



biblestudy

God's Tenth

How Does God Feel About Tithing?

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The principle of tithing first appeared in the Bible in the book of Genesis. It is an ancient principle -- one that has brought prosperity to those who have followed the God of the Bible from ancient times. Today, many believe the need to tithe is no longer incumbent upon God's people. But is this true? Did God require it of His ancient people, but dismiss it in the New Testament? This Bible Study will help you understand God's will in the matter of tithing. It will answer questions like: Do we NEED to give God anything? Didn't God create the entire universe and everything in it; so If God needed money, couldn't He just create some more? Wasn't tithing "nailed to the cross?" Should we tithe today? Read on to find the answers to these questions and much more.

What is a Tithe?

First of all, let's explain what a *tithe* is. The word tithe comes from an old English word used over three centuries ago meaning "tenth". As it is used in the Bible, it generally refers to one-tenth of a person's income (See Genesis 28:22). It is this biblical use of the word *tithe* that you need to understand, because tithing has a powerful impact on your financial success, as we will go on to show.

How Does God Feel About Tithing?

The true Church of God is founded on the Apostles and the Prophets. It is the Church that Jesus Christ built. It is God's Church, and God made Jesus the Head of it (Ephesians 2:20).

One of the prophets who makes up the foundation of the Church is Malachi. Under inspiration from

God, Malachi declared that people have robbed God. It seems incredible! How can God be robbed? Surely we can't sneak into His throne room and steal gold or precious jewels! So how is it possible for the creator of the universe to be robbed? Malachi answers this for us in Malachi 3, verses 8-9: *"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed you?' In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed me, even this whole nation."*

God, through His prophet, is saying plainly that people steal from Him in the form of tithes and offerings. Whoever is not tithing to God is stealing from Him!

Why Would God Need Anything?

It can seem strange to us human beings that God, the all-powerful, all-knowing creator, would want anything from us, His creation, who depend upon Him. Why would God want ten percent of our income? Surely, if He needed something, He could just create it, right? (See Psalm 50:10-12). The obvious answer is yes, of course He could. However, since we know from what we've seen so far that tithing is something God wants from us, there must be an important reason for the existence of tithing!

Question

1. Does God need anything from Us? See Haggai 2:12; Psalm 50:10-12; Exodus 19:5

A careful reading of the Bible tells us God desires a relationship with His children. He desires for us

to be like Him, to develop His character and outlook on life (Matthew 5:48). He gives us laws. He gives us teachers. And He set in motion a system of blessings and cursings to encourage us to walk the right way, to avoid the wrong way, and to help us grow to be like Him.

God is our Father. God is a giving God. He gives abundantly, and receives far less in return. But there is a way we can show our appreciation to Him and our recognition of His ownership of all that we utilize on this earth. Tithing is the system God has established so that we can do that, and it is for OUR good: It keeps our relationship with Him on the right plane. In Matthew 6:19-21, Christ encourages us: *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."* It is clear that God has ways of weighing our hearts to determine what is important to us. Tithing is one of those ways.

Questions

1. *What are the blessings God promises to those who walk in His ways? See Deuteronomy 28:1-14.*
2. *What happens if we don't observe those things God has commanded us? See Deuteronomy 28:15-68.*
3. *Are the blessings and cursings mentioned in Deuteronomy 28 only for the ancient nation of Israel? See 2 Timothy 3:16, Malachi 3:6.*

Motivations Revealed Through Tithing

Many scriptures address the motivations of the heart. Matthew 6:24 states, *"No one can serve two (opposing) masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."* The modern word for mammon is riches. God is clearly saying that you cannot make your life's purpose both to serve Him and to serve the materialism that is of this world: They are mutually exclusive. One or the other -- to serve God and His purpose or to serve self-interests -- must be your priority (Luke 12:34).

Question

1. What does the First Commandment tell us about what our priorities should be? See Exodus 20:1-3; Matthew 19:17.

Even If you want to serve God, and you are convinced that God requires tithing, fear can be an obstacle to your obeying. God knows our nature. He created us. He gives us the encouragement we need in Matthew 6:25-34:

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory

was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 'For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.'

