly, the concept of giving has become distorted today. Yet our giving is vitally connected to who we are.

### *Giving Is an Act of Worship*

Giving is a spiritual sacrifice and an expression of love and gratitude, because everything we have comes from God (1 Chronicles 29:14). Some people say, 'I can't afford to give!' In reality, we can't afford *not* to give. David said that he would not give to the Lord that which cost him nothing (2 Samuel 24:24). No matter what we give to God, what is left will always sustain us better than if we hadn't given at all. It's better to retain part of our income, blessed by God—than all of it without His blessing.

### *Giving Is a Test of Our Faithfulness*

The way we give indicates a great deal about our spirituality. Our giving reveals our value system. Jesus said, 'For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also' (Matthew 6:21). God does not ask us to give because He needs our resources. Rather, He challenges us to make Him the focus of our lives instead of our money and possessions.

### *Biblical Principles for Giving*

Although the Apostle Paul never overemphasized the subject of giving, he never neglected the importance of it, either. In 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, we find specific guidelines for giving that are universal practices for all believers. Giving is to be done weekly, it is to be personal, and it is something we should be prepared to do. As we give, God will meet our needs and prosper us (2 Corinthians 9:6-10).

### *Motives for Giving*

God promises to bless us if we have the right attitude toward giving (Luke 6:38; Proverbs 3:9-10). However, some people give with the wrong motives. They may give in an attempt to manipulate God, to relieve guilt, to increase self-worth, to achieve recognition, to obtain power, or to gain advantages.

However, the Bible instructs us to 'let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudging or out of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver' (2 Corinthians 9:7). The motives that God desires our giving are to: express our love to Him, please Him, lay up treasures in heaven, and help the world for Jesus Christ.

### *The Principle of Tithing*

Old Testament law required the people of Israel God's to pay tithes (10%) of their possession: money. In addition to the tithe, God's people were required to give offerings to the Lord for the care of the temple and the salaries of the priests. In the days of Israel, tithing was not voluntary giving. It was demanded as a form of taxation.

### *A Question for N. T. Believers: Is Tithing for Us Today?*

Many have pointed out that hundreds of years before the law was even given, Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18-24). Later, Jacob promised a tithe to the LORD (Genesis 28:20-22). Since these actions predated the law, there must be some principle of giving related to ten percent.

In the gospels, Jesus Christ rebuked the Pharisees for their incessant legalism regarding the law. But in correcting them, He clearly told them they should continue their practice of tithing, but be careful not to neglect the more important matters of the law, like justice, mercy, and faith (Matthew 23:23). So Jesus, rather than condemning a N.T. practice of tithing, actually encourages it.

God made an incredible promise to Israel if they were faithful in these areas. He promised them that He would 'open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it' (Malachi 3:10-11).

Likewise, Jesus told His disciples that we are to seek God's kingdom first, and also His righteousness. His promise is that all the things we have need of will be provided us as a result (Matthew 6:33).

Here at ReGeneration Church, we give to the Lord through the use of *agape* boxes, located in the back of the sanctuary. For those who wish to give online, there is an option to do that through our church website: [www.theregenerationchurch.com](http://www.theregenerationchurch.com).

We encourage you to begin stepping out in faith in this area of your life. The Lord will most certainly bless you through it.