

The Gift

The following study companion is designed “on purpose” to get you into God’s Word to find some of the answers to what giving and tithing is all about.

The most important part of giving is really all about **our attitude of heart**. By giving, God is able to deal with our attitudes and in doing so is able to bless us even more. **Read James 5:11**

The principal of giving is simply this –

*Give , and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down , and shaken together , and running over , will men put into your pocket. For with the same measuring stick that you use, it will be measured back to you. **Luke 6:38***

THINK ABOUT THIS FOR A MOMENT.

Here is another important principle related to this...

*Do not Judge, otherwise you will be judged .
For in the same manner as you judge others, you will also be judged : and with the same measuring stick you use in judging , it will be used again on you. **Matthew 7:1,2***

I once heard a story about a pastor of a very small church who was counting up the offering he received that morning when the offering plate was passed around. He hung his head and sadly lamented about the very poor offering. Right about that time his young daughter came into the office and asked him what he was so sad about. He told her frankly that the offering was very small. In her innocence she asked him, “daddy how much did you put into the plate?” To this he replied, “more than half of the total offering”. His daughter paused for a moment in thought and then replied. “Daddy if you had only put more in then you would have gotten more out!”

We all want to be blessed with a successful business, or high paying job or winning a lottery. It would be great if someone gave us something, especially when we are in need. But God will check your **giving balance** – how much you have given to others in need – how much you have given to him and above all with what attitude and generosity you gave. Then based on that, he will see to it that you get back in the same measure and way as you gave. **God will provide for you in the same manner as you provide for the needs of others.**

*The giving person will be made prosperous : and he that generously satisfies the needs of others, will be more than satisfied himself. **Proverbs 11:25***

WHO OR WHAT IS YOUR SOURCE OF YOUR FINANCIAL SECURITY?

Most of us really do know the answer to this but somehow we seem to forget.

So think for a minute about what you actually believe. Here are some possibilities.

- Your job or hard work
- Your bank savings
- Your stock or mutual fund investments
- Your Real Estate holdings
- Your own self effort
- Your dad and mom
- Your husband, wife, uncle or other relative

Here is a great test to see what you really believe about that;

Pick one of the above you suspect is the main thing you rely on for your financial wellbeing.

Now close your eyes for a moment and imagine losing that **forever..... Dwell on it for a few minutes.**

How do you feel inside? A bit uncomfortable? Nervous? Panicked? Or do you actually believe ... "Oh that will never happen anyway"?

Its always easier to claim we would trust God and be okay when we are not faced with such a crisis but when the rubber meets the road we find out for real what we really do believe. Is God really our source? Do we really believe he will meet **ALL** our needs?

Lets face it, many of us don't feel comfortable in giving away too much in case we ourselves run short. After all we assure ourselves that we should be that way because well... Its being a good steward right? Its wise to keep a reserve in case of emergencies. I learned that in financial planning 101 many years ago. "**Pay yourself first**". But God says something quite different. **He says, "Pay me first"**. **Read Hebrews 7:5 and Deuteronomy 14:22** Its also interesting to note that the financial counselors all espouse paying yourself at least 10% of everything you earn. Hmmm 10%? Isn't that the same as God says we should pay him first? A tithe?

We feel we need a "security blanket" some assets or savings squirreled away for a rainy day – just in case. But if we really trusted God as we ought to and we really believe what he says in **Matthew chapter 6:28-33** then why would we hang on so tightly to our "security" when God is our source and security and we can truly trust him to ALWAYS meet our needs as he has promised to, **WHEN WE NEED SOMETHING?**

God's Character and Nature.

God NEVER asks us to be anything or do anything that he himself is not or would not do. Have a look at these verses...

John 3:16 – *For God SO LOVED..... that he gave.*

Romans 8:32 – *Since God did not even spare his own son but gave him up for our benefit, how much more will he not **FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS?***

God does not need our paltry gifts. He dwells in the heavens and has no need of anything from us. So why then does he require that we give?

1 John 4:7 *Beloved, let us love one another. For love is of God and everyone who loves unselfishly is born of God and knows God intimately.*

GOD DOESN'T NEED OUR GIFTS, BUT HE WANTS TO BLESS US AND OTHERS, SO HE ACCEPTS OUR GIFTS AND TURNS THEM INTO BLESSINGS FOR OTHERS.

