

## A Summary of Our Study on Giving

At the end of Lesson 12, there is a good paragraph that summarizes what we have studied about giving as it is taught in scripture. This was written by Frank Jamerson, and I thought it would be good to include it in its entirety:

“A member of the church once offered this advice. If you believe your heart is right in the matter of your weekly contribution, then you have taken the right step. If you have a good heart you will find it easy to give cheerfully. The problem, usually, is in purposing. The reason is that in matters pertaining to the financial aspects of your life you don’t find the time, energy, desire, or know-how to budget. You say, ‘Oh, but the Lord did not say anything about a budget.’ What is it to *purpose*? Is it not to budget? Now in budgeting, where are you going to put your contribution—first, or last? Are you going to put it before everything else, as the Lord commands, or maybe after what you consider necessities of life, but before boats, motors, TV’s, cable-vision, golfing, dining out, etc.? If you don’t put the Lord first, you will be lost. As a Christian, budgeting is not optional—it is a command!”

I will add my two cents here (in addition to the giving I plan to do today when we are assembled). God said to give “as prospered,” not as we see what we have left after other expenses have been covered. Discipline is a financial principle by which we should live. God says that if we do, then He will bless us. Those who constantly live in “emergency mode” without planning or commitment often find themselves short wondering where all their money and time went. That is the logical consequence and the lesson of the message of Haggai to Israel.

As to how much of a proportion of what we have been prospered, I believe the most appropriate example is Abraham, who gave 10% of the spoils of defeating the kings who captured Lot and the people of the plain. This incident is clearly a type of our relationship to Christ, with Abraham the father of us who believe (**Romans 4:12**) and Melchizedek typifying Christ as king and priest of Salem (peace—**Hebrews 7:1-10**). He brought bread and wine; he blessed Abraham with his word; he was greater than Abraham. Abraham gave a tenth of what he gained in God’s blessing to win the battle; he gave it to Melchizedek; he also refused anything from the king of Sodom, because he recognized God as the source of his blessing and wanted only God to be glorified (**Genesis 14:18-24**).

Additional teaching in the New Testament includes the gift of Jesus Himself (**2 Cor. 8:9**), the Macedonians giving beyond their ability (**2 Cor. 8:1-8**), the disciples to meet an urgent need (**Acts 2:42-47, 4:31-37**). In each great example of giving, the attitude is emphasized.

It seems to me that if we apply all the guidance the New Testament furnishes us about God’s plan to support the church in the same manner we apply it to the work, worship, and organization of the church, then we will not want to give less than ten percent. I am willing to receive correction on this if I am mistaken. Please let me know what you think.