

Navigating the Tough Issues With God, Your Family, and Community

“Heart and Treasure”

1 Chronicles 29:14-17, Deuteronomy 14:22-29 & 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

-TOUGH ISSUES: Decisions, Time mgt, Priorities, Purity, Conflict, Stewardship of money ☺

***Main Point: God wants your heart, not your money. He wants your everything. The money you give to the Lord through His Church is just a reflection of your worship and how much He has of your heart.**

READ 1 Chronicles 29:14-17 David grateful at Israel’s generosity toward donations of the first Temple.

“But who am I and who are my people that we should ¹⁴be able to offer as generously as this? For all things come from You, and from Your hand we have given to You. ¹⁵For we are strangers before You, and temporary residents, as all our fathers were; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no hope. ¹⁶Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided to build You a house for Your holy name, it is from Your hand, and everything is Yours. ¹⁷Since I know, my God, that You put the heart to the test and delight in uprightness, I, in the integrity of my heart, have willingly offered all these *things*; so now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here, make *their offerings* willingly to You.”

-Believe it or not, the subject of money and possessions are controversial topics. ☺

-Believe it or not, the subject of money and possessions are also the most talked about subjects in the Bible — more than prayer, faith or salvation. WHY? Because God knew what areas we would struggle with. What would become our idols. Matthew 6:21 “**for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**”

*God wants your heart. He knows our hearts are tied to idols (that which we worship, adore, and spend our time and money on). Look at your calendar. Look at your check book/*venmo*. Check your screentime. =IDOLS

1. Our interaction with money should begin with acknowledging that everything belongs to God (Psalm 24:1). “**The earth is the Lord’s, and ^{1a}all it contains, The world, and those who live in it.**” Your life, your breath, your future death, your money, your life experiences, your resources, your gifts, = **ALL belong to God already**
 - Your interaction with money is not just a physical/practical one: It is a spiritual, theological one.
 - **IF God has your heart, then He has your money.** If it’s all HIS anyway, already – then you are simply a steward of it. **You are a steward of your own health, of your time, of your relationships, & of your money.**
 - BTW: God does not need your money. He has NO needs. That’s why He is God! = **Non-contingent being**
 - When we honor the LORD with our wealth, we demonstrate that we Believe Him & **TRUST** him with our all! Heb. 11:6 “**without Faith, it is impossible to please God.**” What we do with our money = **practical faith**
 - In return He promises to take care of us Prov. 3:9-10 “**Honor the Lord from your wealth, And from the first of all your produce; ¹⁰ Then your barns will be filled with plenty, And your vats will overflow with new wine.**”

2. If God does not need money, why does He ask us to give our time, resources, gifting, *our money* to the Church?

Let’s begin with O.T. In the O.T., God, through Israel, set up a theocracy with God as their **KING**. Israel was a geographical, ethnic, and political Kingdom and God Himself was the King (as He provided for them, help them take possession of the promised land, and protected them – even fought many their battles for them).

-Under God’s kingship, He gave the O.T. LAW to guide how God’s people under His Kingship should love, live, and behave toward each other and toward those watching nations who had been displaced.

-To the watching World – the posture of the Kingdom of God was physical, = “**come and see.**”

-Levitical, civil, and Moral laws were established between a **COVENANT** God with His covenant people.

-God demanded loyalty, faithfulness, and obedience to His law. (All hearts stray from God’s presence and law, and the law cannot save – it could only show God’s righteousness and our inability to keep the Law = **sinful**)

What did God command under His theocracy concerning giving: God commanded **Tithes. Offerings. Generosity**

The word “tithes” (Hebrew *maaser*, meaning “the tenth”) was originally 10 percent of every Israelite’s property Lev. 27:30-32 “**A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord. ³¹Whoever would redeem any of their tithe must add a fifth of the value to it. ³²Every tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd’s rod—will be holy to the Lord.**”

The tithe was an obligatory offering requiring 10 percent of an Israelite's first fruits or herds. Because God provided the harvest, this very first part (**best part**) was returned to Him.

A. It was a reminder to Israel that all things we have are **His**.

B. It was a show of thankfulness for His **provision**.

C. It also provided for the Levitical priesthood, holy festivals (worship), and for the needy/landless, the destitute, the stranger, the fatherless orphans, and the widows. God used their money to be a **blessing** to others.

READ Deuteronomy 14:22-29 Levitical law. *Before* the temple was built. To teach the heart to TRUST God and to worship Him (fear/reverence/to be in awe before HIM alone as the provider and protector).

22 "You shall certainly tithe (Heb. *maaser* = "tenth") all the produce from ^[a]what you sow, which comes from the field every year. **23** You shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the tithe of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock, so that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always. (= sacred feast at a central sanctuary, like the Tent of Meeting (tabernacle) & later the Temple) – a place where GOD designates worship to His Name.

24 But if the ^[a]distance is so great for you that you are not able to ^[a]bring the tithe, since the place where the Lord your God chooses to set His name is too far away from you when the Lord your God blesses you, [i.e. if the grain or fruit will spoil, or an animal may die] **25** then you shall exchange it for money, and bind the money in your hand and go to the place which the Lord your God chooses. **26** And you may spend the money on whatever your ^[a]heart desires: on oxen, sheep, wine, *other* strong drink, or whatever

your ^[a]heart ^[a]desires; **and there you shall eat in the presence of the Lord your God and rejoice, you and your household.** **27** Also you shall not neglect the Levite who is in your ^[a]town, for he has no portion or inheritance among you. **28** "At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in that year, and you shall deposit it in your ^[a]town. **29** And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance among you, and the stranger, the ^[a]orphan, and the widow who are in your ^[a]town, shall come and eat and be satisfied, **in order that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do."**

*The O.T. tithe acted as a reminder, an act of worship, of God's goodness, of His gracious provision, and of HIS worth that He owns it all anyway.

