

Truth or Chains



Tithing and Giving

Last year, my nephew, Kevin, visited us with his wife, Cindy, and children. We were sitting around the table one evening and Kevin asked the following: “Uncle, should we be tithing 10% of our total income or 10% of what is left after we pay our bills?”

Cindy chimed in saying that they were barely making it, especially if they tithed before paying the bills. Kevin also added that he wasn’t trying to find the easiest way, just the correct way since they had been taught several different things in relation to tithing.

My youngest daughter happened to be visiting and she said “Oh, no! Here it comes.” She had heard me on this subject many times!

My nephew and his wife aren’t the only ones confused about tithing. It seems that almost every church I’ve ever attended had problems in this area. I believe the church “corporation” helps to keep the current teachings on tithing alive, but that’s a subject for another time. The bottom line is, tithing was an Old Testament teaching that was given to Israel, not to the church. If you are a Christian today, whether you are Jewish or not, you are part of the church and no longer under the “law of sin and death.”

You can’t have it both ways, either. You see, people who teach the flock to follow the Ten Commandments and other laws from the Old Testament (meant for Israel) have a tendency to pick and choose their laws. If you’re going to teach tithing, then you’re going to have to teach stoning too. But that’s not even the real issue. The real issue is that we are no longer under the supervision of the law. In Galatians 3:24-25, we read “So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.” So, if we’re no longer under the supervision of the law, whose supervision are we under? The Holy Spirit!

In Galatians 5:18, we read “But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.” What a concept! Each Christian has the Holy Spirit and we are to act as the Holy Spirit directs us, through faith. When we do, we will see the fruits of the Holy Spirit in our lives. In Galatians 5:22-23, we read “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” (my italics).

What this means is that we no longer think in this manner: “Well, here’s MY paycheck. Let’s see, I’ll give 10% to the Lord, no let’s make that 12.5% of it to the Lord. The rest is mine. No! When Christ died on the cross for our sins, he paid the penalty and bought us with a price – his blood. If we have accepted Jesus’ free gift of salvation, then we have accepted his payment for our sins and we have been bought by that same blood. We’re not our own anymore. We are now His.

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Tithing (continued)

In other words, all of us, everything we are, our plans, our lives, our possessions – they are all the Lord Jesus Christ's. Not 10 percent, not 20 percent, not even 50 percent. 100 percent! We no longer own anything. So what about giving. Since we're not under the law and the requirement to tithe, does the Lord want us to give? Absolutely!

2 Corinthians 9:7 tells us that “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” Notice that the verse doesn't give you a percentage. No, you let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart and give accordingly. Now, that's exciting: the Creator of the Universe moving you to give and meet another person's needs and just at the right time. You're not giving to some entity and trusting it to give to the right person/cause/project. No, the Lord Jesus, who wants a relationship with YOU, wants you to give as he moves you (through the Holy Spirit).

Many times, my wife and I have received gifts from people who were sensitive to God's leading and they were almost always, just in time for whatever need we had. Many times, my wife and I have sensed the Lord moving us to give to others, and what a blessing it was to be used by God, again so often, just in time.

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