

## What You Need To Know About Tithing



As the means to maintaining our new covenant relationship w/Christ, God's people are called to faithfully obey all those precepts and practices established by God's Word – including those established in the Old Testament (Mat 5:17-18; 1Co 7:19; 2Ti 3:15-16; 2Th 2:15; 1Co 11:2). Relaxing even the least of these, will ensure (according to our Lord and Savior) that we are found wanting on Judgment Day and condemned as "workers of lawlessness" (Mat 5:19-20, 7:21-23)<sup>1</sup>. It is with this understanding then, that the true Christian becomes teachable to *all* God's Word has to say about the practice of tithing:

### General Knowledge:

1.1. The practice of tithing goes back to the beginning of man's creation and relationship w/God (or Christ) (e.g. Cain and Abel, the children of Adam and Eve – Gen 4:3-4; Abraham - Gen 14:17-20 w/Heb 7:5-9, 20 = Mel was Christ)

1.2. Jesus confirmed the continued practice of tithing during His earthly ministry (Mat 23:23).

1.3. Faithfulness to pay the tithe is part of the vows a person takes in order to secure God as their God – i.e. Divine Provider, Protector and Savior (Gen 28:20-22; Psa 116:12-14, 18; Psa 50:14; Jon 2:9; Deu 8:11-18; This is no doubt what Paul is referring to in 2Co 8:5).

1.4. Failure to tithe is therefore considered robbing God and results in a forfeiture of His blessings (as Provider/Protector/Savior - Mal 3:8-18).

1.5. Failure to properly tithe was the initial sin of Cain, the reason God w/held His blessing and Cain became depressed (Gen 4:3-5).

"If anyone does not tithe everything, let the curse which God inflicted upon Cain for not rightly tithing be heaped upon him." – Council of Seville (6<sup>th</sup> century)

1.6. Unfaithfulness in relation to the tithe may be a "gateway sin" to more serious sins (Gen 4:6-7).

"Whoever will not give the tithe appropriates property that does not belong to him. If the poor die of hunger, he is guilty of their murder and will have to answer before God's judgment seat as a murderer; he has taken that which God has set aside for the poor and kept it for himself – 4<sup>th</sup> century sermon (*Tithing In The Early Church*, Lukas Vischer)

1.7. The largest part of the tithe is to be used to support the teaching pastors who are to (then) tithe on what is given to them (Num 18:21-27).

1.8. Part of the tithe however is to also be used to care for God's house and caring for the poor (Deu 14:22-28; Amos 4:4; Neh 10:38-39).

1.9. Besides the tithe, God's people sb setting aside portions of their surplus as gleanings/free-will/thank offerings for special needs in their local covenant community, other covenant communities - or for advancing the kingdom thru missions as further demonstration of their thankfulness to God and submission to the gospel (Exo 35:29, 36:3; Lev 7:11-16, 19:9-11, 23:38; 2Ch 29:31; Psa 50:14, 24, 56:12, 107:22, 116:17; Jer 33:11; 2Co 8:1-13, 9:1-13).

"Let him [the pastor] use those tenths and first-fruits, which are given according to the commandment of God, as a man of God; as also let him dispense in a right manner the free-will offerings which are brought in on account of the poor, to the orphans, the widows, the afflicted, and strangers in distress, as having that God for the examiner of his accounts who has committed the disposition to him. Distribute to all those in want with righteousness, and yourselves use the things which belong to the Lord, but do not abuse them." – Apostolic Constitutions (4<sup>th</sup> century Christian literature)

1.10. To fulfill our obligation to tithe – or give other offerings to God, we must only give them to the covenant community (Deu 12:1-8, 26:1-19; Act 4:34-35, 11:29-30). Once the covenant community is established, never do we see the tithe given to someone/something else; (e.g. parachurch ministers, ministries, missions groups, etc.).

1.11. It is up to God's appointed shepherds/leaders to determine the needs - or what is the most obedient use, of the covenant community's tithes and offerings (e.g. Act 4:35).

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<sup>1</sup> They are many who believe the tithe must no longer exist b/c there is no direct command in the New Testament. This reveals a poor understanding of the New Testament's purpose which was never to replace the Old, but only upgrade certain applications (e.g. clean laws).

