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IS IT SIN NOT TO GIVE FREEWILL OFFERINGS?

"When am I supposed to give offerings? Should I give every time there is a call in the church?" Joe asked his friend Carlos. "If I do not have anything to give, am I sinning if I don't give?" Joe had even more questions. "It seems easy to determine if I am dishonest with God regarding my tithes," he continued, "but how can I be sure that I am doing the right thing with my offerings?"

Carlos explained that there are two main offerings: (1) regular, or systematic—also called Promise; and (2) freewill. "Freewill offerings should be given only beyond and above Promise," said Carlos. "Our most basic giving initiative must be based not on the needs of others, nor on any call made at church, or even on personal feelings or sympathies. Instead, it must be based on God's initiative to bless, and be given as first fruits every time God gives a financial blessing, for He is ever the first to give," Carlos explained.

Joe was interested, so Carlos kept talking. "Promise reminds us that God's giving always precedes any human giving," he said. "We are able to give tithe and Promise only after we have already received something from Him. That is why both are given as a percentage of

something that was received before."

"That makes sense," said Joe, "because if you have received nothing from Him, and your income is zero, your tithe and Promise will also be zero." Carlos nodded in agreement.

"Now I see that if I have no income and there is a call to give, I am not sinning by not giving," said Joe thoughtfully. Carlos smiled and added: "On the other hand, by not tithing and giving Promise every time we have an income, we fail to recognize God as the origin of life and all blessings.

"It seems fair," said Joe. "It means that before expecting us to return tithe and give our Promise, the Lord first provides us with the conditions to give!"

APPEAL: By giving to Him as regularly as God blesses us, we are reminded that He is the Origin of life and the Sustainer of all things!

PRAYER: Please, Lord, accept our recognition of your kind mercies!