

Top 10 Tithing Questions

By Bill Scheidler

This message is designed to handle the ten most often asked questions about TITHING or New Testament giving.

1. What is a tithe?

Answer: 10% of your income

The word “tithe” is a word that literally means “tenth.”

Leviticus 27:30-33, NLT

A tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain or fruit, belongs to the LORD and must be set apart to him as holy. If you want to redeem the LORD's tenth of the fruit or grain, you must pay its value, plus 20 percent. The LORD also owns every tenth animal counted off from your herds and flocks. They are set apart to him as holy. The tenth animal must not be selected on the basis of whether it is good or bad, and no substitutions will be allowed. If any exchange is in fact made, then both the original animal and the substituted one will be considered holy and cannot be redeemed.

Let me see if I can help you understand this (See audio file). Use the potato illustration of 10% (I am glad God did not ask for 11.3%, none of us would be able to figure it out).

2. Can I borrow my tithe and pay it back later?

Answer: Perhaps!

But I am not sure that you want to do this. You would be better off borrowing your money from a bank. God says that if you borrow your tithe, when you pay it back you are to add 20% to it (Lev. 27:31).

If you want to redeem the LORD's tenth of the fruit or grain, you must pay its value, plus 20 percent.

3. Do I tithe on my gross income or on the net income?

Answer: The Gross

The tithe is to be the beginning, the first or choice portion not the last portion. It is not to be leftovers. When we receive personal income for service rendered or we receive increase from lands sold, bonuses and inheritances we are to give the Lord the first ten percent of that increase.

My policy, “I cannot spend any of my increase until God has received His portion.” In this way I always tithe and am not tempted to steal God’s portion.

Proverbs 3:9-10

Honor the LORD with your possessions, and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine.
The government does not get its tenth (or fifth) before the Lord (I Sam. 8:10-18).

So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king. 11 And he said, "This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots. 12 He will appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, will set some to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and some to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. 14 And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give them to his servants. 15 He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. 16 And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest young men, and your donkeys, and put them to his work. 17 He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. 18 And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day."

The New Testament principle given by Jesus is "with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

Luke 6:38

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

What kind of measure are you using with the Lord? If your tax burden is 25% and you give tithes on the balance you are actually giving 7.5% to God. Do we really want to short-change God? God has a way of treating us the way we treat Him and others. If we are merciful He will be merciful. If we forgive He will forgive. If we are generous with others, He will be generous to us. With the stingy, He will be stingy. With the generous He will be generous.

What happens when you want to get as much as you can in a vessel. You fill it, you press down the contents, you might even shake it down and then you refill it until it runs over.

4. Is tithing found in the New Testament?

Answer: Yes and No!

Tithing is an integral part of God's Old Testament financial system. Because its origin is in God, we must assume that it reflects His attitude toward giving. The New Testament assumes that we will tithe, but that we will actually go well beyond tithing. In the New Testament we are instructed to give sacrificially, liberally, cheerfully and lovingly.

Let's look at some actual verses in the NT that mention giving.

Acts 4:32-37

Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in

common. 33 And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. 34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need. 36 And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

II Corinthians 8:1-5

Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. 3 For I bear witness that according to their ability, yes, and beyond their ability, they were freely willing, 4 imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. 5 And not only as we had hoped, but they first gave themselves to the Lord, and then to us by the will of God.

5. Can I give my tithe anywhere I want?

Answer: No!

When it comes to the tithe, God is the one Who determines the place where it is to go. It is to go to the place where He has recorded His name. It is to go into the storehouse that there might be bread in His house. Your tithe should go to your local church where you are committed and submitted.

Deuteronomy 12:5-8, 13

But you shall seek **the place where the LORD your God chooses**, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go. 6 **There** you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. 7 And **there** you shall eat before the LORD your God, and you shall rejoice in all to which you have put your hand, you and your households, in which the LORD your God has blessed you. 8 "You shall not at all do as we are doing here today--**every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes**....13 Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings **in every place that you see**; 14 but in **the place which the LORD chooses**, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and **there** you shall do all that I command you.

