

The Storehouse of Heaven

Financing God's work costs money. It is the privilege of all who believe in Him to contribute according to how God has blessed them.

Paradoxically, some of the richest blessings and promises in the Scriptures are given to those who willingly give up their finances for the ministry. Everything we possess, we possess by the grace of God. He grants us our abilities and capabilities including the capacity to make money.

Everything belongs to God, but He has granted us the privilege of managing the earth:

The God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth (Genesis 1:28 NKJV, see also Deuteronomy 8:18 NKJV).

'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,' says the LORD of hosts (Haggai 2:8 NKJV, see also Psalm 24:1 and 50:10 NKJV).

Giving in Scripture

God has spelled out the methods of financing the Gospel. They are divided into two categories: tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:8 NKJV).

Tithe means "a tenth." The tithing system was introduced by God for the financing of the ministry. The tithe was to be used to pay the priests. The first instruction about tithing is in the book of Leviticus.

The tithe's purpose is recorded in the book of Numbers:

Behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting" (Numbers 18:21 NKJV).

Some might argue that the tithing system was only applicable in the Old Testament times and that it was meant only for the Jews. However, the system of tithing was in operation before the nation of Israel was called by God (See Genesis 14). Also, in his letter to the Corinthians, Paul applies the system of tithing to the ministers of the Gospel:

Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:13-14 NKJV).

God has commanded that the minister be paid in the same way as those who ministered in the temple—the system of tithing. In no way does the New Testament negate the system. Rather, it elevates tithing. We should not pay tithe out of a forced feeling of duty. It should come from the heart, "for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

The Heart of the Matter

The Pharisees did everything according to the law, but they neglected the matters of the heart.

Jesus rebuked them, saying, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone" (Matthew 23:23 NKJV).

It is a change of heart that God requires. God knows our selfish natures and so He has promised rich blessings to those who will heed His command. God does not need our money, but He wants us to be co-workers together with Him so that we may become co-sharers in the blessings of the Gospel.

'Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this,' Says the Lord of hosts, 'If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it' (Malachi 3:10 NKJV).

God challenges us to put Him to the test. He will not let His children suffer want, poverty, pain, or emotional hurt because we pay tithe. God promises to meet our temporal needs and we must learn to take Him at His word.

The tenth of our income goes to finance God's ministry. We cannot choose what our tithe will be used for. God has already made that choice. Once the tithe is paid, the responsibility for its correct application lies with the church administration.

Unfortunately, some have had experiences where they believed the Church has misused their money. And although it is important in such circumstances to be wise about to whom we will give our tithe, we must remember that tithing is an act of worship and of trust to God.

His plans cannot be stopped by any misguided administration, nor is He constrained to work within what we give. He asks that we tithe regardless of the circumstances, because He wants us to join Him in His mission of saving the lost.

Offerings, on the other hand, are freewill offerings, and the choice as to their application lies with each individual. We should not neglect offerings because we pay tithe. The blessings promised by God cover tithes and offerings.

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:6-7, see also Matthew 6:31-33 NKJV).

The blessings of God carry with them eternal consequences and should be sought diligently.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matthew 6:19-21 NKJV).

The Promise

God promises rewards for our diligence.

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you (Luke 6:38 NKJV).

Our blessings come from God and we should acknowledge this. We should also make sure that we do not fall into the same trap as the rich farmer in Luke chapter 12 who had a great crop but then decided this:

I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.' But God said to Him, "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?" So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God (Luke 12:18-21 NKJV, see also Matthew 16:24-26).

True repentance brings faithfulness in all things, including paying tithes and offerings.

God will never let us down. There may be times when we have no money, but God will always provide when we are obedient and trust Him.

God has taught us wonderful lessons of trust, not only in terms of tithes, but also in terms of offerings. Sometimes He has required of us to sell something which we felt we could not afford to lose, or to take steps in faith and spend money that we did not have on furthering His work but every time, God poured out a blessing in accordance with His promises.

God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good (Numbers 23:19)?