

Spiritual Practice of Tithing

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/tithing-law-of-god-or-gift-of-god-part-ii>

God offers us a different perspective on giving. It is not one of last resort and compounded with guilt, but one filled with abundance, freedom, and joy. It is the ancient model of tithing. Tithing can help us take a step toward achieving a God-honoring balance with our financial resources. One of the best tithing stories is that of Jacob (Genesis 28:10-22.)

The ways in which we choose to earn, give, save, and spend money are really spiritual decisions. When our first decision is one of giving, we place a greater level of trust in God. We begin by saying, "Thank you God! All that we have received is a blessing from you." We acknowledge that we worship God and not money! Giving frees us from the bondage that money can have over our lives. Tithing encourages us to focus on God as the source of our strength, rather than our own achievements or financial assets. Tithing leads to spiritual growth.

Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, taught that one who earned and saved money, but failed to give money was not living as a Christian. Tithing introduces spiritual discipline to our financial choices. The bipolar contrast between the pull and push of the hyper-consumer culture versus the biblical principle of tithing is so clear. Tithing dissuades us from absorption into the competitive posture of hyper-consumer-driven communities. Tithing challenges the common assumptions of economics and debt. It offers possibilities of economic justice, moderate consumption, and self-control.

Finally, tithing provides the financial assets for congregations to launch and expand a wide continuum of ministries. Together, we are able to accomplish far more than most of us can achieve individually. We might consider giving money through the church, rather than to the church. When people give to the church, they are giving to sustain the institution. However, when people give through the church, they are empowering ministry. The spiritual discipline of tithing is one of giving through the church. Tithing congregations are beacons of spiritual vitality and health. They are communities grounded in spiritual relationships, beginning with a relationship to God as the primary source of strength, hope, and life.