**The Grace Way of Giving No. 1-BD33-01**

Our topic this morning, and a new one for a few Sundays is “The Grace Way of Giving” and this is part one. I want to remind you that we are studying a series of basic bible doctrines. What we have been doing for many months now is orienting ourselves to the Christian life. If you are a person who came along and said I don’t know anything about Christianity. I’d like to know how to get into the Christian life, and I’d like to know how to function, how to operate in the Christian life, this series would provide you with the basic information that you need, from salvation on through spiritual maturity, and on through the practices and the techniques of the Christian life.

So this morning we turn now to the doctrine of the Christians use of his money, and immediately you can see that this is a subject that has very emotional responses. Giving money to finance God’s work on earth is an important aspect of the Spiritual life. But this doctrine requires a certain amount of doctrinal orientation as background before it can be understood and before it can be accepted. So this is one reason why we have delayed presentation about something that deals with money. We don’t want you to think that it is not an important subject or that we apologize for bringing it up. It is actually a very vital subject. A Christian can go shipwrecked in his spiritual life at this point alone, and many do, as the bible frequently warns us that we pierce ourselves through with many sorrows. We bring all kinds of disasters upon our lives in our conduct, relative to the things that we possess.

So this is an important doctrine, but before, generally, you can teach this, Christians have to have a little bit of a certain basic spiritual maturity and background to be able to enter into it and to cut off the emotional responses and the preconceived notions. Some of you this morning are going to get a few jokes because you’ve got some preconceived notions relative to the subject and you’ve got some long standing affections in certain directions for certain concepts that are going to be a little hard for you to yield at this point. But if you will hang in there with what God has said, and then go from there, I think that you will find that his way is really the way to do it, and it is the most fruitful, most satisfying, and the one that you would be most delighted to operate in.

It is unbelievable what an amount of distortion and abuse there is in the matter of giving in the church age. Techniques and motivations are used to secure funds from the people of God, which violate the principal of grace, and some people are urged to give for a variety of wrong reasons, and people give for a variety of wrong reasons.

Some give so that God will give them what they want, they are making deals with God and in effect they are merely lending their money to God so that he will come through for them.

Some give so that God won’t take the remainder away from them. This is what’s known as paying for protection. It’s treating God as part of the rackets so that he’ll leave you with a certain chunk if you give him a certain proportion as payment, protection payment. You’d be surprised how many Christians have this in the back of their minds and if you listen to the things they say, they will tip this off to you that this is their line of thinking. If I don’t give it to God, he’ll go out there and he’ll have some character run right into my new volks wagon and there’s my little tin can all gone, bang. I’ve got to give to God his insurance money, man.

Some give to relieve a guilt complex. The bible has provided a different way for this. If you are an unbeliever, you relieve your guilt complex by receiving Christ as savior, if you are a Christian you confess sin, but you can’t pay off God to relieve it.

Some give because emotional moves have been made through clever words and through mental images, calculating mental images to move them to suddenly dig down into their pockets and to start shelling out as they pass the offering box.

Some give to avoid embarrassment. Some churches actually keep a record of what everybody gives, and once a month they publish it. That’s the honor buying system. And I’ve often wondered what it would be like to be in a church like that, I noticed they always seem to have enough money.

Now the scriptures relating to offerings in the word of God are misapplied and so wrong concepts are imposed on Christians pretty extensively and wrong motivations. There is a vast amount of human viewpoint which is passed off as biblical giving. Now what is not given in God’s way is loss as far as reward comes to you. I don’t say that it is lost as far as what God will do with it in his work. If you go up to that offering box, and you give in a way that violates the principal of grace giving, you’ve lost your reward and you’ve cut yourself out. And I’ll give you a few phrases as we go along, I’ll give you a few lines of thought as we go on in the series that may be clues to you, relative to your own truly functioning in a grace pattern of giving. But God will use, no doubt, what we give, but we may lose our personal reward.

