

# Faithful Stewardship of Our Money: Our Giving

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Preacher: Fred Stone

[ 0 : 00 ] If a new Christian came up to you here at church or at work, knowing that you're a professing Christian, you attend this church, and they told you, I have just become a Christian, I know I'm supposed to give.

What do I do? Could you explain to me what you give, how you give, how much you give? I don't know anything about it.

What would you tell them? As we continue our study on faithful stewardship, this morning I want us to conclude the part about the faithful stewardship of our money.

Some of you I know are going to say, oh, I'm so glad he's through with that. But as we continue talking about being wise managers of our time, our talents, our treasures, we're going to wind it up today, the part about giving, or the part about being a stewardship of our money, by looking at our giving.

What would you say to someone who asks you, what do I give, how do I give, why do I give? What I want us to do is do a brief survey of some of the major teachings in the Old Testament and the New Testament about giving, and then put it together into what the Bible actually means for us today about giving.

[ 1 : 34 ] Let's do first giving in the Old Testament. We looked briefly last week and saw that giving to God should be our first priority. This is called first fruit giving.

Proverbs describes this kind of giving as honoring God. Look at it. Honor the Lord with your wealth and with your first fruits of all your produce.

But what you want us to notice is that first phrase, honor the Lord. The idea of first fruit giving is honoring God, is focused on Him.

We also saw last week that such giving demonstrates trust in God. For those people giving the Lord the first fruits of their produce, their crops, they were saying, we're giving God the first, and we're going to trust Him to provide us with the rest that will meet our needs.

Well, the same thing is true about us. When we give Him the first of our income, we're trusting Him. And we're saying to Him that we're trusting Him to meet our needs with the rest of our income.

[ 2 : 44 ] Paul encouraged Christians throughout his travels and in several of his letters to give generously and willingly because God can be trusted to supply us with what we need.

In fact, God supplies us with what we need to give, to save, to invest, and to spend. By the way, I was so surprised I've got more feedback from last week's message about on the part about saving and investing than anything else.

In fact, I had some people talk about that really got to them. Well, I want to just reemphasize this morning. A part of being a good steward, it's not just giving.

It's earning. It's giving. But it is saving and investing wisely as well as spending. But what I want us to note here in 2 Corinthians 9, Paul encourages them to trust God.

Look at it. And God is able to bless you abundantly so that in all things, at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

[ 4 : 03 ] Our first giving priority should be that we give to God. Don't think about giving to a church.

Don't think about giving to a cause. As Christians, we need to think of our giving first and foremost as giving to God to honor Him, to thank Him, and to demonstrate to Him we trust You, Lord.

We're going to give the first of our income to You because we have confidence that You'll supply us with what we need for everything else.

Well, the major emphasis in the Old Testament on giving is not the first fruit giving, but it's on the giving of a tithe or 10% to God. The first Old Testament records of giving a tithe was not under the law, not a requirement.

The first time we see tithing mentioned in the Old Testament, in the book of Genesis, it was given as a voluntary, spontaneous expression of worship or gratitude or commitment.

[ 5 : 13 ] Abraham, who was first known in the Old Testament as Abram, God's the one who changed His name to Abraham. On one occasion, He gave a tithe of all He had won in a battle.

He gave a tithe of the spoils of war to a mysterious figure in the Bible, Melchizedek, king of Salem and priest of God, he's described.

It says in Genesis 14, verse 20, just simply, and Abram gave him a tenth of everything. But I want you to look next at the book of Hebrews.

It affirms that this was an act of worship. Note, this Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything.

In response to that, God is an expression of worship given to the priest of God. Next, Jacob, Abraham's grandson, promised to give a tithe of all that God had given him in response to God's promise to bless him.

[ 6 : 29 ] God promised to bless Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants in a very special way, and ultimately, we're reading the New Testament, that was through Jesus.

But I want you to note how Jacob responded to God by saying, and all that you give me, I will give a full tenth to you.

That promise of a tithe was an expression of his commitment to God because of God's promise to bless him. These two examples show us that tithing first appears in the Bible as a volunteering.

