

How to be an Automatic Tither

David Bach of Oprah fame wrote a 2004 bestseller, *The Automatic Millionaire*. It can all be boiled down to the simple concept of putting money away on the front end: investing the first portion of the paycheck and living off of what is left. The book is not simply about accumulating wealth, however; "it's also about relieving stress and worries about the future - about putting yourself in a place that enables you to enjoy life now as well as in the future."

It's significant that Bach concludes his book with a chapter on tithing. What better way to enjoy life now than by defining our lives by what we offer to others and to our Lord Christ Jesus?

I've mentioned many times that my commitment to tithe during the early years of my faith journey was critical to my spiritual growth. I must admit, however, that the "logistics" of tithing have often been a struggle for me. It has been easy for me to "get behind," and when that happens "catching up" is not an easy thing to do.

I've been considering for a while what being an *Automatic Tither* might look like in my life. I've come to realize that, for me, *it can be as easy as one-two-three*.

As easy as one-two-three. It can't get any better than that!

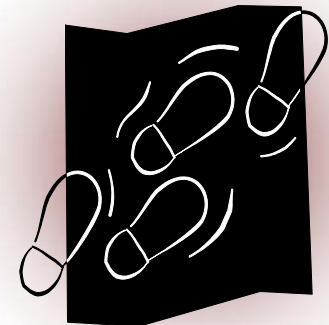
May our Lord's richest gifts continue to overwhelm you,

Jim Wood



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Living out your commitment
to tithe can be as easy
as one-two-three.

First Presbyterian Church



Step One: COMMIT TO TITHING

My tithe (a tenth of my income) is just one way for me to offer thanksgiving to God for what He has done and continues to do in my life. For the Christian, it is a principle way for us to recognize and thank God for His love and mercy. This is why John Calvin placed his discussion of the Ten Commandments in the section on Thanksgiving in his seminal work, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Our offerings are in thanksgiving for what He first gave us.

When I commit to tithing, I'm not committing to a religious law; I'm responding to Christ's love for me and His grace. My commitment to be faithful in the financial portion of my life is a call to welcome Jesus into that important corner of my existence - when I do so, how can I not be blessed?

Tithing comes from a deeper commitment to Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior.

I simply commit to do it!



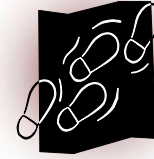
Step Two: MAKE IT AUTOMATIC

Once I commit to tithing, the next step is to make it automatic: To honor my pledge to Christ by offering Him the first fruits - not the leftovers. Making it automatic by developing the habit to make my offering to His Kingdom the *first* thing I do before I begin paying the bills is critical to my attitude. (From a theological perspective, it is significant that this practice is faithful to the tithe as the first fruits of our labors.)

This is where our faith family offers us a significant gift: **Direct Deposit**. Our 2007 pledge card has the place to indicate that we would like to set-up a direct deposit account, just like others we use to pay some of our bills. By doing this, each month (or what intervals we choose) my offering will be made automatic. What is so wonderful about this, is that when I decide to do it, the church will take care of all the details for me.

I'm personally so very excited about this new feature. One less check to write: Hallelujah!

I simply make it automatic!



Step Three: MAKE IT LAST - LEAVING A LEGACY

This is an opportunity to leave a lasting legacy to the work of Christ by preparing my Will to include the Kingdom in my final accounting. By tithing my estate, designated as an endowed gift, my contribution to the ongoing work of the Church in this world will continue long after my eternal rest.

Here again, on our 2007 commitment card, our faith family has designated a space for me to indicate an interest in such a living legacy. If I indicate such an interest, our Church Administrator will be in touch to talk about the many ways to accomplish this.

I simply leave a legacy for his earthly Kingdom!