



THE GREAT TITHING MISUNDERSTANDING

"How much are Christians supposed to give?" A common answer is "10%! Because the 'tithe' is the Lord's! (Deut 14:22)"

So who owns the rest?

Unfortunately an unintended consequence of teaching 10% tithing is that many can walk away believing 10% is the Lord's and the rest is ours!

In 2019, Christians give an average of only 2.5% of their income (during the height of the Great Depression the number was closer to 3.3%). For families making \$75k+ income, only 1% give at least 10% in tithing. Americans spend the same amount on missions to the unreached 10-40 window as they do on Halloween costumes... for their pets! Certainly we have some re-learning to do as a culture.

Consider the following two examples and discuss how much you would advise each person to give:

1. A single dad is raising two children. He earns \$800/mo, and pays \$600 in groceries. How much should the single dad tithe?
2. A wealthy doctor earns \$250,000 a year. Tithing 10% leaves this woman with \$225,000 a year to live on. How much would you encourage her to give?

Jesus makes mention of the Old Testament tithe in only two passages (Matthew 23:23-24 and Luke 18:9-14). Paul is equally silent on the topic of the 10% tithe. But both Jesus and Paul talk frequently about giving. Read and discuss the two passages listing guidelines from both Paul and Jesus on giving.

- [2 Corinthians 8:7, 9:6-7](#)
- [Luke 21:1-4](#)

So how much should a person give? Perhaps a suggestion is to *give in such a way that it makes a difference in your lifestyle*. Biblically, where else might we give? New Testament examples include the poor (Galatians 2:10), orphans and widows (James 1:27), and missions (Philippians 4:10-20). Give where you choose. Paul summed it up in 2 Corinthians 9:7: "*Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give.*"

Spend time answering the following questions to help form conclusions on this topic: What do you believe about tithing? What are you teaching about giving? How do these conclusions influence other areas of your life where you are entrusted something of limited quantity (such as time, energy, etc.)?