

## Tithing

### **MEANING OF THE WORD 'TITHE'**

There are three words in scripture that are translated as 'tithe', or 'tithing':

- Hebrew (asar), "to give a tenth."
- Hebrew (maaser), "a tenth."

Greek (dekatee), "A tenth."

There are variations of the words that describe the contextual circumstances of its use, or variations of the Hebrew language over a period of time, but in all cases they refer to 'a tenth part.'

### **VERSES WHICH ADDRESS TITHES**

#### ***Pre-Mosaic Law Examples***

Non-Biblical tithing: It was quite common, even in Abraham's day, to tax food and wages for religious purposes. The practice is recorded in the areas of Arabia, Babylon, Carthage, China, Egypt, Rome and Syria.

Abraham to Melchizedek: Three things should stand out in these verses. The first is that Melchizedek did not ask for any of the spoils, nor is there any reason to believe that Abram was following any established precedent. Rather, Abram *arbitrarily* decides that a tenth of his increase is the proper amount to give to this man who is generally recognized as a 'type' of Christ [see MELCHIZEDEK]. We don't know whether the gift was spontaneous or not, but it is a cinch that it was done out of gratitude for what Abram believed was the hand of God in the events that took place. Furthermore, he considered Melchizedek synonymous with God such that a gift to Melchizedek was a gift directly to God. The second item of interest is that the increase consists of the spoils of war. The third item is that we see no indication from Abram that he considers this anything more than a onetime deal. [Gen.14:20; Heb.7:1-7]

Jacob to God: Three things stand out in this passage also. During the dream detailing what has been called Jacob's ladder, God made no request for any portion of Jacob's increase. Instead, Jacob makes the decision, on his own, to return to God a portion of that increase and what size portion that should be. The second is that Jacob means (by personal volition rather than command) to make this a permanent arrangement. The third is that he intends that God gets to use of the money. [Gen.28:22]

#### ***Under Mosaic Law***

Things have changed now. No longer is the gift given out of gratitude, but is a command from God. The amount is fixed at one tenth (tithe) of all the increase of the land that they had been given by God. In addition, the tithe was called "holy" (meaning 'set apart for God's use') so that it is clear that the money was to be used in the same manner as it was intended prior to the Law. Another change is that there is now a middleman. The money is no longer given to God directly, but is given to the Levites. [Lev.27:30-34; Lu.18:12; Acts 24:17]

The Levites: The Levites were not given an inheritance of land like the other tribes. In fact, they were forbidden from owning land. Instead, they were given the job of maintaining the Temple and providing all of the Temple music. What were the Levites to do with the tithes for Israel? They

were to treat it as income from which they would also tithe (one tenth). This ‘tithe’ was called a “heave offering.” It was offered up, but not consumed upon the altar and was consequently used by the priests [Lev.27:30-32; Num.18:21-32; Deu.18:1-8; Neh.12:44; 13:5].

Dietary Tithes; Many people did not have ‘jobs’ that paid wages. These people consisted primarily of farmers, herders, etc. These lifestyles paid tithes from their increase in crops and/or livestock. The tithes were prepared as food for a feast of rejoicing in Jerusalem with the family [Deu. 12:6-19; 14:22-29; 26:12-15; 2Chr.31:5-10; Neh.10:37,38,39; 13:12].

What Constitutes ‘Increase:’ Tithing was done from one’s increase, but increase is not defined as *all* that comes into your possession. Rather, that which is received free (rather than through the sweat of your brow) is not considered increase from which you tithe. The lesson behind this principle is that what is received by grace requires no sacrifice on your part under the Law. For example, one’s salvation is received by God’s grace. No further sacrifice on the part of the recipient is required. [2Sam.24:24]

What about the poor: Despite the best efforts of governments, there will always be poor people. God gave instructions that those who were capable of working and did not work should not eat [Gen.3: 17,19; Pr.10:3], but, like today, there have been those throughout history who were elderly (as described in Eccl.12:3-7), widowed [Acts 6:1-7; James 1:27], orphans [James 1:27], disabled & handicapped [Lu. 5:17-26], impacted by emergencies [Lu.10:30-42; 11:5-10], etc. who either can’t work, or are simply unable to feed themselves (or families) on their income solely. God also gave instructions that were designed to provide assistance to the poor [Ps.109:31; 113:7; 9:18; Pr.11:25,26; 14: 21,31; 28:27; 29:7; Rom.12:13; 1Jn.3:17]. These instructions included leaving a portion of the harvest in the field for the poor to “glean.” In addition, every three years the tithes were used to assist the poor. [Deu.15:7-11; 24:19-22 Neh.8:10; Ps.41:1-3; PR.10:3; 21:13; Isa.58:6, 7; Amos 4:4,5; Ma.19:21; Lu:19:8; Acts 3:2]

