

E-Series

They're Not Your Doughnuts



6 For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, have not perished. 7 Ever since the days of your ancestors you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, "How shall we return?" 8 Will anyone rob God? Yet you are robbing me! But you say, "How are we robbing you?" In your tithes and offerings! 9 You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me—the whole nation of you! 10 Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus

put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. —Malachi 3:6-10

The last couple of days we have been looking at the spiritual discipline of tithing. In today, the final installment on this subject, I will share with you something that one of our members, Darrell Beckham, wrote about tithing.

Tithe: One-Tenth of Your Increase

Everyone understands that a tithe is one-tenth or ten percent, but ten percent of what? Becoming a Christian in my early twenties, I knew that I could not get a lot of things right; however, I figured the one thing that I could get right was tithing. After all you give ten percent and you are done. Being a detailed rules person, I started reading every book and listening to every sermon I could find on tithing to fully understanding tithing and making sure I did it right. Most of the books and sermons suggested I tithe based on my income.

Then the question of what is income arose. After attending law school and studying tax law for fourteen weeks, I still am not sure I truly understand what income is. And if you are reading this and think you have income down pat, then ask yourself: if you buy a used desk at an auction and find \$700 in one of the drawers, is the \$700 income or if you get a birthday gift of \$100 is that income?

Along the journey to fully understand tithing, I heard a sermon that suggested I tithe based on my increase. The increase perspective was radical based on what I had learned to that point, but it made so much more sense. After all, should I really expect that only the money I receive in a paycheck is God's? The correct view would seem to be that all the money and resources I receive belong to Him.

*The increase principle is easy to learn but difficult to carry out. **Simply put, if you did not have it before and you do now, then it is an increase.** For example, if you receive a birthday present or a scholarship at school, you have received an increase. Tax season is here, so do you count the tax refund as income. You may not count it as income because you tithed based on your gross income; but if you believe the increase perspective, it is an increase because you did not have it before and now you do.*

I first learned this perspective at Catawba Baptist Church from Pastor Tommy Huddleston. Pastor Tommy was a true financial steward of God's resources. He not only managed his giving well, but his personal investing and savings. I started using this perspective, while attending Winthrop University. It was hard at first, because if my grandparents gave me \$20

on the weekend I would tithe \$2 of it because it was an increase. In my opinion, the increase perspective allows us to account for all the resources God gives us.

Hopefully, this principle will challenge you to look at tithing in a whole new light. After all, can you ever really give too much?

Very truly yours,

J. Darrell Beckham, Esquire

Watching My Increase,
Pastor Michael

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