Misuse of money is widely condemned in the word of God. Everywhere we read in the word of God that greed, materialism, miserliness are denounced. There are repeated warnings given against covetousness and in Colossians 3:5 covetousness is equated with the horrendous sin of idolatry. 1 Timothy 6:10 tells us that, “the love of money is the root of all evil.” And the word for love of money there is “philagoria,” and you notice that the first part here, “phila,” is the Greek word for love that connotes an emotional attachment and what the bible is saying is that your great emotional response and attachment for money is the basis of all sin in human experience.

So if you get hot under the collar about money, take care that it is a divine indignation. Take care that it is not some false motivation, or some human viewpoint that is directing your responses, because God says if you have feelings like that it will lead you into doing what is wrong. It will get your thinking off. It will make you a sponge for picking up all kinds of misconceptions about people, situations, places, things at relative to your life, and it will lead you to that path that says will stab you through with many sorrows. It’s the root cause of all evil.

Giving in the church age, you will discover, is a very highly specialized spiritual activity, and when it is performed on a proper doctrinal ground, it results in great personal joy, great personal blessing, great satisfaction, and great eternal rewards.

Now if you never give to finance the Lord’s work, I think I can safely say right off the bat that something is wrong. If you say, “I never give anything to the support of God’s work,” I can tell you right now that you are not on the grace ground of giving. If you can honestly say, “I am a sometime giver, if I happen to remember I do, if I don’t I don’t,” then I can safely say that this is a signal that you need some orientation to the doctrine of giving. If you are not concerned over the fact that you never give anything to the support of God’s work on this earth, then you have a very grave spiritual problem. And if you use a technique, or have a mental attitude contrary to the grace concept, your giving is lost to you. Now I guess we might as well start right off the bat with one of the most devastating misconceptions concerning giving in the age of grace, and that is the tithing technique.

**Tithing**

Tithe means ten percent. Now there is a dispensational factor that is involved whenever we bring up the subject of tithing. And I am well aware of the fact that the minute you mention the subject of tithing, there is a knee jerk response from a vast proportion of Christians to anybody challenging this as God’s system of giving for this age. It is very strongly defended by its proponents as God’s way, and one of the outstanding defenses is that when you have a church, where people tithe, there are ample funds to cover the expenses. You are not standing around waiting to wonder how you are going to have money to pay the bills. You are not asking the people on the staff to delay payment of salaries and one thing or another. If people are tithing, there will be ample funds, and I must confess that probably, generally that is true. However, we have already learned that we do not judge what God approves on the basis of experience. God’s divine viewpoint is not proven to us on the basis of experience, it may confirmed. It is established and proven on the basis of doctrine. So this is not an overwhelming argument that if you have a church where people tithe, the bills are paid.

Tithing works, you see, in a church where most people do it for the simple fact that it does not cost very much to operate a local church. By and large, the local church operation and just actually just operational costs of operating a local church are very, very modest. And so it doesn’t take many people, you see, in order to produce enough money to cover the bills. All you have to do is get an idea of what it takes in a general fund for one week, treat that as ten percent and multiply it out, and you’ll know how much income that congregation as a whole has to have in order to cover the costs. While in any congregation of even a modest size, there are thousands and thousands of dollars in salary incomes that come in in a week. And the amount that comes in, a tenth of that very easily covers the cost of local church operation. So, this is why it seems that tithing is a good system. It does cover the cost because church costs aren’t very great, and if you get people doing it, even though God says, “I can’t reward you for doing this,” yet the money will be there for you to function. Now this is unfair to believers, to let them have this idea because they are paying their bills, they are functioning under God’s blessing and God’s reward because that’s not true.

Another group of people who love the tithe system are Christians that have an expanding income. Where over the years, their income is getting larger and larger. These people love the tithe, they are the greatest fanatics for the tithe that you will find anywhere because you see, their take home income is gradually expanding, and it adds up considerably over the period of time. Their take home income is constantly increasing relative to what they are giving to the Lord’s work.