You may be saying, OK, OK I get the idea about giving and all that stuff, but I really have a hard time accepting that I am REQUIRED TO GIVE 10% of everything I get to God. That sounds just way too legalistic to me and besides wasn't that a law given to Moses for the Israelites? After all Jesus did fulfill the law so why would we still need to give 10% of everything we get to God?

Where did the idea of tithing come from anyway?

Please take a moment to read **Genesis Chapter 14**.

Now let me ask you a few questions.

- Did Abraham live BEFORE Moses or after?
- Was Abraham required to give a tithe to Melchizedek?
- What attitude did Abraham have when he gave the tithe to Melchizedek?
- If Moses is regarded as the "father of the law" who is Abraham regarded as? (hint: see **Galatians 3:9**)
- So then is tithing about the law or faith in God?
- What do Melchizedek and Jesus have in common? (read **Psalm 110:4 and Hebrews 7:1-4, 17**.)

Now take a moment to read **Malachi Chapter 3:10,11**

- What does God promise to do for those who tithe?
- Where is the tithe supposed to go?

Now take a moment to read **Genesis Chapter 4:3-7**.

- Whose idea was it to give gifts to God back then?
- Did God accept any and all gifts?
- What does this tell us about giving to God whether we are required to or whether it is a freewill gift? (hint: see **2 Corinthians 9:7**)

Dealing with attitudes in tithing and giving.

1. Giving deals with selfishness. We all try to teach our children to share and not be selfish – because by nature we are selfish (self centered or self absorbed). Giving enables us to overcome in real ways our selfish nature.
2. Can you afford to tithe? There is no justification when we try to assert that we can't afford to tithe. We create debt and obligations based on our chosen lifestyles and standards of living. Tithing is for all people of all nations and of all economic classes. It is by no means reserved for those who have more than they need to sustain their lifestyle.

Mark 12:41-44. *And Jesus sat near the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called his disciples, and*

said to them, Truly I say unto you, That this poor widow has cast more in, than all those who have cast into the treasury: For all of them cast in of their abundance; but she of her poverty cast in all that she had, even all her living.

Who of us is as poor as this widow? Yet she gave one hundred percent of what she had and in God's eyes it was worth more than everyone else's gifts. Why? **Because tithing is really a matter of the heart before God.** For many years I was a financial consultant and the most interesting thing I found was that people generally spend everything they earn regardless of what they earn. All we do is upgrade our lifestyles and assets. Newer cars, bigger houses, eating out more, nicer clothes etc. If we do not commit to honor God with at least ten percent of our income we will find ourselves unable to "afford" it no matter how much we earn. If we find ourselves so in debt that there is more month left after payday then we need to do something radical with God's help to change that so that we can be obedient to God. Perhaps get some financial counseling, consolidate debts, sell unnecessary possessions etc. Better to be obedient to God than shrug our shoulders and say "I can't afford to tithe".

3. Giving recognizes that what we have been blessed with in material gain is in fact the result of God's enablement and blessing on us.

Ecclesiastes 5:19 *Every man also to whom God has given riches and wealth, and has enabled him to eat thereof, and to take his portion, and to rejoice in his labor; this is the gift of God.*

Who gives us the health, mental capacity and skills or talents to produce income for us? Who helps us find work whereby our skills and abilities can earn us an income? **If you think its all you then perhaps you should think again.**

4. Giving deals with the issue of obedience to God. Adam and Eve rebelled against God by believing the lie that God was holding out on them by forbidding them to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. By giving we show our submission to God in obedience to Him. Had Adam and Eve remained obedient, death would not have passed on to all of mankind. The cost of their disobedience was more costly than they ever imagined. **Not giving to God in obedience is also costly.**

Malachi 3:8-9 *Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But you say, how have we robbed you? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed me, even this whole nation.*

By not tithing we place ourselves under a curse, so why would we ever want to do that?

5. Giving tithes is giving to God – not the pastor, or minister. However, God has directed that His tithe be given to those who minister the gospel (under the new covenant), it is not our place to "manipulate" the minister by not tithing, as has been the practice of some. Many years ago as a young pastor, I experienced this when many of the church members in my small congregation wanted to get rid of me. Rather than asking me to leave, they simply stopped tithing and for the last three months I was their pastor I received no wages whatsoever.

Romans 15:27 *It has truly pleased them; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, then their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal (material) things.*

1Corinthians 9:13 *Do you not know that they which minister about holy things, live off the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?*

Numbers 18:24 *But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as a heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit:*

The Levites were the priests that God appointed to minister spiritual things on behalf of the nation of Israel.

