



Part 2 (Lesson 14)

Christian Stewardship (Part 1)

The Christian life is a complete life, encompassing every area. When Jesus comes into our lives, He becomes Lord of everything we have, are and will be. The Bible becomes our ultimate authority for our actions, words and thoughts. At church, home, work, and every other place we would go, we are to live according to the principles of God's Word. Since our Christian faith affects every area of our lives, it is easy to see that our finances are to be included. The reality of our living conditions dictates that money is an important part of our lives. For this reason God gives us direction in His Word about how we are to handle the money God places in our care.

I. What is Stewardship

A. In Matthew 25:14-30, on what basis were these servants judged?

(How they handled the resources that were entrusted to them by their master. The master is a picture of God, Who entrusts resources into our care.)

B. This parable shows us by an example that God wants us to use the financial resources He puts in our hands in a responsible way. When we speak of "stewardship", we are talking about how we take care of that which God entrusts to us. We are to be good stewards, or servants caring for our master's possessions.

II. Tithing

A. How much of the world's wealth and resources does God own? (Psalm 24:1; Psalm 89:11; Psalm 50:10-12) **(All of it)**

B. How much of the money and material things you possess belong to God?
(All of it)

C. What principle of giving did Abraham, our father of faith, establish in Hebrews 7:1-9?
(The principle of "tithing" which is giving the first 10% of our income back to God.)

1. Did Abraham live before or after the law of God was given? **(Before the law was given)**

2. Who did Abraham pay tithes to? **(Melchizedek – A type of Christ (Genesis 14:18-20))**

3. How does this passage of scripture show that tithing is not just a part of Old Testament law? **(Abraham is a picture of the New Testament believer who lives by faith. He paid tithe to Melchizedek, a picture of Christ. This happened before the law was given.)**

D. From the same passage in Hebrews can you see a definition of the word "tithe"?
(A tenth – see verse 4)

E. We learn something of how we pay our tithes and give our offerings in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2. What is it? **(We bring them when we gather together as Christians)**

F. What does God have to say about us paying our tithes and giving our offerings in Malachi 3:8-12? **(To not pay our tithe and give offerings is equivalent with robbing God. We are promised that God will bless us and provide for us when we pay our tithe.)**

G. Like his grandfather Abraham, Jacob (who became Israel) lived hundreds of years before the Old Testament law was given. What did he do to honor God that is recorded in Genesis 28:20-22? **(He gave Him a tenth of all that he was blessed with.)**

H. In Luke 11:42 Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for neglecting justice and the love of God. Jesus also makes reference to their practice of tithing. Does Jesus tell them that they should not be tithing? **(No)** What does Jesus say they should be doing? **(Paying their tithe without neglecting justice and the love of God.)**

I. Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:3-7 & Hebrews 11:4) - Hebrews 11:4 tells us that by faith Abel offered “a better” sacrifice than Cain. The King James says “a more excellent” sacrifice. The Greek word speaks of “more in quantity, number or quality”. Genesis 4 says Cain “brought an offering to the Lord from the fruit of the ground”. It says that Abel “brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions”. There are two thoughts as to why Abel’s offering was accepted and Cain’s was not. One thought is that Cain’s offering was not accepted because it was not a blood sacrifice. The other thought is that Cain’s offering was not accepted because it was not a first fruits offering, or his best part. Abel’s offering was “the firstlings of his flock” and was “of their fat portions”. Abel gave of his prime stock. How might this relate to tithing? **(God calls us to honor Him with the first fruits of our income. This means that the tithe (God’s designated portion) is the first thing that comes out of our income. We honor God first in faith and trust Him for provisions.)**

J. The Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:15-17) – There may be a connection to what is described in Genesis 2:15-17 and the principle of tithing. In Genesis 2:15-17 what instructions did God give to Adam and Eve about the fruit available within the garden? **(They could have and benefit from any of the fruit of the trees except the fruit of one tree in the middle of the garden, that is the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.)**

In a sense, by giving Adam and Eve these instructions He was reminding them that though they were given stewardship over the entire garden and could use almost all of it for their benefit, God owned the garden and had the right to prohibit them from having access to anything in the garden that He chose to. How might this relate to the principle of tithing in our lives? **(We are given stewardship over all God has given us and we benefit from it but the tithe reminds us that God is the owner of it all.)**

K. The Spoils of Jericho (Jericho was the first of the cities and lands that God was going to give to Israel in the promise land, but God gave strict instructions about Jericho that were different than any of the other cities and lands they would encounter.) What were the strict instructions they received concerning the spoils of Jericho? (see Joshua 6:17-19)

(They were not to take any of the spoils. The spoils of Jericho were all holy unto the Lord.)

How might this be another Biblical example of the principle of tithing? **(We can again here see the principle of the first fruits in the Bible. The first fruits always belong to the Lord as a reminder that all blessing comes from Him. The tithe is a first fruit.)**

III - Acknowledging God's Ownership

We saw at the beginning of this lesson that God is the owner of everything, including everything He allows us to possess. Consider the following illustration of how tithing acknowledges His ownership. Consider a land owner and a tenant who farms the land. They agree to a certain amount of rent and the tenant begins to farm the land. As various crops come in the tenant brings various gifts to the land owner. The gifts are accepted and appreciated. Then when the rent is due the land owner asks the tenant for the rent. The tenant replies, "Didn't I give you gifts when the crops came in?". The owner acknowledges the gifts but reminds the tenant of the agreed upon amount of rent. If the tenant persists in his attempts to replace the rent with the gifts, the gifts will become a negative thing rather than a positive thing. Can you see that if we bring various offerings to God and attempt to replace the tithe with these offerings we may very well be in danger of causing our offerings to become a negative thing rather than a positive addition to our agreed upon tithe, established in God's Word?

IV - Considering Alternatives Which Help Us to See the Wisdom of Tithing

Example #1 –

If you had a work deadline for a major project which would you choose?

* 90 days and the absolute promise that God would help you each day

or

* 100 days and no promise of God's help each day

Example #2 –
If you had to go to battle which would you choose?

- * 900 soldiers and the absolute promise that God will fight with you
- or
- * 1,000 soldiers and no promise of God's protection or help

* 900 soldiers and the absolute promise that God will fight with you

* 1,000 soldiers and no promise of God's protection or help

Example #3 –
If you had numerous bills to pay and things to purchase
which would you choose?
* \$900 and the absolute promise that God will help you
or
* \$1,000 and no promise of God's help

* \$900 and the absolute promise that God will help you

* \$1,000 and no promise of God's help

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