This is a beautiful passage of scripture telling us that God will provide for us IF we *"seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness."* Then we have the promise that *"all these things shall be added unto you."* God promises to bless us with everything we need, making it unnecessary for us to devote all our heart, mind, and energy to acquiring the things we want in life. Can you believe God will do that for you?

Beyond personal reasons for tithing, like individual financial security and blessings, tithing is also a very spiritual matter. It provides a way for God, through His Church, to do the work He gave us to do on this earth prior to Christ's second coming (We will discuss that in more detail later). But now we understand some reasons for tithing, so let's look at tithing from its beginning with a historical perspective, and address some of the beliefs many have concerning this subject.

Old Testament Tithing

The first mention of tithing in the Bible is found in Genesis 14:18-20. Here we are told Abram (Abraham) gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything he had. Who is or was Melchizedek, and why did Abram give Him a tenth of all that he had?

We read in Hebrews 7:1-3 that Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High, and that He *blessed* Abraham upon his returning from defeating certain kings in battle. Abraham gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the spoils he had taken in war. It should be noted that Melchizedek means "King of Righteousness"; and that King of Salem means "King of peace". Melchizedek was also described as being without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days, or end of life. He is like the Son of God!

Question

1. Who else is referred to as the "King of Peace" and the "King of Righteousness"? Who else has no genealogy, no beginning or end? Read the prophecy of the coming Messiah in Isaiah 9:6-7. Comment: Melchizedek is none other than Jesus Christ!

The patriarch Abraham knew and kept God's commandments, His statutes, and laws. And he kept God's law concerning tithing, as the above example clearly shows (Genesis 26:5).

Question

1. What other example of tithing can be found in Genesis? See Genesis 28:22. Comment: In this scripture Jacob said to God: "And this stone, which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house: and of all that you give me I will surely give the

tenth to You.” Jacob entered into a relationship with God at this point, paying God His tithe.

As the above examples have shown, tithing did not begin with Moses, as so many believe today! Under Moses, however, tithing was *reintroduced* to the Israelites who were being led out of slavery and who had lost many of God’s truths. Beginning with Moses, God ushered in a new and different procedure for tithing. God established Israel as a physical nation, and also referred to them as a church (Acts 7:38). God’s ministry was also changed: It became a physical priesthood.

During this time, a priesthood of *lower rank* (compared to that of Melchizedek) was established.

Question

1. Who did God select for this service? See Numbers 3: 6-7. Comment: God selected His ministers from among the children of Israel. The people had no choice as to who their ministers would be: One could not decide to become a minister of God, one was physically born into it. In the case of Ancient Israel, besides Aaron’s family, God took one whole tribe out of the twelve tribes of Israel, Levi, to be His ministers (Numbers 8:9-11). This ministry was called the Levitical Priesthood.

The Tribe of Levi had no national boundaries, as did the other tribes, but was scattered throughout the tribes of Israel. They did not receive the inheritance of land the other tribes received but were given the Israelites’ tithes and offerings as their portion of the wealth of the nation. They devoted their adult lives to the ministry of God in Israel. Even though this was a physical ministry, it was sacred and holy to God. During the centuries

between Moses and Christ, God continued to compensate His Levitical priests by giving them all of His tithe for their support and for carrying on God’s work (Numbers 18:24). Hence, God’s financial plan remained the same from the beginning - a tenth of His people’s income (increase) was used to support His ministry and to do His work.

Question

1. Was tithing for every one of God’s people? See II Chronicles 31:4-6. Comment: The Bible tells us even the Levites tithed to God. Numbers 18:26 states, Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe. All men acknowledged God in this way, even the priests themselves.

As a church or congregation, ancient Israel was given many physical ceremonies and rituals consisting of animal sacrifices and meat and drink offerings (Hebrews 9:10). Notice that these were physical in nature, not spiritual. Ancient Israelites -- priests and laity alike (except for those very few who were specifically called by God) -- did not possess God’s Holy Spirit. Salvation was not offered to them at that time.

