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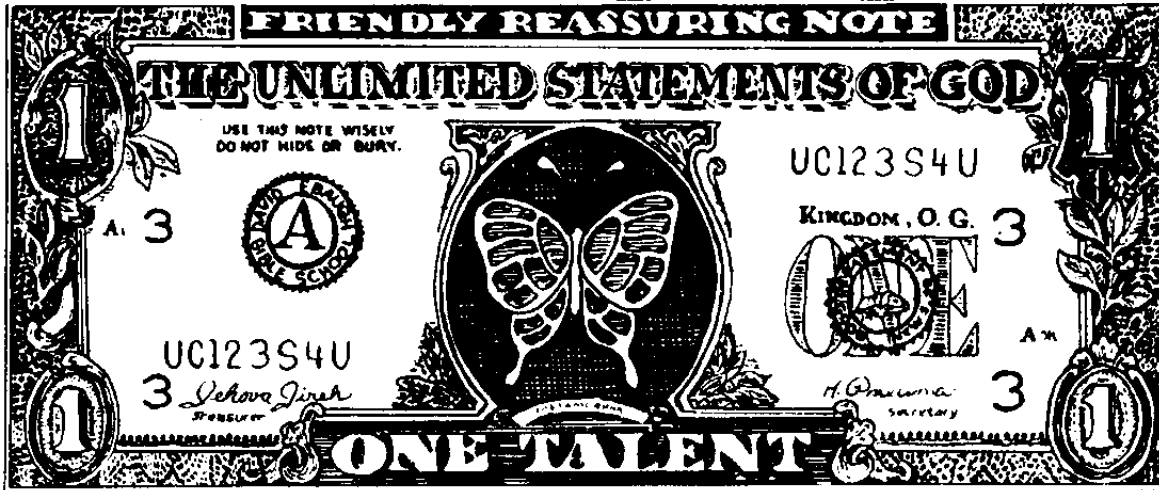
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May 1981

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Q. Brother Ebaugh, I heard your testimony about the marvelous blessings of the Lord through participation in tithing and I completely agree with you. But the elders in our church recently treated a young couple very badly because they did not tithe. Now, I am reacting against the elders. The kids are even talking about leaving church. Even though I believe in tithing, I can see their point too. I have a conflict in my own mind. Can you help?

A. We'll see. Your question involves two problems. The first is easiest.

ELDERS ARE EARTHLY BOSS
NOT SPIRITUAL BOSS

The elders have the right to make any law that they want to make, in regard to running your church. If they say that you can't eat meat, can't drink wine and attendance on Sunday (or Saturday is compulsory - they are backed by Romans 14. They are right when they teach that you must keep their laws to avoid being a stumbling block.

They are wrong if they teach that God will reward you if you keep church laws. However, your church society will treat you with favor and reward, if you keep their rules.

The young couple fell out of favor with their church and this should not be a surprise to anyone. Tithing or not tithing has nothing to do with their relationship to God, but it has much to do with their getting along with their church. Our righteousness is through Jesus Christ - not paying tithes. If the kids do leave your church over this issue, but continue to be sensitive to God, then I do not think I can find fault with them - though your church will.

The reason that there are so many Protestant denominations is because people disagree as to what the laws of conduct in each church should be. They further disagree on how to enforce them. So they circulate around from place to place until they attract a nucleus of

people who have the same basic outlook on various laws and then they start a new denomination. Disagreement about continuous revelation of theology also accounts for some new groups. Romans 14 gives authority for those splinters. There have been times when I thought some church splits were a blessing of God.

GOD'S LAWS OR MAN'S LAWS

Part of your question has to do with God's laws (not man's laws) about tithing, and that's entirely different. A study of the LAW OF THE TITHE in the Old Testament is quite revealing because it is very different from what is taught in most churches; but a further study of the SPIRIT OF THE TITHE in the New Testament provides the most answers for us.

