

Your Finances and the Kingdom of God*

True or False...Test yourself

1. **T F** God has very little interest in money. We should be the same.
2. **T F** God looks at the way we handle money before He entrusts us with the handling of His kingdom.
3. **T F** Ten percent of my income is the Lord's.
4. **T F** As long as I give ten percent to any good cause, I have done my part.
5. **T F** God loves a cheerful giver.
6. **T F** That which a man sows, he also reaps.
7. **T F** I should pay off my debts before I start to give tithes and offerings.
8. **T F** Having savings is not spiritual for a Christian. We should trust God.

(Answers at end of this study)

The way in which we handle finances tells much about the rest of our lives.

*“So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with _____?”
Luke 16:11*

The true riches here are the riches of God's kingdom. The Lord Jesus is telling us that our handling of money determines whether or not He is able to trust us with spiritual gifts and responsibilities.

*“For where your _____ is, there your _____ will be also.”
Matthew 6:21*

1. Money - God's Instrument

It is a basic misconception that God is not concerned about money or how we use it. There are over 700 references in the Bible concerning money. Almost two-thirds of the parables, and one out of every six verses in the Gospels concern themselves with the right or wrong use of material possessions. Money is, in fact, an important tool which God has chosen to shape our hearts and lives.

2. It All Belongs to God

The devil wants to deceive us into a love relationship with money. Although money in and of itself is not evil, the love of money is.

*“People who want to get rich fall into _____ and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into _____ and _____. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs”
1 Timothy 6:9-10*

*This study was written by Eric Stovesand
Pastor, Church on the Mountain
384 South Landing Drive
HCR 79 Box 71
Crowley Lake, CA 93546
eric@churchonthemountain.org
760-935-4272*

The only way we can free ourselves from the love of money is to transfer the total ownership of all we have to God.

*“In the same way, any of you who does not give up
_____ cannot be my disciple.”*

Luke 14:33

This does not necessarily mean that we have to give away all our possessions, but it does mean that we give every dollar we have (and everything else as well), one hundred percent to the Lord. He now allows us the privilege of being stewards of what belongs to Him.

*“.....for every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle
on a thousand hills. I know every bird in the mountains, and
the creatures of the field are mine. If I were hungry I would
not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.”*

Psalms 50:10-12

3. God Wants Us To Prosper

Prosperity from God’s perspective may look a good bit different from what the world would call ‘prosperity’. Financial prosperity is just one aspect of God’s design to ‘prosper’ us. Health, relationships, peace, joy, patience are all currencies of the Kingdom that don’t show up on an accountants ledger. However, our finances are an area God wants to bless so that we will have our own needs met with enough left over to give to the needs of others.

*“And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that al-
ways having all sufficiency in _____, you may have
an _____ for every good deed;”*

2 Corinthians 9:8 (NAS)

God’s Principles Work

1. Do Not Worry

*“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about _____,
what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will
wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body
more important than clothes?”*

Matthew 6:25

To worry about money is a sign of unbelief that we cannot trust God to be responsible enough to take care of our needs. Worry is not to be permitted. It is a sin to be repented of, to renounce and to gain victory over.

In accordance with the words of Jesus, our giving will be a measure of our commitment. Slackness in giving betrays a slackness in the spiritual links which bind you to the Lord and your brothers and sisters in Christ in the local church. Generous giving to the Lord indicates wholeheartedness of commitment.

*_____, and it will be given to you. A good measure,
pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be
poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be
measured to you.”*

Luke 6:38

Answers to true false quiz: 1.F, 2.T, 3.F, 4.F, 5.T, 6.T, 7.F, 8.F

Memory Verse:

*“Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be
trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little
will also be dishonest with much.*

*So if you have not been trustworthy in handling
worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?*

Luke 16:10-11

- 4) He blesses the giver by providing more for Him to have his needs met and have enough left to give to the needs of others.

How much should we tithe? The question might better be asked, “What part of your income do you want so blessed?” Would “all” be a reasonable answer?

_____ the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to _____, and your vats will _____ with new wine. Proverbs 3:9-10

Firstfruits gives us a picture of the priority of our giving to God. Tithing should be used as a starting point in our giving, from which we can then depart to give even more liberally. The standards of obedience in the New Testament are never lower than those of the Old Testament. God’s standard of grace in the new Testament deals with the deepest of heart issues (as well as actions). In Christ our failures and sins are cleansed, our sin nature is crucified and we are empowered by His Spirit to obedience. From this perspective we see that everything truly belongs to God—our lives, our relationships and our possessions. The tithe, as a regular reminder that it is God who gives us the power to get wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18), is the Old Testament standard and deemed as a good beginning point for those under the grace that has come in Christ.

