

Your Motives towards Giving and Tithing

by Peter Salemi

Why do you give or tithes? Is it for your own *personal* gain and that's it? We all want to be blessed by God, in this life as well as the next, as John wrote, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." (3 John 1:2); but what is the *motive* for receiving those blessings?

Why does God bless?

What is the reason why God blesses the person in this life? Is to *hoard* all his or her riches for themselves and not to provide and bless the rest of mankind? Does God operate that way?

Why did God bless Abraham, Isaac and Israel? God says, "and in thee shall *all families of the earth be blessed.*" (Gen 12:3). God would bless Israel so abundantly that all the families of the earth would benefit. God gives so *all* can be blessed. What do you do with your riches? Do you store up for yourself treasure, or do you share with others? Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Mathew 6:21)

God says, "But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." (2 Corinth 9:6). Have you notice that those who give *little* receive nothing in return? I am not just speaking of money, but your time, attention, whatever other things you can give. People who are just into *themselves* are like an ingrown toe nail, it's very ugly. Love is an outward act towards other people, and those that give love abundantly will *receive it back* abundantly.

These days all people do is think about themselves, and what *they* want; they are willing to break up their families, divorce their spouses, for what *they* want. This is lust and greed *not* Love.

But those that love to give know that they are helping other people with the blessings God has given them expecting nothing in return-this is true giving!. In *return*, they will be blessed with more riches, and with those riches continue to give more as his or her riches continue to *increase!*

God Loves a Cheerful Giver

The attitude of a Christian to give must be one of joy, knowing that his generosity will help others in the church and the world. Paul says, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity:* for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinth 9:7).

Notice the attitude one must have to give. If one gives "grudgingly" by grief; with pain and uneasiness of mind, grieving at parting with what is given; or by "necessity," meaning, by "force, by coercion, being obliged to it by the influence, example, or commands of superiors;" (Gill's Commentary). That attitude is *not* the true spirit of giving. No God wants a "cheerful

giver.” It is with this attitude that God will bless the person even more, not hoarding his or her riches for themselves, and “digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.” (Matthew 25:18)

The Parables of the Talents and Pounds (Matthew 25; Luke 19) shows that God when he blesses a person, he wants that person to do something *with* it, mainly the Lord’s work. Jesus said, “For *the kingdom of heaven is* as a man travelling into a far country, *who* called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods....A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

“And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, *Occupy till I come.*” (Matthew 25:14; Luke 19:12-13). Jesus gave his Church instructions to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, do his work “occupy” till he comes. He gave them his “goods,” “The Gospel, *that rich treasure of divine truths, the dispensation of it, and gifts to preach it; all which are Christ's goods and his gifts, and not man's;* and which was in a very eminent manner done, when Christ ascended on high, and received gifts for, and gave them unto men. Just before it, as he was ready to go, he gathered his disciples together; he renewed and enlarged their commission to preach the Gospel; and quickly after it, gave them greater and larger gifts of the Spirit than before; and has been ever since giving ministerial gifts to men, to some more, others less, and which are signified by the talents following.” (Gill’s Commentary, emphasis added).

Those that multiplied, “sowed bountifully” reaped “bountifully.” Those that did nothing with it, Jesus told them, “His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

“Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

“Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents.” (Matthew 25:26-28).

“For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.” (Luke 19:26).

The church of God has been “given” the treasure of the Kingdom of God. We are supposed to share that Gospel with the world (Matthew 28:19). Those who sit on the sidelines and do nothing with it, Jesus says those that have that gift it will be taken away.

What tithes are for?

The tithing system was established in Israel for the ministers to do the work of God. The Levites were God’s “ministers” (Jer 33:21).

The ministers were the ones who preached God’s salvation which is in his law, “And Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levite that taught the good knowledge of the LORD...And with them *he sent* Levites... And they taught in Judah, and *had* the book of the law of the LORD with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah, and taught the people.

“And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that *were* round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat.

“And ye shall know that I have sent this commandment unto you, that my covenant might be with Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

“My covenant was with him of life and peace; and I gave them to him *for* the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before my name.

“The law of truth was in his mouth, and iniquity was not found in his lips: he walked with me in peace and equity, and did turn many away from iniquity.

“For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: *for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.*” (2 Chron 30:22; 2 Chron 17:8, 9; Mal 2:-7).

The Levites were sent by God to teach and preach the knowledge of Salvation, the Law of God. These ministers were supported by the tithes. The tithes were used to support the Gospel message. The Israelites gave to the ministry, so they can be ministered to them, and the Gospel can be preached in Israel.

Paul said the same thing to the church, “If we have sown unto you spiritual things, *is it* a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?

“Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?

“*Even so hath the Lord ordained* that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.” (1 Corinth 9:11, 13-14). Even though the apostle Paul did not use the tithes for himself, he did say the tithes were used to support the work.

How was the attitude of the Israelites giving to the ministry? Why, they were so joyful that Moses had to turn them back from giving to the ministry and the sanctuary, as the scriptures say, “...the people bring *much more than enough for the service of the work*, which the LORD commanded to make.

“And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were *restrained* from bringing.

“For the stuff they had was sufficient *for all the work* to make it, and *too much.*” (Ex 36:5-7).

What a problem to have! Too much is better than to lack. The Israelites had to be “restrained” from bringing more; the Israelites were zealous for the work of God and wanted to give with all gladness. This is the attitude the Christian Church should have when it comes to giving to God.

King David

King David was a man after God’s own heart. He couldn’t do enough for God. Even though God told him that he could not build his house (1 Chron 22:8), the temple of God, David did *not* just leave it alone; instead he gathered all the materials for the work of God. He continued to give to God and the work because God had blessed him tremendously, and with God’s blessings that he received *he gave back to God and his work*. He knew that doing this would bless others, the ministry and the people of Israel and the strangers within the gates of Israel. David had the true spirit of giving in his heart.

“Now, behold, in my trouble *I have prepared for the house of the LORD* an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight;

for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto.” (1 Chron 22:14). David did not store up for himself *alone* the blessings God gave him; he gave back to the work of God and to his country.

What is *first* in your life?

Jesus Christ said, “But seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and *all these things shall be added unto you.*” (Matthew 6:33). God and his righteousness which is his law should be “first” in the life of a Christian, and all things will be added because the Law of God is cause and effect. How you live your life effects others, and the decisions you make. If you live in harmony with those laws they will bless you in everything. This is why the Law and salvation must sought first.

Notice what Jesus said to his disciples who sought after the Kingdom of God first, “Then Peter said, Lo, *we have left all, and followed thee.*”

“And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,

“Who shall not receive manifold more *in this present time*, and in the world to come life everlasting.” (Luke 18:27-29). People that seek the Kingdom *first*, will be blessed in this life and the life to come. It's all about priorities! A few verses before this one, Jesus was speaking of the rich men who would not depart with their money, and hoarded all the riches God gave them.

“How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

“For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” (Luke 18:25-26). They picked money “first” and not the kingdom. So they have riches, but *no* Kingdom. Jesus said those who pick the kingdom *first* will be blessed in this life and the life to come, because God's laws bless you automatically if you keep them.

The great King Solomon, God asked him, “Ask what I shall give thee.” (1 Kings 3:5).

What did Solomon ask of God?

“And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day.

“And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I *am but* a little child: I know not *how* to go out or come in.

“And thy servant *is* in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

“*Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?*” (1 Kings 3:6-9). He told God how he blessed David and how he is blessed to be ruler over his people. David's rulership blessed the people of Israel abundantly.

With this blessing Solomon asked to be added to it, wisdom to govern Israel.

Notice how God reacted, “And the speech *pleased the Lord*, that Solomon had asked this thing. “And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, *and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies*; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment;

“Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.

“And *I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.*

“And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.” (1 Kings 3:10-14). Solomon asked for a blessing that would help his people Israel, and *not for himself*. God gave him that and *riches* as well! God knew Solomon’s heart and where his priorities were, and that’s why Solomon was the richest man in the world at that time.

The Lesson of Tithing

What do you think the whole lesson of tithing is for?

Many evils in this world are due to the fact that people *love* money. Yet many good things occur as well do to the fact that people *love* money. *It can go both ways!* It all boils down to priorities! When we study the incident between the rich young ruler and Christ, one notices that money was the rich man’s *priority* over God! Having money *wasn’t* the sin-money *being his master was!*

After this, the disciples then said this to Jesus, “...we *have left all*, and have followed thee.” (Mark 10:28).

Jesus answered and said, “Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s,

“But *he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time*, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; *and in the world to come* eternal life.” (Mark 10:29-30). Jesus said “in this time” people will receive all sorts of riches, and not just material, if our *priorities* are straight, that God comes first, *not* money. God is our master, and when we learn *to let go of money as the disciples did*; when we learn to do that, then we can receive *vast amounts of money*, and be ITS MASTER, and *not* money ruling us! THIS IS THE LESSON WITH TITHING!

Not just with tithing either; Only when you learn to *let go of your man made spiritual things*, your traditions and ideas about God and the bible, will God shower you with blessings of truth and knowledge of salvation and the word of God. God says, “Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns....Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your *heart*,” (Jer 4:3, 4).

