

Ethics of Christian Giving and Its Inference in Selected Pentecostal Churches

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Abstract

When it comes to the issue of giving, some Christians tend to find their comfort zone in the New Testament because of tithing. Perhaps, we turn to Psalms or proverbs for protection and wisdom, forgetting that the scripture (the Old and New Testaments) was written through the inspiration of God. This research work aims to discover if Christians give to God in accordance with biblical injunctions, to change the motives and to orient Christians on how to give to God, the poor and the needy. Scholars have not done much on this discourse. The researcher adopted a qualitative research method, which involves a careful, diligent, objective and exhaustive research for solid information to develop a valid knowledge of the subject matter. Quantitative method was also used. The findings from the research reveal that giving to God and the needy is what is expected from a Christian to imbibe. The researcher therefore recommends that the ministers of God in all churches should make use of the money contributed by the members judiciously, and also, they should be accountable, they should use the money for the growth and advancement of the kingdom and not for their selfish motives. More so, the church should encourage the use of various media of giving, such as online payment, apps order than only the use of basket offerings during church services. Church founders should treat their resident pastors well by placing them on a good salary structure.

Keywords: *Ethics, Christian giving, Pentecostal Churches*

Introduction

Giving is an act of willingly and voluntarily providing or offering something to someone without expecting anything in return. The giving in the Old Testament and the New Testament was without compulsion, force, and not done reluctantly but with a good and cheerful heart. In Luke 21:1-4, the poor widow gave two mites she was left with as an offering, and Jesus counted it worthy above others who gave more than her. Offering. Also, the widow of Zarephath played a small but

important role in Elijah's story. Even when she had little, she considered the man of God first (1 Kings 17:7-16).

There is an ethical way of giving by a Christian to God and to people; giving to God and the people should not be done grudgingly or forcefully, but cheerfully. And the Heart of giving to God really matters in how God will bless the giver. As Christians, we tend to find our comfort Zone in the New Testament. Perhaps we turn to the psalms for comfort or to proverbs for wisdom, but we do not embrace the fullness of the scripture. It is always easy for us to ask God for a particular thing, but when it is time to give, some people start to grumble and complain. It has been observed that in some selected Pentecostal churches in Atiba Local Government Area in Oyo, the members don't give to God according to how God has blessed them. They are unfaithful in paying the tithe and offering.

Statement of the Problem

The act of giving is an important aspect of Christian worship, ethics and principles of living. It is essentially a central part of the Christian lifestyle that reflects the true essence of Christianity, heart of gratitude, reverence, obedience and submission unto God, love, kindness and a compassionate heart unto humanity, especially those that are in need. Giving in Christianity is a reflection of God's grace and His sacrificial giving of His begotten son as recorded in John 3:16. Despite the significant essence of giving in Christian faith and worship, it is observed that a whole lot of church goers who claim to be Christians still do not understand the actual essence of giving as they often display a misrepresentation of the true essence of giving that would be acceptable in the sight of God. While some fellows hypocritically give to show, some give grudgingly, and some give with expectation of what they hope to receive from God in return, hinged on the aspect of Malachi chapter 3 that emphasises the promise of God, but they de-emphasise the essence that it said that all the tithe should be brought, that there should be meat in the house of God. This also echoes the aspect of the gospel in the book of Luke 6:38, which goes thus: "Give and it will come back to you. Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." A whole lot of Christians hold onto this mindset, which implies that giving brings about a return in bountiful measure, pressed down and running over and not as an essential of submission unto God. All these motives of giving negate the real essence of sacrificial giving and the significant essence that God loves a cheerful giver who gives from the depth of his or her heart as a form of gratitude to God and as a sincere act of worship, love and a compassionate heart.

This research, therefore, fills the vacuum of the lack of proper biblical understanding of the principles and ethics of Christian giving in the minds of many believers and Christians. The research is thus geared at analysing the actual essence, significance and ethics of the different categories of giving recorded in the bible.

The Concept of Giving in Christianity

Giving refers to the act of voluntarily providing or offering something to someone without expecting anything in return. It involves the selfless act of sharing or contributing resources, such as time, effort, money or possessions, with the intention of benefitting another person, a group, or a cause. Giving can take various forms, including donating to charity, helping others in need, offering support or advice, volunteering, or engaging in acts of kindness and generosity. Giving in Christian settings is the act of raising resources (not only money) in order to fund the work of God and also to meet people's needs. Every religion makes an effort to raise funds for the sake of accomplishing set objectives. In most cases, money contributed by donors is used for the project, or to assist the basic needs of members or for evangelism. It is often driven by empathy, compassion, or a desire to make a positive difference in the lives of others. It is a selfless and altruistic action motivated by kindness, compassion, and empathy. Giving can come in many forms, such as donating money, goods, time, services, or even emotional support.

