

surrendering to God – Part 1

surrendering your Finances

The recent economic crisis is an example of the instability of finances throughout the world. Instead of placing their trust in the Lord who promised to meet all of their needs, most Christians trust in their investments, savings, and retirement plans to ensure security and happiness-only to find their hopes dashed when financial institutions collapse. Many are wasting their lives trying to achieve financial security in a volatile world.



Our heavenly Father, on the other hand, wants us to enjoy a full, abundant life free from the cares and stresses brought by confidence in money and other material possessions. Rather than trusting in a worldly system that cannot assure our welfare or relying on our own weak capabilities to provide for our needs, He calls us to depend entirely on Him.

Some thoughts...

- Is money challenging for youth today?
- Read Isaiah 48:17-19. What blessings would you lose by going your own way and failing to recognize God's ownership?
- How much of your finances are you willing for God to control? How much of it does He control?
- What do you think God will do with your life if you surrender it all to Him?

Stewardship

When God entrusts us with His blessings, He gives us "stewardship" over them. A young boy put it well when he responded to a question on the meaning of stewardship. "It means that life is like a ship loaded with a cargo of many things on its way to many people in many places," he said. "God is the owner, but I am the captain of the ship, and He holds me responsible for the distribution."

In the New Testament, two different words describe a steward.

One emphasizes guardianship over children and the administration of a master's household. The other stresses the role of a manager over property. In either case, **a steward oversees the affairs and property of another person.**

God is the owner of all that we possess and the total source of all of our supply. He has placed us in stewardship over these treasures. This principle applies not only to our financial resources, but to all that we possess-including our time and talents-and to all that we are.

One cannot overemphasize the importance of this truth. Stewardship over all that God entrusts to us in life is foundational to giving. He has put into our hands the administration of a portion of all that He owns. As our Master, He holds us accountable for how well we manage what He has entrusted to our care (Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 14:12).

Giving by faith is meant by God to be an exciting privilege. When you honour and praise God through your commitment and obedience to stewardship, He showers you with joy. He turns your giving into a thrilling adventure in Christian living.

Money-The Old Testament Standard

1. What did God command those under the Law of Moses to do (Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 3:8-10)?

Set aside a tithe and bring it to the storehouse

2. What would you say the "storehouse" is (Deuteronomy 12:5,6,11) ?

A place where God's name is proclaimed

3. How much is a tithe (Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:2)? *A tenth, ten percent*

Money-The New Testament Standard

As believers in Christ, we are under grace, rather than the Old Testament Law. Whereas the Law in itself did not provide eternal life for those who attempted to keep it (Galatians 2: 16), we have received life by the favour of God though we do not deserve it and could not possibly earn it.

4. Do we have a higher or lower motivation and standard for stewardship of our possessions than those under the Law?

A higher motivation

5. How did Jesus regard a person's responsibility in that area (Matthew 23:23)?

It should be practiced

Read 2 Corinthians 8-9.

In this passage, Paul attempts to encourage the Corinthian church to give financially to help needy Christians. He first points them to the example of the Macedonian church .

6. What was the attitude of the Macedonians in giving their money to God (2 Corinthians 8:2-5)?

Overflowing Joy and rich generosity

- a. In light of this, what do you think God is interested in? *Out attitude in giving*
- b. Nevertheless, why is giving money an important part of our Christian life (2 Corinthians 8:7; 9:12,13)?

It supplies needs, shows our thanks to God, is a gracious act

- c. In what sense does the one who "sows" (gives) sparingly reap sparingly (2 Corinthians 9:6)?

Lack of joy, love and adventure, doesn't see God's work through himself

- d. What kind of attitude does God want you to have in giving (2 Corinthians 9:7)?

Cheerfulness

- e. When is it hard for you to give that way?

Tithe

The word tithe comes from a Greek term simply meaning the tenth. Godly principles underlay this practice. Tithing accomplishes the following:

- Acknowledges God as the source and owner of all that we possess
- Is a voluntary act of worship
- Teaches us to put God first
- Is a practical guideline for systematic giving
- Provides spiritual release and blessing

Tithing performs a role entirely different from that of mere giving, which suggests that we own all that we possess. Through tithing we acknowledge that God created our increase. As stewards of what God entrusted to us, we set aside a proportion to use for the cause of Christ. We never consider any part of our possessions to be our exclusive property but prayerfully tithe on the entire amount

"The purpose of tithing," we have learned, "is to teach you always to put God first in your lives" (Deuteronomy 14:23, TLB). God does not honor a gift that comes from leftovers. He requires the first and the best of our increase (Exodus 22:29,30; Proverbs 3:9,10). Tithing ensures this.

Ten percent, an Old Testament measure for giving, is a good beginning point for a faithful and dedicated steward. Measuring their giving by the grace of the cross and not by the legalism of the Law, the early Christians did not limit themselves to the tithe. They gave much more. And they gave in the Spirit of Christ, as a demonstration of His authority in their lives.