Question

1. What is the difference between the commission to the nation of Israel and that given to the Church today? See Deuteronomy 4:5-9, Matthew 28:19-20. Comment: The Israelites were not given a promise of salvation at that time, astonishing as that may seem! They were never commanded to go “Into all the world and proclaim the Gospel to every

creature" as we are today (Mark 16:15)! Instead, they were to be a model nation, a light to the world. The other nations were to come to them to learn about God.

God instituted tithing from the beginning (We saw the example of Abraham that showed he knew he was to tithe). It continued on into the establishment of the nation of Israel and throughout their history, and even into Christ's time. Some believe, however, that once Christ came, the tithing law was done away. Is that really what happened? You need to understand.

New Testament Tithing – Jesus' Example

Let's find out what the leader of the New Testament Church taught on the subject of tithing.

Question

1. *Who is the head of the Church today? See Ephesians 5:23. Comment: The Bible tells us Jesus Christ is the living head of His Church TODAY! Then shouldn't we take direction from Him on whether or not we are to tithe?*

In Matthew 23:23 Christ is found speaking to the multitudes, describing the characteristics of the Pharisees who made self-righteous displays of strictly keeping God's law for outward appearances as a show to gain the approval of men. Christ said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These YOU OUGHT TO HAVE DONE, without leaving the others undone."

Question

1. *In Matthew 23:23, was Christ condemning the Pharisees for tithing? Comment: Notice Christ said: "These you ought to have done" (referring to tithing). The Pharisees were not doing anything wrong in tithing, but they were way out of balance, only paying attention to the minute details of obeying the physical aspects of the statutes and ordinances. Christ was telling them: "You must tithe, but you must also not forget the weightier or spiritual matters of the law." As Christians today, if we are to follow Christ's example, and do all that He commands, we must also do both.*

Here is another example from the New Testament about tithing: Look at Luke 18:10-12. Jesus is telling His disciples a parable:

"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed (concerning himself): 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men - robbers, evildoers, adulterers - or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week AND GIVE A TENTH OF ALL I GET.'"

Question

1. *Why is Christ giving another example of tithing involving a Pharisee in Luke 18: 10-12? Comment: The Pharisees followed the "letter of the law." If tithing had not been a law, they would not have tithed. Thus, the parable establishes that people were to tithe. The Pharisees were strict in their compliance with the demands of the laws, which was not wrong; but, unfortunately, they were self-righteous in their attitudes, and were viewed by Christ as hypocrites (See Matthew 23:13-33).*

But many argue today: "Christ did away with those Old Testament laws. They were nailed to the cross when He died. Therefore, we don't have to tithe." Did Christ do away with His Father's laws, really? Rather than doing away with them, we read in Matthew 5:17-19 that Christ said He came to fulfill the law, not to destroy it: *"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill (to render perfect in every aspect). For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."* God's laws are very much in effect today!

Question

1. In Matthew 22:21, did Christ also confirm to a group of Pharisees they were to both pay their taxes to Caesar and their tithes to God? Comment: Read the scripture from your own Bible. This scripture is important because it also demonstrates that paying taxes does not replace our obligation to pay our tithes to God.

You might think, "There is no law in the Ten Commandments that requires tithing." But there is -- the First Commandment! Exodus 20:3 tells us: *"You shall have no other gods before me."* If something is keeping you from obeying and honoring the ONE true God, then that is a god you have placed *before* the TRUE God! If holding onto God's tithe, spending it on your own desires, is more important to you than obeying the Creator

of the Universe, you have broken the First Commandment!

Question

1. Is there a consequence if we don't obey the tithing law? See Romans 2:8-9. Comment: Some professing Christians, knowing they should tithe but refusing to do it, have brought on themselves great harm and trouble. I Timothy 6:10 says "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

New Testament Tithing – The Change in the Book of Hebrews

The law of tithing is discussed in the 7th chapter of the book of Hebrews. The subject is, which of the two priesthoods -- Melchizedek or Levitical -- is superior. The purpose of the passage is to determine which priesthood is to receive tithes during the New Testament era. The answer is that the Melchizedek priesthood is once again in effect. The church is the spiritual nation (I Peter 2:9), and Christ is its head. The ministry representing Christ now serves in the Melchizedek ministry.

