

Giving to God

I. The commandments to give to God

1. God commands us to give a portion of our increase (income) to Him (**Pro 3:9**).
2. This is a sacrifice which is well pleasing to God (**Heb 13:16**).
3. Communicate *v.* - 1. *trans.* To give to another as a partaker; to give a share of
4. Since we can't give anything tangible to God because He is a spirit in heaven, we give to him by giving to others.
 - A. When we do something for others such as providing them with food, clothing, shelter, or comfort and support, we are doing it for Jesus Christ (**Mat 25:35-40**).
 - B. When we give to the poor, we are lending to God and He will repay it (**Pro 19:17**).
 - C. On the other hand, God will judge us for not giving to the poor (**Pro 28:27**).
5. Giving to your minister
 - A. Christians are required to support their pastor financially.
 - B. God has ordained that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel (**1Co 9:14**).
 - i. The general rule is that a pastor should not have to work an additional job because he should *live of the gospel*.
 - ii. The workman is worthy of his meat (**Mat 10:10**).
 - iii. This fact should be self-evident based on observation and reasoning from other areas of life.
 - a. It would be unheard of for a soldier to go to war for his country and be expected to pay his own way (**1Co 9:7**).
 - b. It would be unreasonable to expect a man to plant a vineyard and not eat of the fruit of it (**1Co 9:7**).
 - c. It would be abnormal to expect a man to feed a flock and not eat of the milk of the flock (**1Co 9:7**).
 - iv. Human reasoning would lead one to this conclusion, but so does the law of God (**1Co 9:8-10**).
 - v. If I have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if I reap your carnal things? (**1Co 9:11**)
 - vi. The priests and Levites lived of the things of the temple and the altar (**1Co 9:13**).
 - a. The pastor of a New Testament church should do precisely likewise (**1Co 9:14**).
 - b. Even *adv.* - Exactly, precisely, 'just'. Now chiefly *arch.* after Bible use, and suggesting some notion of 9. a. of manner; often followed by *as, thus, so*.
 - vii. Sometimes a minister must work outside the ministry like Paul did on occasion (**Act 18:3; Act 20:34; 1Co 4:12; 1Th 2:9; 2Th 3:8**).
 - a. This should be the exception, not the rule.
 - b. Paul didn't take any money from the Corinthian church (**1Co 9:12,15; 2Co 11:7-9**).
 - c. He later regretted it (**2Co 12:13**).
 - C. Elders that rule well should be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine (**1Ti 5:17**).
 - i. Paul backs up this fact by the law of Moses (**1Ti 5:18 c/w Deu 25:4**).

- ii. He also proves it with a quote from Jesus Christ in the NT (**1Ti 5:18 c/w Luk 10:7**).
- iii. I labor in the word and doctrine. I will let you determine if I rule well.
- D. Those who are taught in the word (church members) are to give a share of their income to him that teaches them (the pastor) (**Gal 6:6**).
- E. Communicate v. - 1. *trans.* To give to another as a partaker; to give a share of
- F. Paul praised the church at Philippi because they were the only church that gave in support of his ministry (**Phi 4:14-15**).
 - i. They did it multiple times (**Phi 4:16**).
 - ii. Paul's real desire was not to get money from them, but to see fruit abound to their account (**Phi 4:17**).
 - iii. In other words he wanted to see them maintaining good works which proved their faith (**Jam 2:17**).
 - iv. I desire the same thing for you all.

II. The benefits of giving

1. It is a blessing to give (**Act 20:35; Pro 13:7**).
2. Human reasoning would conclude that giving to the poor or to the ministry would be a net drain on one's finances.
3. The opposite is true - it is a net *gain* to give to the Lord.
 - A. When we give to the Lord of our substance and the *firstfruits* of *all* our increase, God will fill us with plenty to the point of overflowing (**Pro 3:9-10**).
 - i. We are to give of our **FIRST**fruits, not leftovers after we have covered the rest of our expenses and desires.
 - ii. Firstfruit - 1. The fruits first gathered in a season; the earliest products of the soil; esp. with reference to the custom of making offerings of these to God
 - iii. In the law, the firstfruits were a tithe (**2Ch 31:5**).
 - iv. Israel was to give the firstfruits of all they sacrificed to God to the priest (**Deu 18:3-4**).
 - v. The priest was not to get whatever was left over that the people didn't want or need (**Mal 1:8; 2Sa 24:24**).
 - vi. The widow woman was told to give the prophet Elijah *first* even though she had next to nothing, and she was promised that she would not lack (**1Ki 17:13-14**).
 - vii. We are to give the firstfruits of **ALL** our increase, not only the increase that is left after the government and our creditors get their share.
 - viii. How much faith does it take to give to God what you have left over at the end of the month? **NONE!**
 - ix. Don't simply give the pastor your spare change if you happen to have any that day.
 - B. When we do this, God promises that our barns will be filled with plenty (**Pro 3:10**).
 - i. I have personally witnessed this in my own life over and over again.
 - ii. I have seen this happen in the lives of other Christians too.
 - iii. When we give of our firstfruits, God will bless us with plenty (**2Ch 31:10**).
 - iv. When we give to the poor, God repays us (**Pro 19:17**).
 - v. When we give, men will give to us good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over (**Luk 6:38**).

