

Is Tithing for Today?

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace Church located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from messages preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

GRACE PUBLICATIONS
P.O. BOX 18715
BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.
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Grace Publications is a ministry of
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

All things come from God, and what we give back to Him is simply already His. Think of the gifts God has given to people—tremendous gifts that so often are not used for God but for self-promotion, money, and fame. But someday, every person will have to face God and be accountable for what He gave us.

So many Christians are missing out on tremendous blessings because they have never really understood the principle of tithing—which is to give back to God a mere 10 percent of what is already His.

But the tithe goes way beyond giving money in the offering. In this booklet we will consider not only what the tithe is, but how it is to be given: willingly, systematically, and cheerfully. Please remember, this booklet is taken from a message preached in one of Dr. Stevens' classes. This is *not* meant to be a complete doctrinal statement on this subject.

Chapter One
WHAT GOD SETS APART
AS HOLY

“But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? *for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee*” (1 Chronicles 29:14).

“For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: *for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer*” (1 Timothy 4:4-5).

“I *beseech* you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, *holy*, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:1-2).

When Paul said, “I *beseech* you brethren...,” he was urging believers to do something. He

was saying, “I urge you to go from theology to practice, from knowing to living this truth: We are to give our bodies as a “living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God.” “Holy” refers to that which is sanctified, set apart, and given over completely to God. When I present my body to God, I am giving back to Him something He already owns (1 Chronicles 29:14b).

An understanding of what is holy is central to our understanding of tithing. “Holy” means set apart unto God and sanctified by Him. What is holy is the Lord’s and the Lord’s alone. He places it in His treasure house.

The Origin of the Tithe in the Garden

It has been speculated that there were ten trees in the Garden of Eden—nine of which Adam and Eve could touch and one they were not to touch (Genesis 2:9, 16-17). The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, however, was set apart by God for Himself. It was a volitional test. “This one is mine,” God told Adam and Eve. “Of the rest of the trees, you may eat anything you want.” The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil represented a conscience God didn’t want Adam and Eve to experience. God didn’t want them to enter into self-consciousness with their

prerogative and free volition outside of the perfect environment of Christ.

Adam did not guard the Garden as he should have. Eve was deceived, but it was Adam's fault for not covering her. In this perfect environment, he proved himself to be a very poor head. They ate of the first tree, which belonged to God. This tree gave Adam knowledge about Satan and the demons. God didn't want Adam to be conscious of evil; He wanted Adam to walk with Him. But when Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Knowledge, they entered into a consciousness of the precreation negativity of Satan and recognized their right to choose evil.

The Offering that God Respects

“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering. But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell” (Genesis 4:3-5).

Cain brought an offering from the ground. There is nothing to indicate that it was the first-fruits of the ground. To begin with, Cain should

not have brought that offering because it was without blood. But also, it was an *offering*, and we are not to give an offering without first giving the tithe. Offerings come after the tithe.

Abel, on the other hand, killed of the “firstlings” of his flock. He offered much more than a lamb, he gave his first lamb. Long before Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, Abel understood the order of the offering and the tithe. Magnificently, he gave a lamb with the shedding of blood, and he gave offerings beyond the lamb. The lamb, of course, pointed ahead to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the ultimate Lamb of God.

“And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering.” Cain, God did not respect, because he didn’t believe in the blood offering. Cain believed in a works program, and he gave without the proper motives.

Chapter Two

THE FIRSTS BELONG TO GOD

In Exodus 13:2, the Lord told Moses, "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine."

Many things are not ours, including our tithes.

Before the Levitical priesthood was established, each home was like a tabernacle. The man was the priest for his home, and his firstborn was set apart to carry on that role. God said, "Your first son is going to be mine, not yours. He is mine." It is a principle that is carried on through the entire Scriptures, even into the New Testament.

"Because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the LORD" (Numbers 3:13). The firstborn be-

longed to God: he was sanctified, set apart, and holy.

“The firstfruits also of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give” (Deuteronomy 18:4). If you are a farmer growing corn or producing grapes, to whom does the first part of it belong? God. Touching that which is the Lord’s would be like Uzzah touching the Ark of God, in 2 Samuel 6:6-7. He touched the Ark and died instantly.

The Ark of God’s presence was not to be touched by man except when God gave orders for the Levites to carry it on their shoulders. The Ark was the Lord’s, and this was God’s way of handling His plan and His provision: The Ark belonged to God, a man touched it, and that man immediately died. The ark was sanctified, it was holy, it was set apart unto His treasury. It was God’s.