For example, here is a man who earns $5,000.00 in a year. He gives God $500.00 as his tithe. So he lives on $4,500.00 for that year. Now the years go by, and the Lord prospers him, and his income goes, from this point, on an expanding basis. And where he started here with $5,000.00, he comes out here, in time, in a few years, to where he’s making $10,000.00 a year. Now this man gives God $1,000.00 as his tithe, but you will notice that there’s a whopping $9,000.00 up here for himself to live on now. As over against this man down here who must still live on his $4,500.00. So as the years go by, people with an expanding income love the tithing system. Wouldn’t you be happy to have a law passed to change the federal income tax to ten percent straight across the board for everybody? How many of you would vote for that? See, all over the place. A lot of people would vote for that, that’s beautiful. Who would vote for it? People with an expanding income. And as their income expands, the tithe becomes more precious to their hearts.

Now, if you have practiced tithing for years, your gift giving is probably under some divine question. If you have started here, years ago, tithing and you are out here years later, you are still tithing, I can almost tell you with a certainty that the almighty God puts a question on your giving. And perhaps the question we will clarify as we go along in the series. Whatever justification you have for starting with the tithe, the prospering that you have enjoyed, at the hand of God, over the years has long since removed that justification for ten percent of your income, period. And people who prosper feel that the tithe is still a big bite in their income, because people who prosper look like this, they say, “Oh, I used to give $500.00, now I give $1,000.00 a year, I’ve doubled it.” And it looks to them like a terribly big bite, $1,000.00 is a big bite in itself. But you see, there’s a God in heaven and when he looks down at this big bite of $1,000.00, this God in heaven has a way of doing this; he sees it like this: $9,000.00 left over and kept. And you better understand that God looks at what you keep as well as what you give. And he evaluates what we give in reference to what we keep. So this standard, our take home share constantly getting larger, is a very attractive standard.

Dr. Louis Sperry Chaffer in volume seven of his systematic theology on page 307, makes a very perceptive observation when he says, “not all giving, which avoids the mere tithe, however, is grace giving.” And we want to caution you that just because you avoid the tithe, you may not come to grace giving. That’s something we’re going to explain as we go along. But tithing itself is not a grace system. But I can see why churches love it and why they have every member a tither campaigns and why it pays the bills, this does not mean it is God’s blessing upon that assembly. I can see why individual believers with expanding incomes love it, this does not mean that they are faithful in their stewardship at all.

Now, the tithing technique results in the idea that this is God’s way results in the fact that people open the bible and they indiscriminately gather together everything that the Bible has to say about giving and they ignore the dispensational aspect of these scriptures. Because the Bible, you remember, records more than one way of life or dispensation because it deals with three major groups of people. The Bible deals with information to Jews, it deals with information to Gentiles, and it deals with information to Christians. And each of these groups is an entity to itself. Each of these groups has a beginning, has a program, and has an end. When you get out into eternity, you will discover that out at the very end of time, there are still Jews and Gentiles and Christians. They do not flow together and intermix. And consequently, what God says to one group, you cannot take and indiscriminately apply to another group. You have to read the bible with dispensational orientation. You have to ask yourself, “to whom is God speaking when he gives this directive,” and leave it there! And not take it over, and attach it to somebody else to whom it was never given.

Failure to respect the tithe as part of the Jewish way of life has resulted in utter confusion among Christians. These different groups of believers have different ways of giving. Now the tithe was part of the Mosaic Law, it meant ten percent and it was a law which was definitively commanded for the Jew. In Leviticus 27:30 we read, “And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree is the Lord’s: it is holy unto the Lord. And if a man will at all redeem any of his tithe, he shall add thereof to the fifth part thereof. And concerning the tithe of the heard or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.”

You simply passed your cattle by, your animals, whatever you had, and as it came by, every tenth one was put off on the side no matter the condition of that animal was, you put it off on the side, it was God’s. And ten percent across the board was part of the Mosaic system.