LAW OF THE TITHE - OLD TESTAMENT

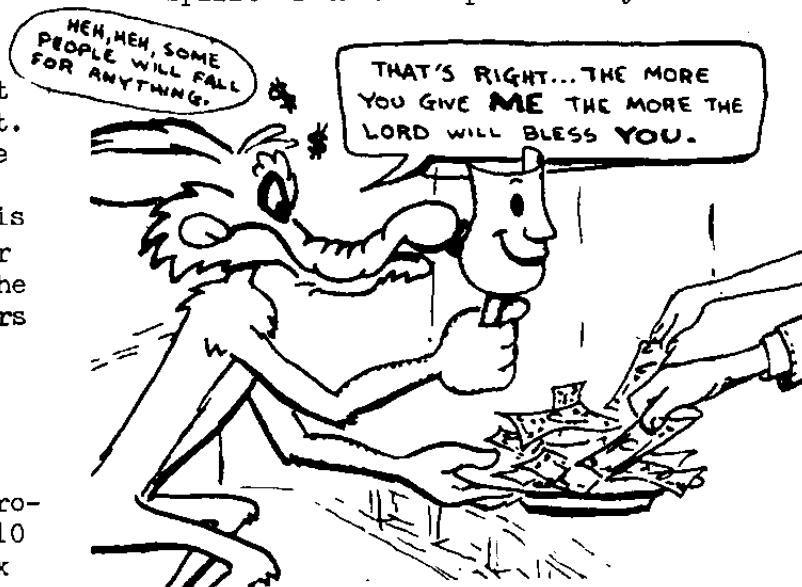
1. The tithe was 10% of the INCREASE of seed. If 10 bags of seed produced 70 bags of crop, then 70 minus 10 was the increase and the tithe was six bags. Today most churches do not ask for a tithe on the increase, which is a person's net pay. They want 10% of the gross. For instance, Joe makes \$200 per week before taxes. After taxes his check is really only for \$140. Some churches want \$20 and others want \$14. Deuteronomy 14:22 says, "Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year." This seems to make \$14 more correct.

EAT YOUR OWN TITHE

2. Israel was commanded to eat a part of their tithe. Deut. 14:23 says, "And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thy oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks."

Also Deut. 12:6-7 says, "And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks; and there ye

shall eat before the Lord your God." We believe that this clearly indicates that a portion of your tithe should be used on yourself. For example, if your tithe is \$20 a week, a portion, perhaps \$4 or \$5 should be used for the purchase of good Bible oriented books, or perhaps for music tapes or records. We don't know of a single church in the world that teaches this, but you judge the spirit of this scripture for yourself.



BENEFIT OTHERS - NOT SELF

3. The tithe was not to be consumed at home but had to be eaten in Jerusalem with relatives, employees and church leaders. Deut. 12:17-18 says, "Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe...but thou must eat them before the Lord...thou and thy son, daughter, manservant, maidservant, and Levite." We believe that this limits the use of the tithe portion, that is to be consumed by the giver, to things of a religious nature, the consuming of which will better society. That means the strength gained from good books, tapes, etc. should be used to benefit others, not just one's self.

However, this does not mean that those kinds of foods can only be eaten in the Temple in Jerusalem. Deut. 12:15 says, "Notwithstanding thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates." Eating in Jerusalem has to do with the tithe of the food, not with the total food. Notice also that the eating of meat is not only permitted, it is commanded at the time of certain feasts.

TITHE PURCHASED GOVERNMENT SERVICE - LIKE TAX

4. Payment of the tithe also provided extra services that are presently provided by our payment of tax to the government such as: Court House type record keeping, Judges, Mayor and administration, Police, Fire, Insurance, Social Security, Welfare, Medical Doctor, Butcher service at the temple

When you compare their costs versus our present day costs, for the same service, either they got a bargain, or else we are getting gyped.

CONVERSION OF CROP TO MONEY

5. If money was used instead of farm produce, a fifth part had to be added to the value of the money tithe. Lev. 27:31 says, "And if a man will at all redeem aught of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof." So if a tithe was 10 bags of seed which sold for \$2 each, then the money value of the tithe is not \$20 ($10 \times \2); it is \$24 ($10 \times \$2 + 10 \times \$2 \div 5$).

