

Tithing Part 2

by A.W. Pink

Tithing is a duty and a privilege that demonstrates God's existence and control over temporal affairs, and is a means of developing faith and experiencing temporal prosperity.

Scripture: Genesis 14:20, Malachi 3:10, Luke 12:48, Hebrews 7:4

Topics: "Faith and Trust in God", "Tithing"

Description

A.W. Pink emphasizes the significance of tithing as a moral obligation for Christians, arguing that it predates the law and is reinforced in the New Testament. He explains that tithing serves as a recognition of God's rights, a remedy against covetousness, and a solution to financial issues within the church. Pink encourages believers to test God through their tithes, promising that those who honor Him will not be left wanting. He asserts that the blessings from God will be abundant, as demonstrated in the lives of faithful givers. Ultimately, Pink challenges Christians to trust God with their finances, assuring them of His provision and faithfulness.

Transcript

TITHING

Part 2

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Mal. 3:10). Down deep in the heart of every Christian there is undoubtedly the conviction that he ought to tithe. There is an uneasy feeling that this is a duty which has been neglected, or, if you prefer it, a privilege that has not been appropriated.

Both are correct. Possibly there are some who soothe themselves by saying, Well, other Christians do not tithe. And maybe there are others who say, But if tithing be obligatory in this present dispensation why are the preachers silent upon the subject? My friends, they are silent on a good many subjects today: that does not prove anything. In the previous section of this article the attempt was made to show three things: first, that tithing existed among the people of God long before the law was given at Sinai and that in the brief record we have of that early history we learn that Abraham, the father of the faithful, gave tithes unto Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High God, and that Jacob, when he had that revelation from the Lord on his way out to Padan-aram, promised to give a tenth unto God.

Second, we saw that when the law was given the tithe was definitely and clearly incorporated in it, but, like almost everything else in that law, Israel neglected it, until, in the days of Malachi, we find Jehovah expressly telling His people that they had robbed Him. In the third place, we found that in the New Testament itself we have both hints and plain teaching that God requires His people to tithe even now, for tithing is not a part of the ceremonial law, it is a part of the moral law.

It is not something that has a dispensational limitation, but is something that is binding on God's people in all ages. Now let us go a step farther. Tithing is even more obligatory on the saints of the New Testament than it was upon God's people in Old Testament days--not equally binding, but more binding, and that for two reasons: first, on the principle of "unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). The obligations of God's saints today are much greater than the obligations of the saints in Old Testament times, because our privileges and our blessings are greater.

As grace is more potent than law, as love is more constraining than fear, as the Holy Spirit is more powerful than the flesh, so our obligations to tithe are greater, for we have a deeper incentive to do that which is pleasing to God. Listen! The Christian should tithe for the very same reason he keeps all the other commandments of God, and for the same reason he keeps the laws of his country--not because he must do so, but because he desires to do so. As a law abiding citizen in the kingdom of God, he desires to maintain the government of God and to do that which is pleasing in His sight.

Again, in proportion as the priesthood of Christ is superior to the priesthood of Aaron, so are our obligations to render tithes to Him. The Aaronic priesthood was recognized and owned by Israel through their payment of the tithe to them. In the seventh chapter of Hebrews the Holy Spirit has argued the superiority of the priesthood of Christ, which is after the order of Melchizedek, on the fact, or on the basis of the fact rather, that Melchizedek himself received tithes from Abraham.

That is the very argument the Holy Spirit uses there to establish the superiority of the Melchizedec order of Christ's priesthood. He appeals to the fact as recorded in Genesis 14, that Melchizedek, who was the type of Christ, received tithes from Abraham, and argues from that that inasmuch as Levi was in the loins of Abraham, therefore the Melchizedek priesthood of Christ is greater than that of Aaron because Abraham himself paid tithes to Melchizedek, who is a type of Christ.

Therefore, in proportion to the greater blessings and privileges that we enjoy, we are under deeper obligations to God; and in proportion as Christ's priesthood is superior to that of the Levites, so is our obligation the greater to render tithes unto the Lord today, than that under which His people lived in Old Testament times. Why God has Appointed Tithing In the next place we wish to suggest a few reasons why God has appointed tithing. In the first place, as a constant recognition of the Creator's rights.

