

BIBLE STUDY

Promise (Regular and Systematic Offerings)



I – THE PROPORTIONAL SYSTEM

1. Besides the tithe, what does God expect to be regularly returned to Him as an act of honesty? (Mal. 3:8).

“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! . . . In tithes and _____.”

Note: “This matter of giving is not left to impulse. God has given us definite instruction in regard to it. He has specified tithes and offerings as the measure of our obligation. And He desires us to give regularly and systematically.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 80 (emphasis added).

2. How regularly should “firstfruits” be returned to God? (Prov. 3:9).

“Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your _____.”

Note: The firstfruits (the first part and best part) were given in recognition of God’s blessings, as often as God would provide income or increase. It would happen after the harvest, or after a sheep started producing lambs, for example. Therefore the regularity of the systematic offering is determined by the regularity of the income. Every time there is income, there should be tithe and Promise (regular and systematic offering).

“Let each regularly examine his income, which is a blessing from God, and set apart the tithe as a separate fund. . . . After the tithe is set apart, let gifts and offerings be apportioned, ‘as God hath prospered’ you.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 81 (emphasis added).

3. Which Bible verses indicate that the Lord suggests a proportional system of giving for offerings? (1 Cor. 16:2; Deut. 16:17).

“On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up _____ he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”

“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the _____ of the Lord your God which He has given you.”

Note: The system indicated by God proposes that both tithe and

offerings should be proportioned to the income. When the proportional system is adopted for offerings, each worshiper will give a specific percentage of their income, rather than a random amount according to their changing impulses. In contrast to the tithe (which is always 10 percent), the worshiper may choose the percentage to be given as a regular and systematic offering (called “Promise”). When this system is adopted, those who prosper more will give more; those who prosper less will give less; while those who do not prosper, who have no income, do not give anything, and even so may be considered faithful.

Regular and systematic offerings (Promise) are the most basic kind of offerings, but special or freewill offerings (for seasonal projects, for instance) may be given in addition to Promise.

“In the Bible system of tithes and offerings the amounts paid by different persons will, of course, vary greatly, since they are proportioned to the income. . . . But it is not the greatness of the gift that makes the offering acceptable to God. . . . Let not the poor feel that their gifts are so small as to be unworthy of notice. Let them give according to their ability, feeling that they are servants of God, and that He will accept their offering.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 73 (emphasis added).

4. *Keeping in mind the proportional system, what is the best motivation for giving? Should we give in order to be blessed, because there is a call or a good project, because we trust the system, or because we have already been blessed? (2 Cor. 8:12; Prov. 3:9).*

“For if there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what one _____, and not according to what he does not have.”

“Honor the Lord with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your _____.”

Note: The best motivation for giving Promise (regular and systematic offerings) is not the needs of the church, the suffering of the needy, a feeling, an impulse, or a rational thought. Instead, the best motivation should be the perception that there was a financial blessing, an income or an increase, that was generated by God.

“The followers of Christ should not wait for thrilling missionary appeals to arouse them to action. If spiritually awake, they would hear in the income of every week, whether much or little, the voice of God and of conscience with authority demanding the tithes and offerings due the Lord.”—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 474 (emphasis added).

5. *What proportion or percentage of his goods, did Zacchaeus promise to give to the poor? (Luke 19:8; Think about why Zacchaeus did not promise an amount instead of a proportion).*

“Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, ‘Look, Lord, I give _____ of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.’”



Note: As an intelligent man, now open to the influence of the Holy Spirit, Zacchaeus decides to adopt the fairest way to give. He would give a previously established percentage from whatever he would have at the moment.

6. *Why did Jesus consider the poor widow as the most generous of all, if the amount she gave was probably one of the smallest that day?* (Luke 21:2, 3).

“And He saw also a certain poor widow putting in two mites. So He said, ‘Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in _____ than all.’”

Note: Jesus was not lacking in mathematical knowledge. It seems inescapable from the story of the poor widow that God does not value the amount delivered, but the proportion of the total that is given.

“In the balances of the sanctuary, the gifts of the poor . . . are not estimated according to the amount given, but according to the love which prompts the sacrifice. . . . God’s providence has arranged the entire plan of systematic benevolence for the benefit of man.”—*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 180 (emphasis added).

7. *What proportion, or percentage, of her livelihood did she give?* (Luke 21:4).

“For all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in _____ the livelihood that she had.”

Write the percentage she put in: _____ %

Note: Have you already established a percentage to give regularly as Promise? That proportion may be equal to the tithe, less than the tithe, or more than it. Prayerfully ask the Holy Spirit what percentage you should give in offerings according to His plan.

The percentage I promise to give back to God as “Promise”: _____%

Until: _____ (date)

“Thus he [Jesus] 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.”—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 342 (emphasis added).

8. *What is God’s promise to those who consider their first priority to return what belongs to Him, before any other expense is met?* (Matt. 6:33).

“But seek _____ the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Learn more about “Promise” here: <https://stewardship.adventist.org/promise-offerings>.