

# Church of God Sunday School

## THE CHRISTIAN'S TOOLBOX — GIVING



### DAILY READINGS:

- ❑ **Monday:** Everything belongs to God (James 1:17; Psalm 50:10-12; Haggai 2:8).
- ❑ **Tuesday:** Abraham and Jacob paid tithes (Genesis 14:14-20; Genesis 28:11-22).
- ❑ **Wednesday:** God is angry when people rob Him (Malachi 3:8-11).
- ❑ **Thursday:** What kind of giver does God desire? (2 Corinthians 9:7; 1 Corinthians 13:3; Matthew 6:1).
- ❑ **Friday:** Examples of giving (Mark 12:41-44; Acts 2:45; 2 Corinthians 8:9).
- ❑ **Saturday:** God will bless you for giving (Luke 6:38; Matthew 10:42; Luke 14:12-14).

**MEMORY VERSE:** *"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."*  
—2 Corinthians 9:7

In the Bible you can read about two large lakes in the land of Israel. The water in both of these lakes comes from the Jordan River. The Sea of Galilee (also called "the lake of Gennesaret") was where Peter, James, and John caught so many fish that it broke their nets (Luke 5:1-6). However, in the Dead Sea you will not catch fish, for this sea has almost ten times more salt than the ocean. How can two lakes that receive their water from the same river be so different? The difference is that while water from the River Jordan flows in AND out of the Sea of Galilee, the Dead Sea has no outlet; thus, all that flows into the Dead Sea stays there.

The Christian's tool of giving should work as does the Sea of Galilee. Everything you have (health, family, money, possessions) comes from God. Everything belongs to God (Psalm 24:1). When He gives you something, you are not to keep it all to yourself. That would be like the servant who buried his master's money in the ground (Matthew 25:18). God expects you to use all that He has given you for His glory, and that includes your money. Being a good steward (manager) of money is not keeping it all for yourself. Because it is God's money (and not yours), it would be wise to see what the Bible says about giving.

### Giving in the Old Testament

In Genesis, Chapter 4, Cain and Abel both made an offering to God. Cain brought "of the fruit of the ground" and Abel brought "the firstlings of his flock." They were giving back to God out of that which God had blessed them. In Genesis, Chapter 14, Abraham successfully went to war to rescue his nephew Lot, who had been taken captive. Out of the enemies' possessions that were brought back, Abraham paid "tithes" to Melchizedek, the king of Salem. (The word *tithe* means "a tenth part.") In Genesis, Chapter 28, Jacob vowed to give God a "tenth" of all that God gave him. Later, when God gave the law to Moses, the people were instructed to give tithes to support the Levites (Numbers 18:21), to provide for the temple and feast days (Deuteronomy 14:22-26), and to provide for the poor (Deuteronomy 14:28-29). (Commentators believe these combined tithes could have been as much as one-third of the property of the Jews.)

The tithe was not all that the Jews gave. It was the minimum standard. In addition to tithes, God's people gave "offerings," or sacrifices. Reasons for these offerings included: the desire to express devotion and thanksgiving to God, to confess sin, to show surrender to God, or to make a vow. Some of these offerings were animals (goats, rams, birds, lambs), and others were grains, olive oil, and drink offerings. God made it very clear what He thought of people who did not give Him tithes and offerings. Malachi 3:8 says: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."

## Giving in the New Testament

Today Christians no longer bring offerings (animal sacrifices), and there no longer is a Jewish temple to give tithes to provide for. Does that mean that giving tithes and offerings no longer applies to God's people today? When Jesus spoke to His disciples, He said "when" you give, not "if" you give (Matthew 6:2). If the minimum the Old Testament Jews gave was 10 percent, how much should the Christian give today? Today we live under a "better covenant" (Hebrews 8:6). Unlike God's people in the Old Testament, today we can experience salvation, live free from sin, and have God's Spirit dwelling within us. When we have been given so much more, can we give any less than the Old Testament Jews gave? The 10 percent tithe was the minimum standard for giving in the Old Testament, and that is a good place for the Christian to start today.

Just as God had a plan to support His ministry in the Old Testament (Levites), He has a plan for supporting the ministry in the New Testament as well. In Galatians 6:6 we find that people were told to "communicate [share] . . . all good things" with the ministry that taught the Word to them. First Corinthians 9:14 says that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel [or 'get their maintenance']." God's plan for giving is to also provide for the poor and others who are in need (Romans 15:26; 1 Timothy 6:17-18).

### Giving With the Right Motive and Attitude

To give with the right attitude or motive, it is good to keep three things in mind: (1) everything belongs to God; (2) you have been given "much" of God's riches; (3) where "much is given, of him shall be much required" (Luke 12:48). God should be first in everything in your life, including your giving. People who have trouble giving back to God often have become selfish. Some say: "I earned this; it is mine. I should be able to do with it what I want." Who gave them the healthy body and mind to be able to earn that money? A selfish heart is not a giving heart. Giving with the right motive is not giving "grudgingly, or of necessity [because it is expected]" (2 Corinthians 9:7), but it comes from a thankful heart, a heart that wants to serve God.

What kind of giver does God want you to be? "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). When our giving comes from a heart of thankfulness and of love (1 Corinthians 13:3), not because we want praise from others (Matthew 6:1), this is giving that pleases God. If you find it hard to give to God, it might be well to check your heart. If you do not have love and thankfulness for God's blessings, the attitude of your heart will reveal where your true treasure is (Matthew 6:21).



### Some Gave All

When Jesus was in the temple, He saw a widow put "two mites" into the treasury (Mark 12:41-44). Jesus told His disciples that she had given more than everyone else. How could that be? "Two mites" were the least valuable coins available during that time. Jesus was not talking about how much money the widow gave, but the fact that she had given all she had. When Stephen, Paul, Peter, James, and countless others gave their lives for the cause of Christ, how much did they give? Some people have given ALL. While giving tithes and offerings to God is important and God expects it, it is wrong to think that is enough.

How much should you give? What example should you follow? How much did Jesus (our example in all things) give? Second Corinthians 8:9 says that "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor." He gave all, dying on the Cross so that you can be saved and live for Him. God wants all of you—your abilities, your desires, your plans for the future, and your strength. The Christian tool of giving is not only putting money in the offering plate at church or taking food to the poor or using your talents and gifts in the work of God. Giving is to include every part of your life. God is the Owner; you are the manager. Do not be afraid to give your entire life to God. He has great plans for your future. You will never out give God (Luke 6:38).

**"A man  
there was,  
tho' some did  
count him mad,  
The more he  
cast away, the  
more he had."**

**—John Bunyan**



1. What is the difference between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. What does the word *tithe* mean? \_\_\_\_\_

3. List three things the Old Testament tithes were to be used for:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. What did the people of the Old Testament give in addition to tithes? \_\_\_\_\_

5. How did Malachi say people were robbing God? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What word did Jesus use to let us know we should give? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What does it mean that we live under a "better covenant"? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What three things should you keep in mind to give with the right motive? \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

9. What does giving "grudgingly, or of necessity" mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What kind of giver does God want you to be? \_\_\_\_\_

11. List some examples from the Bible of people who gave all: \_\_\_\_\_  
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12. How can you give all to God? \_\_\_\_\_  
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# Stories of Giving

