

A CHRISTIAN  
AND  
TITHING



**By Doug Cook**

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A Christian and Tithing  
A New Covenant Commandment  
By Doug Cook

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## Foreword

**“God’s work, done in God’s way, never lacks God’s support.”**

George Muller.

Doug, a servant and apostle to the Lord Jesus Christ, to my brothers and sisters in the body of Christ: Grace, mercy and peace to you from the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave His life so we might be delivered from the shackles of legalistic religion. May He give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, so through the knowledge and understanding of His heart, you will experience freedom from religious bondage and there will shine forth a greater righteousness in the life you now live through Him.

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## Chapter 1

### Malachi, Sweet Malachi

I would like to initiate this biblical insight by citing the most commonly quoted scripture used during offering exhortations in most congregations today. Malachi 3:6-11 says, *“For I [am] the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept [them]. Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, wherein shall we return? Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith 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. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts.”*

Most of the exposés articulated about tithing, proliferating in the Body of Christ today, are for the most part extracted from this Malachi 3 passage. Visit any building where believers are gathering on a Sunday morning in the west and in all probability you will here some form of exhortation about Christian tithing referring to at least one phrase in this passage when it’s time to take up the offering. So, let’s take a deeper look into these verses in the context they were given, as compared to today’s teaching, with the biblical understanding that the tithe literally means to give a tenth or ten percent.

This Malachi passage is in the Old Testament, and it is a rebuke associated with the Old Covenant Mosaic law established with the nation of Israel, in fact the statement, *“even this whole nation”* is pointing the finger directly at the nation of Israel. The lineage of Jacob, with the sacrificial system set up by Moses, worshipped at the temple in Jerusalem, which is where God dwelt in the Old Covenant system. In Malachi 3, He commanded the whole nation to bring *“ALL the tithes into the storehouse.”* Under the Old Covenant, the tribe of Levi was set aside as a first fruit to God to minister in the temple. The tithes were used to support the tribe of Levi and upkeep of the temple as they ministered to the other 11 tribes of Israel because Levi was not given an inheritance of the Promised Land to support themselves. Numbers 18:24 states, *“But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.”* If one wants to convert this to New Covenant typology, the tithe was used to support all of the “five fold” ministry elders, worship leaders, and administrators, and others that minister to everyone else in the nation. If the Church really wants to follow the tithing system then all of the tithe-collecting pastors should theoretically live on land and in houses that are owned by the church because they are not supposed to have an inheritance. The ministers themselves should not own any property. The local congregation should set aside acreage for a few parsonages or apartments in close proximity to their church temples for all the “church staff” and visiting elders and the church should pay for all the bills supporting these living quarters with their tithes. Does this scenario even exist these days? If we are so adamant about following the tithing laws, why do we see the pastors (who insist all Christians should be giving ten percent) using some of that money to build themselves a nice

size inheritance for their “children’s children?” If they’re following this Old Covenant giving law, are there parts of it that don’t apply to priests (pastors) nowadays?

“*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse*” is frequently quoted by tithe collecting pastors, followed by a statement declaring the storehouse is now the local church you are attending. The concordance definition of the word “storehouse” literally means the treasury of the temple. The same Hebrew word is used in Nehemiah 10:38 when he tells the Levites to “*bring the tithes ... to the chambers, into the treasure house.*” When Jesus taught, he spoke in the treasury area of the temple, (John 8:20, “*These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come,*” also Mark 12:41 and Luke 21:1). Clearly the Malachi passage is not referring to the temple itself where the worship takes place, but a specific room in the temple complex. It’s a real stretch to say the storehouse is a foreshadowing of a New Covenant church building sanctuary, because there are no other scriptures in the bible that support that interpretation. The pastors, proclaiming the church building as a storehouse, should proclaim the room where they count the donations as the storehouse. Although still not biblically accurate, it would come closer to lining up with this scripture -- but then wouldn’t that necessitate also proclaiming their church building a temple of God? Although we definitely have scores of pastors in these last days building temples for themselves, should the church buildings be perceived as holy places of worship – temples, if you will?

I sincerely believe a considerable hindrance to a true Christian’s walk -- teaching the correlation between the storehouse and the church buildings -- is the implied understanding that the Church buildings are some kind of holy place. The statements heard most often from pulpits refer to their buildings as “The house of the Lord,” which is the precise way the Old Covenant Jews referred to their temple.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17, “*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.*”

1 Corinthians 6:19, “*What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*”

2 Corinthians 6:16 “*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.*”

The apostle Paul eloquently points out that in the New Covenant we dwell in a temple that is not made by human hands. Our bodies are now the temple in which God’s Spirit dwells. In other words we believers are now the “House of the Lord,” not some building we gather in every week. God destroyed the Old Covenant physical temple in 70 AD (Yes, I said that correctly, God did it, not the devil) by using His beast kingdom at the time (the Roman Empire), and they did not leave one stone unturned. Matthew 24:2 “*And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*” Why did God utterly destroy the temple? Because He did not want man worshipping Him as if He inhabited a temple made out of stone and physical building materials anymore. He wanted the Old Covenant temple worship system destroyed so it wouldn’t interfere with His New Covenant temple manifesting in the heart of every one of His chosen people, the New Covenant Israel (anyone with the Spirit of Christ dwelling in them).

Understanding the biblical truth that my body is now the holy temple in which the Spirit of Christ dwells, I am confident I could formulate a superior biblical defense for the “storehouse” being the wallet in my back pocket, because it’s a treasury room right outside the New Covenant Most Holy Place! That statement may have elicited a chuckle, as it should have because it is a ridiculous theology. But, I am sincere when I say my wallet theology is closer to being a biblically sound doctrine than the current church building/ storehouse theology being taught, yet no one is laughing about the pastors teaching this apostasy. In reality, most of “the church” have bought this storehouse nonsense and believes it to be inerrant truth. I believe it was Adolph Hitler that said “If you tell a lie long enough and loud enough, people will believe it.”

Matthew 19:21 *“Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.”*

Mark 10:21 *“Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.”*

Luke 12:33 *“Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.”*

Luke 18:22 *“Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.”*

Seriously brothers and sisters, if we apply verses listed above, we could very easily establish doctrinal justification that the New Covenant storehouse or treasury is in heaven – a spiritual treasury – not a meeting place on earth, “*where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth*” (Which could be easily interpreted as greedy, corrupt religious leaders). Since we are now in a spiritual covenant with God, shouldn’t we be trying to distance ourselves from our natural mindset and begin thinking more spiritually? “*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*” John 4:24) And According to the verses above, the way to give into the spiritual treasury is by giving to the poor, not some wealthy pastor and his temple building fund.

A favorite quote of the tithe teachers is the second part of Malachi 3:10. “*Prove me now herewith, saith 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.*” I could confidently make the declaration that the greatest majority of the Christians that faithfully give 10% or more, under the tithe system, never see a return “blessing” so large they don’t have enough room to receive it. In fact, I find a lot of them having a hard time just making ends meet. And I am not including the Christians that get themselves into financial bondage with large house and car payments trying to keep up with the Joneses, I’m referring to the ones who are having difficulty affording the basic necessities of life (food, clothing, water, and shelter). Yes, we all realize blessings encompass a lot more than just money, but money is a part of it, especially if the seed sown is currency, and financial returns are what the tithe teachers emphasize when referencing “blessings.” If this Malachi Old Covenant verse is for New Covenant believers, why isn’t it working? These brothers and sisters are “*proving*” God as they are told by their pastor to do for many years, yet very few see huge returns, financial or otherwise. Could it be because they are

not giving to the true temple “storehouse,” or maybe because the money is not going to the actual bloodline tribe of Levi as the Old Covenant commands? If you look closely at the “blessings” from the tithe system in the churches, isn’t it blatantly obvious the majority of the ones seeing the “abundant returns” are the ones collecting the tithes, (and their own close, blood family members)?

In the first sentence of Malachi 3:10, the statement, “*All the tithes*” is plural, which means there is more than one tithe. There was more than just a tithe of their currency the Hebrews were required to give. In the whole chapter of Leviticus 27 it explains that the Lord owns the first tenth of everything, including cattle, oxen, sheep, the seed of the land, and the fruit of the tree. If any of the things that were tithed were not of the best quality or unclean, they were required to “*add the fifth part thereof*” to redeem the tithe. So, on occasion they were required to add 20% more to a tithe to redeem it. This made some of the tithes more than 10%. The law also stated the first tenth of everything belonged to the Lord. If they grew 10 roses in their garden, they had to tithe the first one. I submit to you, under these Old Covenant legalistic standards, VERY few Christians have met this standard and given ALL their tithes. Did you tithe on the tomato plants in your garden, or on the value of all your gifts you received on your birthday? If you are one of the few who did tithe on your tomatoes, did you add one fifth more for the ones that had blemishes? If not, you did not give ALL your tithes. Could it be that most Christians are not seeing the promised abundant returns (blessings) because they are not truly tithing as the bible says on everything? Wouldn’t this mean they are guilty of robbing God? Malachi 3:9 “*Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.*” If they are robbing God, doesn’t this mean they are cursed with a curse? How many times have you heard the “cursed” phrase used from the pulpit concerning the tithe?

To further demonstrate how far this “*cursed with a curse*” mentality can be incorrectly utilized by well meaning pastors, I would like to use a real life example of a teaching I personally witnessed. My wife and I visited a local Messianic synagogue one Saturday. Towards the end of the sermon the rabbi giving the message began to exhort his congregation on tithing. He was strongly emphasizing the need to tithe because of the curse you would be under if you reneged on this commandment. I wanted to ask him about Galatians 3:13a that says, “*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us...*” but I kept quiet so I wouldn’t be out of order and disrupt the service.

The example supporting this rabbi’s doctrine came from someone he was evidently counseling in the past. This couple was having financial difficulty, there was sickness involved and their marriage fell apart. When he discovered they weren’t tithing he said “Duh! It’s the curse for not tithing,” blaming most of what was happening on the fact they weren’t giving their tithes. WHAT? My wife and I looked at each other with very puzzled looks. I couldn’t believe what I was hearing because, by experience, I knew that statement was way off the truth. You see, while I was giving my “tithe” plus extra for offerings, my wife and I had experienced a separation that lasted for seven years. During the separation, my studies of the bible lead me to the truth about New Covenant giving so I pulled myself out from under the Old Covenant law of stewardship. About a year after I quit tithing and began giving according to the New Covenant, my marriage was restored—just the opposite of what the rabbi was saying!