As our Maker He desires that we should honor Him with one-tenth of our income. In other words, the tenth is the recognition of His temporal mercies and the owning that He is the Giver of them. It is the acknowledgment that temporal blessings come from Him and are held in trust for Him. Tithing an Antidote Against Covetousness Again. We believe that God has appointed tithing as the solution of all financial covetousness, for by nature we are full of covetousness. That is why in the ten commandments God incorporates "Thou shalt not covet."

That is why Christ said to His disciples, "Beware of covetousness." And tithing has been appointed by God to deliver us from the spirit of greed, to counteract our innate selfishness; therefore, it has been designed for our blessing for, like all of His commandments, none of them is grievous, but appointed for our own

good. Tithing the Solution of Every Financial Problem Again. I believe that God has appointed tithing as the solution of every financial problem that can arise in connection with His work.

While the children of Israel practiced tithing there was no difficulty in maintaining the system of worship that God had appointed. And if God's people today practiced tithing, there would be an end of all financial straits that are crippling so many Christian enterprises. No church could possibly be embarrassed financially where its members tithed. And I believe that that is the solution of rural church work in thinly populated districts. Wherever you have ten male Christians you have sufficient to support a permanent worker in their midst, for no worker should desire any greater remuneration than the average income of those supporting him.

Therefore, if you have ten male Christians giving one-tenth of their income, no matter what it may be, you have sufficient to maintain and sustain a regular worker in their midst. That is God's solution to the missionary problem. Wherever you have ten average male Chinese you have a situation where they ought to be independent and no longer leaning upon the help of God's people at home. It is a scandal and a shame to see churches in India and in China today that have been in existence fifty years still looking to God's people in Australia and England and America for their financial support.

And why is it? Because the teachings of the Word of God have been neglected. It is because they have never been taught the foundation of Christian finance. No wonder the missionary world is calling out today that they are crippled for lack of funds! They need to be taught scriptural finance. That is why God appointed tithing. It is the solution of all financial problems in connection with His work. Where tithing is practiced there will never be any going into debt. Tithing as a test of Our Faith Now then in the fourth place, God has appointed tithing as a test of our faith, and for the nourishing and developing of our faith--especially of the young Christians.

Here is a young man who has just started housekeeping. He professes to trust God with the enormous matter of his eternal future. He professes to have confidently left his immortal interests in the hands of God. Well now, dare he trust God with one-tenth of his income for a year? My friends, tithing develops in young Christians the spirit of trusting the Lord in their temporal affairs. Two Objections Anticipated Before coming to the next point let us just anticipate two objections.

When the subject of tithing is brought before the Lord's people, there are usually a few who are ready to say, Well, I think it is a man's duty to provide for his own household, for his own family. Yes, so do I. Scripture says so. There is nothing wrong in that. I go further. I believe it is perfectly proper for a young Christian man to desire and to seek after an increasing income with which to properly support his growing family, but if he is not a tither he has no guarantee from God that his present income will even be maintained, let alone enlarged.

But the tither has that guarantee from God, as we shall yet see, unless our eyes are shut. And then perhaps there are some who say, I cannot afford to tithe, for I have made some investments which have turned out very badly. Yes, and you are likely to meet with some worse ones if you continue to rob God! My friends, you need Divine guidance in the matter of investing, and God won't give that guidance while you are walking contrary to His revealed will in the matter of church finance.

I am fully persuaded that in the vast majority of cases, if not all (this may sound harsh: God's Word is piercing and condemning and rebuking and humbling) that where you have children of God in middle life or in old age, who are in financial straits, it is because they robbed God in their earlier years. Be not

deceived: God is not mocked! If they did not handle to His glory and use according to His Word the money He did give them, then they must not be surprised if He withholds from them now: see Jeremiah 5:25!

There is a cause for every effect. There is an explanation to all things right here in the Word of God, too. "Proving God" Now let us come at closer grips with the text itself. There are three things I wish you to notice carefully. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 3:10). My friends, that is a startling expression. It is a remarkable expression. God says, "Prove Me." Those words mean this: Place the Almighty on trial (and it would be sin, it would be positively wicked, for any creature to do so unless he was definitely commanded so to do).