## 2. Specific Application

2.1. To tithe means to give back to God a tenth (or 10%) of all He has given to us as **realized income** = gross pay for your labor, and/or net profit<sup>2</sup> earned from your business, property, investments (including dividends) or interest-bearing accounts<sup>3</sup> (Pro 3:9 – “firstfruits of all your produce” = tithe on all your pay or profit - 2Ch 31:4-6; Eze 44:30 w/Num 18:21-27; e.g. yield/pay - Exo 23:10 w/2Ki 8:6; e.g. profit - Pro 3:14).

2.2. Tithes are not paid on gifts - including inheritance and the money given to people by the church, pre-tithed retirement contributions or any unrealized gains (e.g. appreciation on your home, increase in the value of your stocks or retirement plans not yet distributed).

### 2.3. Scenarios

#### 2.3.1. Sale of my home

(Calculation for determining net profit on the sale of my home) = **Sale Price MINUS Original Purchase Price MINUS Capital Improvements/Expenditures** (Definition: the addition of a permanent structural change or restoration of some aspect of a property that does one of the following: 1) increases the property's total square footage [e.g. popped the top], 2) enhances the property's overall value or functionality [e.g. added a patio, new windows], 3) improves the usefulness of its life or the usefulness of a certain space [e.g. expanded the kitchen, finished the basement, added bedrooms, bathrooms, etc.], 4) adapts the property or space to new uses [e.g. installed handicap ramp]) **MINUS Selling Expenditures/Any Improvements Made In Order To Sell** (new flooring, paint, landscaping, etc.) **MINUS Closing Costs/Real Estate Fees<sup>4</sup>.**

I buy my house for 200k and incur capital expenditures of 40k by adding an extra bedroom. Then in order to sell, I incur selling expenditures of 5k thru painting and replacing the carpet. I sell the house for 300k with closing costs/RE fees (of 20k). My net profit (for purposes of tithing) would be \$25k making my tithe \$2,500:

Sale price	\$300,000
Less:	
OPP	(200,000)
GROSS Profit	\$100,000
Less:	
Cap Ex	(40,000)
Sell Ex	(5,000)
CC/RE	(20,000)
<b>NET PROFIT</b>	<b>\$35,000</b>
<b>Total tithe (.10 x 35,000) =</b>	<b>\$3,500</b>

#### 2.3.2. Retirement account

I contribute \$200/per paycheck (twice monthly) to my 401k. I also tithe on my gross pay. 15 years later (at retirement) I have \$500k (100k personal contributions, 100k employer contributions, 300k increase on portfolio). I decide to take one distribution for the entire amount.

My tithe w/ \$40k (since employer contributions are income - not gifts).

Personal Contributions	\$100,000
Employer Contributions	100,000
Increase	300,000
TOTAL DISTRIBUTION	\$500,000
Less:	
Pre-tithed dollars	(100,000)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>
<b>Total tithe (.10 x 400,000) =</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>

2.4. 20% must be added to any outstanding tithe burden we were aware existed but did not pay at the time the income was realized and could be transported to God's house (Lev 27:30-31; As it re: to transporting the tithe – see Neh 10:34-37 – “year by year” = Once a year).

**CLOSING CONTEMPLATION: Neh 8:1-12** (e.g. 13-18) = God's people are not responsible for what they didn't know. IOW: no retroactive action is required. Revelation (in such cases) establishes only obligation to the present and the future. Hence the reason we are to have “joy” in learning new things.

<sup>2</sup> By net profit is meant gross profit minus costs. See example above.

<sup>3</sup> Reinvested income (e.g. un-distributed business profit, rolled-dividends) are realized income and therefore part of our tithe burden. It is mentioned also that past losses on investment do not offset present gains (e.g. loss on sale of past residence cannot be subtracted from gains made on sale of current residence). God is not penalized in the present for what took place in the past – especially since such losses were (most likely) disciplinary in nature (i.e. God was the One Who decided to give us that loss). Additionally, tithes are always determined/calculated based on present performance (Lev 27:32-33 = Among other things, these verses reveal the “no exception rule” - and present nature, associated w/the tithe.).

<sup>4</sup> Interest on your personal mortgage is not deductible since it is a function of determining income (e.g. rental income) not cost basis.