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WHY IS TITHING IMPORTANT?

(adapted from an article by Brian Kluth, bestselling author on generosity⁶)

Tithing reminds you of Who is the Creator and Owner of all things. *1 Chronicles 29:11-18; Psalm 24:1-2; Psalm 50:10-12; Haggai 2:8*

Tithing allows you to experience our Heavenly Father's constant care in ways you often don't expect. *1 Kings 17; Proverbs 3: 9-10; Malachi 3:7-15; Haggai 1:4-11; 2:15-19; Luke 6:38; Deuteronomy 28; Philippians 4:15-19; Mark 12:41-44*

Tithing has been verified and supported by God's heroes throughout the ages. *Genesis 14:17-20; 28:16-22; Leviticus 27:30*

Tithing has been proven to bring order into your personal finances and will assist you in controlling materialism in your life. *Matthew 6:19-21,24-34; Luke 12:16-21; 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19; Ecclesiastes 5:10*

Tithing will lead to a reward in the Kingdom to come. *1 Timothy 6:18,19; Matthew 6:19-21; Hebrews 6:10*

Tithing strengthens the ministry of both the local church and the worldwide denomination. *Acts 2:42-47; 2 Corinthians 9:12-13*

Tithing provides the means to support a worldwide ministry for pastors, missionaries, teachers, office staff, and retreat workers. *1 Corinthians 9:9-11; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; 3 John 5-8; Philippians 4:15-19; Galatians 6:6; Luke 8:3; 2 Kings 4:8-10*

Sources

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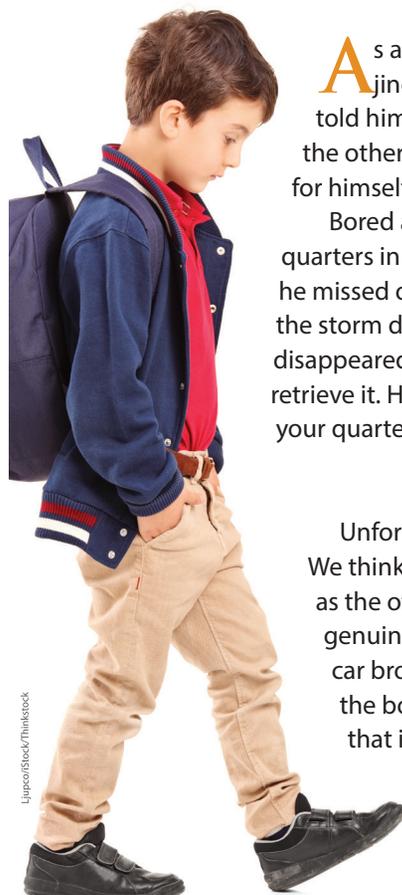
The STEWPOT

A POTPOURRI OF PRACTICAL IDEAS to help you become a better steward

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NOT JUST 10 PERCENT

BY GORDON BOTTING DRPH, CHES, CFC



As a little boy walked to his mid-week Bible class, he jingled two quarters in his pocket. His mother had told him that one coin was for the mission offering, and the other one was for him to purchase something special for himself on his way home.

Bored as he walked along, the boy began to flip the quarters in the air to see if he could catch them. After a toss, he missed one of the coins, and it rolled down the street into the storm drain. Looking inside the hole where the money disappeared, the boy realized there was no way he could retrieve it. He bowed his head and said, "Sorry God; there goes your quarter!"



Unfortunately, we adults often express the same idea. We think, "Sorry God; nothing for you this week in church" as the offering plate goes by. Our excuses may feel genuine, such as "my bills gobbled up my salary" or "my car broke down and had to be fixed. However, much like the boy in the story, we are really hanging on to money that is not our own."

When it comes to returning our tithe to God, we often think 10 percent is too much. We forget that Scripture states clearly that

STEWARDSHIP is a total lifestyle. It involves our health, time, talents, environment, relationships, spirituality, and finances.

