



BETHEL AG CHURCH  
INTERNATIONAL WORSHIP CENTRE



# Blessed Giving **TITHES & OFFERINGS**



*"God loves a cheerful Giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7)*

# A BLESSED LIFE OF GIVING

## Tithes & Offerings

The foundation and essence of the Christian life is to follow Jesus with all that we are, and to hold nothing back. To be a lover of God is to be a giver; to be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with the very essence of our generous God. Lord Jesus said, *"You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment"* (Matthew 22:37-38). When we give God our lives, it also includes our treasure (our time, talent, and money). In other words, when we get saved, our wallets also must reflect changed behaviour patterns.

## Is money really important for God?

In the Bible, there are more than 500 verses that pertain to prayer and nearly 500 verses in relation to faith, but more than 2,000 verses cover the subject of money and possessions. Jesus talked about money in 16 of His 38 parables. Clearly, from the Bible's standpoint, we need to understand money and how to handle it. Why? It is because money is actually a test from God; how you handle money reveals volumes about your priorities, loyalties, and affections. In fact, it directly dictates many of the blessings you will (or won't) experience in life.

Christ's words were direct and profound: *"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"* (Matthew 6:21). By telling us that our hearts follow our treasure, Jesus is saying, "What we do with our money is a sign of who we are and what we love". Our individual money trails are reflections of our priorities, experiences, hopes, dreams — and wealth.

God expects us to be wise STEWARDS of money.

## What do you mean by "tithing"?

Tithing is a spiritual habit of giving the **first 10 %** of all your income to the Lord (*For example: If your income is Rs.1000, your tithe would be Rs.100*). The word "tithe" means "tenth, tenth part, or payment of tenth part." We tithe to honour God for all of His provisions for us, to remind us that He is the ultimate giver, and to teach us to trust Him.

Tithing is an...

- ... act of gratefulness for the past.
- ... act of declaration of your priority in the present.
- ... act of demonstration of your faith in God for the future.
- ... act of worship to show your obedience to His Word.

## Is tithing important?

Tithing is important because God commanded it.

**Leviticus 27:30**, *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 to the Lord.*

Tithing demonstrates that God has the first place in our lives.

**Deuteronomy 14:23** (LB), *"The purpose of tithing is to teach you to put God first in every area of your life."*

God considers the tithe holy. The word "holy" means "separated" and "set apart."

The Creator warned the Israelites that to present anything less than the full 10 % of their income was to "rob God," since the first 10 % percent belonged to Him and not to them.

The prophet Malachi warned the people against this attitude: *"Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! But you ask, 'What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?' You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me."*

**(Malachi 3:8-9)**

Tithing brings God's blessings.

God promises in **Malachi 3:10 – 12**, *"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so that there will be food enough in my Church; if you do, I will open up the windows of heaven for you and **pour out a blessing** so great you won't have room enough to take it in!"*

God expects  
US  
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of money.

*"Try it! Let me prove it to you! Your crops will be large, for I will guard them from insects and plagues. Your grapes won't shrivel away before they ripen," says the Lord Almighty. "And all **nations will call you blessed**, for you will be a land sparkling with happiness. These are the promises of the Lord Almighty.*

**(Please note:** Being a tither doesn't relieve us of our responsibility to pray and seek God's guidance and apply wisdom over the usage of the remaining 90% of our finances. It is crucial to distinguish between our needs and our greeds. We must be faithful stewards of all the money that God entrusts us and not just in our 10%. Be wise in your expenses after you give to the Lord and don't let the devil have a hold on your finances or deceive you into poor investments or inappropriate spendings.)

## Did Lord Jesus endorse tithing?

Yes. In his warning to the Pharisees about legalism (they were tithing, but ignoring mercy and justice) he tells them that they should not neglect tithing, but also that their hearts should not neglect mercy and justice and other attributes of the law.

*“You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. 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)*

The early church showed many examples of giving tithes and offerings as an act of worship. Some of those first Christ followers sometimes gave everything that they had; 100% instead of just 10%! Those offerings were presented to the church leaders and then distributed as needed for the ministry.

**Acts 4:34-35**, *“For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.”*

## Some argue against tithing saying it's an Old testament concept, so it is invalid and done away with as we are in the Grace or the New Testament. What is the truth?

True tithing comes from the heart—not from a legalistic mind. Tithing seems to be a legalistic and self-righteous activity for some Christians who claim tithing as bondage.

There is a popular but false dichotomy that is often set up between the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT) that goes like this: OT is law, NT is grace. Since systematic giving of tithes and offerings is under the law we are exempt from any systematic giving as we are under Grace.

Actually, tithing is seen **before** the Old Testament law, during the law, and even after the law.

**Hebrews 7:1-10** describes Abraham, our spiritual father, tithed to Melchizedek, who was either Jesus Christ Himself or a symbolic representation of Christ. Moreover, all this occurred 430 years before the law. The Israelites actually gave three different tithes, so that cumulatively the three tithes amounted to 23 percent of their income (**Numbers 18:21, 24; Deuteronomy 12:17-18, 28-29; 26:12-13**). This statistic suggests that the Israelites were four times more responsive to the law of Moses than the average Christian is to the grace of Christ.

How you handle money reveals volumes about your priorities, loyalties, and affections

When it comes to tithing: in **Genesis 14:20**, Abraham commenced it; in **Genesis 28:22**, Jacob continued it; in **Leviticus 27:30**, God commanded it; in **Malachi 3:10**, God confirmed it and in **Matthew 23:23**, Jesus commended it and at present, who are we to cancel it?"

