

Volume VIII

# The Essentials



## Stewardship

**We'd like to welcome you to the educational series "The Essentials". These series of study books are designed to equip the believers of Christ with the essentials to live the life the scripture say we should have. This series will also help us to understand and embrace our anointed call to change our view about ourselves and give ourselves to become ambassadors of change in world around us.**

**To properly understand the calling of Christ it is mandatory that we give ourselves to grasping some clarity related to His call. The central resource to discover what Christ has called us to is the Bible. In the pages of the bible, we will discover that we have been made for a purpose. As a matter of fact, "we have been made for this time and this time is made for us". Since so much of who we are and who we are to be is held within the sacred scripture, we must develop a new mind-set in seeking to learn about our Lord's plan for us.**

**We must embrace this reality: “Our assured purpose is rooted in the word of God. To understand our assignment and the father’s destined will for us, it is imperative that we engage the searching of the scriptures as a lifetime journey”. 1 John 3:2 ...it doth not appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear we shall be like him...**

**There are principle fundamentals that God has laid out for our benefit that will help us to understand that “there is nothing that has happened to us that God is not aware of and has made to work for us”. We discover these truths as we study our God and His ways.**

**Special thanks to Bishop Timothy J. Clarke of the First Church, Columbus, Ohio for his permission to use the Foundation class material.**

# STEWARDSHIP

## Introduction

**We live in a self-centered, consumer-oriented world that looks at life, religion included, primarily from a selfish point of view. And this viewpoint all too easily rubs off on Christians. A large portion of blood washed believers see the blessings and provisions God has given us in Christ as designed strictly for our own personal happiness and comfort. The tendency of a great many is to make satisfaction and personal comfort our religion.**

**By contrast, Scripture teaches us that even the comfort we receive from God is to enable us to comfort others with the comfort we ourselves receive from Him (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). In other words, like our Savior who came not to be ministered to but to minister, the Christian life is to be other oriented.**

**Our lesson this week deals with Stewardship. When you mention the word stewardship what is the first thing that comes to your mind? Money, exactly! It is natural for us to have as our first thought something to do with finances. We will talk about finances during this lesson. Stewardship has a lot more to deal with than just finances in your life.**

### **The Issue of Ownership**

**In keeping with this focus on ministry, one of God's objectives for the church is that we might allow Him to reproduce Himself in us as good stewards of His abundant grace. A steward is a manager, not an owner. He is the one who manages the property of another. God is the owner and we are the managers of the various stewardships He has given. This includes every area of our lives.**

**Stewardship involves accountability. Psalm 24:1 says "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in**

**it;" Now tell me, what do you own? The scripture is pretty clear isn't it? "The earth is the Lord's and every single thing in and on the earth is the Lords." So we don't own anything. So if we don't own anything, what are we accountable for? Everything!**

**For the purposes of this study, we shall limit our focus to three areas:**

**The stewardship of time - redeeming it for eternity.**

**The stewardship of talents - discovering and developing our spiritual gifts and natural talents for the blessing of others and for God's glory.**

**The stewardship of our treasures -laying up treasures in heaven through financial faithfulness.**

## **STEWARDSHIP OF TIME**

### **Stewardship of Time: It's Biblical**

**There are a small number of passages in the Bible that address the use of time in**

**comparison to the passages devoted to the stewardship of money. The fact that fewer passages are devoted to time doesn't mean that our use of time is not important. The difference does suggest differences in our society. Let's look at some Biblical truths about time stewardship:**

**Time is a finite resource from God, and we must use it wisely to make the lives that God has given us meaningful.**

**Ps 90: 12 "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."**

**Numbering our days would include evaluating the use and management of our time. This means evaluating where and how we spend our days. If we are too busy to spend time in the Word, then we need to ask ourselves why. Numbering our days also means evaluating the quality of our time spent. Not only must we consider where our time goes, but how we spend it and why.**

**Time is a gift from God, we must live our entire time here on earth in dependence upon God.**

**Ps 39:4-5; 12 "Show me, O LORD, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath. Selah...**

**Hear my prayer, O LORD, listen to my cry for help; be not deaf to my weeping. For I dwell with you as an alien, a stranger, as all my fathers were. "**

**In these verses, David was asking God to help him live as a stranger or sojourner in total dependence on the Lord rather than trust in this fleeting world.**

**All events or activities of life have a proper time and season.**



**Eccl 3:1-8 "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throwaway, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.**

