

# Financial Principles of the Bible

## Part 6: *What* is the tithe and *where* do we tithe? (part 2)

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### Full Text (for reading on your own)

#### *God's Mindset about Money*

We are learning about tithing as part of an overall series on the principles of Biblical finances. How God views money - and therefore how we should view money. It is very important that we get the same mind God has about money. Jesus only mentions two people that you can serve: God and Mammon. He said "you will serve one or the other and you cannot serve both!" You will either "hate one and love the other or be loyal to one and despise the other."

When you look at the origin of the word "Mammon" it is much deeper and broader than just "money." It refers to a demon-god using money to grab your soul. It is the name of gods in pagan religions where they worshiped him because they wanted this God to prosper them. Jesus personifies Mammon and says you can (and many people will) serve it. He is referring really more to the spirit of it than money itself. Money really does have a spirit attached to it. Therefore, God gives us principles in His Word about how to view money and how to deal with money so that it purifies our involvement with it. So that we are controlling it - and not the other way around.

As it relates to money (i.e., wealth, possession, provisions, material goods), God is not opposed to you possessing things - at any level . . . He is opposed to the things possessing us. That's the whole issue in a nutshell.

There is more to it than that - like how do we handle it if we have a lot of it. And God does have desires for us in that: namely that we would not keep it all to ourselves. That we would be a vessel of His goodness in the earth. That we would be like Him - a true reflection of Him on the earth. That means we will be abundant, hilarious givers. Loving giving! Not covetous, not greedy.

Remember, it is not necessarily greedy to want nice things. You'd have to look at your own heart to determine if its greedy. There is nothing wrong with wanting things. God put things on the earth - they are part of God's design. The issue isn't the thing . . . the issue is does the thing have you? One way to find that out is to consider this scenario: If God spoke to your heart and said give \_\_\_\_\_ away, would you end up doing it? Don't be so critical of yourself if you'd have a little bit of a hesitation in giving it away. That's OK. Where would you end up? The problem is if you say "I can't do that. I worked hard for that."

## *The Tithe: the Foundation of our Financial House*

Knowing God's mindset about money is the bedrock to our financial house. The foundation of our financial house is the tithe. That said, some of our brothers and sisters in Christ passionately teach that tithing is a deception. That is nothing to run away from. In fact, Pastor Brad scours their arguments to make sure there is nothing he is missing in his understanding of the scriptures and also to better understand any specific points in their arguments that he may need to clarify for our body.

After deliberately reading many many articles that teach "against" the tithe, Pastor Brad found that virtually every article he read had a common argument against the tithe: that "tithing is from the Law." Their perspective is that anyone who teaches tithing is therefore putting legalism on a believer and/or preachers are using it to bring money into the church.

BUT, tithing is in fact NOT from the Law! The Law came into effect 2500 years after Adam and Eve. And we see 3 clear examples of people tithing prior to the Law being given to Moses! The three tithing events were roughly 2500 years, 1400 years, and 600 years before the Law ever existed! Tithing did not even come from the Law. The Law was simply the period of time in which much of what God had said to man was recorded. It is beautiful actually to be able to see in writing what tithing is all about. There were also other things under the Law that were ONLY for the time of the Law and therefore we are not under. For example, sacrificing animals was for the time of the Law as a type-and-shadow of Christ (the Lamb of God) who came and took away the sins of the World ... He did not cover them only. So, we don't need to sacrifice lambs any more. The tithe is completely different than animal sacrifices. It is a principle of God that has existed from the beginning.

### *WHAT is the Tithe?*

Tithe (in Hebrew *ma'aser*) comes from the root word *Asar* - which means 10. Adding "*ma*" as a prefix is like adding "th" to the end of "ten." *Ma'aser* is "tenth." So tithe, means 1/10. It is 10%. Not 17%, 12%, 4%, or any other percent. To "tithing" some other percent would miss the essence of what word even means. Here are several scriptures that bear that out:

*"And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord." (Lev. 27:32)* The shepherd would count sheep by making his flock all walk through a narrow gate. As the sheep passed through the gate one-by-one they could be easily counted. Here we see that every 10th sheep was "holy to the Lord." Why? Because every 10th sheep was the tithe for that shepherd!

In Gen. 28:22, Jacob says *"And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You."* The tithe as a very specific percentage: a tenth.

