

Stewardship



475) What is a steward?

- A. A steward is one who is in charge of property that is not his own. In biblical times, he was often a slave who was given the responsibility to care for the property of his master's household.

"The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. [3] When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did, [4] Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything he owned."

GEN 39:2-4 NIV

"Now it is required that those who have been given a trust (stewards) must prove faithful."

1COR 4:2 NIV

476) What is stewardship?

- A. Everything we have, including life itself, is a gift from God. God has made us stewards over our life, our talents, our spiritual gifts, our family, our wealth, etc. God has entrusted us with the responsibility to handle all these gifts properly.
- B. Stewardship is often used to refer to our responsibility to support the church through tithes and offerings, although the principle of stewardship is much broader.

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering (good stewards of) God's grace in its various forms."

1PETER 4:10 NIV

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. [20] But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. [21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

MATT 6:19-21 NIV

477) What is a tithe?

- A. The word "tithe" means "tenth." The tithe is the portion of your income that belongs to God.
 - 1. To withhold the tithe is to steal from God. Such disobedience brings a curse upon you and your ability to generate income.
- B. The tithe is figured on your gross or total income. It is not figured on your net income, or your "take-home" pay.

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. [9] You are under a curse - the whole nation of you - because you are robbing me."

MAL 3:8-9 NIV

"Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your paneled houses, while this house remains a ruin?" [5] Now this is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways. [6] You have planted much, but have harvested little. You eat, but never have enough. You drink, but never have your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm. You earn wages, only to put them in a purse with holes in it." [7] This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give careful thought to your ways."

HAG 1:4-7 NIV

"Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year."

DEU 14:22 NIV

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices -mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law -justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former (i.e. tithing)."

MATT 23:23 NIV

478) Why does God require me to tithe?

- A. The reason God lays claim to your income is the recognition that without God you would not even be alive. Without God, you would not have a job. You are not lord of your life, God is. You are but a steward of all the possessions God has trusted you with.
- B. If we withhold our wallets from God, we are also withholding our hearts.
- C. Tithing is a faith issue. God challenges our faith by requiring us to trust Him with 10 percent. If we can't trust God with 10 percent of our money, it is certain that we will not trust Him with the other 90 percent.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

MATT 6:21 NIV

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

HEB 11:6 NIV

479) What was the purpose of the tithe in the OT?

- A. God chose the tribe of Levi to be His priests. He prohibited Levi from receiving an inheritance of land. Instead, the tithe was set aside for Levi so that they could set themselves aside to serve God.

"And do not neglect the Levites living in your towns, for they have no allotment or inheritance of their own. [28] At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, [29] so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands."

DEU 14:27-29 NIV

480) What is the purpose of the tithe today?

- A. Today the tithe supports the pastors and the other church staff.
B. The tithe also supports the necessary things that churches need to minister to the congregation. This includes things like a building, heat and lighting, office equipment, and anything else that is required to fulfill the church's call.

"If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? [12] If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more? But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ. [13] Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? [14] In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel."

1COR 9:11-14 NIV

"Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor."

GAL 6:6 NIV

"The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. [18] For the Scripture says, "Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain," and "The worker deserves his wages."

1TIM 5:17-18 NIV

481) Where do my tithes belong?

- A. The tithe belongs in the local church, your storehouse.
1. The storehouse was where grain was stored, so that there would be something to eat during times of famine.
B. Your tithes should directly benefit the church that feeds, cares for, and nurtures you.
1. You can give offerings to other churches, ministries, and para-church ministries, but your tithe belongs in your home church.

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me

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in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it."

MAL 3:10 NIV

"A priest descended from Aaron is to accompany the Levites when they receive the tithes, and the Levites are to bring a tenth of the tithes up to the house of our God, to the storerooms of the treasury. [39] The people of Israel, including the Levites, are to bring their contributions of grain, new wine and oil to the storerooms where the articles for the sanctuary are kept and where the ministering priests, the gatekeepers and the singers stay. "We will not neglect the house of our God."

