

the Spirit of God not by some set of rules governing our lives.

This point was driven home by the Church in Jerusalem together with the Apostles and elders when they all agreed in the Holy Spirit to the following statement, which directly answers the question which parts of the Law might cover us today (whether Abraham did it or not).⁶³

ACTS 15:22-29

28"...For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things:

"That you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from immorality. If you keep yourselves from these you will do well. Farewell."

You will readily notice that this list specifically does not tell us to circumcise (which was the issue that had been raised), nor are we told to tithe, even though Abraham did both.

I believe that the Holy Spirit has had the last word on this matter!

The New Testament believer has not been told to tithe. Let us not agree among ourselves to do other than God has said.

A Royal Law - Love

Exploring Giving

And Tithing

By Paul A Norman



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Yours together in our LORD Jesus Christ's service –

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and what Peter said to him. Jesus often said, “Your faith has made you well.”

That almost wraps up the arguments often put forward for tithing, except tithing being mentioned in the book of Hebrews. Where the writer sets out to show that Abraham's gift of a tithe to Melchizedek proves that Melchizedek's priesthood is higher than that of Levi, and therefore higher than the Law's Priesthood. Given that Jesus' priesthood is likened to Melchizedek's, this also shows that Jesus' priesthood is higher than that established in the Law of Moses,⁵⁹ just as Holy Spirit led faith giving is of a superior order and class to tithing, actually superseding it, fulfilling its every requirement through faith in the Son of God - Jesus the Messiah!

Continuing Biblical Principles(?)

Some people develop so-called “biblical principles” by which they wish to live their lives.

Regrettably they often try to impose these principles on other people.

This is a similar error to that made by Pharisees in past days.⁶⁰ If there are any “continuing biblical principles,” as some would claim, then surely we would all agree that Jesus has to be the fulfilment of them all, Himself being the LOGOS⁶¹ come to earth as a human-being living amongst us.

We are of course promised the gift of the Holy Spirit and His reminding us of the things that Jesus has said to His Disciples, and His leading us into all Truth...⁶² rather than some principles thrown together as a modern Law or set of rules. We live by faith in the Son of God led by

59 Hebrews 6:1- 7:18.

62 John 14:26, 16:12-15.

60 Matthew 23:4-14.

61 (Logos means more than “word”) - W. E Vines Dictionary.

There are some who are only interested in the money at present, and others who say that they want to teach tithing as something that will please God.

Jesus Himself answering the question . . . what works must a man do to be doing the works of God, answered, “that the work God requires is to believe in Him Whom (God) has sent.”⁵⁶

Those who want to teach tithing as something pleasing to God, need acknowledge that just as we now accept that circumcision is not as Abraham did it, but is of the heart, so too giving is of faith.⁵⁷ So while there are references in the Bible to individuals who did tithe to please God, we cannot simply quote these as proof that God wants people today to tithe. For it is not the person who simply copies what someone else in the Old Testament has done, who pleases God, but the person who responds in faith to what the Holy Spirit reveals the Lord Jesus would have them do. They are the people who please God through their loving obedience.

“But”, some say, “when I tithe, God blesses me(?)”

The simple answer is that God loves a cheerful giver. It is the faith and love that a person expresses in God by their giving that blesses our Heavenly Father, not the form or rules attached to the giving.⁵⁸ Our giving stops our faith to receive from God, from being hindered, it does not all by itself cause God to give.

Some have preached and written saying that healing in the body will only come for some when they start tithing. Remember that Jesus even heals unrepentant sinners by Grace; God having compassion upon whom He will, aside from any apparent merit (or lack of it) on our part!

The gift of being healed by God cannot be bought. Remember Simon the Sorcerer who wanted to pay money to be able to have the gift of imparting the Holy Spirit,

A Royal Law - Love

How we like to receive things from God, family, friends, and workmates, but do we enjoy giving?¹

Either through our ignorance or laziness, and especially where REAL deacons are not functioning, the collection plate becomes a “cop-out” from taking our responsibilities before God seriously.

The giving here spoken of, is first of all, of ourselves.

Some who are not in “systemised churches” no longer take their responsibilities before God seriously. And others act mindlessly with no real faith.

56 John 6:28-29.

58 2 Corinthians 9:7.

57 Romans 2:25-29.

1 James 2:8

1 John 3:14-18

14 “We know that we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren. He who does not love, abides in death.

15 Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

16 By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But if any one has this world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him ?

