


The Communion of the Saints Part 14: Giving to the Church



Introduction

- **Genesis 1:29:** “Behold, I have given you every plant.” In first speaking to man, God says “I *give* you every tree for food.”
 - **John 3:16:** God the Father *gave* his only begotten son.
 - **Matthew 20:28:** “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”
 - **John 6:63 says:** “The Spirit gives life.”
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Introduction

- Jesus spoke much about money
 - 16 out of His 38 parables
 - 15% of everything He said


Introduction

- American evangelicals:
 - give 2.5% of their income
 - 22% give less than \$100 per year
 - 33% give less than \$500 per year

The Stewardship Principle

- There is a Difference Between Ownership and Stewardship
- **Psalm 24:1:** “The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.”
- **Psalm 50:10:** “For every beast of the forest is Mine, The cattle on a thousand hills.”
- **Haggai 2:8:** “The silver is mine and the gold is mine, declares the Lord Almighty.”

The Stewardship Principle

- **Ezekiel 18:4:** “Behold, all souls are Mine.”
 - **Deuteronomy 8:18:** “But you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth.”
 - **1 Corinthians 6:20:** “For you have been bought with a price.”
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The Stewardship Principle

- What we do with our money is really what we do with God's money
- God prospers you not to raise your standard of living, but to raise your standard of **giving**

The Stewardship Principle


- Paradigm Shift:
 - Not “Giving my offering to God” but “Giving **back** my offering to God”
- **Malachi 3:8:** Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings.

The Eternity Principle


- **Matthew 6:19:** “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.”
 - Earthly treasure will not last




The Eternity Principle

- Only heavenly treasure will last
 - **Matthew 6:20:** “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal.”
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The Eternity Principle

- **Philippians 3:20:** “Our citizenship is in heaven.”
 - When we give here on earth, we invest in the **eternal kingdom**
 - **Jim Elliot:** “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”
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The First Fruits Principle

- **Proverbs 3:9-10:** “Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the first of all your produce.”
 - **Deuteronomy 26:2:** “You shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place that the Lord your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there.”
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The First Fruits Principle

- The First Fruits: the first crops of the harvest
- The First Fruits Principle: the **first of everything** belongs to God

The First Fruits Principle

- The Gleanings: The Leftovers of the Harvest
 - i.e. Ruth



The First Fruits Principle

- God has legitimate claim to the **priority** of our lives
 - God wants the first fruits, not the gleanings = God wants the priority, not the leftovers
- With your money, before you think of anyone else, you should think of **God**

The Tithing Principle

- Tithe means **10%**
- Old Testament Law prescribed three tithes:
 - a regular tithe to support the work of the priesthood and the temple (Deut. 12:6)
 - a “festival tithe” for the production of the feasts (Deut. 12:17-19)
 - a “charity tithe,” given every third year to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow (Deut. 14:28-29).
- = 23.3% of total income

The Tithing Principle

- Tithing is not a New Testament Command, but there is a principle for us
- Argument against tithing:
 - tithing was a part of the Mosaic Law, and since we are not under the Mosaic Law, tithing does not apply to us
- But what if tithing goes beyond the Mosaic Law?

The Tithing Principle

- The principle of tithing **predates** the Law
- **Abraham tithed**
 - **Genesis 14:18-20, speaking of Abram:** “Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. **19** He blessed [Abram] and said, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; **20** And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.” He (Abram) gave him (Melchizedek) a tenth (a tithe) of all.”

The Tithing Principle

- The principle of tithing predates the Law
 - **Jacob tithed**
 - **Genesis 28:22:** “This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”

The Tithing Principle

- The principle of tithing **postdates** the Law
 - Jesus mentions the tithe
 - **Matthew 23:23:** “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.”

The Tithing Principle

- The principle of tithing postdates the Law
 - Paul mentions the tithe
 - **1 Corinthians 9:13-14:** “Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the *food* of the temple, *and* those who attend regularly to the altar have their **share** from the altar? **14** So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.”
 - Share = Old Testament tithe

The Tithing Principle

- **1 Corinthians 16:2:** “On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.”
- **Malachi 3:10:** “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse so that there may be food in My house.”
- Every example of New Testament giving in the church **exceeds** the tithe

The Tithing Principle

Piper says: “The best way that I know how to capture the spirit of the New Testament generosity is simply to say: the issue is not, How much must I give? but, How much dare I keep? Not: Shall I tithe? But: How much of the money that I hold in trust for Christ can I take for my private use? The financial issue in the church today is not tithing, but exorbitance of life-style. The question is not can I afford to tithe, but can I justify the life-style that consumes 90% of my income? And behind that is the question: Do I love to use God's money to spread justice and mercy and spiritual hope in the world, or do I prefer to embezzle his money to purchase more and more personal comfort?”

The Heart Principle

- The most important thing in your giving is your **heart**
- **2 Corinthians 9:7**: “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

The Heart Principle

- When the gospel transforms your heart, the gospel also transforms your **giving**
 - **Whitney:** “a powerful testimony to a transformed life is a transformed checkbook.”
 - **Spurgeon:** “I don’t think much of a conversion if it doesn’t touch a man’s purse.”
 - **Randy Alcorn:** “We’re most like God when we’re giving. Gaze upon Christ long enough, and you’ll become more of a giver. Give long enough, and you’ll become more like Christ.”

The Heart Principle

Matthew 6:21: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

The Heart Principle

2 Corinthians 9:6: “whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”

A commitment to giving can lead to tremendous spiritual growth

The Worship Principle


- **Giving is an act of worship**
- **Psalm 96:8:** “Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name, bring an offering, and come into his courts! Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.”

The Worship Principle

- **Matthew 6:24:** “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”
- You will either use your wealth to serve God or you will use God to serve your wealth

The Worship Principle

John Piper says: “The inner essence of worship is the treasuring of God as infinitely valuable above everything. Money and things are a big part of life, and therefore God intends them to be a big part of worship - since all of life is to be worship. So the way you worship with your money and your possessions is to get them and use them and lose them in a way that shows how much you treasure God - not money.”



The Worship Principle

2 Corinthians 8:9: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”