NEH 10:38-39 NIV

"At that time men were appointed to be in charge of the storerooms for the contributions, firstfruits and tithes. From the fields around the towns they were to bring into the storerooms the portions required by the Law for the priests and the Levites, for Judah was pleased with the ministering priests and Levites."

NEH 12:44 NIV

482) What are the benefits of tithing?

- A. The curse of robbing God is removed from your finances.
- B. God blesses the work of your hands.
- C. You have the joy of watching God perform His miracles in your finances.
- D. You become a partaker in the other ministries of the church that you aren't directly a part of through your financial support. For example, when you support a missionary financially, you participate in his ministry without leaving home.

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. [11] I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty."

MAL 3:10-11 NIV

"Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; [16] for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. [17] Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account."

PHIL 4:15-17 NIV

483) What is an offering?

- A. An offering is any gift given to God that goes beyond the tithe. The size and type of gift is determined by the giver.
- B. An offering can be designated to a special project in the church, or given to a missionary, traveling speaker, a radio or TV minister, etc.

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings."

MAL 3:8 NIV

"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under

compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

2COR 9:7 NIV

484) Are there different kinds of offerings?

- A. Yes. There are many offerings discussed in the Bible, but two of the most prominent offerings are the Firstfruits and the Hundred Fold offering.

485) What is a Firstfruit offering?

- A. Firstfruits was an offering, separate from and in addition to, the tithe. It was an offering in which God required the first produce of any harvest and the first male born of the womb, whether human or livestock.

"At that time men were appointed to be in charge of the storerooms for the contributions, firstfruits and tithes. From the fields around the towns they were to bring into the storerooms the portions required by the Law for the priests and the Levites, for Judah was pleased with the ministering priests and Levites."

NEH 12:44 NIV

"We also assume responsibility for bringing to the house of the LORD each year the firstfruits of our crops and of every fruit tree. [36] "As it is also written in the Law, we will bring the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, of our herds and of our flocks to the house of our God, to the priests ministering there."

NEH 10:35-36 NIV

- B. Firstfruits were required of:

1. Every firstborn son.
2. Every firstborn male animal, whether ox or sheep, etc.
3. Olive oil.
4. New wine.
5. Grain harvest.
6. Wool from the shearing of the sheep.
7. Honey.
8. Every fruit tree.

"Consecrate to me every firstborn male. The first offspring of every womb among the Israelites belongs to me, whether man or animal."

EXO 13:2 NIV

"Bring the best of the firstfruits of your soil to the house of the LORD your God. "Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk."

EXO 23:19 NIV

"You are to give them the firstfruits of your grain, new wine and oil, and the first wool from the shearing of your sheep,"

DEU 18:4 NIV

"As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously gave the firstfruits of their grain, new wine, oil and honey and all that the fields produced. They brought a great amount, a tithe of everything."

2CHRON 31:5 NIV

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"We also assume responsibility for bringing to the house of the LORD each year the firstfruits of our crops and of every fruit tree."

NEH 10:35 NIV

C. The firstfruit was offered for two reasons:

1. It acknowledged God's ownership of all you own and worked for.
2. It was given as a deposit (earnest, KJV) guaranteeing God's blessing upon the rest of the harvest, or offsprings that might be born.

"Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; [10] then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."

PRO 3:9-10 NIV

"The best of all the firstfruits and of all your special gifts will belong to the priests. You are to give them the first portion of your ground meal so that a blessing may rest on your household."

EZE 44:30 NIV

"Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, [22] set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."

2COR 1:21-22 NIV

"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, [14] who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession - to the praise of his glory."

EPH 1:13-14 NIV

486) How often was a Firstfruit offering given?

A. The firstfruit offering was offered once a year at harvest time. In the case of live births, only the first born male was to be offered. The offering was to take place when he was one month old.

1. First born sons and livestock could be redeemed with either another animal or a set amount of money. The price of redemption went to the priests.

"Redeem the firstborn donkey with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem all your firstborn sons. "No one is to appear before me empty-handed."