**Some events occur only once in life while others occur repeatedly. The important thing is to recognize that God has ordained times for the various events of life (opportunities, responsibilities, trials) and that we are to take the time to do what is needed.**

**There is a need for time orientation according to the truth of the Word and what it reveals to us concerning the times.**

**Rom 13: 11-14 "And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature. "**

**Knowing the times according to the Bible gives us a strong motivation for godly living. God commands us to live godly lives, which honor Him.**

**We need to make the use of every opportunity to witness to an unbelieving world**

**Col4:5-6 "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders,' make the most of every opportunity.**

**Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. "**

**The focus in these verses is on a period of time filled with all kinds of opportunities through the privileges and responsibilities given us while we live upon the earth.**

**In connection with our witness to the unbelieving world, we are responsible for two things: (a) Our conduct, which includes our behavior, must be appropriate in relation to the time in its various possibilities; and (b) our conduct, as it is occurs in our speech, must be appropriately seasoned to fit the person we are seeking to reach for Christ.**

**Being a good steward of the time God gives is not really a matter guarding the minutes so we can spend our time productively. Certainly we need to wisely use our time, but even more importantly we need to have a grasp of time in the sense of understanding the great events of God in history, past, present and future as they are set forth in Scripture in the grand scheme of the plan of God. As mentioned at the beginning of this study, the goal concerning the stewardship of time is not to get Christians busier. It is not busier lives that we need. What is needed instead is a better use of the time we have combined with a biblical view of time on earth from three important elements:**

**As it is made so evident in 1Peter, we must grasp exactly who we really are as Christians:**

**1 Pet 1:17 "Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear."**

**1 Pet 2:11 "Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful Desires, which war against your soul!"**

**We are children of God and citizens of heaven who are exiles, strangers, and aliens. We are to have the manner and the attitude of life that we are only going to be on the earth a short while and it really isn't our home. We have a living Savior and a living hope through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and we look forward to an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade kept in heaven for us (1 Pet 1:3-4).**

**As believers in Christ, we must remember that we are children of a holy God. This means we are to be holy and live like exiles, becoming set apart to Him in all our manner of life (1 Pet. 1:15-19). Indeed, though we were once not a people of God, we are now. In fact, we are now a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, and a people with a special**

**purpose-that we might proclaim the Excellencies of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvelous light (2:9-10).**

**The world, on the other hand, lives as earth dwellers that search for their meaning and purpose in life from this world alone. For the Christian, following Peter's instruction means adopting and maintaining this new attitude toward our time on earth and what we do with our lives.**

**As Paul reminds us in Romans and Ephesians, we must comprehend exactly where we are.**

**Rom 13:11-14 "And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed the night is nearly over,' the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual**

**immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.**

**Eph 5:15-17 Be very careful, then, how you live-- not as unwise but as wise, making the most of-- every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.**

**We live in a time described by Paul as a time of darkness or night and as an evil age, the form of which is passing away. Everything in this world is designed to get us to make life in this world our ultimate aim. Our need then is to walk carefully so we can rescue the time God has given us on earth from the many evil uses and perspectives promoted by the evil one.**

**We must also ask and respond to the issue of just why we are here.**

**We are here as ambassadors of Christ called to a worldwide mission of making disciples of all nations starting in Jerusalem (home base) and reaching out to the uttermost part of the earth (Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8). We are here to represent the Savior, to glorify God, and enjoy Him forever.**

**2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us, we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God**

**1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**

**Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say, rejoice!**

**Let's Review:**



A steward is a \_\_\_\_\_, not a \_\_\_\_\_.  
He is the one who manages the property of  
another \_\_\_\_\_ and we are the  
\_\_\_\_\_ of the various \_\_\_\_\_. He has  
given.

\_\_\_\_\_ is a gift from God, we must live  
our entire time here on earth in dependence  
upon God.

We are to have the manner and the attitude  
of life that we are only going to be on the  
earth a short \_\_\_\_\_, and it really isn't our  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## **STEWARDSHIP OF TALENTS**

For years, the body of Christ, the church, has  
been hampered by a mentality that makes a  
strong distinction between the professional  
clergy and the lay person. This mentality fails  
to see and function under the New  
Testament truth that every believer is a  
ministering priest who is to be ministering  
for the common good of the body of Christ  
according to the gifts God has given him.

