

# How do we know our giving will be approved by God?

Understanding what makes our giving acceptable to God is a profound spiritual question that touches the heart of worship and faith.



# When God Rejects Our Gifts

Not every act of giving pleases God. When our gifts lack the right heart posture, they may be rejected despite their appearance or size.



## **Hebrews 11:4 (ESV)**

"By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks."

## **Proverbs 15:8 (ESV)**

"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him.."



If you want God to  
approve what you  
give, focus on the gift's  
quality not its quantity.





# The Widow's Offering

Mark 12:41-44 (ESV)

"And he sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the offering box. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him and said to them, "Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."







Principle 1: God approves of gifts that are given as an act of worship.



Principle 2: God approves the sacrifice of the giver, not the financial status of the giver. (41-42)



# What This Passage Doesn't Teach

- 1 God doesn't approve of wealth or the wealthy
- 2 God doesn't value large financial gifts
- 3 God prefers the gifts of the poor because they are oppressed





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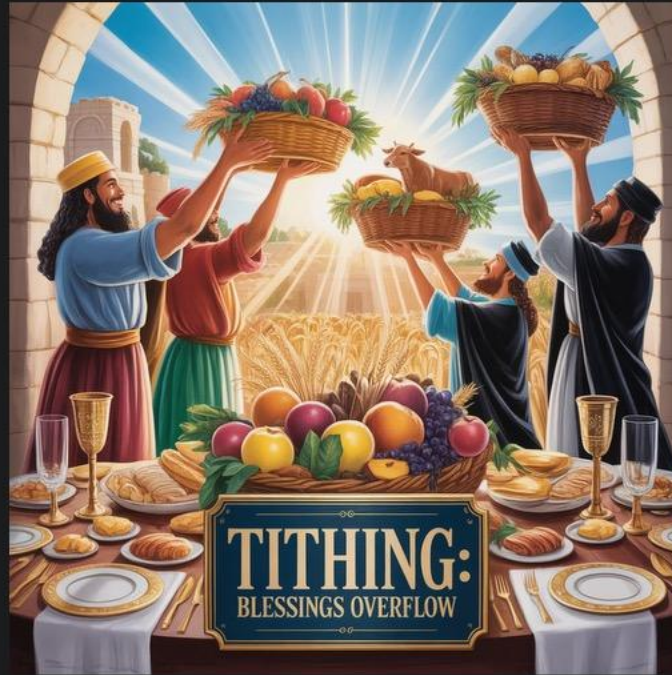
Confusion 1: Abundance = Great Value

# Tithing in the Old Testament



The tithe for Levites

Numbers 18:21, 24.



The feast related tithes

Deuteronomy 14:22-27



Tithe for the poor

Deuteronomy 14:28-29





Confusion 2: Scarcity = Lack of Value

# Widows in Ancient Israel

## Social Status

- Among the most vulnerable in society
- Often lived in extreme poverty without family support
- Frequently grouped with orphans and foreigners as those needing protection
- An orphan could inherit the father's estate, but not the widow. She could have a special provision, called a *ketubah*, which could provide for her.

## Economic Reality

Without a husband, widows had virtually no means of income in an agrarian society where men controlled property and commerce.

### Exodus 22:22-24 (ESV)

"You shall not mistreat any widow or fatherless child. If you do mistreat them, and they cry out to me, I will surely hear their cry, and my wrath will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless."



# Confusion 3: Abundance = Level of Impact

We often confuse abundance with impact or importance.



## Parents

Daily sacrifices and guidance that shape future generations often go unnoticed but have immeasurable impact.



## The Retired

Those who continue serving after retirement bring wisdom and experience that enriches communities in ways money cannot measure.



## The Teenager Who Serves

Young people giving their time and energy create ripple effects of positive influence that extend far beyond what we see.



