



**LEADER'S GUIDE**

# **The LORD's Plan For Financing The Gospel**

**Oliver & Mary Blosser**

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## Leader's Guide

This study is designed for use by a Small Group. The questions that follow each section of the study are best used in a group setting for discussion and evaluation.

The eleven parts of the study can be used in whatever way the Small Group leader find it most effective. Five parts could be studied at home during the week, and discussed together in the small group. In this way, the study would be complete in two weeks, with the final chapter used at the Small Group, included in week two, or as an extra week of study. Or, the Small Group may want to do two, three or four parts each week.

This Leader Guide includes suggested answers for the discussion questions at the end of each part of the study. Many of the questions have no right or wrong answer. Encourage your group to think about the material and share their thoughts and reactions to the material presented.

It is our prayer that this study will help your Small Group to take a careful look at what the Bible says about tithing and the place it holds in God's plan for financing the Gospel.

Oliver and Mary Blosser

*PART 1: The Tithing Test*

**Tithing Principle #1:**

*Your faith and obedience are tested through tithing.*

**Questions for study, thought, review, and discussion**

The divine purpose for the tithing system was *promoting and maintaining the work of the Gospel, supporting the needs of pastors, Bible teachers, and missionaries, and caring for the needy of the Faith Community*

The tithing system is a test for the *human heart*.

Tithing reveals your level of *obedience* and obedience demonstrates your level of *faith in God*.

How is tithing a test of obedience and faith? *Obedience in the tithe requires that you must have faith that God will provide.*

What has been your experience in facing the tithing test? *(Group answer)*

What are the parallels and similarities between giving God one day of the week and one tenth of your income?

*God has required both, both belong to God, obedience requires an act of the will*

*PART 2: The Biblical Basis of Stewardship*

**Tithing Principle #2:**

*In God's world, you are to be a faithful steward of what He has entrusted to you.*

**Questions for study, thought, review, and discussion**

What belongs to the LORD? everything - because he created everything

As you live in God's world and care for the possessions which He gives you, you have the role of a steward.

What is the character trait which the LORD requires of stewards? faithfulness

Who gives you the power to get wealth? God

How would the attitude of a 'steward' differ from the attitude of an 'owner'? a steward does not consider the things he cares for to be his own. He is humble, and has respect for the belongings of his master. A steward knows that he will someday give an account of the way he had cared for what was entrusted to him. (Your group will have additional answers.)

PART 3: The Earliest Examples of Tithing

**Tithing Principle #3:**

*Tithing is a long-established Biblical principle of faith and obedience.*

**Questions for study, thought, review, and discussion**

According to Genesis 14:18, Melchizedek was not only the king of Salem, but was also the Priest of the most High God.

Concerning Melchizedek, Abraham gave him a tithe (10 percent) of everything he had.

Where did Jacob learn about the giving of the tithe to the LORD? at home, from his grandfather and father

What did Jacob promise God? a tithe of all his earnings

Both Abraham and Jacob practiced tithing before the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai.

If the principle of tithing goes all the way back to Abraham's time, then is there any reason to dismiss the practice today? There is no Biblical reason to dismiss the practice of tithing, but many believers still do not tithe. Some claim that tithing is not a New Testament principle, but ended at the death of Jesus, the Messiah, and the beginning of the Age of Grace.

Jacob learned about tithing from his grandfather and probably from his father. Put this generational teaching in a contemporary context. Discuss the significance of the way you might teach tithing to your children and grandchildren. Answers may include: do not live beyond your means, do not take on debt for unnecessary items, do not attach undue

significance to material things and money. Your children will follow your example and learn to put obedience to God ahead of

personal desires. (Your group will have additional answers.)

*PART 4: The Use of the Tithe In the Mosaic Law*

**Tithing Principle #4:**

*The principle of tithing is the LORD's plan to support Gospel workers.*

**Questions for study, thought, review, and discussion**

Why was the tribe of Levi chosen to serve in the Tabernacle? *loyalty to the LORD during the golden calf incident*

To whom does the tithe belong? *the LORD*

What did the LORD do with His tithes, given by the children of Israel? *they were given to the Levites*

To whom did the Levites tithe? *to the priesthood*

How do we know that tithing is not limited to the timeframe of the Mosaic Law? *It precedes the Law and is mentioned in the New Testament. Jesus commends those who tithe; it is God's plan for financing His work as Paul affirms.*

Compare and contrast the practice of the tithe in Mosaic Law with the tithe in the Church. What is the same? What is different? *Possible answers: There is no Temple priesthood today, the tithe supports pastors and ministers. Believers today bring money rather than farm produce. There was a threat of curse to those who did not tithe in under the Law. Just as the Levites tithed, our pastors and ministers also tithe. (Your group will have additional answers.)*

