

FAITH IS ACTION

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HOLY BIBLE

TITHE & THRIVE



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TITHE & THRIVE

Without looking in your Bible or googling on your phone, do you know what **Philippians 4:19** says?

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Would you say that this is one of your favorite scriptures? I think so, as we hear this scripture quoted often.

But this scripture only works in conjunction with **Luke 6:38**: *“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”*

You cannot just quote Philippians 4:19 and not do Luke 6:38. In fact, if we go back to Philippians chapter 4, and look at verse 18, you will see why Paul said what he said in verse 19: *“But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.”*

Paul is saying that he has all of his needs supplied, because they had been so generous to send offerings to him. And he assured them that in the sight of God it was a sacrifice that pleased Him well and came up before Him as a sweet perfume. This entire letter is actually a **big thank you card**. First, Paul thanked them for their concern for him, knowing that he was in jail. Secondly, he thanked them for their prayers on his behalf, and then he thanked them for their generous giving.

The thing is, this church was one of the poorest of the churches. He bragged on them to other churches that were rich, and did not support him as generously as the church at Philippi. In his first letter to the Corinthians, he wrote in chapter 8:1-3: *“Moreover, brethren, we make known to you of the grace God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia; How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. For*

to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;” How do great affliction, deep poverty and abundant joy go together? They were willing to give *beyond their power.*”

Now we can better understand why he wrote: *“But my God shall supply all of your needs according to his riches in glory.”* This divine principle is repeated over and over in both Old and New Testaments: *You reap what you sow*, because God will be no man’s debtor: *“Now he that ministers seed to the sower both minister bread for your food [supply your need], and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness”* (2Cor.9:10). The guarantee is our seed will multiply, providing bread for us, while increasing the fruits we can give to God. There is no better investment plan than to give to God. He guarantees a return that no earthly bank or stock market can match, regardless of the economic conditions. The God of the Universe has given us the opportunity to partner with Him. He has assured us according to *Heaven’s glorious riches* that He will meet His obligations.

THE LAW OF RECIPROCITY

Giving is a spiritual principle as well as a financial principle: *“Give and it shall be given unto you...”* The blessings start *after* you give. The curse is broken *after* you bring God the tithes you owe Him. *“And it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over; shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you mete withal,*

it shall be measured to you again.”

The Hebrew word for give is NATAN which is a *palindrome* (pal-lindrome): *a word spelled the same forwards and backwards.* The hidden meaning: *When we give to God, it comes back to us.* If we don’t give God a measure, there is nothing to come back. When it comes to *tithes*, the measure is 10% of all our increase.

Proverbs 3:9-10: *“Honor the Lord with all your substance, and with the firstfruits of all your increase: so shall your barns be filled with plenty, and your presses shall burst forth with new wine.”* The word for *honor* means *give*. When a speaker is given an *honorarium*, it does not mean a hand clap or a standing ovation, but money. We are to give to God first. And we are to pay tithes on *all our increase*. Then God gives back to us in *a bosom measure—not a hand measure!*

I did a comparison one day using oranges: I picked up as many oranges as I could hold in my two hands. I stretched my hands as far as I could, and I was able to hold three oranges in each hand. Then I put as many oranges as I could into my bosom. I did not have a helper, so when I got to my right side, I could only add so many. I was able to hold 13 oranges in my bosom, and I would have been able to hold more if I would have had a helper to place them on my right side.

As it was, I more than doubled the number of oranges I could hold in my bosom, and I probably would have tripled it if someone else would

have loaded me up. This is how God gives back to us when we give in obedience to Him. We give God a *hand measure*, and He gives us a *bosom measure* back.

Some think that they can give God whatever is left over after they pay their bills. They say they can't afford to pay their tithes regularly or on all of their increase. If you are waiting for all your bills to be paid so you can *afford* to pay tithes, you will never be able to tithe, because you're not being blessed when you are in disobedience. The windows of heaven are never going to open up over you as long as you are robbing God.

Malachi 3:8-10: *"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me. But you say, How have we robbed you? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse: for you have robbed me, even this whole nation."*

"Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house, and prove me now herewith, says 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, says the Lord of hosts."

The nation of Israel had robbed God, and the whole nation was cursed with poverty, because the devourer had eaten all their harvest time and again. They could not get out of the hole of financial distress.

Their finances were cursed, which in their case, because they were an agricultural nation, meant their crops did not yield the produce it should have.

