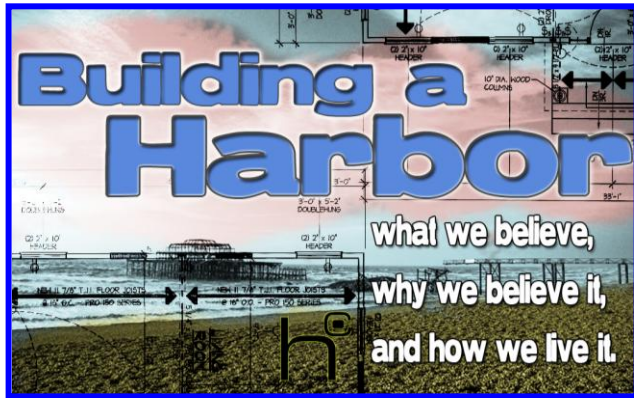


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The Art of Giving

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.”

Acts 17:24–25

Why teach on the subject of money?

- 25 percent of Jesus' words in the Gospels are related to our resources and stewardship of them.
- 28 passages in the four Gospels
- In the OT & NT combined there are over 800 verses on the subject – dealing with a wide variety of financial topics including, planning and budgeting, saving and investing, debt and tithing
- Money is one of the greatest idols in the world, especially in American culture
- Money is a critical component to the growth and health of the church

A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes life merry, but money is the answer for everything.

Ecclesiastes 10:19

While Ecclesiastes 10:19 is true for almost everything in the world, there still are some things money can't buy, mainly our Salvation. Some people may try, but let me assure you, they will fail. God is not moved by our possessions – He is not bribed by what we can offer Him. God, in fact, is the giver of all of our possessions and cares not about them but about the condition of our hearts.

God does bless us, but it is for the purpose of giving Him the glory and not ourselves. It is so easy to fall prey to the love of money – the love of the next new car, the love of spending more than you make, the love of trying to impress others. Greed falls close to the flesh of every human.

Until we properly understand the function of money from a Biblical perspective we can't begin to leverage it for its true purposes. Our money is most effective when it is in line with how God calls us to use it.

What is the function of money?

Money is simply a tool that the Bible gives us a framework for how to use. Other tools outlined in scripture are prayer, friendships, teaching of the word, fellowship, etc. – all of which are to be used to aid us in our lives as Christians and to carry out the following purposes:

- Loving and Glorifying God – Honor the Lord with your wealth (Prov. 3:9).
- Advancement of the Gospel – Giving your first fruits to the work of the Gospel through the church.
- Providing for the needs of your family (1 Tim. 5:8).
- Loving People – Through generosity, hospitality and blessing others.

What is Stewardship?

A steward is a person, who by God's grace, belongs to God. And, because they belong to God they recognize that ultimately everything they are and have belongs to God and has been given to them as a gift. Therefore, they then seek to both enjoy the gifts God has given them as well as invest those gifts in others and the future by distributing them wisely. We have 3 categories that we must steward: our time, our talents and our wealth.

Deuteronomy 8:17–18 *You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.*

Romans 1:6 *And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.*

1 Corinthians 4:7 *For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?*

4 Types of Stewards in Proverbs

1. Righteous Rich – Marked by Hard Work, Faithfulness and Financial Blessing from God

Proverbs 15:6 *The house of the righteous contains great treasure, but the income of the wicked brings them trouble.*

2. Righteous Poor – Marked by Hard Work, Honesty and Contentment

Proverbs 28:6 *Better a poor man whose walk is blameless than a rich man whose ways are perverse.*

3. Unrighteous Rich – Marked by Deception, Lying and Stealing

Proverbs 11:16–18 *kindhearted woman gains respect, but ruthless men gain only wealth. A kind man benefits himself, but a cruel man brings trouble on himself.*

4. Unrighteous Poor – Marked by Laziness and Complacency

Proverbs 6:10 *A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest– and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.*

Is Money Related To Worship?

Our money is inextricably linked to our worship both corporately and individually. As a body of believers, we worship corporately by contributing financially to our local church. We respond to God's gifts and kindness by giving in return, so that the Gospel can continue to reach others through the work of the church. As scattered individuals we worship by loving our family and loving others with our money. This may take the form of sharing your home and a meal with friends, loaning your truck to a neighbor or buying a bible for your unbelieving co-worker. Our whole lives are to be marked by worship – and how you use your money plays a role in this every day. Worship does happen on Sundays, but does not end there!

Deuteronomy 16:16 *Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed.*

Tithing in the Bible

Tithing – literally means "tenth", a numerical measurement.

Old Testament

- OT was basically (but not technically) a law, no punishment found in OT for not tithing to the church.
- 10 percent of money given to the church funded the Levite priests' ministry (Num. 18:21–29, 27:30).
- 10 percent paid for festivals to build community & for celebration (Deut.12:10–11, 12:17–18, 14:22–27).
- 3.3 percent of the church tithe was given to help the poor (Deut.14:28–29).
- Crop Gleanings collected for poor and alien (Lev. 19:9–10).
- Occasional additional tithes above and beyond regular giving (Neh.10:32–33).
- Total "mandatory" OT tithe resulted in over 25 percent of a family's gross income.

New Testament

- Grace centered giving, not law centered.
- The word "tithe" is rarely used in the NT, only for the rebuke of Pharisees and relating OT stories.

- Giving is a joy and an honor.
- Giving is a heart issue, there is no standard.
- Giving should come from your first fruits.
- Giving should be done regularly, cheerfully and sacrificially.
- Giving is tied to your proportion of faith.
- The amount is between you and God.
- Giving is a spiritual gift – (Rom.12) some have a greater measure of this gift,
- coupled with faith.

Proverbs 3:9–10 *Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.*

Common Questions about Tithing

Should giving vary by income?

1 Corinthians 16:1–2 *Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.*

Should a broke college student tithe?

2 Corinthians 8:1–4 *And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.*

What should I do if I cannot afford to tithe?

You may need to begin by reorganizing your spending habits with a wise budget. If you are someone with an unusual need (i.e. traumatic injury, impoverished elderly, struggling single mom) then the church should aid you.

Should non-Christians tithe?

The Bible is clear that non-Christians are welcome in church and are not expected to give any monies.

Should I tithe from my gross or net income?

Should I tithe from all my income or only my salary?

Proverbs 3:9 *Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.*

In our society the government takes a piece of our income before we even see it (in most cases). The Bible teaches the concept of firstfruits, meaning that of all we are given or earn, we should give the first portion back to God.

Can I get a tax deduction for tithing?

Yes. If you give in a way that we can record (i.e. check, online or cash in a marked envelope) then our church bookkeeper will keep accurate totals of your giving and send you a receipt at the beginning of the year, certifying the amount of your total contributions that are tax deductible for the previous calendar year.

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.