Question

1. Who was assigned to collect tithes from the people in Ancient Israel? See Nehemiah 10:37-38.
Comment: Read Hebrews 7:5. Note who is to collect tithes from God's people today? Hebrews 7:14-15 tells us that Christ's Priesthood is in effect today. Therefore, it is the ministers who represent Christ who are to collect the tithes from God's people. There is nothing in the discussion in Hebrews 7 that implies tithing is no longer

necessary. However, as long as the physical temple was still standing, the early church needed to understand they no longer paid tithes to the temple, but to Christ's true ministers. We are still living in New Testament times today!

As you read through Hebrews 7, notice carefully verse 8. God's tithing system is also explained there: *"Here mortal men receive tithes, but there He receives them, of whom it is witnessed that He (Christ) lives."* Also verse 12 states, *"For the priesthood being changed, of necessity (from the Levitical back to the Melchizedek priesthood), there is also a change in the law (as to who should receive the tithes)."* It does not say the law was abolished. The change in priesthoods made necessary a change in the law regarding who should receive the tithes.

So tithing, far from being abolished, is New Testament law! But, the priesthood being changed to that of Jesus Christ -- the Melchizedek Priesthood restored -- the tithing law is also changed of necessity, becoming God's system for financing the ministry of Jesus Christ today! In reality, the law is merely restored to what it was at the beginning!

How plain! Tithing is God's law -- His system for financing His great Work today: It's commanded, now! The tithing law was not "nailed to the cross" as so many would like to claim.

Tithing and the Apostle Paul

Those wishing to prove that New Testament Christians do not have to tithe have quoted the

Apostle Paul countless times. These individuals usually point to the fact that the Apostle Paul worked as a tentmaker and did not receive tithes from the brethren, quoting him in I Corinthians 9:18: *"...that when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel."* This seems to many a clear indication that ministers should not receive tithes from church members lest they "abuse their authority in the gospel." However, this is a gross misunderstanding of Paul's intent.

In order to understand what Paul was saying, you must first read what Paul said PRIOR to this, and place his words in context. All of chapter 9 is a defense of his RIGHT to receive financial support from the church. He was being "examined" and criticized by many people, and he felt the need to make a defense. Look closely at verses 6-14:

Vs. 6 "Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? 7 Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? 8 Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? 10 Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. 11 If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?"

12 If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. 13 Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? 14 Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel."

Question

1. Were the other Apostles supported by the church as they ministered to God's people and preached to the unbelieving world? See I Corinthians 9:5. Comment: In verse 6 Paul said it was a "right" (power) to refrain from working to support himself while doing the work of the ministry; and in I Corinthians 9:12 he stated that he and Barnabas endured not using this "power" (right). Paul was an Apostle AFTER Christ's death and resurrection! Obviously, this power -- THIS RIGHT -- to collect tithes of the people had not been hung on the cross!

Wasn't Tithing Done Away?

By now, it should be obvious that tithing is a seriously misunderstood subject. And with the current trend in this world toward gross materialism, is it any wonder? The Bible says that "a fool and his money are soon parted," meaning we are not to be reckless in how we spend our money; but the Bible is also fraught with examples of how much men love their money...far more than they love God! That is why tithing is so difficult for the vast majority of people today. They love their money WAY TOO MUCH! But little do they realize that without tithing, God withholds His financial blessings from them, making the very thing they love most a curse for them. Here is what God says about such wealth:

Haggai 1:6-9: Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes. 7 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways. 8 Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. 9 Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. (KJV)

Even for those who seek obedience to God, there is much confusion regarding the tithing law. Some believe that tithing, like the Sabbath, was for the Jews only. Others believe it was "hung on the cross" and became void with the New Covenant. Still others believe tithing was only a part of a national taxation system for the physical nation of Israel, and when that nation ceased, the tax was lifted. The word of God, as we have seen, does not support any of these ideas.

Comment: Here are some principles you should now take time to review that support tithing today:

1. We have seen that tithing was in effect before the "Law of Moses" and the founding of the Nation of Israel (Genesis 14:18-20).

2. Christ, Himself supported the tithing system during His discourses with the Pharisees. When asked about taxation, He said: "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God that which is God's" (Matthew 22:21). Obviously, God comes before Caesar!

