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## *Grace Giving*

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DIVINE FINANCIAL POLICY FOR THE CHURCH  
Tithing is not for the Church

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# Grace Giving

TITHING was the practice of giving a tenth of one's property or produce to support religious institutions or the priesthood. It is an ancient practice, widespread in antiquity and found in Judaism as well as in surrounding cultures of the ancient Near East.

## HISTORY OF TITHING

Commandments to tithe in the Old Testament emphasize the quantity (one-tenth) of the gift. This is the belief that God is entitled to share directly in the grain, wine, and oil that humans are permitted to produce. At different times in Israel's history, varying regulations governed the tithe. Before the time of the Deuteronomy, tithes were used to celebrate a cultic festival at the local holy place, as when Amos mentions the tithes brought to Bethel (4:4), probably because of the vow made by Jacob (Gen. 28:22).

The firstborn of flocks and a tithe of the fruits of the field provided for the festive meal. The priest of the holy place, strangers, widows, and orphans shared in the meal with those who brought the provisions. The remainders from the meal were given to the priests and their assistants as well as to the needy (Deut. 14:22).

In the book of Deuteronomy, the firstborn of the flocks and the tithes are to be brought to the central holy place in Jerusalem ("the place which He will choose, to make His name dwell there," (Deut. 14:23). Families and the Levites of the towns were to travel to Jerusalem for the festive meal.

However, if the journey was too long and carrying the tithe too difficult, one could sell the tithe and buy what was needed in Jerusalem (14:24.). Yet this system did not adequately provide for the needs of the poor, so the code stipulated that every third year the tithe should be kept in the local town (14:28-29; 26:12-15).

The tithes would be distributed to Levites, sojourners, the fatherless, and widows who could not produce food for them. The trip and tithe in Jerusalem changed the nature of the tithe from a harvest sacrifice to more of a cultic tax. The concentration of worship in Jerusalem also meant that temple priests required a somewhat regular income.

During the exilic period the tithe became a type of tax paid to the priests. In postexilic texts, the cultic meal is no longer mentioned. At this time tithes were stored in warehouses (Nehemiah 10:38; Malachi 3:10). Then too, tithes no longer were required to be brought to Jerusalem, but rather were collected by local Levites (Nehemiah 10:37-38). This in effect made the tithe a tax. References to the tithe are few in the New Testament. Jesus refuted the Pharisees for paying the tithe exactly while neglecting the more important parts of the law: justice, mercy, and faith (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42). The Pharisee is shown praying in the temple, "I give tithes of all that I get" (Luke 18:12).<sup>i</sup>

## CHURCH AGE TITHING

The early church DID NOT prescribe a tithe for its members. Yet this differed from OT regulations in that the tithe was seen as compulsory, and was given apart from one's free will. Tithing is not for the Church Age believers.

In the early history of the Church the obligation to tithe was no longer practiced except in some pseudo Christian churches. Instead grace giving was practiced and free will offering along with Paul's teaching that Christ brings freedom from legal prescriptions (Galatians 5:1). However, by the fifth and sixth centuries, the practice of tithing was well established in old areas of Christianity in the West. In the eighth century, Carolingian rulers made the ecclesiastical tithe part of secular law.<sup>ii</sup>

By the twelfth century, monks who previously had been forbidden to receive tithes and required to pay them obtained a measure of freedom in being able to receive tithes while being freed from the obligation of payment. Controversies over tithes often arose when people sought to evade payment while others sought to appropriate tithe revenues for themselves. <sup>iii</sup>

Medieval tithes were divided into pre-dial, due from the fruits of the earth; personal, due from labor; and mixed, due from the produce of livestock. These were further divided into great, derived from corn, hay, and wood to go to the rector or incumbent priest of the parish; and small, from all other pre-dial tithes, plus mixed and personal tithes to go to the vicar. This is the origin of the tithing system we have in Christian churches. <sup>iv</sup>

In England, particularly by the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the issue of tithes was a source of intense conflict since a state church depended on tithes for its livelihood. Social, political, and economic implications were considerable in Archbishop Laud's attempts to increase tithe payments prior to 1640. English Puritans and others wanted the abolition of tithes in favor of voluntary contributions to support clergy. But the question of the tithe aroused some of the fiercest passions and bitterness of all issues associated with the English Civil War. After the war, the legislative tithing survived in England until the twentieth century.

To begin with, a distinction must be made between offering and sacrifice. The word "offering" denotes several categories of gifts to the Lord: A required offering to be burnt wholly or partially on the altar; A voluntary offering to be burnt partially on the altar and to be consumed by the priests and the Israelites as a communal meal; The tithe of the produce of the land and the offspring of the flocks—the word "sacrifice" denotes the particular way of presenting certain offerings. The word zebah ("sacrifice") is related to the word mizbeah ("altar"), and both nouns are connected with the Hebrew verb meaning "to slaughter."