**Believers individually and the church as a whole exist to be good stewards of the truth of God in evangelism and discipleship through the exercise of the gifted members of the body of Christ. We exist for the mission of penetrating the world and building believers so that they become healthy ministering saints. And while other factors hurt this mission, certainly one very large contributing factor is the "clergy/layman, retailer/consumer" mentality that is so prevalent in our society. The idea of becoming a mission-oriented church with every believer a minister scares people. They are much more comfortable with the concept of paying others to do the work of ministry for them. But the New Testament teaches us that church leaders are to be like coaches who should be training others for the work of ministry according to the spiritual gifts of each believer.**

**Eph 4:11-16 "It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. "**

**Definition of Spiritual Gifts  
Positively (What It Is)  
Basic Definition and Explanation**

**The primary Greek word used in the New Testament for spiritual gifts is carisma, "a gift of grace, a free gift." It is related to caris which means "grace." Gifts are never merited or earned.**

- (1) Gifts are a special grace-given ability (nature or essence)**
- (2) Gifts are given by the Holy Spirit (a divine endowment) (source)**
- (3) Gifts are given to each believer in Christ (recipients)**
- (4) Gifts are for service to the body of Christ that it may grow quantitatively (evangelism), qualitatively (edification), and organically (developed ministries and offices in the church) (immediate purpose)**
- (5) Gifts are for the glory of God (ultimate purpose)**

**Spiritual gifts are God's special gifts given to believers to enable them for special service to the body of Christ and in the world. When related to the gift of ministry or service or**

**helps, it may include natural talents received at birth.**

### **Synonyms for Spiritual Gifts**

**(1) "Gifts" (1 Corinthians. 1:7; 12:4; 1 Pet. 4:10). Greek word is carisma.**

**(2) "Grace" (Acts 4:33; Romans 12:3; 2 Corinthians. 8:7). Greek word is caris.**

**(3) "A measure of faith" (Rom. 12:3)**

**(4) "Manifestation of the Spirit" (1 Corinthians. 12:7)**

### **Negatively (What It Is Not)**

**It is not an office in the local church like elder or deacon. Certain gifts are needed to function effectively in those offices, but an office and a gift are not the same things.**

**It is not a particular geographical area or a place of service. It is the ability to serve, not the place where one serves. A teacher may teach in Sunday school, in a seminary, in a home Bible study or as a missionary in any part of the world.**

**A spiritual gift is not a particular age group. A person may feel more at home teaching children than adults, or vice versa. But if one really has the gift of teaching, he can learn to adapt to a variety of age groups, though God may very well give him a burden for a certain age group.**

**A spiritual gift is not a particular specialty or method of ministry. The gift of teaching may be used through radio or through writing or through the classroom, etc.**

**It is not a certain personality type (vivacious, scintillating, dynamic, etc. (1 Corinthians. 2:1-5 with 2 Corinthians. 10:10)).**

### **Distribution of Gifts**

**Gifts Are Distributed by the Holy Spirit**

**According to 1 Corinthians 12:4 and 11, the distribution of spiritual gifts is the product of the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit.**

**1 Corinthians 12:4 and 11 "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit... 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these**

**things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills"**

**The Holy Spirit, then, is the primary agent in the giving of gifts. While the Lord as the head of the body directs the distribution of the gifted people and their ministries, and the Father brings about a variety of effects (1 Corinthians. 12:5-6), the gifts themselves are given only by the Spirit.**

**Gifts Are Distributed to Every Believer**  
**As illustrated in life and as stated by Scripture, no one person has all the spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians. 12:29-30), but every Christian has at least one spiritual gift (1 Pet. 4:10). This helps us to see why it is so important for all believers to know what their gifts are and use them. No one is to be a one man show. No believer can even begin to do all that is needed. The need is for leaders to train, motivate, and delegate ministry to others in the church according to their giftedness and God's leading.**

## **Gifts Are Distributed on the Basis of Grace**

**(1) Gifts are not distributed on the basis of spiritual maturity. The church at Corinthians was a carnal church yet they appeared to have an abundance of gifts (1 Corinthians. 3:1-4, 7).**

**(2) Gifts are not distributed on the basis of education. Compare the disciples (Acts 4:13; 2:6-8).**

**(3) It also appears spiritual gifts are not distributed on the basis of desire or prayer because they are evidently given by the sovereign will of the Spirit when He places believers into the body of Christ (1Corinthians. 12:11-13).**

**Scripture asserts all believers have a gift. If gifts were not given at salvation, then there would be a time when that assertion would not be true. Sometimes 1 Corinthians 12:31 is used to teach believers should pray and seek spiritual gifts, but this verse was addressing the need for the church at**



