

God's Way to Financial Security

Few people realize that God set in motion living, dynamic laws that regulate all aspects of human life. One of these laws governs personal finances.

You cannot afford to be unaware of this fundamental financial law and how it affects your financial security! Let's understand the biblical truth about this little known but very important law of God.

Simply look up and read in your Bible the scriptures that answer each question. Comments following the questions will elaborate on these verses. This ministudy is based on the Revised Authorized Version of the Bible, but you may use any translation.

1. Does God reveal Himself as the Creator and Owner of all things? John 1:1-3, Psalm 24:1, Job 41:11. Does all the gold and silver belong to God? Haggai 2:8.

God created everything, and by virtue of that creation He owns it all. Even we ourselves belong to Him. Therefore God also owns everything man produces on earth.

The Creator can be compared to a landlord. He allows humanity to occupy His earth as temporary tenants. God permits us to cultivate the land and produce the food we eat. He allows us to cut down His timber to build the houses we live in, and to use all of His raw materials in producing the thousands of products we use.

But God does not charge us high rent. God requires us to pay Him only a small portion of what we produce from His earth. And as we'll shortly learn, that small amount is actually spent for the benefit of mankind.

2. Was the patriarch Abraham obedient to God? Genesis 26:5. How did he honor the Creator and Owner of all things? Genesis 14:17-20, Hebrews 7:1-4. Was Abraham blessed? Verse 6.

Abraham was a tither! He gave a tenth (*tithe* means "tenth") of the spoils of battle to Melchizedek, God's representative on earth at that time. Abraham thus acknowledged God as the source of all his blessings.

3. Was Melchizedek God's minister? Genesis 14:18, Hebrews 7:1.

Tithing is revealed in the Bible as God's

system for financing His ministry. Prior to the Levitical priesthood, the ministry was that of Melchizedek, who actually was the member of the God Family who later became Jesus Christ. As God's representative on earth, Melchizedek received the tithes from God's faithful servants. (For more information on the true identity of Melchizedek, write for our free reprint article "The Mystery of Melchizedek Solved!")

4. What did Jacob, grandson of Abraham, promise God he would do with all of his increase? Genesis 28:20-22. Was he greatly prospered? Genesis 30:43.

5. After Israel's deliverance from Egypt, God led them to Mt. Sinai. There He instructed Moses to formally write down His laws. Included was God's tithing law. To whom and for what purpose were the people to tithe? Numbers 18:21, 24. To whom does the tithe actually belong? Leviticus 27:30.

Melchizedek (Christ, the "Lord" of the Old Testament) selected the Levites to be His ministers. But God did not commission them to spread the Gospel. The Levites were merely to teach the Israelites God's laws, and to administer the rituals and sacrifices as reminders of sin. And the people were commanded to bring the tithe of their produce to the Levites. Christ (Melchizedek) thus transferred the receipt of God's tithe to the Levitical priesthood — His representatives on earth — for their support.

6. Does the seventh chapter of Hebrews show that tithing is not ceremonial or Levitical, having originated *before* the Levitical priesthood? Hebrews 7:5, 8-10.

Tithing clearly was practiced long before God instituted ancient Israel's civil law through Moses. Because tithing did not begin with the Levites, it therefore did *not end* when the Levitical priesthood ended.

Rather, according to Hebrews 7:11-17, God changed the priesthood back to the spiritual priesthood of Jesus Christ — the Melchizedek priesthood restored! Therefore a change as to *who* should receive the tithe for God was also made (verse 12).

Christ, our High Priest in heaven (Hebrews 7:3, 4:14-16), has authorized His New Testa-

ment ministry to accept His tithe to finance the spiritual work of God's Church.

7. What is Christ's commission to His ministry? Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15. What Gospel would His ministers preach in this end time? Matthew 24:14.

Christ established a spiritual ministry. It is a ministry of salvation, of prophecy and of warning, as well as of good news — of prophesying His glorious return as world ruler to rescue humanity from self-annihilation and bring world peace.

In these chaotic days approaching the end of this age, God's Church is reaching millions of people around the world with Jesus Christ's message. It is a huge undertaking requiring not only financial support for hundreds of ministers and other employees, but also the use of expensive technological facilities — radio, television and the printing press among them — for proclaiming Jesus' Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God "to all the nations."

Today, God provides for the financing of the globe-girdling work of His Church by the same system He has used for millennia — the tithing system.

8. Did Jesus do away with tithing, or did He uphold it? Luke 11:42, Matthew 23:23.

Far from doing away with God's tithing law, Christ commanded tithing! He said that spiritual qualities such as judgment, love, mercy and faith are more important than strictly paying tithes on every little plant that might grow in your garden — especially when that strictness led to self-righteousness, as it did with the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees. But Christ said "not to leave the other undone" (Authorized Version) — not to fail to pay God your full tithe as He requires.

9. How have people literally *stolen* from God? Malachi 3:7-12, especially verses 8 and 9.

Can anyone afford to rob God?

God's tithe is *not yours* to "give," since it already belongs to Him. When you tithe, you are merely *returning* one tenth of the 10 tenths God has given you!

In the Garden of Eden, God reserved just one tree for Himself. Adam and Eve had no right to eat of it. But Satan deceived them into thinking that tree was also theirs to use (Genesis 3:1-6). When they took the fruit of that forbidden tree, they sinned — they stole from God.

Today, the same devil wants us to believe that *all* we earn is ours to keep. But don't believe it!

God has, in effect, put a "no trespassing" sign on the first tenth of our earnings — 10 percent of our profit, or adjusted gross income. It is reserved for Him, to be used as He directs

His ministry. It is our responsibility to acknowledge God's prior claim over that first tenth of our income by paying it to the Church we have proved to be doing His work on earth.

10. What does one come under as a result of breaking this fundamental financial law of God? Malachi 3:9. How does one escape this financial curse? Verse 10.

God does not force us to tithe. But if we don't, there's a penalty. We lose the blessing that goes with honest stewardship. If we hold back the tenth of our income that God reserves for Himself, we come under a curse — the penalty of breaking His tithing law.

11. What does God challenge us to do to "prove" Him — to see if He really will bless us? Verse 10, Proverbs 3:9-10.

The simple equation is: Pay to God what you owe Him — the first tenth — and He will reward you with blessings. If you work diligently and are faithful in returning His portion to Him, making Him your financial partner, God will cause your partnership with Him to prosper.

12. What should be our attitude in paying God's tenth to Him, and even in giving offerings (Malachi 3:8) as we are able? II Corinthians 9:6-7.

A generous attitude is fundamental to God's "give" way of life. God is a generous giver. He wants His children to reflect a like generosity within their comparatively limited means.

13. Does God promise that there are automatic blessings for living His "give" way of life? Proverbs 11:24-25, Luke 6:38, Galatians 6:7.

14. What great spiritual principle did Christ reveal about the use of our money? Matthew 6:19-21.

Storing up spiritual "treasures in heaven" is far more important than being prospered physically. But God promises both! Why not prove God by making Him your financial partner?

(For a comprehensive study of the subject of tithing, send for our free booklet *Ending Your Financial Worries*.) □



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