



SAINT PHILIP ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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Forty Days of Growth in Stewardship 2021 *“The Seal of The Gift of the Holy Spirit”*

October 11, 2020

Fathers of the 7th Council

“So, how much do I give?”

In addition to returning to God our time and talents, we must also give of our treasure. But as my mother has often said, “the last part of a person to be converted is their wallet!” The Psalmist asks, “What shall I render to the Lord for all His bounty to me?” We know that we cannot repay God and that all that we have is His. Can we find any guidance in Scripture to answer the question, “So, how much do I give”?

In Matthew 19:16-21, we hear the story of a young man who asked Jesus, “What good deed must I do to have eternal life?” This man was focused on the right thing—eternal life—not a job promotion or some ephemeral success. Jesus responded by first telling him that he must keep the 10 commandments, but then added, “If you would be **perfect**, go sell what you possess and give it to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me.” The way to perfection is to give everything we have back to God. So, the short answer to the question, “So, how much do I give?” is, “**all of it!**”

Not many of us are ready to do this, and neither was that young man; and because of this the Scripture says that “he went away sad”. While “all of it” may be the maximum amount required in order to be perfect, the Scriptures also set a minimum amount. There are innumerable references to **the tithe**, giving at least 10%, the first fruits of our income (as well as our time and talents). This proportional, percentage giving is found throughout the Old and the New Testament. Jesus Himself continues the Old Testament tradition of the tithe; in Matthew 23:23 He says to the Scribes and Pharisees, “**You tithe...and this you ought to have done**”, and then He adds His own requirements of justice, mercy and faithfulness.

So, prayerfully pick the percentage, between 10% and 100%! We will be held accountable for the choices we make with the treasure we have been given, and “if we sow sparingly, we will reap sparingly”. The choice is ours, as we are blessed with free will. “Let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or out of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver (I Cor. 9:7)”.

In Christ,

Subdeacon Luke and Judy Carpenter, Stewardship Coordinators

A Parish of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

“And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.” Acts 11:26