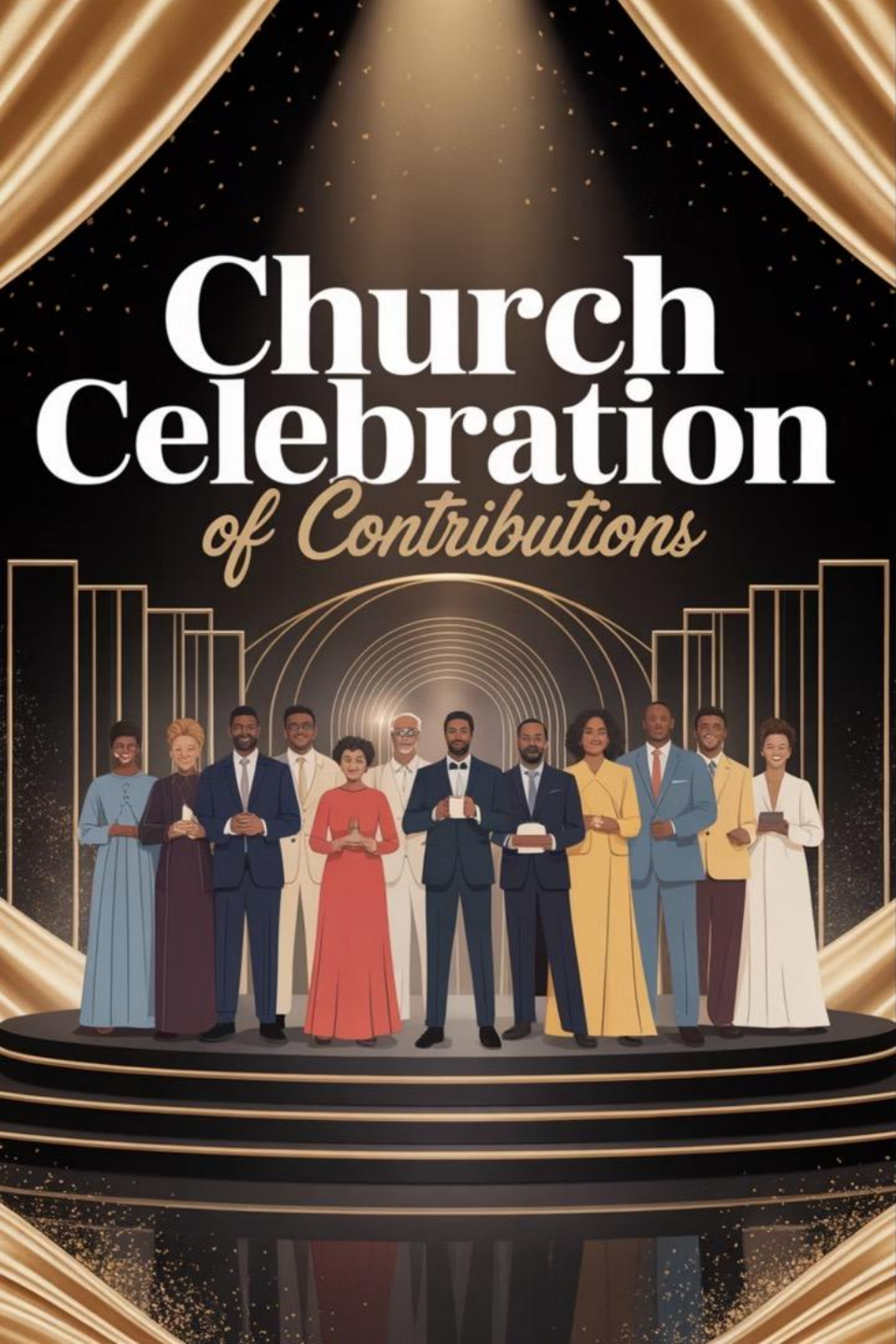
## The Small Church Pastor

Leaders of modest congregations often touch lives profoundly through personal connections and faithful service.



What does this mean for church?





# Church Celebration *of Contributions*

Who and what do we  
celebrate?

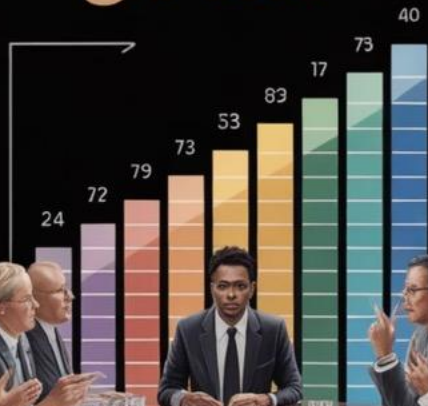


# Church Leadership Selection

Why do we select the leaders we do?



# *Measuring Spiritual Fruit*



## Evaluating a Ministries Value

# Measuring Ministry Success





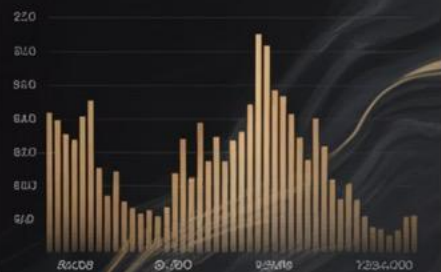


# Evaluating Ministers

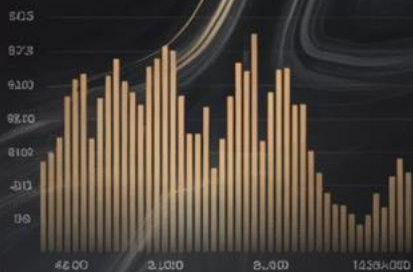
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# Ministry Insights

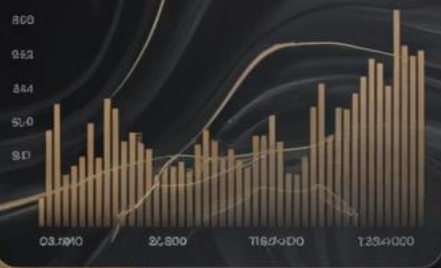
## REACH



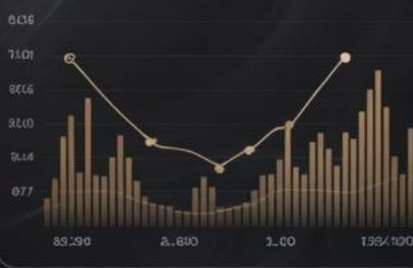
## ENGAGEMENT



## IMPACT



## GROWTH



# Evaluating Ministry Methods

What metrics do we use to evaluate ministry methods?



