

A Consideration of Tithing in the NT

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First off, please know that my goal is not to make any one feel bad or to stir up division, because that is not the Lord's goal! Jesus made the way to walk as dear children, in abundant resurrection life, being renewed in God's love.

Truth is important. Truth makes us free. As our minds line up with truth, we live free. This article presents information from the Bible for the reader to critically think and pray before the Lord. As we read the written Word before the Lord with humbleness of mind, we are positioned to receive true insight. Based on the presented information, I will present a theory for consideration, as someone who simply wants to honor the Lord, living in truth. Before proceeding in reading, I encourage the reader to ask the Lord to personally help them perceive the topic as He desires.

Is tithing Biblical? Yes, it's in the Bible! Does tithing as a New Testament believer look different from the Old Testament? Practically speaking, from even a brief look into what tithes were and were used for, it'd have to be different. Does the NT directly speak of tithing? Yes, Jesus spoke of it directly to those who didn't believe on Him (ref: Lk 11, Mt 23). Does the NT speak directly of tithing after Jesus's death, burial, resurrection and ascension? Tithing is directly referenced in Hebrews 7, but it is understandably debatable to whether or not it references to ministers and God receiving tithes to this day in verse 8. Is tithing from before the ten commandments and ordinances? Yes, as just referenced from the NT. Some also debate the first fruits offerings of Abel and Cain as a principle of tithing.

Some Christians take the stance of commandments and ordinances being abolished. It is not necessary to speak to that debate regarding this topic of tithing because tithing clearly existed with Abraham (ref: Heb 7), referred to as the father of faith, before what is referred to as the giving of "the law." There were however new directives given after the giving of said commandments regarding tithing, but again, those directives cannot be fulfilled today, at least in the same way. To use those commands as the directive for a NT believer, yet not have a clear scripture stating which orders remain and which are no longer relevant does not present itself as a stable ground for a matter-of-fact command in tithing.

After Jesus ascends, we see the topic giving over and over. If we were to focus on the law, how is it summarized?... In loving our neighbor as ourself. We see a beautiful example of maturity in this in the book of Acts, where they didn't see things belonging to themselves, but rather, they had all things common. We see people selling lands and laying it at the apostle's feet. We see people saving up collections for the apostles. We see that the ministry worker is worthy of being paid for his labor, but that the motive is not for money. Regarding the giving of physical substance, see financial giving brought up more than anything else. The development of the NT church was the result of God's amazing grace. Giving cannot be separated from the walk of faith that Jesus is

renewing us into. As we conform to the image of Jesus Christ, giving of ourselves is the norm, where we experience resurrection life.

Tithing was a very clear directive in the OT. The most well-known reference in this time is from Malachi 3. I will take a moment to speak to the topic of being a directive. No directive is a suggestion. It is a directive. What are some directives from the NT?

- Love God with all that you are
- Love your neighbor as yourself
- Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all things
- Intercede and give thanks for all people, including those in authority
- To be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men.
- Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.
- The list goes on!

God's instructions tend unto life. Our question is what does tithing look like for a NT believer? In response from anyone with basic foundational understanding of grace and salvation to the list of directives above: Do you lose your salvation if you don't ace any of these directives? Is God mad at you if you fall short on any of these? Will God punish you if you don't ace any of these? If you do these, will you line up with the ways of life and blessing? Is not any good work in your life a result of His grace?

We became born-again when we gave our lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, believing the truth of Who He Is, and turning to Him as our master. The fruit in our lives is a result of being saved, but we are not saved by doing works. The works are an inseparable result of faith. If someone is saved, that means Jesus is their Lord/Master. Following God's ways is inseparable from salvation. Is it right for someone to call Jesus their Master if they don't do what He says? When we turn our lives to Jesus, we are in a renewal process. Inwardly, there is a radical change. Outwardly, the results accelerate with our level of surrender.

The point is that no one is earning or losing their eternal security or God's love over financial giving.