5. Where Should We Tithe?

Tithing is into the ‘storehouse’ (Malachi 3:10). The storehouse is the source of our spiritual ‘food’ and in most cases should be your local church. Therefore, in a general sense, tithes are not to be used for the support of Christian activities outside of the local church. This should rather be done through offerings.

Offerings

God does not limit us to one tenth. What we give over and above our tithe is classified as offerings. These are used for the needy Christians, the support of the poor (Acts 4:34-35) and other special activities of ministry. The early church’s testimony was that ‘there was not a needy person among them’. This is because of the faithfulness of offerings which were distributed to the needy brothers and sisters by the remainder of the church. Offerings are not just a nice idea, but they are a command of the scripture.

*"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes **and offerings.** Malachi 3:8*

2. Giving Is Sowing

Remember this: Whoever _____ sparingly will also _____ sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 2 Corinthians 9:6

Giving money is the same as sowing seed. It requires faith and trust in God’s laws. The farmer in planting natural seed does so in faith. He knows that in due season, after rain and sunshine, the seed will grow up into a harvest. If the farmer were to eat all of his seed and plant no more, there would be no harvest next year. That is plain and obvious. Yet, we tend to ignore the obvious when it comes to God’s principles in finances. Failure to plant is to plan no harvest. Our responsibility is to obey God’s principles in finances.

3. Contentedness

Keep your lives free from the love of money and _____ with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5

The word ‘content’ actually means ‘sufficient’. Our source is God. We can be content with what we have when we:

- A. Appreciate His presence and His promise that He is with us.
- B. When we rest in His promise to provide for us.

4. Giving Cheerfully

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a _____ giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7

Literally the word ‘cheerful’ as used in the above scripture, means ‘hilarious’. The key to a cheerful attitude is first, to fully devote ourselves and all that we have to Him. Once it is His, we are merely returning what He already owns.

For I testify that they gave as much as _____, and even _____ their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints. And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. 2 Corinthians 8:3-5

Jesus watches , not merely the amount we give, but how we give.

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything-- all she had to live on."

Mark 12:41-44

5. Systematically

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with _____, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

1 Corinthians 16:2

God commends diligent faithfulness. Faithful, regular giving is sacrificial. Careful budgeting is part of the faithful handling of money. Budgeting is not a hindrance to faith and freedom. Giving, saving, budgeting are all actions of good stewardship of God's resources.

God has promised that out of His abundant resources He will always meet our needs.

And my God will meet _____ your _____ according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:19

Also, we will always have enough resources to meet our own needs and those of others too. For 'His riches' are far greater than our 'needs'.

How Much Should We Give?

We have established that all we have comes from God and that in our hearts we have given everything back to God. Now, how much does He want us to actually part with?

For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. _____ — _____,

2 Corinthians 8:3

1. Planned Giving

Our giving is to be systematic, with the attitude of cheerfulness, and done in faith in accordance with the way God has blessed us.

2. A Tithe

From the Hebrew word 'asar (aw-sawr') meaning a tenth; especially a tithe: The word tithe literally means one tenth, one tenth of our income.

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not _____ the floodgates of _____ and pour out so much _____ that you will not have room enough for it.

Malachi 3:10

Tithing is not taught specifically in the New Testament, although it is mentioned in Hebrews 7:1-2 in connection with Abraham, who paid tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of God Most High (Genesis 14:18-20). This raises three points.

1. Since Abraham is the father of the faithful (Galatians 3:6-9), his example of tithing is one we should follow.

2. Abraham lived four hundred years before the law was given. This tells us that tithing is one of those principles which, though later embodied in the law of Moses, is of a more enduring nature than the law (Genesis 4:4, Numbers 18:21).

3. Jesus later sanctions the tithe.

*"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices-- mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-- justice, mercy and faithfulness. **You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.***

Matthew 23:23

3. Should We Tithe on Everything We Receive?

Before we get down and divide the dill and cummin seeds (Matthew 23:23) making precisely sure we've given exactly 10%, let's look at the bigger picture.

- 1) Everything is God's.
- 2) He gives us all that we have.
- 3) Our tithe is a reminder of this, used to promote His mission on earth.