

THE LAWS OF BIBLICAL PROSPERITY

(Chapter Thirteen)

THE LAWS OF BIBLICAL PROSPERITY

Chapter Thirteen – Opening the Windows of Heaven

In previous chapters we have discussed that one of the basic biblical principles that interacts with biblical prosperity is the *Law of Sowing and Reaping*. Indeed, the entire Kingdom of God and everything that goes on within it is subject to this eternal principle. The Christian desiring biblical prosperity must understand and practice Spirit-led sowing and reaping.

In biblical terms sowing is the act of giving (planting seed) out of one's substance according to God's purpose and leading. Reaping is the process of receiving the benefits (the harvest) that are the promised result of sowing one's seed. In the Kingdom of God there is a predictable and powerful connection between righteous sowing and reaping. In fact, the Bible says that if we will sow in the way God has specified, we can expect to reap a harvest of overflowing abundance. Such a blessing is the essence of biblical prosperity: an overflow of benefits that is greater than you can use on yourself. Your very next question should be: by what manner of sowing can I set in motion for my life the kind of process that will lead to overflowing abundance?

The Role of Tithing

The scripture that answers this question is Malachi 3:10: "*Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this,*" says the Lord of hosts, "*if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.*" Clearly the Word of God tells us that the type of sowing which results in overflowing blessing is *tithing*.

Now the windows of Heaven are very, very large. We know this because these same windows are also mentioned in Genesis 7:11 and through them came much of the water that flooded the entire earth in the time of Noah. Therefore, we can interpret that for those who will tithe, the blessing God wants to pour out in return is so significant it can be compared to covering the whole Earth. Moreover, by virtually daring us to test Him, God is guaranteeing that overflowing abundance will be the result. It should be apparent then that the Lord is prepared to make tithing a rewarding endeavor to whoever will take Him up on His offer!

A *tithe* is defined as one-tenth of one's increase and it is given to God in gratitude for all that He does in one's life. You give the tithe by sowing into God's work, usually your local church or into some other ministry if you are temporarily unchurched, according to God's leading and direction. The Hebrew word for *storehouse* in this scripture can also be translated *treasure house* which was the place in the local assembly (tabernacle, temple or synagogue) where funds were received on God's behalf. *Storehouse* can also mean the place from which you are fed, in other words the place where you receive spiritual food. Wherever the tithe is sowed, the understanding of the one who sows it should be that he/she is giving directly to God and that He will return an overflowing blessing according to the sower's faith. The receiving ministry is merely a steward accountable to God from the moment the seed leaves the giver's possession to use it carefully and in accordance with the Lord's plan and direction.

It is also important to know that the tithe is given first, off-the-top before spending or using the rest of one's provision, in order to put God first in the disbursement process. Indeed, one of the principal purposes God has for the tithe is to help us establish and maintain correct priorities in life instead of allowing the flesh to take over and dictate unrighteous priorities where we put ourselves first. As we are faithful to tithe even when the flesh is protesting, we will eventually come to the point where we are placing God first in everything. He and His Kingdom will have then become our highest priority and our flesh will have been forced to bow to the authority of Christ.

Is tithing just a part of the Law of Moses?

Many Christians who don't tithe use the reasoning that tithing was part of the Law which is no longer applicable now that we are to live by faith. The truth is tithing started long before Moses received the Law. The first person in scripture to give an actual tenth was Abram (Genesis 14:20) and he did so voluntarily out of gratitude for what the Lord had done in his life. The descendents of Abraham continued to give a tenth and as a result all of them greatly prospered. Thus, many hundreds of years before the Law of Moses, tithing was already a popular system of biblical giving and rewarding. The Law merely incorporated an existing and well-established practice.

We can see in the scriptures that from the beginning God had a high regard for the tithe. Abram gave that first tithe in Genesis 14:20 to Melchizedek the king of Salem (later Jerusalem) who was also a Priest of God Most High (14:18). Abram gave the tithe on all the spoils of the victory God had given him but on that same occasion He also made God his sole Provider and returned all the remaining spoils (except for a share that went to his principal leaders) to the King of Sodom (14:22-24). It is clear that Abram knew by faith, he was confident, that God would provide for his needs. In the very next chapter, immediately following this incident, God told Abram that his reward for what he had done would be very great (15:1). God was ready then BEFORE the Law to reward someone for tithing just as He is now AFTER the Law. As it turned out Abraham was blessed many times over and became the "father of many nations."

Did the New Testament do away with Tithing?

Other Believers who don't tithe use the reasoning that the requirement for tithing was done away with under the New Covenant. But Abram and his descendents tithed because they were grateful and loved God, not because of some requirement. The Law made the tithe a requirement but now that the Law has been fulfilled, does it not seem wise to look back to the voluntary practice Abram initiated long before the Law even existed particularly since God has already demonstrated His willingness to reward it? There is no statement in the New Testament that tells to forget tithing or to substitute some other system of giving. In fact, Jesus endorsed tithing in Matthew 22:23 and Luke 11:42 when He had a perfect opportunity to cancel, replace or challenge it. In Luke 18:12 Jesus had another opportunity to discredit tithing but He didn't.

