

January 27, 2019 – Elmont Baptist Church
Message Series: EnTRUSTed: Our Money and Our Mission
Week 3: The Bible & Budgeting
Text: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

The past two weeks have been very fruitful in the life of our faith family. The Lord has been gracious to help us wade into the subject matter of money, possessions, and giving and deal well with the truth of His Word. This isn't something we've talked about much at all over the past nine years, but it has been good for us to deal with it so far.

This week the plan was to give you some practical things we should all be doing with the money that's been entrusted to us. We're still going to do that, but before we get there, I need to tell you about the journey I went on in my studies this week.

Going into this week, I expected to come from a place that I know well in regards to giving in the Church – tithing. Let me say right out of the gate that I have always believed in and, not perfectly, but faithfully practiced tithing. That is giving the first 10% of our household income to the church to advance the Kingdom. Many of you do this as well and have for many years. That was an obvious point that I planned to make this week and considered as the baseline of where to begin. But my study took me to a place I didn't expect to go. As a result, I am not going to try to convince you that you should be tithing to the church today. I know, I can't believe I just said that either. Some of you are offended and some of you are relieved, but by the time we're done those feelings with most likely swap places. So just hang with me and hear me out and more importantly hear the Scriptures.

Most of the tithing verses are in the Old Testament law, where there were two, maybe three, annual tithes totaling at around 23% of one's income and this was not was not voluntary, but mandatory. There are two other OT references before the law was established, but study would show those to be difficult to apply to us today, and obviously we don't want to try to impose all of the OT law onto believers today. The OT law has three parts and while the moral law still applies, the ceremonial law (sacrifices, certain foods, and appearance) and the civil law (laws that governed the Israel as a nation) do not apply to us today. Christ fulfilled and finished those parts, and actually elevated the moral law in passages like the Sermon on the Mount. So to really preach with confident conviction on the tithe, I would obviously need to come from a couple of NT texts. The problem is that there are only three that mention the tithe and only one that could be used to promote it in the NT church, but even that one has some problems when taken in context. So what does the rest of the NT say about tithing? We have Luke writing Acts, and we have Paul, Peter, James, and John. What did they write under inspiration of the Spirit about tithing to help mostly non-Jewish people walk in faithful obedience to the Lord? The answer is NOTHING. They wrote not once a word about tithing, about giving a strict 10% of your income to the Lord's work. But hang on, that's not to say they didn't write and instruct us about money, possessions, and giving. Now personally, I believe that tithing – giving the first 10% of your income to the Lord's work through His church is a great practice and good rule of thumb, but that's as far as I can go with it. If you tithe, again like I do, I'm not here to talk you out of that, but rather give you encouragement to not let that become to source of legalism or just a comfortable giving level for you. And if you give nothing to advance the Kingdom of God through His Church, let the Scriptures

instruct your heart and hands to obedience with what you've been entrusted with. For both the offended and the relieved, let's look to the Scriptures.

READ TEXT

Hopefully from this passage and others we will see that you must...

*Steward your money with conviction and generosity to
advance the Kingdom of God through the Bride of Christ, the Church.*

We're going to spend just a few minutes dealing with some practical areas of how every one of us should be stewarding our money. Then we'll end by looking at two governing principles that can be applied to most all of your journey with Jesus, and that includes what you do with your money.

There are things that will be common for all of us when we seek the face of God and obey the voice of God in using the money He has entrusted to us. Let's look at four and you can explore them more fully in your own time.

Biblical Budgeting Essentials

- ✓ **Give to the Lord's Work**
 - 2 Corinthians 8:5-8
 - Advance His Kingdom
 - Through His Church
- ✓ **Care for Your Family**
 - 1 Timothy 5:8
 - Proverbs 31:10-31
- ✓ **Be Generous to Others** – individuals or ministries
 - Proverbs 21:3; 11:24-25
 - James 2:14-17
 - 1 John 3:16-18
- ✓ **Enjoy God's Gifts**
 - Psalm 118:24
 - Ecclesiastes 2:24; 3:12-13; 5:18; 8:15
 - 1 Corinthians 10:31
 - 1 Timothy 6:17-19

This list is not exhaustive by any means. This is a start and Biblically things we should all be doing with the money God has entrusted to us. He may call you to do more than this and very specific things in addition to this, but will never call you to do less than this.

So how do we get there and how do we keep in line with the additional things that God wants us to do with the money he has entrusted to us? There's a couple of principles that govern much more than just how we steward money, but since they cover that too, we'll look at them.

Good Stewards will Always...

- ✓ **Seek the Face of God** – Matthew 6:33; Mark 12:30; Col 3:17; James 1:5
 - Pray often about what to give
 - Evaluate often how you spend

Too often we let our to-do list and schedule be in charge of us rather than us being in charge of it, and the same goes with our spending. Many of us don't pray about what to give and don't evaluate what we're spending God's money on with any regularity. Have you already made plans for your tax return or have you asked God what He wants you do with it. We have to change our mindset and remember it's all God's and so we need to ask Him often what we should do with His stuff. For some of us He may call us to give more than 10%. He may say you live on this amount and give the rest as I direct you. Can we really draw closer and closer to THE GREAT GIVER and not grow in generosity? Even worse, remain stingy or greedy? The more you seek the face of God, the more you will see as He sees and desire what He desires. Investing in advancing the Kingdom of God won't be anything less than the overflow of your relationship with Jesus. Just like every area of walking with Jesus, this will require faith in Him, not in your job, or your bank account, but Him. And once He directs you how to use His money, you must...

✓ **Obey the Voice of God** – Romans 12:1-2; 2 Cor 10:5

- Trust Him with the risk
- Thank Him for the reward

He may start you nice and slow and let you wade in the kiddie pool or He may call you to dive into the deep end. If you earnestly seek the Lord's face in how best to steward what's He has entrusted to you, then most likely He is not going to call you to use or give less than 10% to Kingdom advancing ministry. Learn to listen to His voice and obey His call and just know up front that there will be risk. Faith always feels risky and the bigger that call to obedience the more risky it's going to feel especially when you start being faithful to obey the Lord with His money that's He's entrusted to you. And then when He meets your need, thank Him. And when He keeps meeting your needs, thank Him, and thank those that He may use to meet your need.

The bottom line is that Biblical Giving will always be three things (1) Generous (2) Cheerful (though maybe a nervous cheerfulness in the beginning) and (3) Sacrificial. Take the great 18th century preacher, John Wesley's, advice: "Earn all you can. Save all you can. Give all you can." And I would add "Enjoy all you can. All to the glory of God".

If you are in terrible financial shape due to your mishandling of money or difficult circumstances and have no idea what to do, ask for help. We will help you find someone that can help you toward recovery. If you're a tither and you do that because God has called you to, then don't stop, but also don't get comfortable and stop there. Keep seeking God's face and obeying His voice. If God has entrusted you with His financial resources and are a member of this church, but you are not sowing into or investing into this faith family, but you benefit from its ministry, then realize you need to better steward God's resources by seeking His face and obeying His voice, and a great place to start is with a 10% commitment. The question for all of us is, How will you use what He has entrusted to you to advance His Kingdom through His church with a generous, cheerful, and sacrificial spirit? How has knowing and loving Jesus changed our hearts and minds about money?

Do you currently or will you commit to...

*Steward your money with conviction and generosity to
advance the Kingdom of God through the Bride of Christ, the Church?*