3. *We have seen in the book of Hebrews, chapter 7, that once the priesthood was returned to that of Melchizedek, the tithing system remained in effect: Only the priesthood changed.*

4. *The Apostle Paul stated that ministers had a right to make a living from their work of preaching the gospel much the same way "you do not muzzle an ox while it treads out grain" (1 Corinthians 9:9; 1 Timothy 5:18). The metaphor was used to show men are to be paid for their labor.*

5. *Many excuse themselves from tithing today on the false pretense that tithing pertained to the Mosaic period only. They claim it was for Israel alone. That false thinking has brought a curse on modern Israel (Please request our free booklet, *The United States and Britain in Prophecy to learn the identity of modern day Israel*) and the entire world (Review *Deuteronomy 28 for the blessings and cursings that are mentioned there*).*

The Old Covenant is gone, that's true. But its ending could not take away what it did not bring! The Bible tells us "God is the same, yesterday, today and forever"; and that He has always sought man's involvement in what He is doing on this earth. Tithing was God's law long before the Old Covenant was introduced. Remember, Abraham tithed. Tithing was God's system for financing His earthly ministry and the work they were to do. Prior to the Levitical Priesthood, the ministry was under Melchizedek. Melchizedek -- Jesus Christ -- is once again our High Priest. We have proof positive that Melchizedek's ministry was supported by the tithing system.

How Does God Say to Tithe Today?

As we have seen, God has always used a priesthood -- a ministry -- representing Him,

representing Him, carrying out His mission. From the time of Abraham (Melchizedek priesthood) to Moses (Levitical Priesthood) there was a ministry on the earth. During the New Testament, when Jesus Christ arose from the dead, He ascended to heaven as our living High Priest (Hebrews 3:1). Today, He calls men to His ministry to be His true representatives, to preach His gospel, and to care for His church. In the New Testament period, the Melchizedek Priesthood is restored, in Christ. Then as now, financing is needed to carry out the Work of God, and His ministers are to collect tithes from His people. In ancient days, tithing could have been brought to the ministry in the form of currency, food, animals, or goods. In our modern time the main form of exchange is currency. We earn our wages in money, not produce or cattle, and we tithe in the same manner.

Question

1. What are God's tithes used for today? See Acts 13:2; Acts 14:21-26; 1 Corinthians 15:58. Comment: The tithes collected today are used as they were in Paul's day, for doing the work of God -- to finance God's work through His chosen ministers as they focus their time and energies on preaching His word. A true minister of God knows he must use this money wisely and carefully. He sees that every dollar is stretched to produce the most return. This return can take many forms when used in service to the Church and to the unbelieving world. Tithes can be used for teaching via sermons or personal counseling, for paying salaries of employed personnel, media expenses, production of booklets, magazines, audio and videotapes. The list is endless. There are numerous expenses to be paid so that the true word of God can go out to a starving world! The Church of God, today, is commanded in Mark 16:15-16: "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every

creature." The Apostle Paul stated in Romans 1:15: "So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also." God's ministry has a two-fold commission - to preach the gospel to the world and to feed the Church. Both parts of the commission require God's tithe in order to be accomplished.

It takes a great deal of effort, time, and money to do the Work of God. Therefore, you can see how and why God has, from the very beginning, retained for Himself the *first* tenth of the income of every human being on earth to support His work and His ministry. Just think: The world would be full of the true knowledge of the Lord, if all men tithed. They don't, and it isn't.

The ownership of that first tenth of your income is God's. Unfortunately, there are "ministers" today who claim they have the right to receive tithes, but they do not. They have not been called by Jesus Christ to serve Him. They have simply appropriated the name of Jesus Christ, and use it for their own personal gain. They have misused and abused tithes and offerings given to them by good-hearted, trusting people; and many people now feel that they cannot trust ANY minister. But God tells us we CAN know a true minister. And the Bible also tells us God's true ministry will be on this earth, clear up until the time Christ returns (Matthew 16:18).

God's true ministers have always devoted their time to His holy and spiritual purpose. God's true ministers work. They are men whom God has blessed with ability...working diligently, observing

no set hours. As ministers, they actually *earn* their living: They work for their food, shelter, clothing, and other physical needs the same as anyone else. They are paid from God's tithe for their work as ministers.

