

# Stewardship and Money

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Giving is a heavenly principle (Acts 20:35). It is God's will that we give: time, talents, and money/material possessions (Matt 22:15–22). Satan replaced the Sabbath with another day of worship in order to eliminate our understanding of God as creator. He destroyed the principle of giving the tithe in order to extinguish the knowledge of God as the owner of all things.

## I. Tithe

### 1. *In the Old Testament*

Genesis 14:18–20 Abraham gave the tenth of his income, the tithe. He is the father of all believers (Rom 4:10–12; Gal 3:28–29).

Genesis 28:20–22 Jacob knew and practiced this principle.

Leviticus 27:30, 32 Israel was asked to give the tithe. The tithe was designated to provide a livelihood for the priests and Levites. Nevertheless, the tithe was given to God who in turn took care of his servants (Num 18:20–32). Under Nehemiah the people promised to tithe again (Neh 10:28–29, 37–38). On the other hand, God promised rich blessings for those who would be obedient to this command (Mal 3:7–12).

### 2. *In the New Testament*

Matthew 23:23 Jesus affirmed the tithing.

1 Corinthians 9:11–14 Paul knew the principle of tithing (see also Heb 7:1–10) and supported it.

The tithing principle already existed before Israel came into being as a people. It is not just a Jewish institution. Those who gave the tithe dedicated their entire property to God.

## II. Offerings

In addition to tithing, believers at all times gave voluntary offerings. We are also called to do that. In this case, the amount is not prescribed. The individual believer can decide under prayer how much to give, allowing himself or herself to be influenced by the Lord (Exod 36:3; Deut 16:16–17; 1 Cor 16:2; 2 Cor 9:5–7).

## III. Questions

### 1. *How Much Should We Give?*

Sometimes questions arise whether to give from the salary without deductions or the salary minus deductions. We give tithe and offerings from our full salary or, if we are self-employed, from our income.

### 2. *Why Do We Give?*

- Jesus gave himself for us (Gal 1:4).
- God gives us inner peace, a fulfilled life on earth, and whatever we need (Matt 6:31–33; John 10:10).
- Even more than that, he gives us eternal life (1 John 5:11–12).
- It is God's will that we give. Our giving testifies to our faithfulness as stewards of God's gifts.

God does not need "our" money but he allows us to be fellow workers with him. This has advantages for us. We are being freed from our egotism and our worries. Giving brings blessings (Mal 3:10–11).

### 3. *How Should We Give?*

We give happily and not grudgingly or under compulsion, rather we give because Jesus gave Himself for us (2 Cor 9:7). In giving we respond gratefully to God's love (Mark 12:41–44; 2 Cor 8:3–5). It is possible to give without loving, but it is impossible to love without giving. We do not give with a rebellious heart like Cain (Gen 4:3–6), and like Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–4).

#### 4. *When Should We Give?*

God comes first (Matt 6:33). Therefore we set aside the tithe and offerings before we use the remaining money for our own needs, even if the budget is very tight. By giving to God first, we exercise faith and trust in the Lord. A person who gives only after his/her own needs have been met may indicate a lack of trust. Also nothing should be retained since this would not only rob God of his property, but would also prevent the giver from having wonderful experiences with the Lord.

#### 5. *For what Purposes Do We Give?*

The tithe is used for the gospel ministry. It should not be used for other purposes. Freewill offerings, however, can be given for the local church budget, mission programs, building funds, ADRA, and many other purposes.

#### 6. *Is It Really Possible to Give when You Cannot Make Ends Meet?*

- God keeps his promises, even if His command appear to be illogical (Mal 3:10).
- This is supported by biblical examples. Remember that through God Gideon's three hundred men conquered an entire army (Judg 7:7–25). Consider the widow of Zarephath (1 Kings 17:8–16) and Jesus' feeding of the five thousand (Matt 14:13–21) when God multiplied the little they had.
- This is supported by experiences of believers throughout the centuries, including our own. The Protestant pastor E. Modersohn writes about giving tithe during the difficult times right after World War II: "The miracle happened. The income reached farther than before. I do not know how it came about. Did the shoe soles last longer? Did we need less new clothes? I do not know. . . . But I can testify: We never experienced shortage."
- Tithe payers do not necessarily give because they have; they have because they give. It is possible to give because "with God all things are possible" (Matt 19:26).

### **Conclusion**

When we return tithe and offerings to God, we recognize him as the true owner and as our Lord. We express that we are determined to be faithful stewards. We document that we will use the money remaining in our hands according to His will. It is His; we are His (Matt 6:19–21, 24).