Giving off the Top

“That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there” (Deuteronomy 26:2).

I gather fruit, bring it home, feed my family, and tithe on what is left, right? Wrong. The first basket had to be the Lord's. This is based on the principle of seeking His Kingdom first (Matthew 6:33). In 2 Corinthians 8:5, "they first gave their own selves to the Lord." The first son belongs to God, the first corn, the first wine, and the first-fruits. There should be no argument about tithing. The tithe is not ours; it belongs to God. We are not to keep it for ourselves.

"And to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD:

"Also the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God:

"And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine, and of oil, unto the priest, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.

"And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes:

and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house.

“For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where are the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers: and we will not forsake the house of our God” (Nehemiah 10:35-39).

“Tithes”—the word is mentioned often in the Bible, although many try to rationalize it away. This is how we ought to work it. If a salesman makes a sale, once he has the money in hand, he should give the firstfruits to God, *before* taxes. We are to tithe before we do anything else, because that is what is commanded in the Book.

What does “first” mean? Does the first come *after* something? The first is *first*. There are no exceptions. The first tree, the first son, the first basket of fruit, the first corn, the first grapes, the first cattle, the first of the herds and the flocks, the first of all is set apart for God. The Bible clearly teaches in Luke 9:57-62 that the reason Jesus would not permit three men who “would” to follow Him was that each of them wanted to do something *else* first.

Remember, that which is holy is sanctified, set apart unto God. It is God's and it is placed into the treasury of the Lord.

Tithes and offerings are two separate issues. An offering is voluntary, given according to what you have or what you *don't* have (the Macedonians gave to Paul out of their *need*, in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5). The tithe, however, is the first tenth from what already belongs to God. He allows us to keep nine-tenths for our use, even though all of it belongs to Him.

"And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" (Luke 16:12). In Malachi 3:10, God says "Prove me..., if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing...." In 2 Corinthians 8:9-11, we are instructed to give willingly as Christ gave Himself.

The tithes and offerings are brought into the sanctuary. They are not for us to take into our own hands. Based on Malachi 3 and Luke 16:12, tithes and offerings ought to go to the local assembly ("the storehouse"). From there, the leadership of the church, under the direction of God, determine how the money is to be used for the work of God.

Voluntary offerings can be designated for

specific purposes, but the tithes are what God has ordained for the support of His congregations and furtherance of His work. These firstfruits are not ours; the tithe has nothing to do with us—it is set apart. Furthermore, because it is not ours but God's, a good steward predetermines to give his tithe, even when he will be away for a week for some reason.

This is no insignificant issue, as we will see in examining the Scripture. God takes tithing very seriously, and so should every Christian.

God's Firstfruits for Us

Jesus Christ is God's tithe for the world (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). He is the firstfruits of them who came from the grave. Jesus Christ was set apart and sanctified in His humanity for God's use. God took what was His and gave Him as a gift for the whole world. He gave His own Son and shed His precious blood as a tithe for the whole human race.

"First" is the word we all have to understand. Jesus is the firstfruits (1 Corinthians 15:20). God gave from off the top. He offered the most valuable thing for the world: Jesus Christ. It was the greatest gift ever given.

Marriages don't make it because couples

often don't understand what to put first. The Bible is holy, sanctified, and set apart by God. It is His Word, and it must be put first in every relationship. Every word of God is pure; if we add to it, we make ourselves liars (see Proverbs 30:5-6; Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32). We are to live by every word of God (Matthew 4:4). Jesus prayed to the Father, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). We cannot take away from the Word or add to it (Revelation 22:18-19). It is not of any private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20).

The Bible is to be put first—not our feelings and not our rights. We are to live by every single word of God and take up our cross daily. The Bible is God's living mind.

Sanctification does not mean sinless perfection, as far as we go. We can, however, live as clean as we want to live because of His provision. And, when we give ourselves, we are to give our best.

Did God take out for taxes? Did He subtract His expenses? No. Yet, more and more, Christians are becoming thieves and robbers. They are outwardly "good" people who may not live in any overt sins, but they don't obey this doctrine of tithing. And though it may seem, for a time,

that they are being blessed, they are missing *God's* blessing.

Chapter Three

HONORING HIS WORD

Jericho was the first city in Canaan, the land God promised to Israel. God said, “Jericho is *My* city—don’t touch a thing in Jericho. The silver, the gold, the brass, and the iron are to be taken out of Jericho and put in the treasury house of the Lord” (see Joshua 6:19). Achan touched what God had set apart, and everything about him was destroyed. His wife, his family, his cattle, and his possessions were stoned and burned with fire (Joshua 7:1-26).