*PART 5: The Types of Tithe in the Mosaic Law*

**Tithing Principle #5:**

*God's tithing Mosaic system was established to meet the needs of the Levites, the Hebrew family's religious pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and the poor.*

**Questions for study, thought, review, and discussion**

What are the three types of tithes cited in the Torah? *the Levitical Tithe, the Festive Tithe, the Poor Tithe*

What was the annual total cost of the three tithes for a faithful Hebrew? *23.3% of annual income*

What does the LORD promise to those who help the poor? *They will be blessed and have treasure in Heaven*

According to Proverbs 21:13, what happens if you fail to hear the cry of the poor? *Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard.*

How do modern day Christian believers generally calculate their tithe? *10% of take home, or 10% of gross*

Compare the modern welfare system to the Biblical system? *the Biblical system was operated by the religious leaders, our modern system is operated by government; the Biblical system was dependent on offerings, our modern system is dependent on taxes; the Biblical system was based on generosity, our modern system is based on legislation. (Your group will have additional answers.)*

How can you be more Biblical in your approach to giving and especially to tithing? *Give faithfully at 10% or more, include giving to the needs of the poor. (Your group will have additional answers.)*

PART 6: The Old Testament Tithing Test

**Tithing Principle #6:**

*There are blessings for you, and for the Church, and for the world, when you tithe.*

**Questions for study, thought, review, and discussion**

Was the tithing principle difficult for the Hebrew people to follow? yes

How do we know this? the prophets often had to remind the people, and rebuke them for failing to tithe

What did Nehemiah do to encourage Israel to pass the tithing test? organized the priests and arranged for treasurers

What was Malachi's challenge to Israel to pass the tithing test? try tithing, and watch for the LORD's blessing

Have you ever felt that your financial situation was like that described by Haggai 1:3-11, *And he who earns wages, earns wages to put into a bag with holes*. What is the Biblical solution to this kind of problem? obedient giving

Do you think the modern church is still struggling with the tithing test? yes, the church is often short of funds

How does failure to pass the tithing test impact believers today? individual believers do not enjoy the benefits of cheerful, faithful giving; they are not laying up treasure in Heaven. (Your group will have additional answers.)

How does it impact the church as a whole? the Gospel ministry is hindered, the testimony of the church is limited, the needs of the poor are not met. (Your group will have additional answers.)

Could God's people do what they were called to do in Jerusalem when they failed the tithing test? No. the ministers were too busy trying to earn a living for their families to do the work of the LORD.

Can the modern church do what it is called to do when believers fail the tithing test? No, the ministry is hindered

What three things did Paul promise the Philippians would result from their giving? The LORD would remember their offerings, their giving would please the LORD, and God would supply their needs

Who benefits from your faithful giving? me, my family, my church, my community, the world  
(Your group can expand on the answer.)

*PART 7: Tithing in the New Testament Records*

**Tithing Principle #7:**

*The condition of your heart is important to God at the time of your tithing.*

**Questions for study, thought, review, and discussion**

What did Jesus say about tithing? Did He commend it, or abolish it? *He commended those who tithe.*

What are the three great principles of Judaism which Jesus identified as being just as important as tithing? *Justice, mercy and humility*

When Jesus died on the cross, did the work of the ministry come to an end? *no*

When Jesus died on the cross, did the principle of tithing come to an end? *no*

What is the main reason tithing did not end with Jesus' fulfillment of the Mosaic Law and His death on the cross? *Ministry continues. The Gospel message must be proclaimed, and the ministers and ministry must be supported.*

Why can the Festive Tithe no longer be observed? *There is no Temple, so no expenses for the journey one needed*

Is there a parallel application for the Festive Tithe for the Christian? *Christians should budget for the cost of attending church functions, children and youth attending camps and retreats, families attending special meetings, etc. (Your group will have additional answers.)*

Explain how Paul applied the Levitical Tithe to Gospel workers of the Church Age. *Just as the tithe supported priests and Levites in their work for the LORD, so the tithe of Christian believers supports the work of pastors, teachers and missionaries.*

According to Peter, how is the Church like Israel? *It has a priesthood to do the LORD's work*

How does the principle of the tithe fit into this comparison? *Pastors and church ministry must be supported by the tithe*

When should tithes and offerings be brought into the Church? *When the church gathers for worship*

What should be the conditions of the heart when you tithe? *Cheerful, willing and right*

*PART 8: The Apostolic Teaching On Tithing*

**Tithing Principle #8:**

*The New Testament challenges believers to tithe, even from their poverty.*

**Questions for study, thought, review, and discussion**

Is there any reason, based on New Testament teaching, to NOT tithe?     *No*    

Is there any evidence that tithing was abolished in the New Testament?     *No*    

What evidence supports the principle of tithing in the New Testament?     *Peter's comparison of the church with Israel,*

