

Our Giving is an Act of Worship

by **Ron Kelley**, Lifeway.com

Perhaps the most powerful text in the Old Testament concerning giving can be found in Malachi 3:8-10, where God accused the Israelites of robbing Him. God's chosen people questioned this claim and asked, "How do we rob You?" God's response was, "By not making the payments of the tenth and the contributions." God then went on to make a powerful challenge: "Test Me in this way. ... See if I will not open the floodgates of heaven and pour out a blessing for you without measure" (v.10). That is a powerful promise from our gracious, giving God!



When it comes to the New Testament, the actual word tithe is no longer mentioned, so does this mean the strong message of giving to God in the Old Testament is no more? Nothing could be further from the truth! In light of what Christ has done for us on the cross and the amazing grace we receive, our giving should be a reflection of what our heart treasures.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21). Our giving should be viewed as a part of our worship to the Lord. If we are just giving to mark off a line on our spiritual checklist, we are merely involved in charity and we are missing out on the great joy of being a cheerful giver. This idea of our giving being a part of our worship is expanded upon in 2 Corinthians 8-9 as the apostle Paul makes the following points.

1. Those who follow Jesus should excel in the grace of giving.
2. Giving is an expression of the love one has for Jesus.
3. God loves willing and cheerful givers.
4. A willingness to be generous in giving is more important than the amount given.
5. Our giving will result in praise and thanksgiving to God.
6. Our giving should be a natural response to God's gracious gift to mankind.

In light of what Christ has done for us, why would we not want to give Him our best? I am blessed to be able to speak to many groups on the subject of biblically based giving. It has been my experience that once people hear this lesson, they respond in one of three ways.

The first response is **understanding** — their giving is a joyful act of worship, and they are greatly blessed to be part of God's sovereign plan by making kingdom-significant investments. These people are filled with the joy of the Lord.

The second response is **conviction**. There are many reasons why a person cannot give. Conviction for a Christian comes from the Holy Spirit, and it is actually a good thing. God's love for us is so great. He wants us to turn in a different direction and exhibit different actions or behaviors. It is wise for the believer to take heed when conviction comes over us.

The third response is **irritation** — people are upset that they had to sit through a message on money in a church environment. I can understand people being disillusioned, because we all know how false teachers have taken advantage of good-hearted people. This problem dates back to the church in Ephesus as the apostle Paul instructed Timothy to address this issue of false teaching on money; but, Paul encourages the church to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life in heaven (1 Tim. 6:18-19).