Only three categories of offerings are to be considered sacrifices: the sin offering, the guilt offering, and the burnt offering. Thus, it can be said that all sacrifices are offerings, but not all offerings are sacrifices.

Since the word "offering" also covers sacrifices, reference will be made to the several offerings. The word for offering derives from the Hebrew verb meaning "to bring near" (Leviticus 7:16), as an expression of the physical act of bringing an object as an offering to the Lord. Offerings are also to be distinguished from the tithe. The tithe was one of the tributary offerings imposed on Israel. There were strict regulations pertaining to the tithe (Leviticus 27:30-33; Numbers 18:21-32; Deuteronomy 14:22-29; 26:2-15).

All crops and the increase in cattle were subject to the tithe. The tithe of grain and fruit could first be exchanged for silver, but the Israelite was required to add 20 percent of the market value before taking the silver to the temple. He was not permitted to redeem the tithe of the herd or flock.

In Jerusalem the people were permitted to exchange the silver for grain, wine, oil, and whatever would promote the joy of the people in the presence of their God (Deuteronomy 14:23-27). The Levites and the poor also enjoyed a portion of the tithe.

However, every third year the tithe was reserved for the Levites and those in financial poverty (Deuteronomy 14:28-29). The tithe also functioned as a kind of a tax to support the temple and its personnel.

The temple personnel, for their own use, retained the tithe. Animals were marked to indicate temple ownership, and grain, vegetables, and fruits were stored or sold. An administration was in charge of the storehouse for the continued welfare of the personnel (Nehemiah 13:13; Malachi 3:10; Nehemiah 10:38-39; 12:44).

#### Hebrew words related to giving in the Bible:

- Nathan (v), “to give”
- Yahab (v), “to give, to provide”
- Terumah (n), “contribution, offering”
- Minchah (n), “offering”
- Qorban (n), “offering”
- Nedher (n), “vow”
- Shay (n), “gift”
- Mattanah (n), “gift”
- Zebed (n), “gift”
- Nachalah (n), “gift, inheritance”
- Barak (v), “to bless”

#### Greek words related to giving in the Bible:

- Didomi (v), “to give, to give back”
- Doron (n), “gift, present, offering”
- Dorea (n), “gift, present”
- Dorean (adverb), “grace giving, as a present, gratis”
- Dorema (n), “grace gift”
- Doma (no), “gift”
- Prospora (n), “offering, the act of bringing, gift, that which is brought”
- Metadidomi (v), “to give, to share, to contribute”
- Poieo (v), “to give, to provide”
- Dosis (n), “the act of giving, a gift”
- Koinos (adj): “common, common ownership, common property, partner”
- Koinonos (n): “partner, sharer, companion”
- Koinoneo (v): “to share with someone in something which he has, to take part, to partake in, to participate”
- Koinonia (n): “partnership, participation, fellowship, close relationship, association, communion, expressing a two-sided relation”
- Sunkoinonos (n): “partnership, fellow sharer”
- Sunkoinoneo (v): “to participate or share in something with somebody”
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- Koinonikos (adj): “belonging or appointed to society, generous, liberal in sharing or giving, sharing what is one’s own”
- Charisma (n), “grace gift, a gracious gift, free gift, gift of grace”
- Charis (n), “grace, a gift, gratitude”
- Charitoo (v), “to give grace, to bestow favor”
- Charizomai (v), “to give generously, freely, to give graciously”
- Eulogia (n), “generous giving, a blessing”
- Eulogeo (v), “to bless”
- Dotes (n), “giver”
- Diakonia (n), “service, ministry, provision”
- Choregeo (v), “to furnish a chorus at one’s own expense or supply at one’s own expense”
- Epichoregeo (v), “to graciously supply someone with something at one’s own expense, to generously supply at one’s own expense”
- Leitourgia (n), “service”
- Prosanapleroo (v), “to fill up that which is lacking, to fully provide for that which is lacking, to fully supply that which is lacking”
- Antilambanomai (v), “to help, to support the royal family”

#### DISORIENTATION TO GRACE

GRACE is all that God is free to do for man on the basis of the work of Christ on the Cross. Grace depends on the essence of God-it is what God can do for man and still be consistent with His own perfect character. The divine policy of grace is the prevalence for the Christian way of life (divine protocol for the believers). It is the Christian way of living and giving.

God supplies everything we need in this life, both the material and spiritual things; this is called the logistical grace of God. The logistical grace reflects the divine plan of grace.

Grace is the antithesis of legalism and the arch nemesis of human good works. The greatest thing that God can do for a saved person is to make him exactly like His Son Jesus Christ's humanity, which was accomplished in three stages of sanctification. Falling from grace means rejecting the divine plan of grace and accepting legalism, ritualism and rejecting genuine spirituality.

