

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me how herewith, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that **there shall not be room enough to receive it.**"

Malachi, 3:10

HOW TITHING PROSPERS YOU

My understanding of the principle of tithing has grown and evolved a great deal since I first began to practice it in my own life over twenty years ago. Then again, my understanding of **every** spiritual principle has changed a great deal since then. As I have grown in my understanding of myself, God, and money, I have gone from "blind faith" to "understanding faith" in knowing why tithing is such a powerful practice.

I first began to try the concept of tithing when I heard a Sunday lesson on it in church. I did not begin by giving 10% (the figure suggested in the Bible). As I remember, I began with 5%. I still remember how good (as well as how fearful) I felt when I wrote that first check.

The fearful feeling was, of course, wondering how my lifestyle could absorb this added "expense" when I was already having trouble making ends meet. The good feeling was two-fold: First, I knew I was doing something very concrete to demonstrate my faith in God. Second (and somewhat unexpected), was the other feeling of claiming my part in the success of the church I loved.

I had an experience of the difference between making a **donation** (something I could "spare" - or, in other words, something from which I felt separate) and making a **contribution** (something which was included in my monthly financial planning - in other words, something that felt like a part of me). It made me feel like I was much more a part of the church, and that when someone's life was changed by learning its principles, I was one of those making it possible.

As time went on, I discovered that even though I did not know exactly how it was happening, I did not experience having less money. Sometimes (not always) I even experienced having more. It was amazing! It was the first time I had consciously experienced that money, like time, could be elastic. One day I decided to really "go for it" and commit to giving 10%. Once again it felt wonderful and scary. Once again, as time went on, I often experienced having more, rather than less.

Over the next few years, as I studied to become a minister, I learned that the list of people who attributed their success to practicing the principle of tithing was a long one. It included such corporate founders as Rockefeller, Kraft, Heinz, Le Tourneau and H.P. Crowell (founder of Quaker Oats).

I heard the story of a man named Taylor who, in his mid-forties, had experienced

many ups and downs, was once again flat-broke, and felt like a complete failure. After reading a book on tithing, he decided to try one more venture, this time with God as his Senior Partner, affirming this partnership by the name he chose for his company and by tithing regularly. The chain he founded was for decades one of the most well-known department stores in the country. Its name was Lord and Taylor.

At first these stories, as well as my own experiences, drove the intellectual part of my mind crazy. Having begun my college education as a mathematics major, I always wanted to "figure out;" from a logical point of view, how this could be. It seemed like magic. I later came to realize that this was just one of many ways in which I was trying to understand the spiritual whole by adding up the material parts, trying to understand spiritual principles while thinking from my "ego" mind.

The more I have advanced on my own spiritual path, the more I know that each of our minds has two major parts. The one is our Divine Mind or real self, in which we know ourselves as eternally one with God and each other, and in which we know that our true heritage is an experience of peace, joy, love, and abundance. The other is our ego, or false sense of self, which feels separate from God and other people, which believes in lack, and which only sees with our body's eyes, believing in material causes.

For me, transformation has meant the evolution from identifying with my ego to identifying with and acting from my Divine Mind. I find that I am always teaching myself, with every action I take, that either one or the other of these thought systems is the truth about me.

The more you, also, teach yourself that you are Divine by demonstrating love, oneness, and abundance, the more your life will reflect those qualities. The reason that tithers experience having more has nothing to do with magic. There is a mental, emotional, and spiritual law of cause and effect in operation.

Your most deeply held beliefs and emotions are constantly creating your life and circumstances. Your body and outer life is like the screen at a movie theater. The combination of your mind and heart is the projector. The only way the image on the screen will ever really change is to change what you are projecting onto it.

One reason tithing works so well is that it is a regular and powerful affirmation of abundance. The more it is practiced, the more deeply it changes the "projector" of your mind and heart. The more abundantly you think, feel, and act, the more your life reflects an abundance of God's love. Constantly giving a percentage of your money (an aspect of life that so many of us have held as separate from our spirituality) is also a way to regularly nourish your relationship with God in you and to affirm that you actually do have an invisible, yet very tangible Source of supply.

Money and material wealth are demonstrations of God's love in your life. In other words, money is simply one form of God's love, just as are ideas, affection, and words

of encouragement.

Like most of us, you may have long-ago learned that the first commandment (or success attitude) of the Old Testament says, "You will have no other gods before Me." In other words, whatever you believe to be your source is god to you. If you believe that your job, bank account, spouse, customers, the government, the state of the economy, or anything else outside you is your source, you also secretly know that this "source" is unreliable.

Banks can fail, spouses can die or leave, a new product or service can compete with yours, economies can change, and even governments can go broke. But what if your constant, abundant, unlimited Source is right within you? This attitude builds a strong feeling and foundation of security which is unavailable when you make a god of anything outside you, and from which you feel separate.

Tithing is a way to build this attitude of trust in your one Source. It is one thing to say you have faith in God, and another thing to take an action step which demonstrates that faith. This is true of all spiritual principles. As Paul said, "Faith without works is dead." Tithing is also a way to demonstrate to yourself the truth of the saying found in many spiritual texts that giving actually enriches you, rather than impoverishing you.

For my wife, Lura, and me, tithing means to give the first 10% of our income, before expenses, to the organization, person, or group of people who demonstrate an aspect of God with which we want to affirm our oneness. In other words, we allow ourselves to know that we are not doing this for the benefit of the recipient. We are being "selfish" in our giving. We do not tithe because we are generous. We are able to be generous partly because we tithe.

