

## Weekly Devotional by Pastor Ken Nabi

April 15, 2010

### Why I Tithe

*"Bring the whole tithe into the store house. . ." Malachi 3:10*

Almost 28 years ago, I gave my life to Christ in surrender. I was a college student and immediately found a great small church which taught me God's word. Early on, I was taught that obedient Christians are to give 10% of their income back to God as an expression of faith and thankfulness. This is called tithing. I didn't make much money back then, but decided that I wanted to fully trust God with my life and so I began to tithe. It was very hard at first because it seemed like so much money to give away.

While some debate whether the tithe is an OT part of the law or not, I have found no example of the NT lessening its requirements of followers of God. I believe Malachi 3 and 4 teach that it is possible to steal from God by spending the tithe on your own living. Jesus affirms the tithe in Matthew 23:23 by commending the practice and adding the importance of motive. He taught more about the issues related to money than virtually any other topic in the NT.

The biblical principle is this: everything I have is a gift from God and He asks for at least 10% of my income as an expression of faith (will He really take care of me) and obedience (will I follow Him wherever He leads).

The following list is a sample of the biblical verses which guide Christian stewardship.

- **Giving money away is an investment in heaven toward an eternal reward** (Matt. 6:20 "store up treasures for yourselves in heaven....").
- **Giving patterns reveal heart patterns** (Matt. 6:21 "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also").
- **Give more as God blesses** (2 Cor. 9:6 "whoever sows generously will also reap generously").
- **Give with a cheerful heart** (2 Cor. 9:7 "...God loves a cheerful giver").
- **Plan your giving** (2 Cor. 9:7 "...Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give").
- **Giving is an act of worship** (2 Cor. 9:11 "...through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God").

America is one of the wealthiest nations on earth. Yet, national statistics reveal that less than 4% of evangelicals give 10% of their income back to God. Sadly, we do not model trust in God when we look at our check books or tax returns. Unlike our tax system in the US, the tithing principle is blind to your income bracket. Martin Luther once said that salvation involves 3 conversions to be complete: head, heart, and purse.

Karen and I have tithed almost the entirety of our 22 years of married life and have seen God's provision in simple but certain ways. The last 10 years of our married life we have sought to exceed the tithe by supporting campaigns, missionaries, and friends in the ministry. This causes us to pray and seek God for the future. For instance, we do not exactly know how we will afford

college for our 4 boys, but are resolved to trust God's plan for financial provision rather than hoarding the tithe. There is a deep abiding joy that comes with seeing God provide for our needs. With God's help, we are aiming to teach our children this biblical pattern that they might know the joy of trusting God through tithing.

The tithe is one of the few places in the bible where God says to "test me in this (Malachi 3:10)." Will you follow God's stewardship principles as a life style? Where ever you are at financially, plan your giving and begin to work toward a full tithe discovering the sense of joy that comes from trusting God in the realm of stewardship. Teach your children how to earn, save, and give as an expression of faith.

The pastor who first taught me this principle made a statement that has impacted Karen and me all of our married life. He closed out his teaching on biblical stewardship with this statement about radical trust in God's goodness: "you can't afford not to tithe."

*Prayer: God, help me to demonstrate my trust in You by patterned giving. Give me joy and faith as I give proportionally from the income you provide and my heart burst with joy as I seek to become a cheerful giver. Help me to see myself as a steward and not an owner of all the things you have blessed me with.*

Your Partner in the Gospel – *Ken Nabi*