From the heart, expression of worship, of gratitude, of commitment.

That's how it begins. But tithing appears next in the Bible as a required giving under the law. And that's what the majority of things you read about the tithe in the Old Testament is all about.

[ 7 : 36 ] Required, mandated giving by the people of Israel living under the law in the promised land. Three passages explain this.

I want you to look on the screen, and I want to encourage you to write that down and look at those. There's a lot of verses represented there. Leviticus 27, 30 through 33. Numbers 18, 21 through 32. Deuteronomy 14, verses 22 through 29. If you read that, you may be a little bit confused. Old Testament scholars debate how many tithes are actually being required in those verses.

Some think there was one yearly tithe, and then a second one was required every three years. Some think there were two yearly tithes, and then a third one required every year, every three years.

Well, when you read those passages, it's obvious the people of Israel were required to give more than a tenth of their income every year to God.

[ 8 : 45 ] It was a requirement under the law. Now, let's move on to the New Testament. The New Testament does not teach that Christians must give a certain percentage of their income to God.

The New Testament does teach that Christians should give, but it doesn't say how much. It doesn't talk about a percentage. Most of what you read in the New Testament about giving is focused on principles.

Or what we might even say, our attitude in giving. I want you to look at some examples. The New Testament says that our giving should be willful or voluntary giving.

We looked at this verse last week, but let me just remind you. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion.

And the second attitude about giving should be cheerful giving. And here's the rest of that verse. For God loves a cheerful giver. Everyone must give, but you decide.

[ 9 : 58 ] You choose how much. And whatever you give, do it cheerfully. Number three, regular giving is what the New Testament calls for.

On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up. Our giving should be on a regular basis.

The fourth principle, proportionate giving. Each of you is to put something aside and store it up as he may prosper. Everybody's not supposed to give the same. Everybody doesn't prosper the same way.

Some people are very blessed. They're very prosperous. Their giving should reflect that. Some people just are not that prosperous.

Fact is, the reality of life and their giving will reflect that. The fifth attitude or principle of giving in the New Testament is generous giving.

[10:56] For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means of their own accord. There again, of their own accord emphasizes that Christian giving in the New Testament was something that they voluntarily chose to do.

Even when they sacrificially gave beyond their means. Now, before we start looking at the amount we should give, we need to make sure that our attitude toward whatever we give is the right attitude.

So let's think. As you think about giving to God, and let's be specific, through this church, what goes through your mind?

How do you think of your personal giving? When you write your check or give online or put cash in the offering plate, what goes through your mind?

How do you feel? How would you describe your attitude about your giving to God through this church?

[12:17] and then let's just look at what the New Testament said. Do the words willful, voluntary, cheerful, regular, proportionate, and generous, do those words describe the attitude you have as you give?

Do those words describe your habit, your actions about giving? In light of what we see in this brief survey of biblical giving, we need to think about what should we give to God today as Christians, believers of the Bible?

How should we think in terms of giving today? Well, the first thing we need to understand about giving today is that we do not live under the Old Testament law of Moses, including the law's requirement to tithe.

Jesus Christ has fulfilled the law. Jesus has fulfilled the law and set us free from the law's requirements.

Now this is stated here and there throughout the New Testament. A statement here, an example there. It is explained in some detail in the book of Galatians.

[13:43] It is explained fully in the book of Hebrews. If you want to know, get a handle on, why do we not, why are we not obligated today to live under the Old Testament law of Moses, first five books of the Old Testament, like the people in Israel were living in the promised land?

Read the book of Hebrews. It explains that. And Hebrews chapters 8, 9, and 10 will give you the most detail on why we as Christians today are no longer under the Old Testament law.

In a nutshell, this is what Hebrews is telling us. Jesus fully kept the law of God for us. Jesus perfectly kept, obeyed, fulfilled the requirements of the law.

And when we trust Him as our Savior and Lord, we're one with Him. God looks at us united to Christ and the requirements of the law have been fulfilled.

We receive the righteousness, the perfect life credited to us of Jesus. Jesus also died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins of disobeying God's law.