### *WHOSE is the Tithe?*

*"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's. It is holy to the Lord."* (Lev. 27:30) That last line "it is holy to the Lord" should be very loud to us. It is HOLY to the Lord! Tithes are a precious thing to the Lord. That means that we have the ability, opportunity, and privilege to bring something to the Lord that He calls "holy." To be able to walk into the throne room of God and bring something to Him that He didn't say was scrap, but instead says "that's holy to Me." Notice also that this verse says the tithe "IS the Lord's." In other words, notice that it does not say "it **will be** the Lords once you bring it to Him." It is the Lord's while it is in your possession. Remember the same principle from Lev. 27:32 . . . even before the shepherd set aside every tenth animal of his flock, the tithe was already destined to be "holy to the Lord." While the tithe is still in your possession, the Lord says the tithe is His.

The language in Malachi 3 further bears the ownership of the tithe out. *"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings . . . Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, (Mal. 3:8-10a)* How is it possible to rob someone of something they did not own? Yet, God says we "have robbed Him in tithes and offerings." That means that the tithes are His. He owns them; otherwise, he could not have been robbed!

The tithe is not our own. The tithe is His. We are not really "giving" the tithe to the Lord (in the sense of giving an offering, for instance). We more accurately "bring" the tithe to the Lord because the tithe is His!

### *WHERE do we Tithe?*

OK, we've looked at "what" is the tithe and "whose" is the tithe. Let's now learn about "where" do we tithe from multiple scriptures:

- *"But you shall seek the place where the Lord your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to put His name for His dwelling place; and there you shall go. **There you shall take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes,**"* (Deut. 12:5-6)
- *"But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry **the tithe**, or if **the place where the Lord your God chooses to put His name** is too far from you, when the Lord your God has blessed you, then you shall exchange it for money, take the money in your hand, and **go to the place which the Lord your God chooses.**"* (Deut. 14:24-25) Again, we are clearly instructed to take our tithe and "go to the place which the Lord chooses!"

- *“And it shall be, when you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you shall bring from your land that the Lord your God is giving you, and put it in a basket and **go to the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide**. And you shall go to the one who is priest in those days, and say to him . . .”* (Deut. 26:1-3) The Hebrew word for “chooses” is *bachar* meaning “select.” God selects the place we bring our tithes! The Hebrew word for “abide” is *shakan* meaning “to reside, permanently stay, to dwell.” In verse 3, we see that when we go to that place where God has selected to make His name abide, we will find the priest there. Where was the priest? He was in the temple. That’s where the Lord chose to make His name abide to the people. They would go to the temple and hear the Word of the Lord. That is what this verses talking about.
- *“But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety, then there will be the place where the Lord your God chooses to make His name abide. There you shall bring **all** that I command you: your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes . . . **Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; but in the place which the Lord chooses . . .”*** (Deut. 12:10-14) Obviously you can do whatever you want to with this, but God has made it clear where the tithe goes. We see it is:
  - Where the Lord chooses to make His name abide (Deut. 12, 14, and 26)
  - Where the priest is (Deut. 26)
  - And, in this verse, where would they have brought their burn offerings and sacrifices. (Deut. 12)

So where is the tithe to go? To the temple of course! Tithes are to be given at a specific location and we are to “take heed” to not offer them in any old place along our journey to give them to the place they were intended to go!

Since the tithe is the Lord’s, if we do what we want to do with it - and not what God told us to do with it, we have robbed Him. Which is exactly what the Lord says: it’s Mine and I’ve told you where it goes. If we do whatever we want to do with it, we’re robbing Him.

So, what about giving to people that have blessed you, or to great ministers that are out there, or neighbors that can’t pay their rent - or the poor that need to be fed? Should we not give to them? The Bible clearly says we should do that but it refers to those as offerings . . . it is a “freewill offering.” We can do what we want with it, when we want, and where we want! That is not true of the tithe. The tithe is the Lord’s, it is holy to Him and we are to do what He says to do with it. Period. Specific.

## WHY do we Tithe?

Here is a list of 7 reasons WHY we tithe. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but 7 Pastor Brad has learned from the the Lord in his 31 years of tithing. He has learned them over time and there is no particular order to it, but perhaps the last one is the most important reason (don't peak!) So why do we tithe?