Please don’t misunderstand me here; I’m not trying to establish a New Covenant giving doctrine that says if you quit tithing, your marriage will be restored. That would be ridiculous

on my part. There were many different things God was working on in my life at the time and it was just coincidence (or a God incidence) the two issues were resolved around the same time. What I'm trying to point out is that what was being said from the pulpit had strayed far away from biblical truth and is good illustration of what happens when someone tries to work Old Covenant legalistic laws into our new spiritual covenant – it ultimately ends in wrong direction and confusion.

It is easy to see how legalistic tithing can become. Paul warns us about falling back into the law under legalism and the dangers involved for a New Covenant believer in Galatians, chapters 4 and 5. Some of the blood Jewish believers were trying to tell the church in Galatia that they had to follow Old Covenant Jewish laws, one of which was circumcision, in order to be saved. Paul was refuting this, telling them to cast out the old legalistic system because we are now free from it. In Galatians 5:3-4 he states, *“For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”* In the New Covenant, circumcision is done in the heart, not of the flesh anymore (Romans 2:29 *“But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God”*). He also goes on to say in Galatians 5:9, *“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”* To enhance his comments in this passage, if we try to adhere to one part of the law (i.e. Circumcision, animal sacrifice, stoning, tithing, etc.), we place ourselves under the whole law, not just one part of it. In effect we are saying Jesus did not do a completed work for us at the cross (Galatians 2:21 *I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain*), so we fall back into the legalistic bondage we were operating in before we accepted His grace. Knowing the lack of grace associated with our entire walk if we fall into one area of Old Covenant legalism, are we completely confident the tithe is a New Covenant requirement as it is preached in churches?



## Chapter 2

### What About Those Tithing Testimonies?

I am quite sure all of us have heard the testimonies for years about the “blessings” that came from tithing. Occasionally selected letters are read or certain people are asked to give their testimony before the offering is collected, with emphasis placed on how a tither was blessed with a new car, an inheritance, a cancelled debt, or some kind of unexpected income, which on occasion would be a rather large amount. With these powerful testimonies, it’s easy to get caught up in “what God was doing,” as I did for years. It took a while before I realized the number of letters being read was falling way short in proportion to the number of people tithing (which in reality is more likely less than half of the Christians that claim they give 10% or more). As I visited with other brothers and sisters at church, I never seemed to run across anyone, who I knew was a faithful tither and giver, who realistically had an over abundance of financial blessings they “*could not contain.*” In fact, most of the believers were having difficulty even maintaining enough income to support their basic needs of food, clothing and shelter.

After about 10 years of religiously faithful, over and above tithing myself (I always made sure I erred on the side of giving too much out of the fear of “*robbing God*” if I didn’t give enough), I began to wonder why there was not an overabundance as the preaching and testimonies were implying. Of course the ministers always had an answer for the what-about-me thinking saying, “Your blessing is right around the corner, so don’t quit right before you receive your miracle,” or “God may have protected you from a car wreck that would have cost you a lot of money.” I was having trouble with the car wreck statement because I could have bought a couple of cars with the money I had given into tithing. Even though I had questions, I didn’t quit tithing because I did not want to stop right before God decided to release the “blessing.”

When we stop to evaluate God’s true grace (Which, by the way, is strongly emphasized in most of the sermons immediately following the “tithe” collections), how can skipping an opportunity to tithe one week short of our miracle, negate 10 years of faithfulness? Better yet, would a God full of grace and mercy allow us to be in a car wreck just because we omitted a couple of tithe checks, or would He protect us even though we fell short of perfection? I don’t know if anyone has noticed, but sometimes the exhortations on giving tithes and the sermons on grace seem to be in complete opposition to each other. Could it possibly be an amalgamation of the god of mammon with the God of grace?

To answer all of these questions we need to look at what the whole bible says, not just one passage. It is the total sum of all The Word in the bible that establishes truth, Psalms 119:160. So let’s take a look at how many times the tithe is used or referred to in the New Testament.



## Chapter 3

### All New Testament verses using the word **tithe** or **tithes**:

- Matthew 23:23, “*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.*”
- Luke 11:42, “*But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*”
- Luke 18:12, “*I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.*”
- Hebrews 7:5-9, “*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: 6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. 7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. 8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he [receiveth them], of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. 9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.*”

As you can plainly see, there are VERY few verses in the New Testament that even mention the word “tithe.” In Matthew and Luke, it is Jesus himself who is using the word, but He is using it to rebuke the Pharisees for their legalistic views of the law. Jesus is explaining how they completely missed the more important ingredients of mercy and faith associated with the law. Although, please notice that Jesus said they should not “*leave the other (tithe) undone.*” In other words, He told them they should have tithed as well. I have heard a lot of well-known preachers look at the “letter of the law” interpretation of these two verses above in Matthew and Luke and declare this is clear confirmation we should tithe in the New Covenant because “Jesus said we should.” But is it really that black and white?

I heard one denominational seminary trained pastor (He had an earned doctorate, so he must be an expert, right?) in his Matthew 23:23 teaching try to refute people who believe the tithe is not part of the New Covenant. He made the statement, “If Jesus told the Pharisee to tithe, but we don’t have to do it now; then should we also disregard the first commandment to love the Lord with all our hearts, because He told a Pharisee to do that also?” This kind of scholarly reasoning sounds good coming from a highly educated person. But allow me to use this same kind of twisted logic to illustrate how one can waver from biblical accuracy with this kind of “intellectual” interpretation: Jesus told the man healed of leprosy in Matthew 8:4 to offer a sacrifice offering for his healing, so (according to his logic, not mine) shouldn’t we still have altars for burnt sacrifices in the front of our church temples so all the people who get healed can offer burnt offerings? After all, Jesus did tell the healed man to do this in the New Testament! This is a prime example of how anyone can take one statement in a verse and make it fit their denominational doctrine, without taking into consideration what the rest of the bible says or doesn’t say about the specific topic.

At the time Jesus made these statements in Matthew 23 and Luke 11 about the tithe, we must realize that Israel was still operating under the Old Covenant law because Jesus had not yet shed His blood to atone for their sins, so the New Covenant was not in place yet. Hebrews 9:16 states, *“For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.”* The testator had not yet died. A concept that is widely misunderstood among believers is that even though Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are in the “New Testament,” they are describing a period of time that God was still operating under the Old Covenant law. Jesus was the only perfect one who was able to follow all the law, so He wouldn’t have told anyone, especially the Pharisees, to go against any portion of the law for any reason. He came to fulfill the law, not to destroy it. (Math 5:17-18 *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*)

Jesus also healed the man with leprosy and told him in Matthew 8:4, *“And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.”* He instructed the man with leprosy to follow the Old Testament law offering a sacrifice for his healing because they were still under the law. Are we supposed to offer sacrifices when we receive miraculous healing in the New Covenant? The obvious answer is NO in Hebrews 10:6-8, *“In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law.”*

The Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery to Jesus to see if He would follow the law and stone her to death in John 8:3-7 *“And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”* The Pharisees intentionally tried to tempt Jesus to break the Mosaic Law, but He didn’t fall into their trap and countermand the commandment, He just subtly reminded each of the stoners of their own fallen nature and personal sins they were still wrestling with.

Due to the fact that Jesus didn’t annul the stoning law in the adulteresses’ situation, should this give us justification under the New Covenant to stone people to death for adultery? Should we also stone people to death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath like Moses was commanded to do in Numbers 15:33-35, *“And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.”* I think everyone will agree the obvious answer to these questions is NO! Ask most any New Covenant Christian if we should stone anyone caught in adultery like they did in the Old Testament, and I believe the number one response would be, “We are no longer under the law, we are under grace now.” This response would be correct and biblically accurate. We must therefore apply the same logic when Jesus was talking about the tithe. Just because Jesus told the Pharisee, in the verses in Matthew 23 and Luke 11, he should have tithed, does not

automatically make it a New Covenant requirement either. By making the statement “*not to leave the other (tithing) undone*” He was simply advising him to not break the Old Covenant law of tithing which was still in effect at the time -- as was an animal sacrifice offering for the covering of sins and stoning for people caught in the act of adultery.

In Hebrews 7, the only other passage in the New Testament where the tithe is specifically mentioned, Paul is speaking to messianic Jews who were having issues with trying to incorporate the law and Jesus’ high priest position into their newfound Christianity. He used Melchisedec as an example of Christ to show that Abraham gave tithes to Melchisedec, even though he was not from the tribe of Levi. The Hebrews he was speaking to, who were very familiar with the law, said only Levites from the tribe of Levi could receive tithes. Paul was using Abraham’s tithe to show them Abraham had given a tithe to a priest who was not from the blood line of Levi. He was using the Melchisedec offering to explain how the priesthood changed from the carnal commandments of the Levitical priesthood to the new high priest from the tribe of Judah, not the tribe of Levi. And this new high priest was made in likeness and after the order of Melchisedec. Which Paul said in verse 12, “*there was of necessity a change also of the law.*” Nowhere in this passage does Paul command or even hint that the church should practice the law of tithing, he was simply using it as a tool to show these Jews that the law requirements for the high priest had changed. This passage is a great example of why we need to be familiar with the whole context of a passage so we understand what God is really trying to say. Anyone trying to use a single verse in this passage to justify New Covenant tithing needs to do an in-depth word study of this whole chapter. In fact, have you ever heard a pastor using this text to promote his tithing program? I can’t say that I ever have, because I think most of the pastors know it would be very difficult to contextually support.

There are some church leaders’ teachings that may use the Hebrews 7 passage to support the fact that Abraham tithed to Melchisedec before the Old Covenant law was given, so they proclaim tithing is for the New Covenant because it goes all the way back to Abraham. His dialogue with Melchisedec is the only time scripture says anything about Abraham tithing, and it was because of his victory in a battle he just fought. Genesis 14:18-20 states, “*And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.*” He was blessing Melchizedek because Melchizedek blessed him and because God had blessed him with a victory in the battle. It was a gift out of love (choice), not out of obligation to fulfill a covenant vow. God did not tell Abraham to give, much less how much to give to Melchisedec. He decided himself that was what he wanted to do. There is simply not any information given to establish a tithe-was-required-before-the-law doctrine based on this one incident of Abraham giving a tenth. It is not recorded that Abraham tithed to anyone else or even repeatedly tithed to Melchisedec. God may have recorded this gift of a tithe in Genesis just because he knew an apostle named Paul in the future would need to use this information with a group of messianic Jews to confirm Jesus’ priesthood. The passage in Hebrews 7 simply doesn’t give any solid biblical evidence that tithing is a requirement for the New Covenant believer.

