

GOD'S ECONOMY

From the time of Abraham onward, the idea of giving a portion of your wealth to God has been around. The concept is simple: recognize that God provides all you have, and then respond to this provision by giving a portion back. This simple plan of action was expanded when God started the Priesthood. Then finally, it graduated from a 10% tithe with offerings, to everything belonging to God in the New Testament. This is how God's economy works. The economy of God activates for the spreading of the Gospel message. This is how the ministers of the Gospel have been directed to receive the needed income to focus on spreading the good news of Jesus Christ. For those who willingly and joyfully partner with God in His economy will receive the richness and fullness of His provision. Those who decide not to take advantage of **God's Economy**, forfeit the available blessings God has waiting for those who do!

Definition Of Tithes

Strong's Concordance: "From H6240; a **tenth**; especially a tithe: - tenth (part), tithe (-ing)."

The First Time A Tenth Of Increase Was Given

"After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet Abram in the Valley of Shaveh (known as the King's Valley). Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (Now he was the priest of the Most High God.) He blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by the Most High God, Creator of heaven and earth. Worthy of praise is the Most High God, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of everything."

(Genesis 14:17-20)

So, as we see in response of being blessed by God, Abraham gave 10% of all his increase as a sign of gratitude and recognition of God's blessing upon him. Also securing for himself future blessings from the Most High God.

The Second Time A Tenth Of Increase Was Given

"Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God is with me and protects me on this journey I am taking and gives me food to eat and clothing to wear, and I return safely to my father's home, then the LORD will become my God. Then this stone that I have set up as a sacred stone will be the house of God, and I will surely give you back a tenth of everything you give me." **(Genesis 28:20-22)**

Again, we find that to properly respond to God's provision, Jacob swears an oath to give 10% of all his increase back to God. Securing not only his present blessings, yet his future provisions also.

The Third Time A Tenth Of Increase Was Mentioned

This is the creation of the direct “Tithe / Tenth” of increase given to the newly formed Priesthood, for payment and the continuation of God’s work.

““To the children of Levi, behold, I have given all the tithe in Israel for an inheritance, *in return for their service which they serve*, even the service of the Tent of Meeting.”
(Numbers 18:21)

“You shall surely tithe all the increase of your seed, that which comes out of the field year by year. You shall eat before Yahweh your God, in the place which he chooses, to cause his name to dwell there, the tithe of your grain, of your new wine, and of your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock; that you may learn to fear Yahweh your God always.” (Deuteronomy 14:22-23)

Here, we find that the point of donating to the ministry of God is so the minister can devote themselves fully to serving God- taking care of their earthly needs from the Tithes and Offerings of those being ministered to.

- ✓ **The minister is to take care of the people’s spiritual needs, and the ones being ministered to are called to take care of the fleshly needs of the minister.**

✓ **This is God’s Economy!**

“Moreover he commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might give themselves to Yahweh’s law. As soon as the commandment went out, the children of Israel gave in abundance the first fruits of grain, new wine, oil, honey, and of all the increase of the field; and they brought in the tithe of all things abundantly.” (2 Chronicles 31:4-5)

The Tithe Is Also For Taking Care Of The Priests Household.

“This is yours, too: the wave offering of their gift, even all the wave offerings of the children of Israel. I have given them to you, and to your sons and to your daughters with you, as a portion forever. Everyone who is clean in your house shall eat of it. “I have given to you all the best of the oil, and all the best of the vintage, and of the grain, the first fruits of them which they give to Yahweh. The first-ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to Yahweh, shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house shall eat of it. “Everything devoted in Israel shall be yours.... All the wave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer to Yahweh, I have given you, and your sons and your daughters with you, as a portion forever. It is a covenant of salt forever before Yahweh to you and to your offspring with you.” (Numbers 18:11-14+19)