1. *It is an act of obedience.* We have a God that we declare to be the Lord of our life and He says to tithe. And when we tithe it is first and foremost an act of obedience. It demonstrates and releases our faith in God specifically as our Provider! It is an act of obedience which declares and demonstrates to God our faith in Him as our Provider! "I believe Your Word concerning the tithe and here is my proof of that." Faith without works is dead. Just saying it is not faith.
2. *It is the practical plan of God for His Church.* He says in Malachi 3 that we are to tithe so that "*that there may be food in my house.*" We bring all the tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in God's house. You may say "I don't really like the way this church handles the finances so I am going to take my tithe somewhere else." Is that our decision to make? It's not given to us! God says "the tithe is Mine, do what I tell you to do with it." He is not asking us, with all of our great rationale to decide why we don't think we should. He says "do it that there may be food in My house." If that house is not handling the finances well, who has to answer to God for that? The house! Not us! If we are going to the church God has called us to go to, what they do with their finances is between them and God. What we do with His tithe is between us and God! (As an aside, you should not be in a church unless you believe the Lord has called you to go to that church. AND you do not leave a church until the Lord tells you to leave a church. If you are going to the church the Lord has directed you to attend and you don't like what's going on you can pray about it or keep your mouth shut. And you need to stay in a sweet spirit the whole time! If someone has left a church that you're in and they start talking with you about someone who is in that church - negatively - you need to cut that off ASAP. That is the Devil trying to get in. Even a sweet brother or sister in Christ can take up the wrong spirit about these sorts of things and then try to pass that foul spirit along to you. That is the enemy working and you need to immediately cut that conversation off.)
3. *For the blessings over our finances.* Malachi 3 says to bring all the tithe into the storehouse "*that there may be food in my house*" AND "*prove me now in this' says the Lord of Hosts 'if I will not open to you the windows of heaven and pour out for you blessing.'*" The Hebrew does NOT say "I will pour out blessing such that there will not be room enough to receive it." The actual Hebrew says "and I will pour out for you blessing, and that not enough." So what's the rest then? "AND I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes." Prov. 3:9-10 also promises abundance when we honor God with the first fruits of all our increase.

4. *It brings protection over our finances.* Remember from Malachi 3 that the blessings were “not enough” in God’s eyes. He also promises to “rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground.” What does that tell us? That the devourer would want to destroy the fruit of our ground! Do not be deceived, the enemy is actively involved in destroying people’s financial well being. For example, when Pastor Brad was a baby in the Lord he went from tithing and being all about His Word to promising God that he was not to read His Word, tell anyone about Jesus, or tithe until God told him what was going on as it related to being rejected by his family and friends when he shared the Lord with them. The ultimatum opened Brad up to the work of the enemy in his life and 6 months later he had a nervous breakdown and had gone \$70,000 in debt. It is unscriptural to believe God did that to Brad, He didn’t. Brad simply flung the door wide open to the devil with his ultimatum / decision to reject God’s ways. So 6 months later, Brad changed his mind and asked God to forgive Him and the anxiety left him instantaneously; he was healed of a nervous breakdown in the blink of an eye. He then remembered his debt. He asked God to help and he immediately heard God say “tithe.” Within that day, 3 other people who had no idea what God had told Brad confirmed the same thing: “tithe.” Brad committed to God that day that he would tithe. “Every dollar I make, the rest of my life, the first dime is yours.” And he meant it. In the next two *weeks*, Brad’s business produced more than it had produced in any two *month combination* previously! About a year later, Brad was on a nationally syndicated program to hear how he had come into so much success selling cameras! When Brad made that decision to tithe to the Lord, it brought a hedge of protection around his business and it stopped the devil dead in his tracks from hurting him - and the Lord’s blessing started pouring into his life!

As a note, this is not legalism. Some people may read into this promise from Malachi 3 “you have to pay God to protect you.” That is not what it is at all! This is a covenant relationship with God. It is a covenant based in FAITH. You and I receive nothing from the Lord apart from faith - including your salvation. To say “why doesn’t God just protect my finances whether I tithe or not - because He loves me” is exactly the same as saying “why doesn’t God just save me without my believing in Him, without my asking Jesus to come into my life?” “Why doesn’t God just baptize me in the Holy Spirit whether I ask for it or not?” So, why doesn’t He just do it? Being baptized in the Holy Spirit is a good thing. Salvation is a good thing, after all. “Why doesn’t God just bestow finances on me whether I give or not?” “Why doesn’t God let it go about whether I forgive people or not?” On and on it goes. EVERYTHING we get from the Lord we get by faith! Look at Hebrews 11, which vividly describes the relationship that we have with God.