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God is the owner of everything, and we are just managers. If this is the case, why don't we give him 50 percent? In most business arrangements, the owner gets the lion's share, so why not split the money 60/40 or 75/25? Why should we give Him only 10 percent? I like how Pastor John Ortberg looks at the matter: "Tithing is like training wheels when it comes to giving. It's intended to help you get started, but not recommended for the Tour de France."¹

DANGEROUS COMPARISON

Why are we so resistant to being generous with our tithe? Ortberg offers an explanation based on social psychologist Leon Festinger's social comparison theory. Sometimes we compare ourselves with

people "below" us and sometimes with people "above" us. For example, when we think about our morality, we usually compare ourselves with individuals we believe are below us, such as murderers and drug dealers, and so we feel superior. However, when it comes to money, we compare ourselves to those we think are above us—wealthy people—so we feel inferior. This feeling makes us greedier and less compassionate. We need to

remember that the Bible discourages this kind of upward comparison with the rich and encourages us to turn away from greed in order to live with deliberate generosity.²

THE GENEROUS BRAIN

You may be surprised to learn that Jesus' words "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35) have a scientific basis! Research has shown that our brains are hardwired for generosity. The Wall Street Journal reported on a study by Drs. Bill Harbaugh and Ulrich Mayr examining what happens in the brain when a person gives money to charity. Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), the researchers looked at the brains of people who were giving money to charity. When a research subject gave away money, the brain's nucleus accumbens lit up. The nucleus accumbens contains neurons

that release the pleasure hormone dopamine—a prize for the brain. "There's some primary reward people get from seeing money go from themselves to provide to other

people," said Harbaugh.³ Being generous really does make you feel good!

100% TITHE

Many years ago, an old boat captain noticed a teenaged boy waiting at the dock. "Where are you going, William?" he asked the young man.

"To New York. My father is too poor to keep me at home any longer and says I must shift for myself."

"What can you do?" quizzed the captain.

"My father makes soap and candles, and I have helped him. I know the business."

"I will give you some advice, William," he answered. "Someone will be the leading soap maker in New York 20 years from now. It may as well be you as anyone. Come, let us kneel in prayer."

The captain then prayed and asked the Lord to bless and guide the boy. After the prayer, he told William to give his heart to Jesus and to faithfully return to God 10 percent of the first income he received.

After a week of loneliness in the city, William found himself at a prayer meeting, where he gave his heart to the Lord. The next day he got a job as assistant to a soap maker. When he received his salary, he made sure to pay his tithe. Through the years, as he received promotion after promotion, he continued to return 10 percent of his paycheck. Eventually, he owned his own soap company and became a very rich man. He started paying a 20 percent tithe and then a 50 percent tithe, and eventually he paid all his income to God in gratitude for his many blessings. Throughout his life, William Colgate—famous for his toothpaste and soap company—gave millions to further the Lord's work.⁴

A PARABLE ABOUT HEAVENLY TREASURE

One of my favorite allegories is about a wealthy gentleman who was met by his guardian angel at the heavenly gate—as all these ethical fables go. As they walked together through paradise, the man was impressed by the magnificent homes and, being a little nosy, he asked the angel who lived in each one.

"This one belongs to your earthly gardener. The home across the street belongs to your former handyman. Next door lives your long-time maid. All three were self-sacrificing Christians throughout their lives," said the angel.

Seeing what wonderful homes these servants had, the man had high expectations for his own place. He was very surprised when the angel stopped by a plain, ordinary house and said, "This is your home for eternity."

The man immediately protested to the angel, "How come my servants have such wonderful mansions, and I have a regular house? There must be some mistake!"

"No," said the angel. "This house was the best we could do with what you sent ahead while you lived on earth."⁵

**"Oh! if the good hearts had the fat purses,
how much better everything would go!"**

VICTOR HUGO

**"Generosity
is giving
more than
you can."**

KAHLIL GIBRAN

**"You have not lived today until you have done
something for someone who can never repay you."**

JOHN BUNYAN

