

WEDNESDAY — Biblical tithing, stewardship, and saving

Big Point: *Guilt and legalistic “obedience” toward giving that creates financial dependence is a dangerous trap—simply give generously, proportionately, and regularly.*

On page 11, see the Response Questions for Giving in order to complete the Commitment portion of the Missional Membership Process.

What is the difference between a house and a home? An empty house can look sterile and cold. However, that same home takes on an entirely new feel with the addition of furnishings, wall coverings and most of all, people that care about the house. When all of those elements are added to the empty space, well, that’s when a house morphs into a home.

While new homes are under construction, the waiting homeowners aren’t discouraged by the unpainted walls or uncovered floors. Neither will you hear a home owner say, “Yeah, when the home is done, I’m just gonna leave it like that.” Once the contractor turns over the keys, priority number one is moving in personal belongings in hopes of creating a space that can be lived in and shared with others. We’ve been using house construction as an analogy for the work that God wants to do in our lives. First, we turn our affections toward God, and the ultimate goal is to love Him with all of our heart. Then, a proper foundation must be laid in order for us to establish right attitudes (beliefs), for they lead to right behaviors—that’s learning to love God with all of our minds.

Now, we are looking at the transformation God is doing in our hearts and minds and we are challenged with the outward expression of what is taking place in our hearts, specifically how we view our money and our stuff as well as how we spend our time.

READ and THINK ... Find the Answers in the Bible

Biblical Tithing

1. What percentage is common to the following biblical stories of giving?

Leviticus 27:30, 32 (New Living Translation)

A tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain or fruit, belongs to the Lord and must be set apart to him as holy. ³²The Lord also owns every tenth animal counted off from your herds and flocks. They are set apart to him as holy.

Malachi 3:8-10 (New Living Translation)

“Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! But you ask, ‘What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?’ You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. ⁹You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me. ¹⁰Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do,” says the Lord Almighty, “I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won’t have enough room to take it in! Try it! Let me prove it to you!” (See also Genesis 14:18-20)

Answer:

Stewardship of Our Resources

2. In Luke 14:33, Jesus lays out for His followers the percentage of our worldly goods that belong to Him, and the worldly goods that are ours. What is your reaction to His teaching in this verse?

Luke 14:33 (New Living Translation)

So no one can become my disciple without giving up everything for me.

Answer:

3. What's the moral of the story Jesus summarized in Luke 16:10-12?

Luke 16:10-12 (New Living Translation)

“Unless you are faithful in small matters, you won’t be faithful in large ones. If you cheat even a little, you won’t be honest with greater responsibilities.¹¹ And if you are untrustworthy about worldly wealth, who will trust you with the true riches of heaven?¹² And if you are not faithful with other people’s money, why should you be trusted with money of your own?”

Answer:

Savings and Debt

1. Why is the ant a good model of proper money management according to Proverbs 6:6-11?

Proverbs 6:6-11 (New Living Translation)

Take a lesson from the ants, you lazybones. Learn from their ways and be wise!⁷ Even though they have no prince, governor, or ruler to make them work,⁸ they labor hard all summer, gathering food for the winter.⁹ But you, lazybones, how long will you sleep? When will you wake up? I want you to learn this lesson:¹⁰ A little extra sleep, a little more slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest—¹¹and poverty will pounce on you like a bandit; scarcity will attack you like an armed robber.

Answer:

2. What does the writer of Proverbs say about “get rich quick” schemes?

Proverbs 28:20 (New Living Translation)

The trustworthy will get a rich reward. But the person who wants to get rich will only get into trouble.

Answer:

PRAY...God, What do you want me to know & do?

Ask God to help you learn to give generously, proportionately, and regularly.

Mature Christians

Give:

Generously...*They know Christ has given all to them, and they know Christ owns all they have anyway.*

Proportionally...*They try to give as high a percentage of their income as possible, recognizing the tithe (10%) as a long-established benchmark which may well be exceeded as they prosper.*

Regularly...*As resources flow in, they offer their “first-fruits” back to God, honoring Him before any others.*