**Corinthians to promote or manifest zeal for those gifts which edify rather than the showy gifts.**

**First Timothy 4:14 and 2 Timothy 1:6 in all probability "refers to what had happened at Lystra on Paul's second missionary journey. It was then that Timothy, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, had been amply endowed with this gift. Of this and of the character of his task he had been made aware through (dia) prophetic utterance of inspired bystanders." The prophetic utterance declared the fact to Timothy and all those around and the body of elders present with Paul acknowledged it by the laying on of the hands.**

### **Development of Gifts**

**Gifts are to be discovered, developed, and used through faith, hard work, and prayer (Rom. 12:3; Col. 1:29-2:2; 1 Corinthians. 15:10). Although the Spirit is the source of spiritual gifts, the believer may have a part in**

**the development of his gifts. He may be ambitious in relation to his own gifts to see that they are properly developed and that he is doing all he can for the Lord (1 Corinthians. 12:31). To covet the better gifts is not a matter of sitting down and conjuring up enough faith to be able to receive them out of the blue. It is a matter of diligent self-preparation. For instance, if one covets the gift of teaching, he will undoubtedly have to spend many years developing that gift. The Holy Spirit is sovereign in the giving of gifts, but in the development of them He works through human beings with their desires, limitations, and ambitions.**

## **Definition and Explanation of the Gifts**

**Spiritual Gifts- the gifts mentioned in the primary scriptural passages**

**Wisdom - the distinctive ability to discern the mind of Christ and apply scriptural truth to a**

**specific situation in order to make the right choices and help others move in the right direction.**

**Scripture: Acts 6:3, 10; 1 Corinthians 2:6-13; 1 Corinthians 12:8**

**Knowledge - the distinctive ability to seek out, gather, organize, and clarify facts and ideas on a number of diverse subjects.**

**Scripture: Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:8; Colossians 2:2-3**

**Exhortation - the distinctive ability to appropriately communicate words of encouragement, challenge, or rebuke in the body of Christ.**

**Scripture: Acts 14:22; Romans 12:8**

**Teaching - the distinctive ability to employ a logical, systematic approach to biblical study in preparation for clearly communicating practical truth to the body of Christ.**

**Scripture: Acts 18:24-28; 1 Corinthians 12:28**

**Pastor / Shepherd - the distinctive ability to assume responsibility for the spiritual growth**

**and Christian community of a group of believers.**

**Scripture: Ephesians 4:11-14; 1 Timothy 3:1-7**

**Apostle - the distinctive ability to provide spiritual leadership over a number of pastors and churches that results in tangible fruit in ministry.**

**Scripture: 1 Corinthians 12:28; 2 Corinthians 12:12**

**Prophecy - the distinctive ability to boldly declare the truth of God, regardless of the consequences, calling people to righteous living.**

**Scripture: Acts 2:37-40; 1 Corinthians 14:1-4**

**1 All definitions obtained from Spiritual Gifts by Dr. Dan Reiland through Injoy Ministries.**

**Evangelist - the distinctive ability to share the Goodness of Jesus Christ with others in such a way that many non Christians believe in Christ and are converted to Christianity.**

**Scripture: Acts 8:26-40; Ephesians 4:11-14**

**Giving - the distinctive ability to cheerfully and generously contribute personal resources to God's work.**

**Scripture: Romans 12:8; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7**

**Mercy - the distinctive ability to feel sincere empathy and compassion in a way that results in practical relief for people's hurts, pain and suffering.**

**Scripture: Matthew 9:35-36; Romans 12:8**

**Helps - the distinctive ability to work with and support other Christian's ministry efforts.**

**Scripture: Romans 16:1-2; 1 Corinthians 12:28**

**Leadership - the distinctive ability to influence others according to a "big picture" purpose, mission or plan.**

**Scripture: Romans 12:8; 1 Timothy 3:1-13**

**Service - the distinctive ability to identify and meet the practical needs of others.**

**Scripture: Romans 12:7; 2 Timothy 1:16-18**

**Administration - the distinctive ability to coordinate and organize people and projects.**

**Scripture: Acts 6:1-7; 1 Corinthians 12:28**

**Discernment - the distinctive ability to perceive whether a person's actions originate from Godly, Satanic, or merely human sources.**

**Scripture: Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:10**

**Faith - the distinctive ability to believe God with confidence for things unseen, spiritual growth and the will of God.**

**Scripture: Romans 4:18-21; 1 Corinthians 12:9**

**Miracles - the distinctive ability to perform supernatural acts as an instrument or agent of God which alter the expected course of nature.**