# Howard Hendricks'

## Three Tests for Godly Ministry

1. Is the work well done? (Colossians 3:23)
2. Is the Word well used? (2 Timothy 4:1)
3. Is the Lord well pleased? (Galatians 1:10)





Principle 3: God determines value on the scale of the giver, not the size of the donation. (43)



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# Faithfulness Over Size

"God evaluates our gifts by the faithfulness of the giver, not by the size of the gift."

- 1 God evaluates the context of the gift
- 2 God evaluates the method of gift giving
- 3 God evaluates the motivation behind the gift





Principle 4: God sometimes approves of giving that others would call foolish. (44)



# Giving should cost us something

2 Samuel 24:24 ESV

"But the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.."



# Giving as an Act of Faith

Giving what we don't have can be an act of faith that God rewards.



# Giving may look like foolishness to others

1 Kings 17:8-16 ESV

"Then the word of the Lord came to him, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you." So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink." And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." And she said, "As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die." And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the Lord sends rain upon the earth.'" And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah."



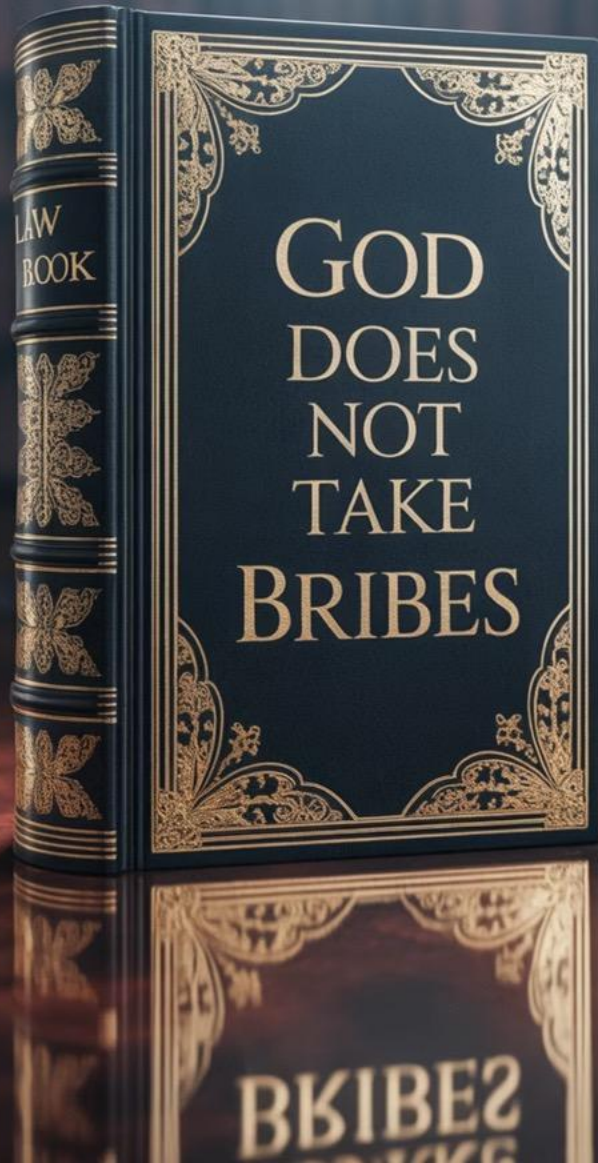
# Not All Faith Gifts Are Approved

1 Timothy 5:8 ESV

"But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

Mark 7:11-13 ESV

"But you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, "Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban"' (that is, given to God) then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do."



# Faith Gifts Are Not Bribes

Deuteronomy 10:17 ESV "For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe."



Why does it seem like we never have enough to give?

# Reason 1: Putting Ourselves Before God

Haggai 1:1-6 ESV

"In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest: "Thus says the Lord of hosts: These people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord." Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet, "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? Now, therefore, thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes."



# Reason 1: Putting Ourselves Before God

Haggai 1:7-11 ESV

"Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord. You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house. Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce. And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labors."

## Reason 2: We don't practice Godly wisdom with what God has given



Luke 16:10 ESV

"One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much."



# Reason 3: Our priorities are not the same as God's

## James 4:3 ESV

"You ask and do not receive,  
because you ask wrongly,  
to spend it on your passions."



Reason 4:  
We don't really trust God to provide (or know  
what to expect from Him).



# God's Wants to Approve and Reward our Sacrificial Gifts

Malachi 3:10 ESV

"Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need."

Mark 10:28-30 ESV

"Peter began to say to him, "See, we have left everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life."

If you want God to approve  
what you give, focus on the  
gift's quality not its quantity.

Giving should be an act of worship

Giving should be sacrificial

Giving should be an act of trust

Giving should not be a bribe

Sacrificial givers should expect a reward  
from the Lord