God can bless the mature believer in the midst of crisis, pressure, adversity and problems [2 Cor. 12:7-14]. God is perfect and His plan is perfect. Grace, who excludes every forms of human, merits, human good, human power, human energy and wisdom protect the perfection of divine plan. Human works cannot accomplish the plan of God human good when assumed to be man's approach to God, expresses arrogance toward God.

The loser saint assumes his sins are greater than the plan of God. The believer who is suffering from self-induced miseries assumes his pains are greater than the grace provision. The pseudo-spiritual saint assumes his human sacrifices are greater than God's plan of grace.

The believer whose mind and soul is dominated by his emotions and false doctrine (doctrine of demons) assumes his feelings and spiritual experience are more important than the mind of Christ [Bible doctrine]. Every Church Age believer is in full time Christian ministry or service.

Every believer is a royal priest who represents himself before God and whose responsibility is to grow to spiritual maturity [1 Peter 2:5-9, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Ephesians 3:17-21, 4:11-16]. The genuine believer lives under the law of Christ as the precedent, that abolished and nullified the Mosaic Law [Romans 6:14, 8:2-4].

## TITHING IS NOT GIVING TO GOD

Tithing was bona-fide only in the Old Testament Israel, while grace giving function in every dispensation. There is no command for the Church Age believers to pay their tithes.

Tithing was for every Israelite, both believers and unbelievers- while grace giving is exclusive for believers. The Lord Jesus Christ did not mention or command the Church Age believers to pay their tithes. No epistle ever mentioned tithing as code of conduct for believers in the New Testament.

Tithing was obligatory taxes. There were three types of tithes in the Old Testament:

- The tax for the maintenance of the Levites (Num. 18:21)
- the tax for national feast and sacrifices (Deut. 14:28-29)
- The tax every 3rd year for the poor of the land (Deut. 14:28-29).

The Grace Policy of God:

God is the Greatest Giver (Eph. 2:8-9; John 3:16; Rom. 8:32; 1 Tim. 6:13; James 1:5).

He gives to mankind on the basis of His grace policy which means that no one earns or deserves blessing from God, it is on a non-meritorious basis (Eph. 2:8-9).

Grace is all that God is free to do for mankind on the basis of the Person and Finished Work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

Eternal salvation is a result of making 1 non-meritorious decision to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Saving grace is for the unbeliever and spiritually dead person which is the condition of every person born into the world.

The believer is the recipient of 2 Great Divine Provisions:

- Word of God
- Spirit of God.

## PRINCIPLES OF GRACE GIVING

Grace giving is a private and free will act of the believer but tithing is obedience to the law of Israel. Grace giving is a commemoration of grace. God the Father gave His Son as the ultimate grace gift to entire humanity. The believer must give in recognition of God's grace, on the basis of his own mental attitude toward God and His Bible doctrine from the virtue love of the soul.

There is a definite sequence in giving: First is the attitude of the soul (the mentality of the heart) then, comes the act of free will giving.

Grace giving is both an extension and manifestation of Bible doctrine in the soul. Giving of self-expresses capacity for genuine love and happiness based on truth and veracity of the Scripture.

Giving in grace therefore, does not make an issue of the actual gift of the giver. There is no place in the Church for giving with string attaches in order to gain more personal benefits. Giving must originate from the free will apart from any coercion, pressure or emotional manipulation or legalistic human schemes.

Giving must be on the basis of virtue love and spiritual integrity not on human emotional response and guilt feelings. Giving depends on the grace orientation based on the individual and personal understanding of divine protocol and operational system. It is a mental attitude of grace and inner happiness rather than being proud of his donations.

Rebound and the resulting filling of the Holy Spirit is a prerequisite for grace giving with proper motivation.

Grace giving is divine good motivated by Bible doctrine in the soul apart from selfish and personal motivation, not by lust, emotional hang-ups, or guilt feeling. It is giving that comes not from coercion, approbation, peer pressures, desire for recognition or approbation, self-glory or human exaltation.

God did not promise greater material blessing to believers who tithes, but He supplies adequately for us to survive the cosmic system. It is human viewpoint and religious teaching that oblige or force the believers to pay their tithes. It is the divine viewpoint that motivates the believers to give in grace.

Grace giving is giving from spiritual mental attitude (2 Corinthians 8:1-2), which is giving from the heart (kardia -the right lobe of the soul), motivated by virtue love toward God.

Grace giving is an expression of the believer's fellowship with the Lord and the body of Christ. There are three key ideas that come out of this:

Fellowship means being a part of a group, a body of people. It is opposed to isolation, solitude, loneliness, and our present-day independent kind of individualism

Fellowship means having or sharing with others certain things in common such as interest, goals, feelings, beliefs, activities, labor, privileges and responsibilities, experiences, and concerns.

