



## Articles and Sermons :: The Dark Side of Tithing Testimonies

### The Dark Side of Tithing Testimonies - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/8 10:10

I thought I would share this article I recently wrote.

The Dark Side of Tithing Testimonies

<http://kingjimmyunauthorized.blogspot.com/2014/04/the-dark-side-of-tithing-testimonies.html>

I work for a department in the foreclosure side of a bank as a mortgage underwriter. Every day I attempt to modify the mortgages of people who are behind on their payments, and adjust the terms of their loan so as to make their home more affordable, so they can resume making their payments, and keep their home. In the process of doing my job, I have occasionally analyzed the tax records and bank statements of people who tithe and make donations to various ministries.

I have seen people who tithe lose their home to foreclosure.

Over the years I have been in the church and involved in ministry, I have known some fantastic Christian people on a very personal level who believed in tithing. I've seen some of these people tithe their way into deep everlasting poverty. I have seen very few people tithe their way out of poverty.

I've seen people "trust God with their finances," but they couldn't keep a bank account open. Either because they were worried about creditors suing them and seizing their assets, or because they couldn't keep a balance high enough to justify a checking account.

I have known people who tithe to have their phones ring off the hook at all hours of the day due to creditors calling for unpaid bills.

I have known people that tithe that have spent years suffering chronic unemployment, who would even tithe from their unemployment checks.

I have known people who tithe that needed people to co-sign for them on a car loan (which means a bank wouldn't lend them money because their credit was trash or they simply didn't make very much money).

I have known people who tithe to drive the most unreliable cars in the world, that constantly breakdown, leave them stranded, and further suck their already limited resources dry.

I have known people who tithe that regularly rely on government aid or the charity of others in order to just survive and have the basics in life.

Some of the people I have known in the above scenarios have been "lay people." But some have also been ordained ministers within the church. And for many ministers in various denominational affiliations, this is a major predicament, because the credentials they hold with their denomination require them to tithe. If they fail to tithe, they could lose their credentials, their church, and their job. So in spite of their extreme financial hardships that some suffer from, they continue to tithe so as to avoid unemployment, or losing a ministry that is precious to them.

Yet, in spite of all these bone crushing hardships people have suffered while tithing, and in spite of going through foreclosure, being behind on bills, being unemployed, and living in deep poverty, I have sat in church and heard some of these same people stand up and testify about how "blessed" they were financially for tithing. If their creditors were in the room, they would disagree. If they are so blessed, and if heaven is so open, why aren't they paying all their bills?

For every story I've heard where somebody stands up, testifies to God's faithfulness in tithing, and then tells stories of groceries left at the door, or receiving anonymous checks in the mail, I know of a hundred other people who went without groceries, and whose mail boxes were full of nothing but "past due" and "shut off" notices. Ashamed, many choose to say little to nothing at all about this in church. Even if they did want to share, many pastors would probably not let them do so

I don't mean for this post to come across as harsh, unloving, or cynical. I'm just attempting to be very real about the things I know and to generate a real discussion about the modern practice of tithing. I am very deeply conflicted about the things I have seen in church over the years, and testimonies connected with people who tithe. I don't think many in the church are being very honest. We are very selective in the stories we tell, and we are guilty of telling half-truths. We ignore a story that could hurt the size of our offering. We don't want the real truth.

Many ministers know of these things, but continue to selectively celebrate "success stories" while deliberately ignoring the stories of people who tested God with their tithe, yet have seemingly seen God fail them. Their selective success stories are like fisherman who tell stories of big catches, but never tell you about the days they caught nothing. Their selective success stories are like professional stock traders who tell stories of 100 percent gains, but don't tell you of the time they saw a stock they own go all the way down to zero.

Some who know of these things will even go so far as to say these failure stories are not evidence of a busted doctrine, but are evidence that the person who was tithing wasn't doing it with the right heart. Or, they will make some other charge of guilt against their brother and sister who was so bold as to give 10 percent of their income, even in the face of financial adversity. Something must be wrong with them and why they tithed but didn't see the results. Then they will go on to rehash a success story they know of, that reinforces the idea that tithing always works, and using it to discount the not so happy story. This my friends is known as propaganda.

As a result, most never bother to genuinely question the doctrine of tithing altogether, and whether or not Christians today are required to tithe, in spite of the knowledge that there are people whose tithing stories aren't so successful. No genuine inquiry and no real "testing" is allowed. No failure stories are kept, recorded, or remembered, except in the memories of people whose financial lives have been turned up-side down because somebody twisted their arm and encouraged them to tithe, and misapplied some promises from the Old Testament.

If we are going to tell people to "test God" in with their tithe, then we better be open and honest about the whole truth of the matter, and tell all the stories of people who tested God with their tithe, only to seemingly see God fail. Some people tithe, and never see heaven so much as crack open an inch. Instead they suffer bankruptcy, foreclosure, unemployment, broken down cars, and outlandish medical bills and other outstanding debilitating issues.

It is my contention that because God does not require Christians to tithe under the New Covenant, the promised blessing of Malachi 3:10-11 has no bearing anymore, and that is why we cannot "test God" in tithing. I believe we are called to a different sort of stewardship and a different form of giving altogether.

**Re: The Dark Side of Tithing Testimonies, on: 2014/4/8 11:05**

Good article Jimmy,

It touches on so many of the abuses of churches, especially word of faith churches and those of the prosperity persuasion. In my own experience over 25 years, so many people I knew tithed from fear. They were taught that if they did not tithe they were robbing God and if they robbed God then they would more than likely face poverty. If they wanted to succeed then first and foremost, before anything else, they must pay the tithe. When you go to the many countries of Africa, you can see the extreme results of this teaching. So many of the poor Africans have merely replaced one witch doctor for another. They remain in their fear and they are taught that they have to appease this new God if they want to be healthy and wealthy and overcome the "demons of poverty."

To me the NT is pretty clear. Give out of your abundance with a cheerful heart, or do not give at all. God does not need your money neither does He need grudging and grumbling followers. Ours is a walk of freedom, freedom to follow the Lord in whatever way He leads us and of course He will never lead us in any way that would violate His word. He who the Son set free is free indeed.

It does not honor God when we do not pay our debts. It does not honor God when we cannot feed our children because we sent checks to some tele-evangelist who promised we would get 10 times or 100 times return. Quite the opposite in fact. Now people can genuinely fall on hard times, lose their jobs and lose their houses, this is not dishonoring, it can often just be life and circumstances.....bro Frank

**Re: The Dark Side of Tithing Testimonies - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/8 11:13**

Honest article, Jimmy.

In the church, just like anywhere else, if you say something enough times, promise enough riches and fortune, and get enough people behind it you're going to have people who eventually buy into it. But they can only bank off the get-rich stories of others, hoping if they are obedient long enough and give cheerfully they too can cash in on God's lottery. They are taught that doubt is tantamount to disobedience; and what's more, it is a requirement to give to the lottery commission under fear of a curse. Since most Christians do not truly understand the New Covenant, they are whisked away with the "tithe requirement" before they can investigate the matter themselves. They become prisoners of denominationalism grow up-think and are at once put to make bricks under Pharaoh's ten-percent taskmasters. They are then told this quota must never fall (even when the straw becomes sparse) or else God will allow the whip of the devourer to lash their backs.

My in-laws are big Pentecostal tithers. They are forever in debt, borrowing money till payday, and then when they default on the loan the creditors call my house (because they listed me and my wife as reference). I shudder to think they have to give the taskmaster his 10% cut after each loan and then spend the rest of the year trying to pay it back with high interest. They will not admit that tithing does not work though they have been in this sad financial cycle for over 13 years. I know other families (Southern Baptists) who have faithfully tithed for 35 years but still live from paycheck to paycheck and do not have ample savings to retire.

I once asked why this was to him (my co-worker), and he thought a moment and shrugged. "I've always been taught that tithing is just what you do. God requires His ten percent." And left it at that.

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/8 11:17**

Quote:  
-----  
It does not honor God when we do not pay our debts. It does not honor God when we cannot feed our children because we sent checks to some televangelist who promised we would get 10 times or 100 times return. Quite the opposite in fact. Now people can genuinely fall on hard times, lose their jobs and lose their houses, this is not dishonoring, it can often just be life and circumstances.....  
-----

Exactly. I remember the first time going through somebody's bank statements at work, and stumbling across a donation to Benny Hinn Ministries. My heart just sank and broke all over the place.

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/8 11:23**

Paul,  
  
It is almost terrifying the degree which pastors bully the sheep into tithing these days. Now I understand, many of them have a gun to their own heads too. If they don't tithe, denominational officials (especially in Pentecostal churches), will remove you from ministry. And being that they don't have any other marketable job skill, some will truly tithe until it hurts. They know if they don't, their family will be out on the streets.

Being in the business that I am at the bank, I have attempted to make several itemized budgets for the average family of 4 to survive off, pay all their bills, and still make a 10% gross tithe payment. It has been my honest assessment that in America, the average family of 4 cannot afford to tithe if they make less than \$50,000 gross a year, and still pay all their bills

Of course, there are exceptions to this. But if the average family of 4 does manage to do this, they definitely will not be able to save much of anything on a monthly basis. They will live paycheck to paycheck. They will retire broke. If it were not for any hope of Social Security and other government entitlements, they would be left destitute once their ability to work expired.

The math simply does not work for most people. Most people truly cannot afford to tithe, in spite of people telling them they cannot afford to not tithe.

I've seen it. It is heart breaking. The prosperity gospel is robbing many saints.

**Re: The Dark Side of Tithing Testimonies - posted by Jeremy221, on: 2014/4/8 11:33**

When does the Sermon on the Mount come into effect regarding finances? Is it only for the missionary? When does the exhortation to help feed and clothe the destitute brethren happen? How about the statement of Peter that having food and clothing, it is enough?

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/8 11:37**

If the church wished to be really radical, it would give directly to the poor, or non profit organizations that specialized in helping the poor. But most of our money is spent on overhead and things that don't really matter. My church last year gave 12% of it's offerings back to people in the community. Such is rather high for most churches. But, we still have the rest of the money being spent on things in house.

**Re: The Dark Side of Tithing Testimonies - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/8 11:38**

Right out of the box, I am going to say this: I do not agree with the doctrine of tithing 10% of your income to the church. Why, because it isn't 10% of just your financial income. It is also 10% of your crops, and every 3 years that 10% is supposed to go help the poor of the land and the levite. If those who preach tithing really did get it from scripture, there would definitely be a lot more to it than just shaving 10% off the top of your paycheck (gross or net).

I also believe that the old testament law is fulfilled in Christ, and since we no longer have levites nor a temple, then what would our tithe, biblically be connected with.

Also, I am not so sure that failure stories is valid justification for the rejection of this doctrine. People who are generous with what they have (like the Bible says to be) yet do not operate their finances like the bible says to, cannot expect biblical results. Point in case: If I give half of what I make to my poorer brethren, but rack up enough debt to be enslaved for a lifetime, then I may have fulfilled what God has said in one area, but I have absolutely rejected what He said in another. Can I expect anything but discipline from the Lord for this? I think not.

I do believe that we are called to a different kind of stewardship. Nothing belongs to me, because I am a slave to Christ. He owns all my stuff, and as His slave, everything I have should be used for His name and His glory--for the advancement of His kingdom. Anything that cannot be used for that end should be tossed out.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/8 12:37**

1Sa 8:18 AND YE SHALL CRY OUT IN THAT DAY BECAUSE OF YOUR KING WHICH YE SHALL HAVE CHOSEN YOURSELVES; AND THE LORD WILL NOT HEAR YOU IN THAT DAY

AND THE LORD WILL NOT HEAR YOU IN THAT DAY!!!

Hmmmm...let's see what is being talked about here.

God speaking to Samuel. The Israelites wanted a King and God was telling Samuel to tell the Israelites what they were going to get.

1Sa 8:9 Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

1Sa 8:10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king.

1Sa 8:11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.

1Sa 8:12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

1Sa 8:13 And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

1Sa 8:14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

1Sa 8:15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

1Sa 8:16 And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and

d put them to his work.

1Sa 8:17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

1Sa 8:18 AND YE SHALL CRY OUT IN THAT DAY BECAUSE OF YOUR KING WHICH YE SHALL HAVE CHOSEN YOU; AND THE LORD WILL NOT HEAR YOU IN THAT DAY.

1Sa 8:19 Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us;

1Sa 8:20 That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles

Has anything changed since Samuel's day?

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/8 12:47**

Just-in,

I am just making sure I understand the intent behind your post. Are you liking our modern day preachers to the kings of Israel?

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/8 12:52**

Quote:  
-----If they don't tithe, denominational officials (especially in Pentecostal churches), will remove you from ministry. And being that they don't have any other marketable job skill, some will truly tithe until it hurts. They know if they don't, their family will be out on the streets.  
-----

I was a certified minister in the Assemblies of God when I began to have doubts about tithing. Of course, tithing is one of the non-negotiables if you want to retain your credentials in the denomination. Any suspicion that you are withholding your tithe brings you under the threat of dismissal.

One year I simply chose not to renew my credentials. This naturally brought a phone call from the district presbyter, but not after I received an embarrassing letter from the general council. The abridged version of the letter stated that as a mortician (my secular profession), the average salary was "x" amount of dollars per year according to national statistics. My current tithing record reflected my salary for that year was, in fact, far below the national average. They then asked me directly (by checking yes or no in a statement) if my tithing was an accurate calculation of 10% of what I in fact earned.

Of course, I was floored - and then just angry. I tried to imagine Paul or John sending such letters to the elders in the churches of Asia minor. It was obvious it was time for me to leave the AG. I still have the letter, by the way. I don't think I'll ever throw it out.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/8 13:23**

Hi havok,

It is ok to let the Word of God speak.

And, it's not as if modern day men and practices are above leaning on the flesh and following men instead of Christ. But there is a price to pay for following men (not following God) and the Holy Spirit describes it very well in 1 Samuel.

Just as there were false kings of the sheepfold in the OT, there are false "kings" of the sheepfold in the NT.

What I find interesting in 1 Sam 8 is that even the Elders wanted a man to rule over them. They condemned Samuel's sons for their blatant money grubbing (bribery, extortion) but did not see their own sin and dependence on the people providing for their needs.

Same thing today. You have preachers (Elders) who run a pretty tight ship and every thing looks to be in order from a religious point of view and they condemn the blatant money preachers, not understanding that in their sophisticated and subtle way, they are "money preachers", too.

1 Samuel 8 is excellent for showing us two kinds of people that use religion (godliness) for gain. The unrespected, blatant, money grubbing preachers (Samuel's sons) and the subtle, sophisticated, respected preachers. They are all caught up in a system that refuses to have God as their complete and total KING. And of course they would tell you that is absolutely not true. But, like Paul West's experience, touch the money and you will see the real intents and motivations of the heart. And you might just find out like Paul and others on SI that you are persona non grata.

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/8 13:28**

That's a pretty powerful story Paul. I remember when I was in the Church of God that the pastor of the church I was at announced that a directive had come down from Cleveland that the pastor was to ensure that all lay ministers were actually in fact tithing 10% to the rest of the church. Now, he went off the honor system, and didn't ask for audited financials or anything like that.

At the time I was a recent college graduate, making a mere 30 grand a year, but had just as much debt. I tried to keep up with tithing, as I knew it was a requirement for ministry in the church. Eventually I had to step aside because I could not afford to keep up my debt payments from college and pay my tithes. I gave what I could, but I simply could not afford to give anymore.

Had I not been dating/engaged to the youth pastor/worship leader, whose apartment I helped furnish and whose expenses I helped subsidize when I dated her on the weekends, I probably could have afforded to tithe. She tithed by the way, and when I was unable to do so anymore, shortly there after, it was one of the reasons she called our engagement off.

Prior to that I had been a candidate for being an elder in the church. After that, Bible college grad and all, they wouldn't even put my name on the roster to teach Sunday school. But my ex-future in-law, who was chronically unemployed and living off the government, tithed what he made from them, and who eventually lost his home, was put on the elder board and Sunday school teacher list.

Sometimes it appears you just got to "pay to play."

**Re: , on: 2014/4/8 13:35**

But why "pay to play"?