Jericho belonged to God. The whole city was burned with fire, which speaks of judgment. Furthermore, Joshua warned that whoever rebuilt Jericho would pay with his firstborn! Israel could have any other city in Canaan. They were free to drive out the enemies and live there peacefully, which they did for forty years.

Do we realize what we do when we touch what is God’s? This is a very solemn thing to

consider.

Notice that God told Joshua: “Up, sanctify the people; sanctify yourselves against tomorrow” (Joshua 7:13). This came after Israel’s defeat at Ai. As the leader, Joshua was responsible to pray for his people and their sanctification. The prayers of a pastor can set apart those in the congregation.

So, if the proper instruction from the Word of God is given, and people take that information and say, “God, by Your mercy and grace I will do this,” then the Word is sanctified by obedience, honoring God’s Word as *God’s* Word.

God Sanctifies Our Words

Ananias and Sapphira said that they would sell their property and give the money to the Church. Many were doing it at that time, and they gave exactly what they said they would give. These were powerful gifts, for this was just the beginning of the Church, and they trusted God for the consequences of their giving.

Ananias and Sapphira, however, kept back half of the money they got for the property. This would have been fine had they not said that they were going to give it all. But they made a commitment and did not live up to that com-

mitment.

When we tell God we are going to do something, what we say belongs to God. It is sanctified. When I sit down to eat, I sanctify my food—and I am completely serious about it. So many do it frivolously, but I believe in sanctifying the food I put in my body.

If I should say to God, “I am going to start soul-winning,” then I have sanctified the Great Commission in my life. I am obligated the rest of my life to go soul winning. I have sanctified the Word of God for me. Ananias and Sapphira sanctified something and then held back.

In John 15:12, Jesus says, “Love one another as I have loved you.” We take this, say “Yes” to the Holy Spirit, and let Him fill us with love. We sanctify for ourselves what has already been sanctified by God. What we sanctify through grace and love ends up adding degrees of glory to our rewards and to our inheritance in heaven.

All That I Am Belongs to God

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. We are not our own; we belong to God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). My body is holy. As a Christian, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God reside in it. It is not mine but God’s, so I

have to be careful how I use what belongs to Him. He bought me and paid a price for me. My body is the Holy Spirit's habitation (Ephesians 2:22). Therefore, I have to make sure I honor Him in how I use it, how I clothe it, how I think with it, what I say with it, and where I go with it. My body is the Lord's.

All of us would have to admit that many times since we became Christians, we have used our bodies for ourselves, for the pleasure of the old sin nature, and for many other reasons. We have taken what was sanctified, that which belongs to God, and used it wrongly. This is true of every believer. But our bodies are not our own. They belong to God.

Chapter Four

TITHING IS NOT TO BE LEFT UNDONE

“And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

“And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury.

“For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living” (Mark 12:42-44).

When the widow put in her two mites, she put in *all* that she had. Jesus was watching her. And what did she do? She sanctified what she gave (which was all that she had). That means she made it holy. It was set apart strictly for God. It belonged to God.

It is not the same for the tithe, however. We do not sanctify our tithe, because it already belongs to God. Remember the first tree in the gar-

den? The first basket of fruit? The first of the flocks? The first son? Who did they belong to? They are the Lord's. Did the firstfruits belong to the farmer? No. It was God's *anyway*. It was a tithe.

Some folks rationalize in Adam, saying, "I'll starve if I tithe!" Obey God, and He will be faithful to keep you. I know a missionary couple who live in a cramped apartment without air conditioning in a very expensive city in Europe. Still, he tithes off the top to his homebase ministry here in America. It never crosses his mind to touch that money. He knows God has sanctified it.

In Genesis 14, Abraham tithed to Melchizedek. Some have taught that this was merely a form of taxation because Abraham was a stranger in Salem, which later became Jerusalem. But according to verse 20, Abraham blessed "the most high God" and gave tithes of "all." Nothing is said about taxes. Abraham was giving back to God what belonged to God.

"And Jacob vowed a vow, 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 this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Genesis 28:20-22)

Jacob made a vow to God. What would he "surely give"? *The tenth*. He would give to God what was God's to begin with.

"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Proverbs 3:9-10).

Tithing and the Law

One of the biggest lies from Satan is that tithing was something that was just done under the Law. Tithing has nothing to do with the Law. The principle that 10 percent belonged to God originated at least four hundred years before the Law was given (Genesis 14:20; Hebrews 7:1-10). Once the Law was introduced, tithing did continue (Leviticus 27:30-33; Numbers 8:17).