Actually, the teachers saying the tithe was in effect before the law are correct. Where their doctrine falters is when they say it began with Abraham. There was a covenant vow of giving one tenth that was established with God by Jacob. The tithe commitment came about

after Jacob had the dream of the ladder going to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it. When he woke from the dream, he took the stone he was using for a pillow, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on it. Then he made his vow to God in Genesis 28:20-22 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, So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: 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 dedicated a tenth of all he had and established the place he had his dream, Bethel, to be the location of the future temple. If years later God honored the location of “God’s house” through Jacob’s descendents, then it stands to reason He also required his descendents to pay the “tenth.” If we go back to the Malachi passage on tithing to the sixth verse, we see that the passage was directed to the *“sons of Jacob,”* not the sons of Abraham. Throughout the New Testament, gentile Christians are referred to as the spiritual seed of Abraham, not the seed of Jacob; Galatians 3:7 *“Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.”* Galatians 3:29 *“And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.”* Even though tithing was established before the law, it was tied directly to Jacob, and there is no reference to him concerning giving in the New Covenant.

Essentially, every time the word “tithe” is used in the New Testament, it is used to rebuke a few Jews for getting into legalism and missing the heartier matters of the law. There are no other times that the tithe is mentioned by Jesus or the apostles. If the tithe is supposed to be a major part of the church, as it is today, why didn’t Jesus or at least one of the apostles say the church must definitely continue in this form of giving? If it was a New Covenant form of giving, wouldn’t Paul, the apostle to the gentiles, have encouraged at least one, if not all, of his gentile churches to follow the ten percent form of giving? After all, most of the gentile churches he established would not have known anything about the tithes because they weren’t familiar with the Jewish religion.

## Chapter 4

### New Covenant Giving

At the end of this epistle is a listing of most of the scriptures in the New Testament regarding any form of giving. This may not be all of the verses that apply, but it is enough to get the full picture. A comprehensive look at all of these passages, reveals a heart for giving to the poor, needy, and widows, and this gives the impression this type of giving captures the majority of focus from Jesus and the apostles. There is also direction on supplying provision for ministers that are constantly studying The Word so they can minister to other saints. New Covenant giving is a heart (spiritual) issue, and out of all the verses listed, there is nothing that we can glean that specifically addresses or encourages an identifiable percentage (tithe) of income.

One of the things we are exhorted to do is take care of others in our spiritual family. I would like to quote a verse here that should give us a glimpse of how we should be supplying the needs of fellow Christian brothers and sisters. 1 John 3:17 states, *“But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”*

For the sake of explanation, I will invoke literary license to rewrite the above verse from 1 John 3 according to Doug's Exceedingly Augmented Bible Commentary that you may be hoping, after this segment, will never be published. It would go something like this; *“But whosoever is wallowing in most of the luxuries this world can offer like a big house, nice car, Johnny Highdollar designer clothes (with the label on the outside so everyone in church knows what you paid for it) purchased from the popular Needless Markup store, who also consistently gives their tithes to the local church 'storehouse' and also puts a little extra in for the temple building fund over and above their tithes; yet sees other Christians in their congregation that are struggling to pay their light bill and provide food for their family, and tells them 'I'll pray that God will bless you like He does me, so make sure you start paying your tithes so you won't be cursed with a curse anymore, and does not pay the utility bill and purchase some groceries for them, how can they be operating in the love of God and be parading themselves around as blessed Christians?”* Without further elaboration, I believe the point of my expansion of this verse is understood.

There are many statements in the New Testament scripture reference passages that advise the person to sell all they have and give it to the poor. We cannot look at the life of Jesus without having a complete understanding of his heart for the poor and downtrodden. If we gave to the poor, in proportion to the number of times Jesus and the apostles told us to, there would be a much bigger percentage of the pie going to the needy than is given through the body of believers these days. If we consider the “storehouse church buildings” today and look at their budgets, on a national average, approximately 93 plus percent of the money is spent on buildings, maintenance, staff, pastor's salaries, and TV time (promoted as missions giving, of course). The remaining 7% is used for benevolence for the poor and true missions type work. These scary statistics and many more can be found at:  
[http://www.fellowshipofthemartyrs.com/scary\\_stats.htm](http://www.fellowshipofthemartyrs.com/scary_stats.htm)

Yes, I have heard on numerous occasions, a lot of TV ministers saying, “The expensive television time slots can reach out to millions more than we could reach in one-on-one personal ministry situations.” They refer to their television ministry as their “mission’s funds” and justify the large amount of “mission” dollars spent by telling how many letters they receive about “changed lives” all over the world. Of course, they neglect to mention how these “missions” dollars are used to build their self-serving empires, advancing their one-man icon along with greatly enhancing sales of his books, tapes and CD’s that are being promoted during the TV program while he is “reaching the world.”

Please don’t misunderstand me; I’m not against TV evangelism, which is a good instrument to get The Word out. We need to use any tools available at our disposal to reach people. What I’m against is forsaking the Christians that minister physical needs to hurting people in order to utilize the money for buying prime time television slots. If a decision is made to withdraw or decline support for a missionary, that Jesus is using to address the physical needs in the backwoods of Africa or South America, so the funds can be redirected to TV evangelism, the heart of that ministry is way out of alignment with Jesus’ desires. They are too far removed from the battlefield, the suffering, or the self sacrifice other believers are giving as they properly fulfill the great commission. If the church can’t provide for the needs of brothers and sisters in Christ, devastated by natural disasters in their own country, and even in their own city, because all the money is already allocated to building loans, staff and TV ministry, then they are completely void of the true heart of Jesus.

Evangelism is only one part of the great commission. Jesus commanded us to “make disciples,” not just converts (especially temporary or false converts for the sake of number counting). We can repent of our sins and confess Jesus watching TV -- I am a byproduct of that kind of evangelism -- but we cannot be baptized or become an effective disciple watching programs on a screen without personal interaction. As with any new baby Christian, they need to be physically ministered to by other more mature brothers and sisters. How can we minister a glass of water to the least of them through a television set? If the TV minister’s response is “I’m called to evangelize; other ministries are called to minister to the needs,” then I would ask, why not donate a very large portion of the millions of dollars in generated TV and book sales revenue and give it to those other missionaries who come face to face with people (In other words, take the muzzle off the ox that is treading out the corn)? The amount of resources devoted to television ministries in relation to supporting personal contact ministries, fellow Christians and the poor is way out of proportion compared to New Covenant teachings on giving. The first century church grew at an enormous rate, like the Chinese home churches are doing currently in this twenty first century, and all without huge TV “mission” budgets!

Some of the New Testament scriptures listed at the end of this epistle do enforce giving to ministers of the Gospel. As stated in the beginning paragraphs, the “ministers” would include all “five fold” ministry offices, along with the worshipers, and musicians. With the “tithing” system in place today, the majority of the money only goes to one office -- the pastor. The rest of the ministries are left out of most of the fundraising because the current teaching advocates the first tenth goes to our local church (storehouse) offerings over and above the tithe are used for building funds and other ministries (mostly under the pastors unbiblical umbrella ‘covering’). If these churches want to utilize the Old Covenant tithing system, then they need to include all ministry offices in the “tithe,” not just the local church congregation and its pastor.

1 Timothy 5:18 states, *“For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.”* The church temple tithing system we have in place today has been very effective at muzzling scores of oxen.

If we take a close look at the Old Covenant tithing system, we can see that eleven of the tribes of Israel were required to support the whole tribe of Levi. If everyone in the country was doing their part in the giving process, the tribe of Levi subsisted at about the same standard of living as the rest of the tribes. If the rest of the country was living in poverty, then the priest were living in poverty as well. If the other eleven tribes of Israel were being blessed with wealth, then the priest were living in abundance. The tithe system was set up so most of the priest in Israel were at about the same average standard of living as the rest of Israel.

Now, fast forward and look at the way the tithing system is used in the church today. For one, as pointed out previously, the money is not being used for all of the God ordained ministers in the body of Christ. Secondly, there is a growing number of ministers living an ultra-rich, upper-class lifestyle that is way above the average income of the fellowship of believers supporting their temple churches they have built. As with the priest in the Old Covenant, I don't believe God ever intended for the priest or the “senior” pastors (No such office ever mentioned in the bible) to live an exotic lifestyle that far exceeds most of their flock. How can they teach others to trust in God if they appoint themselves enough money to supply their every need so they won't have to trust God for anything? Luke 12:15 says, *“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.”*



## Chapter 5

### Equality

When it comes to giving, Paul was very clear in his exhortation concerning giving to the church at Corinth which was very wealthy like the western church is today. He said in 2 Corinthians 8:13-14 *“For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:”* He was concerned that there should be no lack or poor among believers in the church of Jesus Christ, unless those poor were in that condition because of their lack of contributing their part to the local community of believers. 2 Thessalonians 3:10 *“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.”*

Paul was very much for financial equality among the believers, and by his lifestyle, he exhibited evidence that he practiced what he preached. In 2 Corinthians 8 he went on to say in verse 15 *“As it is written, He that [had gathered] much had nothing over; and he that [had gathered] little had no lack.”* He was referring to the Old Testament in Exodus 16 in the middle of verse 16 where God told the children of Israel to gather manna, *“an omer for every man”* in the wilderness. It said some gathered more and some less, but when they brought it in to measure in the omer in verse 18 it says, *“And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating”* God made sure that no matter how much manna they collected, when it was measured they had exactly one omer per man. The reason Paul quoted this Old Testament passage here was to establish that God’s standard was to see that all His children were equally supplied.

Somehow, the prosperity preachers that are collecting the ‘tithes’ seem to be overlooking this concept of equality. We never hear them preach on passages like 1 Timothy 6:8 *“And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.”* Maybe their New Corporate Worldly Translation of the bible interprets these verses much differently into a more easily seducing friend-of-the-world language. Or could it be they’re skimming over these verses, or maybe not even reading their bibles, but instead following in the theological footsteps of other successful fundraising evangelicals?

The gospel was never intended to be used to make people rich no matter what all these prosperity teachers are telling us. We would be much better stewards of God’s money by questioning all of the offerings being taken by deceitful men indulging the lust of their flesh (and/or catering to the expensive taste of their wives). We should be asking ourselves why they are receiving our money and for what purpose it will be used. Do they really need it for the work of the gospel or is it so they can live a lifestyle of obscene, pampered wealth? If you look closely at believer’s incomes, it seems we have developed a ministry caste system. There are the popular TV elite on one hand, and the rest of the church on the other. The haves and the have-nots.