Jesus said, “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” (Matthew 13:11) The knowledge of God is “given” like material wealth,

because the disciples had, “good ground” (Matthew 13:23). *They purged their minds* and “left all” of their traditions behind to follow Christ and receive *his* message. The others could *not* let go, so no gift was given, their, “...heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes *they have closed*” (v.15).

Money should *not* be a master over anyone, but unfortunately for most it is. The love for money and the pursuit of it, people are willing to be immoral to get it to satisfy every sinful craving they have, and the gain of material things. Yet *the pursuit for money to do good*, most people do *not* do; for helping people get out of debt, or money for a surgery, homelessness, funding a ministry to preach the Gospel etc.. No, for most part people pursue money for satisfying their carnal desires. Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (Matthew 6:24). Now does this contradict what Solomon said about enjoying wealth and riches? (see Eccl 3:13) Was Jesus being a hypocrite since he had a “coffer of money”?

The word for “hate” means, “...in NT to regard with *less affection, love less, esteem less*, Matt 6:24; Luke 14:26 hate.” (Mounce Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the NT, emphasis added; see also Strong’s #3404). There are different *degrees* of love or affection for a person or a thing.

Clarke’s Commentary states about this verse, “The word hate has the *same sense here as it has in many places of Scripture; it merely signifies to love less* - so Jacob loved Rachel, but hated Leah; i.e. he loved Leah much less than he loved Rachel. God himself uses it precisely in the same sense: Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated; i.e. I have loved the posterity of Esau less than I have loved the posterity of Jacob: which means no more than that God, in the course of his providence, gave to the Jews greater earthly privileges than he gave to the Edomites, and chose to make them the progenitors of the Messiah, though they ultimately, through their own obstinacy, derived no more benefit from this privilege than the Edomites did.” (emphasis added).

In *varying* degrees, we love or show *affection* for our homes, cars, money, children, parents, God etc.... *There are varying degrees and kinds of love!* Loving our parents; is this evil and does it takes the place of loving God? No! It *priorities!* Jesus said, “He that loveth father or mother *more than me* is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter *more than me* is not worthy of me.” (Matt 10:37). Love and trust in God *first* (Deut 6:5). Loving your Parents, dog, cat, home, love them to a *lesser degree* compared to God; there are *varying degrees of love or affection* of these things, including money! *Prioritize* all of them in correct order.

Jesus said *not* to have money become our *master*; instead ***WE are to control money and not the other way around! The only master we should have is God!*** As this source rightly says, “Observe also that it is *not the possession of wealth that he [Jesus] condemns, but the serving it, making it an object of thought and pursuit. Gathering it and using it in the service of and according to the will of God is not serving mammon* (cf. Weiss, ’Matthaus-Ev.’).” (Pulpit Commentary). ***We are*** the masters of money, and making it, pursuing it, and using it for good and for the service of God and humanity *is no sin*, but is God’s will!

This is the whole lesson of tithing! *To let go of your possessions and give them to God, that God is your master not riches!* A person who tithes and is *not* blessed by God is due to the fact that

they are tithing with a wrong attitude, “God loveth a *cheerful giver*” (2 Corinth 9:7). Learn to let go, and God will bless you financially!

Elijah’s Day

In the time of Elijah during the great famine, God sent Elijah to a woman of Zidon. This woman was preparing her last meal for her and her son before they died due to the famine.

Elijah says to her, “Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand.” (1 Kings 17:11).

She says to him, “As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.” (v.12). She had nothing but one last meal to eat, and Elijah was asking her *to give it to him*.

Notice the challenge, “And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go *and* do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake *first*, and bring *it* unto me, and *after* make for thee and for thy son. “For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.*” (vv.13-14). Elijah said give to him “first” and then “after” they will eat. Can you imagine giving your last meal to a prophet of God, and him telling you that if you feed him *first*, you will eat and never go hungry again?

In my experience, I noticed from God’s people that, as soon as people get into financial trouble, *the tithes are the first thing they stop paying!* Shows the *motive* of people when it comes to paying tithes! God is *not* first, in *good times or bad*. They do not have the same faith the Zidonian woman had, where she gave to *God first*, in the most *terrible* time, a time of great famine, “And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat *many* days.

“*And* the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.” (vv.15-16). Her faith saved her and her needs were met, for God was first in her life as Jesus said we must do.

People say “I can't afford to tithe. ” The Bible shows *you can't afford not to!* Many people tell us that if they had money they would tithe to our ministry; and I always respond, “That's the whole reason why you don't have money is because you don't tithe.” God is not first in their life.