Notice that God commanded: *"BRING all the tithes into the storehouse..."* He did not say, *"GIVE,"* because you cannot give what is not yours. The tithe belongs to God. Bring what belongs to Him to the House of God. Tithing is not just giving—it's *returning*—giving back to God what is His.

God said: *"I will open the windows of heaven and pour out a blessing you won't have room enough to receive"*: The windows of heaven are closed over those who have not given God His tithes. The idea is, the blessings are backed up behind that closed window. The way to release them is to pay God the tithes you owe Him. All the blessings that were forfeited will then be poured out.

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A MISSIONARY'S ACCOUNT:

An American missionary went to the extremely poor part of Chile to teach the Bible. He was able to teach them many deep significant truths from the Scriptures. But one morning God spoke clearly to him: *"You have not declared my whole truth to these people."*

The missionary responded: *"I don't understand, Lord, I have taught them justification by faith, forgiveness of sins, baptism in the Holy Spirit, miracles and power, church history and doctrine. I even taught them about the rapture and the second coming of Jesus Christ."*

God said: *"But you have not declared my tithe to them."*

He said: *"But, Lord, these are very poor people. They hardly have enough to live on. I can't ask them to tithe. They have nothing."*

God said: *"You must declare to them my tithe."*

That Sunday with a heavy heart, he told the people: *"God has shown me I have not been faithful in declaring to you His whole counsel. There is something you have not been doing I must tell you about: You have not been tithing to the Lord."*

For the next hour, he took them to the Scriptures and explained tithing, including Malachi 3:8-11. The following Sunday people brought eggs, chickens, leather goods, handwoven items, and many things from their poor homes and put them on the altar. The missionary felt bad about taking them, but he took them

and gave some to the destitute in the neighborhood and kept some for himself since he had not been receiving any income.

This happened Sunday after Sunday. Not long after, a severe drought hit the countryside, crops failed, and the poverty that gripped the people was worse than ever. But miraculously, the members of the church who had been tithing saw their crops flourish as though they were supernaturally watered. While other fields withered, their fields were green. Their livestock was strong and healthy. There was such an overflow that they began to sell their goods and make money. They then could now tithe in money. Soon they were able to build a new meeting place for the house of the Lord with those tithes.

They had gone from *tithe & survive* to *tithe & thrive!* But it didn't happen until they gave God something to bless. Multiplication takes place after we give. When the young boy brought his lunch to Jesus, *Jesus first blessed it*. Then He gave it to the disciples to distribute to the people. The two fish and five loaves of bread that He blessed multiplied to feed over 5000 men plus women and children. Multiplication takes place after God blesses what we give.

TITHES & TAXES

Several Gospels record the episode when the Pharisees and scribes had come to Jesus asking Him many trick questions to try to snare Him in His words. One of these was about

whether or not the Jewish people should pay taxes to the Roman government. *“Is it lawful for us to pay tribute to Caesar?”* They asked.

Keep in mind that Israel was created by God to be a theocratic nation. They were to pay their firstfruits, tithes and offerings to God. They were not supposed to pay taxes to another nation, but they were slaves. They had lost their freedom, and one of the reasons, as recorded by the final prophet Malachi, was they had failed to pay their tithes to God.

Jesus responded by asking them to show Him a penny. He said to the crowd that was eagerly listening: *“Whose inscription and image are on this coin?”* Everyone in the crowd called out loudly *“Caesar’s!”*

Then Jesus answered: *“Give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and give unto God the things that are God’s”* Give God what belongs to Him! The tithes belong to God!

Do you enjoy the spiritual meal you get at church? The tithers in the church are paying for it. You would not go to a nice restaurant and eat a meal, and then leave without paying the bill. But some Christians do that every week. They go to church, eat a meal, and skip out on the check.

God wants to open the floodgates of heaven and pour out His blessings on us! Furthermore, God said that He would *rebuke the devourer*—He will protect your blessings and prevent them from being attacked by the evil one. In times of economic downturn, layoffs, job losses, God will supply the need for those who trust Him

with their finances. We all will experience these types of things. Jesus said that *it rains on the just and the unjust*, but God will deliver His people from harm and ruin.