Fellowship can mean a partnership that involves working together and caring for one another as a company of doctrinal oriented believers.

Grace giving is giving from the free will volition not from compulsion or coercion (8:2).

Grace giving is giving as a privilege to give in grace, (8:4) and not forced by human emotion or persuasion,

Grace giving is giving as result of soul spiritual activity (8:5) that is spiritual advancement toward spiritual maturity,

Grace giving is giving as extension of spiritual perception (8:7) that is the true knowledge of God's Word.

Grace giving is a test of love rather than obedience to religious law (8:8), Grace giving is the result of grace orientation (8:9).

Grace giving calls for proper administration of church money- the priority of every local church is to provide its members genuine Bible doctrine and NOT to build expensive building or equipments.

Grace giving requires spirituality from each giver, when you give under carnality your giving is useless and unacceptable to God.

Grace giving is giving without any pressure from preachers who are pleading in the name of God for their own spiritual ambition to do great things for God (9:4-5)

Grace giving is related to blessings that we received from God, not just material things but spiritual perception and genuine knowledge of God (9:6),

Grace giving comes from motivation of resident Bible doctrine in the soul of the believer; everything we do for God must be based on our knowledge of God (9:7).

Grace giving is giving back to God in sincere gratitude for what He has provided in grace through Christ (9:8).

Grace giving multiplies its giving in love (9:10-12).

Grace giving recognizes and accepts grace authority in every aspects of life (9:13). Tithing is compulsive giving, obligated by emotion or human laws, enforced by coercion, guilt and personal sins of the giver, motivated by selfish desires for human recognition and approbation which earns no reward in time or in eternity.

Grace giving is free will giving, based on Bible doctrine, enforced by the filling of the Holy Spirit as result of spiritual growth and manifestation of divine good will be rewarded in time and in eternity.

God is glorified by what He gives and not by what men are giving to Him. God created all things and there is nothing that we can give to God since we own nothing except our sins.

There are 4 general manifestations of Christian giving:

- Time: the giving of the believer's time to serve the Lord and the body of Christ.
- Talent: the giving of the believer's talent to serve the Lord and the body of Christ
- Treasure: the giving of the believer's treasure to serve the Lord and the body of Christ
- Operating in one's spiritual gift: The believer's functions of his spiritual gift in serving the Lord and the body of Christ. It is an expression of fellowship with both God and the body of Christ.

#### CAN WE GLORIFY GOD BY OUR GOOD WORKS?

We give and serve in hypocrisy: we are all born with devious desires to be accepted and approved by men. We are proud to be humble in our giving and serving. We are good pretender in our religious responsibility especially whenever we fall short in any religious requirements. We are trying to make some kind of impression that we are right with God, that is why, they are striving to give and serve God more.

We serve or work for God with hidden agenda and wrong motivation. Though we do not say it, we expect for some kind of return investment, to gain more from what we did or what we gave to God. We think that God provides all our needs because we are faithful in our tithing and offering. So, we serve and work legally and rigidly because we thought that we could make God believe in ourselves as good and faithful servant of the God.

We cannot glorify God through our worship, service, giving, and sacrifices while in the state of carnality or spiritual rebellion. Religious hypocrisy is fatal.

God is glorified by distributing perfect blessings to believers. The blessing we give do not glorify God what glorifies God are the blessings that He gives, the function that He performs in behalf of the believers.

To glorify God, both the giver and the gift (believer) must be perfect in the eyes of God. God cannot accept anything less than perfect so He prepared perfect gifts for the imperfect man.

Grace giving is giving with proper motivation from applied doctrine and the Filling of the Spirit results to:

- Provides for the needs of the Royal Family of God
- Produces divine good
- Produces spiritual prosperity in the giver
- Produces an increased capacity to give in the giver
- Produces thanksgiving to God among the recipients which glorifies Him in the Angelic Conflict.

The righteousness and justice of God can never be satisfied with outstanding human good works of the imperfect man. That only thing, He can accept is the divine good works of the imperfect believer who by the grace of God dwells inside the divine dynasphere that is spirituality (doing the will and purpose of God in God's way and in God's time).

Human good works is identified as dead works [Heb. 6:1] it cannot save mankind [Eph. 2:8-9, Titus 3:5]. Human good works is not acceptable to God [Isaiah 64:6, Rom. 8:8 but condemned by God [Eccl. 12:14].

Grace giving for the production of divine good involves all three members of the Trinity:

- God the Father provides the financial and material means necessary to give under the principle of Logistical grace.
- God the Son, the Word of God provides the proper motivation.
- God the Holy Spirit provides the motivation to give in concert with applied doctrine.

