

ELEMENT OF WORSHIP:

Tithes & Offerings

As recipients of his grace, we give back to God a portion of what is already his.

DEFINITION

Tithes and offerings are freely given tokens of dedication and devotion. Everything we have is a gift from God, and our offerings are a way of acknowledging God as the giver.

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Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

1 Chronicles 29:11-12

DEVOTIONAL

Talking about money can be pretty awkward. It is awkward because few things seem so fundamentally ours as money. And yet, the story of Scripture teaches that even money is

not ours. It's God's. The portion of our service where we give tithes and offerings, then, is a recognition that what we have does not, in the truest sense, belong to us. The very concept of tithes and offerings only makes sense in a framework that acknowledges God as the source and giver of all things. Do we take seriously the words in 1 Chronicles that all that is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to the Lord? Or are we more likely to be like the man in Mark 10 who became sorrowful when Jesus called him to give away all that he had? The giving of our tithes and offerings is a joyful recognition that God sits enthroned in heaven and all things come from his generous hand.

APPLICATION

There is both an internal and external application to considering all of this. Internally, spend some time evaluating your relationship to material goods, including money. What is your posture toward money? How does your posture change when you recognize that all that is in the heavens and in the earth is the Lord's? Externally, prayerfully consider how you might adjust your giving. If all that you have is truly the Lord's, how will you give back to him in recognition of who he is and what he has done?

God, you are generous in your gifts to me. Your grace never runs out and your mercy is new every morning. Everything on earth and in heaven is yours. Create an attitude within me that is generous and quick to give. Amen.