

Newness of Life Lesson 10 The Faithful Steward - part 2

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

I. Review/Introduction

A. Review

1. *Luke 16:1-2*

16 And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

*2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? **give an account of thy stewardship;** for thou mayest be no longer steward.*

2. **Definition [slide] oikonomos, or steward, is the manager of a household or estate, treasurer, administrator, an overseer.**

3. God gave mankind the job of being stewards over His creation: the earth, animals, our bodies, souls, time, family, job, finances, and belongings. So, **How am doing I handling God's business?**

B. Principles

1. **[slide-principle #1] Because what I have comes from God, I give to His kingdom purposefully and cheerfully:**

2 Cor 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

2. A steward's giving is purposeful (planned) and cheerful.

3. **[slide-principle #2] God allows us to reap blessings in proportion to our giving:**

2 Cor 9:6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

4. **[slide-principle #3] God uses people to bless those who give liberally:**
*Luke 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall **men** give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*

5. **[slide-principle #4] Consider it a privilege to use God's blessings to participate (invest) in God's kingdom.**
Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

II. Bring the Tithe

A. Giving a tenth

1. The plan for giving that is laid out in scripture is quite simple. Those who benefit from ministry can help sustain that ministry.
2. The first time we find the word "tithe" in the Bible is in the book of beginnings in

Genesis 14:

*Gen 14:20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him **tithes of all.***

3. “Tithes of all,” or “all the tithe” is a concept we find in scripture in various places. (Luke 18:12) Let’s start with the basic definition. It is very basic and simple to grasp.
4. **[slide] Tithe:** from the Hebrew word, a`sar; and the Greek word dekate, which both mean a "tenth", and it refers to a plan of giving a tenth part, or 10% to the Lord.
5. In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, we see the principle of giving a tenth to God introduced for the first time with Abraham.
6. Genesis 14 tells that Abraham met Melchizedek, a priest of the Most High God.
7. Melchizedek shows up as a mysterious representative and minister for the most High God who blessed Abraham, somewhat like a pastor to Abraham. (Also Hebrews 7).

8. That is where we read that Abraham gave him “tithes of all.” Again, referring to a tenth of something.
9. And later in Numbers 18:26, we read that the priests who received the tithes, also gave a tenth part of their tithe in an offering to the Lord. That was God’s way of keeping the cycle of gratitude going full circle.
10. Abraham was the first to give the tenth offering, and that was followed up with his grandson, Jacob, also pledging to give a tenth of all God gave him:
*Gen 28:22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and **of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.***
11. Jacob was lonely, broke, and fleeing for his life at this point. But following his grandfather’s example, he also gave a tithe of all.

12. If you put in a search for tithe or tithes, you will see 38 examples of this giving of a tenth from Genesis through Hebrews.
13. Giving ten percent was initiated as a way to support the work of ministry. In the years when Israel backslid from God and giving, the work of ministry also suffered or stopped.
14. So regardless of whether we are rich or poor or somewhere in between, all contribute their proportion to sustain the work of ministry.
15. Here is a modern parable showing a practical way to look at the purpose of the tithe: There once was a ship called the gospel ship. On that ship, people were introduced to the Lord, found His forgiveness, and received His Spirit. The ship sometimes travels through calm seas and sometimes through storms, and there is even an occasional trouble from within. But always within the ship there is safety.

And along the journey, provisions for security are ensured by God, and strength and victory come through the ministry of the Word and a move of the Holy Ghost. And each passenger riding on the gospel ship contributes their proportionate share for the ride, and that in turn, ensures that the ship keeps sailing.

B. Tithe of all

1. What is the meaning of “tithes of all?” We can look at other places in scripture to help explain that. The words “firstlings” and “first fruits” are found in scripture with relation to our giving.
2. It means off the top and not from the leftovers. God was pleased with gifts of the first fruits and firstlings of the flock.
3. In fact, the first offerings ever recorded in the Bible came from the first two sons of Adam and Eve, Cain and Able. And the reason God accepted Abel’s offering was

that he gave a firstling of the flock:

Gen 4:4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

4. When his brother Cain gave an offering, he an offering “of the fruit of the ground.” In other words, he brought some of the crops to the Lord.
5. It was not identified as first fruits, just a portion from his crops. The Lord is honored by offerings of first fruits of our increase:
Prov 3:9 Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase:
6. And the specific portion He spoke of was a tenth portion:
Lev 27:30, 32
*30 And all the **tithe of the land**, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD*
*32 And concerning **the tithe of the herd**, or*

of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.