A General Breakdown OF Tithes & Offerings Given

Often people do not realize that God required not just “Tithes”, but “Offerings” to Him. “We accept responsibility for fulfilling the commands to give one third of a shekel each year for the work of the temple of our God, for the loaves of presentation and for the regular grain offerings and regular burnt offerings, for the Sabbaths, for the new moons, for the appointed meetings, for the holy offerings, for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the temple of our God. “We – the priests, the Levites, and the people – have cast lots concerning the wood offerings, to bring them to the temple of our God according to our families at the designated times year by year to burn on the altar of the LORD our God, as is written in the law. We also accept responsibility for bringing the first fruits of our land and the first fruits of every fruit tree year by year to the temple of the LORD. We also accept responsibility, as is written in the law, for bringing the firstborn of our sons and our cattle and the firstborn of our herds and of our flocks to the temple of our God, to the priests who are ministering in the temple of our God. We will also bring the first of our coarse meal, of our contributions, of the fruit of every tree, of new wine, and of olive oil to the priests at the storerooms of the temple of our God, along with a tenth of the produce of our land to the Levites, for the Levites are the ones who collect the tithes in all the cities where we work.” *(Nehemiah 10:32-37)* *Here, we also see that the Priests are the ones who are to collect the Donations.*

Tithe Was Not The Only Thing Required To Give To God.

“And there you must take your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the personal offerings you have prepared, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. Both you and your families must feast there before the LORD your God and rejoice in all the output of your labor with which he has blessed you.” *(Deuteronomy 12:6-7)* *Also, A Lot Of Grain Offerings. See: Leviticus Chapter 2*

That's 7 Different Ways To Give Back To God

Tithes & Offerings Were Not Just For The Priesthood

“So now, look! I have brought the first of the ground’s produce that you, LORD, have given me.” Then you must set it down before the LORD your God and worship before him. You will celebrate all the good things that the LORD your God has given you and your family, along with the Levites and the resident foreigners among you. When you finish tithing all your income in the third year (the year of tithing), you must give it to the Levites, the resident foreigners, the orphans, and the widows so that they may eat to their satisfaction in your villages. Then you shall say before the LORD your God, “I have removed the sacred offering from my house and given it to the Levites, the resident foreigners, the orphans, and the widows just as you have commanded me. I have not violated or forgotten your commandments.” *(Deuteronomy 26:10-13)*

Called To Give To The Poor Among You

“**The Levite**, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the **foreigner** living among you, and the **fatherless**, and the **widow**, who are within your gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that Yahweh your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.” *(Deuteronomy 14:29)*

“Beware that there not be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, “The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand;” and your eye be evil against your poor brother, and you give him nothing; and he cry to Yahweh against you, and it be sin to you. **You shall surely give**, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him; because that for this thing Yahweh your God will bless you in all your work, and in all that you put your hand to. *For the poor will never cease out of the land.* **Therefore I command you to surely open your hand to your brother, to your needy, and to your poor**, in your land.” *(Deuteronomy 15:9-11)*

Priests Are Called To Pay A Tenth Of The Tithes They Receive As Their Wages Back To God's Work!

“Moreover you shall speak to the Levites, and tell them, ‘When you take of the children of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, **then you shall offer up a wave offering of it for Yahweh, a tithe of the tithe**. Your wave offering shall be credited to you, as though it were the grain of the threshing floor, and as the fullness of the wine press. Thus you also shall offer a wave offering to Yahweh of all your tithes, which you receive of the children of Israel; and of it you shall give Yahweh’s wave offering to Aaron the priest.” *(Numbers 18:26-28)*

God's Anger Expressed Over Failing To Give To His Work

***Interesting: This rebuke is against the Priesthood for not paying their tithe of tithe to the temple, and the people's failure to do so also.**

“For I, Yahweh, don't change; therefore you, sons of Jacob, are not consumed. From the days of your fathers you have turned away from my ordinances, and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says Yahweh of Armies. “But you say, ‘How shall we return?’ Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me! But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with the curse; for you rob me, even this whole nation. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house, and test me now in this,” says Yahweh of Armies, “if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there will not be room enough for. I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast its fruit before its time in the field,” says Yahweh of Armies. “All nations shall call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,” says Yahweh of Armies.” *(Malachi 3:6-12)*

***Please Read 2 Corinthians Chapters 8 + 9 For A Great New Testament Look At Giving!**

Understanding Wealth & God's Economy

God Owns All Wealth

"For this is what Yahweh of Armies says: 'Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations. The precious things of all nations will come, and I will fill this house with glory, says Yahweh of Armies. **The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,'** says Yahweh of Armies.'" *(Haggai 2:6-8)*

God Gives The Ability To Produce Wealth Or Not!