If you "play" you end up paying in ways you could not possibly envision. Best just hear His voice and follow it, don't you think? It seems that Paul heard the Lord's voice and refused to pay for the "privilege" of paying.

1 Sam 8 shows us the result of "paying to play".

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/8 13:43**

Just-In,

I believe that you are very much right about this. Biblical eldership was never designed to supercede the Lordship (King ship, if you will) of Jesus Christ. Anything that elevates itself above him (including business meetings in some churches) needs to be reevaluated and brought in line with scripture.

I have recently finished studying the last 5 chapters of the book of judges (which actually precedes the first 16 chapters of judges) and I see more and more the modern day church in those verses. Paris Reidhead also preached a sermon called "10 Shekels and a Shirt" from 17 & 18. Very revealing.

It seems to me that most people are merely doing what is right in their own eyes.

**Re: The Dark Side of Tithing Testimonies - posted by cjoysegirl70, on: 2014/4/8 14:16**

I came to the same conclusion about tithing after studying on it & even went as far as to seek the opinion of a Jewish Rabbi. What I learned left me speechless. The Rabbi stated that "NO ONE" Jewish or Gentile may legally ( according to Torah ) receive a tithe. Because only the Levites were allowed to receive tithes. He also stated that because there is no temple the Levites are not able to perform their duties and so any tithing would be nonsense. Also Paul who was a Pharisee not one time mentioned tithing. He being a Pharisee, of whom we know were very careful in tithing on even the smallest matters. Surely Paul wouldn't have neglected such an important subject if it had been required for the New Covenant believers. My husband & I stopped tithing several months ago after my research but we still give to our church but mostly we have been giving money to help the less fortunate in our church. I am a giver. I love to give. But I can't understand how our churches preach love but neglect to see that the tithe doctrine has placed an undue burden on many people. Many times my husband & I have given more than 10% so for us it's not greed, it's a matter of right & wrong. It's about the anguish a single mother feels when she is torn between paying her rent or paying her tithes. My husband & I usually pray about what to give & we give the amount we feel led to give. Moreover we tend to give to others who are in need whether it's buying food, a battery for their car, paying their electric bill etc. We are supposed to share with one another & help those in need. Isn't that what it's all about anyways. If the churches who are receiving tithes aren't really giving & helping the poor, orphan, widow, homeless then aren't they the ones robbing God of the Tithes?

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/4/8 14:24**

The World's System

1. Give to myself
2. Pay bills/taxes
3. Maybe save

God's System

1. Give to God first
2. Save
3. Pay bills/taxes
4. Give to myself

Listen y'all.... I will be the first to agree that the NT does not teach tithing. But that is because it teaches stewardship which means everything is God's but He allows me to manage it.

I use to use this to avoid tithing. But let's face it... 10% is a pretty meager amount. If you have ten pennies and someone told you to give 10% it's no big deal but if you have \$1000 then it becomes a huge issue. But it is the same percentage.

I finally had to reach the point where I had to admit that the reason I was not giving a mere 10% to God was because I was being greedy pure and simple. We should not order and prioritize our lives so that giving just 10% to God will throw us into financial ruin.

So if I don't believe in tithing why do I tithe? Because you have to start somewhere and anything less when it comes to giving to God just seems cheap.

I am not saying you have to pay your church if that is not what you are led to do. But we need to honor God with our finances. Why did Jesus talk so much about money?

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/8 14:30**

With most people in our country living paycheck to paycheck, giving 10% off your gross is a pretty big deal. Granted, many of us could probably easily afford to give 10% if we simply didn't splurge on so much materialistic stuff. But, a lot of people I have found, simply are not able to do that.

For those in the lower income brackets, I would like to see a pastor make a weekly budget for these people, and show them how they can indeed afford to tithe and pay all their bills.

Most probably would not be able to make the math add up.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/8 14:40

Quote:  
-----The Rabbi stated that "NO ONE" Jewish or Gentile may legally ( according to Torah ) receive a tithe. Because only the Levites were allowed to receive tithes.  
-----

When I was going through the whole tithe conundrum in my denomination years ago, I remember sincerely asking God about the issue - because I just wanted to be obedient. It wasn't about the money, because my wife and I (a registered nurse and mortician) made more than enough money in our given professions to live comfortably. It was instead an issue of bondage, of legalism, of a faulty understanding of the New Covenant. Ever since I had come to the Lord, I was taught that to not tithe was an act of selfish disobedience and, even more - I was robbing God. A criminal act!

Going through each book of the New Testament revealed nothing about what I was being taught; instead all the verses were being extracted either from the Levitical law or the times of Abraham and Melchizedek which predated the law. I saw that circumcision, like the tithe, also predated the law, but whether or not circumcision was required was obvious thanks to Paul's treatise to the church of Galatia. The question still remained about the tithe.

And then God spoke to my heart one day and forever settled the matter for me. He told me that if I could read the New Testament of Jesus Christ in its entirety (from Matthew to Revelation) as an early Greek or African believer would have in the beginning, and come away with a propulsion to tithe (considering I even knew what tithing was), then, of course, I was to tithe as an act of faith. Light came to me immediately on the subject.

Re: , on: 2014/4/8 18:03

Quote:  
-----by TMK on 2014/4/8 14:24:52

The World's System  
1. Give to myself  
2. Pay bills/taxes  
3. Maybe save

God's System  
1. Give to God first  
2. Save  
3. Pay bills/taxes  
4. Give to myself  
-----

God's system is everything we are and have is His, and we walk by the Spirit not men's dictates or rules.

Quote:  
-----Listen y'all.... I will be the first to agree that the NT does not teach tithing. But that is because it teaches stewardship which means everything is God's but He allows me to manage it.  
-----

Actually, He manages it to the degree that we are abiding in and obeying Him. It's all Him, it is His voice leading us, guiding us, speaking to us.

Quote:  
-----I use to use this to avoid tithing. But let's face it... 10% is a pretty meager amount. If you have ten pennies and someone told you to give 10% it's no big deal but if you have \$1000 then it becomes a huge issue. But it is the same percentage.  
-----

We are not to live by logic or man's dictates. 2 mites were everything one woman had in the world. We are not to dictate what people should do. That is a Nicolaitan spirit, getting in between Christ and His sheep.

Quote:  
-----I finally had to reach the point where I had to admit that the reason I was not giving a mere 10% to God was because I was being greedy pure and simple. We should not order and prioritize our lives so that giving just 10% to God will throw us into financial ruin.  
-----

That may have been your conclusion, but it would be wrong of you to conclude this for everyone. Don't you agree? If one person understands that all they are and do and own belongs to the Lord and the Lord who is merciful and just and loving wants our heart more than anything, is it right for us to prioritize another person's gain and tell them that it is the Lord that is prioritizing their gain and what they should give? No, it is not the Lord but man using the Lord for his own end. It is also not right to conclude that just because people don't have 10% to give to the preacher man that they are not ordering and prioritizing their life correctly. They have other tax obligations besides the religious tax, you know.

Quote:  
-----So if I don't believe in tithing why do I tithe? Because you have to start somewhere and anything less when it comes to giving to God just seems cheap.  
-----

You start with the Lord's voice. He shows you where to start. We follow Him. Why does everyone think God is so mercenary and wants to start with money in all of our lives. Men start and end with money. God starts and ends with love and mercy.

Quote:  
-----I am not saying you have to pay your church if that is not what you are led to do. But we need to honor God with our finances. Why did Jesus talk so much about money?  
-----

Why do we judge people are not honoring God with their finances because they don't pay the Saul tax (religious tax)? They are feeding their kids, buying them clothes, paying for their medical needs, paying bills, sharing with others, buying gas so they can go to work and paying the government. What in here does not honor God?

**Re: - posted by staff, on: 2014/4/8 19:51**

Hi All,  
May I add one thing. I am not a bank manager or accountant. At best if it would be an educated guess what 10 percent is. I would have to put myself under bondage to figure out the exact figure is. I wouldn't have the time  
Yours Staff

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/4/8 20:02**

My post was more of a personal testimony. I found that when I wasn't disciplined about giving to the Lord I just didn't do it, or at least I did so very meagerly. And I justified it by reasoning that I worked with the youth group and taught bible studies. But I knew I should have been giving more.

Each person can do what he/she feels led to do. But I think that God wants us to have a loose hold of our stuff.

We can say that God doesn't need our money, but really He does. That is how He arranged things. Money buys Bibles, funds missionaries, buys and maintains internet servers, feeds the poor, etc. of course it also buys a lot of silly things that churches think they need.

My point is that God expects his people to give to the cause. I don't see how anyone can escape that conclusion from reading the NT. Yes, we are to give in all sorts of ways. But money is one thing that God gives us to steward and He expects us to invest in His Kingdom. How much? That depends- how much is His Kingdom worth?

**Re: , on: 2014/4/8 20:36**

I have always found it quite brazen regarding the liberties that the religious system takes in prying into the private matters of their members.

I also think it quite telling that money is probably one of the top 3 topics in religion.

I find it odd and spiritually abnormal to talk to born-again believers on a regular basis about what they give, how much and how frequent. I cannot remember one time in our home church where we talked about money. That is a private matter between spouses and if you are not married, it is still your private matter. It is repugnant to me to pry into someone's financial matters or tell them how much they should be giving. Somehow, the head of a religious organization feels the liberty to do such a thing.

**Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2014/4/8 21:19**

If anyone wants to read it, a bud I used to go to Church with wrote a book on tithing.

[http://www.emeraldministries.com/Books/A\\_Christian\\_and\\_Tithing.pdf](http://www.emeraldministries.com/Books/A_Christian_and_Tithing.pdf)

**Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2014/4/9 1:27**

Quote:

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And then God spoke to my heart one day and forever settled the matter for me. He told me that if I could read the New Testament of Jesus Christ in its entirety (from Matthew to Revelation) as an early Greek or African believer would have in the beginning, and come away with a propulsion to tithe (considering I even knew what tithing was), then, of course, I was to tithe as an act of faith. Light came to me immediately on the subject.  
-----

I count myself blessed in this matter. I was raised as a Hindu with no understanding of Christianity until I turned 25. I started reading the Bible starting from New Testament. I did not attend any VBS or Christian education in my childhood that would have introduced me to this OT stories. I started reading OT only after finishing NT. Hence when I read OT I can clearly see it as a shadow of NT. I could clearly see it as a symbol of NT. I was never carried away by any OT law.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 8:40**

The Holy Spirit promised to lead us into all truth. He is a faithful Teacher. Men, oftentimes lead us away from truth.

His sheep hear His voice and another they will not follow. What does that say about thousands...millions...that are following men?

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/9 9:22**

I've done the math... a family of 4 making \$50,000 a year or less probably cannot afford to tithe... contrary to preachers telling them "you can't afford not to tithe".

<http://kingjimmyunauthorized.blogspot.com/2014/04/you-probably-cant-afford-to-tithe.html>

Many pastors have been known to boldly stand in the pulpit and proclaim, "You can't afford not to tithe!"

Many of these pastors have never sat down and tried to make a budget with the people they are preaching to. They've never sat down and done the math.

As I will demonstrate in this brief essay, the average family of 4 making \$50,000 a year probably cannot afford to tithe.

The financial assumptions I am making in this essay assumes a family of 4, where the husband is the sole wage earner in the family, and where the wife is a full-time stay at home mother who stays home to take care of the kids. I assume they own 1 car outright, and have an auto loan on another. I assume they have a mortgage that is reflective of 25% of their gross monthly income (which is pretty common). Because it is the law of the land, I am operating under the assumption the household is fully insured. I assume this family has no credit card, student loan, or medical debts. I assume this family

y is not making any contributions to retirement savings.

Since I personally live and work in the greater Charlotte, North Carolina area, I am going to assume taxes and living expenses that are in keeping with a person who lives in the suburbs of my living area. I work as a mortgage underwriter for a living, so some of my assumptions come from being regularly exposed to the personal finances of a lot of people, as well as the general lending standards of most banks. Please feel free to adjust these expenses based on where you live to see if what I say pans out.

Using the PaycheckCity.com calculator, I have determined that a married man living and working in North Carolina making a fixed salary of \$50,000 a year will gross \$961.54 a week before taxes/social security, and will net \$738.58 after. His gross monthly income ( $\$961.54 \times 52 / 12$ ) is \$4,166.67, and his monthly take home pay is \$3,200.51.

Monthly Gross: \$4,166.67

Monthly Net: \$3,200.51

Itemized expenses:

Tithe 10%: \$416.67

Mortgage payment: \$1,041.67

Groceries: \$850.00

Water Bill: \$50.00

Electric Bill: \$150.00

Gas bill: \$50.00

Home/Cell Phones: \$150.00

Clothing: \$50.00

Auto Loan: \$200.00

Auto Insurance: \$100.00

Auto Gas: \$100.00

Auto Maintenance (Tires/Oil/Taxes/Inspections): \$150

Health/dental/vision insurance: \$200.00

Miscellaneous: \$100.00

Total monthly expenses: \$3,608.34

Monthly budget deficit: -\$407.83

Based off these rough, and rather conservative monthly budget figures that I used, I have concluded that the average family of 4 living in the greater Charlotte, North Carolina area making \$50,000 a year simply cannot afford to tithe. Without their tithe, this family of 4 would be lucky to break even on a monthly basis. They don't even have room for regular monthly savings, let alone money to contribute to a retirement account.

In order to pay their tithe, this family would ultimately be forced to skip out on some other bills in order to make the math work, or they would be forced to radically downsize their current lifestyle... which is already pretty conservative.

So the next time a preacher tells you that you can't afford not to tithe, ask to sit down with them and work out a budget with you, and ask him how this math works. Because as far as I'm concerned, as somebody who crunches numbers for a living, I do not believe that the average family of 4 that is lower middle class and below can actually afford to tithe on a monthly basis, and still stick to their monthly budget.

#### **Re: Tithing Quotes, on: 2014/4/9 9:58**

There is something sinister and despicable about using "fear preaching" to separate a family or individual from their hard earned gain.

Quotes from Richard Garganta:

"For the wealthy to feel the same sacrifice as a poor person giving 10% of their income, a wealthy person would have to give perhaps upwards of 90% or more of their income, depending."

"Many church leaders today seem content with preaching a mixed message as to whether tithing is obligatory or not. They want to keep that subtle guilt in the atmosphere."

"The reality is many mandated tithing teachers don't care how "corrupted" the seed is so long as they get it."

"Many teach that tithing is a form of "protection money" that will insure them against harm, accidents or other calamities of life."

"To teach that giving tithes and offerings a certain way is going to guarantee a particular situation in life is immature and unscriptural."

"Many of today's "cushioned" preachers are arrogant. Some even look down on the less fortunate thinking they have not been obedient or haven't yet caught "the revelation" of prosperity. These preachers forget it is many of these same people that make their lifestyles possible."

"This is what we tell everyone that becomes saved? The sacrifice of Christ isn't enough? Christ removed all but the "financial curse?" This is heretical nonsense."

"Sometimes modern day Christianity looks like nothing more than success coaching with a Christian wrapper."

"Many tithing Christians will tithe out of fear of the misappropriated "Malachi Curse" ignoring the fact their neighbor is in need. These Christians are thinking that when they get their "windfall" from tithing, they will then help the needy."

"We now have countless huge edifices and all types of major Christian media networks etc. With all of this building of things, is Christianity better off?"

"The Bible teaches there is absolutely NOTHING wrong with properly obtained prosperity or success provided it is properly handled. I pray we all attain it via right living, faith, Grace and Love, NOT law, fear, condemnation, deceit or corrupt teaching of scripture and manipulating money out of people."

"You can't "put God first" by neglecting the poor and needy, vows, responsibilities or commitments. If that is what you're doing, it isn't because you are putting God first. It is because you're hoping God will be impressed enough with you and your giving to give you a windfall financial blessing."

"It can be very beneficial to those damaged by abusive spiritual leaders to find their way back to true giving from the heart, without manipulation and for the right reason. THAT is the ultimate purpose of this document. It gives damaged people a framework to begin healing. Nothing proposed here is obligatory, oppresses the poor or involves curses or condemnation if not followed."

