

I. Intro

A. Text: **Matt. 22:34-40**

³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” (Matt. 22:34-40)

B. Recap: Last Week's Stewardship Questions

1. Final segment in our sermon series: "**More Money, More Problems**"
 - a. Last few weeks we've talked finances from a Kingdom standpoint.
 - i. Stewardship
 - ii. Eternal Mindset
 - iii. Practical Tips
 - b. Today: Giving, tithing, sowing/ reaping, etc.
2. If you want to start an argument among Christians...
 - a. Holy Spirit
 - b. Tithing
3. Money is NOT the root of all evil. The love of money is.
 - a. It's a question of love.
 - b. It's a matter of the heart.
 - c. What do we really love?
 - i. Most of us love ourselves, and our spending patterns prove it.

4. Money is not the problem & is not the answer to our problems.
 - a. God has no problem seeing us with money. It was His idea to give it to us in the 1st place.
 - i. **1 Tim. 6:17:** *¹⁷Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.*
 - b. Money is a tool that helps you become more of who you already are.
 - c. In the hands of a wise person, money becomes a tool for worship, good deeds, family provision and God-focused enjoyment on earth.
5. Money can be a **great tool**, if the person holding the tool knows how to use it effectively.
 - a. Now we've already established the fact that God's #1 concern is building and expanding His kingdom on earth.
 - b. God empowered mankind to be stewards (managers) of the resources that God entrusted us with, to build His Kingdom on the earth
 - c. So if you are responsibly utilizing God's resources as a tool to build God's kingdom, I would call you a skilled craftsmen who God can trust with increase!

II. Why Do We Give?

A. We Give Because of Love

³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” ³⁷ Jesus said to him, “You shall **love the LORD** your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘You shall **love your neighbor** as yourself.’ (Matt. 22:34-40)

1. Love God → Love People

- a. If we have a problem loving God, then we'll never effectively love people.
- b. If you really love God, then you'll be passionate about what He's passionate about.
 - i. Passionate about Orphans
 - ii. Passionate about Widows
 - iii. Passionate about the Rejected, Downcast
 - iv. Passionate about those who are oppressed
 - v. Passionate about His Bride

2. Everything we do as children of God is a response to love.

- a. We are loved... so we love back.
 - i. 1 John 4:19: "*We love because He first loved us*"
- b. Giving is no different. We give as a response to the fact that He gave to us first.
 - i. John 3:16: "*For God so loved the world, that He gave...*"
- c. Biblical giving is always a response to Godly precedent.
- d. Biblical giving is always motivated by love, not obligation.
 - i. We were so moved by God's love poured out on us that it primed our hearts.
 - ii. And out of overflow, we began to love Him back.
- e. Out of love, His passion(s) becomes our passion.
 - i. His passion is people; and bringing them into His Kingdom.
 - ii. His passion is His Bride and raising her up in faithfulness.

*It's all a matter of the heart.

3. Jesus understood that our **hearts** are tied to our wallets.

- a. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"
(Matt. 6:21)
- b. Budget & Tracking
 - i. Where we invest, is where our affections are directed.

B. We Give Because We're Grateful

¹Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²“Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine.”... ¹¹“And it shall be, when the LORD brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, ¹²that you shall set apart to the LORD all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males shall be the LORD’s. ¹³But every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. ¹⁴So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What is this?’ that you shall say to him, ‘By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. ¹⁵And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’ (Ex. 13:1-2, 11-15)

- 1. Tithing is directly connected to the Principle of Firsts
 - a. God required the first of EVERYTHING that opened the womb in Egypt.
 - i. 10th Plague
 - b. God: “I didn’t kill your firstborn, but the firstborn still belongs to Me.”
 - i. Either you sacrifice it or you redeem it.
 - ii. Tithing was done in proportion to the first part of everything... with thankfulness in mind.
- 2. Tithing is directly connected to a heart of gratitude for past deliverance.

- a. Why do I tithe? Because God brought me out of Egypt with a mighty hand.
- b. Therefore, out of every thing in my care, I honor God with the firsts.
- c. **Prov. 3:9:** "*Honor God with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase*"

3. Tithing is directly connected to a heart of gratitude for Divine Enablement. (**Deut. 8:11-18**)

¹¹ “Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, ¹² lest—when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; ¹³ and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; ¹⁴ when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; ¹⁵ who led you through that great and terrible wilderness, in which were fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; who brought water for you out of the flinty rock; ¹⁶ who fed you in the wilderness with manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end— ¹⁷ then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’ ¹⁸ “And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. (Deut. 8:11-18)

- a. We're grateful for past deliverance, but we're also grateful for present enablement.