Human good works is the basis of indictment at the GWT judgment [Revelation 20:12-15]. Human good operates from old sinful nature to solve human problems apart from the grace and power of God. It operates from the inspiration of satanic human viewpoint.

Human good is maladjustment to the justice of God, it cannot come close to earning the approbation of God, and rather it is an insult to God's infinite character. Since human good operates from the kardia (heart), therefore without Bible doctrine, it will always turns to evil.

The deception of human good work, its claims for the betterment of mankind and for the glory of God are misleading. God is not well pleased even though we are very happy for what we are doing. A person cannot function with divine good without salvation and the Spirit-filled life.

For a believer to function effectively doing the will and purpose of God requires progressive spiritual growth and advancement. Inside the divine will, the mature believers use the divine provision for solving human problems.



God is never impressed with our big and great things for Him, which we coated with selfish ambition and old sinful nature. Divine good is from spiritual new nature, requires the adjustment to the justice of God and the only things acceptable to God.

Divine good is the result of spiritual maturity and operates at spirituality through Bible doctrine in the soul stored in the soul, motivated by the imputed divine righteousness.

The believer's purpose of existence in the world is threefold:

- To glorify God by allowing God to bless us in the angelic conflict.
- To represent the Lord in the cosmos diabolicus
- To grow and mature in the knowledge and in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ

PRINCIPLES FOR THE CHURCH: Tithing is not for the Church Age believers for six reasons:

- We are not Hebrews or Israelites,
- We are not in the Old Testament era,
- We are not under the Mosaic Law, we are under grace,
- We are NOT commanded by God to pay the tithes,
- There is nothing spiritual about tithing in our time,
- Jesus Christ fulfilled the demands of the law.

The New Testament giving must be grace giving that is the free act of a free choice with a motive to honor what God has provided. The blessings we give do not glorify God but the blessings that He gives, the function that He performs. To glorify God, both the giver and the gift must be perfect (that is being inside the will, purpose and plan of God).

The only way to glorify God is to be properly adjusted to His justice by salvation, rebound and spiritual advancement toward maturity.

The priority of every local church is to preach the Gospel and proclaim Bible doctrine and not to build luxurious and beautiful worship hall. We must support the ministry that contributes to our spiritual progress.

We must support financially the local church that contributes to our spiritual growth. Tithing burdens the Church Age saints into an obsolete system under the Mosaic Law, which Christ Himself had abolished through His sinless life and through His spiritual death on a cross.

Tithing in the Old Testament illustrated the grace of God, because salvation all throughout the human history is through faith in Christ. There was never a time in human history that salvation was through human good works. Only Christ was able to fulfill the Law. FREELY YOU HAVE RECEIVED: FREELY YOU GIVE.

The Christian way of life is a life of volitional responsibility, meaning to say; each individual is accountable for his own decision or action. Each action or decision is measured by a protocol established by God. We cannot meet God by inventing our own standard. God established perfect policies and principles related to our sojourning in the cosmic world. The Incarnate life of the Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated how to apply these divine protocols.

We cannot give something we have not received. There is no reason for any person to practice grace giving without receiving eternal life. Only the genuine believers in Christ are in position of genuine blessedness. Secondly, knowledge and perception of the grace of God is vital for nurturing the mental attitude of grace giving. We give based on knowledge- we give based on doctrine stored in the soul.

Grace giving is giving as an expression of your virtue personal love to God. You give because you know WHO AND WHAT GOD IS.

There are four categories of giver in the church today:

**THOSE WHO GIVE AGAINST THEIR CONVICTION:** They have conviction but not based on Bible doctrine maybe they are not really sure of their beliefs- but they cannot resist the preacher's pleading to give more and more. They are slaves they give against their own will. They are ignorantly afraid of God.

**THOSE WHO GIVE WITHOUT CONVICTION:** They merely follow the voice of God. For some selfish or sincere motives they just swim along with the crowd, not knowing why they are swimming. For them obedience is better than knowledge. They blindly follow the preachers without examining the Scripture.

**THOSE WHO GIVE WITH WRONG CONVICTION:** They are actually deceived by false teachings. They are thinking that they are serving and giving to God.

**THOSE WHO GIVE WITH RIGHT CONVICTION:** based on perception and understanding of Bible doctrine. They give as an expression of their virtue personal love to God.

Grace giving is based on personal perception and understanding of God.

Grace giving is an expression of virtue impersonal love to mankind, because you wanted the proclamation of the Gospel to reach the lost.

Grace giving is an expression of gratitude rather than obedience.

Grace giving is giving the best because of the **SOURCE OF EVERYTHING**, not because to whom you are giving (the recipients), the local church or an individual pastor or missionary.

Grace giving is giving because you have freely received the saving grace, the living grace, the logistical grace, and later (if you reach spiritual maturity) the surpassing grace of God. Grace giving is grateful giving.