7. The Israelites were an agrarian society, meaning agriculture and cattle were their means of earning, and represented their income.
8. Another example that describes how people tithed unto the Lord is described during the revival of Hezekiah's day.
9. Following a long period of Israel's backsliding, Hezekiah restored many of the worship practices of the true God that the former king had abandoned.
10. Hezekiah returned the emphasis to the teachings of the Word of God, and as a result, part of the people's return to the Lord included restarting their tithing of their first fruits to God:

2 Chron 31:4-5

4 Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the

priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD.

*5 And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the fields; and **the tithe of all** things brought they in abundantly.*

11. One way to apply the principle of tithing of all, or tithing of the first fruits, is to base our 10% calculation on our gross earnings before any deductions are figured in for expenses like taxes, insurance, savings, etc.
12. And figuring 10% is very easy and requires only basic math skills to calculate. Just take the number that represents your earnings or increase, and move the decimal one place to the left.
13. \$100.00 earnings has a tithe of \$10.00.
\$350.00 - \$35.00. \$1,273.17 = \$127.32.
Counting down to the precise penny!

- c. Jesus on tithes
 - 1. Speaking of precise tithing, we can now move on from definitions and examples, to how Jesus viewed the practice of tithing.
 - 2. We do not have an example of Jesus giving a tithe, but we see how Jesus complemented the precise tithing practice of some scribes and Pharisees.
 - 3. It is easy to overlook that comment because it was a secondary point Jesus was making about a more important issue.
 - 4. While He commended their excellent manner of giving precise tithes, they had an improper standard of justice. They were horrible at showing mercy to others. And their faith was lacking.

*Matt 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: **these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other***

undone. [You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things.]

5. So from Abel, to Abraham, to Jacob, on to later Israelites, and down to Jesus, each supported giving the first fruits, and specifically, the tenth, unto the Lord.
 6. We are not going to dive deeply to other kinds of giving, but it is scriptural to give beyond the tithe toward other offerings.
 7. There are examples in scripture where people gave other sacrificial offerings for the building of the temple, for missionaries, for the poor, for disaster relief associated with famine. (Ez 1:4 additional offerings given “beside the freewill offering for the house of God”).
- D. Blessings for giving the tithe
1. We no doubt remember Malachi’s warning to those who fell away from the practice of tithing:
Malachi 3:8-9

8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

2. We would not think of holding up our neighbor and robbing from him because “thou shalt not steal” is still the 8th commandment. And we need to consider robbing God in that same way.

3. Notice that same passage in Malachi continues by revealing the blessings God has in store for those who do bring the tithe. And notice the challenge here:

Malachi 3:10-12

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

4. When we take care of God's business, God takes care of our business.
- E. My attitude as a giver
 1. One of the interesting things about being a faithful steward of the Lord, is the attitude God asks of us when giving:

*Ex 25:2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it **willingly with his heart** ye shall take my offering.*
 2. This was in preparation for the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness where they

worshiped God during their wilderness journeys.

3. If you are of a willing heart, bring the offering of various types according to what you have and what the need is:

*Ex 35:5 Take ye from among you an offering unto the LORD: **whosoever is of a willing heart**, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and silver, and brass,*

4. And it is important to note that the giving was not coerced by the leaders, but their heart made them willing to give:

*Ex 35:29 The children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman, **whose heart made them willing** to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made by the hand of Moses.*

5. God commanded the giving, but it was given as God made their heart willing.
6. And when giving was done like that, there was one time when the giving was so

abundant, that Moses said, please stop giving! We have too much! (Ex 36:5-7)

7. Another time, during the time of Hezekiah's revival, there weren't enough priests to handle the offerings, so they had to bring in the Levites to help deal with all the offerings coming in. (2 Chron 29:34)
8. How would we handle it if the giving was very abundant? What would you do? Feed the CIP class, provide child care for the students, acquire additional property to allow for more classroom space, expansion for the sanctuary, a larger fellowship hall, create a safe playground for the kids, a covered picnic area for outside church or classes, a camp ground, a food pantry, training for GED testing, job skills classes, relief for the hungry and homeless, tuition for summer camps, youth outings, missions trips, increased giving to missions,

III. Conclusion

1. What does it mean to love God with all your heart? Giving is part of it, but certainly not all of it.

Mark 12:28-34

28 And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is

*one God; and there is none other but he:
33 And to love him with all the heart, and
with all the understanding, and with all the
soul, and with all the strength, and to love
his neighbour as himself, **is more than all
whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.***

*34 And when Jesus saw that he answered
discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far
from the kingdom of God. And no man after
that durst ask him any question.*