Quotes from Richard Garganta: <http://tithinginfo.com/>

Russell Kelly has a slight disagreement with Richard regarding Abrahamic giving (I agree with Russell) but other than that they are in full agreement. Russell Kelly's site: <http://www.tithing-russkelly.com/>

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 10:33**

And how do you explain these verses.....

Prov. 3:9-10

Honor the Lord from your wealth and from the first of all your produce,

So your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.

Luke 6:38

Give and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure---pressed, down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.

2 Cor. 9:8-9

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed; for as it is written,

HE SCATTERED ABROAD, HE GAVE TO THE POOR.  
HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER.

2 Cor. 9:10-11

Now He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness, you will be enriched in everything for all liberality,

Phil. 4:17

Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the prophet which increase to your account.

Bearmaster.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 10:50**

Luke 21:1-4

And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. And He said, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; for they all out of their surplus put into the offering, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on."

I guess the poor widow did not have someone to help her plan a budget. :)

Bearnaster.

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/9 11:13**

"I have always found it quite brazen regarding the liberties that the religious system takes in prying into the private matters of their members."

Just-in,

This "religious system" is the church. 2 Corinthians 8-9 does not say things like, "giving is a private matter, so I am not discussing it." No, Paul spends 2 chapters dedicated to exhorting the brethren to give with generosity AND gives them several motives and reasons why they should do this. Now was that written only for the Corinthians or was it written for us as well? Did Paul leave it a private matter, yes of the heart. But it is absolutely silly to think that we were bought at the cost of the blood of the Son of God, that He adopted us into His family, that we are now Brothers and Sisters and responsible one for another, but yet we maintain some degree of privacy from one another. We are one. Should we let our left hand know what our right hand is doing--no. Can I teach on true, biblical giving and make blanket statements like, "He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly". Yes. I can.

-----

King Jimmy,

If I ran my finances with that much debt involved, I can see exactly why I am unable to give. I am a slave to my debtor. I would rather NEVER own a house and not be a slave to anyone but Christ than to spend 1/3 of my total income per year on a house.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 11:24**

Yes, there are general references to giving and not being a debtor. Brothers and Sisters are responsible to pray and encourage and exhort and many things, but not to know every private matter of their brethren. And not to take the liberty with their brethren to tell them whether they are giving enough.

And no, there is not a system that is the church. The religious system is not the church. People make up the church and they are scattered within and without the religious system.

The religious system is built on a corporate hierarchy whose engine is mammon. And it's weekly, monthly, quarterly, yearly budget and salaries must be supported by a system of religious taxes.

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/9 11:30**

Ah, I got your meaning now, just-in. I thought you meant the religious system referring to biblical principals.

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/9 11:36**

Quote:

-----  
King Jimmy,

If I ran my finances with that much debt involved, I can see exactly why I am unable to give. I am a slave to my debtor. I would rather NEVER own a house and not be a slave to anyone but Christ than to spend 1/3 of my total income per year on a house.

-----  
That may seem like a rather high mortgage payment, but it is pretty typical for what banks lend. IMO, most people should try to get a mortgage that is no more than 20% of their gross monthly income. But banks will lend up to 36% in some instances. So, 25%, which is what I used in my example, is still pretty conservative.

And in the area where I live, you'll be hard pressed to buy a home for under \$1,000 a month for principal, interest, taxes, and insurance (fully escrowed). Most people I know are easily paying \$1200-\$2000 a month.

For anything below that, you'll have to move a pretty good ways out of the county, or live in a really run down part of town. But if you chose to do that, you'll easily see your monthly gas prices increased due to the increased drive. So you might be able to live in an older home for \$800 a month... but it'll cost you in other ways to do so.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 11:52**

Quote:

-----by havok20x on 2014/4/9 11:30:27

Ah, I got your meaning now, just-in. I thought you meant the religious system referring to biblical principals.

-----  
Cool. From your past posts, I was surprised by your statement, too. But, now I see where you are coming from.

:-)

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 12:15**

Brethren I think something is being missed in this thread. Some questions need to be asked.

Why did God require the Israelites to tithe? For what reason? Was it not to show their dependence upon God who provided for their physical needs.

Under the New Covenant why do we give back to God? Is it not the same. O show our dependence upon God who provides for our physical needs.

Does God need our giving or tithes? No. He owns it all. But because we still battle sin we would become selfish or self centered if we did not have a practice of giving back to God or rendering back to God first fruits.

I can offer testimonies of Christians who do not give out of first fruits and they are arrogant, self centered, conceited, and worry about finances. I know. I was such a person. Until God broke me.

The practice of giving guards us from being consumed on our selfish desires. Also I have found by rendering back to God first fruits I do not worry about finances. He graciously provides.

Bearmaster

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/9 12:31**

Bearmaster,

I don't think anybody here is against being gracious and giving. I believe everybody here regularly gives, some below 10 % and some above 10%.

The purpose of this discussion has been, I do believe, is simply to highlight the fact that there is a lot more going on than usually is seen in the church. There has been a lot of abuse that has hurt a lot of people in a very real way.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 12:33**

The fallacy is that giving for a child of God, is all about money.

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/9 12:36**

According to the Scriptures, the Levites had no inheritance. The tithe was designed to do 3 things:

- 1) Take care of the Levites
- 2) Take care of the poor
- 3) Take care of other theocratic expenses (of course, involving the Levites duties).

Look at Numbers 18:21 and afterward.

Integrating the law back into grace will mean we will once again become self-condemned and it will be nothing more than checklist christianity--some examples: "Brother, I already gave my 10%; I did my duty.", "Brother, maybe if you tithed then you wouldn't be struggling so much.", "This church pays it's bills and everyone tithes, but we have nothing left. I guess God doesn't want us to minister to the poor and needy of our community."

And don't even think that tithers don't think like that. Cause they do. I go to a church full of them. They mark their check box and attained financial holiness for the week.

Let me explain to you how complex it has gotten where I attend church: People talk about tithing like it is an obligation, but if you aren't giving offerings (some mysterious extra amount), then you aren't fulfilling your duty. They say tithing is commanded, but the real blessings don't start flowing until you give sacrificial offerings, and the more sacrificially you give, the more blessed you will be, because, as everyone knows, "You can't outgive God." Not sure what version of the Bible that's in, but people quote it more than they do any other Christianese saying (thanks brother in the other post for that new word). So now we have this: "I put in my tithe plus the \$20 I was gonna spend on cokes. I am now financially holy and well-pleasing to the Lord."

I talked to my pastor about it one time, showing him in scripture the error. His response to me was this: "Well, everyone wants their blessing."

I just wanted to beat my head into the wall.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 13:11**

God does not rule by condemnation, guilt and coercion but the Enemy does and he does it very successfully, through men.

Many men do it ignorantly because that is how they were raised in the religious system and their ear is attuned more to men and their doctrines than to the Lord. Men's doctrines nullify God's word.

Other men, are not ignorant at all about what they are doing.

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/9 13:39**

Quote:  
-----People talk about tithing like it is an obligation, but if you aren't giving offerings (some mysterious extra amount), then you aren't fulfilling your duty. They say tithing is commanded, but the real blessings don't start flowing until you give sacrificial offerings, and the more sacrificially you give, the more blessed you will be, because, as everyone knows, "You can't outgive God."  
-----

The reality of life is that God is astoundingly good and sends His rain on the just and unjust, irrespective of how much they give sacrificially. If we exclusively go by money as the sign that God has "poured out His blessings" on a person, then we must concede that Muslims, Jews and Atheists hold the majority of wealth in this world - and therefore, must be the most favored by God.

Here is a quote by Dorothy Parker I just love: "If you want to know what God thinks of money, just look at the people he gives it to."

The crazy American gospel equates money and success with God's favor. If a person is particularly gifted in athletics, for example, the belief is that God's favor is on the person (especially if they give Him glory for their skills). But what goes unmentioned is a fellow Buddhist athlete is just as gifted and wins just as many medals and attributes his skills to meditation. The idea that God's favor is evident through carnal means - i.e. the ability to run faster, throw a football further, excel in business, earn lots of money, etc. is Old Covenant theology, where God increased flocks and crops and gave His "mighty men" athletic power to rip apart lions and bears.

Not so in the New Covenant. The apostles were not rich and athletically superior. They were weak, humble, despised. They did not preach tithing and "releasing the power of God" through some sacrificial action. That is a cheap, superficial misrepresentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which brings it down to the level of magic.

The truth is that God usually has to take everything away from us in order to break our reliance on the things the gentiles seek after. This is diametrically opposed to the current teaching on tithing, which actually promotes a lust for money. "Do you have a need?" the evangelist asks. "Sow a seed and reap bountifully." It is another gospel. The teaching on the tithe (with its promises and curses), I have found, is the bedfellow of another gospel: a gospel which is predicated upon an obsolete covenant.

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/9 13:52**

Paul,

I was listening to a sermon series by Paul Washer called "The impossibility of the Christian life." It is very good stuff and relates well to what you are talking about--God uses the weak things of this world. That part of the message is primarily found on Part 3. I would highly recommend it.

Re: , on: 2014/4/9 14:27

Coercion preaching should have no place in our pulpits such as the implication that is spoken when preachers say "The tithe is the Lord's." The implication being, keep your hands off it or something bad will happen to you." And this goes right with the statement that "if you don't tithe you are a God-robber." And society knows that all robbers are bad. Some don't stop with implications and just come out with pure fear and say that "a curse will come on you if you don't tithe." But, if it isn't enough for God to be after you, "breathing down your neck", then the preachers will even employ the Devil by saying "Tithing rebukes the Devourer and if you don't tithe, "the Devil is gonna get you." So, forget about your landlord or the banks or IRS breathing down your neck, the devil is worse. I don't know, IRS...Devil....hmmmm, that could be a tie.

Despicably equivalent is telling a child of God that you are not in covenant with God if you don't tithe or that "the tithe redeems the other 90%". Implication being that if you don't tithe you will lose the other 90% and of course, you aren't putting God first in your life. Interesting how men so loosely use the name of God for their own end.

I am constantly amazed at the creative sermons when it comes to money. These examples demonstrate to me how much men love money (and themselves) and hate people. We all know that "tithing qualifies us to receive more from God" and "if we don't tithe God won't bless us with anything." Isn't that right? Yes, God is mean and vindictive because if we don't tithe, He will get His 10% somehow. When you least expect it, He will take it from you. That's what you get for not "putting God first in your life."

There is always another angle to work the guilt into us. You know, the reason that churches are impoverished is because of people like you that don't tithe their 10%. We would have plenty of money if everyone did their part.

They promise us that God will pay our bills and not let us get thrown out on the street if we only tithe. Of course they have a lot of experience with that. The preachers tithe, and yet have hundreds, if not thousands replenishing their coffers. But each sheep, has no one paying into their lives, certainly not an entire congregation. Yeah, right I forgot. They are supposed to depend on God. At least that is what the preachers tell us. Depend on God, like they do.

If none of these work, let's try to be positive and parade out all the miracles that will happen in your life if you tithe. After all, miracle testimonies prove that tithing is God's will. But, is this positive? No, it is not, because what they are really communicating to you is that you have no miracles in your life because you are not tithing.

Isn't it odd, that most everything in the religious world can be (and is) tied to mammon.

Religious world has crafted a guilt-based multi-level marketing system with most of the revenues rising to the top and staying there.

Why is it so hard for born-again people to see this false system?

2Pe\_2:3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

"Feigned words" my friends.

Re: , on: 2014/4/9 14:31

Though I believe the tithe is Old Covenant what I hear coming from this thread is the believer has no obligation to give under the New Covenant. We are governed by the law of Christ which is the royal law. That being to love our neighbor.

In actuality studies and surveys have shown the American church to be pretty stingy when it comes to supporting missions. Particularly when it comes to reaching people groups in the 10/40.

While we are trashing tithing I ask is the New Covenant believer released from his obligation to give to the kingdom? If so then where are the scriptures to support this?

Consider Paul's words to the Ephesians,

He who steals must steal no longer, but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will

I share something to share with one who is in need.

Or consider Paul's example,

In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

So you are released from tithing. But are you released from giving?

Bearmaster

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/9 14:42**

Quote:

-----But are you released from giving?  
-----

Absolutely. You are "released" (as opposed to captured) from anything and everything which might be manipulated via the emotions and soul as being impulsive or a guilt trip. Giving under the New Covenant is governed by the heart, alone, unconstrained and joyful and it is no one's business how much or how often a child of God gives.

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (II Cor. 9:7)

This means that if you do not purpose in your heart to give to missions, you do not have to. You are released. But if you feel you "need" to (out of necessity) because someone is scolding you, then the motive is corrupt. Give elsewhere if you are led. Or give nowhere if you are led. The important thing is that we should never prod or make a believer feel he or she is wrong for not giving. That is unchristlike according to scripture, for it is none of our business. It is a heart matter between that believer and God.

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/9 14:56**

I remember teaching a Sunday school lesson in which I gave the following illustration:

On your way to church, a homeless man came up and asked you for money. You apologized and said you didn't have anything to give him. In truth, you had your tithe money in your wallet. Then you came to church and gave your tithe, while neglecting the homeless man on the street. If that was you this morning, while the church may have accepted your offering, you didn't give one red cent to God.

The pastor of the church heard about this from his son. Very shortly thereafter, I got an e-mail from the pastor warning me not to teach that again.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 15:01**

Paul, giving as anything under the New Covenant is a discipline that needs to be taught. To say a believer is released from not giving will breed selfishness and arrogance.

Again I don't think the issue is people are being manipulated to give. Surveys have shown American Christians are the least generous when it comes to giving. All I see this thread doing is giving rise to our flesh we do not have to give to the kingdom.

Bearnaster.

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/9 15:04**

While greed definitely hinders many, maybe a lot of American Christians would give if they truly were empowered to see real needs, and empowered and encouraged to meet them. Maybe they need to see something worth giving to.

Instead, we get brutally lashed at by many ministers for not giving enough money to church buildings and programs. They are things that usually don't move our heart.

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/9 15:31**

Quote:  
-----Paul, giving as anything under the New Covenant is a discipline that needs to be taught. To say a believer is released from not giving will breed selfishness and arrogance.  
-----

Giving under the New Covenant is never compulsory. It is rather "inspired", purposed in the heart by the Holy Spirit. How can you teach a person to give cheerfully? You can only mention that that is how it is to be done. The cheerfulness must be innate and genuine, bred into the person by the Holy Spirit. This is why you never read of Paul chiding believers to give. He understood this principle. His instructions instead merely governed the collection of the givings.

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2014/4/9 15:33**

greetings

I use to be so eaten up about tithing and then after much prayer and reading the BIBLE I found freedom in HIM to give as HE gave me leading to. I do think there is much pressure in this country to support church buildings and programs with little of the money really being used to go to help the poor, the widows, or the orphans. How many times I have heard the call to bring in more money so the church building can be expanded or a new sound system put in, meanwhile families are struggling to get by.

KingJimmy I looked over your mock up budget and the state I live in a family a four could never live on that amount let alone follow a ten percent tithe. The taxes and cost of living on the east coast are so high that people struggle to barely make it. I think your article was very well written and spot on.

Thank you for sharing  
God bless  
mj

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 15:42**

Quote:  
-----by bearmaster on 2014/4/9 15:01:55

Paul, giving as anything under the New Covenant is a discipline that needs to be taught. To say a believer is released from not giving will breed selfishness and arrogance.  
-----

Bearmaster, that is an astounding statement about God's children and one that I find often coming from the religious system.

You misunderstand what Paul is saying we are released from. Paul is absolutely correct that a Believer is released from manipulations and "disciplines" put on them by men.

We are certainly not released from the functioning and leading of the Holy Spirit within us. Why do you have such an opinion that a Believer will not respond to the giving life of Christ within him and must be regulated by men?

Why can't you see this? Do you depend on men in any way for your daily provision and have you been disappointed with their performance?

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/9 15:43**

Indeed Mary. Most of the mortgages I underwrite for a living are for people who live in New Jersey, Maine, New York, Connecticut, and Pennsylvania. The expenses associated with living in most of these states is absolutely amazingly high. And when I see how small the homes are compared to where I live, and the price tags associated with them, I grieve for the people that live there.