[15:11] And so when we're united to Jesus by faith as Christians, God looks at us, we are lawbreakers. We've sinned and come short of the glory of God. But when God looks at us united to Jesus by faith, the penalty for our sin has been paid.

What Jesus did for us through His life and death is what saves us and frees us from the penalty of the law.

We put our faith and trust in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We are forgiven and made right with God right then and there. Our salvation is by God's grace.

It is totally undeserved through faith in Jesus and what He has done to make us right with God.

That's why we don't bring animal sacrifices to a temple on a regular basis to offer atonement for our sins like the people in Israel did.

That's why thank the Lord we don't have to abstain from barbecued pork and ribs and bacon. Now if you don't agree with what I said you better not be eating any bacon or barbecue.

[16:36] We've been set free from those dietary regulations. There is no unclean food. There's a lot of food we probably shouldn't eat but not from a biblical perspective.

It's what Jesus has done for us on the cross that we're not required to keep Sabbath laws. You say well I do.

Well you don't worship on the Sabbath if you come here on Sunday Sabbath is the seventh day. Saturday. So you're not keeping Sabbath laws. No one is.

Well how should we think of the Old Testament today? Just forget it? Rip it out of the Bible?

Absolutely not. What we read in the Old Testament is still the Word of God that provides us with listen eternal principles for living a life that pleases God.

For example all of the Ten Commandments are restated reinforced in the New Testament except the Fourth Commandment concerning the Sabbath.

[ 17 : 43 ] We don't live under the Old Testament law of Moses but we do live under the principles contained in the law. For example lying and stealing is always wrong.

Honoring your father and mother is always right. It's just in the nature of God for lying and stealing to be wrong.

It's contrary to who he is. Honoring your father and mother is just how God created life to be in this world between children and parents of all ages. You honor your father and mother.

Worshiping God only. Having no other gods. Never taking his name in vain. Those are eternal principles that tell us how to honor God.

You can't honor God and serve idols or other gods. You can't take God's name in vain and that doesn't mean you just don't use his name in profane statements.

[ 18 : 46 ] That means you don't take God's name flippantly or casually. If you don't use God's name be talking about him seriously, honestly, not flippantly or casually.

So what about tithing? Is that a principle? A principle that endures or is it a law we no longer have to keep? Let's think about it. Tithing appears in the Bible before the law ever existed.

Voluntarily giving a tithe to God is one of the oldest tangible expressions of worship showing gratitude and commitment found among God's people.

Here's something else we need to think about in relation to the law and today and principles and so forth. Jesus never lowered the standards of truth found in those Old Testament laws.

He actually raised the bar. Jesus raised the standards of truth for an example. Jesus taught that murder is more than just taking someone's life.

[ 19 : 58 ] Murder actually begins with anger in our heart. Insults, condemnations, judgments on our tongue.

Look at what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5. He says, You have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder. And whoever murders will be liable to judgment. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. And whoever insults his brother will be liable to the counsel.

And whoever says you fool will be liable to the hell of fire. Jesus said that adultery is much more than a physical act.

The sin of adultery begins with a lustful look and desire. Note again, Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5. Jesus said, You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery.

[ 21 : 00 ] But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. And each of those examples, Jesus is bringing out the spirit of the law, not just the letter.

And in doing that, Jesus did not lower the moral requirements of the Old Testament laws. He raised them, didn't He? It's obvious. So now we come to tithing.

Tithing appears to be a solid, biblical, very sound principle for Christians today that gives us a starting point in our giving to God.

That seems to be the most common understanding of tithing among Christian leaders who take the Bible's teaching seriously. I want you to look at an example from James Boyce, long-time pastor, 10th Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, on the radio for years, highly respected.

He says, although the tithe is not mentioned, the giving of weekly offerings is, he's talking about in the New Testament. And more importantly, it is generally the case in the New Testament, the obligations of the Old Testament legislation are heightened rather than lessened.

[ 22 : 27 ] Jesus in murder, Jesus in adultery. So while we are not required to give a specific tenth of our income, it is hard to think of a normal Christian blessed with the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ doing less.

