



Articles

Forced To Tithe?

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Forced To Tithe?

There is a classic bumper sticker that says "If 10% is good enough for God it should be good enough for the government." The term tithe is one that is known of and somewhat understood by even those who have little to no religious background or concern. It's obviously associated with the religious world being that the practice is found in the Word of God and practiced by so many "churches" today. But what really is tithing? Do we still have to tithe today? How much do I have to give to God to fulfill this?

As it was in the days of the early church, and so it is still today, in order to carry out the day to day work of evangelizing, teaching others the gospel, and providing for the needs of those dedicating their lives to that work and others who find themselves in true need, resources are needed to accomplish those tasks. Mind you they are tasks that the Church is required to carry out, as directed within scripture, such as supporting those who preach, facilitating a building for the saints to gather in, etc. And so you will hear passages read from time to time such as [1 Corinthians 16:1-2](#) – "Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper; so that there will be no collecting when I come." and [2 Corinthians 9:6-7](#) – "The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

But then there's that talk of tithing. Some people say that its semantics, some call it tithing and others call it giving. Well yes and no. The word "tithe" literally means – one tenth of someone's income or produce. Again we know this is also from scripture because we find in the Law of Moses (the Old Law) that tithing was commanded...true tithing of 10 percent. "You shall tithe all the yield of your seed that comes from the field year by year. And before the Lord your God, in the place that he will choose, to make his name dwell there, you shall eat the tithe of your grain, of your wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and flock, that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always." ([Deuteronomy 14:22-23](#)) There are numerous other times within the Old Law that clear directions were given to the Israelites concerning tithing. Even before the Law of Moses men gave back to God as part of their worship such as Abram in [Genesis 14:20](#) or Jacob in [Genesis 28:20-22](#).

You first have to ask the question, why do we give? Even under the Old Law, such as in the passage above, there is a purpose for us giving back to the Lord. "...that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always." Yes we have indicated that in order to carry out the work of the church resources are needed but really ask yourself, does God really need my money? Does God really need our resources? No, not at all. Because the truth of the matter is that it's all God's anyways. In this life we are but mere stewards of God's resources and money. It might be in my bank account as a result of my hours worked or investments but it's only by God's blessing I have the ability to work besides the fact that He is the creator of everything. So let's not be so bold as to think of it as our money. God's infinite wisdom and foresight knows that we as humans, through pride, like to think of ourselves a lot more highly than we really are and there are many ways in which God is teaching us to rely on Him not ourselves, such as giving.

The second thing we have to ask is this: what is required of us today? Well understanding if tithing is still required today is answered by looking at the two covenants. So many people today turn to the Old Law as scriptural authority for our worship and requirements today. The first thing I think people fail to see is that the only people who were under the Law of Moses were the Israelites. We know there were only about 2-3 million people that made up that nation when God called them out of Egypt and led them to Mt. Sinai and established that covenant with them. If you were living in NE Asia at the time and you weren't an Israelite were you required to tithe 10 percent each year and bring it every 7 to the Levites? No, because you weren't under that covenant or law. Yes it was required under that law and we can point to it in our bibles and read that clearly. But we aren't under that law today.

In the big scheme of things, the reason Jesus came and lived a life here and died of the cross for our sins was to save us from our sins and unite all to Him and to do that He did away with the Old Law and established the new. For passages further explaining this see [Ephesians 2:11-16](#), [Colossians 2:6-15](#), [Hebrews 8:6-13](#), and [Romans 7:6](#). Those scriptures tell us that He (Jesus) abolished, took out of the way, made the Old Law obsolete and we (mankind) have been released from that law. We don't serve that law anymore. We have it for a purpose though. Paul said in [Romans 15:4](#) that we have it for our learning.

When we come to the New Law, found in the New Testament, we still find a need and command to give. We read of the early church being told to give to support the work of the church. Following the pattern of the early church we still today "give as we have prospered" to continue to support the work. Throughout Jesus's ministry he often talked about money and people's attitude towards it. He commended some and rebuked others. He marveled at the poor widow in [Mark 12:41-44](#) for her faith and willingness to give all that she had, all the while others were putting in large amounts. He wasn't taking away from the generosity of others giving large sums but pointing out that even when it wasn't easy to give (which is an understatement for her) she still gave. Because of Jesus's teaching the men that He appointed to establish His church and carry out the work continued to instruct these churches such as Corinth, Galatia, etc. to give on the first day of the week.

So then there is the question of can we use tithing as scriptural authority today and am I, as a child of God, required to tithe? First off we have already discussed and saw from scripture that the Old Law is no longer binding today. And if one would challenge that and say that tithing is still required in that sense then consider when Paul told some early Christians, that were also trying to enforce parts of the law, that

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1/24/21 09:30am

Wednesday Evening Devotion
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under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Cor 9) If I want to give 10% today great. As I put God first and He blesses me and I'm able to do more than 10 great.

This idea of telling others they have to give a certain amount and requiring a certain amount is nowhere found in the New Testament church that you read of in the Bible. Giving is a command but it is what you purpose in your heart and "not reluctantly or under compulsion..." Compulsion means forced, pressured, coerced, etc. I can understand occasions, although they are usually rare in most cases, of elders standing before the congregation and communicating their vision and direction they see the work at that location going and having communicated that, members see the value and benefit of that direction and in their hearts decide to give more to contribute towards that goal. But God help me if I ever find myself standing before my brethren seeking to force, pressure, coerce, guilt into giving more. That goes directly against the Holy Spirit's instructions. *"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed."* (Galatians 1:8)

The scriptural and very simple answer to the question of do we tithe today is NO. We obey the command to give to God cheerfully as we have purposed in our hearts because we recognize that all things come from God and belong to God and we want to show God that we trust in Him, not me or my wealth, and we want to help in the work of saving souls and bringing others to Christ through our work and the work of the local church.

--Everitt Heaton

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