

LIFE MONEY HOPE

Part 4:

Big Idea

During this week's *Life, Money, Hope* message, Pastor Robert Morris talked about "The Principle of the First." When God is first in our lives, everything comes into order. One thing that indicates whether or not God is first in our lives is whether or not we tithe, returning the first 10% of the income God entrusts to us to Him. The concept of tithing was first introduced in Exodus when God told Moses that the firstborn of clean animals had to be sacrificed and the firstborn of unclean animals had to be redeemed. God showed the ultimate example of this when He gave Jesus as a sacrifice to atone for the sins of the world. The firstborn clean (the only perfect man), Jesus, was sacrificed so that the unclean, mankind, could be redeemed. Jesus is God's tithe! It's vital for us to understand the importance of giving what is first. Money, by nature, is unclean and requires a redemptive portion to be given back to God in order to be made clean. The first portion is the portion that has the ability to redeem the rest. God asks us to give the first because it takes faith to give the first. He invented tithing to teach us to walk in faith. The fact that our tithe is first also honors God's tithe that He gave for us in the form of Jesus. By giving the first portion of our income back to God, we recognize that He made the first move toward us while we were still sinners and made a way for our redemption. It is because of Jesus that we have anything at all!

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine." – Exodus 13:1-2 (NKJV)

Discussion Questions

- All that we have belongs to God but He only requires that we give 10% back to Him in the form of our tithe. Discuss why all we have belongs to God and why a tithe is important to Him.
- Share what types of fears or concerns, if any, you wrestle with most when thinking about the principle of first? Discuss why it is sometimes easier to believe that we are saved by faith than it is to believe by faith that God will bless us and care for our needs?
- Proverbs 3:9–10 says that we are to honor the Lord with our possessions and with the first fruits of all our increase. Take a minute to reflect on a time that you gave your time, talents, tithe, or offering. It could be big or little. Share how you felt about yourself when you gave.

Prayer Focus

Thank God for giving his firstborn Son on your behalf. Ask God if you have any heart issues when it comes to tithing, and ask Him to help you settle those questions in your heart. Pray that God will help you put Him first every day. Commit to giving Him your first, to surrendering your finances to Him, for the rest of your life.

Next Step

Be intentional about your tithe this month. Make sure that when you sit down to pay bills and take care of responsibilities, you take care of your tithe first. Honor God with your first fruits, and you will be blessed!

Leader Tip

When ministering to those in your group, remember ESPN: Encourage, Share Scripture, Pray, Next Steps.