Under reasonable circumstances, any true believer in Christ should give more than the tenth. For all we have is the Lord's. Randy Alcorn, some of you have read his book on heaven, done a study here

in church on heaven based on his book.

He's written a lot of things about giving. One of his books was called The Treasure Principle and in that book he compares tithing to training wheels on a bicycle. He says, training wheels help you to learn to ride, but once you learn to ride, you take off the training wheels.

He says that when we really learn to give, tithing won't even be an issue. It will be merely the beginning point of our giving.

One more, Wayne Grudem. My conclusion about how much we should give is that the New Testament does not specify any certain amount such as 10%. But a tithe certainly seems like a wise guideline at least when someone is beginning beginning to give to the Lord's work.

[ 23 : 46 ] It is a level of giving that is significant and yet not excessively burdensome for people. I want us to understand that the key to practicing faithful stewardship of everything we have, everything that we are, including our money, is to first give ourselves to God.

That's what I pointed out at the beginning of this first fruit offerings. We are honoring God. We are doing it to Him. The focus is on Him. That's how Paul explains how one group of Christians were able to give so generously.

Note this in 2 Corinthians 8. For they gave according to their means as I can testify and beyond their means of their own accord begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints and this not as we expected but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.

The key to their giving, wanting to give like they did, it grew out of their relationship with the Lord.

Here's what I want us to understand. When we give ourselves first to the Lord Jesus Christ in faith, in love, in commitment, everything else in our life will fall into place.

When Christ is truly the Lord of our life and He's first in our life, we'll be faithful stewards of our time, of our talents, of our treasures.

[ 25 : 28 ] That includes earning it, saving, investing it, spending it, as well as giving it. The most important question for each of us this morning is this, have I truly given my life to Christ?

Our lives should show it. If we have, we should know it and other people should be able to see that in us because first and foremost, our heart's desire will be to know Him better, love Him more, serve Him with all our heart, and that includes everything.

Now, if that's true about you, if you think to yourself, I know, not perfectly, but I truly love the Lord, I want to know Him better, I want to be more like Him, I want you to thank God because that is a sign, a great sign that God has worked in your life in a very gracious way.

God's changed you, He is changing you. If that just appeals to you, that's what you're seeking to do, to know and love and serve the Lord, just thank God and ask Him to help you to keep on.

But if you're honest, you might say, that used to be true, but it's not like it used to be. So what I want you to think is this, if you have allowed some more or something to take the Lord's place in your life, admit that as the sin that it is to God right now.

[ 27 : 16 ] You may not have ever meant to, but right now, you're more concerned about doing this, pleasing yourself, or pleasing a certain person than you are pleasing God.

I want to encourage you to confess that as the sin that it is, turn from it, change your mind, repent, ask God to help you, and then come back to Him in a renewed faith and commitment.

Ask Him to help you day by day, maybe hour by hour, to live a God-conscious life. Be focused on seeking to know and love and follow and be like the Lord Jesus.

But if what we're talking about here has never been true about you, you don't know God, you don't have a relationship with Christ, and the truth is you've never really thought that much about it or cared to. But if you do now, if God's been working in your life these past few weeks, maybe through some of the things we've learned, or maybe just today, I want to encourage you to turn your back on living for you, repent of your sin, put your trust in Jesus, and call upon Him to save you right now. That's the most important thing for you to do. I want us to conclude this message the same way we began this morning. I want to ask you, how would you instruct a new Christian concerning their giving?

[ 28 : 57 ] What if they ask you to tell them how you give, your thoughts on giving, your actions, what would you say?

I know for a fact that there are many people in this church who have a testimony similar to mine about their giving, and so on behalf of people who give this way, I want to give you an example.

I'm going to give you my and Lisa's testimony. I don't remember when I began to tithe. When I met Lisa, I was already tithing. She was already tithing. When we got married, we were already committed to giving God the first 10% that He blessed us with.

I'm talking about we gave the first 10% of the gross income that we had. We gave this tithe to God with an emphasis on giving it to God, but we've always given it to Him through our local church, through our church, through this church today.

We've always considered my income and her income to be our income. Now, I know everybody here doesn't do that. That's not the point this morning. I don't have my money.