Since these spiritually elite are so popular, they frequently receive scores of invitations for speaking at different churches and seminars. What many believers may not know is that it’s

common practice for many of these pastors and speakers to charge exorbitant fees for traveling to other locations. It's not unusual to see requests for \$20,000 or more per day plus demanding first class hotels, limos, and fruit baskets just like worldly celebrities. Then they require generous promotional ads on TV spots and newspapers to let everyone know they are coming so when they arrive they can expect to extrapolate more money by promoting their books and CD's. Most of the time, the only thing attending Christians get from the speech that just cost them thousands of dollars is spiritual junk food intended to make them prosper, feel good, and get blessed so they too can be rich, fat and happy.

The bible says *"freely you have received, freely give,"* so charging ridiculous fees to preach "God's Word" is not just a sin, it's an abomination in the eyes of the Lord, and these hooligans will have a lot to answer for. As a true follower of Christ, we should not be following their false teachings and definitely not funding their lifestyles by purchasing their books and materials. *"Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself"* (1 Timothy 6:5).

I am not against wealth, the bible has examples of Godly people who had great wealth, nor am I preaching the virtues of poverty. I am also not against large ministries that need considerable incomes to support their operations. There have been many examples of great ministries in previous generations that were given vast sums of money that they properly used to minister to vast numbers of people, and they did immense works for the Lord. What I am in opposition to and what God speaks against in His Word is the leaders at the top of these ministries using God's resources for their own gain.

Philippians 3:18-19 *"(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)"*

This continual amassing of finances into these false ministries is usually to the detriment of the poor right in our midst. Repeating 1John 3:17 again it says, *"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"* When we get so caught up in the emotion of giving to these ministers so we ourselves can be "blessed" in return, we completely miss the opportunities to minister to the poor and suffering brothers and sisters sitting right next to us. If we would take time to read The Word rather than depending on these pastors to read it for us, the Holy Spirit would give us revelation concerning the truth about sowing and reaping. Blessings are not based on giving to wealthy churches and ministers, but rather giving to the poor in our midst. As Paul stated in 2 Corinthians 9:9, *"(As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.)"*

We need to keep a tight fist around our offerings until we know the mind of the Spirit and give according to the will of the Lord, not according to the emotion of the moment hyped up by impostors promising us a return reward.

## Chapter 6

### The Temple Money Changers

*“And the Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up”* (John 2:13-17). His disciples were remembering this Old Covenant scripture, *“I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children. For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me”* (Psalms 69:8-9).

What made Jesus so upset that He made a whip and drove out all the people that were buying and selling in the temple area? After all, they were providing a service in making sure everyone had access to kosher animals and currency that was required by the sacrificial system of the day, right? Not hardly! Most all these people were conducting shady business dealings that could very easily be described as racketeering. They were also being allowed to continue their lucrative trades in the temple area with the blessing of the Sanhedrin. You can rest assured that a portion of the profits they were harvesting from the masses were making it into the personal bank accounts of a lot of the Scribes and Pharisees. Jesus was so upset because He knew how the religious leaders were milking His sheep. These snake oil salesmen, with their silver-tongued religious jargon, had packaged and sold their bill of goods as if they were trying to help the commoners to suitably practice their Old Covenant religion.

The majority of the religious leaders of Jesus' day were caught up in this money changing which, in every practical sense, is more the worship of mammon rather than the worship of the true God. *“No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”* (Luke 16:13). Jesus was very clear in the fact we can't worship money and Him at the same time – we must make a choice.

If the verses in Ecclesiastes 1:9-10 are true, *“The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us,”* then do we see the same basic mammon-worship principles in use today by the majority of the religious leaders in their “temple” complexes? Is there any place connected to the church buildings of these last days that we can see the practice of preying on a captive audience that is there for the purpose of worshiping our Lord, yet is packaged and hidden under the guise of giving believers access to things they need to appropriately practice their New Covenant religion? Of course there is! It's blatant, obvious and right under our noses, but we don't even realize what it is, and scores of church temple buildings have them, especially the larger ones. The money changers are there, just as they were 2000 years ago, for the sole purpose of making a profit. If they weren't making excess revenue, the “senior” corporate pastors would not allow them to exist.

In case you haven't yet deduced what I'm referring to, I'm speaking of the all familiar, in-house bookstores. Some of you might disagree, as did some of the Jews that were blinded by their traditions in Jesus' time, but all you have to do is look behind the scenes to see what is really taking place, and the association should easily be understood. Just like in the days of Jesus, the bookstore money changers are providing profits to the bottom line of the "church" budgets, and some of those profits from the mega temples amount to millions of dollars a year. Where are the millions coming from? It's manifesting out of the coiffures of ignorant, unsuspecting people coming to worship God, just like it was in Jesus' day. As if their Old Covenant tithe teachings haven't coerced them to give enough, creative pastors have figured out ways to milk more money out of the flock, precisely like the Sadducees and Pharisees did when they were trying to control their religion.

Like the Sadducees and Pharisees, some of those profits find their way into the bank accounts of the pastors, either through their salary or by their own product sales. If you will notice the next time you visit one of these profit centers, the "senior" pastor's picture and expensive promotional posters dominate the high traffic volume areas. Shelves are filled with his books, tapes and CD's in an effort to promote his products. On occasion, because they're so far back in a corner, you may even have to ask where to find the bibles. You will also notice most of the prices charged for the products are at inflated suggested retail prices, which is usually a much higher price than you can purchase them at a local bookstore or over the internet. One of the advantages of this retail pricing scam is the "senior" pastor not only gets a royalty from the publisher, he also gets to keep the extra profit he makes over and above the wholesale price the church paid for the material. Can you say racketeering?

What do you think would happen if Jesus came into one of these New Covenant temple complexes today and began overturning the money changers book shelves and cash registers? Any one of us could answer that question without much thought. He would be instantly wrestled down by the church security, handcuffed, most likely arrested and taken downtown -- or at least kicked out of the building. And from that day forward, they would have a guard posted at the front door so they could make sure He never set foot in "their" church again. In other words, our religious leaders would react the same way the Sadducees and Pharisees did when their lavish lifestyle was being threatened. And to add to the irony, if this truly did happen on a Sunday morning, there would be no doubt the "senior" pastor would still get up in front of the church and preach a sermon on the love of Jesus -- right after they had forcefully removed him from the building. He would probably even utilize the incident to demonstrate the "un-Christ-like" behavior of the anti-bookstore fanatic. As Christians, we may find it alarming to speculate how many believers who truly act like Jesus are shunned from buildings called "churches" these days and are no longer permitted on the premises.

What is it that these New Covenant Sadducees and Pharisees don't get about Matthew 10:8 where Jesus commanded us, "*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.*" If we receive something from God, which is always a gift and cost us nothing, we should freely give it out to others. How many of the original apostles wrote books to the churches, then got their work copyrighted through the local publisher so they could be "blessed" from their royalties? Did they also promoted their books from their apostolic platforms, going on book signing tours so they could get their sales up far enough to be on the New Jerusalem best selling list for 10 weeks running? The answer to both

questions is a definite NO! Yet this is exactly what happens in the corporate structured “churches” of today. The revelation that God gave the apostles they passed on freely and the work was copied and recopied without permission from the writer. If the books these pastors are promoting are really that life changing, and the revelation was received from God, then why are they trying to make a huge profit off of something that was a gift freely given by Him? There is only one answer – *“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world”* (1 John 2:16).

I personally know of one teacher in the body of Christ that has made his teaching tapes freely available ever since he began his ministry. When he was beginning his walk with the Lord, he attended a seminar that had tapes available for sale that he knew could help him grow, but he couldn’t afford to acquire them at the time. He made God a promise right then that if anyone ever needed one of his tapes in the future, he would give it to them. He has kept that word to the Lord over the years and has literally given millions of tapes and CD’s away – even paid for the postage to send it through the mail. You can attend his seminars today and, even though he sells tapes and CD’s with fancy album covers, he has one table that you can pick up some of his teachings for nothing. Anyone can request a teaching from his ministry and he will pay the postage to send it through the mail -- no charge to the requestor. Even though he does sell products, this brother’s heart is not about profiting from other believers.

Please don’t misunderstand me; I’m not against having a bookstore or library in the churches for making material easily accessible for believers to learn and grow. My mother voluntarily managed her local church library for years. There was quite a collection of very good books that were freely available to anyone who was a member of the church, but there was no bookstore. When I began attending another local mega church in my city, they were operating a bookstore, but they also had what they referred to as a lending library. Anyone who attended could check out books, tapes and CD’s and then return them. Eventually though, as leadership changed, the lending library was dropped and the bookstore expanded because the library was a liability and the expense came out of their “tithes” money, the bookstore was income and was in addition to their “tithes.”

If a bookstore associated with the church building was run by Jesus standard, it would not be operating at a profit, nor would it have the “senior” pastor’s enlarged book cover posters plastered all over the walls. We all understand it cost money to produce books; it cost several dollars each to produce this one. Instead of charging suggested retail, they should be using their volume buying ability to purchase books at bigger discounts, then pass that discount on to the people attending the church so they could purchase the products at prices much lower than they could get anywhere else. The prices should be adjusted low enough so that they could recover cost and still be able to freely give books to those who don’t have the means to purchase one. There should also be a receptacle provided for contributions to help cover the cost of the bookstore donating products to people who simply couldn’t afford to buy, even at discounted rates. There also needs to be an area for used products where people could donate their products back to give to others in need. Of course, this plan of operation seems very idealistic, and it would naturally necessitate a complete trust in God for the provision. Duh!!!!

Even though I digressed from the tithing topic by exploring this misrepresented objective of making profits from church bookstore sales, it is also a form of coerced giving that is utilized by entirely too many ministers and ministries these days. In fact, if one does enough

research, they may notice a direct correlation between large bookstore operations and pastors that regularly promote tithe collecting. Another even more objectionable profiteering practice popping up these days (that I won't expand on) is opening up coffee and donut type shops inside the churches. It's yet another perfect example of the worldly extremes "pastors" will go to while obsessing over how to make Christianity more convenient, get one more dollar to do "God's work," and make everyone feel good about parting with their money. They probably even promote their fast food enterprises as a way to bring people into the church. I have news for them. If people are drawn by anything other than the Holy Spirit, all their worldly attempts will be futile, as Jesus said "*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves*" (Mathew 23:15).

