

## ***DEVOTIONALS – GIVE GOD HIS TITHE***

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### **Give God His Tithe (1)**

*‘A tithe of everything...belongs to the Lord...’ Leviticus 27:30 NIV*

If you put your mortgage before your gifts to God, you show more gratitude to your bank than you do to the One who made you. You say, ‘I earned it, so I own it’. No. The Bible says, *‘The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.’* (Psalm 24:1 NIV) God owns every square metre of land on earth and every person who walks on it – including you. You’re not an owner, you’re a steward! And while a good steward deserves to be well rewarded by his master, his first priority is to please him and carry out his will. The Bible says, *‘A tithe of everything...belongs to the Lord...’* Get your thinking straight on this issue! In God’s eyes 10 per cent of your income is ‘dedicated funds’ to be used for one thing only – His purposes on the earth. Tithing isn’t how the church raises its budget; it’s how God raises His children. We distort God’s Word when we teach tithing as a means of getting money to pay off church debt, or as a substitute for other worn-out methods of fundraising, or as a cure-all for the church’s financial shortfalls. The Bible says, *‘...son (daughter)...give Me your heart...’* (Proverbs 23:26 NIV) When God has your heart’s deepest affection you’ll give gladly, not grudgingly. The first man in Scripture to tithe was Abraham. Why did he do it? Gratitude, because God had delivered him from the hand of an enemy who was out to destroy him. Has God delivered you? Has He blessed you? Then show your gratitude by giving Him His portion!

**Soul Food:** Is. 4-7; John 6:16-24; Ps 126; Prov 27:17-19

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### **Give God His Tithe (2)**

*‘...I will give you a tenth.’ Genesis 28:22 NIV*

Jacob wasn't a giver by nature. Quite the opposite, in fact! He cheated his brother Esau out of his birthright, which entitled him to twice as much of their father's inheritance. And when he worked for his father-in-law, Laban took advantage of him too. But one night Jacob met God in a life-changing dream, and when he woke the next morning he told God, '...of all that You give me, I will give You a tenth.' Note, this was hundreds of years before the Law of Moses was instituted, which said 'A tithe of everything...belongs to the Lord...' (Leviticus 27:30 NIV) Jacob wasn't motivated by law, he was motivated by love for God. You can give without loving; some folks give under pressure, or to impress others or to get an income tax deduction. But you can't love without giving! The Bible says, 'For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...' (John 3:16 KJV) You're never more like God than when you're in the act of giving. Jesus said, '...seek first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.' (Matthew 6:33 NKJV) Tithing is about putting God and His Kingdom first. When self, home, business and pleasure come first in your life, your priorities are out of whack. Tithing reverses that order and puts God where He rightfully belongs – in first place. When God instructs you to tithe, He's telling you to establish the habit of putting Him in the number one slot as a life principle. When you do, Jesus said 'all these things' you're so concerned about will be 'added to you'.

**Soul Food:** Is. 8-11; John 6:25-34; Ps 85; Prov 27:20-22

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### **Give God His Tithe (3)**

*‘Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse...’ Malachi 3:10 NIV*

When you honour the Lord in your business, He will bless your business. Imagine the advantage you’d have in the marketplace with God as your partner! Many famous Christian business people throughout history were faithful tithers, including Henry John Heinz of Heinz 57 Varieties, and William Colgate, the toothpaste magnate. Some of these people were so blessed that, before their lives were over, they gave God 90 per cent of their income and lived on the other 10 per cent.

God says: *“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. Test Mein this...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 to store it all...all the nations will call you blessed...”* (Malachi 3:10-12). When you demonstrate that God’s business means more to you than your own, He will prosper you. And He invites you to ‘test’ Him in this. How long have you known that you should tithe, wanted to tithe, said you were going to, and yet you’ve never got round to it?

Start now – and start with what you have! What you can do now is the only influence you have over your future. John D Rockefeller is reputed to have made the following statement concerning the habit of tithing: ‘I never would have been able to tithe the first million dollars I made if I hadn’t tithed my first salary, which was a dollar fifty per week’. Tithing demonstrates that you’ve conquered self-interest and the fear of lack. It’s a demonstration of faith – and God always rewards faith!

**Soul Food:** Is. 12-16; John 6:35-51; Ps 98; Prov 27:23-24

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### **Give God His Tithe (4)**

*‘...those who fear Him lack nothing.’ Psalm 34:9 NIV*

There are three kinds of givers: the flint, the sponge and the honeycomb.

To get even a spark from a flint you have to hammer it. To get anything out of a sponge you have to squeeze it. But a honeycomb just overflows with sweetness. Which kind of giver would you like to be? The Psalmist writes, *‘Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him...for those who fear Him lack nothing.’* (Psalm 34:8-9 NIV) Tithing is an act of worship. Of the 100 to 110 hours you’re awake each week, one-third to one-half generally involve earning money. So when you give God your money, you’re giving Him your brain, your brawn and yourself. When you go to the Lord’s house on the Lord’s Day, partake of the Lord’s Supper and put the Lord’s tithe into the Lord’s treasury, it’s an act of profound worship. Now, let’s be clear: a God who paves Heaven’s streets with gold sin’t going to go broke because you don’t give Him a tithe of your income. The act of tithing isn’t about the tithe; it’s about the attitude of the tither to the Creator. It’s not about the gift; it’s about the attitude of the giver to the Giver. It’s not about the money; it’s about the attitude of the man or woman to the Maker. It’s not about possessions; it’s about the attitude of the loved ones to the Lover. As the songwriter Isaac Watts said, *‘Were the whole realm of nature mine; that were an offering far too small. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.’*

**Soul Food:** 2 Kings 6:8-23; Matt 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-36