**Class 13**  Money in Ministry

# **Reading Assignments:** Genesis 14:18-20; Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 3: 7-12; Hebrews 7:5; Galatians 3:29; EOM By-Laws, Article VIII (Tenets of Faith) Section 7; The Tithe Is Holy (subject to change or revision).

**Class Introduction:** The structure of the church can be categorized into two aspects, ecclesiastical and civil. The ecclesiastical aspect deals with the saving of souls (salvation) while the civil deals with the administration and operation of the church, from which we have to consider Money in Ministry. Our focus in this training will be on tithes and offering. The financial administration of church finances, based on a scriptural awareness and acknowledgement of God's ownership and providence, and the relationship of people to God's property, is an important segment of the regular administration of the church, therefore it should receive proper attention of God’s people.

Before Israel became a nation, the law of the tithe was being used as her guidance during the patriarchal period. Tithing, which is older than Israel and occurred before the law of Moses. Abraham offering the tithe to Melchizedek, the priest king of Salem, gave the tithes of all; Genesis 14:18-20. Likewise, Abraham taught his grandchildren to tithe. "And Jacob vowed 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 of all that thou give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee;" Genesis 28:20-22.

When we tithe we are making significant declarations about our relationship with God. In fact, we cannot wholeheartedly make these statements unless we are tithing.

**Class Section-1:** I am determined to obey God. Tithing is an important issue for every Christian to consider because it reflects the truth of another old saying about money: Money talks! Tithing is a practice for believers of all times. It is popular, in some Christian circles, to dismiss the practice of tithing as being outdated and no longer necessary. But tithing is basic obedience and obedience is foundational to a relationship with God. Jesus said, repeatedly, that if we love him we will obey him (John 14:15,21,23,24). Tithing, as an act of obedience, says: I love you, Lord

**Class Section-2:** I acknowledge God’s ownership of everything I have “The earth is the LORD’s,” the Psalmist declared (Psalm 24:1), “and everything in it.” In other words, we don’t own anything. It all belongs to God. Jesus underscored this truth in his parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14). It’s the story of a master who entrusts his servants with the responsibility of managing his property while he is gone on a trip. When he returns, he asks them for an accounting. In a similar manner, Jesus inferred, God will one day evaluate what we have done with the resources that he’s entrusted to us. We manage it. But God owns it.

**Class Section 3**:I trust God. Tithing can be scary—whether we make a meager income or a lot of money. Those with limited means worry about being able to pay the bills if they give away the first 10% of their income. But we must remember that obedience always brings God into the equation. It is infinitely better to face our financial challenges with 90% of our income plus God than to be hanging onto 100% of what we make while leaving God out of the picture. Tithing is an opportunity to show God that we trust him. We believe that he will cover all the bases in our lives if we put him first in everything. Jesus said, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).

**Class Section 4:** I want to grow spiritually. Does tithing seem like advanced Christianity to you? Many believers reason that someday they’ll grow into tithing. In the meantime, they figure, there are more basic steps to be taken on their spiritual journey. Not only is tithing one of those basic steps, the Bible teaches that learning to manage our money in a God-honoring way is a key to experiencing overall spiritual progress. “If you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth,” Jesus warns us, “who will trust you with true riches” (Luke 16:11)?

If we get tithing wrong, it will be very difficult to get anything else right in our relationship with God. Tithing is foundational. The greatest roadblock to spiritual growth in the lives of many Christians in today’s society is their attitude toward money. They don’t give God his due. Conversely, when these same people begin to honor God with tithes and offerings they take off spiritually.

**Class Section-5:** I belong to this church.

Tithing is not a reference to charitable giving in general. It is money that we give to the Lord through our local church. There are many organizations that are worthy of our tax- exempt gifts: museums, the symphony, the YMCA, the local Little League. But these gifts are not tithes. Neither are the gifts that we give to Christian organizations (radio stations, schools, world missions, social action advocates, etc.) outside of our local church. These causes should be supported from money beyond our tithes. But our tithes are to go to our church family.

There are several ways in which the Bible makes this point. First, the purpose of the tithe in Old Testament times was to support those who ministered at the local worship center—the “church staff,” so to speak. Here were God’s instructions: “I give to the Levites (i.e. the priests) all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting” (Numbers 18:21). The New Testament reiterates this theme, encouraging the support of a church’s leaders: “In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel” (I Corinthians 9:14). And again: “The elders (i.e. pastors) who direct the affairs of the church are worthy of double honor…For the Scripture says…’The worker deserves his wages’” (I Timothy 5:17,18).

**Class Section 6:** Regarding the offering

God commanded us to give in Exodus 35:5 "Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord; gold and silver and brass. Luke 6:38 reads: Give and it shall be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." I Corinthians 16:1-2. "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as 1 have given order to the churches of Galatia even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. Also read Paul's strongest financial appeal he ever made in II Corinthians chapters 8-9.