Tithing is to be grace giving. It started 430 years before the Law. We are to give by grace through faith, with a cheerful heart. Enemies of tithing always accuse tithers of being under the Law, yet Jacob was taught by Abraham to tithe.

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed

me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

“Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

“Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

“And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

“And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 3:8-12).

From this passage, we see that if we are faithful to tithe, God will not only pour out a blessing, but He will also rebuke the devourer. Yet, if the tithes are not brought in, we are “cursed with a curse.” This does not mean that we would necessarily suffer a sudden attack. But it does mean that God may not intervene in our circumstances to bless us.

In Matthew 23:23, Jesus confirms tithing: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hyp-

ocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

Are we to leave tithing undone? According to Jesus, we are not. “For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches” (Romans 11:16). This means I am to honor what is the Lord’s. It is holy and set apart. It is God’s. It is in His treasure house. It does not belong to me. Then I, as a branch, am holy because of my obedience to the Lord’s Spirit, the Lord’s grace, and the Lord’s love.

“Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:18). As firstfruits, we honor what is God’s and sanctify the Word of God, which is sanctified by Him. When we sanctify the Word, all of heaven protects us, blesses us, and uses us in the angelic conflict.

Chapter Five

THE JOY OF A WILLING HEART

“To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect” (Hebrews 12:23).

We are members of the church of the firstborn. As believer-priests and members of the New Testament Church, we are placed ahead of the Old Testament believers. They are patriarchs and prophets, and they will be rewarded greatly. We are called to be His Bride, and Jesus is going to be our Husband. Today, He is the Head of the Church, and we are going to be the firstborn of all eternity. Kings and people will come to see us as the Bride, as the Lamb’s wife.

We have such a rich inheritance. Therefore, we are to give willingly, cheerfully, thankfully, without thought of the consequences. We are to give with pure motives, as a ministry to the Lord and His saints, and we are to give consistently in

a systematic, organized, and preplanned manner.

In God's treasure house, He has sanctified, made holy, and set apart many things for Himself. The preacher sanctifies what God has sanctified when he tells the Truth. We sanctify what we hear when we obey in the Spirit of grace and love.

God's Great Gifts to Us

"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee...I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart, I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee" (1 Chronicles 29:14, 17).

It is by God's mercies that we are not consumed. His mercies are new every morning; His compassions do not fail (Lamentations 3:22-23). The earth is the Lord's (Psalm 24:1; 1 Corinthians 10:26, 28). God gives the earth back to His people (Job 15:19). God quiets the earth (Job 37:17). He scatters the east wind (Job 38:24). He waters the fields (Job 38:25-26). When a tree is

cut down, He makes it grow again (Job 14:7-9). The sun, the moon, the stars—everything about this place called earth, God made for man, whom He made a little lower than the angels.

In His amazing eternal grace, which reveals His character, God decided to give us a tremendous gift. Billions of years ago, in foreknowledge of what we would choose to do in sinning against Him (Psalm 5:4; Habbakuk 1:13), God gave His Son, the best heaven had to offer. The Son became the firstborn among the brethren (Romans 8:29) and the firstfruits of the Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20, 23). While we were yet sinners without strength, He gave His only begotten Son. What a gift! God says to us, “I want you to get to know me, because I am a God who honors your volition, and I am the God of all grace.” There is a difference between grace and mercy. Grace is God giving us what we don’t deserve: salvation. Mercy is God not giving us what we truly deserve: judgment.

Mercy met truth (Psalm 85:10). Righteousness and peace kissed each other. Heaven looked down and truth sprung up from the earth. God, who spared not His own Son but gave Him up for us all, now freely gives us all things in His way, His truth, and His plan (Ro-

mans 8:32).

When we believed while we were yet ungodly, God saved us in our weakness and gave us so many things by grace. The Father justified us so that no sin record could ever be brought up before Him. At that moment, He sanctified us positionally. Now, He sanctifies us daily in a process. We are sanctified, we are being sanctified, and we will be sanctified. He has seated us in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6), hid us with Christ in God, and made us brand-new creatures forever. Old things are passed away, all things have become new (2 Corinthians 5:17). He took away our past except for the fragrance of memories (Song of Solomon 2:11).

God did all of these things out of His nature of love as the God of all grace, all mercy, all comfort, and all patience (Romans 15:5).

When we give something back to God, He doesn't want us to do it unless we do it with a willing heart. Our giving must be done willingly, cheerfully, and systematically (see 2 Corinthians 8:3, 12; 9:7). It must be done with thanksgiving and with pure motives (2 Corinthians 9:9-11; Matthew 6:24).