Malachi 3:8-12

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse-the whole nation of you-because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe **into the storehouse**, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty. 12 "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty.

Nehemiah 13:4-5

Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was closely associated with Tobiah, and he had provided him with a large room formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and oil prescribed for the Levites, singers and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests.

This means that I cannot give my tithe to...

- The poor (although God wants us to give to the poor)
- A special project (such as the purchase of land, building construction, parking lot, school of worship, auditorium seating, etc.)
- A needy family member (although God wants us to take responsibility for our families).
- The TV evangelist. He or she is not the one who watches for your soul.
- Other charitable organizations.

Luke 9:57-60

Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go." 58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." 59 Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." 60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

- Another local church (here or in another country).
- To our spiritual father or mother in the Lord.

There is no record that anyone tithed to a person in the New Testament. In fact, the tenor of scripture is that parents are to lay up for the children not children for the parents (II Cor. 12:14).

II Corinthians 12:14

Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

6. Are tithes the same as offerings?

Answer: No!

The tithes belong to the Lord and are to be given back to Him at His direction. Offerings are taken for buildings, projects, alms, missions and other expressions of thanks in our relationship to the Lord.

Exodus 35:20-21

Then the whole Israelite community withdrew from Moses' presence, and everyone who was willing and whose heart moved him came and brought an offering to the LORD for the work on the Tent of Meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments.

7. Were there other forms of giving in Bible times?

Answer: Yes!

In addition to the tithe, people gave freewill offerings, burnt offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, trespass offerings, first fruits offerings, thank offerings and heave offerings.

Deuteronomy 12:6

There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks.

8. What are some reasons that people give for not tithing?

Answer:

There are many reasons (or should we say excuses) that people give for not tithing. The following are the most common reasons that people give for not tithing:

- **“I can’t afford it!”**

The truth is they can’t afford not to. Tithing releases the windows of heaven and rebukes the devourer (Mal. 3:8-12). Example of Jamaican Church

- **“God doesn’t need my money.”**

The truth is our giving is a reflection of our heart. Where our treasure is, there our heart is as well (Mt. 6:21). While God does not personally need anything from us, it does take money to fulfill His great commission to preach the gospel and extend the kingdom of God. This is a responsibility that God has placed into our hands.

- **“I forgot!”**

The truth is they are undisciplined in their giving. Try that line of argument with the rest of your household bills. Tithing must be seen as a priority, the first check written from our increase (Pro. 3:9-10).

- **“I don’t see the benefit.”**

The truth is we do not do it to get something in return. However, the benefits of tithing are both natural and spiritual. Faithfulness with money positions us to receive true spiritual riches (Luke 16:10-12). The benefits are not always seen immediately. When God says “prove Me in this” He is not talking about trying it for a week or a month. The benefits are not always financial in nature. Sometimes tithing tests our

hearts and helps us deal with covetousness. Someone once said that tithing is God's cure for covetousness.

9. Why does God want us to tithe?

Answer:

- It takes money to fulfill the commission.
- The tithe is to be a constant reminder that it is God who gave us the power to get wealth.
- The tithe is a means of discipline in our life to help us manage the other 90% in a way that glorifies God.

Deuteronomy 8:17-18

...then you say in your heart, "My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth." And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day.

10. What promises does God give to the one who tithes?

Answer:

- **Miraculous Preservation.** God will rebuke the devourer for your sake.
- **Miraculous and Unexpected Blessings.** God will open the windows of heaven upon your life (manna from heaven, water from a rock, healing, provision).
- **Miraculous Return on Investment.** God will pour back into you pressed down, shaken together and running out all over. What is the return of making God #1 in our lives?
- **Miraculous Supply.** Like the widow, the oil never ran dry. God will supply all of your needs according to His riches in glory (our barns will be filled with plenty).

Philippians 4:19-20

And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.