Warwick¹ defines charitable giving as the donation of money to an organisation that benefits others beyond one's own family. This implies that giving is what is done to other people in the society without considering what to receive in return for one's good deeds, for example, donating one's kidney to a relative. This form of giving goes beyond money; it can be one's time to be spent, etc. It is expected of a Christian to give without expecting anything in return from the receiver.

The essence of giving lies in the willingness to offer help, assistance, or resources to others in need or simply to make a positive impact on their lives. Giving is often associated with generosity, charity, and philanthropy. It is a fundamental aspect of human relationships and societal interactions, fostering empathy, compassion, and connection between individuals. Giving can lead to feelings of satisfaction, fulfilment, and joy for both the giver and the recipient. It can also strengthen bonds, build trust, and create a sense of community and interconnectedness. This implies that giving brings about friendship, a relationship which can last till eternity. A practical example is the life Jesus gave to mankind, and to date, the relationship between Jesus and the Christians remains steadfast.

More so, giving is a powerful and meaningful practice that contributes to creating a more caring and supportive world. It makes life easier for the less privileged and for the offspring God has given them. It allows us to express our values, empathy, and compassion towards others, fostering positive change and promoting well-being in both the giver and the broader community. The Bible says, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressing down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you mete withal it shall be measure unto you (Luke 6:38). A practical example is when one withholds a seed without planting it, germination of such fruit is not possible. When you eat all that you harvested from the farm, what will you plant for the coming year? God wants us to give for His glory and also to help His people.

Abel Damian² in a quote, once said, "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." This highlights the importance of giving back and helping those in need as a way to not only make a positive impact on the world but also to find fulfilment and purpose in life. By giving to others, we can often find a deeper sense of connection and joy that enriches our own lives as well. I support this assertion because even the disciples of Jesus lost their lives during the propagation of the gospel to search for the lost sheep of Israel. Am not in support of this assertion of losing oneself because of others. Not everybody is appreciative, irrespective of your good deeds, one can only help or give and not to the extreme of losing one's life.

Christian giving goes beyond the immediate benefit to the recipient (The Receiver). Giving also has a transformative effect on the giver, deepening their faith, shaping their character, and drawing them closer to God. The Bible teaches that when we give, we are participating in God's work of redemption and restoration, bringing healing and hope to a broken world. Giving can have a ripple effect, inspiring others to generosity and creating a culture of compassion and generosity within the Christian community. When Christians give generously and sacrificially, they bear witness to the love of God and demonstrate the values of the Kingdom of God.

Voluntary Giving in the Old Testament

There are various voluntary offerings to God during the pre-Mosaic and the New Testament period. We have given that is subjected under the law and the one under grace in Christ.

Waltke³ holds that Torah, that is, the five books of Moses, especially the priestly legislation, has a rich and precise vocabulary to represent the sacraments offered to the Lord on an altar. He argues that each term denotes a physical object representing a spiritual truth upon which the worshipper

could feed spiritually in his approach to and communion with God. The most inclusive term for presentations to God on the altar is “offering”, from a root which means “to bring near.” The voluntary offerings included the burnt offering, fellowship offering, meal offering and freewill offering. These dedicatory offerings could be either an animal, such as a pigeon or turtledove, which is referred to as a burnt offering, or grains such as wheat or barley, which is also called a meal offering. The fellowship offering could be either (Leviticus 3). A libation offering accompanied burnt and fellowship offerings. The priest’s portion of the fellowship offering was symbolically “waved” before the Lord as His portion, and the so called the wave offering. Certain portions of it were given as a “contribution” from the offer to the priests, the so-called “heave offering”.

Waltke viewed sacrifice as a presentation on the altar, or a more technical term, as representing rituals in making a covenant. The slaughtering of an animal in the latter case symbolised a self-curse (that is, the one making a covenant would say words to the effect, “may it happen to me as it is happening to this animal I am killing”) and effected a sacrifice.

The Old Testament also speaks about the importance of giving with a cheerful heart, not out of compulsion or obligation. In the book of Deuteronomy, it is stated that God loves a cheerful giver and will bless those who give generously and willingly from their hearts. The Old Testament provides numerous examples and teachings on the importance of giving and generosity as a way to support God's work, help those in need, and reflect the loving and generous nature of God himself. It serves as a reminder for believers to give generously and sacrificially, trusting in God's faithfulness to bless and provide for those who give with a generous heart.