There is no better investment plan than to give to God. He guarantees a return that no earthly bank or stock market can match. We used to sing the song: *You Can’t Beat God Giving No Matter How Hard You Try...*

Proverbs 11:24-25: *“There is he that scatters and yet increases...”* This is totally opposite to human logic: you give away and yet you increase in your substance. *“And there is he that withholds more than is mete, but it tends to poverty.”* Again, we see the opposite expected outcome: the one who holds onto his money and does not give experiences great lack. *“The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that waters shall also be watered.”* This is another way of saying, *“Give, and it shall be given.”*

God is so serious about this that He did something that He did nowhere else in the entire Bible: He said: *“Prove me— put me to the test!”* Nowhere else and at no other time has God commanded us to put Him to the test! *Tithing represents a test:* We can test or prove God to see if He will bless us abundantly. And God is testing us to see if we will trust Him with our money and if we have the victory over covetousness. He said: *“Remember the LORD your God: for it is he that gives you power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant”* (Deut.8:18).

Haggai 1:7-10: *“Consider your ways: you looked for much, and it came to little, and when you brought it home, I did blow on it. You earn wages to put in a bag with holes. [and why you can never catch up on debt when you don’t pay tithes.] Why? says the Lord. Because of my house that is waste, and you run every man to his own house. Therefore, the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit.”*

The point is clearly made that God had cut off their blessings. The windows of heaven over them were closed, because they had taken care of their own houses and failed to take care of the House of God. What if everyone paid tithes when they felt they could afford to? God’s work would be out of business. God made tithing the same percentage for everyone, and He requires everyone to pay tithes—not just those who have more money.

WAS TITHING A LAW THING?

There are ministers and people on social media who protest tithing, saying that it was under the law, and we are not under the law, but under grace. To me, people who use this to object to paying tithes only reveal their own covetous heart. Those who truly love God are not only willing to pay tithes, but they seek to grow in the grace of giving to give God more than the 10 %.

TITHING PRECEDED THE LAW

Abel was counted righteous

because he brought the firstlings and the fattest of his flock to God, and God had respect unto his offering (Genesis 4:4).

Abraham lived 430 years before the law, and he paid tithes to Melchizedek, *the King of Salem and high priest of the Most High*, from the spoils he reaped when he rescued Lot and his family from their kidnappers (Genesis 14:18-20).

According to Romans and Hebrews, *Abraham is our spiritual father*, and *Melchizedek* is a type of Jesus Christ. We are told in Hebrews 5:9-10: that Jesus is made our High Priest after the order of *Melchizedek*, and Hebrews 7:1-8 details how Jesus fulfilled all the types and shadows embodied in Melchizedek, and gives specific attention to the fact that Abraham tithed to Melchizedek:

Vs. 3: *“To whom Abraham gave a tenth part of all.”*

Vs.6: *“He received tithes of Abraham and blessed him.”*

Vs.8: *“And here men that die receive tithes, but there he [Jesus] receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives.”* According to this verse, Jesus receives tithes in heaven. When we pay our tithes, we may think we are only giving them to the church, but in reality—in the spiritual sense, *we are giving our tithes to the Lord Himself!*

There are others who say, *“I don’t have to pay tithes, because I am not under the curse.”* Let’s look at the verse they quote: Galatians 3:13-14: *“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law.... That the blessings*

of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ through the promise of the Spirit through faith." Abraham paid tithes—not by the law—but by faith. Should we who are the children of Abraham by faith do any less? If we want the blessings of Abraham, then we must do the works of Abraham. Remember, his works were before the law. He did not pay tithes because of a law, but because he loved God.

Jacob, his grandson, lived 400 years before the law, and he pledged God the tithes: "Of all that you shall give me. I will surely pay you the tenth" (Genesis 28:22). His vow to pay tithes came from his heart. True tithing comes from the heart, not from a legalistic mindset. Jacob named the place where he made his vow to pay his tithes *Bethel*, which means *House of God*. When Jacob returned 20 years later, he was rich. God blessed him in spite of his greedy, conniving father-in-law and brothers-in-law who attempted to defraud him of his just wages.

Laban really wanted to keep Jacob around, because he saw that not only was Jacob blessed, but he was also blessed by having Jacob and his family in his employment: "I pray you if I have found favor in your eyes, stay, for I have learned by experience that the Lord has blessed me for your sake." (Genesis 30:27).

If they paid tithes *before the law*, should not we *after the law* who are *under a better covenant based on*

better promises? In Romans 4:12 & 16, we are told to *walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham, who is the father of us all*. If they paid 10% *before the law*, and they paid 10% *under the law*, should we who are under grace do less when we have *a better covenant based on better promises?* The righteousness of grace always exceeds the righteousness of the law. What grace demands is greater than what the law demands:

JESUS RAISED THE STANDARD

In Matthew 5, Jesus raised the bar on the law, making thoughts and intent of the heart the sins of adultery and murder, even if the act has not been carried out. Every time Jesus pointed to a law under the old covenant, He raised the bar and set a higher standard under the new covenant of grace. He said: "*Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Law until all is fulfilled I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven*" (vv.17-20).