"But you shall remember Yahweh your God, for it is **he who gives you power to get wealth**; that he may establish his covenant which he swore to your fathers, as it is today." *(Deuteronomy 8:18)*

"Yahweh makes poor, and makes rich. He brings low, he also lifts up. He raises up the poor out of the dust. He lifts up the needy from the dunghill, To make them sit with princes, and inherit the throne of glory. For the pillars of the earth are Yahweh's. He has set the world on them." *(1 Samuel 2:7-8)*

We Must Realize- EVERYTHING We Have Belongs To God!

"For you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body." *(1 Corinthians 6:20)*

How We Handle It Will Determine How He Will Bless Us

"The one who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and the one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. **If then you haven't been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will entrust you with the true riches?** And if you haven't been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you your own? No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and money.**" *(Luke 16:10-13)*

When Things Changed In The New Testament to all 100% God's

***When we became the "Temple of God" as found in 1 Cor. 3:16. The need for temple taxes and upkeep of the temple ceased. This has changed. As we see in this small example explained by Jesus:**

"After they arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter and said, "Your teacher pays the double drachma tax, doesn't he?" He said, "Yes." When Peter came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do earthly kings collect tolls or taxes – from their sons or from foreigners?" After he said, "From foreigners," Jesus said to him, **"Then the sons are free."** *(Matthew 17:24-26)*

Yet. The Minister Of The Gospel Living Off The Gospel Has Not Changed.

What we find in the New Testament is that the 10% given to the priesthood, while still a foundation starting line for giving, falls short of New Testament philosophy. What we find is that the Christian recognizes 100% of what they receive from God, belongs to God. Yes, it is provided to take care of our needs. Ultimately though, everything we do with what God gives must be approved by God. We are only stewards of the blessing. We must answer to God for every foolish or misguided venture we engage in outside of His will.

We are the temple of God now, so it's no longer a building we are giving to. Not a church building, but to the spiritual maintenance of the Body of Christ. Yes, that could include a building, but in a lot of areas around the world it does not. It is to support the ministers of the Gospel, to serve the people, and to distribute gifts to the needy within the Body.

We see this exact paradigm shift playing out in the book of Acts.

"The group of those who believed were of one heart and mind, and no one said that any of his possessions was his own, but everything was held in common. With great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on them all. **For there was no one needy among them,** because those who were owners of land or houses were selling them and bringing the proceeds from the sales and placing them at the apostles' feet. **The proceeds were distributed to each, as anyone had need."** (Acts 4:32-35)

"He answered them, "He who has two coats, let him give to him who has none. He who has food, let him do likewise." (Luke 3:11)

"Let him who stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, producing with his hands something that is good, that he may have something to give to him who has need." (Ephesians 4:28)

Example In The New Testament On Life & Giving During Lack

"But if we have food and shelter, we will be satisfied with that." (1 Timothy 6:8)

"Now we make known to you, brothers and sisters, the grace of God given to the churches of Macedonia, **that during a severe ordeal of suffering, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in the wealth of their generosity. For I testify, they gave according to their means and beyond their means.** They did so voluntarily, begging us with great earnestness for the blessing and fellowship of helping the saints. **And they did this not just as we had hoped, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and to us by the will of God."** (2 Corinthians 8:1-5) *See Also: Verse 6-15 For More Of The Story.

Workers Need To Be Sent

“For, “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in him whom they have not heard? **How will they hear without a preacher? And how will they preach unless they are sent?** As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the Good News of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!” *(Romans 10:13-15)*

Those Gifted For God's Service- Should Be In God's Service.

Just like we read earlier in *2 Chronicles 31:4-5*, “commanded the people who lived in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, **that they might give themselves to Yahweh's law.....** “ the people giving “**the tithe of all things abundantly**” The reason for this is so they can go 100% into serving God and not be held back by the daily vocation or work schedule in the world system. This is vitally important as there are so few ministers in the world, and such a large harvest.

Jesus Declared: “Then he said to them, “The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray therefore to the Lord of the harvest, that he may send out laborers into his harvest.” *(Luke 10:2)*

Here we find the same concept being played out in the New Testament:

“Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, a complaint arose from the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily service. The twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, **“It is not appropriate for us to forsake the word of God and serve tables.** Therefore select from among you, brothers, seven men of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. **But we will continue steadfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the word.”** *(Acts 6:1-2)*

***The House Church Model:** Now mind you, they didn't have modern church buildings. They had “The Church in the House of so and so...” *See: Acts 8:3 + Romans 16:5 + 1 Corinthians 16:19 + Colossians 4:15 Philemon 1:2

