

I. Spirit of the Discussion

- A. When attempting to sort out the question of whether or not it is biblical for Christians to tithe, we are having a conversation amongst family. The bulk of this study is going to be a matter of opinion or personal conviction. It is very important to maintain the proper weight to issues of doctrinal differences in order to uphold the unity of the Spirit among the brethren..

II. Tithing through the Scriptures

- A. The Hebrew word translated “tithe” literally means “a tenth” or “ten percent”. It appears roughly 32 times in the Old Testament scriptures. For most of us, the theme or idea of tithing consists of giving ten percent of our income to the local church we attend. This is actually a fairly substantial deviation from the original command of God as to what tithing was intended for in the law.
- B. Origination with Abraham - The very first time we see someone giving a tenth of their increase in the scriptures is Abraham giving a tithe to Melchizedek, the priest. For many believers, this is significant because it is before the Mosaic law. Because of this timing, there is an argument that this is a practice for believers that transcends the law and therefore carries through to today.
 1. Pagan - Historical records of ancient civilizations that predate Israel show us that giving a tithe to their gods or the priests of their gods was a common practice. In other words, Abraham giving a tithe did not originate from an unrecorded command of God; rather, it was common cultural practice to honor the gods with your increase.
 - a. Tithing Nations that Predate Israel - Egypt, Acaidia, Phoenicia, Babylon, Assyrians, Cannonites, Persians, and South Abrians.
 2. Hermeneutics and Exegesis - If you are going to make an argument that since something was established before the law therefore transcends the law, you must apply that to other things such as circumcision and the seventh-day sabbath.
 3. The Whole Story - Abraham actually gave one hundred percent of his increase away. He gave a tenth to the priest and the rest he gave to two of the most wicked kings in history whom God shortly destroyed with fire from heaven.

- C. Law of Moses - Tithing is commanded extensively in the Torah and even the briefest of surveys of this command would reveal that tithing in the law was not about currency (even though they had a monetary system). It was about physical provision, namely food. Specifically, food and provision for the tribe of Levi primarily, and in addition, to the widow, orphan, poor, and foreigner.
1. The Tribe of Levi - God set apart Levi to maintain a continual sacrificial system in order to keep the judgment of God against Israel's sin atoned for. Also, in order that God's glory and presence could dwell with a sinful people. In light of the role of the Levites, God commanded them not to own land or work and put the responsibility to care for their physical needs on all the other tribes of Israel.
 2. The Widow, Orphan, Poor, and Foreigner - God commanded that portions of the crops were left, and that a few times per year, a tithe of the harvest was to be given to be set aside and distributed as needed for the poor.
 3. Into the Storehouse - All the tithe was to be brought into a storehouse that was also maintained by the tribe of Levite for the proper distribution to those in need. (Mal.
- D. New Covenant - It is of note that not one time after the ratification of the New Covenant through the death and resurrection of Jesus is the tithe mentioned. It should also be considered as to how clear the apostolic writers are that we are not to require any adherence to the Law because it is an affront to the sacrifice of Jesus and the New Covenant.
1. Application Caution - I believe we run into all sorts of potential snags when we apply some of these principles to realities of the New Covenant ecclesiology. However, I have heard these applications taught and so I feel like they need to be considered.
 - a. God's house or storehouse is the New Covenant local church - The New Testament scriptures make it clear that God's house is now made up of believers in whom is His Spirit. There is no longer a holy building or set apart building for His presence.
 - b. Priests are the New Covenant local church staff - Upholding any kind of unique priesthood for certain believers or leaders' positions

or tithes in the local church is extremely unbiblical and out of step with the New Covenant.

- c. Cursed finances without tithing - Some teach there is still a curse upon your finances unless you tithe. There is no distinction of various curses upon us that Jesus's sacrifice did not free us from by His grace and mercy.

III. Continuation Thoughts

- A. The Principle - It is abundantly clear there are principles of righteousness found within the Law and we want to uphold those principles. Giving and serving one another with our increase is one of those principles that believers are called to walk out. It is my opinion that there is nothing wrong with using the principle of setting aside a tenth of your income for financial giving and support for ministry. My encouragement to you would be to not allow that biblical principle to lull you out of intentionality to seek the Lord's leadership in your financial stewardship.
 1. Blessing - God tells us that you are blessed with the life of God on your inner man, and storing up treasure in the age to come when you give. Giving also actively works to break the bondage of the love of money, and the bondage of discontentment and worry.
- B. The Local Church - There is a clear biblical command for the local church members to financially support ministry staff and ministry endeavors, both locally and abroad. No matter where you land on the tithe debate, to not sow financially into your local church community is dishonoring and unhealthy.
- C. Stewardship and Leading of the Spirit - I would also encourage you that it is equally righteous to build a budget based upon Godly financial principles, as it is to spontaneously give according to the leading of the Spirit. I would strongly encourage freedom and celebration in both of these areas as God leads us as a community into the reality of generous giving.