On behalf of the body of Christ, I am sorry if anyone has falsely portrayed our Father/s character as if demanding your money to go to that deceived person to earn His love or salvation. I am sorry if they have ever made you feel "less-than" for not giving a certain amount. I am sorry if they have told you that God will curse you if you don't give them money. I am sorry if they have ever told you that you will only be blessed if you give them money, posing as if they were the chosen vessel of God to receive your money.

The love of money is the root of all evil. We must personally take this in account so we don't make financially related decisions out of a fear-based mindset. People often look to the image of success for an illusion of self worth. Jesus wants to be our everything. He thought you were worth dying for, and He is always there for you if you will let Him

be there for you. No one can take anything from you that can rob you of your eternal reward, Christ Himself.

Are you willing to let God show you the truth regarding walking by faith, which includes financial giving?

Practically speaking, let's consider that God Biblically calls people to ministry and wants the Church to support this. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward (ref: Deu 25:4, 1 Tim 5:17-18, 1 Cor 9 - not just referring to apostles). Aside from the topic of whether or not tithing is mandatory, we see from this scripture reference that the Lord wants His ministers financially compensated. Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel. (1 Cor 9:14). The apostle Paul set the example of his motivation not being for money, but making it clear that God's body, the Church, giving unto support of ministry pleases the Lord (ref: Philippians 4). The apostle Paul recognized that their giving actually would return to also benefiting them (ref: v.15, 17). There is a difference between being loved by God, and doing what pleases Him. The first apostles had a very high responsibility, enabled by God's grace, to set order and represent Christ well from a place of personal revelation from personal relationship (and God has called us to personal relationship, and revelation from relationship as well). They planted and oversaw churches. When people sold property and brought the money to the apostles, they distributed to where the need was, not where their carnal desires were.

In the OT, the tithes went to the priesthood. They were called to minister at the temple. We all have callings. Each member of the body needs one another to operate optimally. Aside from whether or not giving 10% of your income is mandatory as a rule in the kingdom, giving to the work of ministry is a directive, and is an acceptable sacrifice of worship when done willingly, from a cheerful heart.

If God has called you to a ministry, and they believe it is God's will for the members to tithe, would not God provide for this giving, and bless your obedience? If a ministry you are linked to demands money, and attempts to impute fear or embarrassment for not tithing, it is likely not a ministry well-rooted in Christ, and thereby likely not a ministry that is letting God lead them, and not a place for being well-nourished in the ways of Christ.

This principle of true worship in giving is often falsely portrayed. The Father seeks those who worship in Spirit and in truth. True worship is never forced. It can look like worship if it is forced, but it is only then the image of such, like a tyrant forcing someone to bow from fear of being executed. God wants us to know Him as Father. Fathers provide. They don't milk the goats then discard them for new ones when they run dry. Sadly, deceived ministries intentionally target members who give more money, and have board meetings directing staff to ensure a tight relationship between them and their organization. The financially wealthy are however charged to help others, as

they are blessed to be a blessing (ref: 1 Timothy 6:17-19). This of course is meant to be for what the Lord is the author of, and not men's agendas.

Manipulation for money has nothing to do with the ways of Christ. As we seek God first, He always provides, even when we make mistakes (ref: Mt 6:33, Romans 8:28, Heb 13:5). God faithfully provides for every good work, financially (ref: 2 Cor 9:8) and even to meet legal requirements (Mt 17:24-27, Rom 12:18). Notice in the story of pulling money out of the fish's mouth, there was a directive. When that directive was responded to in faith, meaning having an action in response to believing His word, the blessing was received. Our character should always be the result of faith, as in hearing His word and simply believing and doing. Unto higher levels of spiritual maturity, we make mistakes, and learn obedience. Even in the midst of our growth, God is good, and God cares. God certainly gives us directives in giving. Do we have a willing ear to hear His directives? So far, we have seen scripturally that tithing was a clear directive in the OT, and that giving to ministry is a clear directive in the NT.