    *Paul's description of the financing practice of the Early Church, and the account of giving in the book of Acts.*

    *(Your group will have additional answers.)*

PART 9: Tithing Is An Issue Of The Heart

**Tithing Principle #9:**

*The greatest gift you can give to Jesus is your heart.*

**Questions for study, thought, review, and discussion**

What does faithful tithing reveal about a believer? *The condition of the believer's heart.*

Do you think tithing can be a matter of pride? *Yes, if you only tithe for recognition or with a Pharisee attitude*

What did Jesus mean when He said, "You cannot serve God and mammon"? *You obey and serve a master. If you serve wealth - it is your master, you work for it. If you serve God, then He is your master. You can't serve both. (Your group will have additional answers.)*

Why and how is tithing a matter of the heart? *If your heart is set on spiritual things, it will be reflected in how you use material things, in particular, how you use your money. (Your group will have additional answers.)*

What root sin in human nature does tithing fight against? *Covetousness*

How is covetousness a form of idolatry? *It reveals what is most important to the person - and if anything is more important than God, it is idolatry - a sin. To want "things" and to chase after them is idolatry. (Your group will have additional answers.)*

What possible reasons could a believer have for NOT tithing? *A lack of love for the LORD, fear that God will not meet your needs, selfishness, covetousness (Your group will have additional answers.)*

What is the greatest gift you can give to God? *Your heart.*

PART 10: To Tithe or Not to Tithe

**Tithing Principle #10:**

*The failure to tithe is a symptom of spiritual poverty.*

**Questions for study, thought, review, and discussion**

Why are adults like little children, wanting to hold on to their money? They haven't matured, spiritually. They are spiritually poor.

What "reasons" have you given, or heard given, for failing to tithe? I can't afford it; I have too much debt; I don't think it is a New Testament requirement; God doesn't need my money; the rich people should pay for ministry expenses. (Your group will have additional answers.)

Can you think of a justifiable reason to neglect the tithe? (Group answers.)

What is a believer's greatest need? Spiritual growth

How does spiritual growth provide the grace for giving? As a person grows spiritually, faith grows, and faith leads to obedience. As a believer studies God's Word, he develops a desire to serve God and others which leads to obedient tithing.

Read Romans 12:6-8. How is the person with the gift of giving to give? liberally - or freely

Real Christian giving is a grace of God.

Explain why a poor person can give out of material poverty. A tithe is a percent - 10% of a dollar is only a dime

Is this statement true? "Poor giving does not come out of material poverty." Explain. Poor giving is the result of a lack of faith, not a lack of money. (Your group will have additional answers.)

How can a believer who struggles with debt correct his behavior and be obedient in tithing? Reduce spending on non-essentials, change standard of living, sell luxury items, and pay down debt. The solution to debt is to reduce the standard of living and increase income. Debt is not the result of tithing - it is the result of living beyond your means.

What reasons to tithe strike you as most significant? (Group answers.)

Is there a special reason for tithing that you have never thought about before? (Group answers.)

Can you think of other reasons why believers should tithe? (Group answers.)

*PART 11: The Real Blessing From Tithing*

**Tithing Principle #11:**

*Treasures in Heaven are the most secure.*

**Questions for study, thought, review, and discussion**

Why is it important to count your blessings? *You will be thankful for what God has done, see His hand at work in your life, and give with a cheerful attitude. (Your group will have additional answers.)*

How has the LORD blessed you materially and spiritually? *(Group answers.)*

Are there any promises in the Bible that you consider significant in your own life? Do they relate to material or spiritual blessings? *(Group answers.)*

The focus of Hebrew stewardship was about *a physical kingdom - the land of Israel*

The focus of Christian stewardship is *a spiritual kingdom - Heaven*

Explain the contrast between the two kingdoms. *The physical kingdom is on this earth and had a material focus; the spiritual kingdom is in Heaven and has a spiritual focus. (Your group will have additional answers.)*

Explain the differences in the blessings. *The physical kingdom has material blessings in this life; the spiritual kingdom has spiritual blessings in Heaven. The blessings of the Old Testament were more immediate. The blessings of the Christian Kingdom are even greater, but are future. (Your group will have additional answers.)*

Have you ever experienced a material or financial blessing that you believe came from God? What was it? *(Group answers.)*

What spiritual blessings have you experienced? *(Group answers.)*

Are you willing to wait for your material blessings, in exchange for your spiritual blessings? *(Group answers.)*

What treasures have you sent on ahead of you into Heaven? *(Group answers.)*

