

FOUR TYPES OF CHRISTIAN GIVING

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The four main ways of giving mentioned in the Bible are:

- Tithing
- Firstfruits
- Alms
- Seed

God wants us to do all of these, and He offers different results for each type.

TITHING. Some people think it's 'under the law", and therefore null & void. Some think it was a secular tax imposed by the Romans on the Jews. I used to hold these views, and my financial life suffered because of it. Then I read what the Bible says about tithing:

Malachi 3: 10-12 "Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And test me in this, says the Lord of Hosts, and see if I don't open the windows of Heaven for you and pour down such blessing on you that you won't have room enough to contain it."

Abraham gave a tenth of his plunder to Melchizedek. Hebrews describes Jesus as a 'High Priest in the order of Melchizedek'.

Jesus instructed in Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them."

And in Matthew 23:23 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices-mint, dill & cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-justice, mercy & faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter without neglecting the former."

Giving a tithe is about honoring God with your **obedience**. Expanding on Malachi 3, verses 8-12 show God accusing his priests of robbing Him by withholding the tithe. Verses 11 & 12 say: "I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the Lord Almighty. "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land: says the Lord Almighty. This shows us how our giving to God puts us back under the 'blessing' which He bestowed on mankind in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 1:28 says: "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the Earth and subdue it."

Notice the Blessing came before the tithe! The blessing won't always be financial. When God says "...see if I don't open the windows of Heaven for you and pour down such blessing on you that you won't have room enough to contain it." With modern bank and brokerage accounts we have plenty of room to contain financial blessings, so this must mean more than that. How about peace, joy, patience etc.?

Result: Honor God with the tithe and He will bless you!

FIRSTFRUITS

Proverbs 3:9-10 says: ‘Honor the Lord with your substance and the firstfruits of all your increase. So your barns will be filled with new plenty and your vats overflow with new wine.’”

There are many references to firstfruits in scripture, both old & new testament, referring to offerings of ourselves, both physical and spiritual, this passage is the most straightforward in referring to the promise of God in this area.

Firstfruits is about pure **generosity**. It is given one time. It is to be given from your increase, not your income. When you find a special financial blessing in your life, consider how God provides for you and see if you don’t find a little thought of wanting to give something back to Him.

Result: Your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats overflow with new wine!

ALMS

Probably the most prevalent in our society this is about giving to the obvious needs of the poor. The motivation is **compassion**. Proverbs 19:17 says: ‘He who takes pity on the poor lends to the Lord; and that which he has given He will pay back to him.’”

The story of the Good Samaritan comes under this heading. The man was obviously in need and the Samaritan helped him. It’s important to remember that the Jews and Samaritans hated each other at this time. But this Samaritan helped anyway because God put something in us as humans to help other humans in need. Some people short circuit this impulse thinking; ‘serves them right-they brought this upon themselves.’ This is not a place for judgement. God doesn’t think of our needs this way, even if we have brought trouble upon ourselves, and we shouldn’t either. It’s also important to note that this the type of giving that Jesus said was to be done in secret. Accepting charity can be a humbling experience for someone in need, and the last thing they need is for the giver to brag about how they bailed them out. Protect a person’s dignity and you’ll give them a chance to become a contributing member of society again.

Result: What you give will be returned to you by God.

SEED

This is what the Parable of the Sower is about. The motivation is **faith and reward**. When His disciples asked Jesus what this parable meant, before explaining it He said in Mark 4:13 “Don’t you understand the parable? How then will you understand any parable?” This is our first clue that sowing and reaping is key to every area of life. The sower is sowing the Word of God, which encompasses all of our experiences here on earth in this life. It certainly covers the salvation message, but the Bible has more to say about life than just that. Marital relations, parent child relations, finances, law and order, forgiveness, thinking right, sin and faith are just some of the areas that we can ‘sow’ into our hearts & the hearts of others and expect to reap a reward 30, 60 and 100-fold! Galatians 6:7-8 say, “Be not deceived, God cannot be mocked: a man reaps what he sows” If we sow hatred and discord, we will reap the same. If we sow peace and harmony, we should expect that also. If we sow financially, we should expect a financial harvest as well. It may not come all at once, some of my greatest financial harvests have come over time, but they will come.

It’s important to note that these concepts are in order with obedience to God first-expressed as giving a tenth of your income to your home church, followed by firstfruit giving which is pure thankfulness to God understanding what He has given you expressed through generosity. As we grow in our faith, at some point our focus should turn from ourselves to feeling compassion for others less fortunate than ourselves. Finally, a mature believer understands that they cannot out give God. They understand that they aren’t ‘giving to get’, treating God as a gumball machine, but giving to expand His kingdom and reaping a harvest so they can give more. Keep these in order and watch your life abound with peace, love and joy!

