

PRACTICING THE WAY



STEWADSHIP & GENEROSITY

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I. A RECENT HISTORY OF MONEY AND THE CHURCH

A. How Money became a Taboo Topic:

- a. **Skepticism:** You just want my money.
 - b. Church in the 1970's & 1980's Scandals. **Jim Baker and PTL:** Built a TV ministry empire; Convicted of Mail and Wire Fraud. **I met Jim Baker after prison;**
 - c. **Prosperity Gospel:** the teaching that faith, expressed through positive thoughts, positive declarations, & donations—draws health, wealth, & happiness into believers' lives.
1. **Good Examples:** Billy Graham insisted on median wage and lived in a home he built.
 - a. **The bad examples put a gag order on the church and the topic of Money.** All pastors were seen like these few with skepticism, mistrust and animosity. Can you blame them?
 - b. **1 Timothy 5:17** ¹⁷ **The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.**
 - i. But some prosperity preachers were paid ridiculous salaries or commission.
 - ii. We don't set Pastoral salaries or get commission. The board uses www.churchsalary.com.
 2. **Necessary topic:** The Gospel has principles and guidance for anything central to us.
 - a. Jesus spoke more about money than heaven and hell combined.
 - b. The New Testaments focus is on Motive Discipleship, Stewardship, Worship, & Self-Control.
 - c. Money is a tool, not a toy either handled with stewardship & holiness or idolatry & impurity.
 - d. **Tension of Money & Us:** Money for security, independence, control, identity, happiness or greed.
 - i. "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry." **Colossians 3:5**
 - ii. "As for what was sown among the thorns... the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and it proves unfruitful." **Matthew 13:22**
 - iii. "For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil." **1 Timothy 6:10**

II. WHAT ARE TITHES & OFFERINGS?

A. The Word Tithe means 10% or a 10th:

1. First seen in Judaism in Hebrew *ma'āšēr* (מַעֲשֵׂר) and then Christianity in Greek *dekatē* (δεκατη)
2. In our language It is the Old English from the word Tolagotha 10th
3. It's the religious act of giving a tenth of one's income for the support of a religious purposes.¹
4. Israel was not always a coin-based culture. Giving was done harvest & animals. Metals were used and weighed. By the time of Jesus, coins began blending with commodities (harvest & animals)

B. The Establishment of Tithing:

1. Abraham Gives 10% to Melchizedek **Genesis 14:17-20** (Before the Law was given by Moses).
2. Jacob Vows to Give God a 10th **Genesis 28:18-22** (Before the Law was given by Moses).
3. The tithe was given first (First-Fruits & shall not delay): **Exodus 22:29-30** "You **shall not delay to offer from the fullness of your harvest** and from the **outflow of your presses**. The **firstborn of your sons you shall give to me.** ³⁰ You shall do the same with your **oxen** and with your **sheep**
4. **Exodus 23:19** The first of the first fruits of thy land thou shalt bring **into the house of the LORD thy God.**
5. **The Three Tithes: Leviticus 27:30-33** ³⁰ " **A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD.** ³¹ Whoever would

¹ J. Christian Wilson, "Tithe," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 578.

redeem any of their tithe must add a fifth of the value to it. ³² **Every tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd’s rod—will be holy to the LORD.** ³³ **No one may pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution. If anyone does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed.**

a. **Firsts for God in the Bible:**

- i. First Tree **Genesis 3:1-4**
- ii. First born **Exodus 12:11-13**
- iii. First city **Joshua 6:17-18 & ch. 7**
- iv. First fruits **Exodus 23:19 & Proverbs 3:9**

C. The Word Offering

1. **Offering** קָרָבָן *Core-bon* Means sacrifice/sacrificial giving as if its already dedicated & on the altar.

D. The Five Main Sacrificial Offerings

1. **Whole Burnt Offering:** “*Holocaust*” (**Leviticus 1**) Nothing eaten, everything is burnt for God.
2. **Cereal offering** (**Leviticus 2**) exclusively cereal products (not captain crunch but Wheat).
3. **Peace/Fellowship offerings** (**Leviticus 3**) A communion in the NT it is a fellowship meal.
4. **Sin offering** (**Leviticus 4-5:13**) a sacrifice for repentance of sins.
5. **Guilt/restitution offering** (**Leviticus 5:14-6:7**) A sin offering but focuses on the need for ‘restitution’. You would also give money to the person you offended along with a sacrifice.

