

THE TITHE: WORSHIP, TRUST, AND PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD

Week 2 — Grace, Generosity, and the Transformed Heart: Tithing and the New Covenant

Recap — Week 1

- Divine Ownership — everything belongs to God; the tithe acknowledges this.
- Community Provision — the tithe funded ministry and social welfare.
- Covenant Responsibility — giving inseparable from justice, care for the stranger, honest business.
- Joyful Worship — the festival tithe was a celebration flowing from joy, not duty.

God's economy: God gives us 100%, we return 10% as worship, and God blesses the other 90%.

From Obligation to Devotion

Does the New Covenant lower the standard of generosity? No — it raises the bar.

Jeremiah 31:33 (NLT)

"But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days," says the Lord. "I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."

Jesus doesn't abolish the law — He fulfils it and relocates it from external act to internal posture.

Matthew 5:17–20 (NLT)

"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

Not just 'do not kill' but 'do not hate'; not just 'do not commit adultery' but 'do not lust.'

Jesus writes the instructions on our hearts — freeing us from slavery to sin so we can flourish.

Seek First the Kingdom of God

Jesus grounds our relationship with money in the faithfulness of God and our trust.

Matthew 6:19–34 (NLT)

"Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be. ... No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money. That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life — whether you have enough food and drink, or enough clothes to wear. ... Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. So don't worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today's trouble is enough for today."

Worry about provision reveals where our treasure — and our trust — lies. Seeking the Kingdom first reorders our relationship with everything else.

Partnering with God, Not Appeasing God

Giving becomes relational, not transactional — a partnership in what God is doing, not a bare-minimum obligation. We become stewards, allowing resources to flow in and out of us for the Lord's use.

Luke 6:38 (NLT)

"Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full — pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back."

Matthew 25:29 (NLT)

"To those who use well what they are given, even more will be given, and they will have an abundance. But from those who do nothing, even what little they have will be taken away."

Jesus isn't saying 'give 10% and I will give you X%.' He's saying: let resources flow freely to and through you — this is good soil for God to plant more. True of our talents, money, and time.

Generosity Beyond the Tithe

The Widow's Offering

Mark 12:41–44 (NLT)

"Jesus sat down near the collection box in the Temple and watched as the crowds dropped in their money. Many rich people put in large amounts. Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins. Jesus called his disciples to him and said, 'I tell you the truth, this poor widow has given more than all the others who are making contributions. For they gave a tiny part of their surplus, but she, poor as she is, has given everything she had to live on.'"

Generosity is not determined by income level. God sees the heart. Her giving was not 10% — it was 100%. The New Covenant doesn't lower the standard from ten percent; it raises the standard toward total trust.

Matthew 23:23 (NLT)

"What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law — justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things."

The problem wasn't their tithing — it was appropriate. It became a dead ritual when detached from its reason. Jesus contrasts external rule-keeping with true inward holiness and generosity.

The Early Church

Acts 4:32–35 (NLT)

"All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need."

Not a mandatory communal system — generosity flowed naturally from transformed hearts. The standard: 'no needy persons among us.'

Instead of 'How little can I give?' — 'How can I honour God with everything he has entrusted to me?'

Paul's Theology of Giving — the Gold Standard

Giving that Goes Beyond

2 Corinthians 8:1–5 (NLT)

"Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do."

The Macedonians gave 'beyond their ability' because 'they gave themselves first to the Lord.' Monetary giving was the overflow of their hearts.

Christ as the Template

2 Corinthians 8:9 (NLT)

"You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich."

Our generosity is a response to — and reflection of — divine generosity. We don't give to earn God's love; we give because we have already received it.

Cheerful, Proportional Giving

2 Corinthians 9:6–10 (NLT)

"Remember this — a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. 'For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.' And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. As the Scriptures say, 'They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever.' For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you."



- Giving is proportional to harvest — generous investment produces abundant return, not always financial.
- Giving is an individual, heart-level decision — not 'have I hit 10%?' but 'am I giving as the Spirit leads?'
- God loves a cheerful giver — Greek hilaros, root of 'hilarious.' Giving flows from delight, not pressure.
- God will resource generous people abundantly — confidence in God's sufficiency, not fear of a curse.
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Systematic and Proportional Giving

1 Corinthians 16:1–2 (NIV)

"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."

Giving is planned, thoughtful, consistent — 'in keeping with your income.' God invites equal faithfulness, not equal amounts.

Supporting Ministry in the New Covenant

1 Corinthians 9:13–14 (NIV)

"Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel."

Christian communities are responsible for sustaining those who minister. When we give, we become partners in God's work.

So — What About Ten Percent?

Jesus says yes, tithe — but don't neglect justice and care for those in need. For new believers, 10% is a wise starting point: a discipline that trains the heart in generosity. The tithe is a floor, not a ceiling. The deeper question is never 'Am I giving exactly ten percent?' but 'Am I honouring God faithfully with what has been entrusted to me?'

Conclusion: From Law to Love

The tithe always pointed beyond itself toward a people wholly dedicated to God, available to one another, committed to the flourishing of communities. Under the New Covenant, that vision expands to every nation, every tribe, every generation. Amen.