There is a principle worth stating before we proceed. In the NT, we read of a concern over how some people believe it is sin to eat certain meats. If we lay hold of the scriptures, we see that nothing has to be refused if received with thanksgiving (ref: 1 Tim 4:3-4), yet our motivation is to be the love of God, which in His wisdom may be to abstain in certain situations (ref: 1 Cor 9:8-13). This principle also applies to other topics such as how we dress, or as we read in Romans 14, regarding the OT directives concerning certain days. 1 Corinthians 8 points to how true knowledge received does indeed set us free. Romans 14 presents a strong case for caring for where someone is in their understanding as it relates to their conscience. I bring up this point because people often already have a strong belief regarding tithing. Their motive of worship is what is especially important to God. If they are taking their approach unto the Lord, believing they are doing right, God is receiving their heart behind what they do, and they should not be ridiculed. I encourage the reader to be honest before the Lord, even for their conscience's sake, as God knows a weak conscience is vulnerable ground for the craftiness of the enemy to bring an unnecessary weightiness of feeling condemned. Whatever you do, do it as unto the Lord.

One of the cases I would like to present is that God is not calling us to have a law-based mindset in giving financially.

The following scripture reference is often allocated to the teaching of offering (not a tithe). I'm sharing this scripture to point to the heart of giving.

In 1 Corinthians 9, we see that Corinthians already had a reputation to give. This was to be a blessing to help take care of other believers, from a generous heart (Christ in us). In Chapter 16, we the apostle Paul gave a directive to the church in Corinth and Galatia to receive offerings on the first day of the week and save them for the believers in Jerusalem.

Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness. Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness. But this I say, 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. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God; Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men;

Let's key in on verse 5.

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

The main point within this context that I believe relates to what tithing may look like today for a NT believer is having a "cheerful heart", not giving grudgingly. When we feel something is demanded that we don't want to give, we are more likely to be tempted to give grudgingly. Is it really a gift if it's mandatory? Is worship really worship if it's mandatory? Tithing is debatably a necessity, one that we don't get to purpose in our own hearts. Worship is willing. Worship is from a cheerful willing mindset.

Coming back to the topic of what Christianity is: Jesus taught us to pray, "Thy will be done". He said that we are not worthy to be His disciples unless we carry our cross, that is, no longer living for self-will, but losing our lives that we may find them. Obedience to God cannot be separated from what faith in Jesus Christ looks like.

When the topic of tithing comes up, many take joy in the concept of it being a sacrifice of obedience. Many within this group approach it as an obligation that they just must simply discipline themselves to do. They believe that the OT directive of giving tithes to the priests now relates to giving 10% of their income to one ministry they regularly affiliate with as their main congregation. The heart behind this mindset is beautiful. OT tithing didn't just include money. Some people who believe those directives still apply to today go as far (and beyond) as to bring 10% of their food from their garden to their congregation or others in need, or even the first fruits of their crops...and they do it beautifully as unto the Lord. In Malachi 3, we see tithing referred to as an ordinance

that the Israelites had turned away from, stating that they have been robbing God, and that if they repent regarding this, that the substance they are a steward of will not only be protected from evil, but also blessed. We see in this chapter that it is important to God that His people are being good stewards of His temple. God is faithful, but He wants us to work with Him.

Others believe that God has not directed the NT believer to give 10%. They do not see clear scriptures to give 10% to congregations, and make a strong case that ministry is in a different form than the temple in the OT (and a case of which tithing laws do we then obey, if we are to tithe?) Many within this understanding still give because Christ is in them, and giving is in them, but don't give an exact measurement of 10% to the tithe collection at their congregation. They often have the personality to give to needs they perceive as important before the Lord, and often still give around 10% total because they want to do right before the Lord, and aren't fully convinced either way.

