

Giving Notes

Giving Education

My name is Ryan Justice. When I accepted the Good News personally in 1972 I was a recent graduate from college. I had virtually no experience with church and **began my journey in ignorance.**

Within weeks I heard a word that I never heard before: "*tithing.*" In youthful ignorance I learned what it meant. Being new to Christianity I determined this was something for me to do but was unsure of how it worked. Whether net or gross, pre-tax or post-deductions **I participated as best as I understood.**

In my new career I joined a blue-collar church. Under exposure to the teaching and reading of the Bible **I quickly learned tithing was on my total income and it was not optional.**

My church invited an evangelist to present the Gospel invitation to the church in the summer of 1975. Our Pastor made quite a thing of asking us to pray about what we should give to support this evangelist. Being one of a few white-collar members I recognized my role to be significant to support this evangelist. But my prayers kept resulting in "*nothing.*" This worried me a lot, but I gave *nothing* expecting the offering to be embarrassing. It turned out to be the largest offering the church had taken in its history. **I learned God did not need my money.** I have the opportunity to join Him in His work of redemption.

As the years passed and my interest and involvement in other ministries grew I learned that I should support the Lord's work in diverse areas, but my tithe was to my local fellowship of believers. **I learned the tithe was just the starting place for giving.**

Perhaps my greatest lesson came when I became a part-time church administrator at Trinity Hills Baptist Church. My life's savings were erased with the poor economy and failed investments. I was totally dependent of my meager salary. This gave me the opportunity to take God at His Word. In Malachi 3:10 God says "*Test me in this and see if I don't open up heaven itself to you and pour out blessings beyond your wildest dreams.*" **Now I learned I cannot out-give God.**

In studying the scripture I came to a startling realization. The tithe is not just 10% but it is the first 10%. **Again I learned that He wants the first 10%, not the last. I guess He wants my heart.** This is truly a journey of faith.