- vi. You reap what you sow (**Gal 6:6-7**).
 - vii. If we sow bountifully we will reap bountifully (**2Co 9:6**).
 - viii. When we scatter, we increase (**Pro 11:24**).
 - ix. Those who give liberally shall be blessed (**Pro 11:25**).
 - x. If we seek God first, all of our material needs will be met (**Mat 6:33**).
 - xi. The problem most people have when it comes to giving to the Lord is that they simply don't believe that God will honor His word and bless them with plenty when they do so. It's simply a lack of faith on their part.
- C. We shouldn't be giving because we expect to be blessed and repaid by God though.
 - D. We should be giving because it's what God commands and it's the right thing to do; and if we are blessed for it, then that's just an added benefit.

III. The judgments that come from not giving

1. If we give to the poor, God will ensure that we don't lack, but if we pretend we don't see the poor in need, we will be cursed (**Pro 28:27**).
2. People who withhold more than they should tend to poverty (**Pro 11:24**).
3. When we fail to give to God, we are robbing Him (**Mal 3:8**).
 - A. When people rob God, they are cursed for it (**Mal 3:9**)
 - B. If you don't want to be cursed by God, bring your tithes and offerings to Him (**Mal 3:10**).
 - C. When we give unto God what He deserves, He will bless us for it abundantly (**Mal 3:10**).
 - D. I have seen this very thing happen to Christians.
 - E. Don't believe me? Prove Him and see (**Mal 3:10**).
 - F. If we give to God, He will not allow our fruits (jobs, wages, etc.) be devoured and destroyed (**Mal 3:11**).
 - G. I've seen evidence of this in the lives of Christians.
4. In the days of the rebuilding of the temple after the Babylonian captivity, the prophet Haggai had to rebuke Israel for taking care of themselves and not taking care of God.
 - A. They were dwelling in cieled houses while God's house lied waste (**Hag 1:4**).
 - i. Cieled *adj.* - Having the interior (roof or walls) overlaid or lined with wood, etc.; wainscoted.
 - ii. In other words, they were making sure they were living comfortably and not giving to the Lord and His house.
 - B. God's response to this selfish sinfulness was: "Consider your ways." (**Hag 1:5**).
 - C. Consider *v.* - 1. To view or contemplate attentively, to survey, examine, inspect, scrutinize.
 - D. God is more concerned about His house than ours (**Psa 87:2**).
 - E. Because of their slackness toward God, they were suffering financially (**Hag 1:6**).
 - i. They worked hard, but brought in little. Ever do that?
 - ii. They never seemed to have sufficient for their needs. Been there?
 - iii. They tried to save money, but it just seemed like they could never get ahead. Sound familiar?
 - F. God's response to their plight? - "Consider your ways." (**Hag 1:7**).
 - G. God's remedy to their problems? Take care of the house of God first instead of yourselves (**Hag 1:8**).

- H. Why could they not seem to get ahead? Why were these things happening to them?
Because God was foiling their efforts (**Hag 1:9**).
- i. Because they were blowing their money on themselves instead of giving to God -- God blew their money.
 - ii. Why? Because His house was neglected and lied waste and they were building their own houses.
 - iii. Therefore God called for a drought upon the land, crops, animals, men, and their labor (**Hag 1:10-11**).
5. This is not only an OT principle, but a NT principle as well.
- A. If we sow sparingly, we will reap sparingly (**2Co 9:6**).
 - i. Sparingly *adv.* - 1. In a sparing or saving manner; frugally, economically.
 - ii. You can be frugal with yourself, but not with God.
 - iii. Bountifully *adv.* - In a bountiful manner; with generous liberality, munificently, plentifully, amply.
 - B. God is not mocked - if you sow little to him who teaches you the word (your pastor), you will reap little (**Gal 6:6-7**).