**Scripture: Romans 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28**

**Healing - the distinctive ability to be used as a human intermediary through whom God's supernatural power is applied to a person's physical or emotional need.**

**Scripture: Acts 3:1-10; 1 Corinthians 12:9, 28**

**Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues - the distinctive ability to speak in a language which you never learned and communicates a divinely anointed message from God to unbelievers.**

**The gifts of tongues and interpretation of tongues are often very controversial, but they don't have to be. To "demystify" these gifts, there are some things that we need to understand about these gifts.**

**The gifts of tongues and interpretation of tongues are biblical- the proof and basis of these gifts existence is recorded in scripture.**

## **1 Corinthians 12:10**

**10 to another miraculous power, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues and to still another, the interpretation of tongues. (NIV - emphasis added)**

**The gift of tongues is not the greatest spiritual gift and should not be viewed as a sign of "super spirituality".**

**The gift of tongues is a spiritual "gift" and is given to certain members of the body of Christ for the purpose of building-up the Kingdom of God.**

**The gift of tongues is not the sole evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit.**

**Scripture speaks of two different forms of tongues (languages):**

**Heavenly- a private prayer tongue which is not understood by humans.**

## **1 Corinthians 14:2**

**For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God.**



**Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit. (NIV)**

**Earthly- historical tongues that are unknown to the human speaker, but are understood by the human hearers. {Acts 2:1-12}**

**Other Spiritual Gifts- other spiritual gifts for which there is Biblical support**

**Missions - the distinctive ability to minister effectively in cultures beyond your own.  
Scripture: Acts 22:21; Romans 10:15**

**Music - the distinctive ability to make a significant contribution to a worship experience through singing or playing a musical instrument.  
Scripture: 1 Chronicles 16:41-42; Psalms 150**

**Craftsmanship - the distinctive ability to use your hands and mind to benefit other**

**believers through artistic, creative or a wide variety of construction arenas.**

**Scripture: Exodus 30:22-25; Acts 18:2-3**

**2 All definitions obtained from Spiritual Gifts by Dr. Dan Reiland through Enjoy Ministries.**

**Hospitality - the distinctive ability to make people feel "at home", welcome, cared for, and a part of the group.**

**Scripture: Romans 12:13; Romans 16:23**

**Intercession - the distinctive ability to pray for significant lengths of time, on a regular basis, and often observe specific answers to those prayers.**

**Scripture: Colossians 1:9-12; James 5:14-16**

**Let's Review:**

**Gifts are a special \_\_\_\_\_ -given ability**

**Gifts Are Distributed by**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Gifts are for the**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Gifts are not a \_\_\_\_\_ in  
the local church like elder or deacon. Certain  
gifts are needed to  
\_\_\_\_\_ in those offices,  
but an office and a gift  
\_\_\_\_\_ the same thing.**

## **STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURERS**

### **Introduction**

**The support for the work of building God's kingdom has always fallen on individuals. The work that needs done can take many forms-praying, fasting, witnessing, serving, teaching, discipline, preaching, evangelizing, etcetera. As Christians, we may be called to do one or more of these things at any time. Many of these ministries require monetary support to survive. This building, for example, has a mortgage and utility expenses. The pastor has living expenses. For**

**comfort, a certain amount of upkeep and maintenance must be performed.**

**The Bible gives clear instruction that each Christian is to do an equal share in providing such support. This process is what is known as giving your tithes to God's work. Beyond that, God accepts offerings according to the ability of the person to give. These aren't specifically commanded but are free-will gifts. As we will see in scripture, although everything in the universe is God's, the only part of what He has provided to us that He considers to be His is the tithe. We are to give it back to His work. We will briefly discuss other precepts from the Old Testament after covering this one in detail.**

**Be clear that God has kept his Church through good and bad times. It survived the Roman Empire, the Dark Ages, and is surviving the current New Age assault as well. However, there is a special blessing God set out for those who support His work.**

## **Tithe -What does it mean?**

**A tithe is literally a tenth part. With this method of supporting God's kingdom, God has provided a method for all His children to be equal. Whether you make a lot of money or whether you make little, God asks exactly the same. If you make \$1,000,000 per year, \$100,000 of it is God's. If you make \$100 a year, \$10 of it is God's. God treats each of these two sample individual's gifts as exactly the same and worthy of exactly the same blessing on their life.**

## **Tithing Before the Law**

**Many people think that tithing was first instituted under the Law. Tithing was practiced 430 years before the laws concerning tithing were established under the Levitical priesthood.**