The living expenses for my theoretical budget only works in places where "y'all" is in the dictionary, and sweet tea is our champagne.

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/4/9 15:43**

Quote: "The important thing is that we should never prod or make a believer feel he or she is wrong for not giving. That is unchristlike according to scripture, for it is none of our business. It is a heart matter between the believer and God."

But according to the clear teaching of the NT is IS wrong not to give. It is not right to be selfish. Therefore is it not right that Christians be instructed about such things?

The best sermons I have heard about giving approach it from the angle of how to be a good steward. Let's face it-- many Christians in the USA are consumed by debt because they live like the rest of Americans who are also consumed by debt. The biblical model of stewardship turns the world's way of handling money on its head which is what my first post on page 1 shows.

In general it is a lack of discipline and unwillingness to give up certain things that put Christians in financial difficulty. Not in every case but usually. If a person follows biblical principles this can be avoided. Again I ask.. Why did Jesus talk so much about money?

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/9 15:57**

Quote:  
-----But according to the clear teaching of the NT is IS wrong not to give. It is not right to be selfish. Therefore is it not right that Christians be instructed about such things?  
-----

You are assuming that not giving equates to selfishness. What I am taking about is not "not giving", but being free from the compulsion of giving for the sake of giving. If the Holy Spirit is leading you to give, you give. If He doesn't, you don't. It doesn't matter what ethics say, or what a preacher says. Giving is between the believer and God and it is not anyone's business how much or how often or to where you give. I know this infuriates, because it bespeaks total liberty. We want to be bound by dictates, by discipline, by rules. The only rule we should have is that of the heart, motivated by love. No one needs to teach a believer to give cheerfully; it is spontaneous and utterly transcends any kind of percentage or law because it is purposed in the heart. It is pure, like the widow's mite. Please show me a New Testament verse where this concept is refuted.

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2014/4/9 16:04**

by PaulWest on 2014/4/9 12:57:07

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Amen Paul Amen!!

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/9 16:10**

In all fairness to us American Christians and our selfish consumer driven lifestyles who are burdened down with many debts, some of us simply have not known any better, as nobody has ever really taught us true Biblical stewardship. I must admit, I went through Bible college, and the only amount of financial stewardship teachings I heard centered around tithing. The same goes in the church.

I fear many pastors don't know how to teach on good financial stewardship because they are lacking a sound Biblical foundation in the matter too. Most of us have been extremely blinded by our culture in this regard, that, even though we read our Bibles, we still think and act like most unsaved people do with our money.

And for many of us, we don't realize and learn good Biblical stewardship until we are so covered in debt that the decision to suddenly get off the hamster wheel is very difficult to do. If I got saved yesterday, but had a debt-to-income ratio of 400%, there isn't much I'm probably going to be able to do in order to change that anytime soon. Practically speaking, even if you go buck wild with Dave Ramsey, it'll probably be several years before you are in the place to give as freely as you would probably like.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 16:57**

The church world expends a lot of effort to separate men from their wallets rather than teaching separation from the world.

But, that is exactly what the world does. The world is always taking advantage of its fellow man trying to separate them from their resources and provision.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 17:00**

PaulWest writes.....

"You are assuming that not giving equates to selfishness. What I am taking about is not "not giving", but being free from the compulsion of giving for the sake of giving. If the Holy Spirit is leading you to give, you give. If He doesn't, you don't. It doesn't matter what ethics say, or what a preacher says. Giving is between the believer and God and it is not anyone's business how much or how often or to where you give. I know this infuriates, because it bespeaks total liberty. We want to be bound by dictates, by discipline, by rules. The only rule we should have is that of the heart, motivated by love. No one needs to teach a believer to give cheerfully; it is spontaneous and utterly transcends any kind of percentage or law because it is purposed in the heart. It is pure, like the widow's mite. Please show me a New Testament verse where this concept is refuted. "

I add my amen's to that of MaryJane!!! This reality of freedom is very scary for many people but indeed, He whom the Son set free is free indeed.....bro Frank

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/4/9 17:52**

Paul-

What you are saying sounds good and I am not sure I disagree with it.

But Jesus commanded that we go and "teach everything I have commanded you." The question we must then ask is, "Did Jesus teach us to give?"

If the answer is "yes" then we must teach about giving. I am not saying that we should ask people what they make and keep track of what they give. I am saying they should be taught about biblical stewardship.

That concept is found in the teachings of Jesus, that a person who follows Christ must forsake "all that he has" (Lk. 14:33/ Mt.13:44-46). The ceremonial law served as a precursor of this NT revelation. The latter teaches that all of God's people, having been "bought with a price," are not their own, but are owned entirely by Jesus Christ (1 Cor.6:19-20). ALL of the believer's time and ALL of his possessions belong to God.

The Christian is a "steward," or "manager," of somebody else's (God's) possessions. I agree that he is not in some partnership arrangement with God in which God holds 10% and he holds 90%. In coming to Christ, the repentant sinner surrenders EVERYTHING to God, and claims ownership of "nothing" (Acts 4:32). At conversion, the believer becomes responsible to manage every asset (monetary or otherwise) in the interests of the Master's profit. whoever seeks to reserve a share of their lives for themselves should not bother applying (Lk 9:23).

What must the steward do? He must discharge his responsibility in exactly the manner that his Master would do if He were in the steward's shoes. What would God spend His money on? The Scriptures give us plenty of guidance on this matter. Throughout Scripture, God expresses His concern for the helpless poor and the support of ministers of the Word of God. A gift to the poor is a gift to God Himself (Prov.19:17/Mt.25:37-40), and is the method of depositing treasures in heaven (Mk 10:21/Lk. 12:33). Giving to the needy is merely an expression of the mandate to love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Lk. 10:27-37).

We must also realize that God promises to meet the needs of His servants and their families. Therefore, a certain amount of our income must be devoted to the feeding, housing and clothing of our families (1 Tim.5:8). Nor is there any forbidding of a few things for enjoyment alone (1 Tim.6:17). How many such things? That is between the steward and his Master, and is not for another to judge (Rom.14:4). HOWEVER, we must guard against our own relentless tendency to judge our own actions (and expenditures) more favorably than the facts would suggest. In eternity, I believe that our joy will be in proportion to our self-denial in this life and our generosity to the poor and to the work of God.

In the first century after the apostles, Christians understood that tithing had been replaced by full surrender to God. In "Against Heresies," Irenaeus wrote, "they offered their tithes; but those who have received liberty set apart everything they have for the Lord's use, cheerfully and freely giving them, not as small things in hope of greater, but like that poor widow, who put her whole livelihood into the treasury of God." The Didache (early second century) states: "Do not hesitate to give, and do not give with a bad grace; for you will discover who He is that repays you. . .Do not turn your back on the needy, but share everything with your brother and call nothing your own."

I guess my whole point in all this is that when you look at what the Bible teaches about stewardship, tithing may be getting off cheap in comparison.

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/9 17:58**

We are not discussing about whether or not we can teach about giving.

We are discussing whether or not tithing or threat of condemnation of some sort is a viable means of doing so.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 18:14**

My first brush with tithing came early on in my walk and involved the pastor asking me not to ask for money from other believers to support a soup kitchen I had set up in the city of Leicester. Basically the pastor didn't want me to take the tithe but to clearly explain that any giving had to be separate. I agreed because I was tithing myself and felt that this was an acceptable thing to do. I understood that the tithe was used to pay for full time ministry as well as some missionary work.

Yet somewhere in my heart I had a conflict. One day a brother came to me and explained that he wanted to support the work financially but could only afford to give his tithe. I explained that the pastor had forbidden me to take the tithe and then added that if he wanted to give it I would take it anyway. A few weeks later I was held up in the church and had to explain myself. I was honest but quickly realised that my honesty was not going to help me very much. In the end I recognised that I had given Satan an opportunity and he took it with enthusiasm. The brother who wanted to help had in effect trapped me due to my own heart of believing that my work was more important than the pastors wages.

To this day I still don't have a problem with tithing per se, but do agree with TMK in that the alternative is to hold everything unto God and to be a good steward. I genuinely don't see anything wrong with the principle of tithing, but can see even

Nothing wrong with giving nothing. I suppose reality falls down where our hearts intent are and so if we do not hear from God regarding giving to the poor as well as supporting those in full time ministry, then this is because we have no desire to give at all. What that means in the end I don't really know. I am sure that it is not an issue of life and therefore whatever it means it will be revealed in the coming kingdom.

No one should wrestle over money. The Lord is a debtor to no man. He will pay our wages if we really set our hearts on serving Him. If in that we go hungry or cold or our children cling to us, then it is because of the disobedience of men who are able to give and will not do so. Yet in that comes a greater reward than even faith to be fed, keep warm and see our children run around warm and comforted. Perhaps we would all be better served of those who serve us if we ourselves freely and without condition supported them recognising the calling of God in their lives.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 18:36**

Brethren I will argue for a New Covenant walk with Christ any day. I have consistently said in my posts that New Covenant believers are governed by the Holy Spirit and not Moses. I will take it one step further and say a believer need only the New Testament and the Holy Spirit to guide them. They need not an Old Testament. Also I am not speaking from a religious paradigm as I am not a member of a 501c church.

The above being said I do see that New Covenant believers are encouraged, inspired, required, promoted, fill in the blank to give. Simply for the fact New Covenant believers are governed by the royal law of Christ to love. His love will compel us to give. John mentions in his first letter that if we see our brother in need and have the means to give to that need and do not do so. Then the love of God is not in them.

Paul taught New Covenant giving by exhortation command and example. If God did not spare His Son but gave Him up for our salvation. His love for us really obligates us to give, money, time, resources to advance His kingdom.

I would think instead of justifying our not giving to the kingdom we should be praying and looking for ways to put more in to His kingdom work.

My thoughts.

Bearnaster

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/9 18:49**

Quote:  
-----But Jesus commanded that we go and "teach everything I have commanded you." The question we must then ask is, "Did Jesus teach us to give?"  
-----

It is interesting to note that in the four gospels you don't see any didactic demonstration of Jesus actually "giving" things (money, food, clothes) to the poor and needy - much less teaching his disciples how much and how often to give. It was always Him asking things from other people: "Give me a drink", he asked the woman at well. He sat and watched how much money people put into the treasury, but scripture is silent about how much He actually put in Himself. This is because mere money in the face of divinity is absurd in itself. Jesus gave the world far more than money. All the money in the universe couldn't bring the widow's son back from the dead, but Jesus did it for free. All the cold water in all the wells of Israel couldn't give Bartemaeus his eyesight, but Jesus gave it to him freely. Surely, we too should give. But how, where, when and how much must never be legislated. Jesus never legislated, Paul never legislated, John and James and Peter never legislated. They commended the believer into the hands of God to be led and taught by the Holy Spirit.

Brethren, we must appeal to the Holy Spirit alone when it comes to our giving, otherwise we just relegate ourselves to the auspices of benevolent humanism in the name of Christ. If we are mature Christians, we must be led by the Holy Spirit in all of our giving, and we must be discerning. Just because a missions organization exists, it doesn't mean we are to automatically pour money into it. Just because we see a panhandler on the street, it doesn't mean we automatically give him a twenty. Giving the prodigal son money when he was down and out would have been a horrible thing to do, and would have gone against God's plan to bring him back to his senses. Just because there are Koreans without Bibles, it doesn't automatically mean we are to buy one thousand dollars worth of Bibles and ship them off to Korea. As good and noble as these actions may be, we must wait to hear a personal directive from God. We must understand this principle.

Once God gives the directive, the giving will be cheerful, borne out of an obedient spirit. I have given to causes in the past without first discerning the heart of God, and the giving was never truly cheerful (though I tried to create an aura of cheerfulness in my spirit). I instead did it out of a sense of obligation, believing God would be pleased - I really wanted to please God. It was selfish at the core, for as long as I knew God was pleased with me, I could then be pleased with myself. Can you see it?

Giving specifically after God directs, however, is different. Spiritual joy floods your being. The focus is taken from self and instantly goes to God. The joy we experience now comes from the knowledge of our own unworth in being allowed the privilege to give, rather than the act of giving itself merited to the kindness of our own hearts (and in what we believe is our godly obligation). It's a very subtle shift, but one that makes all the difference. The difference between soulful giving and spiritual giving.

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/9 19:41**

Amazing observation Paul. Thanks for the confirmation. The thought ran through my mind today as well: Although we know The Lord would've given as the Law required, there isn't one instance of him ever giving any money to anybody for anything as recorded in the gospels.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 19:54**

Another great post, Paul. Really enjoying the word you are bringing.

Whatever we do in our walk with Christ, it must be God-authored, Holy Spirit inspired. All that we do is to be a manifestation of Christ's activity within us and not man's activity upon us.

Our life is an expression of His work in our heart.

How can you regulate or legislate the dynamic functioning of God?

It is spiritual fascism to legislate and regulate a new creation, since their life is a life of liberty to choose what God Himself leads them to do.

We are no longer under a condemning dictator.

Galatians 5:1

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 20:17**

I'll try to remember next time I come across a homeless and hungry man to reflect on whether he needs to be taught a lesson or fed.

Astonishing

**Re: - posted by a-servant, on: 2014/4/9 21:06**

I dont want to sound legalistically challenging, but wouldn't it be correct to say that you first buy him some food and then you expand on it with soft words regarding why you did it?

cheers brother, now i get it. It's a love vs doctrine issue.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 21:39**

There are many homeless men where I live. They get foodstamps, and shelter and other government help and then stand on street corners to raise money for alcohol and drugs. There are many documentaries locally that have interviewed these men and women and the homeless unabashedly say they are trying to get money for their habit. I was driving home one day, and a guy had a sign that said, "Ahh, why lie, I need a beer".

Jesus said many things about the poor, but again, we cannot regulate or legislate Christian behavior.

We don't respond to the need, we respond to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will bring needs to us. He knows about everyone and we know about no one. We are not led by guilt from other men or spirits or even our own emotions. We need the wisdom and discernment from the Lord so that we are not dragged all over the place by our emotions, the desire to please man or to make ourselves feel better.

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2014/4/9 21:55**

Greetings

What I find so interesting from those who seem to support tithing as a "must" is the assumptions that those who do not tithe do not give. Just because someone does not tithe does not mean they don't give. I won't go into detail about how much I give because the BIBLE tells me in Matthew 6:3 "But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,"

Why would any pastor or church leader demand to know what I am giving when the BIBLE clearly does not want me to go around talking about it? I have known many who speak about their tithe almost to the point of bragging...

God bless  
mj

**Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2014/4/9 22:03**

And MaryJane, there are churches that will ask to see your income tax returns to know how much to tax you...Go figure. BTW, the preacher lives in a fancy house, drives expensive vehicles...lives higher than many of his parishioners.

A man was onetime totally befuddled when he learned that we are members of a church and are not taxed.

Operating like a social, business club, don't you think?

A side note. One pastor told us he does not think it is proper for him to drive a nicer car than the people in his church even though he could afford it.

I know this is not based on scripture - it is just an observation from life.

**Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/4/9 22:15**

Paul-

What you are posting sounds so good because it is true. I agree with you 100%. We should always be led by the HS when giving.

But I am afraid from a pragmatic standpoint that in reality maybe 90% of the Christians out there aren't very spiritual. Very few Christians are listening for, much less hearing the HS telling them what to give.

What I am saying is that in a perfect Christianity the coffers of all churches, parachurch organizations, missionaries, and Christian charities would be overflowing with cash from believers who have listened for and heeded the HS telling them to give generously.

I think part of the reason tithing is taught is because of this pragmatic problem. If a person tithes, at least they are being obedient even if the HS is not telling them to do it.

It is kind of like worshipping or praying. We should be doing both whether we feel like it or not, or whether we sense the HS telling us to or not.

It is simply too easy for a Christian to say "The HS has not told me to give, therefore I don't."

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/9 22:27**

I am sorta with TMK on this. I think we have to be careful not to swing the pendulum too far the other way. Some tithe and act like it is a magic slot machine with 100 fold returns guaranteed. Others wait for magical like experiences to influence them before they give.