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.*

*By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks.*

*By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him” for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Heb. 11:1-6)*

Everyone of God’s words are filled with faith, but understand that it is the faith that is the power inside of the word! The word is the carrier. Inside of it is faith - that causes the miracles! The word is the vessel and if there is faith inside of it, it will produce what that word says. If there is not faith, it will produce nothing. So, it’s not really the word, it’s the faith in the word . . . but all of God’s words are filled with faith! It is not difficult or even extremely difficult to please God apart from faith . . . it is IMPOSSIBLE! Why? Because it is a relationship of faith between us and God. This is how Heaven works! Faith is the currency of Heaven. You can try to print your own dollar bills in your inkjet printer, but they will produce nothing! You have to use the actual currency of this country if you want to buy and sell. In Heaven, you must use its currency and its currency is faith! *“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourself.”* (James 1:22) The Kingdom of God is an active participation with God. It’s not passive. James tells us it’s the “doer” that will be the one that gets blessed. God says “my son, my daughter, I want you to tithe as an act of your obedience to Me over your finances.” God is asking “do you trust me with your finances, do you believe in me, or will you bow to the spirit of Mammon?” “No Lord, it’s to YOU I bow.” We show that by giving the tithe. It’s a 10th of our income - a heavy commitment - a decision we have to make by faith. Jesus told Peter “if you believe, come” and Peter stepped out on the water. It was when Peter stepped out of the boat that he demonstrated his faith. Jesus said “why did you doubt?” God is calling us to believe in Him and when we act in faith and say “Jesus I believe you died for me; I ask you to come into my life and be my Lord” then the Spirit of God is released and causes the new birth on the inside of you! Not one second before. When you believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and say “Father, yes!” then the baptism of the Holy Spirit comes. When you give by faith, then it shall it be given unto you “good measure, shaken down, pressed together, and running over shall men give into your bosom.” It does not say “it will come and then give.” It says “give!” and it “shall be given unto you!” Tithe and the protection will come! Tithe and the blessing will come! This the Word of the Lord. It’s a covenant relationship. It’s beautiful! It’s awesome! Do not make the mistake of putting it into the category of “that’s legalism.” No, it’s an awesome relationship of faith that we have with our Father!

5. To deliver us from the spirit of Mammon. (see earlier in this message for more on this point).
6. To develop and maintain a spirit of gratitude. By constantly bringing our tithe before God in the way that He says to do it (more on that in the next message) it causes us to rehearse God's blessings and provision in our life. That keeps you in a spirit of gratitude for all the blessings that you have. It's powerful!
7. It is an act of worship. Tithing is one of many ways to worship God! Deut. 26:10 talks about this specifically: "*and now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O Lord, have given me.*' Then you shall set it before the Lord your God, and worship before the Lord your God." We worship God with the tithe!

The tithe is so important to our financial well-being, that it is really important to take the time to truly understand the tithe. If in any way this whole teaching is in any way coming off as law or legalism either we are doing a poor job presenting it or you have a "filter" and you are taking that way. Please know that there is no law / legalism in this message. The tithe is a beautiful protection and blessing from the Lord that has been given to us for one purpose: He wants to bless us! God has set up the tithe to bless us and protect us in a fallen world. Our hearts want to go towards Mammon - to be snatched by Mammon - but the Lord has set up the tithe.

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## Text Summary (for reading as a group)

It is very important that we get the same mind God has about money. Jesus only mentions two people that you can serve: God and Mammon. When you look at the origin of the word “Mammon” it refers to a demon-god using money to grab your soul. Therefore, God gives us principles in His Word about how to view money and how to deal with money so that it purifies our involvement with it. God is not opposed to you possessing things - at any level . . . He is opposed to the things possessing us.

Knowing God’s mindset about money is the bedrock to our financial house. The foundation of our financial house is the tithe. Some of our brothers and sisters in Christ have a common argument against the tithe: that “tithing is from the Law.” BUT, tithing is in fact NOT from the Law! We see 3 clear examples of people tithing 2500, 1400, and 600 years prior to the Law being given to Moses! The tithe is a principle of God that has existed from the beginning of man.

