

SHOULD I TITHE TO THE CHURCH?

By Joe Keim

Introduction

Have you ever heard statements like these when the subject of money comes up in church?

- “Money, money, money. That’s all they ever talk about.”
- “Isn’t church supposed to be about spiritual things? What’s spiritual about money?”
- “I go to church to get away from people trying to get my money.”
- “I am a member in good standing. What more do they want from me?”

Have you ever been promised a great financial return if you gave money to a church or television ministry?

Perhaps you heard testimonies from people who supposedly became wealthy after “sowing a seed” into someone’s ministry. Maybe you were told that if you planted your seed into their “anointed ground,” God would return it to you one hundredfold.

Sadly, many people have been deeply hurt and disappointed by these promises.

There is no doubt that some churches, ministries, and television evangelists have become extremely wealthy through what is commonly called “seed faith” teaching. Some live in luxury and justify it by teaching that tithing guarantees financial prosperity.

However, when we compare many modern prosperity teachings with the lives of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, and the apostle Paul, we find a very different picture.

Now please understand, Christians should give. Giving is important, and not only financially. Believers should support their local church and ministries that faithfully preach the gospel and help others.

But there are two important questions we should ask:

1. What is my motive for giving?
2. Is what I am being taught truly biblical in its context?

Let us search the Scriptures carefully.

Read 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

Concerning the Collection

1. When was the church at Corinth instructed to set aside money for their gifts?
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2. According to Paul's words in verse 1, was this a: ☐ Command ☐ Suggestion

3. Whose example was the Corinthian church told to follow (v-1)?

4. Who was the offering being collected for? ☐ Believers OR ☐ Unbelievers

Note for Question 4: The collection Paul referred to was a special offering for poor believers in Jerusalem (Romans 15:26; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Acts 24:17).

Many believers there were suffering greatly, possibly because of persecution and hardship.

5. What did Paul mean when he said, "Let every one of you lay by him in store" (v-2)?

Note for Question 5: Paul was not telling people to store up money for long periods of time. He was encouraging regular weekly giving so there would be no need for emergency collections later.

6. How much did Paul ask people to give?

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

When you hear the phrase "cheerful giver," what comes to your mind?

Check all that apply:

- ☐ Happy ☐ Joyful ☐ Cheerful ☐ Smiling ☐ Excited ☐ Blessed ☐ Positive
- ☐ Wonderful ☐ Miserable ☐ Sad ☐ Depressed ☐ Gloomy

1. Finish these sentences from verse 6:

a. If I sow sparingly, I will reap _____

b. If I sow generously, I will reap _____

2. How should believers give according to verse 7?

3. What promise does God give to generous givers (v-8)?

Proverbs 11:24: *“There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.”*

4. Someone once said, “The attitude of your giving reflects your walk with God.”

How would you rate your attitude toward giving? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. What motivates you to give?

6. What kind of giver are you? ☐ Cheerful Giver ☐ Grudging Giver

7. What could help an unwilling giver become more cheerful in giving?

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

They Gave Even While in Poverty

Introduction: the churches throughout Judea were suffering great poverty and needed help badly. This is what this passage is about: meeting the desperate need of fellow believers and human beings who were being threatened with starvation and death, many of whom were without Christ and doomed to an eternity apart from Christ.

The need of missions is an unending call, a call that never ends. The desperate needs of the world must always confront man. Why? Because the world is sinful and corruptible, full of greed and covetousness, banking and hoarding. People who have more than they need should be helping and giving, serving and ministering. Instead, they are banking and hoarding. The result is a world reeling in desperate need. The challenge to the church is clear! Give —give all you are and have to reach and help the desperate of the world.

1. According to verse 2, what else were the Macedonian believers suffering besides affliction?

2. Even though they were poor, Paul was impressed by three things they did (v-3-5). What were they?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

3. How have your views on giving changed over the years?

4. How can the example of the Macedonian church challenge people who have little money?

5. What keeps people from giving generously to the Lord's work?

To Whom Should Christians Give?

The Bible gives several important principles about giving.

1. Give to the Church

The church is Christ's body and God's institution for spreading the gospel in the world. Believers should help support:

- pastors,
- teachers,
- missionaries,
- and church ministries.

Key Scriptures

- 1 Timothy 5:17-18
- 1 Corinthians 9:1-14
- Philippians 4:15-19

2. Give to Needy Believers

The Bible shows special concern for:

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| • widows, | • the sick, | • and those suffering |
| • orphans, | • the poor, | hardship. |
| • the hungry, | | |

Christians are especially responsible to care for fellow believers.

Key Scriptures

- James 1:27
- Romans 12:13
- Matthew 25:34-40

3. Give to the Needy in General

God also commands believers to help the poor and needy outside the church.

Key Scripture

- Deuteronomy 15:11

4. Give Even to Your Enemies

One of the clearest marks of Christian love is generosity toward those who mistreat us.

Key Scriptures

- Luke 10:30-37
- Romans 12:20

5. Give for the Kingdom of God

Believers should prayerfully and creatively support the work of God wherever they see genuine need and faithful ministry.

Key Scripture

- Matthew 6:33

Final Thoughts

Giving should never be based on guilt, manipulation, greed, or promises of earthly riches.

Biblical giving flows from:

- love for God,
- compassion for people,
- gratitude,
- faith,
- and cheerful obedience.

God is not looking merely at the amount we give. He looks at the heart behind the giving.

2 Corinthians 9:7: “God loveth a cheerful giver.”

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