**There are two scriptural references to tithing in this time period. The first is found in Gen. 14:20. Starting in 14:18, we see that**

**after Abram's victory against Chedorlaomer (his only battle) which was fought to rescue Lot, he paid tithes to Melchizedek. This Gentile was king of Salem which is the former name for Jerusalem. He was also declared to be priest of the most-high God. Melchizedek, following the scripture in Hebrews is a type of Christ. The nature of his priesthood is described in (Ps. 110, Heb. 5:10~6:20~7:1-28). Christ is said to follow his order since he could not qualify as an Aaronic priest.**

**Gen 14:18-20 "Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, "Blessed be Abram by God Most-High, Creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be God Most-High, who delivered your enemies into your hand" Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything."**

**After Melchizedek brings out what in the New Testament would be communion**

**elements and blesses Abram and God, Abram gives tithes of the spoils of the battle to him.**

**That reference is the classical early reference to tithing. The second instance is Jacob. This is recorded in Gen. 28:20-22.**

**Gen 28:20-22 "Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's house, then the LORD will be my God and this stone that I have set up as a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you give me I will give you a tenth."**

**It should be noted that this is the only recorded vow before the Law of Moses. In both cases, the tithe (or tenth part) was given to God or God's priests. It isn't recorded who else may have tithed in the**

**Old Testament before the Law was given to Moses. But you should consider both Abram and Jacob and the blessings God bestowed on them. The Bible doesn't say how rich Abram was, but it is clear that the land wasn't able to sustain both he and Lot together. They had to separate so their flocks could survive.**

### **Why Every Christian Should Tithe**

**There is ultimately only one reason why every Christian should be a tither: because it is biblical. All other reason, whatever their advantages may be, would not have any weight behind them at all if what we are talking about is not utterly biblical.**

**Tithing was so deeply imbedded in the Jewish conscience that it needed virtually no mention in the New Testament. Tithing was an assumption in Israel when Jesus came on the scene.**



**Matt 23:23 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices-- mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law--justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former."**

**All of us need encouragement with regard to giving. None of us by nature is a tither. We will look for every possible loophole by which we can justify our not tithing. Our Lord will not let us do that.**

**In Malachi 3:8-10 the Bible teaches that if we do not tithe, we are robbing God! Isn't it unthinkable that a Christian would steal from anyone -much less his God? We must continually remind ourselves that we do not give the tithe -we simply return it! It already belongs to God. In John 14:15 Jesus said, «If you love me, keep my commandments." Nothing will loosen the purse strings like**

**good, old-fashioned Christian love! We give the best gifts to those we love.**

**In Psalm 116:12-14 the Lord reminds us that since we have received so much, we should respond by giving much! We have received God's Son, His salvation, His presence, His blessings and we will receive His Heaven.....How can we think of giving Him less than a tithe!?**

**God has promised a blessing to those who are faithful in the Stewardship of Giving! (Malachi 3:10-11~ Proverb 3:9-10; Matthew 6:33~Luke 6:38) Faith in God's promises is reflected by obedience to His Word!**

### **The Blessing of Tithing**

**The promises of blessing in the Bible are often set in the language of accommodation. God stoops to our level to encourage us. He reaches us where we are.**

**Ps 103:14 "for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust."**

**To encourage us, God accommodates us at a level that will motivate us. This is partly why Paul could tell us to give "cheerfully." After all, he went on,**

**2 Corinthians 9:8 "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."**

**Not only that; this exhortation to become a cheerful giver followed these words:**

**2 Corinthians 9:6 "Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously."**

**These words are clear enough and their implications are obvious.**

**Are these idle promises? They are not. They are not only absolutely true but have been proven again and again by a vast company of believers.**

**REQUIREMENT**

**"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse..."**

**RESPONSE**

**" ..and test me now in this... "**

**REWARD**

**"...open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows."  
(Malachi 3:10)**

**My commitment to tithe is based upon the following truths:**

**God owns everything (my tithe is returned, not given)**

**God expects me to tithe (Malachi 3:10)**

**God promises to meet the needs of a faithful steward (tithing is an issue of trust).**

**Let's Review:**

**A tithe is literally a \_\_\_\_\_ part.**

**Tithing was practiced \_\_\_\_\_  
years before the laws concerning tithing  
were established under the Levitical  
priesthood.**

**There is ultimately only one reason why  
every Christian should be a tither: because it  
is \_\_\_\_\_.**