



Why Does God Want My Money? | Shawn Johnson | 11.16.2024
Weekly Study

SHARE

Before jumping into the study this week, let's take a few moments to begin this group time with listening prayer. As a group, ask the Holy Spirit who you should pray for and see who He puts on your heart. Have everybody go around and share who they felt that God put on their heart, see if there is a common theme, and then pray for that person as a group. Let the Holy Spirit guide how you should pray for this person.

- **Also, if someone is struggling in your group, or has a pressing need, take time to pray for them.**

GROW

This week, we are challenged to rethink our relationship with money and God. Have you ever had this thought: Why does God want my money? As we talk about this question, we will examine the heart of tithing, while also exposing our hearts reaction to tithing. Tithing isn't just about finances, it's about our hearts, our mind, our will, and our emotions (Matt 6:21). It isn't just an Old Testament Law, but it's a New Testament principle that Jesus affirmed. It isn't just about a percentage - it's about our priorities. To boil it all down, God doesn't need our money, He wants our hearts and our lives fully submitted to Him. Pastor Shawn's message encourages us to see tithing not as generosity, but rather as obedience and returning to what already belongs to God. Although not always financial, there is always blessing on the other side of obedience.

- **What were your initial reactions to this message? When discussing this topic of tithing, how does it make you feel?**

Read Matthew 6:19-24

In our consumeristic society multiplied by the holiday season that is upon us, it is easy to get caught up in it all. As Jesus makes clear, materialism is in direct conflict with loyalty to God (v.24). Jesus' teaching about money and possessions is meant to reorient our hearts and our loyalty to their proper place. In our world of always needing (and wanting) to have the latest and greatest, creating a practice of generosity is a beautiful act of resistance that will protect our hearts and our souls, putting them into the hands of God.

- **How do you experience this tension between materialism and loyalty to God, especially during the holiday season? Where do you feel resistance when being told what to do with your money?**
- **What practices have you implemented - or can you implement - that help reorient your heart and loyalty to God when it comes to money and possessions?**

Read Malachi 3:6-12

Talking about finances in church is an easy way to make people feel uncomfortable and uneasy for various reasons. For some, their reasons are valid, but for others, it is simply an indication of where their heart really lies. It's not until we get confronted with an issue that we truly realize where our own heart lies. This passage in Malachi confronts us head on. Malachi's call to bring to whole tithe into the storehouse wasn't simply a call to "get back in line and do what God said", but it was a call that exposed a deeper issue - the people no longer trusted God and it showed how they managed their resources. By calling the people back to the original covenant with God and to bring the whole tithe, Malachi is calling the people back to faith and trust in God. Through obedience, spiritual renewal begins. The call to faith and obedience is relevant for us today. The recipients of God's blessings are those who obey Him.

- **How does discussing finances and tithing challenge you on a personal level? What does it reveal about where your heart and priorities lie?**
- **How can tithing serve as a step towards deeper faith and trust in God for you?**
- **Reflect on God's promise to bless those who bring the whole tithe. How does this promise influence your perspective on giving?**

Read Matthew 23:23; Proverbs 11:23-28

“Wisdom is skill for living well in the sight of God and man. We need wisdom every day, because the right thing to do is not always obvious... The Pharisees tithed carefully from all their income, even the herbs from their backyard gardens, and Jesus did not tell them they were taking it too far. But he told them to pay attention to the weightier matters of the Law as well. So let’s not think of tithing as heroic, high-level commitment. Tithing is entry-level obedience... Wisdom takes us further. Wisdom makes us sacrificial, like Christ. That kind of obedience is more than dutifully mathematical; it is beautiful and powerful and freeing. It opens us up to pursue the weightier matters of the law with whole-hearted devotion. But let’s all admit that, sadly, money has an almost hypnotic spell over us. Money makes us feel secure and in control and important. Our itch for more money holds us back from bolder obedience. But tithing alone will not set us free. We should tithe. We also need God’s wisdom to escape the illusions of money and live in the generosity of Christ...” (Raymond Ortlund - Preaching the Word Commentary)

- **What are some ways that money can hinder our spiritual growth and trust in God? How has this appeared in your own life?**
- **How does stinginess or the love of money affect our search for wisdom? Can you tell the story of a time when your desire for money has hindered your decision making?**

M O V E

When discussing a topic like this, where shame too easily creeps into our minds and hearts, it’s always important to remember that our salvation is not dependent on how much we do or don’t give. God does not love us more if we give 20%, and He doesn’t love us any less if we don’t even give 1%. God’s love cannot be bought. God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners (Rom 5:8). This is Good News. These principles were written down for us for our benefit and wisdom. God’s desire is for us to live a rich and satisfying life. Those who take hold of them will experience this abundant life that God offers here and now.

- **Set up your recurring giving, even if you can’t give the full tithe, begin where you can. If not at Red Rocks, find another church and start there.**
- **What are some things that you can do individually, and as a group, to practice generosity as a regular spiritual discipline and act of resistance?**

PRAY

Close your group time out by praying for wisdom, faith, and obedience in the area of finances.

Ask God to bless each group member in whatever step of obedience they take.