

What does the Bible teach about tithing?

What is a tithe? The practice of giving tithes and offerings is seen in both the Old and New Testaments.

In Genesis 14:20b the Bible says, *And Abram gave Melchizedek a tenth of all the loot he had recovered.* Abram was a great man of God. God blessed him and used him to establish a great nation. Abram tithed. After a great victory Abram's grandson Jacob set up a memorial stone and said, *"This memorial stone which I have set up will be the place where you are worshiped, and I will give you a tenth of everything you give me."* Genesis 28:22

A tithe is ten percent of income. Tithing is only the beginning. Many believers give more than ten percent as God blesses them. A right spirit does not figure out how little I can give and still count it as a tithe. The Apostle Paul encourages the church to excel in the grace of giving... *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.* 2 Corinthians 8:7

Why should the believer tithe?

1. The believer should tithe because of the nature of God our Father and Jesus our Savior and Lord.

The spirit of giving was born in the heart of God. From the beginning of creation God has been a giving God. He gave all creation including life to us. In Old Testament days He gave the Jewish nation privileges and responsibilities.

He gave the Law to help guide them as they developed individually and socially. Finally, He gave His best—His only Son Jesus, to live and die so that lost humanity might have a chance to live eternally. The heart of the giving nature of God is seen in John 3:16, *For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.*

Because our God is a God who loves and gives, we as His children will naturally desire to follow His example. Our love for God can be measured by our giving habits. When talking about Christian giving, Paul said, *...I am trying to find out how real your own love is. You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; rich as he was, he made himself poor for your sake, in order to make you rich by means of his poverty.* 2 Corinthians 8:8b-9

2. The believer should tithe because he has received so much.

Paul said, *You are so rich in all you have: in faith, speech, and knowledge, in your eagerness to help and in your love for us. And so we want you to be generous also in this service of love.* 2 Corinthians 8:7

All who have been born again have been blessed greatly. The believer has eternal life. God gives daily blessings, both material and spiritual. To receive generously and not give generously is ingratitude and selfishness. Tithing is a basic way God has planned for his children to demonstrate their love and appreciation.

3. The believer should tithe because he needs a regular reminder that all of his life and possessions belong to God.

The Bible says, *...You do not belong to yourselves but to God.* 1 Corinthians 6:19b

The world and all that is in it belong to the Lord; the earth and all who live on it are his. Psalm 24:1

All we have belongs to the Lord. When we invited Christ into our lives as Savior and Lord, we ceased to be the lord of our lives. Christ is Lord and King. This means that He controls our present and future. He is Lord of our children, house, land, work, and pleasure. One hundred percent belongs to God. He asks that we give back a tenth every week so that we will always be reminded that He is owner of all.

Because of this need to always be reminded of God's ownership, Paul said, *Every Sunday each one of you must put aside some money...* 1 Corinthians 16:2a. Paul is talking about a regular offering given every Sunday. When we remember that all belongs to God, we will be more careful how we live and how we run our business. We will be more careful how we use the ninety percent remaining in our possession. God is concerned about the ten percent (tithe), but He is also concerned about how we use the ninety percent.

Good management + tithing = blessings.

4. The believer should tithe because the Bible says he should.

Note that Paul uses the word must in the following verse. *Every Sunday each one of you must put aside some money...* 1 Corinthians 16:2a

In Malachi 3:10a the Bible says, *Bring the full amount of your tithes to the Temple...*

Jesus commands tithing in Matthew 23:23b; *You give to God one tenth even of the seasoning herbs, such as mint, dill, and cumin, but you neglect to obey the really important teachings of the Law, such as justice and mercy and honesty. These you should practice, without neglecting the others.*

5. The believer should tithe because this is God's plan to finance the work of the church.

When speaking about Christian giving Paul said, *For this service you perform not only meets the needs of God's people, but also produces an outpouring of gratitude to God.* 2 Corinthians 9:12

Also in 1 Corinthians 16:2 Paul says, *Every Sunday each of you must put aside some money, in proportion to what you have earned, and save it up, so that there will be no need to collect money when I come.* In Malachi 3:10a we read, *Bring the full amount of your tithes to the Temple, so that there will be plenty of food there.*

With tithes and offerings, a church is able to pay a pastor's salary, buy Bibles, build sanctuaries, help members who have special needs, and send missionaries to share the Good News around the world.

6. The believer should tithe because if he does not, he not only robs God, but also robs himself of many blessings.

I ask you, is it right for a person to cheat God? Of course not, yet you are cheating me. 'How?' you ask. In the matter of tithes and offerings. A curse is on all of you because the whole nation is cheating me. Bring the full amount of your tithes to the Temple, so that there will be plenty of food there. Put me to the test and you will see that I will open the windows of heaven and pour out on you in abundance all kinds of good things. Malachi 3:8-10

Paul said, *Remember that the person who plants few seeds will have a small crop; the one who plants many seeds will have a large crop. You should give, then, as you have decided, not with regret or out of a sense of duty; for God loves the one who gives gladly. And God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause. As the scripture says, "He gives generously to the needy; his kindness lasts forever." And God, who supplies seed for the sower and bread to eat, will also supply you with all the seed you need and will make it grow and produce a rich harvest from your generosity. He will always make you rich enough to be generous at all times...* 2 Corinthians 9:6-11a

Now back to the question, should I tithe?

If you are a believer, you are to tithe. Note "each" and "must" in the following verses. *Each one of you should give...* 2 Corinthians 9:7a. Also in 1 Corinthians 16:2a, *Every Sunday each of you must put aside some money...*

The answer is clear. Every believer must tithe if he is to be an obedient follower of Christ. Every believer must tithe if he is to know the unlimited riches of God. Children should be led to tithe faithfully from their allowances or earnings. "Every" includes the rich and the poor, the young and the old. (In some countries, the tithe may be in cash or in produce.) Some say they are too poor to tithe. A reading of 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9 will show that believers may be poor because they do not tithe. God promises to bless those who tithe. A tither will never be a beggar. The Bible speaks clearly about the great material and spiritual blessings awaiting those who give freely. The believer does not tithe in order to gain wealth, but when the believer gives out of a heart of love, God promises blessings as a result. The blessings may be more than financial blessing; they will

include contentment and joy. Such is the life of a person who puts God first in everything. When tithing, a person learns that to be rich in the things of the world is not the greatest blessing.

Should pastors and church leaders tithe? Of course. In the Scripture "each one" means what it says. Tithing is one signal that priorities are right. In Matthew 6:33 Jesus said to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness first, and all the other necessities will be provided. Leaders are models, therefore must follow Biblical teachings.

Please read the following Scripture references concerning tithing:

2 Corinthians 8-9; Malachi 3; Matthew 6