When God shows us one of His true ministers, there is no reason why we should not feel safe in giving them our tithe. God tells us, "*by their (the ministers') fruits you will know them*" (Matthew 7:16-20). That is, they will base their teaching on God's word, and will strive to live by every word of it. They will not be hypocrites, teaching that God's law has been done away, while they ask for your money for their support. And you will clearly see that God is doing a work of preaching His gospel of the soon coming Kingdom to the world through them (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20). That is the work of Jesus Christ's chosen ministry, and that is what God's tithe is clearly intended to support.

Question

1. Besides tithing, what else is required of the Christian when it comes to doing God's work? See Colossians 4:2-4; IThessalonians 3:1-2; IThessalonians 5:25. Comment: Our job is to prayerfully ask God to show us who His true ministers are today so that we can give His tithe to support the work God is doing on this earth. Then we are instructed to pray for them in doing the work. But once God has shown us His true ministry, our responsibility for the money we give to them ceases! We have no further responsibility or direction in the handling of it than we do in the money we pay to others we owe. Our purpose in tithing is to do God's will, and not our own. Once paid, we have done our part: We have acquitted ourselves of our obligation.

God can and will bless the tithe-payer! He tells us in Malachi 3:10: *“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.”*

When you pay tithes to one of God's true spiritual representatives, you pay it as to God. It is not a charitable gift from you to the minister. It is not *YOUR* money -- but rather, it is God's way for you to pay to God that which *YOU OWE HIM*. And from there on, the minister who receives it is *accountable* to God. And you may be sure that God's justice is perfect -- that God Almighty will hold every minister far more strictly accountable than you would be capable of doing! Once paid, so far as you are concerned, you have paid God's tithe to Him.

God Wants to Be Your Partner

The creator God -- the One who is offended when His people do not tithe -- wants to be our help and partner in every area of our lives. He wants to pour out His blessings on us. This includes our business affairs. Have you ever stopped and thought about that? This is the same God who made the earth and all that is in it. God created ALL things, including the heavens and the earth, and if you read Genesis 1, you will realize He created us (Isaiah 42:5, 45:12, Colossians 1:16, Revelation 4:11, 10:6, Genesis 1:1-28). This incredible being wants to be in business with us!

Every business needs materials. Consider for a moment that whatever is produced in the business world is produced out of the natural resources at our disposal. Has man produced *anything* that did not first come from the earth or universe around us? It is almost mind-boggling to realize that there is truly *NOTHING* that we produce that did not first come from our environment. We may manipulate raw materials into goods and tools in order to live life comfortably on the earth. However, we always begin with *SOMETHING*. Wood, metal, food, chemicals, and even synthetics have to first come from somewhere. We don't have the ability to create something from literally nothing. Even if we bring something back from another planet, moon, or star, which allows us to make a new alloy or synthetic, we cannot escape the fact that we didn't create it: God did. All of the raw materials we utilize are His handiwork!

A business partner with the ability to create unlimited resources is a businessman's dream! What better business partner could you hope for than God? Could you find one who is more honest and fair? Could you find a human being that could always keep His promises? God promises to actively bless your efforts, so long as your efforts are godly. He only asks for a small portion of the first part of the profits. Try as we might, we could not find a more profitable arrangement! Incidentally, God adds far more than ten percent to a partnership. A human business partner with this kind of investment might require a different

split of profits. What might be fair? A 60/40 split? Perhaps 70/30? Whatever the percentage, it almost always is in their favor! Why? Every savvy businessman recognizes that the partner who invests the most profits the most from the business. God, however, is not like man. He promises to be our business partner, and He lets us keep 90% of the profit! God has both the power and commitment to see that if you tithe, you will have far more business success (while retaining an honest 9/10 of your increase) than if you cheat Him.

The tithing law could rightly be called a business contract between God and mankind. We use what He has made, and we make sure we give Him 10%. Cheating God, as we have seen from the book of Malachi, sets in motion the cursings or punishments for breaking His laws, instead of the incredible blessings He promises for obedience. What are some of the blessings lacking today? Good health? Happy families? Good jobs? Financial well-being? Yes, all of these are lacking, while we live at the height of material achievement. Why? Success in life really does depend on personal choices. The choice we make -- whether or not to tithe to our God -- will bring blessings or cursing in our lives. It all depends on us.