Grace is not an excuse to give less, but an invitation to give more (**Acts 2:44-45; 2 Corinthians 8:1-4; 9:6**). The covenant of grace enables us to respond in a richer way to God. Lord Jesus calls us to a greater righteousness under the NT than was demanded in the OT (**Matthew 5:20**). **Matthew 5:21-48** demonstrates several times the higher expectations that Jesus has of us. He would never expect us to sacrifice less under the new covenant of grace than they did under the old covenant of law.

Some Bible scholars support the notion of a "*graduated tithe*" in the New Testament. This is defined as the '*more money one makes, the higher percentage he or she gives*'.

## Should we tithe on the gross or the net income?

A very good rule to apply that concerns tithing is that the tithe should be from the gross income.

Gross income is the total amount that God provides; net income is what is left after taxes and other deductions. There is no clear direction on this in the Scriptures. But the simple principle to observe is: if God bases His blessing on what we give, then we should ask ourselves what we want to be blessed on – the gross or the net.

**Proverbs 3:9** "*Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops.*"

## What is the difference between tithes and offerings?

Tithes are one-tenth of your income. Offerings are given above and beyond tithes to the church as weekly offerings or to other mission works as God prospers you and directs you.

**2 Corinthians 9:6-7** says: "*Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*"

**Luke 6:38** "*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.*"

## So how must one give in this New Testament era?

As God *"did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all"* (Romans 8:32), so our posture toward God and others, in response to His love, should be one of cheerful sacrifice and generosity.

In the New Testament, we find **three levels** of giving to the Lord:

1. Tithes
2. Offerings
3. Extravagant or Sacrificial Offerings (Luke 7: 36-50, Luke 21:1-4)

**A tithe** is the starting point of one's giving. Tithing in the New Testament era is looked upon as a child's first steps. Tithing is like the training wheels on the bicycle of giving. Tithing may begin as a duty but often it becomes a delight.

**An offering**, or generous giving, is over and above the tithe. Offerings are something that you search your heart and decide to give beyond the tithe, but not in place of the tithe.

**Sacrificial offerings** or Extravagant offerings are seen as an act of worship. It is given whether one is poor or rich - giving in the midst of extreme poverty like the widow, or as led by the Holy Spirit like the lady who offered an alabaster box of precious ointment at the feet of Lord Jesus.

*"Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on." (Luke 21:1-4)*

**Tithing demonstrates that God has the first place in our lives.**

A New Testament teaching on giving which may be helpful to you is found in **1 Corinthians 16:2**: *"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income."* This verse points out that: we should give individually, regularly, methodically, and proportionately.

## What if we can't afford to tithe?

The statement *"cannot afford to tithe"* is a weak argument before God because we have paid up all other expenses except the tithe. It all comes down to priorities. When it comes to giving, we should ask, "How can I manage my affairs so that I can give more?"

**2 Corinthians 8:1-5**, *"And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. **In the midst of a very severe trial**, their overflowing joy and their **extreme poverty** welled up in **rich generosity**. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even **beyond their ability**. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us."*

## Where do we give our tithes & offerings?

Giving of your tithe and offerings should start with your local church, the spiritual community where you're fed God's Word. In the Early Church, giving was to the local Christian assembly. Even gifts that were sent to other places were given through the local church.

In **Malachi 3:10**, God says to bring your tithes to the *"store house"* i.e., the house of God and the church becomes a conduit to reach the lost.

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth to bring offerings every week to the church as God prospered them. (**1 Corinthians 16:2**). Also, one must give tithes to the place where you have your Holy Communion continually. (**Genesis 14:17-21**)

## Does God really want me to give?

### A. Giving creates in me a heart like God's.

**John 3:16**, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..."*

### B. Giving is an antidote to materialism.

**1 Timothy 6:17-19**, *"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."*

### C. Giving blesses me in return.

**Proverbs 22:9**, *"A generous man himself will be blessed"*.

**Acts 20:35**, *"It's more blessed to give than to receive"*.

**Tithing** is an act of **worship** to show your **obedience** to **His Word**

## What are the right attitudes for our giving?

- **GIVE WILLINGLY**

**2 Corinthians 9:7** *"Each one should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under pressure..."*

- **GIVE CHEERFULLY**

**2 Corinthians 9:7**, *"... for God loves a cheerful giver!"*

### **Conclusion:**

God owns all things, whether or not we recognize it. There is a difference between believing that God owns everything, and cheerfully submitting to His ownership of everything. Have you invited Him to be what Scriptures say He is – Creator, Owner, and Controller of you, your family, and "your" money and possessions?

A test of our stewardship is whether we ask God to show us what to do with His money. If we don't consult Him, no matter what we say, we're behaving as if we are the owners and not stewards. Visualize and reinforce this vital concept and make a joyful surrender to God and His Lordship. Lord Jesus never called someone a fool for giving too much and keeping too little. John Wesley say, "Get all you can, Save all you can and Give all you can".

**Prayer:** Lord I hereby acknowledge your ownership of me and all "my" money and possessions, as well as everything else I own – including my family and loved ones. Instead of seeing myself as the ultimate recipient, I will see myself as God's delivery person here on earth to invest into Your Kingdom. I will enjoy what You intend me to keep and cheerfully let go of what You intend me to share or give away.

From this point forward, I ask You Lord to help me understand the Bible's instructions about money and stewardship and how You wish me to manage and invest Your assets to further Your Kingdom. Use my time, talent, and treasures to extend Your Kingdom, Lord, may my life reflect Your glory. In Jesus Name. Amen.

### **Book References:**

1. Blessed Life - Robert Morris
2. Managing God's money - Randy Alcorn
3. Contagious Generosity - Chris Willard

If you have any further questions, please email us at [info@bethelag.in](mailto:info@bethelag.in) or walk into the church office for any counselling regarding this issue.

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