IV. How should we give?

1. Every man should give according to what he purposes in his heart (**2Co 9:7**).
 - A. Purpose *v.* - To place before oneself as a thing to be done or attained; to form a purpose of doing (something); to design or resolve upon the performance of.
 - B. According *adv.* - According *as*: Consistently as, exactly or just as, in a manner corresponding to the way in which...
 - C. Therefore *every man* should *purpose* (design and resolve to do) to give an amount of money to the Lord and he should give *according* (in a manner exactly and just as) to what he has purposed to give.
 - D. This means no willy-nilly giving.
 - E. This means if you are on a steady income (salary, etc), the amount you give should always be the same.
2. We should not give *grudgingly* or of *necessity* (**2Co 9:7**).
 - A. Grudgingly *adv.* - In a grudging manner; unwillingly, reluctantly; with stint or reluctance.
 - B. Necessity - II. 9. a. What is necessarily required; necessities.
 - C. In other words we should not give unwillingly or reluctantly because we feel like we *have to* give, but we should give *willingly* (**2Co 8:1-5; Deu 15:7-11; 1Ch 29:6,9,14,17**).
 - D. We should give *cheerfully* because God loves a *cheerful* giver (**2Co 9:7**).
 - E. Cheerful *adj.* - 1. Full of cheer; of good cheer; joyous, gladsome, blithe, lively and in good spirits. a. of persons, their disposition, looks, etc.
3. We should lay by ourselves in store each week as God has prospered us (**1Co 16:1-2**).
 - A. We should set aside a percentage of each paycheck, that we have previously purposed in our hearts, each time we get paid.
 - B. That percentage should be laid back in store (saved) and then we should give to the Lord (to people in need and to the ministry) out of that fund.
 - C. The first thing we should do when we get paid is take God's percentage off of the top before we pay any bills, buy anything, or put it in savings.

- D. We should give proportionally *as God has prospered us* -- so when we get a raise, we should increase our giving according to it.
- E. Is that what you do?

V. How much should we give?

1. OT examples and principles.

A. Prior to the law of Moses, Abraham gave tithes of all to Melchizedek (**Gen 14:18-20; Heb 7:2,4**).

- i. Tithe *n.* - 1. The tenth part of the annual produce of agriculture, etc., being a due or payment (orig. in kind) for the support of the priesthood, religious establishments, etc.; spec. applied to that ordained by the Mosaic law, and to that introduced in conformity therewith in England and other Christian lands. (The latter sense appears first in quotes.) Also, in recent use, in certain religious denominations: a tenth part of an individual's income which is pledged to the church.
- ii. Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine and blessed a child of God (**Gen 14:18-19**). Sound familiar?
- iii. Jesus is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek (**Heb 5:5-6; Heb 6:20**).
- iv. If a tithe was sufficient for Melchizedek, would anything less be sufficient for Jesus Christ which is our high priest after the order of Melchizedek?
- v. We are supposed to walk in the steps of faithful Abraham (**Rom 4:12**).
- vi. Why would a Christian think that he should give less to the Lord than did Abraham?
- vii. If you want to be blessed like Abraham, you need to do what Abraham did.
- viii. Abraham's tithe was a pattern that was followed in later generations and was codified in the law of Moses (**Heb 7:5**).

B. Jacob, also prior to the law of Moses, promised God a tithe (tenth) (**Gen 28:22**).

- i. Jacob had just setup a pillar which he said "shall be God's house".
- ii. In connection with the house of God being built, Jacob *purposed in his heart* (**2Co 9:7**) that he would give God a tenth of ALL that God would give him.
- iii. The NT church is "the house of God...the pillar and ground of the truth" (**1Ti 3:16**).
- iv. If a Christian is blessed to be a part of the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth, why would he purpose in his heart to give less than did Jacob?

C. Tithes were later instituted in the law of Moses.

- i. Israel was to give a tithe (tenth) of all for the support of the Levites (**Num 18:21**).
- ii. There was also another tithe Israel was required to give each year (**Deu 14:22-27**).
- iii. In addition to those two tithes, there was a third tithe that was to be given every three years for the Levites, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widows (**Deu 14:28-29**).
- iv. That was a total of 23% per year that Israel was to give to the Lord.

