

**THE PRACTICE OF ABUNDANCE
MESSAGES ABOUT MONEY**

Cultural Messages about Money	Religious Messages about Money
Money is the measure of self-worth	Self-worth is found in God's love
To be responsible is to be self-reliant	To be responsible is to do God's will
Save what you can because resources are scarce	Do not be anxious about tomorrow
Earn your keep	God will provide for your daily needs
Don't be a burden on others	Community is the source of abundance
Money doesn't grow on trees	Trust in God
Get your money's worth	Everything belongs to God
Money is precious	Be a responsible steward
Money makes the world go around	Money is a gift from God
Money makes you powerful	The love of money is the root of all evil
Money is your security	Authority comes from within
You can never have too much money	You cannot serve both God and mammon
People with money are deserving	Security is found in God
If you're poor it's your fault	Money is an idol
Moneyed people are smart, beautiful, cultured	It is more blessed to give than to receive Blessed are the poor; blessed are the poor in spirit As you have done to to one of the least of these...

Source: The Rev. Kirk A. Kubiack and *A Workbook on Biblical Stewardship* by Richard E. Rusbuldt

THE PRACTICE OF ABUNDANCE

**AN EXERCISE FOR COMPLETING A
PERSONAL STEWARDSHIP AUDIT**

What is your earliest memory of money as a child?

Your happiest memory?

What attitude did your mother have towards money?

Your father?

When was money discussed in your family as you were growing up?

Has your attitude toward money changed now that you are older? How?

Do you feel guilty about the money you have? Covetous of others who have more money than you? Does having or not having money affect your self-esteem?

How do you deal with the fact that we in the Western culture live relatively comfortably while two-thirds of the people of the world are poor?

Draw a continuum line on a large piece of paper. The coordinate on the left is your birth and on the right, your death. Plot the key moments in your life when you gained significant learning about the place of money in your life. What was God doing in your life in those moments?

What kind of volunteer work do you find most satisfying or fulfilling? Why is that work fulfilling to you? How does your volunteering utilize your gifts and talents?

Source: Appendix 2 *From Sacricity to Abundance: A Complete Guide to Parish Stewardship*
by David M. Poling (p. 195-6)

THE PRACTICE OF ABUNDANCE

CARDINAL VIRTUES	AUTHORITY
<p>FORTITUDE</p> <p>Courage of our convictions —Here is where I stand</p> <p>Reason we stand when we say the Creed —Only reason to sign a pledge card</p>	<p>SCRIPTURE</p> <p>Old Testament: The tithe is mentioned numerous times as the standard for giving —early 19th century innovation for Christians to replace pew rents Called to the right relationship with God</p> <p>New Testament: The tithe is mentioned only once in Matthew 23:23 —However, 1/3 of Jesus’ parables deal with money</p>
<p>JUSTICE</p> <p>Recognize our diversity —God loves us equally</p> <p>Different gifts with different talents —The Parable of the Talents</p>	
<p>TEMPERANCE</p> <p>The Christian Diet Plan —All things that are good in moderation</p>	<p>TRADITION</p> <p>Personal: When and how did you first learn about money?</p> <p>Communal: Lambeth Conference and General Convention affirm tithe as standard of Christian Giving</p>
<p>PRUDENCE</p> <p>Doing the right thing at the right time Safeguard against impulsiveness —Planning is important!</p>	<p>REASON</p> <p>Is a standard such as the tithe reasonable? Is proportional giving (based on a percentage) a reasonable method of meeting that standard?</p>
<p>FAITH</p> <p>Doubt committed —Despite all to the contrary, this is what I believe (what I “set my heart on”)</p>	<p>THE RULE OF SAINT BENEDICT</p> <p>Live this life and everything to be done with an attitude of thanksgiving. Abandon attempts to achieve security, they are futile, give up the search for wealth, it is demeaning, quit the search for salvation, it is selfish, and come to comfortable rest in the certainty that those who live this life with an attitude of thanksgiving will receive its full promise. <i>From Always We Begin Again: The Benedictine Way of Living</i> by John McQuiston II (p. 12-18)</p>
<p>HOPE</p> <p>Accepting God’s abundance —Julian of Norwich quoted in the midst of a medieval plague, “All is well, all is well, in all manner of things, all is well.”</p>	

