



Tithing

A Means of Receiving God's Blessings

There is a law in the Book of the Covenant of "Setting aside and consecrating to God the best of the first fruits of all the produce of the soil, the tithes of cattle and sheep's first shearings, the best of the oil and all the best of the wine and wheat. These are to be brought into the house of Yahweh and given to the priest, so that a blessing may rest on one's house."

Even before these laws and regulations were given to the people by Moses, Abraham, the Father of the Chosen race, gave a tithe of all that he possessed to the priest Melchizedek in return for the blessings given to him. (Gen. 14:20)

Jacob made a vow to God to pay a tenth part of all God had given him in return for God's blessings. (Gen. 28:20-22)

All through the Old Testament God's people understood the law of tithing a tenth of all they had in exchange for the blessings God bestowed upon them. They recognized everything had been given to them by God, therefore the first fruits and the best were to be given back to Him. However, they only knew this law as a debt that they owed to God.

Jesus came to perfect the Law and the Prophets and through His life and death presented to His chosen people a new Covenant, "not like the one of old." (Heb. 8:9) Jesus taught tithing as the act of "giving and receiving" and if we enter freely into it we would be given back "good measure, pressed down and shaken together and running over." (Luke 6:38) He described giving as a seed for God to multiply and giving back so needs would be realized. (2 Cor. 9:6-12)

Jesus must have something from us to multiply. If we give Him nothing – nothing times nothing is nothing. In the story of the "Miracle of the Loaves," Jesus received from the boy five loaves and two fishes. He blessed them and had enough to feed the five thousand, with twelve baskets left over. (John 6:1-14)

The boy in the crowd following Jesus was hungry with just enough food for himself, but in his giving, not only was his hunger satisfied but thousands were blessed. Jesus works in the same manner today.

Unfortunately, tithing continues to be understood as something we owe. This is why there is so little joy in our giving. We fail to see what God wants to do for us in return.

St. Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians tells the people of Corinth the blessings to be expected from the collection. "Do not forget thin sowing means thin reaping, the more you sow, the more you reap. Each one should give what he has decided in his own mind, not grudgingly or because he is made to, for God loves a cheerful giver. There is no limit to the blessings which God can send you. He will make sure that you always have all you need for yourselves in every possible circumstance and still have something to spare for all sorts of good works. As Scripture says, he was free in alms giving and gave to the poor, his good deeds will never be forgotten."

"The one who provides seed for the sower and bread for food will provide you with all the seed you want and make the harvest of your good deeds a larger one, and made richer in every way, you will be able to do all the generous things which are the cause of thanksgiving to God." (2 Cor. 9:6-12)

There is a spiritual law in giving just as there is a natural law in planting. If we plant a seed in the ground we expect a harvest. Why? Because we trust the natural law within the seed. Once planted, the seed cracks open, sprouts, breaks through the ground, grows, and then produces a harvest. The more seeds we plant the greater the harvest we will reap. This same law applies to our spiritual planting. The Father takes what we give, multiplies it and gives back to us. This act enables us to receive all God has provided for us through the "richness of His glory." (Phil. 4:19)

Start giving your possessions and treasures to God to be used for the building of His Kingdom. These may be your time, your talents, your money, then watch and see God multiply them to meet your deepest needs.

If we honestly put God first in our life, (Luke 12:22ff) in our family, in our relationships, in our businesses, if we look only to God as our source (2 Cor. 9:10-11) believing that He is faithful to His promises, (Heb. 10:23) we will sow with seeds of faith and we will reap a rich harvest. (Gal. 6:7-10) If we reject an opportunity to give, we lose an opportunity to receive.

"Bring the full tithes and dues into the storehouse so that there may be food in my house, and then see if I do not open the floodgates of heaven for you and pour out blessings for you in abundance." (Mal. 3:10)

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