18 Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth.”²

How we like to receive things from God, family, friends, and workmates, but do we enjoy giving? We are not here thinking of the church plate. Either through our ignorance or laziness, and especially where REAL deacons are not functioning, the collection plate becomes a “cop-out” from taking our responsibilities before God seriously.³

The giving here spoken of, is first of all, of ourselves.⁴

“Oh no!”, say some to God, “you can have my house, my money (or some of it), my family even -

But Not Me!”

Abraham in Genesis, you will note that Abraham is certainly no example for us to model ourselves on as far as being regular tithers. He wasn’t so much bound up by rules, as he is a man of faith - and obedience, and there he is an example to us, not at all for tithing or other legalisms, but for faith.⁵⁰

Some say, - “Jesus talked about tithing”

Yes Jesus did talk about tithing to people who were supposed to be doing it as Israelites under the Law of Moses.⁵¹ We are not Israelites under the law of Moses, we are people from all over the world, who are saved by Grace, through faith in Jesus having kept the Law on our behalf. Faith in His having completed the work of the Law in the offering up of His own body and blood in the eternal Spirit, for our Salvation⁵². While indeed not one jot of the Law shall pass away, its just requirements have been met by the Lord Jesus Christ - it is fulfilled, its work is finished. There are no more works to be carried out under the Law of Moses.⁵³

Tithing was a work of the Law of Moses. Just as Sabbath keeping was also provided under the Law of Moses in the 10 commandments, and now is but a matter between God and a person’s conscience secretly, so tithing is not to be suggested or positively talked about, and certainly not publicly practised.⁵⁴ (Jesus even said of giving “don’t let your Right Hand know what your left is doing” - certainly not the Tax Department anyway!)⁵⁵

To really cap it all off, note that Abraham built altars and circumcised and lived in tents. Now circumcision is also mentioned in the Law of Moses, yet no one who promotes tithing is currently using the same arguments (as vigorously) to propose that we practice circumcision, or that we should live in tents!

2 1 John 3:14 - 18

3 1 Timothy 5:16

4 Matthew 16:24-25, Luke

9:23-27, 2 Corinthians 8:

1-5.

50 Hebrews 11 :8-9, 17-19.

51 Matthew 23:23-24, Luke
11 :42-43.

52 Hebrews 9:14-15.

53 Galatians 2: 18 - 3:5.

54 Colossians 2:8-19.

55 Matthew 6:1-4.

This may sound complicated, however the second part of this question arises, because some claim that as Abraham (a man of faith before the Law of Moses), gave a tenth of his war spoils - (note) to a man called Melchizadek, so we as men of faith who also are not under the Law of Moses, should do likewise.

Having cited Abraham tithing apart from the Law of Moses, surprisingly the enforcement for tithing is then normally taken from the words of a prophet speaking to people about their obligation, while under the Law, to give a tithe to God or be considered to be robbing God.⁴³

On one hand then it is claimed that we should tithe unrelated to the Law of Moses - but on the other hand we are told we must do it, from the words of a prophet speaking concerning the Law of Moses.

Now even within the Law of Moses itself, it is made plain that the provisions of the Law of Moses apply to Israel only.⁴⁴ Israel was the name given by God to Jacob. Jacob was the only man recorded, in the time before the Law of Moses, who volunteered to give a regular tithe to God.⁴⁵ The nation Israel are Jacob's offspring and centuries later were given tithing in the Law of Moses.⁴⁶ Now we are not children of Jacob (Israel), but by faith are considered as children of Abraham⁴⁷ (Jacob's Grandfather). With no reference to Jacob what-so-ever.

Now it was not to the non-Jewish nations that the Law of Moses was given to be observed and kept, but to Israel.⁴⁸

Did Abraham make a regular gift of a tithe?

The record of Scripture is that he only gave a tithe once, and that was from war spoils . Then he gave the left overs away as well ! - taking only enough for the war expenses of his men's food and the like.⁴⁹ If you read the references to

43 Malachi 3: 6-12.
44 Numbers 36:13.(cf Romans 2:12-14), Deuteronomy 6:1-3 (esp.) 28:1.

45 Genesis 28:20-22.
46 Leviticus 27:30.34.
47 Galatians 3:29, 3:7.
48 Deuteronomy 28:1
49 Genesis 14:16-24.

The Apostle Paul wrote,

5
“ . . It is you I want, not your (money). . .”

Whole hearted people are concerned to know how their resources, including money, should be used in God's service.⁶

Giving

As we have read,⁷ the first and most important motivation for our lives, and therefore in this matter, is LOVE. Through walking in this Love we are promised a wonderful assurance of our Salvation. The opposite applies, and through not so walking in Love, a person is found to be hateful, a murderer who has not got eternal life living and remaining in them.