2. How much should we give as NT Christians?

A. There is no express commandment of how much we should give to the Lord in the NT.

- B. The law of Moses has been abolished (**2Co 3:7; Gal 3:19**), so we are not mandated to give 23% of our income to the Lord.
- C. The pattern set by Abraham (the model of faith) and by Jacob, both of which predated the law of Moses, was a tithe (10%) of one's income.
 - i. Abraham gave 10% to the high priest Melchizedek who was a type or forerunner of Jesus Christ our high priest.
 - ii. Jacob promised to give God 10% after the house of God was built.
- D. What would be the rationale for a Christian to purpose to give less than the patriarchs?
 - i. We have been blessed far in excess of what they were (**Mat 13:17; Joh 8:56**).
 - ii. To whom much is given much is required (**Luk 12:48**).
 - iii. Why would a Christian conclude that NT Christians who are blessed far more abundantly by God than were Abraham and Jacob should give LESS than they did?
 - iv. Since God doesn't specify a tithe in the NT, why would a Christian assume that *less* is required under the NT, under which we have been blessed with more?
 - v. Why would a Christian not assume that, if anything, *more* is required?
 - vi. Why would God not specifying an amount in the NT mean that He requires less?
- E. There is an amount which is too low.
 - i. Zero is too low; there is no excuse for giving nothing, no matter how poor you are (**Luk 21:1-4**).
 - ii. Reasonable people would also conclude that there is an amount which is greater than zero which is still too little.
 - a. Example: What reasonable Christian would disagree that a person who makes \$100,000 per year and has purposed in his heart to give the Lord \$1 per year has purposed too little?
 - b. There is therefore a non-zero amount that is too little.
 - c. Since there is a non-zero amount that is too little, how should a Christian determine what that amount is?
 - d. If there is an amount that is too little, and every example of giving in the scripture is at least 10%, then if a Christian is trying to decide how much to purpose in his heart, would he not be safe to purpose at least as much as the minimum which God required throughout all periods prior to the NT?
 - e. Given the scriptural pattern, the onus to justify his action would be on the Christian who has purposed to give less than 10%.
- F. Challenge: If you have purposed in your heart to give less than 10%, then justify to yourself with the scripture and reason (not from your discretionary income) the amount you have purposed.
- G. I personally cannot think of anything in scripture to justify me giving less than 10%.

3. Here is a table that shows the percentage amount that would be given monthly for a given yearly salary.

Yearly Salary	1% (monthly)	2% (monthly)	5% (monthly)	10% (monthly)
\$10,000	\$8.33	\$16.67	\$41.67	\$83.33
\$20,000	\$16.67	\$33.33	\$83.33	\$166.67
\$30,000	\$25.00	\$50.00	\$125.00	\$250.00
\$40,000	\$33.33	\$66.67	\$166.67	\$333.33

\$50,000	\$41.67	\$83.33	\$208.33	\$416.67
\$60,000	\$50.00	\$100.00	\$250.00	\$500.00
\$70,000	\$58.33	\$116.67	\$291.67	\$583.33
\$80,000	\$66.67	\$133.33	\$333.33	\$666.67
\$90,000	\$75.00	\$150.00	\$375.00	\$750.00
\$100,000	\$83.33	\$166.67	\$416.67	\$833.33

4. If those figures look high, "consider your ways".

VI. Objections/excuses you *may* have:

1. The pastor lives frugally, therefore I don't need to give much.
2. The pastor is single without a family, therefore I don't need to give much.
3. The pastor doesn't have any debt, therefore I don't need to give much.
4. The pastor made a good living and saved money before he went into the ministry, therefore I don't need to give much.
5. The pastor has a second job and works a total of more than 60 hours per week just to get by, therefore I don't need to give much.
6. This is a small church, therefore I don't need to give much.
7. If you have entertained any of these ideas, then I have three words for you: "Consider your ways." (**Hag 1:5,7**).
8. Would you work for an employer under the same conditions that pastors too often do? Would you take a job where:
 - A. You were paid when the owner remembered to do so?
 - B. You were paid with whatever was left over after everything else was taken care of?
 - C. You were paid less if it appeared you needed less?

VII. A call to action

1. If you have been giving to God what you should, then change nothing.
2. If you have not been giving to God as much as you should, as regularly as you should, or not at all, then you need to make changes.
3. Don't walk out of here feeling convicted about your sin and then do nothing about it.
4. Go home and review your budget (or make one) and purpose in your heart that you WILL take a certain and definite percentage of each paycheck OFF THE TOP (the firstfruits) (before you pay any bills) and put it into a separate account or shoebox for the Lord.
5. Make it automatic if you can by using automatic transactions in your bank account.
6. Give to godly purposes from that account or shoebox (your pastor, church fund, the poor, etc.).
7. If you are not able to give a percentage of your income that accords with what the scripture says you should because you are not living within your means, then begin by purposing to give SOMETHING (even if it's small) each paycheck, and then work on ways to live within your means.
8. You may have to cut out vacations, going out to eat, pleasure and leisure activities, car payments, or even house payments to get your budget under control so that you can give to God what you should.
9. As you get your budget under control, then steadily increase the percentage that you take off of the top for God until you are at the level that it should be.
10. When you do this, don't be surprised when God pours out a blessing to you.
11. If you don't do this, I fear for you, and you should too.

12. If you think I am an hireling who is greedy of filthy lucre and I have preached this sermon for my own financial gain, then still do what I have told you to do, but give nothing to me out of your Lord's money and instead give it to the church, the poor, or other ministers.
13. If you think that I left the career that I did and came here for the money, you are certifiably insane.
14. I seek not yours, but you and I will gladly spend and be spent for you (**2Co 12:14-15**).

VIII. Conclusion

1. What I have done is what Nehemiah and Hezekiah did by admonishing you (**Neh 13:10-11; 2Ch 31:4**).
2. Now you need to do what Israel did (**Neh 13:12; 2Ch 31:5**).