

CHURCH OF CHRIST
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GIVING – *A Biblical Survey*

First Fruits is a "principle" in scripture referring to God's requirement of His people to put Him First and not last. To give Him the Best and not mediocre. To give from a Heart of Love and not out of compulsion (II Cor 9:5, 7). Christians today are under the new covenant (New Testament); however, as you'll read in Romans 15:4 "*...those things written before [Old Testament] were written for our learning...*" meaning that we learn about the nature, and attitude etc., of GOD. For example:

- 1) When you look at Genesis 14:18-20 we see that Abraham gave a tenth part of ALL (Tithe) in his giving to the Lord to the high priest.,
- 2) We see in Leviticus 27:30-33 again that a 10% part of all (or Gross) belonged to the Lord.,
- 3) We see in Malachi 3:8-10 that God tests us to test Him in our giving saying to bring all the Tithes into the storehouse etc.,
- 4) We see in Haggai 1:2-8 how God feels when we put our priorities before His.,
- 5) When Jesus was being tested by the Pharisees regarding paying taxes, Jesus said, "*Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's*" - Matthew 22:21 We often (& sadly) give the world the things that belong to the world, while Also giving the world the things that belong to God!



6) When we read I Cor 16:1-2 there are a few things we need to understand:

#1 We lay aside for the Lord (*plan to give by setting aside His portion first*)

#2 When we examine the verse 2 in the KJV it more clearly renders "***as God has prospered him***" - meaning that whatever you have, God blessed you to attain. (Deuteronomy 8:17 - Read Deut 8:7-18)

#3 Our giving is not arbitrary, meaning that God accepts "whatever" you give Him., but the "principle" of first fruits (giving God our Best and First - Prov 3:9-10) & having an understanding of the Tithe, helps us know what portion pleased God.

7) We see in Matthew 5:20 that our righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees who were notorious for giving God only up to the letter of the Law and not from the Spirit of God's law - in the context of giving, our righteousness should exceed the tithe which (again) is a tenth part of ALL., meaning our gross.

Your giving should be motivated by your love for the Lord for what He has done for you (John 14:15 / I John 4:19 / John 3:16). When we truly appreciate what God has done for us, giving will not be a heart issue. Giving will not be an issue when we learn what God requires in giving and when we "*first [give] of ourselves to the Lord*" - II Cor 8:5

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In Exodus 35., God required of the people an offering for the constructing of the tabernacle. His prerequisite of the people was that those who gave, gave of a "*willing heart*" (Ex 35: 5, 21, 22). In chapter 36, Moses had to give a command for the people to cease this freewill offering (Ex 36:3-7) because it became too much!

Jesus says, "*Give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.*" - Luke 6:38

We have to also remember that we're Really NOT Giving to GOD, but rather Returning to HIM that which (*He have required from a Spirit of love and joy because Everything*) Really Belongs to HIM!! - Psalm 50:10-12