

Stewardship

The tithing game is fascinating, though no one is advised to rush into it. There is no room here for any but the most dedicated players. Dedicated in many ways: to tossing your all into the pot; to being eager to win; to revelling in the fever that grips you while you play; to spending even your spouse and kids on the game; to the thrill that races up your spine as you realize how tremendously high the stakes are climbing; to the absolute NEED to win.

It's a game that separates the men from the boys ... yet it is often the young boy who leads the man.

Tithing is no game of marbles. No mere exchange of steelies or clearies. Nothing so easy as marbles ... with its ring to help form the rules. There is no penalty here when the marbles roll astray because there is no limit to this game. No way, either, to crack someone else's cleary. It's even exciting when you think of the many kinds of beautiful marbles

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everyone has ... and how each one is a winner as valuable as your own, though yours be a half-pint, a boulder or a steely.

But it is a game ... and it's always for keeps. It's very much like gambling, but it is no gamble.

If you have never gambled be aware before you begin, that this game, whatever its variation, is already rigged. There

is no way for you to break the bank or change the odds. But no ceiling, either, on your take.

Actually this kind of gambling becomes gradually reversed until the give



and the take become blurred in your mind, until you find yourself fascinated and feverish at tossing in your chips. Maybe it's because of the tremendously high stakes.

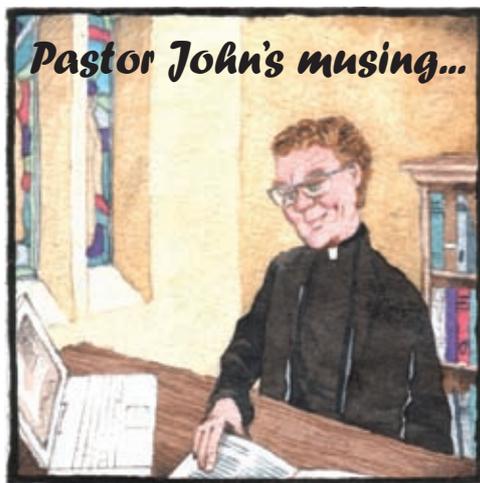
But make no mistake, tithing IS risky. This is no mere game of marbles where you can quit while you're ahead, pick up your marbles and leave the game. While no one blocks you, the pot quickly becomes too high NOT to keep on playing.

The tithing game is exciting and once the fever gets into your blood it rampages. It's dangerous. Don't even begin if you are not serious about the stakes.

Because nobody plays this game with God without both paying high ... and raking in the pot. ☩

Too often we fail to understand that Christian instruction about money is one of the best opportunities we have to teach our children about God's love for us, and his ownership of all things.





The pastor of St. John's was indulging in a malted milk and a frown.

"Who did you scrap with this time?" I asked him.

"With one of my parishioners, worse luck," he replied. "While I was out to dinner at his home the other night he beamingly showed me three piggy banks he had given his three children, and right away he was having them go through the drill of putting nickels into their banks. 'They do it religiously every week,' he purred softly. Then I blew up. I denounced the piggy bank as an emissary of Satan. Well, not quite, but I did denounce reliance on it as a shaper of character. My parishioner had been training his children in thrift and saving, but what, I asked him, were his means of training them to generosity? He had none. I told him he was training up a nice trio of tightwads."

Perhaps the old scrapper has a point. In many, many homes Johnny is being given training in thrift and saving. I can just hear the proud parent saying, "Put your quarters into the piggy bank, Sweetheart! Listen, you can hear them: Ping! Ping! Ping!" Little Johnny and little Mary are being conditioned to like the "ping!" of a coin dropping into a china bank as if it were among life's sweetest sounds. So it is that the piggy bank helps the young

financiers grow up to epitomize the little pig who went to market. Or maybe ... and this goes for boys and girls equally ... the little pig who stayed home, who never set forth on any adventure in giving, who never took part in any enterprise of service. When Junior gets to be Senior you may very likely find him or her, if you seek them out in solicitation of charitable funds, down in the cellar sitting on their piggy bank.

How much more detailed, continuous and emphatic is the training parents give their children in thrift than is the training they give in generosity! The end result, as far as giving to church and charity is concerned, is comparable to a person who goes into town and buys a \$200 overcoat and a \$100 pair of shoes for themselves and a \$25 dress for his wife - then returns home singing at the top of his voice, "I love my Nancy Jane." Such love is simply overwhelming.

Training in generosity ... here is quite a field for imaginative invention. You might try the church offering envelopes for a good beginning. Let the child see that money goes into the church envelopes no matter what the need for other things. It is a great lesson for a youngster to know that Mommy and Daddy may be strapped for ready cash, yet always have money for benevolence and church. A good practice is to let the children have their own envelopes and contribute a regular sum from their allowance. When they are old enough - age ten will do it - let them make out the envelopes for the whole family. It's good training in book-keeping as well as benevolence.