As for the drug addicts in the church who enjoy the convenience of the coffee shops to get their morning fix of java, is there any difference between caffeine and any other drug, legal or illegal? I've seen believers on the church prayer team proclaim they must have at least 2 cups of coffee so they can wake up to be able to minister and pray with others in the church. Then they talk about someone who happens to come into the church in bondage to a cocaine addiction that they had to intercede against the "spirit of addiction." Excuse me! Isn't that the epitome of being hypocritical? And for the rest of the caffeine addicts not on the prayer team, God has a verse for you to believe in. Mark 16:18a says, "*They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them;*"

For those that see nothing wrong with coffee addicts praying for cocaine addicts, try Matthew 7:5 (parenthesis mine) "*Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam (caffeine) out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote (cocaine) out of thy brother's eye.*"

## Chapter 7

### Public or Secret Giving

In the passage of Matthew 6:1-4 it says, *“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest [thine] alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.”* We see that our giving is to be in secret, then God can reward us openly. In other words, if we proudly tell someone how much we are giving, we just received our reward, which was trying to impress fellow believers. I have seen a few ministers during offering time ask the congregation, “Who is a tither?” causing the majority of the congregation to instantly raise their hands. Guess what? Most of those who were truly “tithers” just received their reward by participating in the self promoting exercise -- not taking into consideration that some of them were untruthful (only 20% - 30% of the people in any given church actually give enough to equal a tenth of their income).

I have also personally witnessed pastors, collecting offerings for visiting ministers, building projects or other causes, place a “chest of Jehoshaphat,” an offering bucket, or a person right in front of the pulpit, then encourage people to give sacrificially for their special cause. The problem with this practice is anyone who wants to give must walk up in front of everyone else in the church. This creates situations where: 1) people that are not being lead by God to give feel guilty or condemned, so some of these give to go along with the crowd; 2) some people give primarily so they can impress the pastor or show others they are giving; and 3) people who truly want to give anonymously may not because they feel very uneasy walking in front of others, especially those that understand the biblical act of giving in secret so God can reward them openly. This practice goes completely against the Matthew 6 passage concerning giving in secret, and should not be utilized by pastors. Yes, Jesus did sit in the temple and watched as the people put money in the treasury, pointing out the sacrificial, New Covenant style giving of the widow and her two mites in Mark 12:42-44 *“And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called [unto him] his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all [they] did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, [even] all her living.”* He said nothing against this easily noticed, public giving. As pointed out earlier in this treatise, Jesus wouldn’t speak against any of the law, and the Jews he was observing were following the commandment to bring the tithes to the treasury (storehouse). So, I guess, if the pastors exploiting the public giving method are operating in Old Covenant laws, relying on tithes and soliciting offerings to rebuild their temples (church buildings) like King Jehoshaphat was doing, this practice of public giving may be okay for their rabbinical religion, but please don’t refer to it as Christian.

This Matthew 6 passage also contradicts the practice of having our name placed on a walkway stone leading up to the building, a brick on the side of the building, a plaque in the foyer, or some other permanent fixture on the structure for some building project the “church” is

raising money for. This kind of fundraising is used because of the leadership's lack of ability to believe for God's provision. Either that or they are using a spare-no-expense, God-wants-us-to-have-the-best extravagance mentality that they know God would not want any part of. So these congregation leaders opt for worldly ways of raising money, promising people they will be noticed if they give to the building fund, which, on most occasions, is taught as an offering over-and-above the "tithe." This way the church leadership can make sure the building fund money does not take away from the usual amount received to run the congregation's regular operational expenses (including pastor's salaries). If we give to these building funds out of a desire to join in, or any self motivation to get our name mentioned, our only reward (blessing) is getting our name on the public list. Contrary to the teachings by some of these leaders, God will not bless us because of these so-called "offerings." There are occasions where God specifically tells Christians to give to a building fund, and their sole motivation is to be obedient to God's leading. These brothers and sisters will be rewarded (blessed) by God, even if their name is displayed on the name-noticing-promotion, because their heart is in the right place. Matthew 6 is in essence saying, God blessing our giving is dependent on our heart motivation, not a percentage or an outward show to be seen by man.

## Chapter 8

### How Much Should We Give?

At the beginning of the New Covenant church, Acts Chapter 2:44-45 it states, *“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all [men], as every man had need,”* and then it discloses in Chapter 4:32-37 *“And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any [of them] that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid [them] down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, the son of consolation,) a Levite, [and] of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold [it], and brought the money, and laid [it] at the apostles' feet.”* There was none of the early Christians that lacked anything because all of them sold their possessions and goods and laid them at the apostles' feet, who in turn distributed it to the other Christians according to their needs. Galatians 6:10 says, *“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”* Taking care of our brothers and sisters in Christ is definitely emphasized in the New Covenant.

Act 5:1-10 says, *“But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land. Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.”*

In this Acts 5 passage, Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead by God because they lied to the Holy Spirit about their contribution. They sold a possession and said they gave everything they made from the sale, but in reality they were secretly holding back part of their possessions for themselves, so God quickly removed them from this earth. This act of divine judgment was under the New Covenant, which means we can't make the statement, “God does not pass judgment on His own children under the New Covenant.” What this book of Acts teaching is implying is that everything we have belongs to God and our brothers and sisters in Christ. Luke 14:33 states, *“So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”* This lines up with Jesus' teachings when he told some of the rich people to sell all they had and give to the poor. The new church was displaying an agape

(charity) kind of love in their heart for one another by giving of their possessions to provide for each other, and according to Luke 18:22, “*Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me,*” they were storing up treasures in heaven. Why don’t we hear this kind of teaching in the churches today if it was the way of life in the first century church?

After Jesus advised the Christians to sell all they had and give to the poor, He explained that wherever our treasures are stored up is where you will find our heart (Luke 12:33-34 “*Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*”) Allow me to ask a question. If I have a million dollar home, two Cadillacs, my wife is wearing a new, latest-fashion-name outfit every Sunday (bought on sale, of course), yet I faithfully give my “tithes” plus another 10% more of my income into building fund offerings every week; in all honesty, where is my treasure stored up? I bet Ananias and Sapphira could correctly answer that question. Let me ask another similar question. If I have a two million dollar home, a Rolls Royce and a Bentley, my wife has a new brand-name outfit on every day of the week, yet I give 90% of my total gross income to the poor, older widows, other brothers and sisters in Christ, ministers of the gospel and missionaries in foreign lands; where is my treasure stored up? It’s not about what you have; it’s about your heart to give and share with others. I have been a firm believer for years now in the statement, “Show me a person’s check book, and I’ll tell you where their heart is.”

The New Covenant church met in homes, not in church buildings. The apostles also held many open air meetings where thousands would gather and listen. Overhead costs associated with maintaining expensive buildings in this type of setting were non-existent. Therefore, if they actually were “tithing” to their local church “storehouse,” it had to be the home church they were attending. Most of the money had to be going to the needs amongst themselves, the poor, missions, and provisions for the traveling apostles and elders which, by the way, not one of them used the newest, fastest, most elegant 4 horse chariots to travel on their journeys. The apostle Paul also had to make tents to supplement his living while ministering in some of the countries.

No doubt there were many Jews saved during the time of the early church that still paid their “tithes” to the temple treasury, trying to be obedient to the law. It was difficult to let go of some of their traditions, as it is for many of us that grow up under legalistic religious practices. But God eliminated the storehouse problem by having the Romans utterly destroy the temple in 70 A.D. If you remember, Jesus said there would not be one stone left upon another, so it was an utter complete destruction. God made sure the Old Covenant Rabbinical sacrificial system had no place to operate. There was no longer a temple or a treasury, so there is little doubt that the Jewish believers wouldn’t have been able to continue tithing to the storehouse.

It was the original apostles and elders that met in a council in Jerusalem to determine which parts of the Old Covenant ordinances should still be observed by Christians. They wanted to make sure all of the leaders of the church were operating in the same mindset and they were in agreement with God. The outcome of that council, which included Peter, James, Paul, and Barnabus, was they wrote epistles to the churches explaining the united position they agreed upon for the whole church. Acts 15:28-29 says, “*For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost,*

*and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well Fare ye well.*” They also affirmed in verse 28 that not only did all the apostles and elders agree on these requirements, but these resolutions were also given by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. They wrote in the letters that the only “*necessary things*” that still applied from the Old Covenant letter of the law was refraining from meats offered to idols, abstaining from blood and things strangled, and not committing fornication. Nothing was said about the tithe still being necessary. If this council of apostles, who were for the most part responsible for writing the New Testament, gathered expressly to determine what parts of the Old Covenant laws should still be observed, why didn’t they mention the tithe, especially if they were in agreement with the Holy Spirit? And if we try to apply a they-didn’t-speak-against-it-so-it’s-okay rule, then why haven’t we reinstated stoning people for picking up sticks on the Sabbath? They didn’t speak against that either. Brothers and sisters, this council was concerned about the elders of the church speaking as one voice because of the converted Jewish teachers trying to place gentile believers under bondage of the Old Covenant legalistic laws. If tithing was supposed to be followed, it would have been on their list of Old Covenant laws to adhere to. If the tithe applied to gentiles, then why didn’t Paul the apostle specifically communicate this in any of his writings to any of his churches?

The easily identified conclusion is tithing is an Old Covenant vow that applied to the sons of Jacob, not the sons of Abraham. Romans 3:19-20 states, “*Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*” We have been placing Christians under the bondage of the law, which means our giving is coming under the curse of the law as well. I too was drawn into this bondage for years because I was listening to the false teachings that claimed you were stealing from God if you did not pay your tithes. It was considered to be a sin and would bring us under the judgment of God. I was not reading The Word enough to search for the truth. I believed that if you “*robbed God,*” you “*were cursed with a curse,*” so I made sure I always erred on the side of giving more than was required.

Another problem came up that, on the surface, looked like it supported the tithe teachings. I personally knew a fellow believer who would look the other way a few times when the offering plate passed by, and sure enough, they later admitted something happened that cost them more money than they would have spent on the tithe. If tithing was Old Covenant law and we were not supposed to be giving that way in the New Covenant, then why did this happen to this person? God revealed to me it was because that person also believed in the tithe system the way it was being taught, so they placed themselves back under the law, and the law was working the way it was designed to work. They were robbing God because that is what they believed in their heart they were doing. Like I pointed out in an earlier paragraph, if we are justified by the law, we are fallen from grace. Galatians 3:12 says “*And the law is not of faith: but, the man that doeth them shall live in them.*” We need to make sure we believe in the right things. Mark 11:23 says, “*For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.*” This biblical truth can work for us or against us, but we will have whatsoever we believe!

