

A Position Statement on Tithing and Pledging among Christians



"But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water, that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit." Jeremiah 17:7-8

To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32

What is Tithing?

1. **Tithing is the Scriptural practice of returning to the Lord the first 10% of all my income as an offering to the Lord.**
2. **Tithing was the practice of God's faithful people in both the Old and New Testament. God owns it all. Everything is His.**
3. **Tithing is God's expectation to remind us that the first and the best of everything we have should be returned to the Lord as our offering to Him.**

What Does the Bible Say About Tithing?

1. **The Tithe is God's Established Standard**

"I the LORD do not change. (Remember that important sentence as you read the rest of this passage.) So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from My decrees and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty. "But you ask, 'How are we to return?' "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob Me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob You?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing Me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty. "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty. *Malachi 3:7-12*

2. **Even Before God Made it a Requirement of His People, the Faithful Considered the Tithe God's Portion**

Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand." Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything. *Genesis 14:18-20*

Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's house, then the LORD will be my God, and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth." *Genesis 28:20-22*

(Even pastors were required to tithe.) The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the Levites and say to them: 'When you receive from the Israelites the tithe I give you as your inheritance, you must present a tenth of that tithe as the LORD's offering. Your offering will be reckoned to you as grain from the threshing floor or juice from the winepress. In this way you also will present an offering to the LORD from all the tithes you receive from the Israelites. From these tithes you must give the LORD's portion to Aaron the priest. You must present as the LORD's portion the best and holiest part of everything given to you.' *Numbers 18:25-29*

3. **The tithe Should Go to the Local Church**

The best of all the firstfruits and of all your special gifts will belong to the priests. You are to give them the first portion of your ground meal so that a blessing may rest on your household. *Ezekiel 44:30*

4. **Offerings (given to meet specific needs) and Sacrificial Giving (giving to things we want because we see that others have greater needs) are over and above the Tithe.**

From what you have, take an offering for the LORD. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the LORD an offering of gold, silver and bronze; *Exodus 35:5*

And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased. *Hebrews 13:16*

Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little." *2 Corinthians 8:13-15*

5. **The New Testament Church Continued the Practice** "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. *Matthew 23:23*

Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. *1 Corinthians 16:1-2*

But just as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. *2 Corinthians 8:7-9*

6. So, I Should Tithe, But I am Not. How Do I Start?

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. *1 Corinthians 16:2*

Summary

The tithe was and remains God's expectation of the faithful. It, however, was never proper to give the tithe with a bad attitude (for show, grudgingly, or as if compelled), "for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7) But the issue is without question, Christians who want to know and willingly give according to the will of God, will offer a tithe, as clearly directed in His Word.

Who Should Not Tithe?

1. Those Who Do So Against Their Will

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. *2 Corinthians 9:7*

2. Those Who Make Offerings to Soothe Guilt Over Other Sins

You flood the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, "Why?" It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. *Malachi 2:13-14*

3. Those Who Make Offering for Show of Whose Motive is Wrong

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. *Matthew 23:27-28*

My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness, and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will

receive his praise from God. *1 Corinthians 4:4-5*

Summary

The Bible says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6) Any good that we do in life is evaluated by the Lord on the basis of motive. Those who give to be seen should not expect the Lord's blessing, because they have already achieved their purpose. Those who resent God's expectation about offerings may be compared to Cain, whose offering was rejected, while the offering of his brother, Abel, was accepted because it came from a faithful and loving heart.

What Does God Promise to Those who are Faithful in Offerings?

1. You Get Back What You Put In

Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. *2 Corinthians 9:6*

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

2. God Restores Tithes With Blessing

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; His righteousness endures forever." Now He Who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. *2 Corinthians 9:8-10*

3. He Will Rebuke the Devourers that Consume Your Excess

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty. *Malachi 3:10-11*

"You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. Why?" declares the LORD Almighty. "Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house. Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands." *Haggai 1:9-11*

Summary

The Bible says, "The eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His." (2 Chronicles 16:9) That has not changed. The way in which we handle our income is a primary indication of life's priorities. The Lord clearly promises to bless and restore the resources of those who maintain the tithe.

What Does the Bible Say About Pledging?

1. Making Vows Was Always a Voluntary Activity Practiced by Faithful People of God

Sacrifice thank offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High, and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me." *Psalm 50:14-15*

Praise awaits you, O God, in Zion; to you our vows will be fulfilled. O you who hear prayer, to you all men will come. *Psalm 65:1-2*

But you brought us to a place of abundance. I will come to your temple with burnt offerings and fulfill my vows to you— vows my lips promised and my mouth spoke when I was in trouble. *Psalm 66:12-14*

2. The Bible Urges the Faithful to Make and Keep Sacred Vows

"Make vows to the Lord your God and then fulfill them! Let all who are around Him bring gifts to Him Who is to be feared." *Psalm 76:11*

How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. *Psalm 116:12-14*

And here is my advice about what is best for you in this matter: Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have. *2 Corinthians 8:10-12*

So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given. *2 Corinthians 9:5*

The Following People of God Made Sacred Vows

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Gideon, Samson, Hannah, Samuel, David, Solomon, Elijah, Isaiah, Josiah, Hezekiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Jeremiah, Jesus, Peter, Paul, John and many others.

3. Those Who Have No Intention of Fulfilling a Vow Should Never Make a Pledge; It is an Offense to God and Hypocrisy

When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake." *Ecclesiastes 5:4-6*

4. Recognition of Leaders Making Special Gifts is Proper

You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints. I urge you, brothers, to submit to such as these and to everyone who joins in the work, and labors at it. I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition. *1 Corinthians 16:15-18*

5. Vows Are a Positive and Voluntary Act of Faithfulness, Not Required, but Encouraged

If you make a vow to the LORD your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the LORD your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin. But if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty. Whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do, because you made your vow freely to the LORD your God with your own mouth. *Deuteronomy 23:21-23*

Summary

Making sacred vows has always been regarded as a voluntary action of the faithful, who understood and appreciated the blessing of God in their life. The Lord is careful not to make it an obligation, thereby removing the joy of making a vow and the witness to others that comes from the exercise of a voluntary action. Vows today are still properly made in many areas of life. Most Christians make voluntary sacred vows in baptism, at confirmation, in marriage, regarding prayer, fasting, Bible study, and in matters of offerings. Nevertheless, many are comfortable making financial commitments to own a home, purchase a car, or obtain an education, but hesitate to make a financial commitment to the Lord.

Comments or questions are always welcome! Contact [Pastor Hower](#) at 636-394-4100 x 800.