John gives us very practical guide-lines on love: We can say that love is not just nice sentiments, spoken or unspoken. It is the fruitful out working of a life surrendered in the same way that Jesus gave His life for us - and it consists in helpful actions without hypocrisy or insincerity, primarily towards our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Giving - financial aspects

Let us be clear. In financial giving, there are no magic percentage or other compulsory figures for the New Testament believer. The believer in Jesus does not today pay G.S.T. to God (or what is called the “church - local storehouse”), as if it were God's Service Tax!

There are a number of helpful materials available explaining why we are not now required to carry on the Old Testament practice of automatic tithing.

5 2 Corinthians 12:14 (cf 2 Corinthians 8:5).

6 2 Corinthians 9:8, Luke 12:16-21, 1 Timothy 6:17-19, Titus 2:11-14

7 1 John 3:14-18.

Creative Action

Starts with having our own finances in order.⁸

Of greater importance to God is obedience over sacrifice, and that we be a debtor to no man other than the debt of Love⁹ Therefore while acknowledging occasions when the Holy Spirit leads us in specific sacrificial 'faith giving',¹⁰ it is none-the-less generally important that we expect to meet all our bills (including taxes - Romans 13) as they fall due, before thinking of "scattering our bread upon the water" on a regular basis.¹¹

Meeting our bills also involves recognising what our real bills are. Keeping our spending on justifiable things (living simply), and not merely for our own pleasures,¹² or using money loosely.¹³ We must also be wary of any overdraft offers or hire purchase type agreements, avoid credit.

We should aim to be content at having the basic necessities of life - and are not to be chasing after additional things.¹⁴ Let each one's conscience and God's wisdom be their testing plate in this. Be aware that a number of things we think we need or 'feel' we must have, are only cultural expectations learnt from our families and friends. or brought to us through advertising and the likes of television.

The Holy Spirit will help you in this - do not be surprised as you seek God's pleasure, at what He will show you to do - whether it seems "uncomfortable" or 'nice'.¹⁵

8	(an extreme case !)	11	(often used for mindless giving) Ecclesiastes 11 :1.
9	Romans 13:8, 1	12	James 4:3-8, Mark 4: 18-20, Philippians 2:3-11.
	Thessalonians 4:9-12, 2	13	Luke 15:11-32.
	Thessalonians 3:12-13.	14	Luke 12:22-34, Proverbs 23:4-5, 1 Timothy 6:6-19.
10	2 Corinthians 8:1-5.	15	Luke 12:29-34.

"Into the local store house", says the person pushing tithing.

So often the 'local storehouse' being mentioned is their own or their friends' store house or pockets! We do well to remember the warning given by the apostles for both elders and deacons to not seek after money, or use their position for getting money.⁴¹

There are others who have misguidedly developed or sincerely accepted teachings which in their opinions place believers under an obligation to "tithe", ignoring some very important Scriptures which clearly show otherwise.

Very often this giving is utilised to support types of "church" administration which God has not ordained or given His express authority for. It is not only amongst followers of Armstrongism or Mormonism that tithing is being pushed, but regrettably many true believers have been placed under this unnecessary bondage as well.

We will here explore some of the arguments used to try and justify tithing, and see from the Scriptures where the Holy Spirit reveals that we are free of this requirement.

Is Tithing a part of the Law - do we keep the Law?

The key question needing to be answered is

(i) is a believer to be expected to keep to the provisions of the law of Moses;

(ii) and which of the practices also contained in the Law of Moses but carried out by Godly men before the Law of Moses, are believers today to keep?⁴²

41 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7, Peter 5:2

42 Galatians 3: 10-14.

“For I Will Make A New Covenant With Them”

The LORD speaking through the Prophet Jeremiah

In talking so far about financial giving, we have concentrated in looking at the whole area of our total lives.

Now we are to approach a kind of thinking which wrongly separates financial giving from our total commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ - placing God (in some people's eyes) under an obligation to us! Such people hold to the theory that God requires a special “first fruits offering” of ten percent (a “tithe”) of a believer's income.

Some of the people who hold to this theory say that this ten percent represents the total giving of a believer, others, that it is just the first step in giving which can even total up to forty percent! -or more! (As there are no Scriptures to support the idea of Christians “tithing” no reference numbers can be given, for that idea, in this article.)

We may see from Acts chapter two, that the first believers did not count any of their possessions as being their own,³⁹ and indeed many even sold property and gave all their funds at the Apostles feet.⁴⁰

For a person born of the Holy Spirit and who is in love with Jesus, there are no percentage figures at all. Not a tithe of His blood did Jesus give before the Father to redeem us, but 100% - let us be like minded! For if we have given all of our self, how can we have a “tithe” left to give?