(i) The Offering of Cain and Abel

According to Strong⁴, the Hebrew word used for offering means (to apportion, i.e bestow; a donation, euphemistically, tribute; specifically, a sacrificial offering (usually bloodless and voluntary). The contention of MacArthur⁵ that one may infer that at an earlier time God had required that offerings be made can therefore not be supported. These were clearly freewill offerings.

The first offering that was recorded in the Bible was that of Cain and Abel, whereby God asked the two brothers to offer unto Him an offering from the work they were doing. Cain brought an offering of “the fruit of the soil” (Genesis 4:3), but these were unacceptable to God. The offering of Abel was acceptable, which was an animal sacrifice, but the reason for Abel's offering to be

accepted before God was the attitude he displayed (Hebrews 11:4). We are told that it was by faith that Abel “offered God a better sacrifice than that of Cain”. According to Gray⁶, this means that “faith in some previous revelation or promise of God touching the way a guilty sinner might approach Him. Such revelation was doubtless given in Genesis 3:21, which has been reserved for consideration for now.”

In the book of Genesis, Cain and Abel were the sons of Adam and Eve. They both made offerings to God, but God favoured Abel's offering of his best sheep while rejecting Cain's offering of his produce. This caused jealousy and anger in Cain, leading him to kill his brother Abel out of jealousy and resentment. This story is often interpreted as a warning against jealousy and the importance of sincerity and humility in one's offerings to God. In the biblical story of Cain and Abel, the two brothers were farmers and raised livestock. When they made their offerings to God, Abel presented the best of his flock, showing his willingness to give God his very best. Cain, on the other hand, offered some of his produce, but not necessarily his best or with the same level of sincerity and reverence.

The story of Cain and Abel serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of jealousy, anger, and the consequences that can arise from acting on these emotions. It also highlights the importance of sincerity, humility, and giving our best in our worship and offerings to God. In the biblical story of Cain and Abel, the two brothers were farmers and raised livestock. When they made their offerings to God, Abel presented the best of his flock, showing his willingness to give God his very best. Cain, on the other hand, offered some of his produce, but not necessarily his best or with the same level of sincerity and reverence.

God's rejection of Cain's offering left him feeling angry and resentful towards both Abel and God. Instead of reflecting on his own actions and trying to improve, Cain allowed these negative feelings to fester, which ultimately led him to commit the first murder in history.

The story of Cain and Abel serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of jealousy, anger, and the consequences that can arise from acting on these emotions. It also highlights the importance of sincerity, humility, and giving our best in our worship and offerings to God. Abel's attitude is further demonstrated by the fact that he brought an offering “from the firstborn of his flock”, whereas Cain merely brought some of the fruits of the soil (Genesis 4:3). Cain knew he had done something wrong and it was confirmed in Genesis 4:7, God told him if you have done what is right

will you not be acceptable and your offering? It is also recorded in 1 John 3:12: “Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother.

(ii) Abraham’s offering

After the promises that God made with Abraham that he would be the father of many nations, he decided to build an altar for God in order to offer an offering to God (Genesis 12:7). Abraham built an altar which he had memorable spiritual experiences. The other thing he did was offering of tithe to the King of Salem (Melchizedek), the priest of God Most High, to whom he gave “a tenth of everything”

This act of faith and obedience by Abraham is seen as a powerful example of trust in God's will and is often interpreted as a foreshadowing of God offering his own son, Jesus, for the salvation of humanity. The story of Abraham's offering continues to be a source of inspiration and reflection for believers of various faiths. Abraham's offering is also seen as a demonstration of the concept of sacrifice and devotion in religious teachings. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, whom he loved dearly, showed his deep and unwavering faith in God and his willingness to obey divine commands, even when they appeared to go against human understanding.

