

## The Christian's Money and the Bible

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I recently received this email about, "*No Tithing for the Christian.*" It is important for several reasons. It contains three huge errors concerning a Christian's money and God's teaching and expectations on this subject. Can you pinpoint them?

*"Robin, came across your ebook on tithing. Not that I disagreed with line of reasoning but you ... really gave no solutions to people who honestly want to know what they should give .... it wasn't much help for those who want to be faithful to God with their finances and yet be responsible to their families as well .... I don't believe that I live under the law .... Yet, I personally find 10% a good baseline, not as law, but as the only reference to what 'my first fruits' might be .... I guess I wished you had given more direction to helping people decide how to give than just bashing the tithing."*

Okay, ... well, ... here goes. But first, my new readers, did you find the errors?

### **Error One: "I personally find 10% a good baseline, ...."**

Boy, what a deal. The only problem ... God is not interested in this "deal." While each Christian has **full control** over his/her money **at all times** (Peter stated that to the lying Ananias just before his demise [Ac 5:4]), God has **full rights** to everything in the Christian's hands. In fact, He has "*double rights*" - Creation Rights and Redemption Rights. As Creator: "*Whatever is under the whole heaven is Mine*" (Job 41:11). As Redeemer: "*You have been bought with a price*" (1Cor 6:20) - the blood of Christ. A Christian's responsibility is to discern, as he/she moves through life, what He wants us to do with **what is His**. If there is some kind of baseline, it starts at ... 100%.

### **Error Two: "... who want to be faithful to God with their finances and yet be responsible to their families as well."**

This comes from Bible folklore that goes something like this: "*God is first, family is second, job is third, ...*" and on down the line. This pits "*faithfulness to God*" and "*responsibility to family*" as competing interests. "*Corban,*" anybody? (Mk 7:11). When discussing the pressing matter of the care of widows, Paul made a remarkable assertion that goes to the heart of the Christian's responsibility with money. "*But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has **denied the faith** and is **worse than an unbeliever***" (1Tim 5:8). This is an incredible verse, men. God's first financial order is ... family provision. Anyone who fails in this financial ministry has "*has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*"

I can not think of a more dire consequence for any transgression anywhere in the Bible. This rivals blaspheming the Holy Spirit (Lk 12:10). It is only **by faith** that anyone stands. And

failure to provide for one's own (even beyond the immediate family) is **denial** of the faith. That is eternal trouble. But, the warning does not end here. The non-provider ... is *worse* than an unbeliever! "*But the unbelieving ... their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone*" (Rev 21:8). You know, Bible folklore may say your job is number three on the list (or four, or five, or whatever is the current fad), but God doesn't. In fact, you may need to secure *a second job* so you can meet *the first priority* of your financial ministry - and thus, be faithful to God. Once that ministry is under control, then God may call you to other fields.

### **Error Three: "... bashing the tithing."**

Anyone who bashes the tithe is not a legitimate teacher of the Bible. If you find anyone doing this, walk away from that false message/messenger. The tithe was invented by God and is a tremendous teaching. I believe in the tithe - and fully teach, and support it. In fact, it is quite likely that any tithe-basher will be bashed by the God of the tithe. Similarly, that same God will bash those who hijacked the word, "*tithe*" - and placed it on this "*new teaching*" in Christendom calling it, "*the tithe*." I bash, and will continue to bash, this unholy concoction. It is extortion in the Name of Jesus Christ. If you find anyone calling the tithe, "*ten percent of your gross income required to the local church (or anywhere) for life*," walk away from that false message/messenger, too. This is either "*doctrines of demons*" (1Tim 4:1), or has been penned by flesh. I intend on bashing the life out of this fabrication, but, in reality, that is impossible. It has no life. God retired the tithe when He ripped the veil of the Temple from top to bottom (Mt 27:51).

If this fellow actually did read my ebook, he belongs to the, "*one-foot-in*" and "*one-foot-out*" group. Many, who know there is no tithe for the Christian, still can not fully repent of this extortion. They replace God's Word with seemingly pious "*Biblical principles*." Most "*Biblical principles*" are teachings (or practices) void of clear scripture - yet, religious people want to establish some pet belief as though it has authority from God. In this case, Abraham and Jacob are heralded as pre-Law examples of tithing. Ten percent was then required under Law (some say up to 30%), and now, as Grace exceeds Law, God expects at least 10% from the Christian "*as the baseline for giving*." Somehow, ... The Jerusalem Council missed this (Acts 15), as well as all the New Testament writers - including the One who inspired them.

### **So, here are the real principles for the Christian and his/her money.**

**First:** The Christian must take care of all personal responsibilities. This is God's first demand. Christians in affluent societies must discern the difference between a need - and a want. These lines easily blur.

**Second:** The Christian is not to be in debt. "*Owe nothing to anyone ...*" (Ro 13:8). If real assets exceed debt, then God may not consider that one to be in debt. To owe 100K on a home, that would sell for more (thus, be in the black), God may see as investing in an appreciating asset. But, if possible, pay everything off. Personally, I have no debt. I want all my brethren to be able to experience this. Other needs are easier to fund (health insurance, house insurance,

etc.), taxes are less of a burden, emergencies are easier to weather, and economic downturns are not as big a threat. The wolf ... is further from the door. In fact, I instruct potential donors to my website to take what they want to send me and apply it directly to their debts (if any). That is the best financial blessing my brethren could give me. This is one instance I believe Paul's admonition to his Corinthian brethren strikes a parallel. A famine had been raging in Israel. Christians in Antioch *"in proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea. And this they did ..."* (Ac 11:29,30). But, to some in Corinth who *"lacked means,"* (i.e., were scrapping to fulfill God's first requisite of family), Paul said, *"if the readiness is present (the desire to give), it is acceptable, according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have"* (2Cor 8:12). Wow! This is a time ... when the thought does count!

**Third:** If we sow sparingly, we will reap sparingly. Conversely, if we sow bountifully, we will reap bountifully. *"Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver"* (2Cor 9:6-7). Additionally, *"let our people also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, that they may not be unfruitful"* (Tit 3:14). Giving is a **learned activity** based upon personal judgment, personal evaluation, and personal volition. A Christian is to invest in things he/she discerns to be true Kingdom expanding work.

**Fourth:** As much as possible, give *"in secret"* (Mt 6:4). This is a true act of faith - believing God sees, knows ... and will reward.

### **Conclusion**

After you have fulfilled your first financial calling (immediate household and legitimately needy extended family members), then you can branch out. Who knows - God may want you to invest 50% in your local church. Or, He may direct investments into a Children's Home, Street Gospel Mission, or Christian Drug Rehabilitation program. You decide - before Him - how much to invest, where to invest, when to invest ... and if you continue to invest.

I know that I replaced the word, *"give"* with *"invest."* But, in this case, they are synonyms. Giving to God's true agenda (and we need wisdom from Him on this) is actually an investment - with Judgment Day the maturity date. That is not really ... that far off.

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