C. We Give Out of Obedience.

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house”
(Mal. 3:10)

- 1. **The Tithe:** literally means “*a tenth*”
 - a. First mention of giving tithes was in **Gen. 14:18-20**
 - i. Concept pre-dates the law by several hundred years.

- ii. Beautiful picture of freely honoring God by investing in others.
- b. We've been mistaught the concept of tithing as a matter of an obligation.
- c. Tithing is not an obligation as much as it is an opportunity...
 - i. *"We get to... honor God with obedience."*
- d. Don't ever think that you're doing something special by giving God something material.

I will not take a bull from your house, Nor goats out of your folds. ¹⁰ For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills. ¹¹ I know all the birds of the mountains, And the wild beasts of the field are Mine. ¹² "If I were hungry, I would not tell you; For the world is Mine, and all its fullness. (Ps. 50:11)

- i. God doesn't need our money.
- e. Returning God the first 10% actually declares that we agree that the other 90% belongs to Him. The 10% is but a representation of the whole.
 - i. Act of Faith.
 - ii. Agreement with heaven.
- f. Benefit: Proportionate Giving (10%)

2. **Question:** *Wasn't the tithe only tied to the law? If we are no longer under the law, why are we still talking about tithing?*

- a. The tithe actually pre-dates the law.
 - i. First mention of giving tithes was in **Gen. 14:18-20**
 - ii. Concept pre-dates the law by several hundred years.
- b. Timeless, universal principle that was included into the law.
- c. The law was a schoolmaster to set guidelines and shine some light so that we could see.
 - i. The law is not bad at all.

- ii. It helps us see where we're at.
- d. Jesus didn't come to destroy the law, He came to fulfill it.
 - i. **Matt. 5:21**: "*Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and the Pharisees, you will by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven*".
- e. One of the benefits of tithing is that God rebukes the devourer from you.
- f. It was just something that I've always done out of gratitude.
- g. I've learned not to despise the rule. The standard is good.

3. Holy Spirit alone empowers us to freely go above and beyond "*the rule*".

- a. 10% is a good place to start
 - i. I get to freely give God 10% of His resources that someone else will then steward.
 - ii. With increase in mind.
- b. Act of faith.
- c. Doesn't have to stop there (11%, 12%).
 - i. Freewill Offering
 - ii. Sacrificial Giving
 - iii. Extravagant Giving

III. Offerings, Sowing Seed, etc.

A. **Question**: *What is the difference between a tithe and an offering?*

1. A tithe is based on a straight mathematical calculation (10%). It's non-negotiable.

- a. Offering, sowing seed, giving is anything you offer to the Lord that is different than the First 10%.

- b. We were instructed to tithe, so it becomes a trust issue.
 - i. A surrender issue.
- c. Other types of giving (over and above the tithe), is usually based on responsible stewardship and an expanded heart for God.

2. Whether we give tithes, freewill offerings, sowing seed... We make God first place. (**Prov. 3:9**)

“Honor God with your possessions, and with the first fruits of all your increase”
(Prov. 3:9)

- 3. We manage a corporation that God owns called “Everything”.
 - a. God is the owner. We just manage.
 - i. And God wants wants a return on His investment.
 - b. If Uncle Sam gets his off the top, why shouldn’t God. He’s the owner of Everything!
 - c. Anything less than first place is out of order!
- 4. Some of our Money Problems come from Misplaced Priorities.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (**Matt. 6:33**)

- a. As we budget our Father's resources, why not make informed, intelligent, Holy Spirit empowered decisions about returning to Him the first things?
 - i. Why not pray about it before we get to church?
 - ii. Why not pray about it before we spend a dime?
 - iii. Automatic deposit → Me first spending
- 5. The modern church has produced a generation of irresponsible, compulsive givers.
 - a. Hear a good sermon so you give a certain amount.

- b. Sitting among certain people, so you give a certain amount.
- 6. **Question:** *Should I give to God or should I pay my rent?*
 - a. Give all your money to the church and you neglect your house?
 - i. **1 Tim. 5:8:** *But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel/unbeliever*

B. Supply for the House: God Supplies From Within

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, so that there may be meat in Mine house"
(Mal. 3:10)

- 1. The church is the vehicle in which Jesus moves and acts in the earth.
 - a. As we grow in the grace of giving, the church grows in its ability to impact the region
- 2. Church is to be fully resourced from within.
 - a. Every dollar we need is already here.
 - b. Everything we do is made possible by your faithful giving.

C. 8 Week Challenge: **Read Mal. 3:10-12**

- 1. *"Generous giving is not about doling out more money. It's about re-directing the heart so that we become passionate about the things that Christ is passionate about". (Gordon MacDonald).*