6. **Note:**

- i. Only one offering has to do with sin against God. The rest were voluntary beyond the tithe.
- ii. “Despite this generalizing tendency virtually all references in early Judaism and early Christianity are to *tithes* (plural) not to *the tithe*. *Tithes* do not become *the tithe* until much later in the history of Christianity.”²

E. Freewill Offerings & Tithe used for the Temple

1. To Build the Tabernacle: **Exodus 35:22-29**
2. To build the Temple in Jerusalem **1 Chronicles 20**
3. Renovation and Restoration of the Temple (**2 Kings 22:1-7 cf. Haggai 1:1-15**).

III. MODERN DISAGREEMENTS WITH TITHING

A. It’s the Old Testament, we are not under the Law

1. **Implicit & Explicit quotes from Jesus, Early Church and Jewish Literature On Tithing.**

- i. Jesus criticizes the motive Pharisees but affirms the giving of the tithe: **Matthew 23:23** “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.”
- ii. **Matthew 5:17** “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”
- iii. **Acts 21:26** The Apostle Paul participates in a Nazarite Vow involving a sacrifice.

B. The Bible says I decide what to give from my heart:

1. **2 Corinthians 9:7** “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”
2. **Didache 13:7 (65 AD)** ...and of money and clothing [sheerings wool] and every possession take the first fruit, as shall seem good to thee, and give according to the commandment.³
 - i. The phrases “should give what you have decided in your heart” and “As shall seem good to thee” are poor translations of colloquial Greek and English. They are phrases better translated as it relates to the tithe and you measuring it since everyone’s harvest, flock, sheerings, gains vary. “as it is to you [and what tithe looks like in your assessment]” and “should give what you have decided in your heart to give [of what you view is the a tenth of your gains].”⁴

² J. Christian Wilson, “Tithe,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 580.

³ Joseph Barber Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1891), 234.

⁴ Sam Kim and Paul Conway “colloquial and implicit language concerning the tithe that has failed to translate well from Hebrew culture through Greek literature into 21st century English and American culture. January 2023.

- ii. While Judaism and Christianity were overlapping, the tithe was still functioning even after the temple was destroyed: **Mishnah Ma'aserot 1:1 (200 AD)** "Whatsoever is used for food, and is kept watch over, and grows from the soil, is liable to Tithes."⁵
- iii. **Matthew 17:24-27** Jesus gives to the building program of the Temple Tax.
- iv. **Paul the Apostle used the Free-Will offering for Missions. Faith promises. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2** Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. ²On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

C. We don't tithe to the church. We meet needs like the book of Acts:

1. **Acts 2:44-45** All the believers were together and **had everything in common**.⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.
2. **Qumran, The Dead Sea Scrolls Cult Practice this: Josephus Wars 2.8.3** those coming into the community must yield up their funds to the order. The group is doing free will offerings. No one practiced this like the Cult at Qumran.
 - a. Sometimes a false impression is gained that these early Christians sold everything they owned when they joined the church. This was, in fact, the practice of the Qumran community on the Dead Sea.⁶
 - b. Either of these ideas are no good
 1. Giving everything away to another is an extreme.
 2. Giving as you see fit only works if you have a heart like Jesus.
3. **The Phrase "Had Everything Common"** Was seen in secular culture as much as the church, but neither were addressing tithes.
 - a. **Philo Good Person xii, 86** ...their expenses are all in common; their garments belong to them all in common; their food is common, since they all eat in cafeterias; for there is no other people among which you can find a common use of the same house, a common adoption of one mode of living, and a common use of the same table more thoroughly established in fact than among this tribe: and is not this very natural?
 - b. **Plato Republic 4, 424a** "...and all that sort of thing should be made as far as possible the proverbial goods of friends that are common."
 - c. **Plato, Republic 449c** it is obvious to all that the possessions of friends will be in common.

D. Christians don't tithe, they do "Grace Giving":

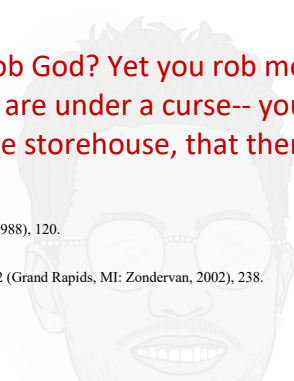
1. **Theme Verse: 2 Corinthians 8:7** But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love, we have kindled in you —see that you also excel in this grace of giving.
1. **Can you say your Grace Giving is like the grace giving of the early church. Generous.**
 - a. Barnabas vs. Ananias and Saphira **Acts 4:21 & Acts 5:1-14**
 - b. **2 Cor. 8:3, 7** "For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability... see that you also excel in this grace of giving."
 - c. It all belongs to God **2 Corinthians 9:6-11**
 - d. The Widow's mites **Mark 12:41-44** They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."
 - e. The rich young ruler **Luke 18:18-27**

IV. THE TEST TO BLESS

Mal. 3:8-12 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,"

⁵ Jacob Neusner, *The Mishnah: A New Translation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 120.