How about we just do as much good to every man, as often as we can, and call it a day. If a beggar asks you for money, just give it to him if you have it. Whatever you do, do it sincerely from the new heart Christ gave you, and you'll be fine every single time. If it was in your regenerate heart to do, that was probably the Spirit every single time.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/9 23:24**

I doubt that it matters whether anyone tithes or not. What does matter is claiming that you have to be led by the Holy Spirit to show compassion. Now that is astonishing. Thank God I don't live in the USA if this attitude is symptomatic of your attitudes to homelessness and hardship.

Have any of you actually been on drugs, addicted and destroying yourself? Have you been a complete alcoholic? Or homeless? Slept on any benches lately? Thought not!

That's the real thing by the way, not some ideological fantasy borne out of cynicism.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/10 0:59**

I never said you could not be led by the flesh to show compassion. It is done all the time, but is normally self-centered. A lot of people give to the poor because they don't want to feel bad not because they care for the poor. Or they give because they have someone like you Andrew, nagging them and judging them. I don't receive your guilt or condemnation. No nation has the market cornered on compassion. You guys are hard on your brothers and sisters and should be concerned with your own motives and intents and stop judging who is worthy to fellowship with you or not. And this bit about judging who has had hardship or not in their lives is a bit sophomoric and over the top. Please, spare us such nonsense.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/10 1:00**

Jimmy, how about if we just "keep ourselves in the love of God" and abide in Christ? Again, no need to judge, condemn, legislate or regulate. Do what you feel you are supposed to do and leave others to God.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/10 3:56

Justin, I'm only offering general exhortations.

As far as the homeless go, having worked with them every week for several years of my life, I am always reminded of what one former homeless drug addict who got saved told me years ago:

He told me that he always gave to any beggar he came across since he cleaned up his act if he had the money. He said it is true that most of them, like him, are just going to take the money and spend it on booze and drugs. But he gave anyway, knowing like him that many are so addicted that it is a matter of life and death to them. Without their fix they could go into severe relapse and die. He often ended up in the hospital because of it. Knowing that he needed his drug fix so bad, he often would break into homes and such and steal stuff to support his habit.

Eventually though, God got a hold of him, and he got help, got his life together, got a job, married, and had kids and is now a grandfather. He said if his giving keeps one high street person out of somebody's home and out of the hospital and keeps them alive one more day, that is one more day they have the chance to get saved and get cleaned up. It is what happened with him.

That story has stuck with me for 12 years now. It has influenced why I do what I do when dealing with beggars. Most of the time when I know I am going downtown, I try to always get some pocket cash just in case the opportunity arises.

Do what you want with my story :-)

Re: , on: 2014/4/10 4:01

Quote:  
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-----

Yes I read what Mr West posted and I could easily reply to it with some substance and reality of experience. I won't for self evident reasons. I have to say I am sickened by what I am reading here but ought not to be surprised. What I have written is not a matter of thinking I understand what it means to be led of the Spirit in the matter of giving to the poor, it is based on experience in my own body. I have been ripped off more times than I can remember. In most instances I am happy to be defrauded because I too was once a thief, and therefore know what it means to both steal and to give. When someone says they need to be led of the Holy Spirit in order to give to the poor or feed a hungry person I know they have gone over the wall. Better let them run away for a while and perhaps they will come back one day with a real mind of understanding. How easy it is to spiritualise that which ought to be practical.

In ministering to homeless and broken people I have seen some genuinely humorous and imaginative ways that people employ to get my money. Why be offended? I would have done the very same thing in their shoes. At the same time I can only recall a handful of occasions when I would say that the Holy Spirit specifically bore witness to what I was doing. Why make that a basis for not giving or passing by?

And as for a nation Just-In I will say this part very plainly. The USA is a sick self centred society. If you feel minded to compliment my own nation please feel free to do so, but do not tell me I am being humorous when in point of reality I am offended by religious hypocrisy. Whether it is found in the USA or anywhere else is irrelevant. Save for one difference. It seems to me that in the USA somehow there is a veil which can be drawn easily and through which even the most difficult thing appears acceptable. As someone sitting from a distance of thousands of miles it is not hard to see where the USA differs in its particular effect and influence. As far as I know the USA is the only nation on earth where happiness is a right of all. That makes for an especial attitude which few can miss. Sorry if that offends you but it is true.

Don't tell me that my experience is my own experience because if you do I feel sure that my reply will in the end have you prepare one of those 'spiritual fascist' labels of yours, ready to hang around my neck. It's all talk. Moreover I don't care what you think of me either Just-In. Don't get lost on the self placating flattery which seems so much in evidence. It mea

ns nothing. I do not do religious hypocrisy and flattery. I would rather make the street my church and the park bench my pew. Give me thieves and liars and I will in time show you men and women who know what it means to be forgiven with tears. But it requires some straight hard talk as well as compassion and mercy.

There we are then Just-In. It seems as though you and I are set to clash more often than not. Don't take it personally I do not know you it cannot be personal.

**Re: - posted by ZekeO (), on: 2014/4/10 4:18**

Interesting points of view, just to add another perspective.

Within the grace churches even they are divided on whether tithing should be encouraged. The reasoning goes that Abraham tithed under grace, not to get a blessing but because he was blessed already.

Also, in tithing to the local church there is a level of trust for the people who are full time employed by the church.

They need to eat, live and raise families. They have the time to run the affairs of the church because they are employed to do so.

More often than not people in need know where local congregations meet and will come to the premises for help. So there is a focal point for ministry and the administration of helps.

I have to trust that the full time staff have systems in place which makes there ministry to the poor and needy the most effective. Which they do in my case.

So I 'tithed' based upon the above factors. Not under law, because tithing predates the law and also that its by and in faith.

Does it release the burden to help every and anybody, to a certain degree it does, because as a local body of believers these things are happening. At the same time you can't turn away someone when its in your power to do so.

Listening to some of the ways that churches 'collect' tithes was quite revealing. Only in our more conservative old school churches do they still go to that level of invasiveness in your finances.

In fact it was so bad many years ago that the pastor used to go around at the beginning of the month and collect tithes from the congregants.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/10 6:53**

Quote:  
-----I never said you could not be led by the flesh to show compassion. It is done all the time, but is normally self-centered. A lot of people give to the poor because they don't want to feel bad not because they care for the poor. Or they give because they have someone like you Andrew, nagging them and judging them. I don't receive your guilt or condemnation. No nation has the market cornered on compassion. You guys are hard on your brothers and sisters and should be concerned with your own motives and intents and stop judging who is worthy to fellowship with you or not. And this bit about judging who has had hardship or not in their lives is a bit sophomoric and over the top. Please, spare us such nonsense.  
-----

Reply Number Two

You didn't say that a person could be led by the flesh in order to show compassion. In fact you said the complete opposite thing. Which was my point really. How is it possible to turn things on their heads and to miss what we have written or else to see that what is said in reply may just be something different.

For example why do you need to be led by the Holy Spirit to give a hungry man a meal? Who cares if you vainly imagine yourself to be pleasing God? Who knows but the Father Himself if in fact you are pleasing Him? Just because someone says something does not make it so does it? I suppose you would have to have made a point of feeding the hungry and homeless to know what the difference may mean.

Am I really nagging anyone? In my experience the most heartless people I know are believers. I know criminals with more compassion than most of the believers I know and I am not jesting either. I gave up trying to encourage believers to be thoughtful and generous twenty-five years ago when I was virtually destitute with a disabled son. I got plenty of advice and no compassion. God will help those who help themselves was the Evangelical mantra. Really I thought to myself. How will God need to help anyone who can in fact help themselves? Hypocrisy is not being a thief. Hypocrisy is thinking you are better than a thief when in truth you withhold what is due.

As for the adolescence which you say I am suffering from. I truly hope and pray that you never experience the reality of destruction in your own life because it is in no way an adolescent thing to speak of what that means. Or do you suppose that the woman who prostitutes her body is simply immoral? Or the man who fixes on heroine is somehow at peace with himself? What about the pastor who is torn from every angle by his own flock?

Finally how do you know that the giving which some make to the homeless and the downtrodden is mostly self centred? How do you know that?

**Re: , on: 2014/4/10 8:26**

A person who is walking in the Spirit is not vainly imagining himself to be pleasing God. That is a description of walking in the flesh.

Now, we are lowering ourselves to attacking believers? They are always an easy target, aren't they? I know, they never do enough or love enough. Regardless of the pain that you have experienced in your life, it never justifies the attitude that you have regarding an entire community of people.

There is a spirit I find that is very common not only in pulpits but on street corners. It is a spirit that understands something about the human condition and how most people through guilt and condemnation are easy targets and can be preyed upon.

This is actually very appropriate for the tithing thread, because this is what many preachers do. They prey upon their own people, in a sophisticated way of course. They have many ways (and creative sermons) to satisfy their greed and covetousness, but always through subtle messages of guilt and condemnation accusing others of lack of compassion or having too much. And it works most every Sunday. They also know that people will feel better if they have a cause to give to, so why shouldn't they be the ones that are that "cause"?

To use God for personal, greedy gain is most outrageous and the church world does it openly (on TV) before a lost world. Many beggars or panhandlers have caught on and are now using God just like the false, greedy preacher man.

Are there some panhandlers that are in true need? Yes, of course, undoubtedly so. I also know preachers that don't require a tithe or salary and truly live by faith. Not all beggars are on the take, preying on people and there are a few preachers who are not preying on people, either.

Finally, no Christian has to prove to any other man (let alone a fellow Christian) that they are compassionate. Neither, do they have to unfurl their "curriculum vitae" of hardship and destruction that they have endured in their life. In short, a Christian does not have to justify themselves to man. To God alone they stand or fall.

Christians are certainly easy targets. It reminds me of the pagan nation, whose name escapes me but they would only attack Israel from behind. When the Israelites were travelling in the wilderness, the lame, and sick and weak ones were at the very back of the company. This pagan nation would always attack the weaker ones. The pagan nation (Hittites, Amorites maybe?) are gone today, but the spirit that preys on the "weak" ones is still here and it is in the Church in the false shepherds. The weak ones today, are those who do not know who they are in Christ.

Eze 22:25 There is a conspiracy of her prophets in the midst thereof, like a roaring lion ravening the prey; they have devoured souls; they have taken the treasure and precious things; they have made her many widows in the midst thereof.

Eze 22:26 Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.

Eze 22:27 Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain.

Eze 22:28 And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord GOD, when the LORD hath not spoken.

Eze 22:29 The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/10 10:41**

Again, for those getting upset. The issue we are discussing is indiscriminate giving (under which the tithe falls). This is much different from being miserly. It is important to note Jesus did not cleanse entire leper colonies. He did not revive entire cemeteries. Such impulses might be steeped in the logic of humanism, but they are not God's way. The money I have is God's - not merely the tithe, but 100%. That means none of it is mine to spend autonomously.

Knowing this, I want to try my best to spend it according to his heart, according to His will and purpose. This means that if I am not prompted to give His money to a certain panhandler, I won't - no matter what the sign he is holding says. There may be another beggar I see tomorrow to which the Holy Spirit says "Give to him", and so I give. It's God's money; He should choose to whom it goes. We need to be able to discern His heart in this matter, otherwise we will give to anything and everything that puts on a sad face and panders to the emotion: tantamount to clearing out entire leper colonies for the sake of goodwill.

God has given us the freedom to hear his voice and be led by Him in all of our giving and taking. The old way was to go to a prophet or some human oracle to get instruction. To get rules, legislature, commands on what to do, how to do it, how much, etc. The flip side is to go off our own corrupt humanistic reasoning; of what "seems" right, of what we believe our godly obligation is, and of what others tell us we need to do. This may foster the "feel good" notion of the flesh, but often misses the perfect heart of God. The tithe preachers assume the latter, preying on those devoid of New Covenant understanding.

I'll say it again, brethren. We are "released" (or loosed) from everything on this earth that seeks to usurp the place of the Holy Spirit, including where, when and how much we give. Do not let any man put you under the bondage of what he thinks you should do with God's money.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/10 11:04**

Quote:  
-----Now, we are lowering ourselves to attacking believers? They are always an easy target, aren't they? I know, they never do enough or love enough. Regardless of the pain that you have experienced in your life, it never justifies the attitude that you have regarding an entirety of people.  
-----

I suppose I knew that you would make this comment. Just-In you have referred to those who seek to raise money in a certain way as 'spiritual fascists'. Did you miss this point? Apart from asking what a spiritual fascist is it seems that this is a much more extreme saying than my own which amounts to no more than many believers would agree with. It is a fact that at the church, just as with Israel often stands in opposition to the perfect heart of God when it comes to showing compassion.

What has my own experience got to do with addressing this topic. If I make a personal comment it is to back a statement. Such as saying that I have generally found believers to be hard hearted and lacking in compassion for homeless people. Or perhaps even more generally as well. It is a sad fact, and being thus said it amounts to saying no more than that which I have experienced myself and witnessed many times. This is not only a personal comment but a more general comment. You don't have to keep feeling sorry for me as a way of excusing your own failings Just-In or making reference to my past or being concerned about it. I am more blessed than many in every way.

As a family we are multi millionaires. We live in an Edwardian nine bed mansion. Drive Mercedes Benz vehicles and have more liquidity than we could possibly spend. Lets get something straight Just\_In. I haven't known hunger or a lack of comfort from the day I believed into Christ to this hour. Before that I slept on park benches, floors of warehouses, and in the street. Other than that I spent the rest of my time in prison. I can make the distinction between poverty and wealth directly. I can also see what an astonishing difference there is in the way believers deal with you when a poor man and wh

en a wealthy man. I utterly detest it without reservation.

This thread is about how we tithe or more generally how we give to others.

Your own comments were in my opinion typical of the kind of remarks which I hear constantly from believers who for the most part have little to give. The only difference is that I can look them in the eye and they turn away because they do not understand how a wealthy man can hold an attitude which stands at odds with their hypocrisy of judging the hearts of others and understanding why people get into the mess which makes their lives such a misery. There is no compulsion to give what you do not have. If you have much then even a poor man can exceed you in giving by giving all of his little substance. Praise God for that. It is not about wealth or poverty. It is about the heart of compassion for the Lord's sake.

Mr West made what appears to have been an attempt to raise the bar a little and put the thing into a higher plane. Several have acknowledged that this presentation is helpful and meaningful to them. Mr West asserted that a person can be harmed or hindered by help.

When my son who has never known a moment of discomfort or hardship and who has more money than many adults have, decided to rebel one time I took him to the edge of reality in an instant. I explained what it actually was like to be homeless, cold and alone. He was very nearly sick and turned back instantly. The parable of the prodigal son, is not for rich brats who throw away their parents efforts, it is for all men, and has to do with seeking out the Father in heaven. If applied to a financial matter it takes on the meaning as was applied. I happen to think that this is wrong and fundamentally other than the intended and true meaning of the parable. If our giving exceeds that which is necessary for the basics in life then it may well be a reasonable and necessary thing to discern at least the wisdom of giving more than a man needs for his life.

The Christian life on the other hand is not a psychological exercise where people have to reach the bottom before they can be brought back. You can go out in Christ name and bring them back by authority. If not then with tears!

I am simply saying to you that suffering and ease are of themselves not the issue. The issue is compassion. The rich perish and the poor may well believe more easily but they too perish. Your own comments about me are getting thin Just-In. Why do you feel a need to reply if you are so confident that your elitist and individualistic understanding is so right? If a brother came to me and asked for ten thousand pounds then I would see a need to exercise some proper discernment. But if a pastor needs his keep because he is in full time ministry, or a brother or sister needs a bed, some warm clothes and some food then it seems to me that I am obligated before God to give it if I have the means to do so even to the end of wealth.

I actually believe that in the end it will come down to that very thing. Then the whole matter will be settled of necessity. The Amalekites who preyed on the rear of the flock of Israel continued to be a prey until they were eventually destroyed some 700 years later. Are you saying that someone who presses for a tithe and teaches that it is a true and proper way of measuring to the kingdom, is an Amalakite preying on the flock? If we so easily reject men out of hand because they perpetuate the pastoral ministry improperly then we will no doubt find it easy to believe that we have not spoken against the Lord house. I do not so easily reject any man as being an unbeliever and so I am willing to bear with most men. Even though I may go against them directly I would not so easily say that they are unbelievers if they in fact do believe into Christ Jesus according to the doctrines of life.