IF THIS MESSAGE GETS OUT I'M RUINED!



CHARITY AT HOME

6. Some years the tithe was not to be given to the church at all. Rather it was to be used for acts of charity in the giver's home city. Deut. 14:28 says, "At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shall lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite, and the stranger, the fatherless, the widow which are within thy gate, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied."

Since the field was not to be planted every seventh year this gives a seven year pattern like this:

- Year 1. Tithe to the Lord (take to church at Jerusalem).
- Year 2. Tithe to the Lord (take to church at Jerusalem).
- Year 3. Tithe to welfare, charity (in your own city).

Year 4. Tithe to the Lord (take to church at Jerusalem).

Year 5. Tithe to the Lord (take to church at Jerusalem).

Year 6. Tithe to welfare, charity (in your own city).

Year 7. Year of land rest - no tithe, because no increase.

Following this type of tithing law would be very threatening to many church denominations today, so naturally they do not teach these things. The spirit of the LAW OF TITHING demands that each tither gives some personal attention to the indigent in their community - not to turn welfare over to professionals. We believe that the present government welfare systems are not Biblical. It seems that the church is shirking its Biblical commission.

TITHING CHANGED TO FEE - OR PLEDGE

7. As time changed, so did the LAW OF TITHING. Nehemiah charged each family $1/3$ of a shekel for the service of the House of the Lord. (Nehemiah 10:32). Presently some churches drop the tithing law, in favor of a membership fee or pledge.

GIFTS AND OFFERINGS

8. In addition to tithes, other forms of giving included: Burnt offerings, sacrifices, heave offerings, vows freewill offerings, firstfruit offerings.

SPIRIT OF THE TITHE - NEW TESTAMENT

1. Jesus told the Jews to not forget the tithe. (Matt. 23:23-Luke 11:42). Some say that this does not apply to the Christian church because Jesus was talking to Jews (not Christians) at the time. That's partly true. But we believe that the spirit of the law, not the letter of the law, applies here.

OLD TESTAMENT HAS VANISHED

2. Since the priesthood has changed there is also a change in the law (of tithing). (Heb. 7:8,12). The law of the tithe should have vanished by now. Hebrews 8:13 says,

"In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now, that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."

ELDERS' BENEFIT



- Elders in the church, who labor in word and doctrine, are to be provided for financially, in a special way. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of DOUBLE honour." (I Tim. 5:17).

GIVERS' BENEFIT

- Giving to the Lord's work releases spiritual forces in the Heavens which work to the givers' benefit. "Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. (Matt. 6:38).

"He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (II Cor. 9:6-7).

It is implied that the heavenly spiritual forces will not act in our benefit if we give grudgingly or out of necessity. So one factor is the amount of the gift. Another factor is the way we give.

SOW SPIRITUAL - REAP CARNAL

- Effective spiritual activity should result in carnal blessings. Paul said, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (I Cor. 9:11).

In conclusion: We are not under the law of the tithe. But we cheerfully follow the leading of the Holy Spirit in giving. The gospels and epistles promise a response from God which will multiply our resources.

No one has a right to condemn you, if you feel led (or do not feel led) to tithe to your church. But try to keep your elders from bringing spiritual condemnation upon the young couple for not tithing (if you can talk to your elders). If you can talk to the young couple, try to show them that giving not only shows mature responsibility and commitment - it also brings multiplied resources in return, if given in the right spirit.

That was a long answer. Did it help?

This ministry does not exist apart from your gifts.

"If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (I Cor. 9:11)

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MONEY MANAGEMENT, TITHING & EXPANSION A portion for yourself. Managing your money. Bible rules for abundant life.	1	\$5.00
MONEY AND THE MILITARY Economy. Rev. 13 & 17. Military establishment will annihilate Babylon. Nontraditional. Follows NATIONAL ECONOMY.	1	\$5.00
IS GOD FOR SALE? "Thy money perish with thee." if you try to buy Him. Mistaken reasons for giving offerings. Why Ananias and Sapphira died. Error of Balaam. Shakanian family leaving Armenia. Protect yourself.	2	\$10.00