

21 Stewardship – Tithing

- Purpose** All belongs to God. As His stewards, we are responsible to Him for our time, talents and material possessions.
- Focus** Jesus gave all and wants us to be more like him by our willingness to be faithful with what He has entrusted us.
- Introduction** Greed is said to be the root of all evil. Today we will look at some principles that are God's antidote to this problem.
- Let's begin by looking at the first principle of stewardship...*
- Ps 24:1** How much does God own? Does it include our money? (**Hag 2:8, Ps 50:10-11**)
But God has made man His steward...
- Matt 25:14-30** Who is the man? Who are the servants? (**Gen 1:26**) How many received some talent? Did all receive the same amount? What were they supposed to do with the talents? What happened to the one who refused?
- How much of what we have does God expect us to return to Him?*
- Luke 14:33** That's quite a lot!
Does this mean that every Christian need to sell everything they own and live in a monastery?
- Luke 5:27-29** How much did Levi Matthew leave? But wait a minute! At whose house did he afterwards throw a party for Jesus? How could he leave everything and still own a house? IE: Slave owner, roll in mud. Jesus might not expect you to literally leave all your belongings... but He expects you to be willing to do it! Everything you are not willing to give up for God is your god.
- How can Jesus ask so much of us?*
- First of all, He is our Creator (**Ps 119:73**) IE: Volvo, manual.
He knows how we function best. Wouldn't our world be a better place if every person was willing to give up everything?
- 1 Cor 6:20** Secondly, He is our Redeemer. IE: Toy sailing boat, boy.
What was the price paid for us? (**1 Pet 1:18-19**) Could He give any more? So who is God asking us to be like, when He asks us to give up all?
Is it your desire to be like God in character? Are you willing to give up all?
Let's get into some practical aspects of this philosophy. Let's talk about money.
God doesn't need your money; He owns them already. But He has set up a system of systematic benevolence which is the antidote to greed, so that we can be more like Him. Have you heard about tithing?
- Let's look at what the Bible says about this; we will begin in Genesis...*
- Gen 14:18-20** To whom did Abraham give tithe? (Heb 7:1-6)
Abraham taught this principle to his children and grandchildren...
- Gen 28:20-22** How much of his earnings did Jacob commit to give a tithe of?
When Israel became an organized nation, the system of tithing was still binding...
- Lev 27:30** Who does the tithe belong to? Is it holy?
What was then done to the tithe?
- Numb 18:21, 23-24** Who did God give the tithe to? Why? They were supposed to work fulltime in ministry. This principle was also true for the NT preachers (**1 Cor 9:13-14**).
- What happened if they neglected to return their tithes?*
- Mal 3:8-10** Who did they rob by neglecting the tithe? Will a practicing robber inherit the kingdom of God? (**1 Cor 6:10**) What does God promise those who test His promise? IE: Testimony. Where does He want us to give our tithe? (**1 Tim 3:15**)
- Finally, I'd like us to look at one passage in the NT...*
- Mark 10:21-22, 28-30** Why did the man leave Jesus? He gave up eternity in order to gain what he couldn't keep anyway. What promise did Jesus give to those who left all?
- APPEAL** Peter left all and won all. The rich man left nothing and lost all. Are you willing to give 10% of your income, in order to advance the work of God?

APPENDIX

Promises to those who say they can't afford it – **Mal 3:10-11, Matt 6:31-33, Luke 21:1-4**

New Testament texts about tithing – **Matt 23:23, Luke 20:25, 1 Cor 9:13-14, Heb 7:5**

"I can tithe anywhere!" – You may, but do not neglect to give your first tithe to the organized church of God (**Mal 3:10, 1 Tim 3:15, Numb 18:21, Heb 7:5**). There is a second tithe spoken of in the Bible that was to be used for charity (**Deut 14:23, 28-29; 16:11-14; 26:12**). This second tithe you may use for whatever benevolent purposes you desire. But if you withhold your first tithe from God's organized church, then you are committing robbery against Him (**Mal 3:8-10, Deut 12:5-12**). Ellen White's comments about the first tithe: "The portion that God has reserved for Himself is not to be diverted to any other purpose than that which He has specified. Let none feel at liberty to retain their tithe, to use according to their own judgment. They are not to use it for themselves in an emergency, nor to apply it as they see fit, even in what they may regard as the Lord's work. ... A very plain, definite message has been given to me for our people. I am bidden to tell them that they are making a mistake in applying the tithe to various objects which, though good in themselves, are not the object to which the Lord has said that the tithe should be applied. Those who make this use of the tithe are departing from the Lord's arrangement. God will judge for these things." {9T 247.1, 248.3} And her instruction about the second tithe: "To promote the assembling of the people for religious service, as well as to provide for the poor, a second tithe of all the increase was required." {PP 530.1} "the devotion of a second tithe for the relief of the poor and for other benevolent uses, tended to keep fresh before the people the truth of God's ownership of all and of their opportunity to be channels of His blessings." {Ed 44.2}

"I don't trust the church" – Have you always been faithful with everything God has entrusted to you? If God had your attitude, there wouldn't be much hope for any of us. But Jesus commended the widow for giving her last mites to a corrupt church that would soon crucify Jesus (**Luke 21:1-4**). The Church has problems, but your neglect will not make it any better. It will draw your affections away from the church (**Matt 6:21**). Ellen White's thoughts again: "Some have been dissatisfied and have said: "I will not longer pay my tithe; for I have no confidence in the way things are managed at the heart of the work." But will you rob God because you think the management of the work is not right? Make your complaint, plainly and openly, in the right spirit, to the proper ones. Send in your petitions for things to be adjusted and set in order; but do not withdraw from the work of God, and prove unfaithful, because others are not doing right." {9T 249.2}