[ 30 : 19 ] Lisa doesn't have her money. We have our money. And so we give one tithe of our offerings, our income rather. It used to be the first check we wrote after we got paid, which has been for years now, twice a month.

Now, we've set it up for that tithe to be drafted the day after payday, two times a month. I love that. I love online giving. I love having it drafted. You may not want to do that, and that's fine for you. But you'd be surprised how many Sundays I've sat in a pew and passed, seen that plate go by twice, and I get home, it's still in my pocket.

I love having it drafted, and I try to think, I don't every Sunday, but I try to think and do most Sundays when that plate has passed. Thank you, Lord, for blessing us and allowing us to be able to give the way that we're giving now.

For over 41 years, we have given at least 10% of our income to God through our church, regardless of what our income was or what our expenses were.

[ 31 : 34 ] There's been times in our life when money was tight, and we cut back on our spending. We've never cut back on our tithing. After giving 10% to God through the church, we consider what other ways God would have us to give with the other 90%.

I want to be real honest with you here. We've always practiced saving and investing. That's very important. It's wise. It's biblical. I just don't realize, haven't realized how many people don't understand that, but you need to understand that.

But we consider what we give, the 10% to be our tithe. And we consider what else we give to be our offerings. And we always, through the years, have given offerings to special cause, special mission causes.

Usually our largest offering like this is to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering for international missions that we give through our church. Some years our largest offering has been giving to the building fund.

We were doing something real special like building or remodeling here. We've made it a habit to give to other offerings for various kinds of ministries and missions that were biblically sound, gospel type organizations.

[ 33 : 01 ] We've also supported some individuals who were raising money to go on a mission trip or being involved in some missions, but we do not give to people who ask us to just go on pleasure trips or even educational trips.

That ain't my place. I'm not sending you around the world, but I will help you to serve the Lord somewhere around the world. We've given to benevolent ministries like Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree, Samaritan's Purse, the Dream Center.

One reason we give to those ministries is because we're supposed to help people who are in need, and those kind of organizations not only help people who are in need, but they share the gospel in the process.

We have given like this out of love and gratitude to God for all that He has done for us and out of obedience to what we believe He's called us to do.

But I want to be real clear about something. We have not and we do not give out of fear or guilt. I grew up going to church and all my life, mostly growing up, I heard it taught that the tithe is the Lord's and if you don't give it, He's going to get it some other way.

[ 34 : 16 ] That is poor theology. That is not biblically sound theology. I think if we don't give, we miss out on a lot of blessings.

But I don't think we should give because we're afraid God's going to do something to us to get it another way. You can't find that as a motivation for giving.

The result has been in our giving, God has met all of our needs and so much more. But I want to be quick to say here, don't give thinking God's going to make me wealthy or I'm going to manipulate

God by my giving.

It doesn't work that way. God has promised to meet our needs, but He has not promised to meet our wants. In our lives, we've been blessed by having our needs met and a lot of wants.

But there's been things we couldn't afford to do. There's been times, lots of times we've told our children we can't afford this because we chose to be faithful to God to give instead of just spending it on ourselves.

[ 35 : 30 ] But we chose to do that because God has blessed us, because He sent His Son to die for us. We love Him. We appreciate it.

That's our testimony. And you may not know a lot of people in this church. If you're a guest here today, if there's a lot of people in this church, theirs wouldn't be exactly like ours, but a lot of people in this church do the same way because I've heard them say it.

That's our testimony. That's how I would explain to a new Christian how to give. What's your testimony?

How do you give? Make sure that whatever it is, it's what pleases God, what honors Him, what demonstrates your trust in Him.

And if it doesn't, talk to Him about it this week and develop a way to give that will honor God and show Him that you love Him and trust Him.

[ 36 : 38 ] Let's pray together. Father, show us now how we should respond to You and just help us to do it. Help us to commit ourselves to You first and all that we are to do.

and all that we have, including our money and our giving. Let's just have an attitude of prayer and respond to the Lord as He speaks to us.

If I could help you, pray with you, I'll be here at the front and we'd be happy to do that.