

GIVING

To God and His church

For those considering financial stewardship and involvement

Life Community Church has made it a point from its inception to guard financial integrity to the highest degree. We work hard to ensure that the true work of spreading the good news of forgiveness in Jesus is not associated with pleas for money. We believe giving to God is a key expression of worship and obedience.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT GIVING

God has made it clear that how we use the money He gives us is very important to Him.¹ He wants to be Lord over every part of our lives.² So what does He really want from us? What does He say about how much we should give to Him and His Church?

The Law of Moses (in the Old Testament) gave some clear directives for how much money the people of Israel were to give to God during the days when God ruled over the nation.³ After Jesus's mission on earth, God never gave a "law" for how much money His people are required to give to Him. Instead, He calls us to understand "stewardship" (the responsibility of managing someone else's possessions wisely for them)⁴. Those who have been "bought"—or purchased—by Christ become fully and completely His, and that includes everything they have.

So for a Christian, our money is never our money. Everything we have (including gifts, inheritance, even the ability to earn it) is provided by Him, and is His, not ours. When He entrusts money to us, He is naming us the steward of His money while we're on earth, to be invested in a way that honors, pleases, and represents His desires first and foremost, not our own.

Therefore, the question when it comes to money is never how much of our money we should give to God, but how much of God's money we need to use on ourselves. It's a matter of the heart, not of the calculator.

God wants us to shift our hearts so that we see all of our lives and possessions as dedicated to Him first and foremost, used for the primary purpose of honoring Him and expanding His kingdom.

So He doesn't give us a required percentage. The Old Testament law of ten percent off the top (the Latin word, "tithe," meaning "10%") isn't a bad starting place, but it's not mandated in Scripture.⁵

Now that Christ has fulfilled the Law and "nailed it to the cross," what He gives us instead are principles to apply:

1. Give freely, not out of compulsion⁶
2. Give joyfully⁷
3. Give consistently, regularly, off the top⁸
4. Give generously⁹
5. Give sacrificially¹⁰
6. Give in keeping with how God blesses you^{11,14}

For some of us that might mean returning far more than any law required. But for all of us it means regular, responsible participation. Giving to God and His Church is a unique act of worship and stewardship, and therefore should be considered a separate practice from other charitable giving.

Jesus knew that our wallets are one of the truest tests of our hearts. He regularly regarded our giving to God as a gauge for how we're truly doing spiritually.¹² He talked more about money than He did about heaven, for that very reason. God has said that it is the responsibility of His people to support and make happen financially what He is doing in their midst. It's part of being dedicated to Christ with every part of our lives, and we need to take it seriously.

One of the best ways to adopt this area into your life is to sit down with a blank slate when planning your budget. Pray and ask God to help you discern what He'd have you do as far as giving to His work. Set that amount aside before dividing up the rest of the budget. God has made it clear that if we honor Him this way with our money, He will supply everything we need financially.¹³

Footnotes:

¹Malachi 3:7-12

²Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 3:23-24; 1 Peter 3:15

³Leviticus 27:30-34; Deuteronomy 14:22-29. When it came to how much, the law included not only offerings for the Temple, but funds to be used for the government, care for the poor, support of national defense, and other societal necessities. Jesus fulfilled that Law, set His people free from it (Ephesians 2:14-15; Colossians 2:14), and established the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 3:2; Luke 17:21; John 18:36), which includes people from all lands and nations, gathered in groups as the "Church" while on earth.

⁴Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 14:7-8; 1 Corinthians 4:2-7; 6:12-21

⁵The tithes are not even an accurate amount from the days of the Old Testament. The Old Testament Law's requirements actually added up to somewhere closer to 23.3% when they were all totaled.

⁶2 Corinthians 9:7

⁷2 Corinthians 9:7

⁸1 Corinthians 16:2

⁹2 Corinthians 9:6

¹⁰2 Corinthians 8:1-15

¹¹1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6

¹²Matthew 6:19-21

¹³2 Corinthians 9:8-11; Malachi 3:10-12

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