Now there actually were, in the Old Testament, three distinct tithes, and it is important that you distinguish and realize just what was involved in tithing. It was more than just one tithe. First of all, Numbers 18:21, the Levites tithed, “And, behold, I give the whole children of Levi the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle and of the congregation.” Verse 24, “But the tithes of the children of Israel which they offer, as an heave offer unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, among the children of Israel, they shall have no inheritance.”

You see the Levites, the priestly tribe, had no portion in the land, so they had to depend on the tithes for their livelihood. The temple expenses, also, were met out of this tithe. There is no such system of priest, temple, or ritual for us in the church age, and we have nothing of this nature to collect a tithe to finance. There is a distinct difference between the Old and New Testament saints in their character and their destiny.

There was also a second tithe, and this was called the festival tithe. This was taken once a year. As was the Levites tithe. Now this festival tithe, you read about in Deuteronomy 14:22-27, “Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name,” that is, the temple of Jerusalem. “The tithe of thy grain, and of thy wine and of thy oil and the firstlings of thy flock and of thy herds and of thy flocks, that thou mayest learn to fear thy Lord always. And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the Lord thy God will bless thee: Then shalt thou turn it into money and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go into the place which the Lord thy God shall choose: And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul desire it, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desire: and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household. And the Levite who is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him, for he hath no part in the inheritance with thee.”

So here is the description of taking this particular tenth of the produce of the farmer, and to convert it, if necessary into cash, and to take it to Jerusalem, and there, to celebrate the Jewish feasts. And then once every third year, there was a third tithe, and this was the poor tithe. This was once every third year. This was for the poor of the land. You read about this in Deuteronomy 14:28, “At the end of three years thou shalt bring fourth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates. And the Levites, because he hath no part, nor inheritance with thee, and the sojourner, and the fatherless, and the widow who are within thy gates shall come and shall eat and shall be satisfied. And the Lord thy God may bless thee, and all the work of thine hand in which thou doest.”

So here in the Old Testament, if you’re going to deal with the tithing system, the first thing to learn is that there were three tithes. God expected you to give ten percent of your income as a Jew to the Levites, for the support of the priestly ministry and the temple operation. He expected you to give ten percent for observing the festivals and the feasts, and ten percent every third year for providing and supplying the needs of the poor.

Now the Mosaic tithe you see in effect, therefore, was not an offering. It was a religious income tax. It was a straight ten percent religious income tax. Because this tithe, or tax, was imposed upon every Jew, believer or unbeliever alike. Now the functioning, and the handling, and the attitude toward this tithe, this religious income tax, is given to us in the last book of the Old Testament, in the book of Malaki 3:8, where God says, “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But we say, ‘how have we robbed thee in tithes and offerings?’” You see, if a Jew did not bring these tithes to God, he was stealing from God, just as when you and I do not bring our federal income tax to the United States government we are stealing. That’s what this verse means. These people were skipping their income tax payments that God had ordained should be provided through these Jewish people and consequently God was being robbed by them. Verse 9, “Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.” Instead, this is what they should have done, verse 10, “’Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in mine house, and test me now herewith,’ said the Lord of hosts, ‘if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.’” And the blessings upon the Jew, for faithful bringing of this income tax, was a material blessing.

This verse can by no wild stretch of the imagination be applied to Christians who are never promised material blessings, but only great spiritual blessings. If God blesses you materially, it’s his grace and his trusting of you with what he has, that he has placed in your care. It is no reward for something you have done, as was the case with the Jew, who faithfully brought his religious income tax.