Under the New Covenant, we are no longer under any curse of the law. Galatians 3:13 *“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree:”* Christ has redeemed us from those curses, which means we are no longer under any kind of bondage, including giving. Jesus already fulfilled the law for us, so we don’t have to. We became the seed of Abraham by the faith of Christ, Galatians 3:29 *“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”* Due to our new spiritual birth, we are his spiritual descendents and inherited his right to give out of choice (love for Christ), not bondage. We also receive his blessings by faith, Gal 3:9-11 *“So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.”* This is the same way Jacob’s descendents inherited the duty to tithe, except theirs came by natural birth, not spiritual.

When we surrendered to Jesus as Lord, we also received a new spirit *“whereby we cry Abba Father,”* (Romans 8:15). God is now our daddy and we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us who knows all things and reveals all things, John 14:26 *“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”* We no longer have to go to a temple to see God’s presence, He is right there within us all the time in the new temple, which is our own body. In the Old covenant, the only people who were given the anointing of the Holy Spirit were the prophets, priests and kings, so God gave the rest of the Jews rules to go by because most of them did not have access to the Holy Spirit within themselves. Every true born again Christian now has access directly to God and His Holy Spirit. This is why the veil in the temple was ripped apart at the same moment Jesus died, Mark 15:37-38 *“And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.”* It was God’s way of showing us we now had direct access to Him and He no longer lived in the Most Holy Place of the literal temple building. We don’t need a high priest (or senior pastor) to tell us how to give because we are now supposed to use the Holy Spirit to guide us in those decisions.

Earlier we looked at Matthew 5:17-20 where Jesus explained he came not to do away with the law but to fulfill the law, *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”* If you look at just this passage by the letter of the word, you could easily conclude that it seems like I am teaching to do away with a law so I will *“be called least in the kingdom of heaven.”* But as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3:6, *“Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”* God’s Word can only be spiritually discerned. If you try to interpret it only by the literal written letter of the words, it will kill the meaning. This is why atheists who read the bible are able to find so many things they perceive as contradictions.

Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 13:13-16, *“Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.”* We need to depend on God through the Holy Spirit to reveal what is the real truth hidden in the bible concerning the laws. So if Jesus said He came to fulfill the law and not do away with it, then how do we fulfill His commandment to give and not break the tithing law?

Jesus went on to describe how to fulfill the law as you read further in the Matthew 5 chapter. In verse 21-2 He said *“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”* The sixth commandment is thou shalt not kill. In the Old Covenant you were only held accountable if you actually murdered the person. But in the new covenant, Jesus holds us guilty of murder if we get angry with a brother, even if we don't physically hurt them. So in the new covenant, the standard is much higher.

In Matthew 5:27-28 Jesus said, *“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”* Again Jesus referenced one of the Ten Commandments which was thou shalt not commit adultery. He then said if you look upon a woman to lust, you have already committed adultery in your heart, even if you had no intention of engaging in the physical act.

Jesus didn't do away with any of the Old Covenant laws. In every example He gave comparing old covenant and new covenant laws, He actually upped the standard to deal with the very heart issues that appear long before the physical acts ever take place. If He changed the benchmark on all the other laws, doesn't it stand to reason that the criterion of giving ten percent may have been raised as well? Looking at most of the giving passages in the New Covenant, it looks to me like all we have belongs to God, not just the first tenth. In the Old Covenant they were 90% owners and 10% stewards. In the New Covenant with Jesus' new standard we are 100% stewards and we own nothing because everything belongs to God. If this is true, those who are expecting a blessing for being a faithful 10% giver are actually the ones that are robbing from God by hanging on to the other 90%.

In the Old Covenant, they were given the commandment to “love your neighbor as yourself.” When Jesus appeared on the scene, he added a new commandment in John 13:34 saying *“That ye love one another, as I have loved you ... By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples.”* Now we are to love one another like He loves, not like we ourselves love. I heard another apostle do a great job of describing the difference in the two covenants on this passage, so instead of trying to sculpt a situation, I will use his example. In the Old Covenant, if my neighbor was hungry and I had a loaf of bread, I should share an equal amount with them.

Under Jesus' New Covenant commandment, if my fellow believer was hungry and I had a loaf of bread, I should be prepared to give them the whole loaf, not just half.

In Jesus' new commandment, in John 13:35, He was speaking to his followers, not unbelievers, as discerned by His closing statement "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples.*" He did not command us to give everything away to non-believers, just believers, so the skeptic could readily recognize Christians by how they provided for each other. This passage reinforces the giving in Acts 4 describing the sale of all their possessions and laying them at the apostle's feet to distribute for each others needs. The New Covenant believer was easily distinguishable because all they had belonged to God and was considered to be part of the community of Christians, and no one in the group had lack. 2Corinthians 8:12-15 says, "*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. For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.*" They were in a spiritual blood covenant relationship with each other, similar to a natural blood family's relationship to each other, only the spiritual covenant was much closer. Mark 10:29-30 explains, "*And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left (Natural, flesh and blood) house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, (spiritual) houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.*" Can we say this type of giving up everything, including natural blood family and possessions that pull you away from Jesus, is occurring in our local church families today?

If we are supposed to pool our resources to provide for each other, what happens when someone does not do their part to contribute? A great question because it did, and will, happen and that specific problem is dealt with in scripture. Paul addressed this lazy person issue in 2 Thessalonians 3:10-15, "*For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count [him] not as an enemy, but admonish [him] as a brother.*" Paul was explaining if a person doesn't work, they can't eat with the brethren and they need to find their own bread. He also advised the believers to treat him as a brother, not an enemy, but not to associate with him.

I know we have all been approached by someone, even Christians, asking for money, and the verse in Luke 6:30 says, "*Give to every man that asketh of thee.*" So are we supposed to follow this verse to the letter? I made it policy years ago that I will use discernment in giving money to most Christians that ask, unless the Holy Spirit directs me to give. I do give monetarily to some of the non-Christians that solicit funds. Although, this may sound contrary to Luke 6, I have discovered most of the time I am in line with the Holy Spirit. It is very easy to enable a needy or poor person, which can actually contribute to their poverty, rather than help them out of it. If they are an unbeliever, I try to use discernment before I hand out any money. Although I try to err towards giving when I shouldn't, rather than take the chance of missing the

Holy Spirit trying to minister to someone through me, or even worse, meeting an angel in human form sent to test me. I have given monetarily to the people panhandling at intersections, knowing they might use it on drugs or alcohol, but where they spend it is an issue between God and them. Although, if you pray over those dollars before you hand them one, it provides a means to transfer a prayer anointing, without them even knowing it. As I stressed earlier in this thesis, Jesus' heart is for the poor and needy, and He did not limit his exhortations to only poor believers.

Some Christians that ask for money justify their request by quoting the James 4 verse, "*Ye have not because ye ask not.*" James is telling Christians they "*have not*" because they don't ask God and then stand and believe for His provision. It is not talking about asking other people in the church, so the verse is taken completely out of context by these needy believers. We as children of God are supposed to trust Him for provision, not man. If we are truly trusting God, we present Him with our need, then wait for Him to move on someone's heart to respond to our need. If a believer is suffering from lack, it just may be a position God has placed them in to force dependence on Him.

I had a Christian lady at our church building solicit me for money, justifying her request with a story about needing to pay a dentist to fix her tooth. I told her I would not give her money, instead I prayed with her for healing in her tooth without the assistance of a dentist (not what she wanted to hear). I would watch from a distance as she approached others in the church building, and would see some of them slip her a little money. Several weeks later, she approached me again petitioning for monetary handouts with the exact same dentist story. This time I advised her she needed to begin trusting God for finances and quit looking to man to supply her needs. She withdrew disappointed, but the next week she tracked me down to tell me she had been a panhandler all her life. She said God was strongly convicting her about begging people for money, so she finally made the decision to quit. That week she found extra money in her purse for a need, and she had no idea how it got there. I no longer notice her soliciting others in the church. What this sister needed was loving, but stern, encouragement, not a hand out. The handouts from other believers were actually keeping her in bondage to her old lifestyle and hindering her walk with the Lord.



## Chapter 9

### Does any of my previous “tithing” count?

A couple questions that many may be asking themselves that have been absorbing what has been revealed in this book so far is, “If I have been following a false doctrine and tithing is not the way we are supposed to give in the New Covenant, then do I receive any recompense from any of the funds that I have given so far?” Or maybe you’re thinking, “Great! All that money I gave and now I won’t receive any ‘blessings’ from it.”

Before you place yourself under a lot of condemnation, you must understand that God looks at the heart and judges everyone from their heart motivation, not by their outward actions. Just as there is a difference between Old Covenant and New Covenant giving, there is also a difference in the way God holds us accountable for lack of knowledge in the New Covenant.

In the Old Covenant, the people of God were held accountable for the sins they committed even though they did them in ignorance. The scripture that explains this best is Leviticus 5:17-18, “*And if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wist (knew) it not, yet is he guilty, and shall bear his iniquity. And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist (knew) it not, and it shall be forgiven him.*” Any commandment that they broke, even if they didn’t know they were doing it, they were held accountable for the sin. This is why it was important for them to give a sacrificial lamb every year so they could also atone for the sins they didn’t even know they were doing.

Thank God He repealed that law for us. Along comes Jesus and with His death establishes a New Covenant of grace concerning our sins. With the support of New Testament scriptures we see how the sins of ignorance are now handled differently. Romans 4:8 says, “*Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*” Further on down in the same chapter it says in verse 15, “*Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.*” Chapter 5 Verse 13 of Romans says, “*For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*” These scriptures reveal that where there is no law, we are not held accountable to sin. Romans 3:20 discloses, “*Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*” If we do not know what the law (God’s commandment) is, we have no knowledge that something is a sin; therefore the sin is not imputed (credited) to us.

