

Jesus Teaching On Tithing

Matthew 23:23

- For those of you who have been a Christian a long time, I doubt you will learn anything new or profound from this message. But I trust, as Peter wrote,
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 - For those of you who are new Christians, I pray this message might stir you to a greater commitment to honor God in your stewardship.
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I started tithing when I was baptized in 1968. I have not regretted tithing since I began 49 years ago. Furthermore, I don't know of any Christian who said he was sorry he ever started tithing.

➡ So why don't more Christians tithe? I suggest three reasons—

1. They may be ignorant of what the Bible says about tithing.
2. They are selfish... Tight-wads... Stingy.
3. They think tithing restricted to the Old Testament law. The truth is tithing is practiced before the law and after the law.

The first mention of tithing in the Bible is Genesis 14:20—400 years before the Law to Moses. Abraham was under no legal obligation to tithe.

- Abraham is, (Rom. 4:11).
- Hebrews 7 identifies Melchizedek as a type of Christ.
- Therefore, Abraham freely giving tithes to Melchizedek is an example to all believers when we give tithes to Christ's work today.

I. Christ's ENDORSEMENT of tithing (Mt. 23:23). Jesus commended tithing as something that should be done.

A. The PORTION of the tithe. The word simply means a tenth. Tithing is the giving of one tenth of ALL your income to God.

- Tithing involves more than money. It involves all your increase (Dt. 14:22—

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➡ The Pharisees were very serious in paying their tithe. were trivial products of a field. Yet, the

Pharisees made sure they gave 1 out of every 10 strawberries, apples, cucumbers, etc. to God (cf. Luke 18:12)

A standard “tip” for a restaurant waitress is 15%, or 20% for exceptional service. Why would any Christian give God less than what they would tip a waitress? Sadly, many Christians don’t even give God a “tip”!

- B. The PAYMENT of the tithe. A tithe should be PAID as you would pay any other obligation (house payment, car payment, etc.). It is not yours. Leviticus 27:30—“ *is the LORD'S:*”
- Tithing is something that any **honest** person will do.
 - **Why do I tithe?** NOT because it is commanded! I tithe because... (1) I love Jesus. And (2) it is the honest thing to do.
- C. The PERCEPTION of the tithe. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, not because they paid the tithe, but because failed to recognize that matters of the heart (judgment, mercy, faith) were more important to God.

II. **The ESTABLISHMENT of tithing.** Established by three laws.

- A. **The law of the LORD** (Mal. 3:10).
 ➡ While we are not under legal obligation to tithe, as Israel was, there is another law that establishes the practice of tithing—
- B. **The law of LOVE** (2 Cor. 8:1-3, 7-9, 24). Under grace we are under a HIGHER law. LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW.
1. Love is shown by giving. How do you know God loves you? How do you know your husband/wife loves you?
 2. While tithing is not legally binding on a New Testament saint, how could a Christian, who has been redeemed at the great price of Christ’s precious blood, do anything less than tithe??? Love should demand more!
 3. Why would any Christian who loves God do less under grace than an orthodox Jew would do under the law??? Haven’t we received a **better testament; better promises; a better high**

priest! Our level of giving should be better than an orthodox Jew under the law!

- C. **The law of LOGIC** (1 Cor. 9:7-14). God's plan is that preachers of the Gospel today are to be supported exactly as the priests in the O.T. were supported by tithes and offerings (see Num. 18:21 cf. Gal 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18).

III. The ELEMENTS of tithing.

- A. Tithing is **PROPORTIONATE** giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2). You are to give in proportion as God prospered you. How could this portion be less than 10%?
1. Tithing is the most equitable way for all members of the church to share their stewardship responsibility. Unlike the secular world, with all its inequities between rich and poor, tithing lays no heavier burden on one group than on another.
 2. Whether one has much or little, the same standard is made. If both rich and poor contribute the same 10% of their respective incomes, the widow who gives her mite has given just as much as the tycoon who gives his thousands.
- B. Tithing is **PRIORITY** giving. Tithing "puts first things first."
1. God deserves ***the first-fruits*** not the left-overs (Prov. 3:9-10). The "first-fruits" is the part of a crop that ripens first. It represented the entire crop that was to follow. If God owns the fountain head, He also owns the stream that flows from it.
 - The first born.
 - The first day of the week.
 - The first portion of our increase.
 2. Tithing puts God at the head of the line, in front of government/IRS... retailers... banks... land-lords, Visa, etc.

I read a story of a missionary in Africa who received a knock on the door of his hut one afternoon. Answering, he found a native boy holding a large fish in his hands. The boy said, "Missionary, you taught us what tithing is, so here is my tithe." As the missionary gratefully took the fish, he questioned the

boy. "If this is your tithe, where are the other nine fish?" The boy smiled and said, "Oh, they're still back in the river. I'm going back to catch them now." This boy evidenced the joy of faith and putting God first in his giving.

- C. Tithing is **PURPOSEFUL** giving. It makes a decision/commitment.
1. Upon the first day of the week.
 2. Lay by him in store.

IV. The ERROR of tithing. WHEN TITHING IS WRONG? (It is possible to do a good thing in the wrong way.) **TITHING IS WRONG WHEN...**

- A. ...it is done grudgingly.
- B. ...it is given as a legal obligation. It is a privilege to tithe. I don't honor God with the tithe—I get to tithe.
- C. ...it is motivated by anything other than love (e.g. fear, praise of men, for reward, for a tax right off, etc.).
- D. ...it is given as a substitute for dedication instead as an expression of dedication.
1. Tithing is an outgrowth of consecration, not a substitute for consecration.
 2. Tithing will not make you a better Christian!
 3. Tithing does not relieve you of your responsibility to serve God with the rest of your time and talents.
- E. ...it is paid as "protection money." Tithing is wrong when it is given to appease God's wrath.
- F. ...it is not given by faith (Rom. 14:23b; Heb. 11:6).

SUMMATION: Tithing is an expression of ...

- Your love for the Lord
- Your concern for the lost.
- Your freedom from selfishness and stinginess
- Your faith in God's provision.

Are you a tither? What's in your wallet?