

Must A Christian Tithe

Text : **Gen. 14: 17-20 , Lev. 27: 30-34 , I Cor. 9: 8-14**

INTRODUCTION :

A. Interruptions have defeated the affect of our series on giving.

1. A series keeps our mind on the same topic long enough to meditate on it.
2. The time allotted for a sermon is insufficient to cover a topic in one setting.
3. Summer series are particularly difficult because people are often absent.
 - a. Responsible church leaders plan a specific spiritual diet for God's family.
 - b. However, they can't force God's children to come to the table.
 - c. Each lesson is built on the one before so missing one is like a missing link.

B. The Christian's love causes him to care and are eager to share.

1. Love is more than warm feelings. (**James 2: 14-16 & I John 3: 16-18**)
 - a. Love is a commitment to the best interest of another.
 - b. No action in behalf of another indicates the absence of love for that individual.
2. Christians have always sacrificed for others. (*especially their brethren – Gal. 6*)
 - a. From the beginning ... **Acts 2, 4, 6, etc.**
 - b. Jesus purchased people desirous of good deeds ... **Titus 2: 14** .
3. Giving to meet needs is regulated only by opportunity. (**Gal.6: 10**)
 - a. Those who are zealous seek out opportunities and find ways to help.
ILL.- Young family man couldn't help student so he got part-time job.
 - b. The impoverished Macedonians insisted on being allowed to give. (**2 Cor 8: 5**)

C. God possess all, ... Christians are but His stewards. (**Psa. 24: 1**) **accountable**

1. We recognize that we are but temporary residents passing through planet earth.
2. God gives us many cautions about how we are to view physical things. (**I Jn 2: 15**)
3. Though the world does not accept God's sovereignty, **all** will give account.

D. God is totally consistent ... He never changes. (*concept important to understanding*)

1. The world and all in it changes. (*Change is the only constant in life.*)
2. God's values never change, right will always be right and wrong always wrong.
3. What pleased God in the past will please Him in the future. (**O.T. Important**)
Heb. 13: 8- Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

With this lesson we will seek to answer the question, “Must a Christian Tithe?” We will see that though it is not an explicit command of Christ, it is strongly inferred.

I. Though tithing is in the Law of Moses, it predates the Law of Moses.

A. Secular historical documents indicate that non-Jewish religions tithed.

1. The Syrians (*Macc. 10: 31, 11: 35*)
2. Lydians (*Herod 1: 89*)
3. Babylonians (*Religion of Babylon & Assyria pg 668 by M. Jastrow*)

B. Abraham made a tithe offering to God.

1. **Gen. 14: 17-20**
2. This offering was an act of worship ... not law.
 - a. Vs. 19- It acknowledged God as “**Possessor of Heaven and earth.**”
 - b. Vs. 20- It thanks God for blessings already received.
3. Abraham understood 10% as being the proper amount.

C. Jacob committed to pay tithes (10%) to God.

1. **Gen. 28: 20-22** Then Jacob made a vow, saying, “If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, **21** and I return to my father’s house in safety, then the LORD will be my God. **22** “This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”
2. This vow was not in response to law.
 - a. By it Jacob acknowledged the sovereignty of God over his life.
 - b. It promised a grateful response to a blessing requested.
3. When is the last time you made a covenant promise to God ?

D. By these we are made to understand that tithing was an established practice BEFORE the Law of Moses.

1. Remember, the Law of Moses was never given to all nations.
 - a. The Law of Moses was given by the King of the Jews (God) to rule His people.
 - b. It was never a plan of salvation or a way for all nations to approach God.
2. **However, *throughout history the tithe has been recognized as God’s portion.***
 - * Where did that number come from ?

II. God required His people of old to tithe.

A. The Law of Moses required giving a tithe of everything.

1. **Deu. 14: 22- 26** You shall surely tithe all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year. **23** You shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock, so that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. **24** If the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring *the tithe*, since the place where the LORD your God chooses to set His name is too far away from you when the LORD your God blesses you, **25** then you shall exchange *it* for money, and bind the money in your hand and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. **26** You may spend the money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen, or sheep, or wine, or strong drink, or whatever your heart desires; and there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice, you and your household.
2. Notice the purpose for their tithing :
 - a. Vs. **23** - **so that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always.**
 - b. God did not require the tithe because He needed money. (*Remember .. Psa. 24:1*)
3. Notice the occasion was to be a special feast : (*Not like April 15*)
 - a. Vs. **26** - **there you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice**
 - b. It was a time of worship (in His presence) of gratitude for blessings received.

B. God required giving above the tithe :

1. They were required to maintain the “*local congregation*” to provide ongoing religious services.
 - a. Vs. **27-** **Also you shall not neglect the Levite who is in your town, for he has no portion or inheritance among you.**
 - b. They could not go to Jerusalem for every sacrifice so they needed a local work.
2. They were required to maintain a fund to care for the poor, the helpless & the refugees.
 - a. Vs. **28-29** **At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and shall deposit *it* in your town.** **29** **The Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the alien, the orphan and the widow who are in your town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, in order that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.**
 - b. God would only bless them if they blessed others.