In our New Covenant, God’s commandments are now written on our hearts a few at a time. It’s a slow gradual process as He completes our salvation from glory to glory, one step at a time. We’re not given all the commandments in our hearts at one time as that would completely overwhelm us. Paul explains in Hebrews 10:16-17, “*This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*” If God has not

written a specific law on our heart or mind, we are not held accountable for that sin because “*sin is not imputed when there is no law.*”

Romans 7:9 declares, “*For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*” The purpose of God’s commandments is to point out His plumb line of perfection as compared to our flesh. We don’t know how far we miss the mark until we are presented with the perfect standard. As Paul discloses in the above passage, he was alive until he was presented with the standard, then his sin was revealed, which causes death. This should simultaneously send us to our knees repenting so we can be restored to life again. “*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*” (Romans 6:16)

A passage in James might help amplify this point of sin not being imputed. James says in Chapter 4 verse 17, “*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*” If we know what God revealed in our hearts and minds to do and we don’t do it, then it is sin to us, and we will be held accountable for that sin. The implied unspoken understanding of this passage is that if we don’t know what we are supposed to do (the law hasn’t been written on our heart yet), and we don’t do it, then it is not sin to us, and that transgression will not be imputed. We are still alive because there was no knowledge of the “law” on our heart explaining what was sin, so we are not held accountable for that sin in Gods eyes. This is part of the “good news” that the New Covenant is all about, and would be a great place to shout, Halleluiah!

Allow me to interject a word of caution here. We need to be cognizant of the realization that the passage in James furthermore implies that what is sin for one believer may not be sin for another as of yet, based solely on his/her knowledge of the Word and what specific laws God has impressed on their heart. We need to extend as much grace to fellow believers without knowledge as God extended to us when we were without knowledge of the same sin! God changes each one of us from glory to glory and His promise as outlined in 1Corinthians 10:13 is, “*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*” God knows how much sin He can reveal to each one of us at one time and still be able to bear it. Let’s make sure we don’t hinder God’s plan and try to overload other believers with conviction before God has the chance to deal with their heart on the issue.

Knowing that God does not hold us accountable, for the lack of knowledge of His laws, should give us a better understanding of how we ought to answer any questions that plagues our thoughts about our previous manner of giving. If we didn’t know that tithing was not the proper form of giving for the New Covenant believer, then it stands to reason by the verses we have considered that God will show much grace towards those that have fallen prey to the money

hungry pastors. Of course, much will also depend on the heart motivation for any giving that took place. Again, in the New Covenant God looks at what inspires the person to commit an act, not the actual act itself. For example, in Matthew 5:28 Jesus told us, “*But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*” A man may never physically embrace a woman, yet still be guilty of the sin of adultery in his heart.

While you were tithing, your desire from your innermost being may have been that you wanted to give as the Lord wanted because of your love for Him. You didn’t give to get anything, you just wanted to be obedient to do the will of God and no ulterior motives ever crossed your mind. If this mindset describes you, then I would declare you gave with the right heart. God sees that and He will recompense you according to your heart. I remember my thoughts when I began tithing as a baby Christian. I wanted to do what God said to do, period. I had tried to run my life my way for many years and I knew that didn’t work, so I was ready to surrender to Him everything He wanted, even if I had to do without. Even though I was a faithful tither for many years, I was not “blessed” with so much that my “barns were overflowing,” as the tithe collectors were promising, but all my needs were taken care of. God did provide as He endured my lack of knowledge and I truly believe He will do the same for others whose heart is in the right place even though our actions are wrong.

I would like to add another principle that may come into play as well. God instructs us to read and study His Word ourselves. 2 Timothy 2:15 exhorts us to, “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*” Fortunately, I find that most of the prosperity promoters do communicate this commandment to their flock’s every once in a while. This means that, even though they fleece the sheep for money, most believers have been advised they need to study their own bibles for themselves so they’re not “ashamed” (find out they’ve been following a false doctrine). I suppose if the prosperity boy’s offerings decreased because their congregations were actually searching their own bibles for truth, they may be less enthusiastic about advising their flocks to “*study to shew themselves approved.*”

Unfortunately, most “Christians” blindly follow the pastor’s teaching on giving-to-get, but they refuse to follow the encouragement to study their bibles. How ironic is that? Paul had the same problem and he called it carnality in Romans 7:14-15, “*For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.*” If we have the right heart motivation for giving to the Lord, yet we operate in carnality because we don’t want to study the bible for ourselves, we will be held accountable for our lack of knowledge concerning giving. We would have known to do good if we had read our bible so we could find out how to give, yet we didn’t do it. So God will hold us accountable for the knowledge of proper giving we still don’t have written on our minds due to disobedience in following the commandment to study our bibles. Hear me well on this – if you’ve been a Christian for many years, “No one ever taught me this” is NOT an excuse in Gods eyes! You’ve had plenty of opportunity to study the Word on the subject, and if you love

Him as much as you're telling everyone you do, you would probably have had at least some knowledge of proper giving by now.

For those that have been tithing for reasons other than simply wanting to give to the Lord, you may not receive anything from "all that money you gave." If you asked the question just the way I stated it earlier, "Great! All that money I gave and now I won't receive any 'blessings' from it," then you definitely need to question whether your heart was in the right place. How we ask the question in our thoughts should illustrate where our priorities are because, "*A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.*" (Luke 6:45) The attitude we have will be revealed by the moving of our lips! If you believed the racketeer's speeches expecting an over abundance of returns for your ten percent tip to God, then yes, you will get nothing in return. Your motivation was to get a lot for your little, and you probably would have received better returns on a slot machine. Gambling theology just doesn't work with God. He rewards those who do for others, not those who do for themselves.

Even though I denounce the tithe-collecting prosperity preachers frequently, they can't be allowed to shoulder all the responsibility. A lot of the blame has to be given to most believers that follow these ear-tickling doctrines. Paul writes to Christians, "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*" (2 Timothy 4:3-4) He is speaking to All Christians here, not church leaders. People calling themselves "Christian" will run to these teachers with itchy-ear doctrines because as Jeremiah 5:31 says "...*my people love to have it so.*" They don't have ears to hear the truth. Allow me to use one of the verses the tithe collector's use, except in the right context out of Mark 4:23-24, "*If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And he said unto them, take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.*" This verse is referring to those that have ears to hear the truth and give accordingly, and that doesn't include the "tithers."

God will be looking at our heart, and He will judge or bless us based on our inner motivations and our ability to be open to grow and mature in the knowledge of Him. By reading this book and the scriptures written within, God has just written on your heart enough information that you should now study to show yourself approved. You will be held accountable for whichever way you decide to give from this moment forward. If you decide to still follow tithing, you better have a lot more New Covenant scripture references than a chapter in Malachi to back up your position. Swallow your pride and have ears to hear what God says in His Word. "*But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*" (James 4:6)

## Chapter 10

### How Will the Church Get Support Without The Tithe?

The question that always arises when the tithe doctrine is repudiated is, “How will the local church be supported without the tithe.” The best answer to that is with the opening statement of this epistle by George Muller, “God’s work, done in God’s way, never lacks God’s support.” If the church building, pastor, salary, and TV ministry is truly God’s will, there will not be a need for a loan or to ask for donations of any kind. Make the request known to God in prayer and all of the funds needed will be there and be on time as long as the leadership has asked God and truly believes that He will provide. George Muller built many buildings and did many mighty works for God and he never took an offering or solicited funds from anyone. He made his request to God and allowed Him to bring in the provision needed.

In my opinion, if a gathering of believers is held in a building, instead of homes like it was in the first century church, the best way to allow people to give is to provide a receptacle at several easily accessible discrete locations in the main entrances throughout the complex. Ministers may use a brief time before the worship service (not every service), or in a bulletin, to advise the saints of the locations of those receptacles. The only exhortations should be to inform them to seek God in prayer and give wherever the Holy Spirit leads. No amount or percentage should ever be mentioned, nor should offering buckets be passed. If giving is conducted in this manner in all the church buildings these days, it would be easy to tell if a new building plan was actually God’s work because the funds would be there when needed. In each form of giving every effort should be made to keep the ability of each believer to give as discreetly as possible.

I seriously doubt whether anyone can find support in the New Testament for any of the elders (Pastors) receiving a consistent salary. The passage that comes the closest would be in 2Corinthians 11:7-9, “*Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself.*” If we literally interpret “wages” to mean a regular salary, then we would also have to literally interpret “robbed” as he stole the money from them. Neither one is true in this case. The church in Macedonia simply provided offerings to help support Paul’s ministry to further the gospel and without him begging for it. Paul also renounced support at times if he deduced it would hinder his work in spreading the gospel. One of these instances is recorded in 1Thessalonians 2:9, “*For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.*”

Elders and pastors should be using the New Testament example of ministers walking by faith and believing God for their supply by refusing to take a regular salary from the church offerings. Again, if God has truly ordained them to be a minister, they will not lack provision for what He has called them to do. I think one of the biggest problems in the body of Christ is the misconception that all you have to do is use your own wisdom to educate yourself, obtain a

theological degree and that qualifies one to be in a “five fold” ministry office. Most pastors acquire their degree from a seminary and then are “ordained” as a pastor to lead a church within their denomination. A lot of these “Dr. ordained pastors” are not called or sent by God to be in those ministry positions and the tithing system is the only thing that keeps them supported in their invalid position. If all these seminary graduates had to trust God for provision and they were not called to be pastors by Him, the provision would not be there and they would have to figure out where God really wanted them or they may starve. The church wouldn’t have so many denominations producing false prophets, pastors, and teachers if believers quit tithing and gave as the Holy Spirit lead because of the lack of support for them. Besides, most all of Jesus’ disciples came from the ignorant and unlearned fishermen ranks, not the educated doctors from the Hebrew universities. Somehow, we in the church have completely ignored the biblical concept that God chooses and equips the called, He doesn’t always call the seminary equipped. First Corinthians 1:26-27, *“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;”*

We must mention one exception here outside the tithe and that is the financially creative pastors that have “generously” given up their salary to live off the royalties of their book sales. The public announcement of their renouncing a salary is sometimes intentionally packaged to make the pastor look like he is making a sacrifice, but in truth, instead of making a six figure salary, he is now receiving a seven figure income off royalties. This is nothing but deception and greed coming directly from the pulpit. Without belaboring the point, read what the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability has to say about pastors receiving any royalties from books that use their position, television spots or church offering funds to promote their own books, tapes and CD’s. This council says, *“An officer, director, or other principal of the member must not receive royalties for any product that the member uses for fund-raising or promotional purpose”* (www.ecfa.org). Could this be why some of these pastors are not willing to associate or be accountable to this quality Christian organization? Have you ever seen any of these pastors decline their books royalties because, like Paul, it may hinder the spread of the gospel?