Grace giving is giving freely because you received freely. If you received nothing, you are free to give nothing. If you received freely from God, then you are free to give back to God [Matthew 10:8b]. To whom much is given, much also is required [Luke 12:48b].

Grace giving gives to:

- The Local Church: (Gal. 6:6, 1 Tim. 5:17-18). If the local church is to form a solid home base for other ministries of outreach, it is only logical that it should become a first priority for our giving.
- Other doctrinal and grace oriented organizations and individuals: (3 John 5-8).
- Fellow Believers in Need: Those unable to support themselves or who have faced serious problems are to be helped as we are able. (1 John 3:17; Jam. 2:15-16; Gal. 6:10; Heb. 10:33-34; 13:1-3 with 2 Thess. 3:6-10).
- Unbelievers in Need: Our first priority is to those who are of the household of faith, but we are also to reach out to others in need as we are able (Gal. 6:10).

Five-fold effects of grace giving:

- Providing for the needs of the Royal Family of God
- Producing thanksgiving to God
- Produces rejoicing (Phil. 4:10-17)
- Rewards at the Bema Seat Evaluation
- Spiritual Growth

**MONEY** was designed as medium of exchange. Coined money was unknown until the middle of 7th century B.C. Before the invention of coins, gold and silver metal was measured in terms of ingots or rings.

CROESUS king of LYDIA was the first one to preserve his money in form of coins. When CYRUS the Great captured LYDIA, he adopted the concept of coinage. CYRUS spread the concept throughout the Persian Empire and beyond.

Monetary transactions are a legitimate function of life. Barter trading was not only burdensome but also inaccurate in transacting the values of goods. Money makes life easier and better in many aspects [Gen. 23:9, Jer. 32:44].

Money at this point is a useful servant and effective tool. The giving of money is an expression of the believer's royal priesthood [Heb. 13:15-16, 1 Cor. 16:2, 2 Cor. 8-9]. It replaces the animal sacrifices and offerings of the Old Testament believers.

MONEY HAS NO CREDIT WITH GOD, meaning to say, the amount we give is not the issue, but the mental attitude of the believer in giving [Prov. 11:4, 13:7, 11]. The love of money is the ROOT of the materialism lust and slavery to details of life [Mat. 6:24, Luke 16:9, 11].

The desire for money is very perilous for any believer. (That is his spiritual death), so that we can live for God [Mark 8:36-37, 1 Peter 1:8-19]. It can hinder the unbeliever from seeking salvation [Luke 16:19-31].

Money can easily become a god that a materialistic believer worships seven days a week. Money is a tool that never given a chance to become a master that controls the believer's soul.

NO AMOUNT OF MONEY can purchase Salvation of our souls because the Lord Jesus paid for it in full by His blood

THE LOVE OF MONEY can cause the rich man to put his trust in the wrong things [Mark 10:23-25]. The love of money can become part of slavery to the details of life [Eccl. 5:10-6:2].

The love of money will become the root of kinds of evil in the soul of a person (1 Tim. 6:6-12, 17-19).

Money can destroy the grace orientation of a believer and contribute to his carnality and reversion of his mental attitude [Acts 5:1-10, James 4:14-5:6].

Money can be a source of deceit [Jude 11, Numbers 22-23]. Money at this point has become a cruel master and a dangerous enemy.

MONEY IS NOT THE MEANS OF HAPPINESS. For the believer there is no happiness from the details of life, including money. The believer's happiness is built on his progressive advancement and growth toward spiritual maturity.

MONEY IS NEVER THE MEANS OF SECURITY. Grace provides a security for which there is no substitute [Matthew 6:24-33]. Money has wings and it flies away. Money cannot guarantee anything. God is the best security in life since God guarantees everything.

Few can pass the test of prosperity for money can easily change the mental attitude of a person and always for the worst. Money cannot buy salvation, happiness love, spirituality, stability, tranquility and the grace of God. Any attempt to buy happiness through material satisfaction will result to bitterness, dissatisfaction and vanity.

For an individual the word "wealth" signifies well being resulting from outward rather than inward causes such as health or contentment. The word is used to signify the material well being produced and consumed in the community. Both uses of the term, whether pertaining to an individual or a community, are concerned with the evaluation of things according to priorities.

Wealth is a privilege from God and an opportunity to enjoy life with others who benefit from it. It must never take the place of a master.