"Prove Me now herewith"--with the tithe. In other words, our text tells us to put God to the proof, to test Him out and see what He will do. We are bidden to give Him one-tenth of our income and then to see whether He will let us be the loser or not. "Prove Me now herewith." I tell you, my friends, my soul is overwhelmed by the amazing condescension of the Most High to place Himself in such a position. God allows Himself to be placed on trial by us, and tithing is a process of proof.

Tithing is a means whereby we can demonstrate in the material realm the existence of God and the fact of His governor-ship over all temporal affairs. If you have any shadow of doubt in your mind and heart as to whether or not God exists, or as to whether or not He controls all temporal affairs, you can have that doubt removed by an absolute demonstration of the actuality of God's existence and of His control over temporal affairs. How? By regularly, faithfully, systematically giving Him one-tenth of your gross income, and then seeing whether He will let you be the loser or not: proving whether He does honor those who honor Him: proving whether He will allow Himself to be any man's debtor.

He says, "Prove Me, prove Me, put Me to the test." You trembling, fearful saints, never mind if your income is only \$1 a day, and you have to scheme and scratch and strain to make both ends meet. Take one-tenth away and devote it to the Lord, and then see if He will remain your debtor. "Prove Me now herewith," He says. Try Me out and see whether I am worthy of your confidence; put Me to the test and see whether I will disappoint your faith. As we said above, God has appointed tithing as a test of faith, for the development of faith; and if the young Christian would only start by proving God in the material realm, testing Him out in His own appointed way, what a confirmation it would be!

How it would enable him to trust God in temporal things--which is one of the hardest things that the average Christian finds to do. "The Windows of Heaven" Opened Now coming again to the text. Notice the expression, "Prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven." What does He mean by that? "And see if I will not open the windows of heaven." What does He mean? Now Scripture always interprets Scripture. If you will go back to the seventh chapter of Genesis, verses 11 and 12, you will find that identical expression used there, and it explains the force of it here in Malachi 3.

Read Genesis 7:11: "In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights." Now the same expression that is used in Genesis 7 in connection with the Deluge is used here in Malachi 3 in connection with the return, the response, the blessings that God has promised to those that honor Him with their substance, by devoting a tithe to His service.

In other words, that expression "open the windows of heaven" signifies an abundant outpouring. Now listen! That does not mean an abundant spiritual blessing. It does not mean that at all, for spiritual blessings cannot be purchased. You ask, Can temporal? In one sense, yes. Certainly they can in the sense that God has promised that we shall reap what we have sown; in the sense that He has promised to honor those who honor Him; in the sense that He promised a bountiful return to a bountiful giver.

Certainly! Just in the same way that He has promised length of days to those who honor their parents when they are children. That is a blessing that is purchased! Now then, listen! When God has promised to open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing, it is not a spiritual one, it is a temporal one. He promises an increase in your income. Of course He does. Do you suppose Almighty God would be your debtor? Do you suppose the Most High would allow you to be the loser because you are faithful to His Word and obedient to His will and give Him a tenth of your income?

Why, of course not. And we say again, the great reason why so many of God's people are poor is because they have been unfaithful with the money that God gave them. They robbed GOD! No wonder they have suffered adversities and misfortunes. No wonder! Some of us need to re-read our Bibles on the subject of the principles and conditions of temporal prosperity. Some need to learn that the God of the New Testament is the God of the Old Testament and that He changes not. God changes not.

God does not vary the principles of His government. The God who gave bountiful crops to a people in the Old Testament times who honored Him and kept His Word, is the same God who is on the throne today, and the same God gives bountiful crops and prosperity in business to them who honor Him. But those who meet with financial adversities and financial misfortunes--there is a reason for it; of course there is. The world calls it "bad luck": they know no better, but we ought to!

"Enough and More Than Enough" It is very obvious the translators did not know what to do with this text, if you will notice the words they have put in italics. Look at it as it reads (the last part of Mal. 3:10): "I will open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing, that (now leave out the words in italics) not enough." The words in italics are not in the original. They have been supplied by the translators and they had to supply more words in the last clause than were actually there, which shows they did not know what to do with it.