Now you will notice that the word storehouse is used here and this is a very favorite word among those who are for the proponents of tithing. Those that teach people that God’s way is the way of tithing love to make an issue over this storehouse, and this storehouse somehow becomes converted into the local church treasury. However, that is not what it says, because in the Hebrew, what it says is ba which is the word for house, ha ot faar, ba ha ot faar, and ba ha ot faar means house of treasure. It is the treasury, so that this word should actually read, “bring me all the tithes into the treasury.” Into the treasure building. And those who did not bring this tax into the building, into the treasury, were robbing God. This has nothing to do with church. You cannot convert storehouse or treasury into church. It simply has nothing to do with it, it’s a different dispensational situation altogether and there is no way for you to cross over into the church age.

The Old Testament actually did provide for the giving of gifts along with tithes. For you will notice in verse 8 of Malachi 3:8 God says, “In tithes and offerings.” And it is true that you could give an offering. And how did you give it in the Old Testament? Just like we do today, out of the free will, grace responsive, our individual hearts, a Jew could come along and say, “Here God, I give you this.” And that was an offering. So that a Jew paid his income tax or his religious income tax, and then he had opportunity to bring the offerings and the two were distinctively different. The principle of these offerings is expressed in one place, in the book of Proverbs. Proverbs 11:24, God says, “There is he that scattereth and yet increaseth,” that is he that gives and yet increase it, “there is he that withhold it, more than is fitting. But it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that waterith shall be watered also himself.” Here again, is Old Testament offering promises.

You want to remember, in order to get your thinking straight on the tithe system that the Mosaic Law was a unique system delivered to the Jewish people. The law provided an Israelite with all the regulations he needed for every circumstance of life as a member of the Jewish nation. This rule of life is never applied to Gentile nations, nor to Christians. The law was actually a merit system. It offered rewards for obedience and penalties for failure. Doctor Lewis Sperry Chafer used to sum this up by saying, “The law system said be good and I’ll bless you. But grace says be good because I have blessed you with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus in heavenly places.” So the law was a merit system, it rewarded obedience, and it had penalties for failures. But legalism is in the nature of the case, therefore, the very opposite of grace. There is no way that you can combine this legal system with the grace light of the believer in the age of the church. In Romans 11:6 the Apostle says, “And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” The two systems are mutually exclusive. The Bible says that the law system is no longer in operation in any of its parts today. Ephesians 2:15, Romans 6:14, Galatians 3:19-25 all clearly declare we are not under law today, we are under grace.

**The Ten Commandments**

Now some people like to claim, “Well that’s true, but only certain features of the law system, it is claimed, were cancelled, not all.” But if you look in 2 Corinthians 3, see, there are certain features of the law that people want to keep. They want to keep the Ten Commandments as a system of laws to be imposed upon believers. They want to keep the tithing factors, and so on. But in 2 Corinthians 3:7, notice what it says, “But if the ministration of death, written and engraved in stones”, and what was written and engraved in stones, the Mosaic law, and certainly the Ten Commandments, “if this was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be more glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious,” and what was done away? The Mosaic Law system, and it was glorious in itself, “much more that which remaineth” the age of the glory of the grace of God. “Seeing then we have such great hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, who put a veil over his face, that the children on Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.”

 Now there was such a glory that it reflected in the very face of Moses when he received the Mosaic Law system. But that system, Paul says, “is nothing to the glory to which we have been called in the age of grace.” And that glorious system, as great as it was, has been abolished. And when it says it has been abolished, that means everything on those tables of stone, and that includes the tithing system. So you cannot claim that only certain parts of it have been done away, the entire system is gone. It is very unlikely, you see, that the very heart of the law system, the Ten Commandments which were written on the tables of stone, that these should have been done away, and that some minor feature like tithing is still in operation.

Christians today are under a restraint from evil, and moral guidelines are provided in the grace way of life. We are not to think because we say we are not under the Ten Commandments, that we are not under the righteous commands and standards and commands of those standards. Those moral rules still apply to everybody. But the Ten Commandments, you see, are just one expression of the righteousness of God, and this was designed for a certain people in a certain age; the Jewish people in the age of the law. We Christians have also, a relationship to the righteousness of God. 1 Corinthians 9:21 says that we are in the law to Christ, and that means that we are under the rule of grace, which is a powerful motivation and control element for righteousness that achieves everything that the Ten Commandments calls upon us to do. So the tithe is not part of the grace rule, the tithe was compulsory, and grace compels. The tithe was a debt, payable to God, and grace cancels all debts to God. The tithe was part of the law, and grace abolishes the law.

