

Discussion Questions

October 12, 2025



Belong: Jesus Centered Generosity

This week, we explored why the Old Testament command to tithe is no longer a requirement for followers of Jesus and that it was far more than 10%. Instead of a legalistic percentage, we are now called to a new standard of cheerful and sacrificial generosity motivated by grace. The central idea is that where we put our treasure is where our heart will be, making our financial decisions a powerful tool for discipleship. We were then challenged to put this principle into practice with the '\$50/50 Challenge,' using it as an opportunity to orient our hearts outward by meeting a tangible need in our community.

1. This week we saw how the Old Testament tithing was actually around 23% (three separate tithes), not just 10%, plus significant mandatory "free will" offerings.

- Did Anything surprise you about the Old Testament requirements?
- What do these laws teach us about God's heart & His desire for His people? What was God "training" into his people?

2. Read 2 Corinthians 8:9

- Paul roots all generosity in the "generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." How does focusing on what Jesus did for us (becoming poor so that we could become rich) change our motivation for giving from a sense of obligation to a grateful response?

3. Read Matthew 6:19-21

- Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Most of us think it works the other way - that our heart determines where we put our treasure. Why do you think Jesus reverses this order?
- James reflected on this and said, "Our financial decisions are not spiritually neutral acts; they are deeply formative practices." What does this mean practically? How have you seen money shape your own heart (either positively or negatively)?

4. Read 2 Corinthians 9:7

- Paul says that God loves a cheerful giver and that we shouldn't give reluctantly or under pressure. Why do you think the attitude of our giving is so important to God?
- What practical things can help cultivate a "cheerful" heart in giving, rather than a reluctant or resentful one?

5. James used the analogy from Randy Alcorn of "training wheels" or "skate trainers" to describe the Old Testament tithe. How does this analogy help you understand the relationship between the OT law and the NT freedom in Christ when it comes to giving?

6. James shared about his personal practice of giving 10% as a spiritual discipline (his "training wheels") to guard his heart against selfishness & a scarcity mentality. What "training wheels" or regular disciplines have you found helpful in cultivating a generous heart? (This could be a recurring gift, a specific budget category, a prayer, etc.)

- What are the biggest obstacles that prevent you (or people in general) from being more generous? Consider things like:

Fear of not having enough (scarcity mentality)

Debt or financial pressure

Desire to maintain a certain lifestyle

Lack of trust in God's provision

Past wounds from church fundraising

7. The sermon finished with a "50/50 Challenge" - a practical way to orient our hearts toward the needs around us.

- What were your initial thoughts or feelings about this challenge?
- Spend a few minutes brainstorming as a group. Without naming specific people, what are some types of needs or situations where this money could make a real impact? (e.g., a single parent struggling with groceries, a neighbor who lost their job, someone needing help with a car repair).

You Don't Have to Tithe

Jesus spoke so much about money because he understood that finances are one of the most powerful forces that actively shapes our hearts.

Tithe = a tenth

The First Tithe

Numbers 18:21 (NIV)

I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the tent of meeting.

The Second Tithe

Deuteronomy 14:22–23 (NIV)

*Be sure to set aside **a tenth of all that your fields produce** each year. at the tithe of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the Lord your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name*

The Third Tithe

Deuteronomy 14:28–29 (NIV)

*At the end of every three years, **bring all the tithes of that year's produce** and store it in your towns, so that the Levites... and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied*

The actual tithe was about 23%

Malachi 3:8–9 (NIV)

"Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me.

This new covenant is no longer asking "how much do I have to give?" But instead "how is my money shaping my heart and reflecting Jesus' generosity towards me?"

Paul's appeal to generosity

Grace

Proportionality

Cheerful Willingness

Sacrificial Giving

Grace

2 Corinthians 8:9 (NLT)

You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich.

2 Corinthians 8:7 (NLT)

Since you excel in so many ways...I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving [Act of Grace].

Proportionality

2 Corinthians 8:12 (NLT)

give according to what you have

1 Corinthians 16:2 (NIV)

On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.

Cheerful Willingness

2 Corinthians 9:5-9 (NLT)

I want it to be a willing gift, not one given grudgingly.... You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."

Sacrificial Giving

2 Corinthians 8:2-3 (NLT)

..they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity.

For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will.

Matthew 6:19-21 (NIV)

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

According to Jesus our financial habits do not merely reflect the state of our heart; they actively direct and shape it. Our financial decisions are not spiritually neutral acts; they are DEEPLY formative practices.

'Where do I want my heart to be?'

50/50 Giving Challenge

