

2010 Financial Stewardship Pledges

FAIRLAWN WEST UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, 2095 W Market Street, Akron, OH 44313

What are we? A church.

Who are we? The body of Christ.

We worship, we teach, we pray for & with, we nurture, we support, we care for, we offer, we include, we challenge, we hope, we dream, we listen, we work, we serve, we question, we meditate, we retreat, we laugh, we cry, we sing, we bless, we give...

Here are some tools to help us grow in a more biblical and Christian spiritual understanding of stewardship, tithing, offerings, and pledging. Please use these as you consider your financial pledge for 2010 for the mission of Fairlawn West United Church of Christ.

Malachi 3:10 Bring your full tithe to the Temple treasury so there will be ample provisions in my Temple. Test me in this and see if I don't open up heaven itself to you and pour out blessings beyond your wildest dreams.

A Disciple's Generous Response Six Principles

1. Generosity: A Spiritual Discipline: A disciple practices generosity as a spiritual discipline in response to God's grace and love.
 2. Responding Faithfully: A disciple is faithful in response to Christ's ministry.
 3. Our Financial Response: A disciple's financial response, while unique to individual circumstances, expresses love of God, neighbor, creation, and oneself.
 4. Sharing Generously: A disciple shares generously through tithing so that others may experience God's generosity.
 5. Saving Wisely: A disciple saves wisely in order to create a better tomorrow for self, family, the church's mission, and the world.
 6. Spending Responsibly: A disciple spends responsibly as a commitment to live in health and harmony with God and the world.
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As disciples of Jesus Christ, it is helpful to understand what he said about money and possessions:

* More than 2,000 scripture passages refer to money and its use; about two-thirds of Jesus' parables make reference to our use of financial resources.

* Jesus knew that, left to our own devices, this area would quickly become a source of pain and frustration--and sometimes bondage.

* He saw how easily our hearts would be led astray from devotion to God into areas of worry and even obsession over possessions.

* Jesus wanted to show us that liberty comes from following God's word in every area of our lives, including this one.

From "Wealth Conundrum – A Money Manager Wrestles with the Puzzles of Wealth" by Ralph Doudera

"According to the Old Testament, if I didn't tithe, I was stealing from God. (Malachi 3:9) Jesus took it several steps further. He said, 'Pick one—only one. You can't serve both God and Money.' When I first read Jesus' statement about serving God or Mammon, it seemed simple, almost obvious, but when I thought about it, I realized that many of my decisions had been improperly motivated by money. I asked myself, do my actions and motivations revolve around money, or do I use money as a tool to achieve my goals? Do I use IT, or does IT use me? When I have to make a decision, who decides?"

"The word for mammon is capitalized in the New Testament. That suggests that for some people Money with a capital M is the object of their affections. In other words, it's a god. Money with a small m is neutral, while Money with a capital m is not.

"*Serving Money.* To be honest, I saw that instead of money serving me, I was serving money. Capital M. What did that mean?"

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other,
or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and Mammon." (Matthew 6:24)

It meant that money was dictating my final decisions. I always considered the money factor before I moved forward. I could not serve both God and mammon, Jesus said, and I had to admit I was serving mammon. You don't have to be rich to serve money."

(If you would like a copy of this small book, contact our office@fairlawnwest.org or call 330-864-2179)

For help on financial management and other resources in regards to money, spirituality and stewardship, visit

<http://fairlawnwest.org/steward.html>