So a Christian who feels obliged to tithe, should keep all the other features of the Mosaic Law in order to be consistent, because tithing was just part of a larger system. If you want to claim that tithing is God’s way of giving in this age of grace, then you should also not be here this morning worshipping on Sunday. You should find yourself someplace where you can go to church on Saturday and observe the Sabbath day and don’t do any work on Saturday. You should offer the prescribed animal sacrifices at the appointed places. If you are a male, you should be circumcised, and you should avoid all ceremonial defilement by touching certain foods, lay off the shrimp, and things like that, that are ceremonially defiling. And the dead bodies, or anything dead. But the problem is you can’t even find a Levite priest to pay your tithe to. Who are you going to pay your tithes to? The seminary students? Now there’s a certain warm feeling toward that in certain circles. But you’d have to again spiritualize the idea, see where is the Levitical priest is? There is no way we can observe this.

Alright, there is one other argument, people say you’re right, there is no doubt that tithing was part of the law system, there is no doubt that tithing was not imposed upon Gentiles or Christians, that it was specifically for the people in the Old Testament era, but they remind us that the tithe has anti dated the Mosaic Era. And I have heard seminary professors wax eloquent on defense of the tithing system on the simple fact that it is to be found in human society before the Law of Moses made it an obligation upon the Jewish people.

**Melchizedek**

There are two places in the bible that refer to tithing before the Law of Moses. The first is in Genesis 14:17 when Abraham was returning from the battle with Chedorlaomer, and he lets God’s priest, a priest in the pre-Mosaic Era, a priest liken to the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the high priest, Melchizedek. Genesis 14:17, “And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king’s dale. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, ‘Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.’ And he gave him tithes of all.”

This act of Melchizedek is referred to in the book of Hebrews 7:4. Referring back to this historical incident when it says, “Consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.” This is the first record we have in scripture of the tithing system. However, we may not infer that it was a new practice on that occasion, as a matter of fact, tithing was an ancient practice in the ancient world even among heathen people. In the Dallas Seminary’s publication, stack in volume 427 there is a quotation from A.H. Seis in a volume on patriarchal Palestine that says, “This offering of tithes was no new thing. In his Babylonian home, Abram must have been familiar with the practice. The cuneiform inscriptions Babylonia contained frequent references to it. It went back to the pre semitic age of Caldia and the great temples of Babylonia were largely supported by ursha, or tithe, which was levied upon prince and peasant alike. That the God should receive a tenth of the good things which it was believed he had bestowed upon mankind, was not considered to be asking too much. There are many tablets in the British museum which are receipts for the payment of the tithe to the great temple of the sun god at Supora, at the time of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors. From one of them we learn that balshazer, even at the very moment when the Babylonian empire was falling from his father’s hands, nevertheless found an opportunity for paying the tithe due from his sister.”

So, tithing was an ancient practice. Abraham new it, from just, heathen society in general. But on this basis, the attempt is made to claim that tithing was a universal practice and responsibility. We have no indication from this scripture, you see, that Abraham was under obligation to pay this tithe to Melchizedek, it was purely a voluntary act in gratitude for the victory God had given him. The tithe to Melchizedek was from the spoils of war not from what God had prospered and blessed Abraham with. There is no indication that Abraham was in a habit of giving tithes to the priests. And the claim that Melchizedek represents Christ, and so Christians should pay tithes to the Lord is purely an assumption, it is not based on doctrine. Abraham is viewed as a type of a Christian under grace and on this basis, the claim is sometimes made that because he gave tithes, so should we, the Christians who are the antitype. He represented us, what he did, we should do. But this is not true, Abraham is only a representative of the Christian in the fact that he was saved by grace and not by works, and this is true of everybody in the Old Testament. Abraham was not part of the church body, he is not part of the body of Christ so what he does is not an obligation on us, or binding upon us as Christians.

