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Family increases tithing as act of worship, reaps joy

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DALLAS-Tithing is an act of worship for one Texas family. □

Marc and Tamara Holden struggled for years with how much money to give to their place of worship, Northway Baptist Church in Dallas.

"We wanted God to show himself in the most tangible way-our money," said Holden, owner of Holden Art Studio in Carrollton.

Like many Christians, they donated 10 percent of the profits from their decorative paint company to the church. Then Proverbs 3:9-"Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops,"-struck them.

The Holdens and their three children committed to give more than they could afford, to tithe 25 percent of their annual income.

"It didn't seem like firstfruits to me. It seemed like last fruits," he recalled. "We wanted to set a goal higher than 10 percent and make it a challenge to trust God. It wasn't a give-and-get kind of thing. We wanted to test ourselves. We were going to give in advance and trust God for the rest."

The Holdens adopted Malachi 3:10 as their family verse to encourage

faithful giving. It urges believers to give “the whole tithe” and the Lord will “open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”

But they had drained their bank account by March. Despite that, Holden nervously wrote the usual tithe check, knowing it would not clear the bank.

A week later, he had more painting projects than he could handle. The check he wrote in faith never bounced.

One month they could not pay the rent. They fasted and prayed all weekend. That Sunday, the pastor handed them a cash-filled envelope from an anonymous donor that covered the rent.

After taking a financial-management class based on biblical principles, the Holdens decided “to honor God by paying off accumulated debts owed to family and friends,” he said. And the family plans to increase their tithing amount again soon.

“The times we have truly trusted, God has provided,” Holden explained. “And I can really say that he will provide in the future.”

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