The righteousness of grace always exceeds the righteousness of the law. In Matthew 23:23, Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, calling them hypocrites: "*You pay tithes of mint, anise, and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law,*

judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

In this saying, Jesus was affirming tithing! He was saying: You pay your tithes down to the seed, *and you should!* You should pay your tithes! But you should also show justice, and mercy, and faith. If someone says, *“I don’t pay tithes because I am not under the law: I am under grace,”* then they should be giving more than 10%, because grace has a higher standard than the law.

The new believers after Pentecost, including Barnabas, sold their homes and lands, and possessions and laid them at the feet of the apostles to give to those in need so that no one lacked (Acts 4:34-37). This was voluntary, and was far above 10 %!

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth that the Philippian church gave abundantly out of their deep poverty: The church at Corinth was much richer, and Paul said that they should be giving more generously.

The Law did not establish tithing—It only *regulated* it. Tithing was already in existence before the law. What God did under the law of Moses was to regulate how the tithes were to be paid. The Israelites were an agricultural people, and their tithes and offerings were paid in crops and livestock.

FIRST FRUITS & TITHES

The firstfruits was an offering of the *first* of their crops or the firstborn of their herds. The tithe was 10% of *all* their increase. They did not know

what their 10% tithe was until the full harvest was in and the animals had birthed their young. Therefore, they were to give God a *firstfruit, sort of like a sampler of the harvest to come*. They would say, *“God, bless this firstfruit offering and give me a good harvest, and I will pay the tithes, the full 10%, at the end.”* And when all their harvest was in, and all their flocks had increased their numbers, they paid the tithes for that harvest season.

Today, we know what our paychecks are at the end of the work week or month, so we are to pay the tithe right away. In our case, the firstfruits are our tithes, and they belong to God. When the Israelites gave firstfruits or firstborn offerings, it blessed their coming harvest. When we pay our tithes, God continually blesses our finances. Deut. 14:22: *“You shall truly tithe all the increase of your seed that the field brings forth year-by-year.”* If they lived too far from the Tabernacle, or if it was too much for them to carry, they were *to turn it into money* and bring it to the House of God.

The reasoning of one author of a book on tithing is that since the Israelites only paid tithes with edible food and animals, and that does not apply to New Testament believers, so we don’t have to pay tithes. Really? Not only is this illogical, but she failed to read Deut.14:24-25 that instructed them to exchange these for money to bring to the Tabernacle and pay their tithes. Since our income consists of *money*, then we are to pay

tithes with our money. The point is, God says that 10% of all our increase belongs to Him. *Don't fudge on paying your tithes! Give God the tithes on all your increase!*

THE CENSUS

Numbers is called the Book of Numbers because it details the census that God commanded Moses to take of the children of Israel, *because the firstborn males represented the tithe of the people.* He was to count all the firstborn males from one month old and up from every tribe, except for the tribe of Levi. God said that this tribe was His, because He had redeemed the Israelites' firstborn during the tenth plague of death in Egypt.

The total of the firstborn of the 11 tribes came to 273 more than the number of the men of the tribe of Levi. The firstborn represented the tithes of all the people, but since they were short by 273 men, God commanded the deficit to be made up by giving five shekels for each of the 273 men over the number of Levites. Moses took 1,365 shekels from the 22,273 firstborn of Israel, and gave it to Aaron, the high priest and his sons, the priests. God was saying about the tithes: *"Give me what is mine—all of it!"*

THE LEVITES WERE TO PAY TITHES ON THE TITHES

Numbers 18:26: *"Speak unto the Levites and say unto them, When you take of the children of Israel the tithe*

which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe." The Levites were to pay tithes on the tithes that they received from the people. People in ministry like myself who receive a salary, are to pay tithes on that income. When I receive love offerings, birthday, Christmas, offerings from members, I pay tithes on it.

Some people question whether we should pay tithes on the gross income or the net? This is what I believe: you should pay on your gross income. Uncle Sam takes out his first, because he knows if he doesn't many people would not pay. God trusts us to do right by Him and pay our tithes. Income taxes are a bill like any other bill we have. It's just taken out before we receive our paycheck. If we overpay our taxes and are due a refund at the end of the year, if we have already paid tithes on the gross, we do not need to pay tithes on the refund. (If you choose to, it is a free will love offering, and God will bless it accordingly.)