-However, greed & idolatry discouraged many Israelites from paying the tithe, and eventually it became a duty that replaced true worship. God was angry when He was robbed through idolatry, robbed through stealing and neglecting His law and the provision for the Levites and priests and the needy throughout Israel.

Malachi 3:10-12 "Would anyone rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and ^[a]offerings. **9** You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the entire nation of you! **10** Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and put Me to the test now in this," says the Lord of host/armies, "if I do not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until ^[a]it overflows. **11** Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruit of your ground; nor will the vine in the field prove fruitless to you," says the Lord of armies. **12** "All the nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land," says the Lord of armies." God asks Israel to test Him – **Can you outgive God???**

So what about today? We are living in New Testament times. The Church Age. **Do we still need to tithe?**

We are living in a new dispensation = we live under Objective, universal moral law (Bible) vs. the levitical law.

-Mt. 22:40 The Law is summed up: "Love God. Love others." Jesus perfected this. Modeled this. **Commands** this.

-As we read Scripture, we see a Covenant Redemptive flow of history toward grace.

-Israel rejected God. Rejected God's king. Rejected Gods heart toward the Law. God sent Jesus. Israel rejected Jesus. God rejected Israel and through Jesus, established His Church.

-Kingdom of God. = No more ethnic, geographic, political center in Israel.

-God's kingdom became a Spiritual Kingdom (already & not yet) awaiting the return of the King - Jesus.

-Since Christ's sacrifice of himself removed the need for a Levitical priesthood, the principal purpose for the Old Testament tithe is **gone**.

- BUT ... **Because of grace**. Because of Gods great generosity toward us, because God LAVISHED His grace over us (Eph. 1:7) and b/c God lavished His love over us (1 Jn 3:1)-Jesus paid it all.... **What is our response to God?**

Our giving our money to the Lord is an act of worship in response to what Jesus paid that we could NEVER pay.
-The overflow of our life to the good news of God's great salvation of your life is WORSHIP. God wants your **heart!**

READ 2 Corinthians 9:6-15

Now *I say this*: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows generously will also reap generously. [You CANNOT outgive God]. ⁷ Each one *must do* just as he has decided in his heart, [heart issue. It's a freedom issue. It's a faith issue, worship issue], **NOT** reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful [Gk: hilarious] giver. ⁸ And God is able to make all grace overflow to you, so that, *always having all sufficiency in everything* [through your relationship with Jesus], you may have an abundance for every good deed; ⁹ as it is written: "He scattered abroad, he gave to the poor, His righteousness [endures forever]." ¹⁰ 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; ¹¹ you will be enriched in everything **for all liberality** [giving], which through us is producing thanksgiving to God. ¹² For the ministry of this service is not only fully supplying the needs of the [saints] [Church ministry], but is also overflowing through many thanksgivings to God [Missions]. ¹³ Because of the proof given by this ministry [giving], they will glorify God for *your* obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ and for the liberality of your [contribution] to them and to all, ¹⁴ while they also, by prayer on your behalf, yearn for you because of the surpassing grace of God in you. ¹⁵ **Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!** =gospel

APPLICATION:

Using a strictly legal principle of giving prompts wrangling over questions like: Is it 10 percent of gross income or net income? Of take-home pay only? Before or after insurance and retirement deductions? = **Unhelpful**

-We are to check our heart. Is money in idol in my life? Material possessions? Who owns who? -Accountability? Luke 6:11-13 "Therefore if you have not [k]been faithful in the *use of* unrighteous [l]wealth, who will entrust the true *wealth* to you? ¹² And if you have not [m]been faithful in *the use of* that which is another's [stewardship], who will give you that which is your own? ¹³ No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

-We are to give in response, as an act of genuine worship, to what Christ has given us. **Has He changed your heart?**

-We are to love and support His Bride, the Church, with our resources. **To whom much is given, much is required**

-We are to reflect the gospel of generosity and grace and be generous to all: liberal/hilarious in our giving [with our love, our service, our time, our resources, our opportunities, our experiences, & our encouragement]

Main Point: God wants your heart, not your money. He wants your everything. The money you give to the Lord through His Church is just a reflection of your worship and how much He has of your heart.

- How do we use that money? Ministries
- Who is supported by that money?
- What is our church's fiduciary accountability system?
- No pastor in this church knows if you give or not.
- No pastor in this church knows how much you give.
- Our pastors' job is to love you, serve you, and shepherd your life into spiritual maturity regardless if you give or not.
- A right question on giving might be: How can I better manage my affairs so that I can give more? Where can I give that will best serve God's purposes? Now that I've given what money I can, what else can I give?

Group Discussion Questions:

1. Does generous giving to the church reflect the heart of the gospel? If so, how?
2. Should a tithe (a tenth) of one's income still be a good place to start to give to the N.T. Church?
3. Define generosity. Give an example of generosity (in any context). How does God model generosity to us?
4. Is there an example of tithing BEFORE the Law of Moses? Gen. 14:18-20. If so, then is the "tithe" still in effect if it was not determinative by the O.T. Law, but by God? Is there a moral law in effect which is greater?
5. Can you give a testimony of not being able to "out-give" God? Luke 6:38