Who gave?: All who respected God’s authority gave to Him (His work).This wasn’t necessarily to the temple (or church), but to his work—wherever it would further God’s work. Not to give from your increase is the same as robbing God [Mal.3:10; Ma.19:21], but giving of your gifts is honoring to God. [Pro.3:9,10]

### ***Biblical Customs Concerning...***

The Temple priests: Rather than servants, the Temple priesthood became an aristocracy who tightly controlled the membership of the Priesthood and the money that the lucrative positions provided. You may have been born into the priesthood by your blood line, but unless you were born into the Zadokite clan (which formed the nucleus of the Sadducee party) it would be unlikely that you would ever see any of the ‘big bucks’ from the Temple. What kinds of ‘big bucks’ were involved? By Law, the Temple priests received 1% of the nation’s GNP (Gross National Product). Add to this the profits from their money changing business (unregulated banking) and you have a tidy sum. As if that wasn’t enough, they also controlled, influenced or got kickbacks from the highly profitable leather trades (recall that they got the finest animals for sacrifice) and shared in the other taxes, special assessments and gifts. Although there were some godly men in the priesthood, overall it closely resembled a type of business enterprise for most priests (at its best) and, for some priests, legitimized organized crime (at its worst). Why was it legitimized? Because they maintained the air of plausible deniability by stressing that they were only carrying out God’s instructions. Can’t you hear it now?

“Yes, we’re well off financially, but that’s because it is part of God’s plan. God has rewarded us for our faithfulness and good stewardship. Of course, there are the homeless, starving,

widows, and orphans too, but they are spiritually rich and don't need money. The only ones we hear complaining are those who are jealous of our God given increase. They could be like us if they only had sufficient faith."

Don't think that same mentality doesn't permeate many a church infrastructure today. Sure, there are probably many churches that are "dying to self" for the benefit of the Kingdom, but there are also a lot more ministries who are either scamming people on purpose, or have simply made the Great Commission a business enterprise. Like in Christ's day, the culture didn't realize what had happened to their religion, least of all the priests. Perhaps this was because it changed so slowly.

The Levitical priesthood: Recall that the Levites were to receive all of the tithes from the nation of Israel. That was the plan set up by God. In practice, however, the tithes were given to the Temple priests who then divided the tithes among the Levites as they saw fit. Still, the Levites did pretty well for themselves, particularly the ones that had friendships or political ties to the high priests. The distribution of funds was by no means even-handed among the Levites.

### ***Christ's Teaching on . . .***

Mary's anointing of Jesus: Mary had been waiting for a long time to express the love she had for her savior. When the opportunity came, she anointed Jesus with precious ointment. The cost of the oil was the equivalent of an average person's yearly salary. The complaint was that the use of such an expensive gift was not good stewardship: that the money could have been better spent on the poor. Christ knew that the complaint was a smoke screen, but answered anyway. His response was to tell them to lay off. The point was that the issue of stewardship was (and is) between the person and God—not others. If the Apostles had no business judging it, then neither do you. [Jn.12:3]

Giving for the praise of people: We have all seen people who give money or service primarily as an opportunity to build up their ego or stature within the local ministry. We have also seen people within the ministry who use the services or money of others to their personal benefit. Using tithes to build up material things, or one's ego is its own reward and, therefore, not subject to eternal reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ. As such, it's not a product of Godly guidance. [Ma.6:1-4; Lu.11:42] It's the attitude, not the amount that concerns God. [Lu.21:1-4].

Giving for religion's sake: We have also seen scriptures where Christ criticizes Pharisees for their meticulous adherence to the Law while ignoring the *real* manifestations of one's love for God. [Ma.23: 23] The act of giving, in itself, is nothing. The reason is everything.

