

# DAY 31

DO NOT NEGLECT THE TITHE.  
MATTHEW 23:23

Money is an extremely divisive topic, because **how you spend your money shows where your heart is**. Jesus said it: "For where your treasure is, there your heart is also."<sup>38</sup>

Whenever a Christian leader talks about money, it can cause negative reactions. In fact, one of the biggest reasons people leave a church or don't attend church is the church's emphasis on money.

I believe this is for two reasons. First, some think the church has no right to tell them what to do with money. They've seen the church use it in ways that haven't always honored God, so why should they give?

I was sickened by a television show called "Preachers of LA" which followed the lives of six preachers. I don't know any of the preachers or their families personally. I know that God can work through each of them, but it bothers me when I see preachers who have become tremendously rich. You can make any excuse you want, but that lifestyle doesn't look good on preachers, and I don't think it's what Jesus had in mind when He called us to follow Him. If my money was going to someone or something like that, I wouldn't want to give it away either.

But there's a second reason we don't like to talk about money: we really like our money. **Money is the number one idol in our lives**. It is really difficult

to separate people from something they love so much.

Please understand there is nothing wrong with money in itself. It's not money that is the root of all evil, but the love of money.

Jesus tells the Pharisees not to neglect the tithe. A tithe is literally a tenth. If I make \$100, \$10 would be the tithe. I hear some people say, "I tithe 5%." But if you are giving 5%, that is an offering, not a tithe.

Jesus only said one thing about tithing in the four Gospels, in Matthew 23:23 (NLT) "What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law--justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things."

Jesus talked a lot about giving, but not much about tithing. Because of that, some pastors don't teach on the importance of tithing.

But the practice of tithing goes all the way back to Abraham. From the beginning, God's people have returned the first 10% to Him as an offering to show that we fully trust Him to provide for us.

If someone were to look into your bank account, would they know you are a follower of Jesus? **You cannot truly go all in for God if you cannot trust God with your money**. I believe in our nation tithing could possibly be the number one indicator of an abiding faith in Jesus Christ.

I haven't always felt this way. In fact, I've really struggled in this area. I remember the first time I had a considerable amount of extra money. Rather than buying something important, investing in my family's future, or giving to God, I gambled it away. I snuck behind my family's back to do it. I was studying to be a pastor, and I wasted thousands of dollars. I don't know which was a bigger issue: the competition of gambling or the greed of always wanting more, but I failed miserably and had to repent.

I have found out personally that God can give you complete victory in an area that was once a struggle. **He can redeem what was once broken and turn it into one of your biggest strengths.** Now when I take a spiritual gift test, one of my top three gifts is generosity. In fact, last year when I did my taxes online, my tax return showed a high risk of audit because my charitable contributions were way out of proportion with my income.

I'm proud of that. God has redeemed me and made me a generous person. And I'll tell you something else: I've never regretted giving any of the dollars to the church. And you never will either.

If 10% was required by the law, then **how much more should we give now that we operate out of God's grace?** I believe the tithe is the starting place, not the finish line. There are a lot of things to do to follow Jesus the way He wants us to, but follow Christ's command today: don't neglect the tithe!

YOU CANNOT  
TRULY GO ALL  
IN FOR GOD IF  
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TRUST GOD  
WITH YOUR  
MONEY.



#REDLETTERCHALLENGE

This is the only time in all of the Bible that God tells His followers to “Test him.” Test Him with your tithe, and see how God will pour out His blessings on you. It doesn’t always mean material blessing in this world, but when we give to God, we are always blessed.

### MALACHI 3:6-12

*6 “I the Lord do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. 7 Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord Almighty.*

*“But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’*

*8 “Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.*

*“But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’*

*“In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,” says the Lord Almighty. 12 “Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land,” says the Lord Almighty.*

## TITHE FOR THE NEXT 6 MONTHS TO YOUR LOCAL CHURCH.

If you don’t have a local church to give your tithe to, I’ll give you my church’s website! Just kidding! In all seriousness, find a local church or charity that is making a difference and start giving sacrificially and watch how God works in big ways!

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