EXO 34:20 NIV

"Everything in Israel that is devoted to the LORD is yours. [15] The first offspring of every womb, both man and animal, that is offered to the LORD is yours. But you must redeem every firstborn son and every firstborn male of unclean animals. [16] When they are a month old, you must redeem them at the redemption price set at five shekels of silver, according to the sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs. [17] "But you must not redeem the firstborn of an ox, a sheep or a goat; they are holy. Sprinkle their blood on the altar and burn their fat as an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the LORD."

NUM 18:14-17 NIV

487) Is there a set value or percent required for a firstfruit offering?

- A. No. Unlike the tithe, there is no set value placed on a firstfruit offering. Except where God requires the first born male, the firstfruit is a free will offering.

488) What does a firstfruit offering mean to us today?

- A. Israel was an agricultural society and the firstfruit offering reflected that fact. Today the majority of wage earners do not plant and harvest a yearly crop. For believers today, a firstfruit offering is a yearly event where we give God an offering based on what we are believing our financial "harvest" to be.
- B. In addition, there might be times when a firstfruit offering can be given that is not related to a yearly gift.
 - 1. If you start a new job, a portion of your first pay check, beyond the tithe, could be set aside as a firstfruit offering.
 - 2. You are a salesman who lands a new account and you give a firstfruit offering from the profits of the initial sale.
- C. It is important that we keep our attitude right. The firstfruit offering is always a faith offering. If we give a large firstfruit offering hoping to "force" God to bless us, we will be disqualified for the blessing because our motive is wrong.
- D. Today we practice child dedication which is, in part, related to the offering of the first born male to God. (See Chapter 24, "Marriage & Family," for a more detailed discussion of child dedication.)

"The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously; [22] those the LORD blesses will inherit the land, but those he curses will be cut off. [23] If the LORD delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; [24] though he stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand. [25] I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. [26] They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be blessed."

PSA 37:21-26 NIV

"When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."

JAMES 4:3 NIV

489) What is the Hundred Fold offering?

- A. The phrase "hundred fold" is a reference to the reproduction of a seed. When a seed is planted, it produces a plant that yields many more of the same type of seed. How large the yield is depends on the sunshine, the quality of the soil the seed is planted in and the amount of rain the plant receives.
- B. Faith is the most important part of this offering. When we give an offering in faith, trusting God to increase it, we can believe for a 30, 60, or 100 fold increase.
- C. Our increase, or "yield," will be determined by the "sunshine," the "soil" into which the seed is sown and the amount of "rain" it receives.
 - 1. The "sunshine" is that grace which God provides to multiply the harvest.
 - 2. The "soil" is where we plant our seed. It might be a ministry, a person or a project. We must be careful that God directs our giving so that our seed goes into good soil.

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3. The "rain" is our prayers of expectation. We needed faith to place our offering "seed" in the ground. We also need faith to follow the seed through to harvest. Many times we plant our seed, but it lies dormant because it is not properly watered and cared for. If we have dormant seed in the ground, we can cause it to grow by watering it in prayer.
- D. Not all the increase returns in the form of cash. When God prevents sickness, averts a car accident, prevents a fire in our home, spares our farm from flood damage, etc., He has returned a financial blessing to us.

"But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

MATT 13:23 NIV

"Peter said to him, "We have left everything to follow you!" [29] "I tell you the truth," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel [30] will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields - and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life. [31] But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

MARK 10:28-31 NIV

"Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" [28] Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. [29] And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. [30] But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first."

MATT 19:27-30 NIV

490) What are alms?

- A. Alms are donations to the poor. Alms are given with "no strings attached." There should be no expectation of financial return from those receiving your donation. It is purely and simply a gift.
- B. Such giving should be done in private so that your motive for giving stays pure.

"Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. [2] "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. [3] But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. [4] so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."

MATT 6:1-4 NIV

"And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even 'sinners' lend to 'sinners,' expecting to be repaid in full."

LUKE 6:34 NIV

Name: _____ Group Leaders: _____

Date: _____

Homework for Chapter 32

Please answer the following questions from the textbook in full sentences and return to your Group Leaders next week.

1) What is stewardship?

2) What is a tithe?

3) Why does God require you to tithe?

4) List three benefits of tithing.

5) What is a "firstfruit" offering.

6) What are alms?
