

# Heart of Giving

When it comes to finances at Pearce, leadership and staff take care to steward well that which the Lord has provided financially to the church, whether through giving or other means. In 2021, the Employee Retention Credit was a significant way in which the Lord blessed Pearce financially despite contributions decreasing by over 14% from 2020 to 2021. It won't come as a surprise that giving needs to increase within the next 1-2 years in order to maintain how we are currently operating, let alone in order to grow our ministries which I know is all of our prayer; to expand this family of God's holy love that transforms lives for Christ.

Speaking of "transformation," many of us know that this can be *really* difficult. It is at the least uncomfortable and can even be quite painful at times. Romans 12:2 tells us "*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*" Despite transformation challenging and stretching us, we are *called* to transform as we continually seek to become more like Christ in our thoughts, words and actions.

The pattern of this world, as the enemy would have it, is to be self-focused. To care for one's own pleasure and happiness above, or even at the expense of, someone else's well-being. To desire personal ownership, yet even at times despise personal accountability. It is so easy to create justification for our choices, even when they are not in alignment with God's best for us. We often have no trouble convincing ourselves that we know best when it comes to how we ought to live our lives, spend our time, use our money.

One of the more difficult areas for even otherwise faithful Christians to trust the Lord and truly hand over the reins is in the area of finances. There are a variety of reasons that people give for neglecting to tithe. Life situation can seemingly prevent generosity. Past experience can cause us to carry financial fear or angst, which in turn makes us grab on tight to what we see as "our" money. And many just don't seem to truly understand that the Lord has *asked* us to tithe and to live generously, as well.

At the end of the day, the heart of giving - of tithing - is a heart of surrender. Not only is tithing something we have been told to do by our Creator, by the Giver Himself, but it demonstrates surrender over a prominent area of our lives. It demonstrates a trust in His provision. It demonstrates a deep faith in His promises. Tithing is not an easy or mindless act. It is a thoughtful, deliberate sacrifice as we give back to the Lord a portion of what He has first given and allowed for us.

Often times, those who withhold the Lord's tithe from Him have other areas in their lives which they are withholding from Him, as well. Tithing can be a first step to break the temptation we may have to stake claim over aspects of our lives which are not healthy or pleasing to the Lord. It's a step toward handing over those reins. And the Lord will not leave that step unaffirmed. He sees your act of giving; He sees your heart.

I remember my dad putting a \$20 bill into the offering plate one week and later telling me that he literally did not have any more money to his name at that moment, but that there was enough food at home for the week and that things *always* worked out. And they did that week. And for many, many more afterward. The stories and testimonies are endless about the ways in which God shows up when

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we demonstrate our faith in Him. When we *refuse* to withhold from Him. Tithing changes you, transforms you. It will open your eyes to ways in which the Lord is moving in your life, it can spark an entirely new outlook and you will be amazed at what can happen or be set in motion in your life by being faithful with your finances!

It is our responsibility but also our privilege to give in support of the Lord's work through the local church. To get involved and go all in. To match our wallets to our words, so to speak. We *get to* give, and we get to witness the Lord give *bigger*. Thank you for your faithful giving and continued prayers over this important area of each of our lives.

Faithfully,

Honna Curtis  
Executive Administrator