



SABBATH 17—APRIL 27, 2024

How Much Should My Offering Be?

Mark 12:43, 44—“Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood.”

When the widow took the offering to the temple, she made two decisions: First, her offering would involve a great sacrifice, and second, she chose what percentage she would give as an offering. How do we know? Jesus said that the widow gave more than the others. If the criterion was quantity, she could not have given more than the other givers, for the Bible says that they gave large sums of money. On the other hand, if the criterion of her offering is a percentage, then the statement is true. She was giving away 100% of what she owned, and this was much higher than all the other percentages returned that day.

Commenting on this story Ellen G. White states: “Thus He taught that the value of the gift is estimated not by the amount, but by the proportion that is given and the motive that actuates the giver” (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 342).

For tithing, God chose a percentage. The word “tithe” means ten percent of one’s income. Regarding the offerings, God gave the freedom to the worshiper to choose the percentage to be returned. In Deuteronomy 16:17 we read, “Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you” (NIV, italics added).

Did you notice the word “proportion”? The percentage of the offerings can be periodically reassessed according to God’s blessings over our financial life.

A good summary would be:

1. Offerings and tithes must be given on a percentage basis.
2. God chose the tithing percentage; the worshiper chooses the percentage of the offerings.
3. Tithes and offerings should not be given impulsively or thoughtlessly.
4. I cannot change the tithe percentage, as it has already been established by God, but I must always be eager to increase the proportion of offerings given to God’s cause.

Appeal: Today I want to invite you to pray and choose what the percentage of your offerings will be. If you already return offerings based on a percentage, you can pray at this time and choose either to maintain the chosen percentage or to update it. This is one of the ways to put self last and God first.