Some illusion related to money:

- Money is happiness
- Money is security
- Money is evil
- Money is not needed in this life

Dangerous things about money:

- Unbelievers: money can purchase salvation (1 Peter 1:18-19, Mark 8:36-37)
- Rich unbelievers: seeking salvation in the wrong way (Luke 16:19-21, Prov. 11:4, 28)
- Rich believers: putting confidence on their riches and wealth instead on God (Mark 10:23-25)
- Believers: money can keep the believers from honoring the Lord Jesus Christ, the purpose for which he is left on this Earth.
- Believers: the love of riches can crown the Lord out of their lives (Eccl. 5:10-20, 6:2)
- Believers: money can cause various temptations (1 Tim. 6:7-19, 6:8).
- Believers: money can cause presumptuous and arrogant apart from God (James 4:13, 5:6)

Grace giving is a function of the unique Royal Commissions that every church age believer receives at the moment of personal faith in Jesus Christ. All church age believers are members of the Royal Family of God through the Baptism of the Spirit and have been given 2 unique Royal Commissions:

- Royal Priesthood (1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6)
- Royal Ambassadorship (2 Cor. 5:20).

For the Christian, wealth is not an innate evil but an opportunity for godly service. While not the greatest value on earth, wealth can be a good thing. We should not put our trust in it because it can be lost or stolen.

The value of an item of wealth is measured by the market price. If there is no market, the value can only be appraised. Because a railway and a share of stock in the same railway are not separate items of wealth, counting paper wealth such as equities and securities together with the underlying physical nonhuman goods involves double counting. When debits and credits for all forms of wealth are summed for a community, paper wealth cancels out and double counting is eliminated.

Abraham was a very wealthy man who owned gold, silver, and cattle. Lot was also very wealthy. Job was a wealthy man before his ordeal and twice as wealthy afterward because God prospered him with cattle and livestock and blessed the work of his hands. God in no way questioned the legitimacy of their wealth. Although wealth is sometimes associated with violence and oppression, it is sometimes a gift from God representing a blessing on his people.

Sometimes wealth can help us when there is trouble, although it cannot shield us from God's judgment. Wealth can tempt us to forget God and prevent us from enjoying things. God entrusts his wealth to individuals and institutions in order to increase its value and benefit the working people.

As compassionate stewards of God's property we are fully responsible to God for the proper administration of God's given wealth. At the same time we are the legitimate owners during the period of our stewardship. Complete economic self-sufficiency for an individual or even a small community is difficult, if not impossible, because of the curse of the ground.

This forces us to cooperate with other men of all types to increase our own per capita wealth. This is a way in which our interdependence as human beings is demonstrated. How we manage our cooperation with other people will determine to a large extent the value of our wealth.

Although there are many motives for accumulating wealth, most of the populations have no significant accumulation. Most people tend to live above or within their income and run down what little liquid wealth they own.

They may do this in reaction to those who love money and wealth for its own sake rather than for what it can do or in reaction to examples of the tyrannical use of wealth. Nevertheless, wealth can be enjoyed for the prospect of family continuity it offers, the status it provides, and the opportunity for the exercise of power.

In recent times the importance of providing for one's children as a motive for accumulating wealth has diminished. Public and private security and pension plans; taxes; and geographical, occupational, and marital mobility have all contributed to this general tendency.

#### MONEY: A WRONG MOTIVATION

Some men enjoy the process of accumulating wealth because it demonstrates that they have the ability to grapple with the alternating changes of life and win. A man who puts together a successful deal may even feel the same kind of inner satisfaction as a poet or a mathematician who has just completed a creative endeavor. For him it is not so much the enjoyment of using wealth that motivates as the fun of accumulating it.

The owner of a successful business may enjoy identifying himself with the success or wealth of his business, especially if it dominates a market. The accumulation of wealth in this case accompanies successful activity and enlarges the individual's influence.

Directing great affairs, putting one's ideas into practice, or only doing good for mankind may be important motivating factors which impel a Christian man to devote his energy, capital, and time to subduing the portion of the earth under his sphere of responsibility.

One's world and life view affects one's attitude toward wealth and its accumulation. When the highest purpose of man is seen as the attainment of spiritual union with God, wealth may be regarded with a certain amount of disdain.

The accumulation of wealth beyond the minimum to keep an ascetic alive may then harm the individual and subvert his spiritual union with God. Because the desire for wealth and the things wealth allows can defile the spirit, the struggle of life is to mortify any desire for wealth and to escape any attachments to wealth.

This antagonism between spirit and wealth is unnecessary, however, and may ultimately be understood as anti-Christian. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction (1 Timothy 6:9).

To some, wealth is seen as real but also dead and inert because it is totally unrelated to the spiritual issues of life. For this reason such people fail to relate to wealth except to use, manipulate, or destroy it.

This attitude directed toward the physical world leads to the depletion and destruction of the earth's wealth. Only by having one's mind renewed can we come to a true and joyous repentance of our anti-Christian attitude toward wealth, our abuse of the environment, and our disdain of God's creation. Still others believe we are caught up in an inevitable process of evolutionary advancement to which all means of wealth should be directed.