⁶ Clinton E. Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: John, Acts*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 238.



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.

V. CONCLUSION: GIVING IS STEWARDSHIP, LORDSHIP & TRUST

A. Jesus always raises the bar.

1. OT don't murder Jesus says love your enemies.
2. Not to commit adultery. Jesus says if you lust in your heart its like you had an affair.
3. OT eye for an eye tooth for tooth. Jesus says love your enemies.
4. OT live for God, NT Die to self.
5. What if Jesus is calling us to more?
6. "Despite this generalizing tendency virtually all references in early Judaism and early Christianity are to *tithes* (plural) not to *the tithe*. *Tithes* do not become *the tithe* until Christianity."⁷
7. "In my estimate when you factor in the tithes, offerings the Israelites were giving on average 28%"

B. Randy Alcorn "Money Possessions, and Eternity"

1. "Whether or not the tithe is still the minimum measure of those first fruits, I ask myself, does God expect his new covenant children to give less, the same, or more? I've found that, to many people, the term "grace giving" simply means "give whatever you feel like." The assumption seems to be that God no longer expects his people to give substantially.
2. "Tithing are the training wheels of giving. It's when we listen, trust and obey God with that, he calls us to greater biblical generosity"

3. Stewardship:

- a. "If you made \$1500 last year, you're in the top 20% of the world's income earners.
- b. If you have sufficient food, decent clothes, live in a house or apartment, and have a reasonably reliable means of transportation, you are among the top 15% of the world's wealthy.
- c. If you earn more than \$50,000 annually, you are in the top 1% of the world's income earners."
- d. In the Great Depression the average giving was 3.3%. A time when they didn't know if they would make it. Today the average Christian gives 2.1%? What happened?

A CHILD AND CANDY.

⁷ J. Christian Wilson, "Tithe," ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 580.

Monthly Cash Flow Plan

Cash flows in and out each month. Make sure you tell it where to go!

Monthly Take-Home Pay

Add up budgeted column
+ enter here

These icons represent good options for cash envelopes

♥ CHARITY	Spent	Budgeted
Tithes	_____	_____
Charity & Offerings	_____	_____
	*10-15%	TOTAL

🏠 SAVING	Spent	Budgeted
Emergency Fund	_____	_____
Retirement Fund	_____	_____
College Fund	_____	_____
	*10-15%	TOTAL

🏠 HOUSING	Spent	Budgeted
First Mortgage/Rent	_____	_____
Second Mortgage	_____	_____
Real Estate Taxes	_____	_____
Repairs/Maint.	_____	_____
Association Dues	_____	_____
	*25-35%	TOTAL

⚙️ UTILITIES	Spent	Budgeted
Electricity	_____	_____
Gas	_____	_____
Water	_____	_____
Trash	_____	_____
Phone/Mobile	_____	_____
Internet	_____	_____
Cable	_____	_____
	*5-10%	TOTAL

🍎 FOOD	Spent	Budgeted
👉 Groceries	_____	_____
👉 Restaurants	_____	_____
	*5-15%	TOTAL

👕 CLOTHING	Spent	Budgeted
👉 Adults	_____	_____
👉 Children	_____	_____
👉 Cleaning/Laundry	_____	_____
	*2-7%	TOTAL

🚗 TRANSPORTATION	Spent	Budgeted
Gas & Oil	_____	_____
👉 Repairs & Tires	_____	_____
License & Taxes	_____	_____
Car Replacement	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____
	*10-15%	TOTAL

🏥 MEDICAL/HEALTH	Spent	Budgeted
Medications	_____	_____
Doctor Bills	_____	_____
Dentist	_____	_____
Optometrist	_____	_____
Vitamins	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____
Other _____	_____	_____
	*5-10%	TOTAL

*Dave's Recommended Percentages

Sign in to FPU Central at daveramsey.com to download this form and explore our other online budgeting tools!



January 10, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Please be advised that Rev. Dr. Paul Conway, an Ordained Minister with the Assemblies of God, has faithfully and consistently tithed to the Southern New England Ministry Network of the Assemblies of God.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Yacovone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Paul Yacovone

Executive Secretary, Southern New England Ministry Network