Another practice I have discovered amongst many pastors is the act of placing Christians in ministry position or on staff according to how they give. I understand their motivation as I stated previously that I could tell you where a person’s heart is by looking at their checkbook, but I would probably never look at someone’s checkbook even if I were given the opportunity. Giving is a personal issue between God and the believer. A believer should never be kept out of a volunteer position nor declined employment because they are not a “partner” with the ministry. If God tells a Pastor or ministry leader to place a person in a position in their fellowship, they should do it even if they don’t give a dime to their ministry. The person could have been directed by God to give their finances to the poor and give their time to another leader’s ministry, and the hiring minister would never know this information if the person were following the biblical mandate to give in confidence. Again, the Matthew 6 passage says giving is to be done in secret, and it did not make an exception for church ministry databases.

Yes, there will be many so called “Christians” who would take advantage of the New Covenant form of giving if they are not exposed to the guilt and condemnation teaching of the tithe, donating only when they *feel* like it, which may be very little. But, it is no different than

the number of “Christians” that are using the grace teachings to keep from following other New Covenant commandments, such as not committing fornication. It is a well established fact the churches are full of “Christians,” single and married, that are involved in physical relationships with others that are not their spouse. Jude 1:4 *“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”* It is also well know that there are a lot of church goers and even pastors involved in pride, greed, corruption, adultery and most any other sin we could list, continuing in those sins under the “license of grace” perception that a God of mercy forgives all the time and won’t ever judge them because of a little salvation prayer they said in front of the church once. 2 Peter 2:19-21 says, *“While they promise them liberty (license), they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.”* It is not up to preachers to keep preaching a tithing law just for those “believers” operating in the greasy grace mindset. God will be the one that ultimately judges them and they will grow into true righteousness or they will fall away.

Giving is a matter of the heart in the New Covenant and God will judge the heart issues. Ananias and Sapphira are prime examples of God’s mercy only going so far. Lack of obedience will not keep God from getting the finances into the hands of the people that are truly following His directions to the best of their ability. If a brother or sister does not give when God tells them to, then He has someone else already in place to use, even if He needs to use a non-believer, which I have witnessed on several occasions. God is sovereign and knows the beginning from the end, so He will not be surprised.

When we become a new Christian, a tenth of our income may be a good guideline to use when God begins to urge us to give, as long as we don’t think we are keeping the “tithe” laws. I remember when I first began to give and ten percent of my income seemed like a huge amount. I really had to step outside my comfort zone to begin that process. In the beginning of our walk I think God honors that type of commitment. I also recall when God told me to begin to fast. I forced myself to fast one day a week like a religious practice, not because I necessarily wanted to. After I destroyed enough flesh where fasting became a desire rather than a discontented act of obedience, I was able to move away from being legalistic, so I discontinued the once a week fasts. As God changes us from glory to glory, I find it is easier for me to be obedient by being legalistic for a season until I get my flesh under subjection to my spirit. As God begins to deal with your heart for giving, some may find it easier to begin by putting themselves under a legalistic amount until the flesh can be crucified. But please don’t plan on staying under bondage for a long time, just long enough to break old habits. If you are unable to get out of legalism, it may be you are giving to the wrong place, giving the wrong amount, or there may be a different salvation issue other than giving involved. Be constantly seeking God on amounts and locations of giving, and He will direct you.

New Covenant giving is a matter of the heart. The bible plainly states that Jesus came not to do away with the law, but to fulfill the law. When we surrender our lives to Jesus, we are supposed to surrender everything. Truly surrendering everything, including our finances, means

we also fulfill the 10% “tithe” law plus an additional 90%, because it all belongs to Him. If we have a close relationship with Jesus, our heart will be to give what we have, not hoard it for ourselves. The Holy Spirit will reveal to us who to give to and how much and we shouldn’t ever feel guilty or condemned if we don’t give to a “senior pastor” begging for money for his new temple. We should keep our donations secret to the best of our ability, realizing that this is not always possible. We should be sharing what we have with other brothers and sisters in Christ, not necessarily blood brothers and sisters. I have seen many “Christians” give only to their blood kids and call it their “tithe.” Most of these people in these situations would give this money even if they weren’t Christians, and it’s all done in the flesh. All of our fellow believers should not lack for anything unless they are not doing their part, and we should strive for equality among the brethren, not one having abundance while others barely get by. The poor were always on Jesus’ heart and should be a big part of our gifts. Support for all of the ministers that study The Word and travel to spread the message of Jesus Christ should also be included as part of our financial contributions. If our heart is in the right place, our finances and time will be distributed in line with God’s will, and just like He treats each one of us differently, He will have each one of us giving different amounts to different ministries.

One thing most believers don’t realize is our time is a more valuable asset than money, and each one of us are equal in this respect, each having only 24 hours in every day. It’s easier for most people to give money than it is to give time these days. But, if more Christians dedicated their time to ministries, there would probably not be near as large a need for finances to hire people to do the job that could be done by committed volunteers.

Brothers and sisters, the word “tithe” must be eradicated from the New Covenant believers mind and vocabulary. The act of tithing has a tendency to put God in a box. It also limits our thinking to a specific amount and puts scores of believers under bondage that do not have enough to even provide for the basic necessities of life. Let’s get out of this mindset so we can become the church “without spot and wrinkle” that Jesus is returning very soon to collect. May God give you eyes to see and ears to hear what the Spirit of the Lord says.

I bless you all, In Jesus Name,

Doug

## Chapter 11

### Confessions of an Ex-Tither

I heard a popular tithing pastor with theological seminary letters behind his name proudly declare in a sermon that he had never met a Christian that wasn't tithing that was being blessed. He claimed all the non-tithers he had a chance to converse with on the topic were struggling financially in some way. All I can say is if we ever cross paths he will have met one and may have to unlearn the canon he acquired to earn his doctorate in his denominational seminary. I could go into many testimonies from my own life where blessings came after I pulled myself out from under the curse of the tithing law. But since I am the one writing this book, I thought it might be more appropriate to provide the testimony of someone else who herself was under the tithing system until I showed her the truth a short time ago. The following is the witness from her perspective of being on both sides of the equation.

“I was taught most of my life from the apostolic doctrine, Acts 2:38, and Malachi 3:10, the latter was constantly hammered into my thinking. I was told if I did not give that 10% I was automatically cursed. Well, my thinking was if it's in The Word that's all I need to know, and I will do it with no questions asked. I first began tithing at the young age of 16 years. I was so happy because I wanted to please God. From the age of 16 until 2008, I was a faithful tither, not to mention giving over and above. I even doubled my tithes because I wanted to please God. I gave 'waaay' over and above in my offerings because I did not want to rob God.

In 2008, I was shown scriptures that opened my eyes. After reading and studying those scriptures, I immediately pulled myself from under the curse of the tithing law. Since that time God has blessed me in such a way it has left me with my mouth open in amazement. God has strengthened me spiritually, given me wisdom, and I can truthfully say He had given me that peace that passes all understanding.

Praise God, I am no longer a tither, I am a GIVER.”



## Chapter 12

### New Covenant Scripture References All references from the King James Version

**Matthew 6:1** Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. **2** Therefore when thou doest [thine] alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. **3** But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: **4** That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

**Matthew 10:8** Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

**Matthew 19:21** Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go [and] sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come [and] follow me.

**Matthew 25:40** And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done [it] unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done [it] unto me.

**Mark 4:20** And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive [it], and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred. (*Jesus was speaking directly to salvation in this passage, not giving*)

**Mark 10:21** Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

**Mark 12:42** And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. **43** And he called [unto him] his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: **44** For all [they] did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, [even] all her living.

**Luke 6:30** Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask [them] not again.

**Luke 6:38** Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

**Luke 10:7** And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

**Luke 11:41** But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

**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.

**Luke 12:21** So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. **22** And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. **23** The life is more than meat, and the body *is more* than raiment. **24** Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? **25** And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? **26** If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? **27** Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. **28** If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more *will he clothe* you, O ye of little faith? **29** And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. **30** For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. **31** But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. **32** Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. **33** Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. **34** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

**Luke 14:33** So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

**Luke 18:22** Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

**Luke 19:8** And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore [him] fourfold.

**Luke 21:4** For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

**Acts 2:44** And all that believed were together, and had all things common; **45** and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all [men], as every man had need.

**Acts 4:32** And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any [of them] that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. **33** And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. **34** Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, **35** And laid [them] down at

the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. **36** And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, [and] of the country of Cyprus, **37** Having land, sold [it], and brought the money, and laid [it] at the apostles' feet.

**Acts 6:1** And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

**Acts 10:2** [A] devout [man], and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. **4** And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. **31** And said, Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

**Acts 11:29** Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea:

**Acts 20:35** I have shewed you all things, how that so laboring 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.

**Acts 24:17** Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

**Romans 12:8** Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, [let him do it] with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

**Romans 12:13** Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

**Romans 15:26** For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

**1 Corinthians 9:11** If we have sown unto you spiritual things, [is it] a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

**1 Corinthians 12:25** That there should be no schism in the body; but [that] the members should have the same care one for another. **26** And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.

**1 Corinthians 16:2** Upon the first [day] of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as [God] hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. **3** And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by [your] letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.

**2 Corinthians 8:2** How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. **3** For to [their] power, I bear record, yea, and beyond [their] power [they were] willing of themselves; **4** Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and [take upon us] the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. **11** Now therefore perform the doing [of it]; that as [there

was] a readiness to will, so [there may be] a performance also out of that which ye have. **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. **13** For [I mean] not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: **14** But by an equality, [that] now at this time your abundance [may be a supply] for their want, that their abundance also may be [a supply] for your want: that there may be equality: **15** As it is written, He that [had gathered] much had nothing over; and he that [had gathered] little had no lack. **24** Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

**2 Corinthians 9:6** But this [I say], He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. **7** Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, [so let him give]; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. **9** (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. **10** 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;) **12** For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;

**2 Corinthians 11:8** I robbed other churches, taking wages [of them], to do you service. **9** And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all [things] I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and [so] will I keep [myself].

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

**Galatians 2:10** Only [they would] that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

**Galatians 6:6** Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. **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. **9** And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. **10** As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

**Philippians 4:14** Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. **15** Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. **16** For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. **17** Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. **18** But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things [which were sent] from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God. **19** But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

**1 Timothy 5:3** Honour widows that are widows indeed. **16** If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed. **17** Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine. **18** For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The laborer [is] worthy of his reward.

**1 Timothy 6:5** Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. **6** But godliness with contentment is great gain. **7** For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. **8** And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. **9** But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. **10** For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. **11** But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

**James 1:27** Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself unspotted from the world.

**1 Peter 5:2** Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight [thereof], not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; **3** Neither as being lords over [God's] heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

**1 John 3:17** But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

**3 John 1:2** Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.