So on the basis of saying that you know of men who press strong doctrines onto the flock, there is no basis for formal giving and no basis for bearing responsibility of others needs unless you have an express leading of the Holy Spirit. In the end this thread has concluded for the most part that believers should only give as the Holy Spirit leads them. I cannot see how that could even be possible. We are not inert flesh. We comprehend need and so if we are not willing to meet that need we know that also. Waiting to be led of the Holy Spirit may well be a necessity in some circumstances. Needing to be led in my view is a falsehood when it comes to the basic things of life.

We live before God and men whether we believe it or not.

**Re: - posted by noone (), on: 2014/4/10 11:41**

This whole discussion on tithing and the reality of it in the "church" is a symptom of a greater problem and would not even be happening if the Church was truly built according to God's plans and not man's ideas based on the Old Testament patterns. Nothing will change in Christendom until we say:

12 O our God, will You not exercise judgment upon them? For we have no might to stand against this great company/enemy that is coming against us. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO, BUT OUR EYES ARE UPON YOU. 2 Chronicles 20:12

And throw away anything that does not land on Jesus only. Man has entirely built his systems to bring God down to his level, how we think God should act and function and be. This system will truly have to come to naught if we expect a true movement of God's spirit. His word says that new wine cannot be poured into an old wineskin if it does it will ruin both skins. When will we awaken and give up our own ideas and plans and purposes and truly repent of "doing it our way or how our parents did it or church fathers did it?"

And crying out to God "We don't know what to do, we don't know how to be the true body, but our eyes are on YOU!"

30 But what does the Scripture say? Cast out and send away the slave woman and her son, for never shall the son of the slave woman be heir and share the inheritance with the son of the free woman. Galatians 4:30

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/10 12:18**

Whoa, brothers. Giving to the poor was not the original issue here. So please don't apply the entirety of this thread to the subject.

In regards to the poor:

Jesus said, "Give to those who ask of you." So if a poor man comes up to me and asks me for money, food, or gas, etc and I am able to give it, then I will, regardless of the motive (which I may or may not be able to perceive), because I desire to be conformed to the image of Him.

What I would be looking for is not the Spirit to tell me to give, but for the Spirit to forbid it. Our default setting should be generosity and only when the Spirit commands us should we pull back. We should not default to cynicism or feelings. Because, let's be honest, if you like to keep control of any amount of your money, you will see no benefit for just giving it a way and you are very likely to not feel like giving.

Now, do I do it out of obligation? No. I delight in the commands of the Lord. Now, if I am broke and have very little and a poor man comes up to me and asks for money, should I give it? Well, yes. "Give to those who ask of you." It would be awfully easy for Jesus to throw on there, "if you are able" (that is assuming we actually have what is being asked of us)

Now the context is for us to love our enemies and those who don't love us back. Most homeless and poor people who fall into the latter category.

HOWEVER:

In regards to the church taking up a mandatory collection. THAT is not commanded. And that, I believe, was the original intent of this thread. So we need to decide right now, which one of these things we are talking about lest our discussion become absolutely fruitless and detrimental to the body.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/10 12:30**

Gal 5:22-24 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: AGAINST SUCH THERE IS NO SUCH LAW. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

We must remember that when it comes to living in the Spirit, THERE IS NO SUCH LAW that is superior to it.

We have been released, as Paul has stated over and over from every man made regulation and legislation (legalism) that would seek to regulate our spiritual life with God.

We do not walk with God according to this world's dictates of what it means to be spiritual.

Col 2:20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

Col 2:21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

Col 2:22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

Col 2:23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

Because this world and the religious world are engaged in "the satisfying of the flesh", to make themselves feel better about themselves.

Our identity and security is in Christ.

In Him, we live and move and have our being. Acts 17:28

Andrew, the demon spirit behind the Amalekites has not died, even though the Amalekites died. Is that so hard to understand?

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/10 12:34**

I found this article:

<http://onenewsnow.com/church/2014/03/25/tithing-%E2%80%93-more-than-just-an-issue-of-generosity>

It is very revealing of the corruption on this topic.

They state that there is a biblical foundation for tithing, and then say it showed up during the fourth century under constantine! Doesn't sound scriptural to me. Especially when you find out what the tithing was paying for--big buildings...hmm mmm

**Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2014/4/10 12:37**

All of you who are pastors and anybody who is a pastor and they take the offering that the people have given them in the churches for themselves they are robbing God. They are robbing God, they are using the money for their own lifestyles and they themselves are not preaching the gospel for FREE. Those of you who are giving to these organizations are not giving to God you are giving to man.-Lyte Robert

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/10 12:46**

Now, the Bible makes it abundantly clear that a man is allowed to make his living off of preaching the Gospel if he indeed preaches the Gospel.

Now, Paul in 1 Corinthians 9 and 1 Timothy 5 uses the same reference in regards to those who labor in the Gospel reaping material things from their labors.

If a minister chooses, for the sake of the Gospel to waive that, then that is fine.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/10 13:07**

Quote:  
-----In regards to the church taking up a mandatory collection. THAT is not commanded. And that, I believe, was the original intent of this thread. So we need to decide right now, which one of these things we are talking about lest our discussion become absolutely fruitless and detrimental to the body.  
-----

As far as I know the so-called mandatory tithe is fully intended to be a tithe to the house of the Lord. I agree that it is not in evidence in the apostolic church. What I cannot agree with is that it is arbitrary or that it is fundamentally wrong to the point of becoming a curse. As noone said the problem really lays in the way we understand church life itself. Yet even in this regard we forget that it has pleased the Lord to bless and support this pattern of church life where a single pastor holds broad ministry responsibility. Many profoundly godly men have held that part and done great things for the Lord Jesus both in numbers of men into the kingdom and in setting a good example to the flock.

If today there is a need to re-look at this pattern then perhaps it is because there is a more significant change afoot which makes that pattern of ministry redundant. That change may simply be persecution. Supporting a godly brother and his family is a privilege even when the pattern is wrong for this day in which we live. Yet even a small flock of fifty believers could easily support such a pastor elder in the basics of life and then the pattern is only changed in so far as the issue of unnecessary wealth is removed. It may well be the responsibility of a minister to walk by faith, and that could easily mean having some practical work to earn a basic living. It may also be that there should be several such men leading the ministry and serving others to play their part also.

Feeding the poor brethren regardless as to how they come into their need will never be removed, nor will the pattern of ministry remove it unless every member works with their hands to make a living apart from the gift which they represent to the church. From what I have read in recent years and the many conversation I have had it seems to me that there are a number of clear moves afoot which are shaping the minds of brethren in how they think about the whole question of the church as a body of believers. Some of these appear to me to be in agreement with the reality of preparedness for coming persecution, but others appear to be false in that they are moves which are seeking to remove any notion of the pastoral ministry itself.

Tithing of itself cannot be evil. And no matter that some brethren take a wrong comfort from it and others wrongly ask for it, these things will not change the outcome of a faithful walk. The Lord is not asking us to be perfect in detail, we are asked to be perfect in obedience. In that sense all contentions are settled because a man simply has to obey his conscience and the leading of the Holy Spirit to be perfected. I have never fully agreed with tithing yet I did tithe when I was a young believer and the Lord never once said to me to stop from doing it. In the end I only changed my mind because I realized that this tithe has made ruin of many pastors because it ends up far in excess of what is necessary for life. Even in this regard the Lord has never told me to begin again.

Watchman Nee sought to put this idea of pastoral ministry into an experiential reality in China in the 1920s and 30s. The pastor's in that exercise became the bishops or elders and the ministerial pastor of Ephesians five became essentially a co-worker going out into the mission field with other co-workers. In 1948 Nee held co-workers meeting in Gu Ling and began by addressing the reality of what happened to these co-workers in the ten years of their experience. Many starved to death, some died of cold and so on. It was at this time that Nee shared a vision regarding the necessity of all believers pooling their wealth freely so that this wealth could be used to support all the co-workers as they had need.

Even this Jerusalem Principle, as it has been called by some, amounts to a legalistic formality if the one who partakes in it does so for reasons of selfishness and pride. How will we remove from that possibility? We cannot remove from it bec

ause these things are of the heart and no man has dominion over another man's heart. In the end brethren will do what they will do of their own volition and according to their own intentions. The cost to other believers may well be considerable. There is no possibility of the kind of freedom which brethren speak of happening in the way we would like it to happen. There will always be believers who take and will not give. There will be believers who give and have no need to take yet become proud and self justified through their gift. There is no right or wrong answer because in the end it is a heart matter.

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/10 13:42**

Armkelly,

The issue I have with a mandatory tithe to the Lord's house is not that Christians are being coaxed to do something that they are financial incapable of doing. No. It is far more sinister than that. What I have noticed is that those who tithe develop a checklist mentality, "oh I did that. I tithe. I don't have to give anymore." They shut up their hearts and absolutely cling to their 90% because that is THEIRS and they already gave God His 10%.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/10 14:16**

Quote:  
-----Andrew, I find it pointless to respond to you as you constantly put words in my mouth and misrepresent what I say, attempting to put me on the defensive which I will not capitulate to. The demon spirit behind the Amalekites has not died, even though the Amalekites died. Is that so hard to understand?  
-----

No that is an easy thing to understand. It was the easiest part. How it is applied is more difficult to understand.

Quote:  
-----The issue I have with a mandatory tithe to the Lord's house is not that Christians are being coaxed to do something that they are financial incapable of doing. No. It is far more sinister than that. What I have noticed is that those who tithe develop a checklist mentality, "oh I did that. I tithe. I don't have to give anymore." They shut up their hearts and absolutely cling to their 90% because that is THEIRS and they already gave God His 10%.  
-----

There is no way to change this attitude even if we did away with the tithe altogether unless the Lord Himself judges His house. In Jerusalem where the kingdom was increasing daily with peace, at the time of the apostles, Ananias and Sapphira were judged unto death. Yet the sin was not in giving, nor was it a not giving, it was lying against the Holy Spirit. The outward action was withholding a measure of their intended gift having sold a spare property to support the Lord's work. The inward action was to conceive a lie to cover their change of mind. And Peter asked the question 'why has Satan put this thought into your hearts?'

“But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.” And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. (Acts 5:3-5, NASB95)

I wonder how this admonishment of Peter stacks up to the claim that everything we own belongs to the Lord. If we intend it to be so then it may well be so. But if we say we intend it there is coming a day when we will be judged by that intention.

“While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control?”

Possessions appear to have a different meaning to money itself. One is clearly ownership the other is stewardship. The tithe it seems to me falls into the category of stewardship. What that means in the end will be a matter for the Lord Himself. Yet that we have control over our own finances is clear. Control always means authority. So I cannot help but believe that if a man chooses to give ten percent and keeps hold of the ninety percent he will be rewarded according to the ten percent and have to give an account for the ninety percent. The implication which Peter is making appears to be examine

your heart and be honest about what you intend.

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/10 15:09**

AmrKelly,

Maybe the best way to think about me and my stuff is to take up the attitude that Paul had in Philippians 3: To count all things as loss--even garbage in comparison to knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

"Money? Forget it. I want to know the Lord, and I am willing to part with all of it, if necessary." Maybe that is the attitude I should strive for, in regards to money.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/10 15:24**

Act 5:4 Whiles it remained, WAS IT NOT THINE OWN? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

First, it is important to note that Peter did not mention tithing at all. In fact, he said that after the land was sold the money was still their own and in their control, just as it was before they sold it. That is quite different than telling them that they were required by the Lord to pay 10 percent but that 90 percent that remained was in their control. He did not say, "now that your asset has been converted to cash, you are required to pay 10%." No mention of that at all.

If Peter had the concept of tithing that the church today has, (which is nothing at all similar to the Old Testament concept of Tithes and Offerings), Peter would have taken the opportunity to say something like this:

"Ananias, why have you lied about how much of the proceeds you are giving? After all, God only requires you to give ten percent. Anything above ten percent is a "freewill offering" to the Lord and you may do with it as the Spirit leads"

But again, any reference to tithing is obviously missing. Again, the NT is silent about tithing. This would have been a perfect spot to teach that Christians are under obligation to pay the tithe. But it isn't here. In fact, it isn't anywhere!

THE LAW OF TITHING IS NEVER TAUGHT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

I fail to see any PAYMENT SYSTEM that we are under in the NT.

**Re: - posted by a-servant, on: 2014/4/10 20:03**

I go with the stewardship concept, it clearly has to be delegated, and it is not our own. That's why i appreciate joyful givers, they understand that it was given to us, so we also can give whenever we see a need.

Why talk about the law and the 10%? Why not give more than that? Has absolutely nothing to do with the law, it's about if grace has touched our hearts or not.

Besides, this might just be my personal experience, whenever i regard money not as my personal possession and kind of 'drop it' on people, doors open, and new ways of receiving 'new money' appear out of nowhere. Who opened these doors, and for what purpose arrive these streams at our door? Take a wild guess.

**Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2014/4/10 20:23**

Quote:  
-----a-servant...Besides, this might just be my personal experience, whenever i regard money not as my personal possession and kind of 'drop it' on people, doors open, and new ways of receiving 'new money' appear out of nowhere. Who opened these doors, and for what purpose arrive these streams at our door? Take a wild guess.  
-----

I can totally relate! There used to be this homeless guy that always stood on the corner of the last intersection before I got out on the freeway. when I headed out in that direction. This is the God's honest truth, every time I was able to stop at that intersection, and handed him a few bucks, I was Blessed with a really nice profitable job just days later, yes I said days later. I don't know where he went, but maybe God has him standing on another corner somewhere, so someone else can Bless him and be Blessed. :)

**Re: , on: 2014/4/10 23:22**

It strikes me that there are those who are being legalistic about not being legalistic. Thank the Lord that I am free of all that. If someone wants to give ten percent what possible business is it of yours or anyone else's. Get over yourselves. Who are you to instruct another man's servant?

Do you have your freedom to do as you please?. If so then you are yet in captivity to the flesh, because the freedom for which we were set free is the cross until Christ Himself returns. It is the yoke of obedience realising that God is good and just and true. Freedom to do as you please when you please is not freedom. It is lawlessness. Then again anyone who agrees that the Scriptures is lying when it speaks about the law of sin and death working in our members and says it is a doctrine of hell, clearly has some especial liberty which few others have heard about. Be careful lest you find in the end you have not pressed freedom onto your brother, but lawlessness. Rest is the thing we are given, not freedom to do as we please.

It is a strange business this freedom which some men so love they will destroy nations with it. Is there such a thing as a tithe unto the Lord? For the man who believes it by faith it is true. Whether other men make profit from that is a matter for the Lord.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/11 1:08**

"Get over yourselves". I found myself chuckling at this statement for some reason:)

Perhaps this one statement though is the most important thing uttered on this whole entire thread...and it applies to ALL sides of the argument.

I have been wondering lately what the Lord thinks of me when I tap furiously away on the internet striving to get my tiny voice heard and to convince anonymous people how right I am about my puny opinions?

This thread does have one merit though, to clearly display once again how fruitless and time wasting Christian forums and facebook discussions can be. Perhaps if we put as much passion and effort into seeking the face of our Savior as we do about arguing these non-essentials we would come back on here and find we had no desire left to argue non-essentials but a great deal of new found passion to encourage one another to live whole heartedly for Christ?

**Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2014/4/11 4:38**

this has been interesting ,,,and as usual brother Andrew has given me much to think about ,,,as I was leaning towards the seeming obvious and elementary ,possession of tithing not being for me or Christians

it is true tho that even the holy spirit can convict and tell a person to make regular roughly ten percent payments to a church or a missions society ,,,and then not have to lead and remind me every week ,through a word of knowledge ,or even less a leading, to continue to do so

but if some one legalistically with out knowing ,, tries to pressure me to not do this by saying it is wrong to tithe ten percent ,,,,

who becomes guilty of legalism ????????

need I say the one who preaches to me that im doing wrong by giving ten percent

we need to watch what we say in regards to this issue and not become unknowingly hypocrites

blessings

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2014/4/11 7:46**

What is truly amazing is KingJimmy original article does not claim anyone is wrong for giving, he was merely talking to the fact that many pastors pressure people into giving ten percent when they do not have the monies to do so. He spoke about the pressure and condemnation placed on people, the bondage placed on people to follow a law that was given in the old testament. He never said giving was not required, we are to give out of the abundance of our hearts as mentioned several times, but then that is how this forum usually works people read and see what they want to only.