Put God First: Perhaps you are thinking, *how can I pay my tithes when I'm always short? You have to start the process! You have to give God a measure!* Don't let another paycheck go by without paying your tithes first. When you count your money, stop and look at one of the bills: on the back side at the top it says, **In God We Trust.**

DON'T BORROW YOUR TITHES

The divine principle states that *you must give first—then you shall see the rewards*. The first thing you should do when you get your paycheck is to give God the tithes. Don't borrow your tithes to pay bills and figure you will pay your tithes later. You probably know by now, you never get around to paying them, because you are only getting further behind without God's blessing: *"You shall not delay to offer the firstfruits of your ripe fruits"* (Ex.22:29).

Giving God His portion first guarantees a rich harvest. God said, *"When you have made an end of paying all the tithes"* [your tithes are paid up], *"come before the Lord your God and say, I have brought away the hallowed [holy] things out of my house, and also have given them.... according to all your holy commandments which you have commanded me. I have not transgressed your commandments, neither have I forgotten them. I have not eaten thereof in my mourning; neither have I taken away any ought thereof [not one cent] for unclean use... but I have hearkened unto the voice of the Lord my God, and have done according to all you have commanded me. Look down from your holy habitation from heaven, and bless..."* (Ref. Deut. 26:12-15).

In other words, *you did not eat your tithes in the time of hardship*. You did not borrow or spend your tithes for other things, *because the tithes is hallowed*. It belongs to God, and to use it for anything else is considered to be for unclean use. When you pay

tithes, you are giving to God what is already His. *Then you can come boldly and ask, and expect God's blessing!* If you wait for the right conditions to pay your tithes, you will never will. Giving is an act of obedience, and in time of financial need, it is an act of faith: *"He that observes the wind shall not sow; and he that regards the clouds shall not reap"* (Ecc.11:4). Waiting for favorable conditions to sow will never happen — The enemy will see to it, and until you sow, you can't reap.

A MEMBER'S TESTIMONY

The week that I decided to preach this message at Faith Tabernacle Church, I wrestled with it. I know how testy people can be when you talk about tithing. Then about midweek, I received this unexpected message from a seasoned member, and I knew the Lord wanted me to preach this. I am sharing it here:

"I have a powerful testimony (I think so) about having a base from which God CAN move. I was so completely financially depleted, that my paychecks were gone months before I got them. I should have known better, but I was in such financial stress that I didn't pay my tithes; I just couldn't see how I could so I stopped paying them which started my downward spiral to the point where I did not have one penny to my name. I brought home leftovers from work to feed my family.

That was the turning point. So I talked to the Lord and I said *"Well Lord, I know I did wrong, and in*

order for me to get back on track, you're gonna have to give me the money to make an offering." I kid you not, I found a nickel on the ground and I took that nickel and I put it in the offering at church, and from then on everything started to explode.

I got checks that were owed to me from other sources for months that they couldn't find. I had money coming from everywhere. So I don't know how you calculate that, because it had to be thousands of folds over what I gave: one nickel... in faith, and honored by God as the widow with only two mites.

Since that point, I don't let anything interfere with my paying tithes, or giving when the Lord wants me to give. I have laid hands on my furnace and it started working. Finally, when it could work no more; the burner burned out, and an oil company sent me a message. Can we come in and check your furnace for free? I said, of course, and they came and said that I needed a new burner, and we can give you a new burner and start delivering you oil, and you don't have to pay until 45 days after

delivery. There are many stories that I could tell of God miraculously moving, many times in directions I never expected."

Remember, you are not trusting in your own self, or your job, or your family, or the government, but in your Heavenly Father, and He promised in Matthew 6:33: *"Seek you first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."*

THE SEA OF GALILEE V. THE DEAD SEA

The Jordan River in Israel begins in the Sea of Galilee and flows south 65 miles to the lowest place on planet Earth: The Dead Sea. The Galilee is full of life, thriving with many fish providing food and livelihood for millions in Israel. The Dead Sea is dead—absolutely nothing lives in it. Because it has *no outlet*. It is an analogy of the principal of giving: *Givers live a more prosperous life than those who keep for themselves and don't give out!*

So do you want to be *the Dead Sea* or *the Sea of Galilee*?

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