



## **GIVING, OFFERINGS & TITHING**

### **WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS**

The Bible has much to say about Christians and their money. The Bible contains more than two thousand verses on the subject. 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 give to others is to give financially. Through giving, the early church helped one another and invested in what God was accomplishing. 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 (see 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 will not give to the Lord that which cost him nothing (see 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.

### **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; it is to be a universal practice for believers (vs.1); it is to be done regularly (vs. 2); it is a personal act (vs. 2); and it is something we should be prepared to do (vs. 2). As we give, God will meet our needs and prosper us (see 2 Corinthians 9:6-10).

### **MOTIVES FOR GIVING**

God promises to bless us if we have the right attitude toward giving (see Luke 6:39; 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 tax advantages.

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

### **THE OLD TESTAMENT PRINCIPLE of TITHING**

Old Testament law required the people of Israel to pay tithes (10%) of their possessions or 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 required 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 (Gen. 14:18-24). Later, Jacob promised a tithe to the LORD (Gen. 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 tithe. 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.

Here at Refuge Church, we give to the Lord through the use of a tithe box. For those who desire to give online, there is an option do so through the church website: [www.refugeslo.com](http://www.refugeslo.com). We encourage you to begin stepping out in faith in this area of your life. The Lord will most certainly bless you as you do.