

Offering Scriptures: Bible Passages for Tithes and Giving

Bible passages for the offering moment in a worship service — texts that teach generosity, gratitude, and stewardship without manipulation, with pastoral notes on delivery.

The Heart of Giving

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-8 (ESV)

“The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.”

The anchor New Testament offering text. Names giving as a decision of the heart rather than a demand of the church. Read as the standard weekly framing.

2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-5 (ESV)

“We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints.”

The strongest biblical framing for sacrificial or special offerings. The Macedonians gave out of poverty and joy, not wealth and obligation. Use for missions appeals or capital campaigns — and only when the giving really is for a specific need.

1 TIMOTHY 6:17-19 (ESV)

“As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.”

For a service teaching on wealth and generosity as a whole. Names generosity not as loss but as a way of taking hold of real life.

Giving as Worship

PROVERBS 3:9-10 (ESV)

“Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.”

The Old Testament firstfruits principle. 'Honor the Lord with your wealth' names giving as an act of worship — putting God first in the practical realm of money.

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.”

The most-quoted tithing passage. Use carefully — some traditions preach it as a straight promise of material return, which is not the pastoral point. Frame it as God's invitation to trust him with the first portion, not a formula for wealth.

1 CHRONICLES 29:14 (ESV)

“But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you.”

David's prayer at the temple offering. The theological posture that undergirds every gift — we are only returning what was already God's. Especially fitting for a capital campaign or building offering.

The Blessing of Generosity

LUKE 6:38 (ESV)

“Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”

Jesus' own teaching on generosity's return. Present as a description of God's character, not a transactional formula — the return may be material or may be of an entirely different kind.

PROVERBS 11:24-25 (ESV)

“One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.”

The wisdom-literature paradox: generosity enriches the giver. A shorter, less transactional alternative to Malachi 3.

ACTS 20:35 (ESV)

“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'”

Jesus' own words, preserved only in Paul's speech. A concise offering scripture that names the joy of giving as the actual reward.

Stewardship and Trust

MATTHEW 6:19-21 (ESV)

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Jesus' framing of giving as a matter of the heart's location. The final line — 'where your treasure is, there your heart will be also' — is often the most convicting sentence spoken in the whole service.

1 CORINTHIANS 16:2 (ESV)

“On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come.”

The apostolic pattern of weekly, proportional, planned giving. Useful for teaching on rhythms of generosity rather than reactive giving.

DEUTERONOMY 16:17 (ESV)

“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God that he has given you.”

The proportional principle in the Old Testament — as God has blessed, so give. A short and non-manipulative introduction to a weekly offering.

How to Use These in a Service

Keep it short. The offering moment is typically 45–90 seconds of spoken content: read the scripture, name briefly what the giving funds, pray, and let the plates pass. Extended appeals train the congregation to brace for the offering rather than participate in it.

Rotate the passages. Reading 2 Corinthians 9:7 every single week trains the congregation to tune it out. Rotate through 6–10 offering scriptures across a quarter so the moment stays fresh and the theology stays broad.

Avoid manipulation. Do not use guilt ('some of you have not been giving what you should'), do not promise financial returns as a formula, and do not compare gift sizes. The scriptures above teach generosity as heart posture and worship — let them do that work without pastoral pressure.

Match the passage to the season. The start of a new year: Proverbs 3:9 (firstfruits). A capital campaign: 2 Corinthians 8:1–5 and 1 Chronicles 29:14. Missions Sunday: 2 Corinthians 9:6–8 and Acts 20:35. A stewardship teaching series: Matthew 6:19–21. The specific scripture signals what this Sunday's giving is for.

Name what the giving does. A brief, honest sentence — 'this funds our ministries, our staff, our care for people in crisis, and our missions partners' — dignifies the moment and

treats the congregation as informed partners rather than a captive audience. Combined with a scripture that names giving as worship, this is often all the framing an offering needs.

Frequently Asked

What is a good scripture to read before the offering?

2 Corinthians 9:6–8 — 'Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver' — is the anchor offering text in the New Testament. It names giving as a matter of the heart rather than the amount, which is exactly the posture pastors want the congregation in as the plates pass.

What does the Bible say about tithing in the New Testament?

The New Testament shifts the frame from a fixed percentage to proportional, cheerful, and generous giving (2 Corinthians 8–9, 1 Corinthians 16:2). Jesus affirms tithing in Matthew 23:23 but points beyond it to justice and mercy. Most pastoral teaching treats the tithe as a wise baseline while calling for generosity that goes beyond it as God provides.

How do I introduce the offering without being manipulative?

Read the scripture, name what the giving funds (ministry, missions, care for the poor, staff), pray briefly, and let the plates pass. Avoid guilt-based framing ('you should be giving more'), promises of financial return, or extended appeals. The scripture and the moment do the work; the pastor's job is to keep it dignified and short.

What is a short offering scripture?

2 Corinthians 9:7 — 'God loves a cheerful giver' — is a single line that carries the whole offering theology. Proverbs 3:9 ('Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your produce') is another strong short option, especially at the start of a new year or a new giving season.

What is the difference between a tithe and an offering?

In biblical usage, the tithe is a proportional gift (traditionally 10%) given as a matter of obedience and worship. An offering is anything given beyond that — often for a specific need, project, or missions cause. Many churches use 'tithes and offerings' as a combined phrase for the whole giving moment in the service.

What is a good offering scripture for missions or a special appeal?

2 Corinthians 8:1–5 tells the story of the Macedonian churches who gave 'beyond their means' out of joy. It is the strongest biblical framing for a sacrificial special offering. Pair with a concrete description of what the funds will accomplish — Paul himself named the recipients.

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