Personally if you feel led to give ten percent and GOD has guided you to do so then do it, if you feel led to give fifty percent, or one hundred percent then do so. No one said you can't or shouldn't...

God bless  
mj

**Re: - posted by brothagary, on: 2014/4/11 8:55**

I honestly believe the majority of Christians and people in general in USA and Australia probably live bonded there means, and that is the reason why they are in debt rather than blaming a ten percent offering or tithe

most people don't hear what Paul said as one of our examples that with food and clothing, he is content, he even said he was content with what he had, and he lived in a rental home rather than owning his own house

the bible says own know man anything

if we were willing to sacrifice the idea of the American dream to go in to debt for 30 years to own our own home and then die just after we finally pay the debt, and be content with our heavenly home and for sake the mundane trinkets and toys of the world system, we would be able to afford around the ten percent for missions, and extra to help the poor when the opportunity arises and even save a little money

interests on loans materialism and wanting too much and perusing that by feeding the covetous spirit imbedded in the flesh is the sickness of the world and is infected many Christians and so called Christians

im not speaking about those who are already rich in this age, Paul said to those always be willing to share and give, but he said all those who desire to be rich fall in to the snare of the devil and pierce themselves with many sorrows

the Australian dream is to seek riches, if we want to compare us with the rest of the world that's what it is

but if we seeked first the kingdom of heaven every thing we need will be added to our life, God knows what we all as individuals need and, and to some he may give less and some more, he may even make some one wealthy by seeking the kingdom come, but that up to him and not us

all my life I was broke till I started to seek God's kingdom and in the last 5 years he blessed me with much more food and fish that I need and more money than I need 25000 more, a good wife, I have forsaken bank loans so I went own a house unless I pay mainly cash for one but im not seeking that, and im still have the same job a glorified labourer

Jesus said we should forsake our own lives to be a worthy disciple, we should not in any way set our minds on those things that are on the earth, but in the heavenly

if we do that we know that what we receive comes from his hand and not from our fleshly efforts

rather than winge about what we all know about the pastors and the church and state the obvious and amen each other, we should exhort one another as Jesus and Paul did, forsake this life

I need to hear that and be reminded of that

faith without works is dead, demonstrate your faith by doing holy selfless works

he who sows sparingly will reap little

I see so much of us stating the obvious and patting one another on our backs ,,,,,,,

none of this is impressing the lord

knowledge puffs up ,its not edifying anyone , love does that , don't be fooled it wont conform us to the image of the son

I don't expect to get an amen for saying this ,but please brethren just think on these things

the lord will be home soon ,real soon ,hard times are at the door ,what is going to matter in these final seconds of this age ,,,,what will matter

I pray that god helps us be ;;;;;;;;;;; slow to speak  
and slow to wrath  
and eager to give  
and quick to forgive

gods blessings on all of us

**Re: , on: 2014/4/11 9:14**

It doesn't even make spiritual sense for a Christian to keep track of how much money they give to others, or how many chickens, or lambs, or bowls of soup, or pieces of clothing, etc. etc.

No system has been instituted in the NT and since men love to systematize and codify everything (even God), then it must be said that there is no PAYMENT SYSTEM in the NT. I am saying this only because of the weakness of man, we have a GIVING SYSTEM. I even have a hard time writing that, because God and matters of the heart cannot be systematized. But that is what religious man loves to do. We have vast libraries of Systematic Theology, which teach on many aspects of the PAYMENT SYSTEM. I would say the "Storehouse theology" in Malachi is probably the hub of the Evangelical Payment System theology.

I was told one time that the "storehouse" is the local church and you cannot give that portion to anyone else.

In the ages of grace and faith, God has commanded the church to give sacrificially and nothing about keeping a running ledger about how much you give and who you give to.

A payment system presupposes you OWE someone a DEBT. And yet, we are told to "owe no man anything but love". Payments are a requirement, Love is a gift. A gift is something that you give that you didn't have to give. It is not given because you must. It is not given out of necessity. It is not given under compulsion. Otherwise, it would not be a gift. It would be a payment.

2Cor 8:1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia;

2Cor 8:2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

2Cor 8:3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power THEY WERE WILLING OF THEMSELVES;

2Cor 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

God no longer wants His children to pay under compulsion, but to give cheerfully. It is impossible for the requirement of paying the tithe to remain if God says that our giving is not under compulsion. If you owe it, you are under compulsion to pay it. The very act of paying tithes creates an act of "necessity" and 2 Cor 9:7, says "not grudgingly, or of necessity".

"But shouldn't tithing be the starting place? Shouldn't it be the minimum?"

That would be like saying, "Shouldn't circumcision be the starting place?" "Shouldn't circumcision be the minimum?"

I think if this were true, the New Testament would have stated it, somewhere, just once.

The requirement of tithing has kept God's people in slavery to the Law and has kept them from growing in God's grace.

How can you grow in grace when you are bound to a legalism by others? Because, the Lord is certainly not binding us to a legalism of payments. We cannot accuse Him of putting this on us.

More importantly and what has not been explored yet, is that the legalistic teaching of tithing has opened doors to other legalisms in the church and that is why God's people cannot grow in grace towards one another. They are being compelled and required to "love". Is that just a crazy concept or what? It's like a person who is forced to live under Communism/Fascism for most of their lifetime and then freedom comes. They still by rote, go through the same motions everyday. They don't know what to do, or how to handle freedom. They still show up each day in line for their daily bread rations, they still "spy" on their neighbors as a good comrade looking for suspicious activity, they still parrot the party line when speaking to others not knowing what it means to be able to think and speak from a position of freedom of conscience. They have been bound by legalism for so long they even find security in their old way of life. It takes a drastic action to wake them up.

In short, people need a revelation to see that the Christian life is 100% about giving of all we are and all we have (according to 2 Cor 9:7) and not keep a running tabulation or record about your giving and not worrying about getting a tax deduction, and the Christian life is ZERO PERCENT about compulsion or requirements, or rules and regulations and yes, even the payment systems which we love so much and find security in.

Why is it so hard for people born of the Spirit to understand these things?

**Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2014/4/11 9:30**

When I was growing up in the 50's and 60's we never had any issues with tithing. Today's Pastors that are building 50 million dollar buildings, and 5 million dollar homes, this has raised the issues of today. At our old church, we leased a home for our Pastor to live in, and he drove a used car. Jesus never even owned a home.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/11 9:45**

I would agree, Bill that the over the top greed and covetousness many has exposed the payment system. Have you seen how well some "pastors" in Africa and other countries have learned from the American tithing "champions". They actually out do some of America's richest pastors. They have Gulfstreams and even hangars to park their jets in. Tens of thousands of poor people are tithing to these men.

Today's payment system would not have been exposed if these men took the money that came in and distributed it to the needs of poor saints as the early church did. Of course the early church pooled their offerings together and there was no requirements or compulsion to give.

And this is part and parcel of what we have, today. A real witness to the lost.

<http://www.nairaland.com/1342968/top-richest-pastors-world>

**Re: - posted by MrBillPro (), on: 2014/4/11 9:58**

What's really sad is, how can a pastor worth millions preach from the heart to the needy? Personally, if I had millions I just don't think I could still possess the heart to be a good disciple. My older brother used to say, money can't buy happiness, but it sure can make living in misery a lot easier.

Re: , on: 2014/4/11 10:28

Withdrawn.

Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/11 10:30

Yeah Gary is right. We do need to spur one another on toward love and good works--all the more as we see the day ap  
proaching.

Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/11 11:03

Quote:

-----They don't know what to do, or how to handle freedom.  
-----

This is an interesting point you've brought up. I lived in the former Soviet Union from 1991-1996. This was right after the Iron Curtain fell, right after Gorbachev stepped down and Yeltsin took over. Democracy was new for the Russians; busin  
esses could now be privatized, including banks. As result of this liberty, violent organized crime groups suddenly came i  
nto existence. The streets Moscow resembled Chicago during the Al Capone prohibition era of the 1920s and 30s. Bank  
s were robbed almost daily, mafia hits at traffic lights, extortion, racketeering, kidnappings of company CEOs, etc. The o  
ppportunity to suddenly make unlimited money in this system of embryonic-capitalism brought open violence. Liberated fr  
om communism, the the poor Russians now found themsevles prey to the overwhelming corruption of a huge mafia-run  
syndicate eager to take advantage of their new freedom.

Many people expressed how it had been safer to live under the dicates of communism. Some even wished Josef Stalin  
were back. They would rather deal with the predictable confines of communism than with the unpredictable violence the  
free market engendered.

When people are set free from the law (i.e. the communistic law of Moses which demanded uniform conformity) by the S  
on of God, like those Russians, they suddenly find themselves in a quandary. They don't know how to handle their new f  
reedom. Some people, like the pharisees Paul mentions in Galatians, actually become indignant when they see a perso  
n walking in spiritual freedom and seek to put the person back under bondage. They imagine that Christian "freedom" re  
ally can't mean total freedom. There still must be some communistic do's and don'ts: "Do tithe. Do not drink alcohol. Do  
not dance. Do Sabbath. Do pray 3 hours per day. Do not cosmetics. Do not jewelry. Do not TV. Do read 10 chapters of  
Bible per day. Do not wear pants if female, etc."

These are just some of the more popular "Christian community" rules that are often imposed upon believers in their free  
dom. They are imposed because they are regarded as "safe", to protect against the potential threat of lasciviousness tha  
t comes with the freedom grace brings. Some of those guidelines are good, and I observe them myself. But I observe th  
em because I am led by God to observe them and not coerced by man. This is the fulcrum. We are free to give, but we a  
re also free not to give if the giving is not purposed in our hearts.

This angers people. It angers them because they see the atrocities that occur when people take advantage of God's gra  
ce, and this I can understand. Where they go wrong, however, is in the endeavoring to merge elements of spiritual com  
munism with grace to try to keep the sheep in tow. Again, the sheep are free. Totally, utterly free. But this freedom is inte  
nded to bring them under the law of grace where the Chief Shepherd can take over. If the Chief Shepherd says "Give", t  
hey give. If the Chief Shepherd says "Withhold", they withhold. If the Chief Shepherd says, "Go", they go. No man under  
the New Covenant has the right to usurp the role of the Chief Shepherd in issuing these directives in a spiritually commu  
nistic setting. As soon as he does this, grace vanishes and the old spoonfed regime of Josef Stalin returns.

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/11 12:09**

Paul, what were you doing in Russia during that time?

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/11 12:38**

Quote:

-----Paul, what were you doing in Russia during that time?  
-----

I worked with a film production crew initially in 1991, which produced "Stalin" with Robert Duvall, filmed in Moscow and in Budapest. After that I worked with my father (Don West) on "Police Academy 7: Mission to Moscow". After these movies wrapped, I extended my visa and enrolled in the Moscow State Institute of Foreign Relations (MGIMO) and studied international journalism and Portuguese as a foreign language (in Russian). Then I taught English for a few years as a freelancer and did some commercial translating. For a few years I travelled around Russia (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Zelenograd, Astrakhan) and lived a very debauched, wild life. Came back to the United States in 1996 and worked for the US Army as a Russian signals interceptor until I got saved in 2001.

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/11 16:19**

"until I got saved in 2001."

You stopped at the good part...lol. How did that come about?

**Re: - posted by a-servant, on: 2014/4/11 20:12**

Just a little intermezzo regarding all this usual talk about legalism and NT freedoms, I just did a 'phrase search' for the term "prove me", and got only 3 results:

Job 9:20 Â If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse.

Psalms 26:2 Â Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart.

Malachi 3:10 Â 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.

lets look at the details regarding who it is that says 'prove me':

- 1) Job
- 2) David
- 3) God

it is an invitation in all three cases, not an invitation to start a discussion, but an invitation to get practical about it. It's the only time by the way that God invites us to prove HIM. So why don't you? Because He said it in the OT? And now He changed His mind? That God that never changes?

Why don't we just 'prove him' on this, and be quiet? Are we scared that HE will respond?

**Re: , on: 2014/4/12 0:29**

I think He HAS proven Himself, by giving us the deposit of His Spirit whereby we cry Abba, Father. And He has given us a new spirit and a heart of flesh and is with us always, even unto the end of the world. That may be all some of us get in this life, but that's not bad, is it?

**Re: - posted by a-servant, on: 2014/4/12 1:12**

"I think He HAS proven Himself"

vs

"It's the only time by the way that God invites us to prove HIM."

justin thinks vs God says - its a no brainer for me, but thats just me

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/12 7:48**

A servant where does your tithe go?

**Re: , on: 2014/4/12 9:41**

a-servant, to go further, we do prove God's word every time we decide to trust in His words.

Again, men are quite mercenary and know how to weave money into every subject and even think that God is all about money.

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/12 11:35**

Quote:

-----You stopped at the good part...lol. How did that come about?  
-----

Well, you only asked about my time Russia ;). My testimony is very dramatic - the events leading up to my conversion - and this thread with respect to Jimmy's topic is probably not the best place to go into detail. I'd be glad to share it elsewhere, though.

**Re: - posted by havok20x, on: 2014/4/12 12:33**

Nathaniel.gardner(a)parker.com (a)=@

I would love to hear it brother.

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/12 12:35**

Quote:

-----we do prove God's word every time we decide to trust in His words.  
-----

Excellent point. All of God's "proofs" are consummated in the advent of Jesus Christ. All the validity a man can seek, the brokerage of every one of His promises in the OT, and the immortal assurance of His love and compassion for mankind are all encapsulated in Jesus Christ and in our spiritual marriage to Him. From this single union God grants us all we need. It is not right therefore to adapt a mindset that although I am in Jesus Christ, God is still somehow obligated to prove something more - especially when this proof is needing to be evidenced in the form of mammon.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, the life". He is Abundant Life - we all know this abundance is not only comprised of food and clothes and money, but much more: the very life of the Godhead in our spirits. The real treasure is not mere money (brought on by the proof necessitated by tithing, as some teach), but rather the Life of Jesus Christ in man.

The problem is that not many people have fully evaluated this Supreme Treasure. This is because the treasure of Christ

does not translate over into abundant tangible means the way we have been accustomed to desire. God only giving us what we need in materialistic terms is banal and undesirable for most. People want to go above and beyond: they want the \$350,000 home in the gated community, the luxury car, the top notch schools for their kids, six-figure salaries, instant freedom from debt - and are trained to expect all this from God as a proof of His "exceeding abundance" activated from the tithe, totally missing out on the true Pearl of Great Price in exchange for hunk of fake glass.

It's all a facade. Life is fleeting, riches are inconsolable, beauty goes. The pretty glass gets scratched with wear and tear over the years...and the soul of man is forever gaping and hungry for more glass, like a bottomless pit. During these crisis moments, is God still saying to man "Prove me through the tithe?" No, He is not. God says instead: "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased." Jesus then says, "Come to me, all you who are weary." Weary of not having enough money? Why come to Jesus. You can simply go to the laws of karma and give what's left in your bank account to a beggar, and magically you will get more money. This is a universal law, like gravity. It works for Buddhists, Muslims, Atheists - what goes around comes around.

Again, Jesus says "All you who are weary, come to Me." Weary of ill health? (Note, money and health are the main things all the gentiles in the world go after, whether they be atheistic or religious). You can get healed without Jesus; you can go to a psychosomatic healer and get healed by the power of the soul. Muslims and Baha'i and Mormons have just as many "healing miracle" testimonies as do Christians in their faiths. And they attribute it all to their gods. Indeed, the True God of Israel healed infirmities and gave monetary riches and saved souls from hell (and even forgave sin!) for thousands of years under the Old Covenant, way before Jesus even went to the cross (see Psalms 103), yet many Christians still have this incorrect notion that God is waiting for them to "prove Him" in these areas via Christ, via the tithe.

