

# Need More? Give More!

Unleash the power of  
tithing in *your* life!

BY HARRY DONOVAN

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**M**y first lesson in the power of tithing came when I was eleven years old. Over that summer I worked for a grocery store in the little Ohio town where I grew up, and the owner paid me fifty cents a day. At the end of my first week of six ten-hour days, he gave me three dollars.

This was a lot of money to a kid back then, and I went home and with great excitement I showed it to my mother.

“That’s wonderful, son,” she said. “And now, take thirty cents of that and give it to the church.”

“Thirty cents!” I said. I couldn’t believe it. It was such a huge chunk of my hard-earned pay.

We didn’t have a lot of money; in fact, we were poor—but my mother was firm. “That’s what we do, Harry,” she said. “It’s called tithing. Ten percent of everything we earn we give to the Lord. Actually,” she said, “we give it back to the Lord, because it all comes from Him.” And she went on to explain that whatever we give to the Lord, He gives back to us—and more.

So—reluctantly—I did as my mother said. Every week I gave my ten percent to the Lord.

At the end of that summer, I had to go back to school. But my boss at the store said to me, “How would you like to work for me on Saturdays?”

“Sure,” I said. I expected that he would pay me the same rate I’d made before, fifty cents a day. But at the end of that first Saturday he handed me a dollar bill. I was amazed.

That was my first proof that there was something to this business of tithing. I was beginning to get the idea that it was just as my mother had said: You give to God, and He will give back to you even more.

Since that day I have tithed, and the blessings

haven't stopped. After serving in the Navy during World War II, I came home and eventually established my own certified public accounting firm in Akron, Ohio. I attribute the prosperity of my business entirely to God's generous response to my continued practice of tithing.

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**A cure that never fails.** In my role as a CPA, I counseled a lot of people on their finances. Often a young couple would say to me, "After we pay the mortgage and the bills and buy food and clothes for the children, we don't have anything left over."

And I'd tell them, "Do you want to know a surefire way to have money left over?"

"Of course," they'd say. And I would explain to them about tithing.

"Try an experiment," I would advise them. "You're making thirty thousand dollars. Take three thousand and put it into a separate account. The money in that account will be earmarked to go to the church or to do God's work through some other charitable organization. The reason for the separate account is so you won't be tempted to use that money to pay the heating bill. At the end of the year, see if you're better off. If you're not, well, the money is still there. But if you are—and I guarantee that you will be—then you can go ahead and give that money to God."

Sometimes, if I knew the people very well and really wanted to make a point, I would even say, “I’m so sure of this that I’ll make you this offer. If at the end of a year of tithing your finances are as much improved as I expect them to be, I will match that three thousand dollars, and you’ll have six thousand dollars to give to God.” They would look at me in absolute amazement.

Do you know that, although I made that offer to several people throughout my career as a CPA, not one of them ever took me up on it? They didn’t need to. They tried the tithing experiment and the result was just as God promised in Malachi 3:10: “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the flood-gates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”

Just last week a friend from Akron came down to Florida to see me. He owns a paint manufacturing business, and three years ago business was pretty bad. He had cut his workforce to four employees, and the orders were coming in at a very sluggish pace.

“John,” I told him at that time, “do you want to know how to revive your business?”

“Of course,” he said. “How?”

And I explained.

When we got together last week he told me, “After

talking with you, I decided that from every sale I would take ten percent and put it in an account for God. When the account built up I would donate it to the church or to feed the poor. So that's what I did. And would you believe, even with the economy the way it is, I now have all my employees back to work, and we have so many orders we can't get the paint turned out fast enough?"

"Yes," I said. "I certainly would believe it. In fact, I have never known it to fail."

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**The whys and hows of tithing.** Here are a few of the most common questions about tithing that I have heard, and the advice that I offer from years of experience.

*We don't have enough, and we're in debt to boot.* Well, first, take a good, honest look at your expenses. Ask God for the clarity and discipline to cut out inessentials. Once you've done that, go ahead, take ten percent off the top of your earnings and give it to God. Trust God enough to take this courageous step.

*I believe in the philosophy of tithing and would like to try it, but my spouse is opposed. How can we reconcile this conflict?* If something is really important to one spouse, then as an act of love the other should consider doing it. And remember how little money has to do with happiness. I've known more miserable millionaires than I can count. But shar-

ing a walk or a pizza or a movie with someone you love—what can beat those things? If you focus on the simple pleasures and on loving relationships you will be happier, and you will have more to give.

*How do I decide which organizations to benefit with my tithe?* For everyone the answer is different, but here's what I do. For many years I gave 100 percent to my church, but now I donate to several different charities: some to the church, some to a program in Akron that feeds the poor, some to Guideposts, and some to Honor Flight, a service that flies disabled veterans to Washington to visit the World War II Memorial.

To anyone who hasn't experienced this overflowing abundance of joy tithing can bring, I would say: What are you waiting for? Try it! Your life can be so much more than you ever dreamed, not just financially but in every way. God Himself has promised us this.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Harry A. Donovan, a World War II veteran, has had a 50-plus year career as a CPA and management consultant. He served as a presidential economic advisor in the Nixon administration and has been a frequent speaker at various universities and business meetings in the U.S. and abroad. He and his wife, Fran, are members of Guideposts' National Cabinet and also of the Guideposts Foundation Founders Society. Copyright © 2010 by Guideposts, founded by DR. AND MRS. NORMAN VINCENT PEALE. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission.

# *Why* should you consider **TITHING?**

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- Greater material wealth
- Freedom from money worries
- More financial discipline, the basis of wealth
- An enhanced reputation and wider recognition in your community
- The satisfaction of following God's law
- The sheer joy of giving

**Learn more about the  
amazing law of tithing inside!**

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