

**Bellefield Presbyterian Church**  
**Stewardship Teaching Guide**

Understanding the significance of Financial Stewardship





# *Introduction*

*This booklet is intended to serve as an instructional guide and reference for those who may have questions relating to the Christian practice and spiritual discipline of giving. The following are some of the most common questions dealing with the biblical concept of financial stewardship.*

*As you read and study the following material, please refer to the Scriptural citations found throughout this booklet, and also discuss it with others as necessary.*

## Questions

- *What is financial stewardship?*

A steward is someone who oversees, manages, and cares for the belongings of another. The word used for a steward in the New Testament is *oikonomos*, which means “household manager”, and referred to the servant(s) entrusted with the master’s things. Jesus once told a parable about servants who were given various levels of material resources by their master (Matthew 25:14-30). In that parable, Jesus taught that a good steward is one who takes what they have received and then cultivates, multiplies, and uses it wisely rather than hide it away under the guise of ‘protecting’ it.

Stewardship, therefore, is a broad concept that refers to how we are to use the things that God has given us in ways that honor God and bear witness to Christ’s kingdom. It encompasses everything we do as followers of Jesus Christ. Scripture says, “it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy” (1 Corinthians 4:2). Financial stewardship is how we use our material resources, wealth, and economic capital.

- *Why is financial stewardship an important aspect of Christian living and faithful discipleship?*

Because the allocation of our wealth reveals the allegiances of our heart. Jesus taught more about money than he did about heaven and hell combined, famously saying, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). Wealth is one of the easiest idols for our hearts to pursue, and can be one of the hardest idols to let go. It often becomes an insatiable pursuit which then produces other sinful behaviors like greed, jealousy, and pride.

The writer of Ecclesiastes knew this when he said, “He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity” (5:10). The Apostle Paul echoed this when he was instructing Timothy, his young protégée: “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs” (1 Timothy 6:10).

Financial stewardship is an important part of faithfully following Jesus Christ because it reminds us that our identity, security, and ultimate worth come not from the size of our bank account but from the sufficiency of our Savior. “Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you’” (Hebrews 13:5).

When we give part of our resources back to God, we are declaring an allegiance to the One who has given us all things in Christ (Romans 8:32). We also reflect the character of God—because giving is at the very heart of who God is. After all, “For God so loved the world, that *he gave* his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Our giving is a way to reflect the character of God as we rest in his grace.

Finally, our giving “is a visible expression of the commitment of believers to the extension of the Gospel, the work of ministry, and the support of the Church of Jesus Christ” (EPC *Book of Worship*, 2-9B). Faithful financial stewardship helps to advance the Gospel, meet the needs of others, and provide for the ministry, community, and service of the local church.

- *How much am I supposed to give as a faithful steward?*

In the Old Testament, the concept of the tithe, or ten percent, is consistently presented (e.g. Numbers 18:26;

Deuteronomy 12:17; 2 Chronicles 31:5). This wasn't always upheld by God's people, however, as seen most strongly when the Lord spoke through the prophet Malachi, saying, "Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions...Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need" (Malachi 3:8-10).

In the New Testament, there is not a specific command given to believers regarding the percentage of giving that constitutes faithful financial stewardship. Jesus, however, validates the concept of the tithe (Matthew 23:23). With respect to giving, believers are called to "excel in this act of grace also" (2 Corinthians 8:7), and the earliest Christians gave sacrificially of all that they had (Acts 2:45; 4:34-35). In light of this, the tithe is commonly considered to be a valid and enduring principle for Christian giving patterns.

Establishing your giving level is not about grudgingly adhering to a legalistic principle, but about joyfully and generously responding to God in an act of worship, obedience, and sacrifice. Jesus commended the widow who contributed "out of her poverty" (Luke 21:2), and we are told that "God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). Because the Lord is the one who "searches mind and heart" (Revelation 2:23), the significance of our giving comes not from the net total but from the motive of your heart and the grateful, generous sacrifice that results.

- *Why is generous giving often so difficult—and how does the Gospel help us cultivate a different perspective?*

There are three underlying reasons why generous giving is often difficult, and they can only be truly overcome when we turn to Jesus Christ and rest in his Gospel.

The first is apathy. It is the heart attitude that says, “I could give, but I just don’t”. When we focus on who God is, what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, and the blessings that come from being renewed through the Spirit, we can then be roused out of our apathy into joyful participation in the ongoing work of God in this world.

The second is greed. It is the heart attitude that says, “I should give, but I won’t”. It looks to material wealth as a source of identity and security rather than finding those things in Christ. The Psalms remind us that when a rich man “dies he will carry nothing away; his glory will not go down after him” (49:17). Our wealth is not something to be hoarded, but something to be managed wisely as a temporary—not eternal—good. When we look to the eternal inheritance that we have in Christ, we can hold the temporary things of this world loosely.

The third is fear. It is the heart attitude that says, “I would give, but I can’t”. It doubts that God will provide or that we will have enough for our wants and needs. Jesus reminds that the Father knows what we need, and that we need “not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on” (Matthew 6:25-34). Generous giving is a display of trust in the God who has made us, sustains us, and has redeemed us in Christ.

- *How can I give to the Lord here at Bellefield?*

There are several ways to give:

- Each week during the worship service, an offering is taken; reminding us that regular giving is act of worship. You may present cash or check (made out to “Bellefield Presbyterian Church”) gifts during that time. Offering envelopes are available in the pews.
- You may go to our website and setup an Electronic Fund Transfer account, to be withdrawn from your bank

account or credit card under the parameters of your choosing.

- We also accept stock options, charitable trust disbursements, annuities, and other methods of giving. Please see our website for more information.

6. *How will my giving be used?*

Your giving will be used to fund our various ministries and outreach endeavors, run our programs, care for our facilities, support our missionary partnerships, and employ our ministry staff. The annual budget is distributed to the congregation each year as a way to be fully transparent with how we, as a church, are stewarding the gifts of God.

**Conclusion:** Financial stewardship is vital aspect of our lives as followers of Jesus Christ, and generous giving is a way for us to honor, serve, and reflect the God who has given us all things in Christ (Romans 8:32). If you have any questions, please contact the office or speak to Pastor Josh or any of our elders and we would be glad to help.