

**What Does God Want?
What Does God Want?**

Thinking About What God Wants

By

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God does not **need** our money or our possessions – but He **wants** them. Why and how much?

God's Economy is way beyond anything we can understand. There is not now, never has been and never will be a recession in Heaven. Not going to happen. All of the banks and financial institutions in our world combined could not possibly compute or compete with the wealth of God. So, why does God even bother to ask His children for money?

Money and possessions are very close to the human heart. That's how we make our way in the world. It's how we pay our bills, buy food, and put a roof over our heads. As far back as we go in history, we find people using some type of financial system – from bartering and trading to coins to paper to plastic. Members of the human race have found ways to get what they need and want from other people who are also trying to get what they need and want. Some have said that money and love make the world go around. Money is something we have become dependent on for life and happiness.

God wants our **heart** to belong to Him – so He helps keep our heart in the right place. Jesus explained it this way to His disciples -

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew

6:19-21

For where your **treasure** is, there your **heart** will be also. That's why God asks us to give some of our money and possessions back to Him. He wants our heart – not our money – but He knows that when we give freely of our money and possessions to Him, we're giving Him a big part of our heart. Once we are free to give – we are free to live.

What do you like best in this world? Be honest – what do you like best in this world? Another way to ask the question is – how do you spend your money? What we like best in the world is often where we spend our money. Do a personal inventory of how you've spent your money for the past five years. Next, do an inventory of your possessions. Write down everything you own and how many of each. When you finish, ask yourself this question – what is the most important thing in my life? Is it God?

How much does God want us to give? 10% minimum. Why 10%? That number has been an important part of human history for thousands of years. The 10% temple tax was well-known in ancient Mesopotamia. We see this clearly when Abram (Abraham) met King Melchizedek of Salem.

“Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has

delivered your enemies into your hand.’ And he gave him a tithe of all.” Genesis 14:18-20

Abraham grew up in lower Mesopotamia in the capitol city of Ur of the Chaldees. The 10% temple tax (the *Esretu*) was well established by that time. Worshipers were expected to give 10% of their wealth to the high priest of the local temple. It was a way of repaying the gods for protecting and providing for them. When Abraham wanted to express his gratitude for the great victory God gave him over King Chedorlaomer and other kings who were with him, he gave Melchizedek – the priest of God Most High – 10% of the spoils of victory.

Abraham’s grandson, Jacob (*Israel*), also confirmed the concept of worshiping God with one-tenth of all he had. This happened during his trip from Beersheba to Haran. He had a vivid dream about a ladder that reached from earth to Heaven – angels were ascending and descending on it. God spoke to Jacob during the dream.

“And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: ‘I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to

you.’ Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.’ And he was afraid and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!’ Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, set it up as a pillar, and poured oil on top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously. Then Jacob made a vow, saying, ‘If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father’s house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.’ Genesis 28:13-22

Jacob made a sacred vow to God at a very important spiritual point in his life and in doing so gave us two powerful principles about money - ”and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.” Did you catch that? “... of all that You gave me ...” Where do we get the health and strength to work to earn money? Where do we get the intelligence and skill to get and keep a job? Doesn’t God give us everything? So, why is it so hard to give a small portion of what He gives us back to Him? Think about it – God gives us everything – we give Him 10% as part of our worship and adoration – and keep 90%!

- 1) God gives us everything
- 2) We give back to him a tenth (10%)
- 3) We keep 90%

We also know that Joseph, Jacob's son, increased the tax in Egypt from 10% to 20%. It was known as the law of "one-fifth."

"And it shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh. Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and for your food, for those of your households and as food for your little ones.' So they said, 'You have saved our lives; let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.' And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt to this day, that Pharaoh should have one-fifth, except for the land of the priests only, which did not become Pharaoh's."

Genesis 47:34-26

See that? The people of Egypt were glad to give 20% of their income to Pharaoh because God used the Pharaoh and Joseph to literally save their lives. When people come to understand that God saves them physically and spiritually, it is so easy to worship God with a portion of our wealth.

God established the tithe (10%) as the Law in Israel 400 years later through Moses.

“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 to the LORD. If a man wants at all to redeem any of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it. And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD. He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, nor shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.’ These are the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount Sinai.”

Leviticus 27: 30-34

One answer Christians might give to this is that we are under Grace – not Law. That’s true (Romans 6:14), but does it mean we forget about everything God has taught us in the Old Testament? The Apostle Paul also wrote this – “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17) We would be unwise not to learn the lessons God taught His people for thousands of years. Shouldn’t Christians – especially Gentile Christians – be overwhelmed with gratitude at being included in God’s Grace? As Paul wrote – “For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion,

that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.” (Romans 11:25) We are fortunate indeed!

Jesus taught His disciples many lessons about money. What do we learn from our Lord in these verses?

Matthew 10:8-10 – Mark 6:7-9 - Luke 9:2-4; 10:3-5; 22:34-37

Matthew 17:26-27

Matthew 21:11-13 – Mark 11:14-16

Matthew 22:18-20

Matthew 25:17-28

Mark 12:40-42

Luke 16:13-15

Luke 19:14-24

Acts 4:32-37; 5:1-11

1 Timothy 3:1-13; 6:9-11 – Titus 1:6-8

2 Timothy 3:1-3

So, what have we learned about worshiping God with our money and possessions?

- 1) God wants our heart – and everything in it
- 2) God is pleased when we worship Him with our money and possessions and displeased when we don't.
- 3) If we don't worship God with our money and possessions, we run the risk of worshiping money and possessions instead of God

Pretty sobering thoughts – don't you think? You've given God control over your spiritual life and eternal future – now give Him control over your financial future. He is much better at handling our money than we are!

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