Like the Zidonian woman of Elijah's day, there was a poor widow who gave to God that Jesus was watching, “And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

“And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

“And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, *That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:*

“For all *they* did cast in of their *abundance*; but she of her *want* did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living. ” (Mark 12:41-44). People in good times when they had abundance gave, but this woman in bad times still gave and Jesus said, “she of her want [need] did cast in all that she had,

even all her living. ” Like the Zidonian woman, she needed God to help and bless her, and she knew of the promise God made about giving and tithing, and she gave away all, and trusted to providence for immediate supply.

Why do people tithe? Is it because of this promise from God to those who tithe, “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.*” (Mal 3:10). Question is, what will you do with those blessings?

Will you dig into the sand and do nothing?

Store up treasure for yourself and not the kingdom? (Matthew 6:19-20)

Will the riches God gives you become your god that’s costs you the kingdom?

Or will you use those riches God has blessed you with, to give to the work of God and the preaching of the Gospel to all nations; to preach and teach the knowledge of God and help the church and the world? You will be blessed and your needs met, and others will be blessed as well!

There are two ways to approach this? The way of the rich young ruler who rejected Christ?

Or the way of Solomon who took the blessings of God and bless others?

Not Blessed by God?

Why do people who tithe *not* receive blessings? Could it be their motives? Are the motives of some people to receive the blessings then they can gather for *themselves* and help no one or the work of God? Are they just out for themselves?

God told Israel, “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

“Ye *are* cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, *even* this whole nation.” (Mal 3:8-9). People who tithe and God has blessed, they were just out for themselves, they have stolen from God; they kept the blessing for themselves, and God says, “You shall not steal.” The blessings God gives he wants us to invest it, so it multiplies for the kingdom of God.

Most people tithe because they read that God will, “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.*” (Mal 3:10). They give because their motive is, they want something in return, instead of helping people with the tithes. Why is it people can't read that verse and say, “Great more blessings means more tithes so the work can grow and we can help people”? Instead they look at it as becoming rich and ending up serving mammon and not God!

Jesus said about the main principle of giving, “And if ye lend *to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye?* for sinners also lend to sinners, *to receive as much again.* “...*lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great,* and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to the evil.*” (Luke 6:34-35). If your true motivation for giving is expecting something in return this is *not* true giving, Jesus said sinners do this, *not* the children of the highest. Christian give to help and bless other people as God has blessed them expecting nothing in return, and our reward will be great!

When God blesses you when you tithe, you are to *continue* to tithe, and God will bless you more, because your motive, your heart is right. *You tithe because you know it will help the church, the work, and the world.* It multiplies because it helps people with the spreading Gospel, and the “fruits of righteousness” are produced.

“Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for *your* food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)” (2 Corinth 9:10). These are the riches of the Kingdom of God, the end result of our investment, “For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by [Grk. because of] them.” (Rom 10:5).

Jesus said, “and I will give unto every one of you according to your works... and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. ” (Rev 2:23; 22:12). Nothing is done without “works.” God's works- his *law* we apply to our lives, and we will be blessed. God told Israel, “because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, *and in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.*”(Deut 16:15).

Christians must get out of their minds that there is no labor involved when it comes to the Christian religion. Jesus said, “*Labour not* for the meat which perisheth, *but* for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life... .” (John 6:27). Labor is involved, and if more Christians understood this, the Church would be a powerful institution in this world.

Jesus said to his followers, “pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he *would send forth labourers* into his harvest.”(Luke 10:2). The Christian church are laborers, not people that sit around and wait for things to happen. The Church labors and the Lord blesses the works of our labor.

Why do you keep the Tithing Law?

The Apostle Paul says that God “loveth a cheerful giver.” The tithes system is part of the law of God. But why do you keep the law? Do you do it *grudgingly, or of necessity as Paul says?* No the law of God is not to be kept that way. That is an empty vain faith.

God says, “And thou shalt *love* the LORD thy God with *all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*” (Deut 6:5).

God’s law IS love, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments:” (1 John 5:3).

We must keep the law of God with all our heart, soul and might. We keep the law because it *shows that we love God*. This should be our motivation to keep the law, including the tithing law.

We do it because God is first, God is who we love, and God says to do it, and we must *want* to be obedient because we love him and we do it with everything we got.

If the whole church did this, the church of God would be powerful, doing a powerful work.

People do not realize how powerful keeping the law is! It is the way of blessing and riding the high places of the earth. God told Israel, “And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

“And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.” Does the church realize the kind of power they actually have in their hands by keeping the law of God?

So the next time you give, ask yourself what are your motives? Is it for greed, or for God?