Voluntary Giving in the New Testament

Example of Jesus Christ

Jesus’ attitude regarding the correct approach towards freewill offerings is typified by the account of the widow’s mite in Mark 12:41-44. According to Barclay¹¹, “the coin so called was a lepton, which literally means ‘a thin one’. It was the smallest of all coins and was worth one fortieth of one pence”. Her contribution, by any normal standard an insignificant amount; in Jesus' eyes, however, is an offering beyond ordinary measure. Jesus viewed this widow’s offering as actually greater than all the offerings made by the rich. Smith⁷ holds that it was Jesus' contention “that the value of the offering is best measured against the financial worth of the offer”. He contends that “the quality of an offering is best measured as a percentage of total assets”. This means that God's acceptance of one’s offering really depends on one’s income; the widow voluntarily gave all she had, whereas there are rich people who offer a little amount from what God had given them. We can refer to this act of giving as a self-denial, not minding what will become of her (a widow) and the children. The place of faith is view in this context, she gave the offering sacrificially and she hoped that God will supply her needs and that of her children according to Phillipians 4:19. This

sacrificial giving of this widow teaches that not only the rich can give, the poor or the needy can also give from the little God has given them, not necessary in monetary form it can also be in kind. In Matthew 25:37-40, Jesus teaches that those who feed the hungry, or give something to drink to the thirsty, or clothe the naked, or visit the sick and those imprisoned, are doing it for Him. Lewis says that “every stranger we feed or clothe is Christ.” “The phrase these brothers of mine” is very vital. Christ is referring to Christians, to those who are brethren. Romans 8:17 says, “now if we are children, then we are heirs- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings so that we may also share in his glory.” When giving, we should not be biased by segregating the unbelievers from those we want to give to. Considering the unbelievers in our giving life will bring them to Christ is also a means of winning souls for Him. But I will urge Christians to always consider the less privileged in the household of faith to live a better life (Matthew 7:5-6). This implies that before considering the poor who are unbelievers, consider the believers.

Ethics of Christian Giving

Ethics is a discipline that studies the moral life. It studies not only what is right and good to do, but also the character and values of a person and the standards to use for judging the rightness or wrongness of society’s policies.

J.K. Ayantayo⁸ viewed ethics as a systematic study of human actions and intention to determine their goodness or badness, rightness or wrongness, correctness or incorrectness and with attention given to how such course of action and intention being evaluated affects the person who performed the action or showed an intention in question, the person at which it is directed, and the society or the environment where the action is performed or the intention is muted. For instance, a person who slapped his or her colleague must have planned it before executing the action.

Georgia Harkness⁹ defines Christian ethics as a systematic study of the way of life exemplified and taught by Jesus, applied to the manifold problems and decisions of human existence. This means that Christian ethics encompasses the ways of life of Jesus Christ. The word “Christian” was used when they saw the disciples of Jesus Christ at Antioch, due to their dress, they were called Christians (little Christ). Also, Matson¹⁰ defines Christian ethics as a critical reflection on the moral decisions and actions of individuals, Christians and the Christian community (the church).

In addition, Christian ethics considers the role of the Church and Christian communities in promoting justice, peace, and reconciliation in the world. It encourages individuals to engage in acts of compassion and solidarity with the marginalised and oppressed, in line with the teachings of Jesus to love one's neighbours as oneself. Christian ethics also addresses contemporary moral issues such as environmental stewardship, social justice, human rights, and healthcare, seeking to provide ethical guidance and insights rooted in Christian faith and values.

The act of giving is a key that is highlighted, which constitutes a central part of the religious life for individual believers that enables them to live out their faith and become truly Christians. Lincoln¹¹ et al seeing it as a rational and economic transaction undertaken by believers in exchange for expected returns, such as afterlife –utility as well as personal fame and social reputation in this material world. This is rampant in most of our churches today, whereby they seek fame, for recognition in the church and the society they belong to. The Bible is not in support of this “Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” (Matthew 6:11-4).

Christian giving not only contributes to the making of individual sacred selves, but importantly, it also contributes to the construction of a sacred moral economy with God. Christian givers highlight the moral and spiritual equality between them and the recipients of their giving, as they are all children of God. Moreover, instead of seeing the recipients having a material need for receiving the giving, arguably, it is the Christian givers who have a greater spiritual need to do giving. We have Christian morality and Christian ethics in motivating and guiding believers to engage in giving and doing it in a Christian way. Under Christian ethics, giving is not seen and enacted as a self-fulfilment of the ego, but a realisation that one's self is part of God's moral order and is under constant divine moulding and guidance. At the same time, individual Christians can make their giving decision based on deep-rooted values such as economic rationality and effectiveness maximization of our modern secular world. Christian giving should be done in the church and outside the church. It is through interrogating and understanding the multifaceted and multi-layered expressions and meanings that the individual Christians adhered to and embraced in their act of giving that we could fully comprehend the quest for enacting their divine and secular duty as they seek to follow the Christian logic of giving and transform their mundane secular self into the sacred self.