Sadly, some of those within both groups mentioned have been tempted to ridicule each other, not uniting to God's heart and mindset towards His dear children. Some have gone so far as to say the other is not saved because they are not obeying God, or because they think they are manipulating people with fear to get their money.

When we are saved, it's in us to want to do what's upright. We should be careful to not take out our own insecurities on our own body, or anyone for that matter. The two groups mentioned are far from encompassing everyone's understanding.

Regarding the NT, the following is found referred to twice in the gospels. This presents a strong case that Jesus was for detailed tithing, at least while the physical temple remained:

Jesus speaking: Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

(The previous verse also points to His concern about the heart of worship, and loving their neighbor)

Hebrews 7 has a brief reference that, depending on the proper translation of tense and contexts of the statements, could make a strong case for tithes being received at the time of the letter (which could debatably not relate to the NT church), perhaps even also by God Himself. Aside from whether or not the scripture points to God Himself receiving tithes (as many take Melchizedek to be a personification of Christ), if He does, the next question may be what sort of tithes are received considering that details are not explicitly given in the written Word? If this is so, it would at least reasonably include that which is given as an acceptable sacrifice, from a heart of worship as unto Him. Comparisons of translation can be read [here](#).

Hebrews 7:8, KJV

And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

I wanted to intentionally share the two commonly seen mindsets before presenting what I believe to be step towards resolution.

A Proposed View:

The concept I am about to present doesn't fully resolve whether or not tithing is something that is expected by God from His followers, but rather, what a further matured believer can walk in that I believe fulfills God's will for giving, which then would fulfill His will concerning what tithes and offerings would be meant to be.

God has redeemed us to literally walk with Him. There is a principle we read of in Romans 7. We are no longer carnal humans facing holy requirements, but rather, a new creation where the righteous fulfillment of the law is written on our hearts (ref: 2 Cor 5:17, Romans 2:15). Before being born-again, covenant followers of God still had access to the grace of God, but we are actually the temple of the Holy Spirit. They could still receive God's help, but we have believed on the Son and have the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead within us. The law of God is holy, but the power to live holy wasn't within them. They would make mistakes, then have to go sacrifice for the remission of those sins. Christ is our one sacrifice for ever! When they were faced with trying to do what was right, they were doing it from a different strength. If you were born-again later in physical life, do you recall how you knew not to do something, but it was hard to not do it, yet in Christ (as you allowed Him to teach you and renew you), it was actually easier to resist sin? It is now in us, the redeemed, to do right. The hidden inward person of your heart, your spirit, is born-again of God (ref: John 3, John 4:24, 1 John 5:1). We still however have a body and soul. As we allow our minds to line up with truth, we are less so pulled around in our emotions, thoughts and perception. As we lay hold of God's ways, we live more towards God's will of wholeness. In this maturing process, we discover places in us that need to be renewed. At one stage, you may see someone give you a snarky look, then in your lack of growth, are pulled into anger and wrong responses. At another stage in the same circumstance, you may get a little mad, but then settle down and have compassion to know that they need God's help. At another stage, you tear up with compassion and pray for them. Etc...The earlier version of you may have needed to go read some scriptures and pray to settle down your flesh. The further renewed version of you didn't even get pulled at. You came to a higher level of walking in the Spirit.

This can also relate to giving. Consider other things we are called to do, like read the word and pray. Earlier in our walk, it's especially good to set up a disciplined regiment. You may not be at the place to hear the Lord say, spend time with Me, or go read your Bible, or you may not feel that pull on your heart to do those, but you know you should, so you set up times to do both. Doing both of these things are actually keys in allowing

the Lord to nurture us to a greater level of walking in the Spirit. Even many of those who are at very high levels of walking in the Spirit still keep a regiment on when they will make sure they do healthy disciplines. Is giving 10% of your income as unto the Lord by giving to your local ministry wrong? Of course not. Just as people may have to turn off the tv, and make themselves go read because they know it's good for them, it can also be healthy to have a disciplined structure to say, I'm going to teach my flesh I can trust God, and give this 10%. It's often when people take that step that they see God do miracles in their finances.