If I don't have a willing heart, I am not to give offerings. If I gave a million dollars without

a willing heart, it would be counted by Him as wood, hay, and stubble (using money selfishly, not tithing because of circumstances and conditions). But whatever I give with a willing heart is counted as gold, because I trusted Deity; silver, because I redeem the time; and precious stones, because God esteems my faith-giving as precious.

Chapter Six

GIVING LEADS TO WISDOM

“And Moses spake unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, This is the thing which the LORD commanded, saying,

“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,

“And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats’ hair, and rams’ skins dyed red, and badgers’ skins, and shittim wood,

“And oil for the light, and spices for anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, and onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breastplate.

“And every wise hearted among you shall come, and make all that the Lord hath commanded” (Exodus 35:4-10).

God told Moses in Exodus 35:4-10 that He wanted the people to give specific things for the

building of the Tabernacle. The wise people came and gave willingly. God stirred their hearts with a willing spirit (Exodus 35:21-22). The God of all grace creates in us a response to His grace. Those who gave willingly, cheerfully, and systematically simply gave God what was already His.

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, purchased by the blood of the Lamb. We are to glorify God in our spirit, soul, and body. Will God force me to present these to Him? No. I must present myself with a willing heart. If I don't present myself, then I have to face the consequences from God.

Be Doers of the Word

We seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; then, all things will be added unto us. The gift of righteousness comes by grace to help us to reign in life by Christ Jesus (Romans 5:17). When we take God's grace, use it, and respond to it, we have sanctified grace in our lives. When we obey God in soul winning and go with a willing heart that is *strong* in grace (2 Timothy 2:1), *growing* in grace (2 Peter 3:18), *established* in grace (Hebrews 13:9), and *standing* in grace (Romans 5:2), then we sanctify the Great

Commission. In going into all the world—Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts—we sanctify the Word by obeying it.

The Bible has been set apart as holy. From Genesis to Revelation, God has set apart sixty-six books as His. He reveals this Word through His Spirit and His heart. Christ is the living Word. The Bible is the written Word made alive through the Spirit and grace.

When I love others as Christ loves me, I sanctify the commandment to love one another (John 15:12; 13:34; 1 John 3:14-15). We obey the commandment and set it apart for God. God then sheds His love abroad in our hearts. We are filled with love and grace and obey the channel of communication as the means of manifestation.

God's Word is forever settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89). Heaven and earth will pass away, but His Word will never pass away (Matthew 24:35).

We give the firstfruits of everything in our lives to God. Then, in every area of our lives, God's resurrection power abides through grace, through mercy, and through love. If we don't give, He will be loving, gracious, patient, and kind.

“As soon as they hear of me, they shall obey

me: the strangers shall submit themselves unto me" (Psalm 18:44). As soon as we hear the Word and we obey, then with our obedience we sanctify the Word of God.

Without power, without grace, without mercy, and without love, doctrine is worthless—it is just knowledge and the letter of the Law. The flesh profits nothing. But, the words Jesus speaks to us, they are spirit and they are life.

God sanctifies His Word, we obey and we sanctify it, then we are conformed to Christ's image. We trust Him with all of our hearts; we lean not on our own understanding; we acknowledge Him in all of our ways; and He will direct our paths. That is *God's* promise to us.

CONCLUSION

“And the people blessed all the men, that willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem” (Nehemiah 11:2).

Ultimately, tithing reflects a giving of ourselves back to God. We are His. Yet, he equipped us with free volition, and the choices are ours to make. First, we give ourselves to God and then to men, by the will of God, to do the work of God (2 Corinthians 8:5). We are always under grace. If we fail, we name it and rebound. God will not condemn us; He has paid for everything. He only wants to teach us how to set apart what He has given us to set apart. Then, whatsoever we do, we do to glorify God—and we do it from the heart (Colossians 3:17; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

God has allowed us to be great stewards of His grace, and so much of our stewardship is properly managing what He freely gives us. Tithing reveals a trust in His Word and His pro-

vision. The righteous are never forsaken (Psalm 37:25). Trust God, and see what He will do! “Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace” (John 1:16).

Thank You, Lord, that You are so trustworthy. We are grateful that your plan for our lives is only to bless us. Let us use the authority of Your Word with conviction as we use our volition. We choose to buy the truth and sell it not. We desire to be good stewards of Your gifts, and we will give portions as we go, knowing that You see everything. In the end, it will come back, multiplied. In Jesus' name, Amen.