Summary

Christian giving is a prominent aspect of Christian ethics and is rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ. The act of giving is seen as a way to demonstrate love, compassion, and generosity towards others, reflecting the selfless and sacrificial love that Christ exemplified during his time on Earth. However, the ethical considerations surrounding Christian giving are complex and multifaceted, requiring careful examination and reflection.

Christian giving is the issue of justice and equality. Christians are called to care for the poor, marginalised, and vulnerable in society, showing compassion and solidarity with those in need. This requires a commitment to social justice and a willingness to challenge systems of inequality and oppression that contribute to poverty and suffering. Christian giving should not only address immediate needs but also work towards systemic change that promotes greater equity and justice for all. The motivations behind Christian giving are also important ethical considerations. Giving should be done out of a genuine desire to serve others and glorify God, rather than seeking recognition, approval, or personal gain

Conclusion

In conclusion, Christian giving is a foundational aspect of the Christian faith that is rooted in values such as love, compassion, and generosity. The ethical principles that guide Christian giving include integrity, accountability, stewardship, and selflessness. By practising Christian giving, individuals not only fulfil their duty to help those in need, but also participate in the work of God and demonstrate their faith in action. However, the ethics of Christian giving can be complex and challenging, particularly in a world marked by inequality, poverty, and injustice. It is important for Christians to critically examine their giving practices and ensure that they are aligned with the values and teachings of their faith. This includes being mindful of where and how their resources are allocated, as well as being accountable for the impact of their giving.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, this dissertation provides a set of recommendations for ethical Christian giving as follows:

1. Christians should cultivate a spirit of generosity and show compassion to people in need in all aspects of their lives, not just financial giving.

2. Christians should give thoughtfully and intentionally, considering the needs of others and the impact of one's giving.
3. Christians should seek accountability and transparency in giving practices, ensuring that resources are used effectively and responsibly.
4. Christians should engage in ongoing reflection and education on the ethics of giving, seeking to grow in wisdom and discernment in their giving practices.

Ethical Issues on Christian Giving in Selected Pentecostal Churches in Atiba Local Government, Oyo.

Ethical Issues Questions

During the course of the study, there are different views from different churches concerning the way to give to God and the poor. The researcher asked the following questions to the pastors in some selected Pentecostal churches in Atiba Local Government Area of Oyo in order to know the right means of giving to God and the poor.

1. Why do we have to give to God?
2. How can we give to God?
3. Is there a reward for giving to God?
4. Is it necessary to give to the poor?
5. Did God compulsory tithe for believers?
6. Is the use of talent a means of giving to God?
7. Is it good to be coerced before giving to God?
8. Does spirituality influence one's life of giving?
9. How should a Christian give ethically?
10. How has the tithe strengthened one's faith?

These are the questions asked of the pastors, and answers were duly provided through the use of interviews and adequate answers were provided for a believer to know the ethical ways of giving.

The churches are:

1. The Redeemed Christian Church of God, Agape parish Oyo.
2. Christ Apostolic church, Oyo.
3. Living Faith Church, Ajegunle International, Oyo.

The Redeemed Christian Church of God

Pastor Michael Ajayi¹² assistant pastor of the Redeemed Christian Church of God Agape parish, Oyo, said we give to God because He first gave His son to us for the redemption of our sins. In John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." He gave His son as a sacrifice for the atonement of our sins. We have to reciprocate this by giving our money, time, and talent to Him as a means of showing appreciation.

It is expected of us to give our totality to God, we should give our time, money, energy, and also our intellect. It is not only money we can give to God but also our time, properties and also our body.

There is a reward for giving to God, the Bible says, "Give, and it shall be given unto you...." It is expected that when we give, we will receive back in multiple fold. Giving is a command in which if we follow, we will receive back in hundred-fold from God. Some people withhold, yet still in abject poverty, and there is he who scattered, and they increase greatly.

The issue of tithing is raging on social media. Concerning tithing, there are different opinions from different denominations based on doctrine. On the issue of tithing, we should consider what God wants and not what pleases men. The issue of tithe is compulsory for all believers Malachi 3:10 "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse so that there will be food in my house " Not bringing tithe to the house of God does not mean that one is under curse because we are in the dispensation of grace (Jesus Christ) who have redeemed us from the curse of the law, but if truly we love God, we must give our 10% of our income to the one who provide. Giving tithe to God is essential for church growth. In the Redeemed Christian Church of God, tithing is part of the doctrine. The Bible says the poor will not cease in the land. The poor are the ones who cannot afford the basic needs of life. It is recorded in the Bible that we should take care of the poor. As a believer, it is mandatory to give to the poor. Also, it is necessary to give to the poor.