Only the best in civilization as confirmed by repeated human judgments should be encouraged. Some holding this view, however, suspect that a greater flow of wealth retards human creation, knowledge, and experience and causes decay in civilization.

For the evolutionists this is evidenced by a coarsening of cultural tastes, an atrophy of conscience, and a frenzied search for sensual pleasures, which satisfy only for a moment. For the Christian these phenomena, while real, are the results of turning from God rather than the accumulation of wealth.

The Christian sees a world of spirit and wealth flowing together in oneness without antagonism. Through Jesus Christ all wealth is clean, and both spiritual and material wealth is to be respected. The Christian way of unity is for people to be fulfilled and expressed through material wealth in an abundant and prosperous life.

In the biblical view the Spirit of God naturally flows through everything the Christian is and does and the Christian is a blessing purely because he is walking in God's plan and purpose. In this case, the Lord is free to bless everything His child touches.

In grace oriented local church there is a strong spiritual level of communion among the believers. Companionship through communication would include:

- Our communion and fellowship with the Lord through the Word, prayer, the filling of the Holy Spirit, and the abiding life.
- Our communion and fellowship with the body of Christ, other believers. This includes:
  - Assembling together as a whole body (Heb. 10:25)
  - Assembling in smaller groups (2 Tim. 2:2)
  - Meeting together one-on-one (1 Thess. 5:11)
  - Sharing and communicating truth together and building up one another (2 Tim. 2:2)
  - Sharing together in worship
  - Sharing together as partners in the needs, burdens, concerns, joys, and blessings for the purpose of encouragement, comfort, challenge or exhortation, praise, prayer and physical help according to the needs and ability (Phil. 1:5, 19)

## THE LOVERS OF MONEY

Lo and behold, the servant of God has become the servant of money. The lovers of God have become the lovers of money! Some pastors have become \*Solicitors General\* soliciting money just from anybody. Thus the Bible admonishes us not to become anxious over our possessions, exhausting ourselves to pile up treasures on earth where moth and rust corrupt.

Our heavenly Father knows we have needs, and whether we abound or suffer want, we should be content with what his kind hand has provided (Phil. 4:11-13).

THE LOVE OF MONEY is a root of all sorts of evil and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith [1 Tim. 6:10]. Satan has every gimmick to entice believers into his boat. Modern financial scheming are (like networking) is the genius of Satan and not wisdom from above. It is another trick to divert our focus from God's plan and purpose.

Let your character be FREE FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY, being content with what you have [Hebrews 13:5].

God will never forsake or desert His children in any situation beyond human control. The priority of every believer is not to accumulate material wealth but to know God through progressive and systematic study of God's Word.

The priority of every man called is to proclaim Bible doctrine that will edify the church, not business or human wisdom. Pastors, preachers, missionaries, Bible teachers of the Word of God MUST BE FREE FROM THE LOVE OF MONEY, not materialistic or whose minds focus on the things of the world (1 Tim. 2:3).

The believer cannot serve two masters at the same time (God and money) and money is not a master but a servant.

Money is necessary for Church's operation and mission but raising money is not the mission of the Church.

The Body of Christ (members of the universal Church) must be free from the love of money because Christianity is all about loving God and loving our fellowmen - not loving money.

In the world, the richest institutions are in the religious sector. They should put money signs (peso, dollar, euro, etc.) on their steeples and not the cross since they are making their religions as business enterprise.

Properly motivated giving on the part of the believer will result in rewards for them at the Bema Seat Evaluation (Mt. 5:11-2; Luke 6:22-23; Rm. 12:9-13; 15:13).

Crowns and rewards will be distributed at the Bema Seat Evaluation of Christ. These crowns are the result of the believer producing divine good through the utilization of the 2 power options.

Crowns and rewards glorify God because in order to produce the divine good necessary to receive these rewards the believer has to utilize what God the Father has already provided from eternity past under the principles of Election and Predestination.

Every believer has equal opportunity and equal privilege to receive rewards at the Bema Seat Evaluation of Christ. Personal love for God the Father and occupation with Christ must be the believer's motivation for receiving these rewards.

The Filling of the Spirit is the means of attaining these rewards. The purpose of receiving rewards is to glorify God in the angelic conflict. These rewards were designed by God the Father in eternity past (Eph. 2:10).

Only the believer who is a spiritual champion and finishes the spiritual race that the Father has set before them will receive these rewards which glorify Him and His Son Jesus Christ.

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- <sup>i</sup> The Wellhausen's Prolegomena to the History of Israel 1885
  - <sup>ii</sup> History of Christian Practices - W. R. Smith 1894
  - <sup>iii</sup> Edwell's Bible Dictionary -Tithes and Offerings
  - <sup>iv</sup> Encyclopedia Britannica 2002 PC-ROM -Tithes