The Grace of Giving

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 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.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8
Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE ALSO.

MATTHEW 6:19-21
In 2 Corinthians 8:7, Paul said, “But just as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us – see that you also excel in this grace of giving.”

My prayer is every New Lifer would “EXCEL” in the grace of giving. God blesses us NOT to raise our standard of living but our standard of giving!

Our mission is to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. One of the primary ways we serve God is by cheerfully and consistently giving God our “firstfruits” (2 Corinthians 9:7; Proverbs 3:9). God expects us to give, not to meet some petty, required percentage, but by digging deep and sacrificing for the sake of the gospel because Jesus sacrificed for us and all that we have is His anyway.

People ask me questions all the time around the subject of giving and specifically tithing. Here are responses to some of those questions:

1. WHAT IS A TITHE?

Principle: The literal meaning of the word tithe is “a tenth” or 10%. A tithe is the firstfruit of your harvest. This is given to God through your home church in faith as a practical means to finance the mission of the church (Malachi 3:8-10, Matthew 23:23).

Practice: Jana and I have been tithing and giving to special offerings for almost 30 years. (It was easier when I worked at McDonald’s) We believe in the local church and that our tithes make a difference.

2. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TITHING & GIVING?

Principle: They are both found in Scripture. Giving is what we were born to do. Tithing is a very specific way we give. Tithing defines God’s beginning point in our giving as Christ followers. Tithing means 10% of your income given to God.
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**Practice:** Jana and I love giving. For almost 30 years we have practiced the discipline of tithing. Tithing is a floor for us, not a ceiling.

We are not paralyzed by meeting some petty, required percentage - we are driven to be good stewards of God’s resources. Recently we raised this to 20% of our income.

**3. HOW DO YOU TITHE?**

**Principle:** Find a systematic way to tithe. Some give weekly, while others give monthly. Find a systematic way. (1 Corinthians 16:2).

**Practice:** Jana and I have our giving automatically taken out of our check. We also use Pushpay to give to special offerings.

Some of the best ways to give are through the NL app, website or text. All of these will take you to a platform called Pushpay, a convenient and secure digital giving platform.

**4. WHAT KIND OF ATTITUDE SHOULD I HAVE WHEN I TITHE?**

**Principle:** The Bible says, “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7).

**Practice:** Most of the time Jana and I give cheerfully, but sometimes out of pure discipline. However we give, we do it because we love God and people. We also think giving is foundational to being a healthy human being (1 Corinthians 13:3).

**5. ISN’T TITHING JUST AN OLD TESTAMENT CONCEPT?**

**Principle:** Giving is a Biblical concept. Tithing is found in the Old Testament (Genesis 14:19-20; Malachi 3:10-12).

Generous and sacrificial giving is found in the New Testament (Acts 2:42-47, Acts 4:32-35). Tithing is not explicitly commanded in the New Testament, but the bar is raised by Christ and the apostles of the early church. Christians must give whenever there is a need to meet. Those who get lost in a percentage lose the whole point of giving.
Practice: Usually this question implies the New Testament requires less giving. The opposite is true. In the New Testament, they sold land and gave it to the church. The New Testament church went way beyond the tithe. This is why tithing is just a beginning point in our giving.

6. SHOULD I GIVE TO SPECIAL OFFERINGS?

Principle: Our first and foremost responsibility is to be cheerful and consistent givers. This is both a scriptural truth and a practical truth.

Practice: Here are the priorities of our giving: We tithe first and then to special offerings. You can’t outgive God.

7. IF I SEND KIDS TO CAMP OR AM NOT REIMBURSED FOR MINISTRY EXPENSES CAN I INCLUDE THAT AS PART OF MY TITHE?

Principle: No! The tithe belongs to the storehouse (Malachi 3:8-10).

Practice: Personally, I love paying a kid’s way to camp. It is worth every penny. This is why Jana and I push ourselves in giving beyond the tithe.

8. WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I CAN’T AFFORD TO TITHE? CAN I START WITH A SMALLER AMOUNT?

Principle: Start somewhere. The Biblical standard is to tithe. Honestly, you can’t afford NOT to tithe. If you wait until you can afford it, you will never start. Start today!

Practice: Jana and I ask this question every year: “Are you going backward or forward with your giving? Did we step up the generosity ladder?” “Does our giving reflect our passion for the local church?” No matter how much you give or don’t give right now, we should always be asking this question.
9.  I WANT TO TITHE BUT MY SPOUSE DOESN’T WANT TO, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

**Principle:** Very good question. Be on the same page with your spouse. Instead of pushing the “tithe” concept, agree on charitable giving. You will be surprised how open your spouse may be about giving if you frame it in the context that we should give back to this world.

**Practice:** My wife likes tithing.

10. IS TITHING JUST AN ADULT THING? WHEN SHOULD MY CHILDREN BEGIN TO TITHE?

**Principle:** It’s never too early to start teaching your kids to tithe (and save).

**Practice:** Since my girls were walking I have made sure they tithed 10% and saved 10%. I tried to get them to give me 10% but Jana wouldn’t let me go there.

11. DO I NEED TO TITHE ON A FINANCIAL GIFT? TAX RETURN? BONUSES?

**Principle:** If in doubt, give. Don’t be stingy with God!

**Practice:** Yes, on the financial gift and bonuses. I don’t tithe on my tax return because I already tithed on my gross. (Although, a tax return is a great opportunity to be a generous giver.)

12. CAN I TITHE THROUGH VOLUNTEERING MY TIME AND SAVING THE CHURCH STAFFING EXPENSES?

**Principle:** We need to learn to give our money and time. The answer is no.

**Practice:** Jana and I give our time and money.
13. IS IT OK FOR ME TO GET A TAX DEDUCTION FROM GIVING?

**Principle:** Yes, this is called wisdom.
**Practice:** We get a tax deduction for our giving.

14. IF I TITHE WILL GOD BLESS ME FINANCIALLY?

**Principle:** Yes! (Proverbs 11:24-25, Proverbs 3:9-10)

**Practice:** He has blessed Jana and me more than I can even put in words!

15. SHOULD I TITHE OFF OF MY GROSS INCOME OR NET (AFTER TAXES AND DEDUCTIONS)?

**Principle:** If in doubt, round up. The firstfruits principle would indicate gross. However, don’t get lost on this point. Tithing is the foundation, not a ceiling.

**Practice:** Jana and I tithe on our gross income.

16. CAN I GIVE MY TITHE ON A CREDIT CARD?

**Principle:** This scares me. Although in theory it is possible, you should never go in debt by tithe. Most people should not consider this option.

**Practice:** We don’t use our credit card to tithe.

17. IF I AM IN DEBT, SHOULD I GET OUT OF DEBT BEFORE I BEGIN TO TITHE?

**Principle:** No, begin to tithe first. I know this sounds strange, but God will open up heaven and begin to give you the wisdom to get out of debt.

**Practice:** Get out of debt. Depending on how far in debt you are, I would recommend you get help. Financial Peace University is a great place to start.
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Ways To Give

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