

Here we go again...

I know what some of you are saying, *“Here we go again—one of those nuts who says that for every dollar I give I’ll get 100.”* No, I’m not saying that, and neither was Jesus.

What He was saying is that if we put God first in our lives, and remember systematic giving as one expression of that priority, then we can expect an overabundant, eternal blessing from the Lord, a *“hundredfold blessing”*.

“Make all the money you can; give all the money you can.”

To conclude: John Wesley once wisely said, *“Make all the money you can; give all the money you can.”* He had discovered the joy, the privilege, and the blessing of *generous, regular, and joyful giving to the Lord.*

How about you?

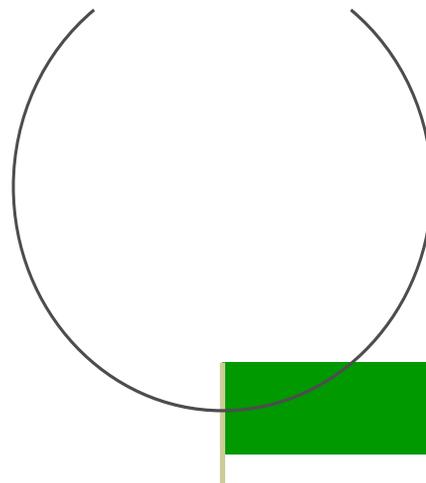
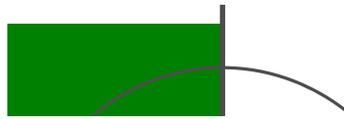
How about you? *Do you love to tithe?* Are you *celebrating*, are you *liberated*, are you *educated*, and will you one day be eternally *remunerated*?

I hope so! If not, why not begin today by faith.

Then you too can say with me,

“I LOVE TO TITHE!”

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Four Reasons I Love To Tithe!



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“The thing I don’t like about churches...”

Recently, while waiting for the program to begin at a local theatre, I overheard the conversation of a man sitting behind me. He said, “**The thing I don’t like about churches is that all they ever talk about is money!** Every time you go to a church function, there they go again asking for money.”

I must admit there have been abuses in this area. This man’s criticism has some truth in it. However, if we back off from honestly holding forth and participating in this vital part of our Christian walk—namely **the ministry of tithing**, we rob ourselves and others of great spiritual blessings and contribute to the restrictions imposed on world evangelism by insufficient funds.

Over the years that I have been walking with the Lord, I have come a long way - from criticism, much like the man in the theatre, to **a heart that loves to tithe!**

What God places in our hands...

The giving of the tithe (ten percent of our income, **what God places in our hands**), was a God-given principle of Old Testament times. The Prophet Malachi stressed the need to give “offerings” in addition to tithes (3:8). And he went on to say that the Lord will open windows of heaven to pour out blessings on those who faithfully give the tithe (3:10).

In the New Testament Jesus endorsed the tithe and the Apostle Paul stressed the importance of weekly giving (I Cor. 16:2) as a part of our worship experience. He was concerned that such giving by Christian worshippers would not become a “burden” because of giving grudgingly. Paul proclaimed - “God loves a cheerful giver!” (II Corinthians 9:7)

There in lies the problem...

You see, there in lies the problem. Previously, I was giving, but I had not experienced the **joy of giving**. I did not see that this tangible act was a meaningful expression of my worship - until I discovered **four keys to joyful giving**.

1st: Joyful Giving Celebrates!

That’s right! Every time I give my tithe to the Lord, I am actively participating in a celebration!

One part of my celebration is **worship**. You see, tithing reminds me that I need to put God first in my life. And that is worship in the highest sense. Another part of my celebration is **purpose**. Tithing not only celebrates my worship to God, it also lifts up an important purpose of my Christian life—putting others before myself! This is what Paul refers to as the mind (will, purpose) of Christ (Phil. 2:3-7). **Yes, giving our tithes and offerings is a celebration!**

2nd: Joyful Giving Liberates!

Giving regularly and generously is the key to personal freedom.

As I begin to celebrate through my tithes, I find that I experience a liberating breakthrough in two areas of my life. **First, my heart is set free!** This may sound a little strange. How can obedient giving liberate my heart? The answer: It frees my heart from the pitfalls of covetousness (or in common terminology, “Keeping up with the Jones”). Jesus warned us about this deadly attitude of the heart (Luke 12:15).

Second, I experience a liberating breakthrough in blessing. Yes, God does want to bless his children! God promises physical provision and blessing to those who honor Him with their tithes. However, this isn’t just “sanctified covetousness”.

It is a blessing which naturally follows from obedience to God. It is a blessing which results more from giving than receiving (Acts 20:35). And this enables me to be a blessing to others.

3rd: Joyful Giving Educates!

This may be a new thought to you. As I worship the Lord through tithing, I find myself receiving a helpful education.

One course in that education is **stewardship**. This is one of those “buzz” words that everyone uses, yet few really know what it means—“the management of a household or estate”. Sadly, some of the worst credit ratings belong to Christians. Some families have no budget, no savings plan, and no money left over for the Lord.

If I choose in my heart to begin giving at least ten percent of my income to the **ministry of the local church**, then I must create a budget and get my finances in order. If that isn’t an education, then I don’t know what is! Since I began tithing years ago, I have systematically lived on a budget that has enabled my family to have all our needs met, to prepare for our future, **and to increase our giving above the tithe!**

Another education course is **priorities**. Tithing is a practical reminder and a continuing education that my first priority in life is to put **God’s Kingdom first** (Matt. 6:33)! Making a weekly contribution to the church aligns my priorities and focus toward the eternal, not simply on the temporal needs of life (II Cor. 4:18).

4th: Joyful Giving Remunerates!

Wouldn’t you take advantage of an investment if you knew that it would offer a “100 percent return”?