Payment of the Temple tax: Christ taught a very important principle about tithing. When approached in Capernaum about the payment of tithes, Jesus paid the tithe for one reason only—not to offend the tithe collectors. What he taught about the topic was quite a bit different. He said that children of the King (believers) did not tithe to their own father (God). The application being that tithes were collected from non-believers (religious people) only and not from believers. That is still true today. God doesn't tax His people. Rather, His people give willingly as they see fit to support the Father's work. [Ma.17:24-27]

The Great Commission: God gave all believers a job. That job is called the Great Commission and consists of winning souls to Christ and helping them grow [see BAPTISMS]. This is an individual responsibility, not one that is optional depending on what ministries a particular local church infrastructure offers. The mature Christian supports that which supports the Great Commission. That support can be either direct or indirect, cash or services, to the poor in spirit or the poor and hungry. [Ma.19:21]

## ***Apostolic Teaching on . . .***

Legal vs. grace attitudes: Joseph of Arimathea begged for the body of Christ and buries it in his own new (and very expensive) tomb. Notice that, unlike the complaint against Mary's use of the ointment, no one complains about the unnecessary overkill in the selection of an expensive burial place that would only be needed for three days. This is a perfect example of a previous legalistic attitude toward tithing turned now to a gracious attitude toward giving. Tithing in today's Church is a step backwards to legalism. We should be emulating the attitude of Joseph in our giving toward God's work rather than emulating and perpetuating the abuses resulting from human applications of the Mosaic Law.

Meeting the needs of the less fortunate: The early church recognized the real need to assist in meeting the needs of those who were less fortunate. How many churches today make that ministry an important part of their overall goals? How many churches today have spent more money on their building, or on paving the parking lot, or on new carpet than on sharing God's love? [Acts 2:44,45; 4:34-37; 6:1-3; 9:36; 10:2; 11:29,30]

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

*Many religious leaders today make the claim that you don't actually own anything. Is it true that God owns everything?*

We know that God never sins. We also know that the malicious destruction of someone else's private property was and is a sin. Since God will destroy the earth following the Millennial Reign to create a new heaven and new earth, then it stands to reason that He is either sinning *or* you don't actually own anything. God, by character, is sinless so that answer is that you are simply stewards of what God owns—not owners yourselves.

*I heard a respected Christian financial lecturer say that the tithe is an external, material testimony of God's ownership of both the material and spiritual things of our lives. That is, when we try keeping all our money to ourselves, we reveal a serious problem in our perspective on life. Is this true?*

It is partly true and partly false. Two statements have been made. Naturally, you would expect many unbelievers to feel comfortable with the notion that the money they earn is theirs to spend on themselves, if they choose. However, it *is* correct that Christians who try to keep all of their money to themselves by choice have misunderstood the principle of God working through His children to accomplish His goals.

The other statement is very misleading. The tithe does not exist today [Col.2:14] and, therefore, is not a testimony of anything except lack of doctrinal moxie. Today, believers in fellowship are not under the Law [Gal.5:18]. We have already shown that pre-Law tithes were purely voluntary in amount and spontaneous in timing. They were a manifestation of grace and love rather than conformity to regulation. [Ma.23:23] You may have noticed that the same 'teachers' (?) who turn 'giving' into the legalism of 'tithing'—the ones who make it a requirement of church membership, or specify how much, when and to whom—are also the ones who stand to benefit, directly or indirectly, from those tithes.

Many people have elected to stop tithing to their local church. I would agree with that move. Everyone should stop tithing to their local church. Instead, they should *give* to their local church. They should give what they honestly believe God would have them to give to go toward the

support of God's work [2Cor.8:1-4; 9:1,5-7; Gal.2:10; 1Tim.6:18; etc.].

The problem arises when people begin to recognize that their church infrastructure is one that includes a legalistic tithe, or that the 'gifts' are misused on projects or expenses not related to the Great Commission. Are they to be chastised for failing to meet their 'fair share?' Joining another church is not likely to solve the problem because nearly all churches suffer from similar legalism or abuses.

Are they to be judged as being out of fellowship with God for their failure to support 'business as usual'? Are they to be reprimanded by the church leadership for failing to meet the requirements of the church bylaws? Should they be forced to withdraw membership from a local church because their spiritual growth in the area of giving has exceeded that of the local church leadership? Doesn't the answer seem to be to encourage them to find, or create one or more ministries that they would be pleased to support—one that they perceive to exemplify the work of God? To the extent that a church would lack in a specific area of ministry, a portion of one's giving can be given to the individual or organization which is 'filling the gap. If anything, that position would encourage churches today to take a hard look at what they are about and to refocus their spending habits where needed.

