

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

1. Stewardship
 - a. God owns everything, but empowered mankind to be stewards (managers) of the resources that God entrusted him with, to build His Kingdom on the earth
 - b. God has no problem seeing us with money. It was His idea to give it to us in the 1st place.
 - i. Ps. 35:27: “*Let the LORD be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.*”
2. Practical Tips (but with Eternal Mindset)
 - a. Tips
 - i. Budgeting
 - ii. Living within boundaries (avoiding debt)
 - iii. Saving
 - iv. Investing
 - v. Legacy planning
 - b. Unjust Steward: The children of this world are more shrewd than the children of light.

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. 22:36-39**)

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.
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.

*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**)
 - i. Where we invest, is where our affections are directed.

B. We Give Because We're Grateful

¹⁸ Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. ¹⁹ And 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." And he gave him a tithe of all. (Gen. 14:18-20)

1. First mention of tithe.

The Tithe: literally means “*a tenth*”

2. Abraham was granted a mind-boggling victory.
 - a. Because God blessed Him with the ability to get this wealth, he immediately turned back and honored God first.
3. Concept of the tithe pre-dates the law by several hundred years.
 - a. Beautiful picture of freely honoring God by investing in others.
 - b. We've been incorrectly taught 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....*”
 - 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.

III. How do we give?

- A. We give to God with firsts in mind (priority and chronology).

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

1. 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.

- a. Act of Faith.
- b. Agreement with heaven.

2. Principle of Firsts Explained

¹ Then 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, ¹² that 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. ¹³ But 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. ¹⁴ So 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. ¹⁵ And 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)

- a. God set apart the first of EVERYTHING that opened the womb in Egypt.
 - i. 10th Plague
- b. Tithing was done in proportion to the first part of everything... with thankfulness in mind.
- c. The descendants of Israel tithed because God brought them out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

B. We give with Divine Enablement in mind. (**Deut. 8:11-18**)

¹¹ “Take care lest you forget the LORD your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, ¹² lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, ¹³ and when your

herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied,¹⁴ then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery,¹⁵ who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock,¹⁶ who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end.¹⁷ Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.'¹⁸ You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. (Deut. 8:11-18)

1. We're grateful for past deliverance, but we're also grateful for present/future endowment.
 - i. We remember... we acknowledge that it was God who gave us the strength, ingenuity, marketability, skill, etc.

IV. Tithing Controversy Clarified

A. Question: *If we are no longer under the law, why are we still talking about tithing?*

1. The tithe actually pre-dates the law.
 - a. Remember: First mention of giving tithes was in **Gen. 14:18-20**
 - b. Timeless, universal principle that was included into the law.
2. Even if the tithe was only connected to the law, remember that the law was a schoolmaster to set guidelines and shine some light so that we could see when we're off.
 - a. The law is not bad at all.
 - i. It helps us see where we're at.
 - b. Admission: Believers don't HAVE to tithe!
 - i. The tithe is a great benchmark that shines a light on our hearts

- c. Jesus didn't come to destroy the law, He came to fulfill it.
 - i. **Matt. 5:20:** *²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.*
- 3. Holy Spirit alone empowers us to freely go above and beyond “*the guideline*”.
 - a. 10% is a good place to start
 - i. Act of faith.
 - b. Doesn't have to stop there (11%, 12%).

B. **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. Other types of giving (over and above the tithe), is usually based on responsible stewardship and an expanded heart for God.

C. **Question:** *Should I give generously to God or should I pay my rent?*

- 1. Giving all your money to the church and you neglecting your house dishonors God!
 - a. **1 Tim. 5:8:** *⁸But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*
- 2. The modern church has produced a generation of irresponsible, compulsive givers.

- a. As we budget our Father's resources, why not make informed, intelligent, Holy Spirit empowered decisions about returning to Him the first things?

D. Supply for the House, God Supplies From Within

⁸Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. ⁹You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. ¹⁰Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. ¹¹I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. (Mal. 3:8-10a)

- 1. God had serious indictments against Israel because of their dullness toward Him. (v.8)
 - a. Obvious social and community benefit connected with the tithe in the O.T. (v.10)
 - i. In the N.T., as the church grows in the grace of giving it grows in its ability to impact the region.

2. Biblical Challenge

¹⁰...And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. ¹¹I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. (Mal. 3:10b-11)

- a. Test God (v.10b)
- b. Benefit of Tithing
 - i. Proportionate Giving (10%)
 - ii. God tends to rebuke the devour. (v.11)

"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).