

“God only, who made us rich, can make us poor.”

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

what one witness says...

Following is the testimony given by Fred J. Chemidlin, a parishioner of St. Helen's Parish, Westfield, NJ.

A MIRACULOUS SURVIVAL

“As a 24 year-old Air Force pilot in November of 1954, I was flying a cargo run in a C-47 from Oklahoma City to Spokane, WA. Just outside of Colorado Springs, I ran into a freak blizzard and snow-storm, lost an engine, iced up and crashed into the side of a mountain 15 miles from Pike's Peak. My co-pilot, a desk-jockey colonel getting in his monthly flight-time, and I were miraculous survivors.

“Recuperating together in the local hospital, we talked of many things seriously about life. Being a Mormon, the colonel told me about his commitment to tithing which impressed me quite a bit. Naturally I was more than ready to repay the Lord for saving my life. I began then to be very conscious of sharing the fruits of my labor with God and proceeded to try and give 10% of my income to my church and charities.

A GRATEFUL COMMITMENT...

“This commitment carried into my married life, six children, several jobs, and finally a business of my own in 1960. Although I tithed to my church and various charitable organizations, I always tied strings to things. How and who was spending my money, and on what, was of great concern to me. I spent a lot of time and had many unpleasant confrontations with people making sure they knew I was tithing and in trying to get an accounting of the money I had given. This was a very unhealthy attitude for me. Today I give or tithe because I recognize that whatever talent I possess, God asks for 10% back in justice. I no longer concern myself with what they do or how they spend ‘my’ money. It's the Pastor's or charitable organization's responsibility to God to account for it. My responsibility, I believe, is to give according to my talents.

A ‘RICHER’ LIFE IN GIVING...

“To this day, I know I've gotten back more than I've ever given, a hundred-fold, as the Bible says. As a practical businessman and investment counselor, I am convinced that tithing has been the most productive and rewarding use of my money with many rewards in the spiritual, emotional and financial aspects of my life. As president of my own investment firm today, I believe the best investment advice I can give to anyone is to share 10% of your income, right off the top, for God's work with no strings attached. Don't expect anything in return, or it's not true giving. The benefit, I believe, is that you'll be richer in your life than dollars can ever measure.”