Tithing is legalism. Giving is not. If giving is done out of a sense of duty, or to fulfill some stipulation necessary to be a good disciple, then you are tithing and wasting the effort. On the other hand, giving done out of gratitude, thanksgiving, the excitement of seeing the work progress, etc. is clearly rewarding—both now and for eternity. The difference is 100% in one's attitude and motivation. That's it! Nothing else!

*Wasn't the local church designed by God to contain the infrastructure for collecting and disseminating tithes?*

No! The Mosaic Law contained such guidance concerning *tithes*, but none is given for the New Testament church. Tithes were of the Law for the Levite's support, etc. No mention of tithing is found in Church Age scriptures except Heb.7:5-9 and these lone verses refer to the previous age of the Law. Instead, guidance is given for the collection of *gifts*. [1Cor.16:1-4] Gifts in the NT church, as opposed to tithes, were given with a specific need in mind. As an example, money was collected for mission work and was done ahead of time so the need didn't come as a burden. It was done *not as a tenth*, but simply as God had prospered (it may have been greater than a tenth, for all we know). It also was not given to benefit a general fund, but always to a specific need as presented to the church.

*What about when spouses disagree on the amount of tithe, or to whom it should be given?*

The husband should have the final say. This is not because he is any smarter, or wiser, but because he is ultimately responsible to God. If the husband is unsaved, then it makes no difference. He is still responsible to God (he simply doesn't know it yet). The focus of the wife at that point should not be on giving money, but giving herself to prayer for her husband's salvation. If the roles are reversed and the wife is unsaved, then the husband should consider deferring his ultimate authority and compromise (that's right, compromise). They should attempt to find a ministry that they can both agree to support and to what degree. The husband should then also focus on giving himself to prayer for her salvation. If both are saved then they should agree on how much and to whom. After all, the best counselor a husband ever had was a wife in fellowship (and vice versa).

*What if a believer gives to a church, or to an organization that is later found to be mismanaging the money?*

Recall that the woman who gave the two “pennies” was giving with the right attitude even though she was giving to an organization that was wrought with corruption. Christ praised her giving not because of the amount, but because of her attitude. What matters is our attitude when we give. Are we giving cheerfully to a group that we *believe* is furthering God’s kingdom? If we later find that’s not the case, then we simply give somewhere else.

*Should churches, or other organizations receive gifts from dubious sources?*

A gift is a gift. The real issue is whether the giver expects some special treatment or influence because of the gift. If they do, then it really isn’t a gift, is it? Instead, it becomes payment for services. If a homosexual advocacy group gave your church a million dollars, then you might be expected to, at the very least, soften your stand against homosexuality. On the contrary, you should treat the gift like any other. You would use it to get out the Gospel and teach new converts that homosexuality is a sin, just as you have always done.

Remember that God is in charge. If God sees fit to fund your ministry with the resources of dubious sources, then don’t deny God’s sovereignty. Instead, treat the matter as poetic justice.

*Where do trusts, annuities, wills, and the like fit into the ‘giving’ picture?*

In most applications trusts annuities and like mannered financial vehicles are geared toward long-term giving. The problem with long-term giving is that unless you are still in direct control of the giving you may find yourself funding an organization that has long since departed from your, presumably, orthodox views. This is the message behind Rom.12:8. Although the verse refers to giving as a spiritual gift the application still applies—make your giving simple and straight forward. A time honored axiom would also apply here, “Do your giving while you’re living so you’re knowing where it’s going.”

*What is a ‘faith promise’ and when is it appropriate?*

A faith promise is a commitment to give from your *presumed* future increase. It is frequently used to fund special projects (building funds, etc.). In most cases, it’s not actually legally binding, but it can be intimidating. There are a number of problems with this practice.

The first is that there is no real promise. How much good does it do to solicit a promise that is contingent on factors that are outside both the control of the one promising and the one being promised? [Pr.27:1] It certainly can’t be verified, shouldn’t be spent ahead of time, or used for budgeting purposes. So what good is it—except as a form of intimidation, or perhaps as a budding form of name-it-and-claim-it theology?

