

Essentials

Learning and Tithing

Week of August 16

As we read through the lesson this week, remember that though we are discussing physical actions of Learning and Tithing, they are in the context of a relationship. In a relationship we *learn* about those we love by living life with them, finding out everything we can about them, studying them out of a desire to know what pleases them and what doesn't. As we learn to know them more, and fall in love, we bend our will and even sacrifice so we can better love those around us. Learning and Tithing are outward expressions of our love for our Father. He is the only One who can not only teach us HOW to love, but He also generously gives us everything we need to love Him and others well.

1) Learning

If you are in a Life Group going through these questions, you are already experiencing the benefit of living in community, and sharing a common foundation in Christ. If we are honest with each other during our time together we also share our shortcomings, failures, and fears. Learning together gives us encouragement, insight and perspective that we might have otherwise missed.

Share one benefit of learning together in a group.

2 Corinthians 9:10a says, "For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat." God is intimately involved in every aspect of our learning and has given us everything we need to grow in relationship with Him. One author put it, "We are as close to God as we choose to be." He has provided a portion of faith to each of us (Romans 12:30), The Bible, and His Holy Spirit, so it is not a lack of resources that keeps us from learning about Him.

If I were to ask you to go read from Scripture for the next 30 minutes, would your first reaction be one of excitement and anticipation, or would it be one of boredom, dislike, or indifference? Is it difficult for you personally to learn from God's Word?

What methods or actions do you take to keep your personal study times refreshing and engaging?

What actions or life situations have increased your desire for knowing God more? Are there seasons of life you have found it easier or more difficult?

Romans 10:17 reads, "So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ." Challenge each other this week to commit to studying God's Word daily, not as a ritual discipline, but as a child coming alongside his or her Father taking pleasure in learning how He works.

2) Tithing

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Many people think that the Biblical principle of "you reap what you sow," is like Karma or "what goes around comes around." However, Karma is a teaching of Eastern religions, including Buddhism and Hinduism. Karma teaches that a person who does good acts will become and receive good, and one who does bad acts will become and receive bad. The Bible teaches that we are all sinful and no amount of good deeds can make us good. Only by accepting Jesus, who was all good, as our substitution can we be made holy.

The Biblical principle "you reap what you sow" is far more generous than the idea of Karma because you don't just get out what you put in, you reap a harvest far greater than your original seed because of God's generosity. James 3:18 reads, "And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness." Have you or someone you know ever planted a garden? Could you have fit all of the seeds into one jar? When you were ready to pick or harvest, did you harvest more or less than you planted?

The law of the harvest in the Bible shows God's generosity in even our small contributions to His kingdom.

Recall a time where you or someone you know put in what you thought was just a little effort, but God used it in a big way.

I have found it interesting as a lay person that when we are asked to give 10% of our time to serve the Lord the response is normally positive, but when the church asks if we could give 10% of our income the response is often anger, worry, or indifference.

Why is it so difficult to talk about and submit to teaching about tithing?

What about the argument that tithing was an Old Testament law instead of a New Testament command? Even before the "law" of the tithe was given, Abram tithed (Gen 14) out of gratefulness.

Looking at tithing through the lens of a relationship with God, how does that change your perspective of giving?

Christ Church (you, me, the pastors, staff, everyone!) uses the generous gifts of its people to further God's Kingdom. Though senior leadership has discretion in how the money is apportioned and practically accomplished, God is the One who is ultimately sovereign and the Church is His bride. Our church uses the money received from tithes and offerings to financially support our local Strategic Partners (CCM, 5th St Ministries, Hickory Soup Kitchen, Pregnancy Care Center, Safe Harbor, The Corner Table, Salvation Army) as well as our global missions in Ghana and Bulgaria. We also provide life groups, classes, worship spaces, and events to create non-threatening and sacred environments for the church to invite and meet. And yes, it is also used to provide salaries for faculty and staff which is directed in 1 Timothy 5:17-18.

Ultimately, as the Church, we recognize that we are ambassadors of the most critical Good News the world has ever heard. Investing in God's Kingdom financially should be a response to His already overflowing love for us. When we invest our part, the harvest is great not only for those who receive Him for the first time, but also in our joy.

What steps could you take to invest in God's Bride, the Church? Would you commit to the 90-day tithing challenge as a group?

ESSENTIALS

Text: II Corinthians 9:6-15

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Learning and Applying God's truth.

1. We invest time in _____ God's truth.
2. We put that truth into _____ what we say we _____.

The Plain Truth:

Let's choose _____ over _____
for a Clutched Hand reveals a Clutched heart.

Here are Biblical Principles to live by:

1. You _____ what you _____.
2. Eat all your _____ and you will have none to _____.
3. Give God your first _____ percent and God blesses the other _____ percent.
4. Give God the _____ day of the week/Sabbath and God will bless the other _____ days.

One Year Bible Reading

August 16: Nehemiah 11:1-12:26, 1 Corinthians 10:14-33, Psalm 34:11-22, Prov. 21:14-16
August 17: Nehemiah 12:27-13:31, 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, Psalm 35:1-16, Prov. 21:17-18
August 18: Esther 1:1-3:15, 1 Corinthians 11:17-34, Psalm 35:17-28, Proverbs 21:19-20
August 19: Esther 4:1-7:10, 1 Corinthians 12:1-26, Psalm 36:1-12, Proverbs 21:21-22
August 20: Esther 8:1-10:3, 1 Corinthians 12:27-13:13, Psalm 37:1-11, Proverbs 21:23-24
August 21: Job 1:1-3:26, 1 Corinthians 14:1-17, Psalm 37:12-29, Proverbs 21:25-26
August 22: Job 4:1-7:21, 1 Corinthians 14:18-40, Psalm 37:30-40, Proverbs 21:27

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