Tithing While in Debt

One of the concerns many people have about tithing is their indebtedness. Many say: "I don't think it would be right for me to tithe while I'm in debt." But what really is right? Proverbs 16:25 tells us: *"There is a way that seems right to a man,*

but its end is the way of death." That means our human reasoning is not what should guide us when it comes to determining what is right. God's Word teaches us what is right, it is our moral compass, and in regard to tithing, God tells us to pay to Him the firstfruits of all our income. When it comes to our material and financial needs, even debts, God says: *"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things (that you need) shall be added unto you"* (Matthew 6:33). That's a promise from God!

Question

1. Is tithing really a debt -- something we actually owe God? See Leviticus 27:30, 32. Comment: These scriptures clearly show that the tithe is holy to God. It belongs to Him. Many people do not consider that the tithe is a debt owed to God, but God is a GREAT KING. He is the sovereign ruler of the universe. He feels it very personally when His portion is not considered with care, even greater care than man-made rulers might expect. The book of Malachi is replete with examples of His being offended by the complaining that people utter toward Him, as if He has put some great burden upon His children by asking for their respect and honor.

Tithing Requires a Right Attitude

In the book of Malachi, God chastises humans for bringing things to Him in the form of tithes and offerings that we would not dare offer a human ruler -- we would be too embarrassed and might suffer serious consequences! Yet, we often have the nerve to offer God, who is greater in majesty, that which is inferior! Read Malachi 1:8:

"And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is

it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?' Says the LORD of hosts."

Question

1. What is the attitude God will bless? See Isaiah 66:2.

Comment: Not only do we need to obey God and tithe to Him, but we also need to see that we are doing it properly -- with a reverent attitude. We can become so worried about meeting our obligations to men that we often forget we have a first obligation to God, putting aside our tithing until all other obligations are met. But God is not like our other creditors. If you pay your utility bills and mortgage on time, you are not rewarded financially for your troubles! Malachi 3:10 promises:

"Bring all the tithes into my storehouse...and prove me now in this...if I do not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out on you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it."

If you pay your debt to God, making Him your partner in your business affairs, the blessings will come. Not to do so would make Him a liar! And God cannot lie (Titus 1:2)! He will enable you to pay your debts, find employment, or have your needs supplied more quickly than if you evade tithing. Remember, everything belongs to God (Deuteronomy 10:14), and ALL things are possible for Him (Matthew 19:26)! There is nothing in your life He cannot help you with...nothing He cannot help you overcome!

When it comes to tithing, you are, literally, in the position of a steward, handling that which belongs to another. God is your silent partner, and the first tenth, in addition to offerings, is His share. The rest He gives freely to you. But if you appropriate for yourself His share, you are **STEALING** from God (Malachi 3:8).

Question

1. What do we do about tithes we have not paid to God? See Acts 26:20. Comment: God, does not expect, nor want, you to pay back tithes for every job you had from the time you had your first lemonade stand or paper route. You only become responsible for the truth when you understand it. From that point forward, however, God does require you to repent -- to act on what you know. If you reject God's word, His truth, He will reject you (Hosea 4:6). That is the awesome responsibility placed on those who come to know the truth of God. It is the job of God's true ministry to make that truth available, so that people can reap the blessings of obedience.

Conclusion

Since creation, God has always had a desire for a close relationship with humanity. He has made a way for us to know Him. But He has, in His wisdom, established laws that maintain a wholesome and righteous way for that relationship to be carried out. God is not making Himself "common" -- someone to be disrespected or taken for granted. He is, as this booklet has pointed out, a GREAT ruler of extreme intelligence and wisdom who desires a righteous relationship with those over whom He rules. We must, if we want His involvement and blessings in our lives, learn to abide by the laws He has established for our good. Then we can pray to Him with confidence, knowing He hears us, and that He will bless us abundantly as He has promised.

For additional information on this vital subject, we invite you to visit our web site at WorldWatchToday.org or send your requests and questions to:

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