

# C. God and Money

Most people are surprised when they discover one of the most talked about subjects in the Bible, and in the teachings of Jesus, is money. The way we earn it, the way we spend it, and what we give to God, were all issues of great concern to Jesus and the other Bible writers.

## Why?

There is no other aspect of our behavior that says more about our goals and values in life than how we acquire, use, and manage our monies (Matthew 6:19-21). It is easy to say that God is Lord of our lives, but for many, that never becomes completely true until they allow Him to be Lord of their finances.

There are three terms found in the Bible that summarize the Bible's teachings on money: Stewardship, Tithes, and Offerings.

## What Is Stewardship?

A "steward" is one who manages the property or financial affairs of another. Stewardship refers to the responsibility each of us has to manage our resources in a manner consistent with God's will and purposes.

The Bible teaches that every one of us is viewed by God as "stewards" over the resources which He has entrusted to us (1 Corinthians 4:1). This applies to our time, energy, money, and other material assets. Everything we own does not actually belong to us but to God (Psalm 24:1; 1 Chronicles 29:10-13). As stewards we are responsible to use and invest our resources wisely, for the sake of His kingdom (Luke 16:1-3).

## What Is Tithing?

The tithe is a specific way in which man can acknowledge God has ownership of all things. It is a biblical concept first introduced in Genesis, the first book of the Bible. In its earliest usage, it literally meant "the top of the heap." It refers to giving to God the best we have, right off the top of the pile; rather than what is left over after we meet all our other obligations (Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:5-9).

Over time, as commerce and culture became more sophisticated, the tithe was identified as being a certain percentage of one's income. Ten percent (10%) was to be regularly set aside and given to the priests for the service and maintenance of the Temple and the Priesthood.

Under the Old Testament Mosaic Law, the tithe was given as a matter of necessity. It was the law (Ezekiel 44:30; Malachi 3:8).

In the New Testament, giving is generally viewed as an act of our free will, motivated by a desire to honor God and to invest in the furtherance of His kingdom work in the world (Matthew 6:19, 20).

Today, many Christians customarily give 10% of their monthly income as a way to honor and worship God. They take to heart the challenges found in the Bible to believe God's promises to reward and abundantly bless those who give in faith (Malachi 3:10; Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7). Such people are the ones who primarily support churches and their outreaches.

## **What Is An Offering?**

An "offering" represents a special financial gift, above and beyond the tithe. It is usually given in response to a special need or request. It is an expression of concern, grace, and love for others and God's work.

## **Who Pays The Bills?**

Many people have no idea how churches are funded. Some believe churches receive money from the government or some giant institution. The fact is, churches are funded solely through the financial gifts of their members. Consequently, a church's facilities, staffing, and ministries are all directly linked to its members' willingness to financially support them. It is a direct expression of our faith in God and our desire to see His message of salvation extended to others.