39 Acts 2:43-47.

40 Acts 4:32-37.

Love - a responsibility to care

Our first line of Love then, is to our dependent family, our flatmates, or people where we live, to see that they are clothed, fed, enabled in the basics of life.¹⁶

We should have a special concern for widows,¹⁷ children who have no real parents or loving guardians, solo mums and solo dads, those in prisons, other institutions, and hospitals. Act not only with money, but with time and care.¹⁸

Look out for the poor,¹⁹ remembering in their need they come as Jesus to you.²⁰ Never assume that Social Welfare has the situation under control, or that you are too busy.²¹

Act full of compassion but wisely, particularly if there is any kind of loose living or drugs involved (even cigarettes, alcohol, or glue).

Find the person's real need and directly meet that. Even where Godly, correctly appointed²² Deacons are ministering, God has not so much established “church systems” and organisations (Christian or otherwise), to do this work, as He has given you faith with a responsibility to act, and Love out poured by His Holy Spirit in your heart²³ to motivate.

The Way of Jesus has more to do with faith out worked through Love than with almost anything else.²⁴ Let God establish for you in His Spirit how and when to act.. Be ready.

16 James 2:14-17, 1 Timothy 5:8.

17 1 Timothy 5:4 & 16, James 1:27, Matthew 25:31-46.

18 John 15:12-14.

19 Galatians. 2:9-10.

20 Matthew 25:31-46.

21 Luke 10:30-37.

22 1 Timothy 5:16, 1 Timothy 3:8-13, Acts 6: 1-8.

23 Romans 5:5.

24 Galatians 5:6.

Do Good to All Men

We are also to do good to all men, especially those of the “household of faith.”²⁵ When we have a clear choice to make between our own and the world in general, the priority is always to help fellow believers. Keep an eye on not so distant relatives - even if they are non-believers!²⁶

Do all things whether in word or deed in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ,²⁷ so that our Heavenly Father may receive all the praise and glory that is due to Him alone.²⁸

Those who toil in the gospel

One of our important bills is to share such material blessings that we have received, with any person who having spiritually blessed us has helped us to receive God’s blessing in our lives. Here we are to share our wealth with those who serve us through God’s ministries of preaching and teaching.²⁹

For the Lord Jesus commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel.³⁰ As with the ministries of elders and others (prophets and teachers etc) these people often will not be operating inside the four walls of a “church” building. Recognise these people by faith according to the fruit of their ministries.

It is not a matter of - sermon into our ears - money out of our pockets - into the plate, -like an automatic payment or money machine. But recognising whether or not we really are being spiritually fed by God through someone. We have a personal responsibility to see the person looked after. Even if the person is on salary support system through some organisation or other. we are to directly see that our blessing goes straight to the person. They could pay their system back if they wish to.

25 Galatians 6:9-10. 1
Corinthians 15:58.
26 1 Timothy 5:8, 1
Thessalonians 3:12.

27 Colossians 3: 16-17.
28 Matthew 5:13-14.
29 c.f. Romans 15:27.
30 1 Corinthians 9:13-16, 3
John 5-11.

We have a personal responsibility, and we might do it all anonymously. Recognise that sometimes our blessing may not be financial. It could be giving time or ability or material goods.³¹

Other “Offerings”

If you are considering contributing to other projects, organisations. “church” structures. programmes, buildings or just the collection plate, remember the priority that the poor have, and personal support and concern for missionaries at home and abroad³² - and generally for the needs of our brothers and sisters in others lands.³³ **No matter where you are giving, let it be where and as the Holy Spirit shows you to.**³⁴

Each one must do as he has made up his mind to, not reluctantly, or under compulsion. for God loves a cheerful giver.³⁵ And God will reward us for our faithfulness. particularly as we give at cost to ourselves - for there God will meet our needs as well.³⁶

Note that the talents mentioned by Jesus in the parables, were quantities of silver money³⁷ which the master gave to each servant - not skills or abilities. Jesus says that He gave the money according to each one’s ability to use it.³⁸

Let us do well, it is all for our Lord Jesus Christ!

31 Galatians 6:6.
32 Philippians 4:14-18, 3
John 5-11.
33 Romans 15:25-27, 2
Corinthians 9:9-15, Acts
11:27-30.
34 Romans 8: 14-15.

35 2 Corinthians 9:6-8,
Philemon 1:14.
36 2 Corinthians 8: 1-5.
Philippians 4: 10-20.
37 (Smiths or Harpers Bible
Dicts) Matthew 25:14-30.
38 Matthew 25:14-15.