

Why I Quit Tithing

I grew up in a home where tithing was as natural as breathing. I never questioned the legitimacy of this practice. When I took my first outside the home job, I automatically gave the first ten percent of my wages to the church. This system worked fine through my junior high, high school and college years.

But when I became a young adult, I decided I could no longer tithe. Let me share with you my reasons for not tithing.

First Reason: Tithing Doesn't Sufficiently Express My Love for the Lord.

Giving the first tenth of our income to the Lord's work is an act of love for him. Tithing is not mere obedience to a law.

Some people don't tithe because they regard tithing as an Old Testament law. They reason that since we live in the New Testament era, tithing isn't important and doesn't matter. When I first heard this logic I decided to research the background of tithing. Here's what I found.

About 600 years before Moses wrote the law, Abraham lived in a Middle Eastern city named Ur. Like everyone else of his day, Abraham worshipped idols and knew nothing of an invisible God. Nevertheless, when the Lord graciously spoke to his spirit, Abraham followed this unseen God's instructions to move to Israel. Love for his heavenly Leader grew and grew. He learned how to please this holy God who was so very different from manmade gods.

Abraham once met Melchizedek, a priest of God most high. In Genesis 14:20 Scripture records, "Abram gave him a tenth of everything." That's right! Abram tithed even though there was no law saying he should. So, why did he tithe? *Tithing expressed his devotion to the God who loved him!*

Why did the Lord use Moses to write "a tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord"? ⁽¹⁾ Because the Lord wanted to give us direction in how to express our love for him. In other words, tithing is the minimal declaration of our feelings for God; as love for him increases, so does our giving. Therefore, I quit tithing because 10 percent failed to sufficiently express my love for God. So I increased my giving to 15 percent of my income. At other times Delores and I give much more than that.

God's laws tell us how to obey him. Carrying out his law fills us with God's grace so that we obey him with hilarious joy. Tithing or giving 15 percent or 20 percent or 50 percent of our income to the Lord shows forth our love for him.

There you have it. I believe in tithing, but I go way beyond 10 percent in order to show the Lord how much I love him.

Second Reason: Tithing Doesn't Sufficiently Involve Me in Carrying out the Great Commission

Before returning to his heavenly Father, the resurrected Jesus gave us some very clear commands. We call these *The Great Commission*.

“Go and make disciples of all nations,” Matthew 28:19.

“Be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth,” Acts 1:8.

These verses assign us the job of spreading abroad the message about him. Why? Because Jesus announced, “No one comes to the Father except through me.”⁽²⁾ Then, Acts 4:12 records, “There is no other name under heaven...by which we must be saved.”

In view of people's need to hear about Jesus, Delores and I financially support as many missionaries as possible. This giving involves us in bringing the gospel to those we will never meet and whose language we will never speak.

So there it is. We believe in tithing, but we don't practice it. We want to give much more than ten percent so we can carry out Jesus' command to send the good news around the world.

Third Reason: Tithing No Longer Sufficiently Demonstrates How Deeply I Honor the Lord

Proverbs 3:9 commands us to, “Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.” Giving to God isn't a religious habit or duty. Giving honors the Creator who sustains our very existence. “In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.”⁽³⁾ Tithing acknowledges our total dependence on the Lord. As our dedication to Jesus increases, our desire to more adequately honor him compels us to go beyond tithing.

So now you know. Tithing is God's ingenious method for all of us to honor him. However, don't be surprised when you want to give 100 percent of all you have and all you are to the Lord who loves you.

Fourth Reason: Tithing Limits My Capacity to Receive from God

Some people fear expecting God to reward their giving. They feel selfish when anticipating a blessing from God in return for giving to God.

Contrariwise, tithes and offerings demonstrate our trustworthiness with the material possessions God bestows on us. Jesus declared, “Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much.”⁽⁴⁾ Faithful, systematic tithing springs out of our loyalty to God, not an effort to earn favor from God. Our

trustworthiness with the blessings God grants us enlarges our capacity to receive more responsibility from him. When we prove “faithful with a few things,” the Lord puts us “in charge of many things.” ⁽⁵⁾

“You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion.” ⁽⁶⁾ God commits his resources to enriching faithful stewards who bountifully refresh others. ⁽⁷⁾

So, Dee and I believe Jesus’ words, “give, and it will be given to you.” ⁽⁸⁾ We feel embarrassed to not expect the blessings God repeatedly promises to lavish on tithers.

Footnotes:

1. Leviticus 27:30
2. John 14:6
3. Job 12:10
4. Luke 16:10
5. Matthew 25:21
6. 2 Corinthians 9:11
7. Proverbs 11:25
8. Luke 6:38

