

PROSPERITY AND GIVING

Firm Foundation Chapter 14

by

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Why do some people prosper? There are two basic reasons why Christians prosper, according to the Bible. First, **they pay God His tithe and offering**. Second, **they seek the Kingdom of God first and His righteousness**.

Paying God what belongs to Him

Malachi the prophet told the people of his day that they were **robbing God by not giving tithes and offerings** (3:8). **A tithe is one-tenth of our earnings**--that which comes into us by our labor. We owe this amount to God. Above this amount, we are commanded to give offerings, or contributions, which are determined according to the willingness and leading of our hearts'. We should **never give grudgingly or under compulsion, but we should give cheerfully since God loves this** (2 Cor. 9:7). If we feel pressured or uneasy about giving a suggested amount as a contribution, then we should not give. We need to purpose in our heart what we ought to give and then give this amount in faith.

We give to God by giving our money to **provide for the needs of the ministry and those who perform the service of the Lord**. The tithe is also used for food for God's house. As the ministers receive their needs from these tithes and offerings, they also pay a tithe of their earnings. As we give to God by practically giving to the church, God promises to **open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing until there is no more need** (Mal. 3:10). In addition, the Lord will **rebuke the devourer** for us (Mal. 3:11). To the degree that we give, we will receive back. **He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly** (2 Cor. 9:6). This principle is also stated in **Luke 6:38**:

Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.

The Bible warns us to be on guard against every form of greed. Many people have wandered away from the faith by overly desiring riches. We need to not be so concerned with holding on to our money, but instead we need to **be generous and then we will be prosperous** (Prov. 11:25). Where a person's treasure is, so is his heart. We need to have our heart on God and love Him more than anything or anyone.

Seeking the Kingdom of God First

Matt. 6:25-33 explains to us that God does not want us to be anxious or worried about "what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or what we shall wear," or any other necessities that we have. Instead God wants us to be primarily concerned with Him and His kingdom and to trust that He will supply all our needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. We can be assured of this because the Bible says, **"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these**

things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33).

Joseph and Solomon became prosperous because they desired to serve God and do His will. As a result, God supplied their needs and gave them an abundance, not to hoard for themselves, but to be a blessing to others.

Jesus himself mentioned that giving tithes is important and that we should not neglect it. However, He also implied to the Pharisees that they (and us) must keep it in its proper perspective (**Matt. 23:23**) and not exalt it or any other doctrine above the doctrine of Christ and serving Him. Giving money to God and the needs of His servants is one means in which we please God and allow God's Kingdom and glory to reign on earth.