

The Principle of Giving to God

Gen 28:20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, **21** So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: **22** And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

Jacob is our model here, because the concept of the tithe is very focused in his words. The tithe is a commitment between the believer and his Creator. In other words, what Jacob shows here is that as a child of God he offered his offerings and tithes (a proposed 10% of his economic income) in exchange for God's hand of protection and care in his life. Who would not want that?

Pro 3:9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:

God has instituted the principal that we should honor God with firstfruits (a portion of our income before spending the rest). This is, simply put, of our goods. The tithe is not something God charges us, but even if it were such, it would be just on God's part.

1Co 4:7 For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?

Deu 8:18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth.

All that we have in this life, even our body and life, we have received from the hand of God. But the tithe is an expression of our faith (that we believe that God will take care of us even if we lose 10%). It is where a person returns 10% of his income to God.

What is the Tithe?

Being a pastor, I have heard all kinds of nonsense that I would like to clarify; beginning with what is a tithe. First a tithe is 10%. Of \$100 dollars, a tithe is \$10 dollars, and of \$1000

dollars, a tithe is \$100 dollars. It is not 15% nor is it 5%, nor any other figure that you want to make it. It is 10%. We mention alternatives at the end of this tract. It is just for all, rich and poor. The actual amount is not in focus as much as the percentage. If you earn 1 million dollars, the tithe is \$100,000, and giving a very generous \$10,000 is not a tithe on a million. Also the tithe is comes from a person's income. There were other kinds of tithes, but the tithe we speak of is a tithe on your income. An offering is some amount you give God but is not related to your income (not a percentage). Call it what it is. It not necessary to tithe on money that goes between husband and wife, when they live together, and the tithe has already been given on the income when it first entered the home. But there shouldn't be an additional tithe when a man gives his wife money for groceries, food, school for the kids, etc. Many parents give their children an allowance and want their children to learn to tithe on that income. This is a personal thing between the parents and their children. The tithe is not on the expenses of the family, only on the income. I heard of a situation where a brother was buying a new car, and asked his pastor advice about it. The pastor didn't like the high cost of the car, and asked him if he had paid his tithe on that new car. This is just greed. The tithe is on money that enters the home, not when it goes out. The tithe is on the firstfruits, or when income first comes into the home (**Exo 22:29**). God does not want left-overs, the pieces that were not used. We have liberty in how we spend our money, but we should always first take out what is due to God. **1Co 16:2** Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him... Even in the NT, the principle centers on returning to God a percentage of our income when it first enters our hands.

Why do we tithe?

God instituted the system of tithing in order to economically sustain His work, in order to pay the salaries of his ministers (**Mat 10:10; 1Cor**

9:4), and this system is through the tithes and offerings of God's people. This purpose or need has not changed from the Old Testament to the New Testament in any manner. This reason is as valid today as it was in Moses' day.

Another reason is so that we show our relationship with God through sacrificial tithes and offerings. In the Old Testament, people gave because of their problems and sins, or just because of the joy in their heart towards their Redeemer, or because of some joyful thought towards God. In **Acts 11:29** we see that the brethren of their own free will determined to send economic help to some needy brethren. There was no obligation on them, but they wanted to do it out of joy.

There is a constant spiritual war (**Mat 16:26**) IN EVERY BELIEVER between the economic and their relationship with God. **Luke 12:15** And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. It is carnal when a person highly esteems and prizes what he has accumulated in life. **Luke 14:33** So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. God wants every Christian to examine his life and remove idols that there may be within it. One constant idol is greed. We have to evaluate the importance of economic things in this life against the eternal values of spiritual things. Whoever values the material more than the eternal has an idol, and salvation is impossible for that person.

Giving is the spiritual remedy for greed. In **Mat. 19:16-25** Jesus gave the homework of giving everything he owned to the rich young ruler. This youth was greedy, and could not do it. We do not see God giving this commandment to others in the Bible, but this is how God fixes the covetous and greedy heart, by commanding the person to give sacrificially. **Mat 19:23** "a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." At the bottom of many arguments against the tithe being for today is simply greed reigning over that

person so bad that he refuses to admit any economic obligation on the believer's part towards God. Paul spoke of this in **1Tim 6:6-11**, when he explained that the **desire to be rich** is the cause of the coveting problem and many other sins.

Eph 4:28 *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, **that he may have to give to him that needeth.***

Gal 6:10 *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, **especially unto them who are of the household of faith.***

The Christian is obligated by God to work in order to support himself. But God also gives the reason as being so that they can help others who have needs. This obligation is first and foremost towards your Christian brethren in the church where you congregate.

Act 20:35 *I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, **It is more blessed to give than to receive.*** The point is very important here that people who are stingy (only through great difficulty will they let something leave their hands) have a spiritual problem, and the blessing and remedy is in learning how to give generously to God and to the brethren. Also **the giving to the work of God is in order to heap up spiritual riches in heaven.** In the parable in **Luke 12:16-21** we see the normal thinking of every man, that of gathering up economic goods for his life and gathering possessions and riches for the now, and forgetting completely about what will happen after death. The reality is that all that we have in this life is temporal, and we will lose it all at death. We will carry nothing with us where we go after death. So it is a faulty understanding of reality to concentrate so much on the material things of this life, and not on eternal things. **Luke 12:21** *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, **and is not rich toward God.***

Gal 6:7 *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for **whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.***
8 *For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

Is Tithing for the NT?

There are many who want to block tithing from the New Testament, and this is always in order to make them free to give only crumbs and left overs (what they want to give without a biblical reason). If they give 10% or more, they see no problem with tithing. If they give less then the ugly head of covetousness raises up, and we see a clear heart motive of covetousness and greed.

Carefully study the passage of 2Cor 8-9. Paul recommended the churches in Macedonia because they gave from their poverty because they loved the Lord so much.

2Co 9:6-7 *He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and **he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.** Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: **for God loveth a cheerful giver.***

In **2Co 8:12**, *“For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”* Paul proposed the principle that the gift is worthless without a proper heart attitude (the disposition of the heart).

1Co 16:2 *Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, **as God hath prospered him...***

The practice of giving according to income continued in the N.T. Jesus rebuked (**Mat 23:23**) the Pharisees for their extreme practices, and especially in tithing of their spice gardens. He said that they should have sought justice, faith, etc *“these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other (tithing) undone”*. If the standard was 10% under the law, and God demands more under grace than under law, shouldn't we be giving more than 10% today? 15%, or 20%?

Is it Biblical to Tithe? Is Tithing a NT Obligation?

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There are people who attack the work of God from without, and there are those who attack the work of God from within. The two most critical points of God's work which have been seriously attacked from within is the role of pastor in taking care of the church, and the economic sustaining of the church. If convince the ministers to work a secular job to support themselves (see **1Cor 9:14; Mat 10:10; Gal 6:5; 1Tim 5:17**) then you will cause an economic poverty within the work of God, basically making it impossible for ministers to accomplish anything more than just keeping their doors open.

There are groups who wish to “free” or unlink the tithe from being a NT Christian's obligation. If we accept their arguments for a moment, then this means that God doesn't want his children to support the work of God? What is the biblical alternative? This makes no sense that good Christians don't want to support the work of God. The rejection of the tithe for the NT Christian has to be a teaching of the devil.