6. Giving deals with our attitudes about trusting in God to provide for us. This is perhaps one of the biggest obstacles in us giving freely to God. It is easy to rely on "money in hand" to meet our needs, than on God. God wants to bless us more, but how many times have we prevented him from doing so because we don't really trust him at all to provide for us? Do you remember the rich young ruler that came to Jesus and asked what he should do to inherit eternal life? Jesus told him to go and sell all that he had and to come and follow him. Jesus has no issue with the wealthy excepting when their trust is in their wealth or possessions rather than God who provided it anyway. If we were to be obedient and give God what is required of us – a tithe of all we get, can we trust him to provide whatever else we need to meet our other obligations? One of the names attributed to God in the Old Testament is Jehovah Jirah. The name means, "The Lord our provider".

Read **Matthew 6:25-33**

Tithing in the Old Testament.

Who gets the tithes?

Numbers 18:26

Numbers 18:28

The above verses clearly illustrate that even the priests were to pay a tithe of the tithes and God instructed them to give it to Aaron, the high priest. That meant that ten percent of all the tithes in Israel went to one person – in this case Aaron. Can you imagine how wealthy this would have made Aaron?

Is tithing all we have to give?

This next scripture is going to really deal with the false notion that once we have paid our tithe we have done our duty in giving to God. **Deuteronomy 12:6:**

WOW this is staggering. Look at all the different offerings that were brought before God by the children of Israel. The first two were for sin since Christ had not yet died for the sins of the world. Tithes remained separate from those offerings. The vows were offerings whereby you made a vow to give something to God over and above. The freewill offerings were "just because" offerings, not at all a requirement or obligation. The firstlings of flocks however was a requirement and were over and above all the previous offerings to God. God said that the firstborn of everything belonged to him. **Exodus 13:2**. Giving your tithes is not enough!

What are the benefits of giving or tithing?

This is actually amazing. God commands us to give a tithe of all he blesses us with and yet if we are obedient he actually promises to bless us even more. So why do we hesitate in giving and being obedient? Is it because we really do not believe or trust God to be faithful to his promises?

Deuteronomy 15:5-10

Also have a look at what God promises in the book of Malachi.

Mal 3:10

There is another principle and promise given in God's word about giving. " (**Luke 6:38**).

How does God view those who do not tithe?

Malachi 3:8

OUCH! God says if we do not give him the tithe that belongs to him that we have actually robbed him. I don't know about you but I would not want God to view me as a robber. What do you think about a child whose parents provide food, shelter, clothing and even pocket money for, who being unsatisfied, steals money from their wallet? Yet God provides all our needs and then we rob him because we don't give him a tithe?

Is tithing taught in the New Testament?

Here is what Jesus himself said;

Mat thew 23:23

Although Jesus was not actually teaching on tithing here, he simply says you ought to do it but don't think for a moment that it is all that God requires of us.

This next passage is found in Hebrews and reiterates that tithing began in our father of faith – Abraham and that even Levi being yet unborn is considered to have been a party to that giving in Abraham, though he was born several generations later. Notice also that the priesthood was "Commanded" to take tithes from the people.

Hebrews 7:1-10 *For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abides a priest continually. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he received them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receives tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.*

In this next verse Paul clearly establishes that the Gentiles also were obliged to give to those who minister spiritual things to them.

Romans 15:27

Here is another scripture in the New Testament that shows that tithing was not only for “back then” or only for the nation of Israel.

1Corinthians 9:13

What was Paul’s instruction to Timothy in **1Timothy 5:17** ?

The term “double honor” here refers to a double honorarium or double the normal wages given. Many church boards have it the other way around. Let those who rule well get minimal wages so that they stay humble – why should they earn more than us? It is an utter shame that some pastors (Elders) are paid so miserably.

Maybe its because there are not enough tithes coming in. God is not at all pleased with that and we need to repent of our disobedience and selfishness. We need to give our tithes and also freewill offerings and at all times be obedient to give to the needs of others **as God directs us. DOING ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER IS NOT OKAY OR ACCEPTABLE TO GOD.**

What attitude are we to have when giving to God?

Exodus 25:2 This is what God expected under the old covenant and nothing has changed under the new covenant.

