

Stewardship of God's Gifts: A Self-Study

Topic #4: Considering your faithfulness in tithing

Over the past several weeks we have been exploring God's Word to discern what he has to teach us about the stewardship of the gifts he has blessed us with. What we have learned so far is that stewardship is not a "thing" we do, but it is actually part of our life in Christ, part of what it means to be a Christian and a child of God. As we prepare for Stewardship Sunday on November 15th and 16th, consider the following things from God's Word as you prepare your pledge form. No matter where you are in your life of stewardship – a tithe, more than a tithe, or working toward a tithe – consider what you are currently doing in light of Scripture, and then be intentional about what you will work to contribute in response to all that God has given you.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Mt. 6:19-21). **Your heart will always go where your treasure is.** We are encouraged to store up our treasures in heaven where things do not spoil or fade or decay. In our giving (God calls us to a tithe or 10%), we are really giving back to God what is his, because he is the ultimate giver of all we have, including our incomes. To acknowledge this, we are moved in faith to respond to God's love for us, not holding on to the tangible gift as a god, but holding on in faith to the giver, who is God Almighty. Again, **this is an act of faith, and it requires intentional effort on our part...it does not come naturally.** If tithing is something you've never done before, it can be scary. But it does not need to be, for God promises in His Word to supply us with all we need in this body and life.

Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions.⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you.¹⁰ Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need (Mal 3:8-10).

On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper (1 Cor 16:2).

Again, we are called to give a tithe, or 10% of what we have been blessed with in service to God through His Church. **He challenges us to see how he blesses us through our gifts to him.** God does not need our money per se, but it is a demonstration of our faith and trust in his promise to provide for us. It is also a gift he has given to us by which we may not fall prey to the temptation to use money in a way that is dangerous to our life or salvation, for money and the world's idea of it can have a negative influence upon us.

The other assurance we always have is that God will never give us something, or ask us to do something, that would harm us. He gave his Son for us, and loves us too much to bring harm to our lives. He wants what is best for us, and what he says about money and stewardship is only for our benefit. **Tithing is not easy, but it is godly, and it will change your life** – that is what happens when we act in faith. It may involve us giving up something we like so that we can give a tithe, but our life will also change in other ways – it will give you the peace and contentment that can only come from placing your life in the hands of the Lord.

Consider the following questions, and pray through the Scriptures we have considered over the past few weeks. Then, by God's grace, consider how you might be intentional in your proportional, first-fruits, regular gift as a tithe and thank-offering to the Lord for all his blessings toward you.

The Lord loves me and gave Himself for me on the cross. Y N

All that I have comes from the Lord. Y N

The Lord blessed me to live in the richest land in the world. Y N

If I had to start living on 90% of my current income tomorrow, I or someone in my family would starve. Y N

I/We have been making first-fruit, regular, proportionate and generous Y N

(at least 10%, a tithe) money offerings to the Lord from the heart.

If “yes”, the Lord gets all the glory for that. Y N

If “no”, the Lord wants me to change the way I make money offerings to him. Y N

If the Lord wants me to change, I should change now, and not later. Y N

It is the power of the Holy Spirit and the love of Jesus Christ that changes me for the better. Y N

Prayerfully consider your stewardship of God’s gifts, fill out your pledge form that you received in the mail (extras available in narthex), and then bring it back next weekend for Stewardship Sunday. May God bless you in this important aspect of your life with Him.