The only other case you have tithing before the Law of Moses was the case of Jacob, in Genesis 28:20-22. Now Jacob, at this time, is a fugitive. He is fleeing for his life, he is facing the immanent contempt with his brother Esau, and so he proceeds, in his own inimitable fashion, to try and make a deal with God. Genesis 28:20, “And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, ‘If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God. And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.’” Jacob is a fugitive, he is seeking to make a deal with God, for what? For God’s protection and blessing. And this is a vow you notice, so this is a voluntary act. He could decide to give to God or he could not give, we don’t even know whether he ever kept this vow.

Jacob, like Abraham is not part of the church age, so what he does is no indication of what is God’s way for us in this age. Tithing was not a regular practice probably with Jacob either, so there is no case that can be made for universal tithing as an obligation on the basis that it existed before the time of Moses. In the New Testament, the tithe is mentioned only occasionally, and then it’s just part of the Jewish way of life. You may choose to tithe today, certainly, but it’s purely a personal choice, just like it was with Abraham and Jacob.

There is a way of giving under grace, and we have principles, which explain this giving. And this giving under grace does not depend on the hypnotic power of a professional pleader. It is not uncommon for organizations who have meetings, who need to take an offer to say, “Is there anybody among us now who is good at taking an offering?” By which they mean, “Is anybody here have anything that you can say, any story you can tell, any emotional pitch you can give now that would be relevant to this meeting to help us get a good offering.” This is not grace giving. It doesn’t depend on an eye catching, three colored brochure which your organization prints and fills with startling facts and figures. Nor is it the Christian doling out spazmatic tips to God from a comfortable financial surplus, as if he were giving with his tips a king’s ransom.

Here are some general principles concerning stewardship to give us general direction in our thinking relative to the study we will now make of the grace system of giving, which is centered primarily in two chapters in the New Testament, 2 Corinthians 8-9 that we will going through in some details.

**Christian Financial Stewardship**

But here are some observations on Christian financial stewardship as background for our thinking. One, let it be understood that a Christian doesn’t own what he possesses. He is simply acting as God’s agent, and using God’s money as for God’s directions. The Lord is the original and final owner of all things. Each believer, thus, must one day account for how he has used what is not his, but was entrusted to his care. Luke 12:42, 16:1-2.

Number two, God’s money entrusted to us is to be used in such a way as to make more money. It should be placed for the best interest return, Matthew 25:27.

Number three, money is to be subordinated to our love for God. A crude obsession with the things of the good life is often disguised by a pious image of respectability and suto refinement, Matthew 19:16-26.

Number four, God makes money available to us to finances his work on earth. The technique for getting, from God, is to live modestly and give liberally because it’s his money, Luke 6:38.

Number five, there is a much greater eternal blessing in giving than in receiving. What we get benefits us for the present in some small way, but what we give to God blesses a wide circle and thus magnifies our future eternal rewards in heaven, Acts 20:35.

Principle number six, God recons the value of our money gifts by comparison to what we keep of all he has entrusted to us. Not all giving is to be richly rewarded in heaven, because often the keeping hides the giving in God’s sight, Mark 12:41-44.

Number seven, false giving expects something in return. Much giving of Christians is merely lending, exchanging, or honor buying. True giving is only another’s good view and delights to give what cannot be repaid or to those who cannot reciprocate, Luke 6:35.

Number eight, our money is dignified and made sacred by the causes of the Lord for which we give it. Giving to worthy human enterprises should be secondary for Christians, Matthew 23:19.

And number nine, our money is to be converted into spiritual wealth stored in heaven. The more the better. Souls blessed by our spiritual investments will welcome and honor us in heaven, Luke 16:9.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1971