2 Corinthians 9:7

God does not accept, nor will he bless our giving if we do it grudgingly (I’d rather not). Neither does he accept our giving when we do it because we feel compelled to because of obligation. When we give back to God because we are truly thankful for all he has blessed us with knowing he will always meet our needs, then God will bless us in our giving to him and it will be acceptable to him. God is very concerned about our attitude of heart along with our obedience to him.

Does the law of sowing and reaping apply to tithing?

Some Bible teachers and TV Evangelists, suggest that if we have financial needs then we should “sow a seed” by giving and then God will multiply it back to us. The logic of this sounds quite believable and maybe even true but is it?

The primary scripture used to prove this is as follows.

Galatians 6:7-8 *for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap.*

The context is not at all speaking about money or giving so in my opinion the “principle” they adopt from this scripture is actually taken out of context and is manipulative to coerce people into giving. I find this quite offensive and not scriptural at all.

This, like so many teachings today, is based on some sort of formula for getting what you need from God. **EVERYTHING** we receive from God is through faith and has **NOTHING** to do with formulas or works of any kind – otherwise it is not of faith. God blesses us because he loves us, because we trust in him by faith and not because we have obligated him under some universal law. **If you are giving to get, you have missed the whole point.**

The other passage often quoted is from **Malachi 3:10**. *Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now by doing this, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it .*

Once again this is taken out of context – look at the verse preceding this... *You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed me, even this whole nation.*

With sin comes the curse. By removing sin (being obedient to God), we remove the curse which results quite logically in blessing. This is not something “earned” or “deserved” but rather the result of repentance from sin and obedience to God.

It is not my place to judge those who hold to and teach this idea, but I can and should judge the soundness of their doctrine according to the whole Word of God. I therefore have to conclude that it is a misguided teaching and should be rejected. Carefully consider this and judge for yourself.

Where should tithes be given?

This sadly enough has become another point of contention among believers. If we go back to the foundation of tithing we see that tithes were taken to the house of God. It was not sent anywhere else, not given to the poor directly. It was not even permissible to give it to Prophets. It was to go only to the priests or rulers of the temple or Synagogue. It would seem to me therefore that the tithe goes only to the local church fellowship that you attend. However, as mentioned previously we are also instructed to give to the poor and bring free will offerings also. These can be given anywhere we feel we should give – to a missionary, evangelist, the homeless etc. This practice appears to be in keeping with the establishment of tithing given to Moses by God. I see nothing in scripture that would infer or indicate this has changed so I am not sure what the argument is over.

On what am I supposed to tithe?

There also appears to be a lot of confusion over this issue. When we look back at the scriptures concerning the tithe it is clearly based on “increase”. So in effect anything we receive from God that we did not previously have whether earned by our own hand or not, a tithe of that should be given to God. Under the Old Testament most people were farmers and herders so they tithed in kind rather than in currency. In our day and age we would tithe on currency. Here are a few examples of increase that I believe we should tithe on.

1. Wages
2. Profits made on anything – selling items or even a house. The increased profits on the sale of a house and so on.
3. If you are not sure, simply pray about it and see what your spirit says – then obey.

Where many people disagree is on whether tithes should be paid BEFORE taxes or after taxes. There is no indication in scripture either way. In my own opinion God requires a tithe on "what we get", hence tax deductions which are automatically deducted in most cases do not go to you. If however you get a tax refund then you should give tithes on that also.

Regardless of your interpretation of what you should tithe remember always that you are doing it as unto God himself and he is watching your heart – are you being selfish or afraid that he will not provide for your other needs?

Let us put our trust in the Lord, be generous and obedient. Giving with a joyful heart to bless others and extend the Kingdom of God. Lets stop making excuses based on our poor money management and lifestyle choices. Give to the Lord first and then learn how to live on the rest.

Lets face it. If you went to work tomorrow and they said that times were tough and that they would have to cut wages by 10% in order to keep everyone employed, I would bet we all would make the necessary adjustments to our lifestyles to live on 10% less. But because we are not forced to tithe we feel we cannot do it. Lets honestly examine our hearts and honor the Lord who redeemed us from our sins and has given us eternal life. Lets extend His kingdom by our giving, store up treasure in heaven and show others the love of God by caring for them.

"The road to failure is paved with good intentions" so take action now
"People don't plan to fail, they just fail to plan". So develop a plan to consistently give to God and others. Why not have your bank automatically deduct 10% of every deposit and transfer it to a separate "tithing account" from which you can faithfully give your tithes?

In conclusion please read the following:

Deuteronomy 28: 1-8

By Ken Crause