

TITHING

*Adapted from an article by Paul Cherry, spouse of Rev. Natalya Cherry,
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My childhood understanding of tithing was “give what you *can*.” So once on my own, I gave what I *could* after I paid bills and considered my *needs* until next payday. *Then* I’d drop something in the offering. I figured this was the *gift* I could afford.

Once my gifts tallied 1% of my income, so from *guilt*, I increased that to 5%. It didn’t last long... *guilt* is a terrible motivator because tithing is more than paying bills. It’s about my relationship with God. I knew God, but didn’t trust his promises. Instead, I trusted a paycheck.

When I married my wife, a United Methodist Pastor, we moved to Knoxville, PA where there were no jobs. So here we were, living on one income, deep in debt and my wife *insisted* we tithe.

Writing that first tithe check was a humongous leap of faith. But although expenses exceeded income, we always finished in the black. We were constantly blessed despite my constant laments.

After writing one tithe check, lamenting all along, I prayed for fifty dollars to keep from bouncing checks. Later when cleaning our junk room, I found a basket we received as a wedding gift. Guess what was inside? Someone tied one-dollar bills together on a ribbon. As I started counting them, tears welled. There were fifty... just waiting for a time such as this.

God promises to bless us. The more obedient we are with tithing, the more blessings we see and the closer we are to him. Tithing is an enormous leap of faith. It’s a lot of money over which we have little control.

My problem *earlier* was a lack of *trust* in God’s promises. Now, when feeling queasy about tithing, I increase it as testimony to God’s faithfulness. God provides everything we need... We’re just obeying.

My faith is again challenged. I’m unemployed and working several jobs, none of which pay well. With new son Gregory, things are looking tight again. But this time will be different. I know if we’re living in God’s will, God will bless us. Besides, our tithe always returns to us a hundred fold. Praise God!