THE PRACTICE OF ABUNDANCE TEN USEFUL PRINCIPLES

1. The basic theology is not new: "All things come of Thee, O Lord, and of Thine Own have I given Thee." What I think of as my possessions have in fact been given to me in trust only for a time.
2. My life itself is a gift. As I spend it, I receive money in return. So when I offer my money at the altar, I am offering a clear symbol of my life.
3. Whatever tithing may or may not mean, it clearly does not mean that 10% of what I have belongs to God and the rest belongs to me. "All things come of Thee..." I am called to be a good steward of 100% of what has been placed in my keeping.
4. The issue is: How much will I set aside to do what God wants done in the world outside my own immediate family? Or to be more precise what proportion (percentage) will I set aside to do what God wants done?
5. The only standard we have been given is the standard of tithing.
6. Tithing is not a law but a gracious norm for the individual's giving; a fractional commitment which symbolizes total commitment.
7. But how much does the Church need? If the Church's task is simply to minister to its own members, its needs are limited and can be budgeted in advance. If, however, the Church's task is to become a channel for ministering to the needs of all people in the name of the Gospel, its needs are for all practical purposes unlimited and can be budgeted only when it is known how much will be made available for this task.
8. So called "Modern Tithing" is an attempt to interpret this ancient Biblical practice in the light of the circumstances of modern life:
 - A- 10% may be figured on the basis of after-tax income.
 - B- The Tithe may include all giving to causes outside one's immediate family.
 - C- A person who wishes to become a tither begins by figuring what percentage of his/her income is presently being given, and sets clear and realistic goals for increasing this percentage until 10% has been reached.
9. This last point is the most central in what we call "modern tithing." It is consistent with the way God always deals with us. God accepts us where we are and as we are, and the Spirit moves within us enabling us to grow. We are called to make a commitment that not only signifies our conversion but can be kept. This commitment can be a plan that leads the converted to the tithe (remember: the minimum standard of giving) by making a commitment to percentage (proportional giving) that after a number of years becomes at least 10%. The commitment can be kept because the dollar amount can differ as long as the percentage is honored.
10. Committing to the Tithe as a standard is a mark of confidence in the Abundance of God.

Adapted from material developed by the Diocese of Alabama.

**THE PRACTICE OF ABUNDANCE
STEWARDSHIP STATEMENTS**

**THE DIOCESAN STEWARDSHIP COMMISSION OF WEST VIRGINIA
STEWARDSHIP STATEMENT**

We believe that faithful stewardship is a thankful response to God's abundance and is an essential component in the life of everyone who believes in and follows Jesus Christ.

We understand stewardship to mean all that we do with the resources God has given us to use, such as our talents, our time, and our material possessions.

We believe that faithful stewardship means making prayerful decisions to use and share these resources responsibly, joyfully, and in keeping with God's

We recognize and accept the tithe as a minimum standard of giving.

**THE STEWARDSHIP STATEMENT OF
THE RT. REV. FURMAN C. STOUGH, VIII BISHOP OF ALABAMA**

EVANGELISM is calling persons to commitment.

WORSHIP is the celebration of that commitment.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION teaches the meaning of that commitment.

STEWARDSHIP is the practice of that commitment.

Some Questions

- **How do you respond to the Stewardship Statement of the Diocese of West Virginia?**
- **What truths about your own response to God's abundance are found in that statement?**
- **Do you accept the connection among Evangelism, Worship, Christian Formation, and Stewardship? How does this affect your commitment to follow Jesus Christ?**
- **What do you now believe about Christian Stewardship?**
- **What are you going to do about it?**