The Hebrew as nearly as I can get it in the original means, "there shall be enough and more than enough." That does not vary very much from the rendering of the translators. In other words it means, "The liberal soul shall be made fat." Turn for a moment to 2 Chronicles 31 and notice now the tenth verse: "And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the Lord, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the Lord hath blessed His people; and that which is left is this great store."

Now if you read the preceding verses you will find it was when the tithe was restored in that revival in the days of Hezekiah; and here we are told that since the people brought their offerings (their tithes) into the Lord's house there was not only enough, but there was more than enough; there was a great store left over! It is ever thus when we faithfully honor God with our substance! John Bunyan wrote: "There was a man, Some called him mad; The more he gave, The more he had."

Practical Suggestions In closing I want to give you a few practical suggestions. They are very important and they are very simple. In the matter of tithing, Christian friends, be just as strict, and careful and systematic as you are in business matters, in fact, even more so, for it is not the world's money and it is

not your own, but it is the Lord's money which is involved. Now do not trust to memory. There are some Christians who say, Well, I have never bothered to keep any records, but I am quite sure that if I had done so, I should find that I had given at least a tenth to the Lord.

Some of you might be surprised to find--if you did keep a record and looked it up--how much short of the tenth you had given! In the first place I would suggest this. Form the habit of taking out one-tenth from all the money that you receive either as wages or gifts. Subtract one-tenth and put it into a separate bag, or box, or purse. That is what it means when it says in 1 Corinthians 16, "laying by in store." And that box or purse is the Lord's, not yours. It is holy unto Him.

Form the habit of taking out a tenth from all you receive, putting it into a separate compartment belonging to the Lord. In the second place, get a small book, a cheap notebook, and on one page put down all your receipts (it will not take some of you very long--one entry, I suppose, at the end of the week) and on the other page put down the disbursement of God's "tithe." And then in the third place make it a matter of definite prayer to God to guide you in the disbursement as to where He would have you use the money that belongs to Him.

It is not yours; it is His; for remember you have not even begun to give at all until you have first paid your tithe. Giving comes in afterwards. The tithe is the Lord's. That is His. That is not yours to give at all; that belongs to the Creator. You have not begun to give until you have done your tithing. A Testimony Now in the last place I just want to quote an extract clipped from a religious magazine published in England. In that magazine there has been going on for some time a correspondence, a number of letters, and the subject has been the unemployment in England among the Lord's people.

Here is the testimony of one who has written to that paper: "Twenty-five years ago, being influenced by reading the life of George Muller, I was led to give a tenth of my income to the Lord. I think I was earning 6£ (\$1.50) a week at the time. The first few years I found it sometimes a sacrifice. One shilling out of ten seemed a lot. But it became such a habit with me to divide at once and put away the Lord's tenth that for years it has been no sacrifice. Now what is the result?

This: I have proved the truth that Him that honoreth Me I will honor. All through the war, and since, I have experienced no poverty. Though a shop assistant and now over forty (it is a woman that is writing) I have been away ill only one week in twenty-five years. What makes it even more wonderful is that after twenty I became slightly deaf and this has increased (and they do not want deaf assistants to wait on people in a shop, do they?) and yet, praise the Lord, I am still holding my situation.

When I read of so many other sad cases of unemployment I praise the Lord for His mercy to me." One testimony like that is worth twenty arguments. And, my friends, I want to bear my own witness that after twenty years' experience and observation I have proven the truth of our text that God does open the windows of heaven and that He does give more than enough in response to simple obedience to Him. "Prove Me now herewith." That is God's challenge to you. God dares you to test Him out in the financial realm.

You profess to have faith in Him, to trust your soul into His keeping; now He challenges you to see whether you have faith enough to just trust Him with one-tenth of your income for a year, for mind you, in the case of the children of Israel it was a matter of waiting very nearly twelve months for any returns. They were farmers. You test the Lord out for twelve months. You wait a reasonable length of time, and then see whether He lets you be the loser or not. "Prove Me now herewith."

That is God's challenge to your faith. O brethren and sisters, do so and see if He will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out such a blessing that there shall be "enough and more than enough."

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