Those Who Work For The Gospel- Live Off The Gospel

-1- “Jesus sent these twelve out, and commanded them, saying, “Don't go among the Gentiles, and don't enter into any city of the Samaritans. Rather, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, preach, saying, ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!’ Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and cast out demons. Freely you received, so freely give. Don't take any gold, silver, or brass in your money belts. **Take no bag for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for the laborer is worthy of his food.**” *(Matthew 10:9-10)*

***Just like we have seen in the Priesthood in the Old Testament, we have the same concept applied to the new minister of the Gospel.**

-2-“Don’t you know that those who serve in the temple eat food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar receive a part of the offerings? In the same way the Lord commanded those who proclaim the gospel to receive their living by the gospel.”

(1 Corinthians 9:13-14)

-3-“Elders who provide effective leadership must be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching. For the scripture says, “Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,” and, “The worker deserves his pay.””

(1 Timothy 5:17-18)

-4-“Now the one who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with the one who teaches it.” **(Galatians 6:6)**

The Great Ministry Paradox

***It’s a strange thing to think about: That when people go to a doctor, knowing they have to pay for well informed advice. That when you talk to a lawyer, you will pay for educated information concerning their situation. That if you go to a counselor, you will pay to receive their support in your area of need. If you call an Air Conditioner company, you will pay for their services and advice. The list goes on. But, when most people talk to a Minister of the Gospel, they assume the service should be free. Not realizing that for the dedicated Minister of the Gospel- the time, education, talent, and workload to be effective in the vocation of God, still requires all the same funding as all other professions. Yet, none of us would assume to think that a lawyer’s office would stay open for long if none of their clients ever paid. Ministry is no different. Even more so, it’s imperative to support the Minister- for in doing so you are partnering in **God’s Economy** and will reap the eternal rewards for doing so.**

Understanding & Agreement

“Do two walk together, unless they have agreed?” **(Amos 3:3)**

In **God’s Economy, the minister and those who are being ministered to enter into an agreement of mutual protection. The minister works at protecting the people spiritually, the people work at protecting the minister physically. If one side of this agreement fails to uphold their side of the covenant, then both sides will suffer. Ultimately, great spiritual or physical harm [or both] will occur- destroying the covenant power and goals of **God’s economy**!**

“What soldier ever serves at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard, and doesn’t eat of its fruit? Or who feeds a flock, and doesn’t drink from the flock’s milk? Do I speak these things according to the ways of men? Or doesn’t the law also say the same thing? For it is written in the law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.” Is it for the oxen that God cares, or does he say it assuredly for our sake? Yes, it was written

for our sake, because he who plows ought to plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should partake of his hope. If we sowed to you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we reap your fleshly things?" (1 Corinthians 9:7-11)

Whatever You Give To The Lord- He Will Repay

"For whoever will give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because you are Christ's, most certainly I tell you, he will in no way lose his reward." (Mark 9:41)

"Give, and it will be given to you: A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be poured into your lap. For the measure you use will be the measure you receive." (Luke 6:38)

"Now God who provides seed for the sower and bread for food will provide and multiply your supply of seed and will cause the harvest of your righteousness to grow. You will be enriched in every way so that you may be generous on every occasion, which is producing through us thanksgiving to God," (2 Corinthians 9:10-11)

Invest Into Heaven With Your Giving

"Don't lay up treasures for yourselves on the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves don't break through and steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:19-21)

When You Give- Give With JOY

"Remember this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Let each man give according as he has determined in his heart; not grudgingly, or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that you, always having all sufficiency in everything, may abound to every good work." (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

It's SACRIFICIAL Giving that God Responds The Most To

"He looked up, and saw the rich people who were putting their gifts into the treasury. He saw a certain poor widow casting in two small brass coins. He said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow put in more than all of them, for all these put in gifts for God from their abundance, but she, out of her poverty, put in all that she had to live on." (Luke 21:1-4)

If You Know You Are Supposed To- You Are Required To

"To him therefore who knows to do good, and doesn't do it, to him it is sin." (James 4:17)

***There is no such thing as a free meal in the Ministry of God.** Someone has sacrificed and gave to provide for everyone of us to receive the spiritual help we need. We might have received it freely, yet God expects us to provide the same opportunity for others.

Therefore, we must give and invest into the message of Jesus Christ. *God's Economy*

***How great a Sin would it be to turn the ministers -working for the health and saving of your soul- into beggars of earthly goods just to survive?**