So, what is the tithe? Tithe (in Hebrew *ma’ aser*) comes from the root word *Asar* - which means 10. Adding “*ma*” as a prefix is like adding “th” to the end of “ten.” *Ma’ aser* is “tenth.” So tithe means 1/10 or 10%. Not 17%, 12%, 4%, or any other percent. To “tithe” some other percent would miss the essence of what the Hebrew word even means.

Whose is the tithe? “*And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s. It is holy to the Lord.*” (Lev. 27:30) The language in Malachi 3 further bears the ownership of the tithe out. God says we “have robbed Him in tithes and offerings.” That means that the tithes are His. He owns them; otherwise, he could not have been robbed! The tithe is God’s. We are not really “giving” the tithe to the Lord (in the sense of giving an offering, for instance). We more accurately “bring” the tithe to the Lord because the tithe is His!

Where do we tithe? We see 3 characteristics of the place He has chosen for us to bring the tithe:

- Where the Lord chooses to make His name abide (Deut. 12, 14, and 26)
- Where the priest is (Deut. 26)
- Where would they have brought their burn offerings and sacrifices. (Deut. 12)

So where is the tithe to go? To the temple of course! Tithes are to be given at a specific location. If we do whatever we want to do with it, we’re robbing Him. Surely we can also make “freewill offerings” to the poor, the needy, those that have blessed you, etc. With a freewill offering, we can do what we want with it, when we want, and where we want! That is not true of the tithe. The tithe is the Lord’s, it is holy to Him and we are to do what He says to do with it. Very specific.

Here is a list of 7 reasons WHY we tithe.

1. *It is an act of obedience.* Tithing declares and demonstrates to God our faith in Him as our Provider! “I believe Your Word concerning the tithe and here is my proof of that.”
2. *It is the practical plan of God for His Church.* He says in Malachi 3 that we are to tithe so that “*that there may be food in my house.*” We bring all the tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in God’s house. If that house is not handling the finances well, who has to answer to God for that? The house! What they do with the finances is between them and God. What we do with His tithe is between us and God!
3. *For blessings over our finances.* Malachi 3 says to bring all the tithe into the storehouse “*that there may be food in my house*” AND “*‘prove me now in this’ says the Lord of Hosts ‘if I will not open to you the windows of heaven and pour out for you blessing.’*” Prov. 3:9-10 also promises abundance when we honor God with the first fruits of all our increase.
4. *It brings protection over our finances.* Do not be deceived, the enemy is actively involved in destroying people’s financial well being. Remember from Malachi 3 that the blessings were “*not enough*” in God’s eyes. He ALSO promises to “*rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground.*” As a note, this is not legalism. This is a covenant relationship with God. It is a covenant based in FAITH. EVERYTHING we get from the Lord we get by faith! Faith is the currency of Heaven. James tells us it’s the “doer” that will be the one that gets blessed. When you give by faith, then it shall it be given unto you. It does not say “it will come and then give.” Tithe and the protection will come! This the Word of the Lord. It’s an awesome relationship of FAITH that we have with our Father!
5. *To deliver us from the spirit of Mammon.*
6. *To develop and maintain a spirit of gratitude.* By constantly bringing our tithe before God it causes us to rehearse God’s blessings and provision in our life. That keeps you in a spirit of gratitude for all the blessings that you have.
7. *It is an act of worship.* Tithing is one of many ways to worship God! Deut. 26:10 talks about this specifically: “*Then you shall set it (the tithe) before the Lord your God, and worship before the Lord your God.*” We worship God with the tithe!

Please know that there is no law / legalism in this message. The tithe is a beautiful protection and blessing from the Lord that has been given to us for one purpose: He wants to bless us!

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## Points to Ponder . . .

- What are some scriptures that help us understand God's mindset about money / possessions / wealth?
- What scriptures make it clear that tithing is not "from the Law" although much about it was recorded during the time of the Law?
- How do we know the tithe is meant to be 1/10th?
- What are the scriptural characteristics of the place which God has chosen for us to bring the tithes?
- How does God's tithe practically support His ministry on this earth?
- Scripturally, how do we know that tithing for financial blessing and protection is not an example of legalism but of faith?