

reason why giving is such a test and evidence of one's faith; for the person who gives to God first is placing his trust in Him, not in his money and possessions. As Jesus said: "No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."¹⁶

*Excerpt from the book,
"Building a Dynamic Church"
By Randall Hillebrand*

¹Philippians 4:4:15-19; ²cf. Matthew 6:19-20; ³1 Corinthians 9:1-14; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; ⁴Acts 13; Philippians 4:15-16;

⁵1 Timothy 5:5,7,9-10; ⁶Acts 2:44; 4:32-35; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Galatians 2:10; 6:9-10; ⁷2 Corinthians 6:14-15; cf. 3 John 5-8;

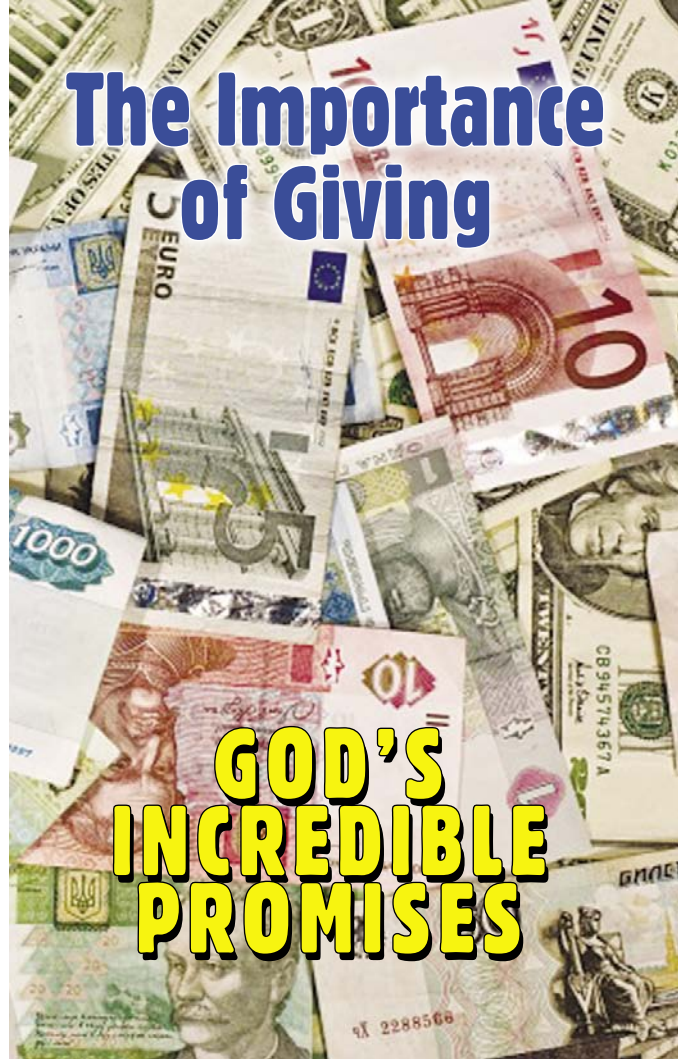
⁸1 Corinthians 16:2; ⁹2 Corinthians 9:6-7; ¹⁰2 Corinthians 9:10; ¹¹Genesis 14:18-20; Hebrews 7:6-10; ¹²cf. 1 Corinthians 16:2;

¹³Proverbs 3:9-10; ¹⁴cf. Philippians 4:15-19; ¹⁵2 Corinthians 5:17;

¹⁶Luke 16:13

The Importance of Giving

**GOD'S
INCREDIBLE
PROMISES**



Giving to the Lord and others is an opportunity; an opportunity which allows you to invest in His work locally and around the world.¹ This investment also allows you to store up rewards for eternity.²

As a church member it is important that you give generously to your church for the purpose of supporting its ministries. Your giving will help pay for such things as: the pastor's salary,³ evangelism and the sending out of cross-cultural missionaries,⁴ the support of widows,⁵ helping people in need,⁶ building upkeep, utility bills, etc. Without the faithful giving of its members, the church and its ministries would not be able to function. It is important to note that the financial support of the church is to come from believers.⁷ Money should never be solicited by your church from unbelievers for this reason.

Although in the Old Testament a tithe was required of the people of Israel, in the New Testament there is not a specified amount believers are required to give to their church. Instead, when Paul was taking up the offering for the poor in Jerusalem, he told the Corinthians: "On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come."⁸ They were instructed to lay aside money for the offering in direct proportion to how they had prospered. So on Sunday (Saturday being the seventh day) believers were to consider how God had prospered them during the past week; and then in proportion to that, set money aside for the offering.

In 2 Corinthians 9, Paul further told the Corinthians: "Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap

sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."⁹ The point here is that a person will be blessed in proportion to how he gives. If he gives sparingly, he will reap sparingly. If he is generous in his giving, then God will be generous to him. God does not want people giving "grudgingly" (when they do not want to) "or under compulsion" (when they feel they have to). God desires that the giver be a "cheerful giver," giving joyfully. As a person gives cheerfully and generously, God will continue to supply more, multiplying what He gives him even before he uses it, resulting in the maximum distribution and impact of the believer's resources.¹⁰

How much money should a Christian give to his church? The author's personal conviction is that since the people of Israel gave a tithe -- ten percent -- of their gross income, so the Christian should begin here. It seems that a tithe was a standard in Old Testament times because even before the Law of Moses was given, Abraham paid a tithe to Melchizedek, the King of Salem who "was a priest of God Most High."¹¹ Beginning with a tithe, a person should continue to give up and beyond that as God prospers him.¹² When a person gives, he should always give to God first, for in so doing he honors God.¹³ When God comes first, then the believer's other needs will be met.¹⁴ Therefore, giving is an act of faith. When believers live this way, specifically when one gives to God first before purchasing food, paying bills etc., he is walking by faith and not by sight.¹⁵ This is the