Additionally, in Hebrews 7:1-22 the writer shows us that Jesus became high priest "after" (i.e., according to) the order of Melchizedek and that their priesthood has had a continuous flow from before the Law of Moses into eternity. Since tithing existed before the Law and was connected to a continuous and never-ending priesthood that Jesus is High Priest over, how can it be said that the practice of voluntary tithing somehow lost its favor and power when Believers moved into the New Covenant? The priesthood that received the first tithe still exists!

We should also consider that most Christians are quick to believe that the Blessing of Abraham has come to them by faith in Christ (Galatians 3:14). But, is it logical that a blessing originally given as a reward for tithing would be fully manifested now in the lives of Believers who resist tithing? Do you have a better system of giving to follow? Some say their giving is led by the Spirit instead of such an antiquated system as tithing. But on what basis can they release their faith that their gift has been adequate and pleasing to God? How can they test the spirits or the Word to ensure they have correctly heard from the Lord for their giving? And what is their expectation, their hope, for how the Lord will respond to their giving? Is He sure to open the windows of Heaven?

Why We Should Tithe

In this lesson we are focusing on the point that tithing is one of the keys to experiencing biblical prosperity in every area of life: spirit, soul and body. Indeed, we submit for your consideration that it really isn't possible to come into that overflowing blessing we have been talking about throughout this entire series unless you start from the practice of voluntary tithing. In addition to this point though, there are several other excellent reasons for tithing summarized as follows:

1. Voluntary tithing is a proven biblical way to show God our gratitude and express our love just as Abram did. If you do what you see in the Word, you can't go wrong.
2. Voluntary tithing removes uncertainty from our giving because we can be assured that God will be pleased with our gift.
3. Voluntary tithing helps us learn to put God first in our lives because by definition we are led to give to Him before we make any other disbursements.
4. Voluntary tithing helps us learn to overcome the flesh. Since our flesh does not like for us to give money to God that we could consume on ourselves, tithing leads us to deny the flesh.
5. Voluntary tithing establishes a basis for faith as we stand on the promises of the Word that God will open the Windows of Heaven and pour out an overflowing blessing. Believers need to take care to always attach faith to their tithing.
6. Voluntary tithing pays the ministers in our local churches. This is the system God originally set up and if we take care of God's ministers and see to their needs, God is sure to bless those who have blessed His laborers.

Conclusions

Tithing still opens the windows of Heaven and ***in order to experience the full manifestation of biblical prosperity, you must be a tithing Believer.*** Tithing should not be viewed as just an out-of-date Old Testament practice; it is just as appropriate for New Covenant Believers as it was for those under the Old Covenant.

But since we don't live under the Law, tithing should not be some legalistic "requirement" of Christian life. God prefers that we tithe voluntarily, in gratitude for what He has done, by faith and with a spirit of cheerfulness (2 Corinthians 9:7-8). Each of us must seek and receive our own revelation for tithing from the Holy Spirit. And above all we must walk in love to fulfill the commandments of Christ (Matthew 22:36-40). In other words, we tithe because we love God and by doing so we make ourselves eligible for the fullness of His reward.

Now, tithing should never be seen as a limitation that restricts us from the cheerful sowing of bountiful offerings that God leads us to give over and above the tithe. Malachi 3:8-9 talks about both tithes and offerings just before describing the promises discussed in this lesson. It takes both tithes and bountiful offerings along with love and faith to open the windows of heaven to their fullest extent for you and your family.

The truth is tithing will open the windows of Heaven for you and your family. God challenges you to try it and has guaranteed the results.

THE LAWS OF BIBLICAL PROSPERITY BIBLE STUDY

Lesson Thirteen – Opening the Windows of Heaven

1. The Bible says that God challenges us to tithe and see if He won't open the _____ and _____ and pour out a blessing until it _____.
2. A tithe is defined as _____ of one's increase and it is given to God in _____ for all that he does in one's life.
3. Sowing is the act of _____ out of one's substance according to God's purpose and leading.
4. Reaping is the process of _____ the benefits that are the promised result of sowing one's seed.
5. Many hundreds of years _____ the Law was given to Moses, tithing was already a popular system of biblical giving and rewarding.
6. The first person in scripture to actually give a tenth was _____ and God blessed Him for doing so.
7. Jesus had several opportunities in scripture to abolish and replace tithing with some other system of giving; however, He _____ it.
8. Voluntary tithing is a proven biblical way to show God our _____ and express our _____ just as Abram did.
9. Voluntary tithing helps us learn to put God _____ in our lives because by definition we are led to give to Him before we make any other _____ out of our provision.
10. Voluntary tithing establishes a basis for _____ as we stand on the promises of the Word that God will open the Windows of Heaven and pour out an overflowing blessing.

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