

# God's Financial System

How we handle money reveals a lot about our passions, priorities and loyalties.

**BIG IDEA As Christ followers, God, and His purposes are to be our first priority when it comes to our money and possessions!**

**But why? Because God Owns it All**

Our money and possessions are ours in the sense that we are responsible for managing them on behalf of the Creator and Owner of all things!

**We're just managing or stewarding God's possessions.**

When you think about it, the idea that God owns everything makes perfect sense. After all, God created us, and the earth that we inhabit.

*Psalm 24:1 The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.*

**We have no right to exist outside of His sovereignty.**

**The truth is, God owns everything in this world.** We may think that our stuff belongs to us, but God says clearly in His Word - it really belongs to Him.

*Psalm 50:10-11 Every wild animal of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and the creatures that move in the field are Mine.*

*Psalm 50* was written in a time when the economy was based on agriculture, and livestock that were considered units of wealth.

When God talks about owning livestock, He's declaring that He is the Creator and Owner of all of the wealth in the world.

This is why if you are a follower of God, meaning you have surrendered your life to Him and have decided to live your life to fully please Him, then...

**God, and His purposes are to be your first priority when it comes to your money and possessions!**

God has entrusted us with a stewardship as managers of His property.

## God's Financial System

The financial system of '**Tithes and Offerings**' was initiated and given by God to His people in the Old Testament and it was continued into the New Testament.

**What is the difference between a 'tithe' and an 'offering'?**

**Tithe: Greek** (dekate) - a tenth part of anything. **Hebrew** (ma`aser) - a tenth part.

The practice of tithing (percentage giving) is the benchmark for Christian giving in God's financial system. *Malachi 3:8-11 "Bring your whole **tithe** into the storehouse..."*

The '**Principal of the First.**'

*Exodus 23:19 The first of the first fruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God.*

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***Proverbs 3:9 Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase.***

Tithing is simply giving back to God what is already His! 100% belongs to God. He gives us 90% to use, but asks us to give Him the first 10% of our income.

All God's people give equally through tithing or percentage giving - one tenth. The rich do not give more. The poor do not give less. **All give equally, even though the amount can be different.**

**When we give to God the first tenth, we are acknowledging God as the 'owner' of all things and we are His stewards.**

## **Freewill Offerings**

The Bible reveals that offerings are '**over and above**' the Lord's tithes and are directed towards the needy (widows, orphans, poor, foreigners, and to the Levites (or temple [church] workers).

The Tabernacle and Temple of Solomon were built out of the freewill offerings of the people. So great was their generosity, they had to be stopped from giving!

*1 Chronicles 29:9 "The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord."*

*Exodus 36:6 "Then Moses gave an order and they sent this word throughout the camp: "No man or woman is to make anything else as an offering for the sanctuary." And so the people were restrained from bringing more, because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work."*

**The following three areas are a general Biblical guide where to give.**

### **1. Local Church (the Lord's tithe)**

Every local church is to be self-supporting in carrying out the ministry of Jesus.

*Malachi 3:8-11 "Bring your whole tithe into the storehouse ... Test Me in this, says the Lord, and see if I will not throw open floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have enough room for it!"*

The 'storehouse' was a place in the Temple for storing grain and other food given as tithes - 'first fruit.'

The Levite Priests lived off these 'first fruit gifts' to support them in their serving God by ministering to the spiritual needs of God's people.

**The following two areas are allocated for 'freewill offerings' - over and above the 'tithe'!**

### **2. World-wide Missions, other Ministries, and for the Temple – church buildings (sacrificial offerings)**

The Church in Philippi is a biblical model of a church supporting and partnering with the apostolic ministry (Paul) in spreading the Gospel to the nations.

This is clearly seen throughout the affectionate letter that Paul wrote to the Philippi Church.

Adelaide Christian Centre has always supported the apostolic ministry in reaching the nations through world missions and Christian education.

We as a church tithe (10%) on the tithes and other income received and we are allocating this tithe-of-a-tithe to our World Missions monthly support including Christian education overseas.

### **3. The Needy** (widows, orphans, poor inc extended family, foreigners)

**Freewill offerings should be taken up for the care and support of widows, orphans and those in need.**

In many cultural settings it is expected those who are earning an income are to help support less fortunate family members. **Which in my opinion falls within this category of a “free -will offering to the needy”.**

However, it is important for those who are giving to seek the Lord in how and what they are to give and not feel under compulsion.

*Proverbs 19:17 NLT If you help the poor, you are lending to the Lord and He will repay you.*

*Proverbs 28:27 NLT Whoever gives to the poor will lack nothing. But a curse will come upon those who close their eyes to poverty.*

*James 1:27 NLT Pure and lasting religion in the sight of God our Father means that we must care for orphans and widows in their troubles, and refuse to let the world corrupt us.*

**As a church, we have set up a ministry called Adelaide City Care.** This vital ministry has been set up to help fund those who are in need and in particular those who are foreigners to our region.

**Giving is simply a natural expression of our faith, gratitude and obedience to Christ and the Scriptures.**

**Let our giving be generous, sacrificially and joyful.**