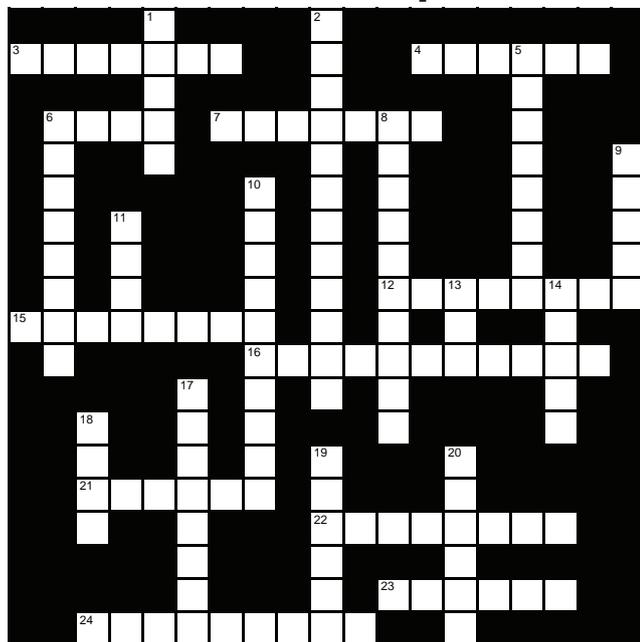
Don't let the piggy bank have the last word. 



"My mother drew a distinction between achievement and success. She said that achievement is the knowledge that you have studied and worked hard and done the best that is in you. Success is being praised by others and that's nice too, but not as important or satisfying. Always aim for achievement and forget about success."

Helen Hayes

Stewardship Crossword Puzzle



Across

3. Christians' wealth not used simply to increase them.
4. Real person's worth is to put this to work.
6. Steward wants to do _____.
7. God's intended use of talents.
12. One of the three T's of stewardship.
15. Christians' wealth not used to promote their own.
16. It is a ministry.
21. _____ money is not an end to itself.
22. How to make money in Amos' formula to Christians.
23. Another of the three T's of stewardship.
24. Wise use of money explained by St. Luke.

Down

1. Referenced in 22 verses in the New Testament.
2. Christians' wealth not used to acquire more of them.
5. Christians' wealth not used to provide more of them for themselves.
6. Both serving and giving to benefit others.
8. Followers of Christ.
9. Not silent on making and spending money.

10. Treating others unjustly.
11. Prophet who give advice on how to make money.
13. Making money is not an ___ to itself.
14. _____ our gifts to benefit others, pleases God.

17. Cultivated by stewards to enable generous giving.
18. A gift from God, measured in hours and minutes.
19. Use of money that does not violate good morals.
20. St. Luke's advice on how to spend money.

Steward of the Month

The Hands of a Few...

Submitted by: Debbie, Milltown, NJ

Can a simple knit cap help save a baby's life? In many developing countries it sure can! According to the Save the Children organization four million newborn babies die each year within the first month of life. Bill Gates has been quoted as saying one of the easiest ways to cut down on infant mortality is to keep babies warm and dry. Through their Knit One Save One campaign, this organization has sent thousands of baby caps and newborn care kits to new mothers in such places as Bangladesh, Malawi, and Vietnam.

This past fall one of the college students at St Pauls Church in Milltown, NJ approached the pastor asking if he thought some of those in the congregation might be interested in knitting/crocheting baby caps. She was hoping to collect a few to send along to the Save the Children organization. Thinking that maybe the people of St. Pauls would donate 25-30 hats, Pastor Rich asked one of the consistory members to spearhead the project. Some congregants stitched away, some donated wool and others asked friends and elderly family members to make hats. One congregant

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Regardless of whether you tithe or use some other method of measure, the return you make to God should come from the "first fruits" of your labor. This means that your return to God comes first, before paying all your other bills.

If we give simply from what we have left over after all our needs are met, it is not really sacrificial. If there is no pain in our giving, then we can be sure that we are not giving enough.



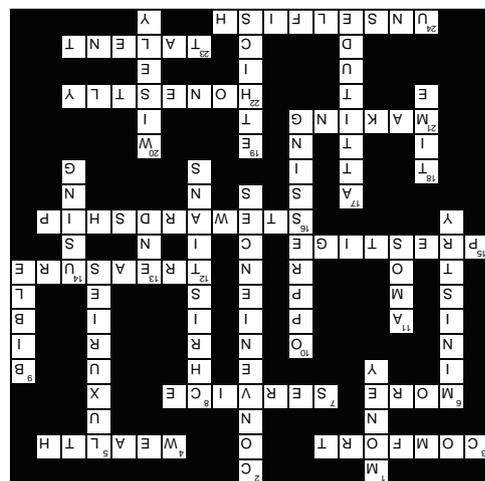
“Can a simple knit cap help save a baby’s life? In many developing countries it sure can! According to the Save the Children organization four million newborn babies die each year within the first month of life...”

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Steward of the Month

gant even offered her time and talent to teach a few how to knit. For the next two months baby caps of all colors and sizes were dropped off during coffee hour!

Through the overwhelming generosity of a few women from St. Pauls and Rutgers University, 242 little ones were a bit warmer this past winter. Yes, the hands of a few provided love and warmth for many newborns around the world. 



**Stewardship Crossword
Puzzle Answer**

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