We tithe because it is a spiritual discipline we practice. We practice this discipline to nourish our connection with God in us. We practice it to affirm our oneness with God in others. We tithe upward. We tithe to people who are successfully applying spiritual principles in their lives which we want to master. We tithe to people whose lives reflect their oneness with God, those who demonstrate love, abundance, inner peace, harmony, and successfully living their vision. We tithe to nurture ourselves, so that we will **then** have more love to extend to the world.

In your life, if you are just beginning, start with whatever percentage represents taking the next step in faith, but make it large enough to be a contribution rather than a donation. In other words, make it something you include in your financial planning. Take this gift "inside yourself" and give it to God in you. Ask God in you to direct you in giving it to whoever or whatever is demonstrating an aspect of Divine Mind with which you want to identify.

Give it to the person or organization that is inspiring you by successfully demonstrating spiritual principles. Give where you can say, "I want to claim this as being

part of my mind." Give where you can say, "That's for me!" Give to that with which you want to feel at one. Give to what you want to empower in others and yourself.

Do not use tithing to give to people or organizations who demonstrate lack. In other words, don't tithe because "they need it," unless an attitude of need is something you want to empower and strengthen in yourself and in them. Let your giving empower your belief in abundance, your trust in God, your idea that money is not separate from your spirituality, and your knowledge that the recipient of your gift is a part of your mind that you want to more fully claim. Tithe to unconditional love, to success, to prosperity, to oneness. Tithe to those who demonstrate the kind of relationships with God, themselves and other people that you want to have.

When Lura and I tithe, we tithe to those people or organizations who have more fully embodied some aspect of God Mind than we have. We also tithe to constantly remind ourselves that our success is not the product of hard work but the product in our lives of God creating through us. We like to have both of us sign our tithe checks as we decide together who will be the recipient of our tithe.

Regular tithing constantly reminds us that God in us is our unlimited Source. It nourishes our trust and makes us feel wealthy. The more we feel "rich in God," the wealthier we become in every way, and the more we have to share with others.

There are a myriad of questions about the mechanics of tithing. Here are some, with my thoughts and experiences in response:

Why tithe 10%?

The word "tithe" means "tenth." This is the amount suggested several times in the Bible. The number ten is often considered a number representing increase. There are nine primary numbers. The number ten is the first **combination** of integers, combining one, representing unity, with a zero, representing increase, or the next higher level.

Should I tithe on my gross (before tax) income or on my after-tax income?

There are no "shoulds" involving tithing, and you can't do it wrong. Allow God in you to be your Guide.

What if I don't have an income from a job outside my home? (or) What if I share a joint bank account with someone who doesn't believe in tithing?

Establish, in talking with your partner, what portion of the family income you can legitimately claim as yours, and tithe on that amount.

Should I tithe only to churches or other organizations where I can deduct the amount tithed on my income tax return?

Tithing is not charity. It is giving to Divinity, to whoever or whatever you feel inspired by and want to claim as a reflection of your mind. When Lura and I tithe, we do not decide the recipient of the tithe based on whether or not the gift is tax-deductible. Believing that your gift must reduce your taxes is an attempt to control how you will receive from God as a result of giving. Again, give your gift to God in you and ask for direction as to which person, persons, or organization you want to have receive your gift.

Isn't it enough to simply tithe my time?

It isn't a question of whether or not it is enough. Actually, Lura and I teach and demonstrate tithing our time, as well as our money, because this is another area of our lives in which we want to constantly experience abundance. Asking this question usually reflects a deep belief that there is something bad or unspiritual about money, and that having money is something to be avoided.

Can I "split" my tithe, having part of it go one place and part to another?

Once again, the only "rule" is to give it to God in you, to practice listening, and to practice acting on what you hear.

Why is it important to tithe first, before paying bills?

As you establish the attitude that your spirituality and your relationship with God come first (not just monetarily but in every way), every area of your life will improve.

Must I choose between tithing and giving to myself?

First of all, tithing IS a form of giving to yourself by claiming that you are not separate from the recipient of your tithe. We recommend tithing first, and then paying the next 10% to yourself before you pay your bills. The more you make this a way of life in all areas, the more love, in all forms, you will have to extend to others.

How old should someone be to begin learning prosperity principles such as tithing?

No one is too young to begin learning and practicing prosperity principles. As your children see you demonstrating principles such as tithing, they can be encouraged to do the same by, for example, tithing on their allowance.

If I tithe, does that mean I shouldn't give to charities?

Not at all. Giving money, service, and talents are natural expressions of a Divine

being. You may want to include one or more other causes in your giving, along with tithing. It has been our experience, however, that when you give because "they need it" or because "they can't make it without me," you are giving to and empowering lack in others and yourself. The solution to someone's prosperity problems is not money. It is being open to receive God's love by demonstrating abundance. When you give to anyone or anything, give to whatever demonstration of abundance that the person or organization is making.

If you have more questions about tithing, I would be glad to talk with you about them, as would your minister, teacher, or spiritual counselor. As to the most important questions: "Does it work?" and "Is it safe to make a commitment to tithe?" the answer to both is "yes."

It works to nourish your relationship with God. It works to give you more of an experience that the Source of everything you want is within you. It works to heal any thoughts you may have that money is bad, evil, or not spiritual. It works to give you the experience that giving and receiving are one and the same and that giving means gain, not loss.

It works to help you feel that you are contributing to lives or causes in which you believe, and that you make a difference in the success of the group(s) in which you participate. It works to support the end of the illusion of separation. The benefits of tithing are many. Commit to yourself to begin practicing it in your life, starting today. Tithing really does prosper you!