But God loves a cheerful giver. As we are renewed, it becomes a joy to give, and not so much of a mandatory ritual. I recall my first full-time salary job in ministry. I love serving the Lord, so I didn't count the hours. Other people have wronged ministries in taking full-time salaries, but not having motivation to serve the Lord, receiving full-time pay for little time spent serving the church. I was tempted at a time of unknown weakness, and realized I was spending way over 40 hours a week working for that ministry. I believe this happened after the topic came up of asking how much time I spend on certain tasks so that the ministry could better understand what to reasonably expect from people in the future. I started counting the hours and found myself in a terrible mindset of grudging obligation. Thank God He freed me swiftly from that, and I was renewed to a place of the liberty. What I'm presenting to you is a mindset of liberty by the Spirit to do right, serving in newness of the spirit, no longer taking a mindset of meeting requirements. As I walk in the Spirit, the requirements are beyond fulfilled, it becomes the more full, righteous version of what God has called us to.

Have you considered regularly asking God how much you are to give? His Words give us faith. When you hear and you give, there's confidence in that act of faith. You'll likely find that you are giving beyond 10% if you will literally allow yourself to hear from the Lord when the opportunity to give comes up, and even when you just pray to hear what He wants you to hear. God cares for His people, and He may have you give an offering in secret straight to a brother or sister in need. This growth process looks different for everyone, but this is Christianity; hearing and doing, like Jesus. Like Paul, dying daily to self will that you may know the power of Christ's resurrection, living alive with Christ unto the Father. Growing in perceiving His leading is inevitable if you give Jesus your life. Again, prayer and reading the Word is an important key in growing in perceiving His leading.

I believe this view acknowledges and cooperates with the concerns often brought up on both sides afore mentioned. It doesn't come from men pressuring us, it comes from God leading us. God doesn't want us evaluating the value in giving by gaining influence, tax-exempt benefits, or even fear of what others might think if we don't. He wants us to live through His will. He wants us free and motivated by His Love.

I want my actions to be the fruit of abiding in Christ. Instead of giving 10% because I'm afraid that anything less would be doing something that doesn't please Him, I want to

have clear convictions (from my love and reverence of the Lord) that I'm doing what pleases Him, and what bears the best results in my stewardship here on earth.

If we actually receive His personal leading concerning giving, we can be fully assured that we are cooperating with what the righteous fulfillment of tithing and offering is meant to look like for a NT believer. For those who agree with this approach, while still being convinced that is also God's will that we give at least 10% to our base congregation as a fulfillment of tithing, I would suggest to exercise bringing your attention before the Lord to want to hear what He says. If you take this approach, but believe you haven't heard anything, or are not certain in what you believe He leads, still cheerfully give according to your convictions of the scriptures as worship unto the Lord. When not assured of what to give in the moment, you can be confident in giving 10% knowing that God will always take care of you, and that scripturally you will reap in relation to your sowing, especially when with the right heart. This is not a proposal to abolish tithing, but rather a proposed approach towards further fulfilling what the heart behind tithing and offerings are meant to look like. It still requires obedience. 10% may not feel like sacrifice to some with lots of money, but God teaches us to walk by faith, and it is likely that if such people will hear from God, He will stretch them to give beyond what they would assume to give, hence, this proposed idea would still look like a sacrifice of worship for most. In the approach of being intentional to hear and do, it helps nurture a Spirit-filled walk, helping to wash away the patterns of the flesh resisting a mandatory directive and moving towards faith-filled actions.

Once a follower of Jesus Christ is presented the scriptures I have shared, they will like agree it is God's will for us to give. I encourage you to evaluate the heart of worship, which includes giving, and to consider that God wants us living from freedom in Him more than He wants us worried about money.