Talent is a means of giving to God because it is God who gave us talent, and it is expected of us to use it for His glory. Jesus taught about the parable of a man who gave talents to his servants. He gave 5 to one, he gave 2 to another and the last servant he gave 1. The servant with 5 talents traded with it and got 5 profit, the second servant traded with the 2 talents and had 2 profit, and the third servant went and hid the 1 talent given to him. When the master came, he was pleased with the two servants that traded with their talents but the one that hid his own, he called wasteful servant.

Ethically, as Christians, the Bible says when you give, do not let your left hand know what your right hand did. Spreading the news of what we give God or the needy around is embarrassing, and it has no reward. Giving of the tithe has strengthened our faith. The Bible says bring you all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in my house. One's income in a month is not sufficient to spend before the new month. So, to give God 10% out of the 100% requires faith. Giving God the 10% makes us depend solely on God for sustainability throughout the month. If 100% will not sustain us before the month ends, then 90% cannot be enough as well. If we give the 10% to God, He will sustain us.

Christ Apostolic Church

Pastor Ayanfemi Sola¹³ of Christ Apostolic Church Oyo, said we give to God because He first gave to us, everything we have comes from Him. And it is expected of us to give some back to Him to show gratitude. Also, we can give to God in a diver's way. These include our money, material things and time. We should give willingly to God and not grudgingly, because He gave His begotten son to us for our redemption from the power of sin.

Also, there is a reward the Bible says if you sow sparingly, you will reap sparingly, and if you sow bountifully, you will reap bountifully. The more you give unto God, the greater you will receive. God did not owe us anything; whatever you do unto God, you will surely have.

The Bible says we should do well to everyone, especially those of the household of faith. An example of Abraham is when he entertained the strangers that are passing by; he did the work of hospitality. Through this, God gave him Isaac even at his old age. It is necessary to give to the poor, the Bible says he that gives to the poor gives to God.

The issue of the tithe is based on doctrine. Tithe is compulsory by God, Habakkuk 3:8-12: "How did man rob God?" He said you are robbing me by not paying your tithe. The origin of the tithe started with Melchizedek and Abraham, whereby Abraham gave 10% of all he got from the battle and gave to the Melchizedek king of Salem 10% of all. Malachi 3:10 says, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in my house "To stay out of this curse we must pay our tithe. Tithe in our contemporary society is not based on farm produce alone, but also in the form of money. It is based on what an individual or a church member does for a living.

It is not good to be coerced before giving to God. The Bible records that God loves a cheerful giver. God did not want us to give grudgingly. Also, it is not good to be forced before giving to God; God is interested in a cheerful giver, someone who can give a freewill offering to Him.

Imposing giving to God on members does not attach God's blessing. Abraham gave a freewill hospitality to the strangers, and God gave him a great child even at his old age.

Living Faith Church

Pastor Abbas Sunday¹⁴ from Living Faith Church, Ajegunle International, said we give to God because He is the giver of all things. He first gave it to us. He said we should remember Him, honour Him with our substances. The word substance here can be money, time, talent, etc

The first thing we can offer to God is our life. Giving our substances to God without giving our lives to Him is a waste of our resources. The means of giving to God include the following: tithe, offering, sacrifices, and also giving to the poor (because whatever you give to man, you have done it for God. God also said we should not appear before Him empty-handed.

There is plenty of reward when we give to God, he will multiply what we have offered to him or the needy. There is time for everything on earth, the time to plant and the time to harvest. It is expected of every farmer to plant seed to harvest. The reward can be in the form of money, clothes, food, a car, etc., when we give to God. The psalmist says, "Blessed the Lord of my soul, and forget not all his benefits "The benefits here refer to the reward He gave to us.

God compulsory tithe for believers by saying bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse. Tithing here is for both believers and non- believers, and because of this, Jesus said to the Pharisees in the New Testament, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matthew 23:23).

The talent given to us by God should not be monetised but should be used freely for the growth of God. God gave us talent to be used for the advancement of the kingdom. For example, when someone is blessed with a good voice, it should be to the glory of God. Talent is a means of giving, but it must not take the place of giving our substances, time, money, etc.

Christians should give by not blowing their trumpet when we announce our act of giving; it has no reward from God. The more we give to God, the more our faith will be strengthened. Also, it takes submissiveness to pay tithe. Faith will tell the giver of the tithe that the 10% will come back in a hundredfold.

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