C. Failure to tithe was linked to rebellion against God.

1. Hezekiah’s reforms included the restoration of tithing and blessing. **II Chron. 31**
2. Nehemiah’s reforms included restoring the tithing. **Neh. 13: 10-14**

D. God views the failure to tithe as both rebellion and theft.

1. Remember our text : **Lev. 27: 30- All the tithe of the land ... is the Lord's**
2. ***What was God's remains God's ... man is but a steward. (Lev. 25: 23)***
3. Those who do not give God ALL that is due Him steal from Him.
- * a. ***What if you rented out a house and the tenant gave you only part of rent ?***
- b. That is how God feels when we do not give Him what is His.

Mal. 3: 7-11 “From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept *them*. Return to Me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD of hosts. “But you say, ‘How shall we return?’ **8** “Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. **9** You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of *you!* **10** Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,” says the LORD of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows. **11** Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast *its grapes*,” says the LORD of hosts.

- 1) Not to tithe is to steal from God.
- 2) A partial tithe is the same as NO tithe.

III. That was then ... what about now ?**A. Remember ... God is eternal and unchanging. (*He has required a set percentage.*)**

1. He still reigns sovereign over ALL His creation.
2. He still owns this planet and all that is on it as well as the universe. **Psa. 24**
3. Man has always owed God 10% ... (*Moses encoded known values.*)

B. The N.T. makes reference to Christians being under the same financial system as were the Jews. **I Cor. 9**

1. In our text we saw the Apostle Paul refer to the law to confirm his teaching.
“ ... **Or does not the Law also say these things?**”
2. This system was maintained by the tithes of believers.

C. Christians are commanded to give in proportion to their income.

1. **I Cor. 16: 2-** On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, **as** he may prosper, so that no collections be made

when I come.

2. “**As he may prosper**” refers to a fixed proportion of one’s income.
3. The only proportion mentioned in scripture is the tithe ... **10%**.

* D. *10% is what is owed.*

Loved is not expressed by paying what one owes.

One expresses love by what he gives above what he owes.

IV. Though tithing is not specifically addresses in the N.T. there are many reason why one should tithe.

A. (1st) It honors the eternal principle set forth in the scriptures. (*above*)

B. (2nd) Tithing honors the rights of Gods as our creator and owner.

1. Everything belongs to God and He lets us use it. **Psa. 24**
2. Thus, everyone owes God something; ... some give ... others steal.

* *The real issue is the 90% we keep.* **Col. 3: 5**

What we do with it determines whether we are worshippers or idolaters.

C. (3rd) Tithing is an antidote to greed and covetousness.

1. Our culture feeds our natural tendency toward desiring things.
2. That’s why the Hebrew writer warns :
Heb. 5: 13- **Make sure that your character is free from the love of money,**
being content with what you have; for He Himself has said,
“I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you,”
3. Every time we write that check for our offering we face a crisis of faith.
 - a. Will we trust God to take care of us ?
 - b. *Satan will always tell us that we need to take care of our bills and give God what’s left.*

Then Satan will make sure there is not much left for God.

* **Personal Counsel :** When our income arrives, the very first check we should write is for God.

4. Uncle Sam takes his off the top, **but God** wants us to choose to give to Him.

D. (4th) We must move beyond our tithe if we are to put a governor on our spending.

1. Our spending expands to fill our income. (***We spend what we make.***)

- a. If our income grows, we can afford more expensive things.
- b. **ILL. ...** *John Wesley recognized the pull of greed on his life so he fought it. In 1731 Wesley earned 28 lbs. and realized he could live on that. Through the years his income grew, but he continued to live on 30. In 1776 he was making 1400 lbs., but still lived on the 30. At age 87 he earned 30,000 lbs, but still lived on 30lbs. When he died he had a few coins in his pocket and a few books. He had given it all. "My own hands will be my executor."*

2. Considering the task God has put before us, do we deserve the lifestyle we afford?

E. When we tithe we provide sufficiency for ourselves.

1. The law of sowing and reaping is immutable and eternal. *As we sew we reap.*
2. God blesses us with the same measure we use to give.
3. Through Malachi God tells us to try Him ... if we give to Him He will bless us.

CONCLUSION :

A. It all boils down to faith.

1. Do I trust God or my banker ?
2. Do I believe the promises of God or not ?

B. God will force no one, but he will hold all accountable. (*Stewards*)

C. Salvation is by grace through faith.

1. We must trust Jesus to save us.
2. If we do not trust Him with physical matters,
how can we trust Him with our eternal soul ?

INVITATION :

Put your trust in Him today.

Lesson Texts :

Gen. 14: 17-20

17 Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). **18** And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High. **19** He blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; **20** And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." He gave him a tenth of all.

Lev. 27: 30-34

30 'Thus all the tithe of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S; it is holy to the LORD. **31** 'If, therefore, a man wishes to redeem part of his tithe, he shall add to it one-fifth of it. **32** 'For every tenth part of herd or flock, whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD. **33** 'He is not to be concerned whether *it is* good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; or if he does exchange it, then both it and its substitute shall become holy. It shall not be redeemed.' " **34** These are the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the sons of Israel at Mount Sinai.

I Cor. 9: 8-14

8 I am not speaking these things according to human judgment, am I? Or does not the Law also say these things? **9** For it is written in the Law of Moses, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING." God is not concerned about oxen, is He? **10** Or is He speaking altogether for our sake? Yes, for our sake it was written, because the plowman ought to plow in hope, and the thresher *to thresh* in hope of sharing *the crops*. **11** If we sowed spiritual things in you, is it too much if we reap material things from you? **12** If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ. **13** Do you not know that those who perform sacred services eat the *food* of the temple, *and* those who attend regularly to the altar have their share from the altar? **14** So also the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.