**Re: - posted by lovejt (), on: 2014/4/12 15:34**

I have not read the entire thread but really appreciated what you wrote in detail earlier Paul. My initial church experience was with a place that required 3 tithes. I realized later it was not NC and 'rebelled' against it. Then they later realized their error and denounced it all. But then shortly after required just the first tithe. So, that was the straw that broke the camel's back for me. Some Christians have been offended when they ask me about tithing and multiple offerings during a service but I don't bad mouth their church. It's wonderful to be free from all that guilt and mental gymnastics with giving and 'giving in public'. I don't want people to see me giving money. Wow, Police Academy. Did the humor rub off on you? ;)

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/12 16:43**

Quote:  
-----Its wonderful to be free from all that guilt and mental gymnastics with giving and 'giving in public'. I don't want people to see me giving money. Wow, Police Academy. Did the humor rub off on you? ;)  
-----

It is wonderful indeed :) And it's a real privilege to teach this freedom, even though you often take criticism for it by people who do not understand. The understanding of freedom doesn't come right away. After the initial conversion, there is a process that takes years and years of learning to walk in this freedom, of being able to understand and enter into New Covenant rest. There's so much bad teaching out there, bad examples, things assimilated because of mainline practice and habits of denominationalism. Like the "passing of the collection basket" you mention. When did that come into practice? Did the Protestants just continue the tradition from the Catholics? I don't know its origin, but I do know it goes way back. When you get saved, chances are you get plugged into a church that passes the public basket and so you just comply and follow rote like everyone else - until you begin to get light on certain teachings of Jesus.

As far as the "Police Academy humor rubbing off", I always thought those movies were abysmally dumb, even before I was saved :) But I've always been a funny guy. I try really hard sometimes to restrain myself here!

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/12 18:02

Quote:  
-----is God still saying to man "Prove me through the tithe?" No, He is not. God says instead: "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased  
.....  
-----

This is truly beautiful Paul. Deeply prophetic.

Re: , on: 2014/4/12 18:30

Quote:  
-----Excellent point. All of God's "proofs" are consummated in the advent of Jesus Christ. All the validity a man can seek, the brokerage of every one of His promises in the OT, and the immortal assurance of His love and compassion for mankind are all encapsulated in Jesus Christ and in our spiritual marriage to Him. From this single union God grants us all we need. It is not right therefore to adapt a mindset that although I am in Jesus Christ, God is still somehow obligated to prove something more - especially when this proof is needing to be evidenced in the form of mammon.  
-----

Exactly! In the light of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus, and now the deposit of His Spirit, what else are we saying He should prove to us?

Going to Paul's point, "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2Co\_1:20)

There is no such theology in the NT about proving God, who has proven His love for us and in fact, is our great High Priest, who is making intercession for us daily.

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb 7:25)

Did Christ, being faithful to His Father, prove His Father's faithfulness to Him? Absolutely! We are to allow the character of God to be expressed through us. "As He was in the world, so are we".

We are actually to prove our love for Him, not Him proving His love for us. He has already done that. Loving others is an expression of God's loving character. And we are now the ones to give (as He gave). Christian giving is an expression of God's giving character which has been given to us by the presence of the Spirit of Christ, the presence of Jesus indwelling the Christian.

The whole Christian life is a life of giving, but we have categorized and cordoned off when and where and to whom Christians are to give. In reality, the religious world does not reflect the giving heart of God as they are more consumed with taking and making sure THEY GET their 10%.

Religious administrators and clergy are more like the government telling people when and to whom they should give and how much. Like the government, they would have no power, lest the people give it to them. That's what the religious world looks like, but that is not what the Church of Jesus Christ looks like. Well meaning godly people have ignorantly adopted worldly, religious practices.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/12 18:41**

Behold the stones are gathered thus  
by men of ill and fated wrong,  
by means of righteous shouts, and all,  
shall of His servants join the throng?

Better to speak in the dark of the night than to share what you mean in the presence of such righteous and well informed men.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/12 19:31**

That could have been said of all the prophets and Jesus, too. The truth hurts and it never makes you any friends.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/13 0:41**

How often have you heard the following (or something to the same affect)?

"If you will just give us \$100, God will give you back ten-fold."

Have you ever just wanted to write them back and say "If you really believe what you say, then you send me the \$100, and you can keep the \$1000."

But that would expose their fund-raising scheme.

The self-indulgent, "gimme" religion of today that promises health, wealth and prosperity is foreign to the Early Church and the gospel of Christ.

And, where did a religion that tries to bribe God ever come from?

**Re: , on: 2014/4/13 9:47**

I have followed this thread with great interest. It has yielded very profitable insights into the matter of giving and also the excuses we make not to give,  
The wealth of information accumulated will surely yield great rewards and we will treasure its proceeds.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/13 11:16**

Giving is the heart of God, and all true Christians support giving. It is a way of life for them 7 days a week.

Fund raising schemes done in the name of Christ are wholly different than true Christian giving and that is what Christianized tithing is: a compulsory fund raising scheme.

Even Rabbis will tell you tithing is no longer valid since it is tied to the temple, the sacrifice and the Levites, all of which no longer exist.

**Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2014/4/13 13:09**

From another new post. Special thanks to Paul for providing some inspiration and insight on the matter...

A Terrible Lie: You need to Tithe to be Blessed

<http://kingjimmyunauthorized.blogspot.com/2014/04/a-terrible-lie-you-need-to-tithe-to-be.html>

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3 NASB)

Have you ever been told that in order to experience God's blessings in your life that you need to do x, y, and z? Does any of the following sound familiar...

If you want to be blessed financially, you need to tithe.

If you want to experience a special touch from God, then you just need to go to listen to so-and-so preach.

If you want to be a super strong Christian full of the Holy Spirit, then you just need to pray 2 hours a day, read 3 chapters of your Bible daily, and regularly fast.

If you want to have a successful ministry, you need to trust God with God sized dreams.

If you want to be freed from sins you habitually struggle with, then you need to go and get deliverance.

If you want to experience peace and joy, then simply do these 10 things.

If you only do ... then only will you have...

The truth of the matter is that all of these things are terrible lies.

The truth of the matter is that everything you could ever possibly need you have already been given and blessed with by Jesus Christ. Re-read Ephesians 1:3 cited above. How does it read to you? Does it say you need to do anything to be blessed? Or does it say you ALREADY ARE blessed?

Here is a truth that regularly escapes us: Everything you could possibly need to do in order to be blessed was already done for you by Jesus Christ in His work on the cross.

There remains nothing left for you to do, other than to walk in and enjoy the blessings God has already richly supplied as a kind of act of grace.

You see, the Bible teaches that when Jesus Christ was crucified, resurrected, and ascended into heaven, that you and I were spiritually made participants with Him during everything He experienced.

When Jesus was crucified, we died with Him on the cross.

When Jesus was resurrected from the dead, we were made to live.

When Jesus Christ ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of God the Father, we too were raised with Him into heavenly places, and are made to presently enjoy all the blessings He currently enjoys as the One who lives forever.

In recent essays I have given considerable attention to the modern day practice of tithing. And I have done so, not because it is some sort of pet issue of mine that I enjoy giving considerable attention to. I've only done so because I believe this particular issue exposes a deeper problem within the church, and magnifies a set of problems that reveal our true spiritual condition, and how immature we truly are.

You see, almost all teaching you will ever hear on tithing from the pulpit these days tells us that the reason we aren't experiencing everything God has for us is because we aren't trusting Him with our finances. If only we would tithe, then the windows of heaven would be open, and we would be blessed financially. If only we would tithe, we would get a promotio

n at work and be able to pay off all of our bills, and experience God's 100 fold blessing.

The days of "if only we would..." are over because of what Jesus Christ has already done.

The truth is that as Christians we don't give in order that the Lord might bless us financially. We give because we are already blessed.

We are already blessed financially because of our union with Jesus Christ, as we sit with Him and enjoy the same life He enjoys sitting in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. We don't need to go chasing down some 100 fold blessing. We have already been blessed 100 times over, and with everything beyond what we could think or ask. We lack nothing.

Therefore, we as Christians give, and do so abundantly, not from our arms being twisted by a preacher employing coercion and guilt tripping us, or fear of "the devourer" unleashing hell in our lives and somehow causing us to be ruined as a result, but we give out of the realization that we've already been blessed financially, and that it is the joy of our heart to do so.

We bless others financially because we have discovered that we are already blessed, and want others to enter into the same joy that we have in the knowledge of Christ.

We don't give in order to tap into God's open heaven. For the doors of heaven have already been thrown open for us when the King of Glory took His place in heaven, and He has invited us to come in and participate with Him in the blessings of that heavenly kingdom.

The only thing that remains for us to do is to open our eyes to see what has already been given to us, to see our true position in Christ, to see the riches that have already been supplied to us, and to live out our lives making the most out of what He has already done and what He has already provided.

We are blessed, therefore we give. And when we give, we don't worry in fear about somehow having less or going without. We have faith that God has already provided us all things, and that He has done so out of the work of Jesus Christ and what He accomplished in the cross, and that He will continue to enable us to always be able to give.

**Re: - posted by PaulWest (), on: 2014/4/13 13:23**

Jimmy, that was one of the best things I've ever read in this forum.

**Re: , on: 2014/4/13 15:50**

Realising that this will sound contradictory and possibly even argumentative I post with some unease. Nevertheless I must post.

I rejected the Wealth, Health and Prosperity gospel some thirty years ago on first hearing it. It was so obviously false that I couldn't even bring myself to try to understand any part of it at all. Today I feel no different, and still speak against this false gospel whenever I have need to do so, for the sake of others.

When I was saved I knew from the very first moment, by an exceptional act of the Father's grace, that I was seated in Christ Jesus at His right hand.

Having asked the question 'who is Christ' I was translated into heaven and found that I was sat on the Lord's knee. Nothing more clear and unshakable could have happened to me which could have taught me something of a wonderful reality which seems to elude so many believers.

In this thread this reality is being spoken of. Yet the experience of the overwhelming majority of believers I have met has been to find no corresponding reality in their lives with the true knowledge, that in Christ we are complete and in Him we are supplied with the fullness of the rich mercy and blessings of the Father.

The worse thing for me over the past thirty years has been listening to fellow believers speaking about this wonderful truth and yet never knowing much of its reality in their lives. I have looked brothers in the eyes and seen that they were groa

ning under a weight and burden of difficulties, finically and in other ways, and asking themselves, 'when will my day come?' Many times I have sought to relieve such brethren and have done so with a willing and fearful heart realising that in some profound way they were missing the very reality which they knew ought to be theirs. It has at times been impossible for me to repeat that which they already understood with their minds and yet did not know in their spiritual minds so as to walk in it. Their faces are etched in my mind and the knowledge of their faithfulness, in that which they had received at the hands of their brethren, still makes me indignant.

For this reason I can say without intending any offence that I am myself offended for all those believers I know who suffer and pain through the inexplicable gap between what they have been taught concerning the fullness of salvation and laying hold of Christ Himself, and their own living experience of being defrauded by their brethren who take from them even the little they have. Many believers are used and abused by even the least of the brethren and yet when these things are taken up in a cry, even the one who is being used becomes offended because they simply cannot imagine their lives without their brethren. So they suffer the offence. When I speak with them in the momentary silence of the finger of God, their countenance speaks of injustice and they cannot fathom it at all.

When a truth is presented so decisively as it is in this thread, yet which for the overwhelming majority of believers, is simply unknown in experience of their lives, the effect is not liberty it is a weight of confusion and added doubt. Not only this, but when this liberty is pressed because it is out of place, the thing becomes a single word 'REST'. None of which is a falsehood of itself, but I say that it is a stumbling stone. The revelation that we are in Christ Jesus seated at the right hand of the Father, and that in Him we have all things which pertain to life and godliness, is both true and it means to enter His rest. It is to cease from ones own labours and it is to know the unimaginable goodness and mercy of the Father in Christ Jesus in your daily life. But simply saying these things is of no true value.

I have no way at all to explain how it is that some do enter into this rest and why so many others, even the overwhelming others, do not come to it. What I can say is that if in order to deal with the offence of tithing, which is of little consequence altogether, even though by compulsion it is an offence, we offend against that which speaks of the very substance of eternity itself. In doing this we will have made offence more important than eternal life. So many times over the years I have asked the Lord how it is that He continues to bless my life and the lives of those I have responsibility over, and each time I realise that it is because of Christ Himself and for no other reason at all. I have fallen and sinned, boasted in the flesh, wrestled with authorities at times and missed doing even the little things often. Yet the Father continues to bless and to pour out His blessing.

What is the relationship between such blessings and the source of those blessings? I believe it is just as simple as seeing the source, even Christ. That desire to know Him and to truly know Him overwhelms every other desire when it is met with the merciful hand of the Father.

This is a terrible thing and a weight and burden to say it.

We must be of such a mind that we truly comprehend that unless the Father Himself leads you, you cannot know Christ in this way of resting in Him. When the Father filled my understanding with the knowledge of His presence in 1984 I was kicking against His Son and openly declaring that hate was more potent and desirable than love. I wrote it down in words and I shouted it from my anger and hatred of that which was good, for no other reason than because I was hated myself.

I asked the Father in 1984 'who is Christ?' Now I ask was this faith? It was not yet faith to believe into Him. It was the mercy of the Father. Then after some hours I knew Christ in visibility and touch. If any man were to ask me today what must I do? I would say cry out to the Father, call upon Him and ask Him to fill you with the Holy Ghost, not for power to bear witness of Christ, but for revelation that you might know His Son Christ Jesus as He is. Rest is that which follows on. But to speak of the rest which is in Christ Jesus and to do so in terms of wrestling with the offences of men will prove to be of no benefit whatsoever. Even if we removed all the offences of men, we would still not know Christ as He is. There is nothing that men can do to make good the lack of faith and the evil desires of the heart. Whether the Father sets you free or ties you down is a matter for the Father and when you know it, of His hand in the rest which is in His Son, there will be no distinction of meaning, because it will all be a true resting from your own labours.

In finality unless the work of the Father in our lives produces true compassion we will ourselves make ruin of everything. That means compassion for the one who is defrauded and compassion for the one who defrauds.

May the Father help that man who makes of this a mystery and thereby puts it beyond the reach of men! May the Father

rebuke that man who makes of this an offence and thereby makes of this a ruination!

**Re: - posted by MaryJane, on: 2014/4/13 18:04**

Jimmy wrote: The only thing that remains for us to do is to open our eyes to see what has already been given to us, to see our true position in Christ, to see the riches that have already been supplied to us, and to live out our lives making the most out of what He has already done and what He has already provided.

We are blessed, therefore we give. And when we give, we don't worry in fear about somehow having less or going without. We have faith that God has already provided us all things, and that He has done so out of the work of Jesus Christ and what He accomplished in the cross, and that He will continue to enable us to always be able to give.

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I appreciated this very much. Thank you for sharing this here with us. Wonderful post.

God bless  
maryjane

**Re: , on: 2014/4/14 0:03**

Yes, great post Jimmy and a very good one from Andrew, too.

Modern theology has separated Christ from His gifts, when in fact, they are one and the same. Christ is the gift(s). He is all in all. He is whatever we need. Christ does not dispense gifts, He is the gift. We receive Him. Christ is Salvation, Christ is grace, He is comfort, He is Deliverance, He is Holiness, Sanctification, Justification. He is everything. He is the personification of everything good that comes down from heaven.

We don't have to hold the Bible up to Jesus and tell Him to prove His word to us. Or remind Him what He said. He came, suffered, died and was resurrected and then gave us the deposit of His Spirit. I would say, He has proven all He needs to prove.

We are bought with a price, and we are now to glorify God in our body and our spirit. We are "slaves of love" to Christ and as "He was in the world, so are we." He was obedient unto death not making demands of His Father, and we are to walk in the same way.

We have Christ, so we have everything!

There are so many people through the centuries that became Christians and their short life after their conversion was one of pain and suffering, yet they knew they had everything in Christ and lived and died expressing that belief in their behavior. Today, we don't think we have everything. We want "health, wealth and prosperity" and (nothing about more of Jesus, mind you) if we don't have that, then we are doing something wrong.

The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: that maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the LORD, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the right seasons. I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore. (Psa 16:5-9, 11)

Godliness with contentment is great gain. (I Tim 6:6)