The second problem is if it is a binding promise to pay, then one would be a fool to promise what they don’t have. You would be better off keeping your mouth shut, then falling for an emotional plea for promises of money you don’t have [Pr.14:15]. After all, God hears your vow and will surely hold you to it. [Ecc.5:1-7]

The third problem has to do with the routine application of ‘faith promises’ to building funds. Observe how Godly men from the Bible structured their building funds:

1. Preplanning is paramount. [Pr.4:26]

Do not cosign loans for others (including your church). [Pr. 6:1-5; 11:15; 27:26]  
It is not promises of money that ‘builds’ a church, but a focus on God’s kingdom. [Pr.14:11]  
Be sure the building is really necessary. Would Christ spend the money the same way?  
[Pr.15:16,17; 16:8; 17:1]

God never authorized loans be taken out to further His work. Rather, He provided the funds with which to accomplish His work [Ezra 2:68,69]. The tabernacle was to be built using willing donations from the people of Israel—*not* from loans [Ex.25:1-8; 35:4,5]. It was real nice, as mobile tabernacles go, but paled next to the splendor of Solomon’s temple. Recall that Solomon, well remembered for having built the splendid temple, is less well remembered for running up such a debt with the neighboring kingdom of Hiram (who supplied resources and craftsmen) that he had to hand over twenty cities north of Mt. Carmel and a sizable chunk of the Plain of Acco in repayment. This wasn’t occupied territory, but part of Israel. There is a lesson in that comparison! Faith is waiting on God, not presuming on God!

*Why is it that some people always seem ready and able to support the work of God even when they aren’t exactly rich and yet others have difficulty supporting even ministries that they know are doing God’s work?*

This may be the manifestation of a Spiritual gift of giving [Rom.12:8]. Giving *is* a ministry and *may* be a gift, be it money, or time, or service. Don’t think that having the gift of giving doesn’t mean that it isn’t less difficult.

*You haven’t mentioned salaries that the church pays out of the gifts (or tithes) of the membership. Should ministers and others be employees of the local church?*

The Mosaic Law allowed the servant to reap some of the benefit (i.e. soldiers, farmers, the oxen, the Levites). Even Christ, who was under the Law at this time, provided guidance for the compensation of Apostles who were out spreading the Gospel. [Ma.10:10; Mk.6: 8,9; Lu.9:3; 10:7] Paul correctly argues [1Cor.9:4-18] that from the standpoint of the Mosaic Law they, if anyone, could expect to receive some support from the people. Indeed, Christ started as a carpenter, but later received His support from those who followed Him. He directed His Apostles to live in a similar fashion. This is the position taken by most churches that pay their pastors. Those churches that take that position are perfectly within their ‘legal’ rights to do so.

However, most wouldn’t fare so well if the verses they use to support their position were applied literally. The support only goes toward the Apostle and their wife (or traveling companion), but not toward children, housing (they lived among members), clothes, etc. They lived on the *freewill handouts* of the church members they served, rather than on a salary. In addition, many of the referenced verses call for support commensurate with the true needs of the Apostle.

To summarize, evangelists (“those who preach the Gospel”) under a system of legalism have a right to expect compensation commensurate with their efforts toward furthering the Kingdom. Your pastor has the legalistic right to expect handouts commensurate with their efforts at winning souls. Paul, however, recognized a much deeper truth. [1Cor.9] There is an important distinction to be made between what is allowed and what is God’s will. He taught that as an evangelist, he might rightly expect support, but he didn’t ask for any. To explain why, he then discusses the difference between God’s will during the Church Age and God’s will under Mosaic Law.

Paul sees the legalistic, pay-for-preaching position as a worldly argument, a paper tiger, which he then shoots down. In 9:1-11,13,14 he sets up this paper tiger by explaining the rationale behind pay-for-preaching. Under the Law only certain people were ordained (or ‘authorized’) to preach the Gospel. Those people (priests, Apostles, etc.) were to live off their following. The word ‘preach’ in this verse means, “to thoroughly explain.” Evangelists who “thoroughly explained the Gospel” were to live on the handouts of their following (as opposed to the Levites, who lived on a fixed minimum of 10%). Truly, he has done a masterful job of supporting the pay-for-preaching position as a legalistic right of evangelists under the Law.

Having explained the legalistic practice taking place then (and now), Paul then begins to expound on the significant differences for the Church Age. ‘Legal’ rights have nothing at all to do with grace. Paul explains God’s best for the Church Age in 1Cor.9:12,15-27. Under grace, the exercise of the apostolic authority concerning support would run the risk of hindering the Gospel [9:12]. Paul explains that the indwelling Holy Spirit makes him want to preach [9: 16]. To not follow the Spirit’s clear direction in this area would be sin for Paul. [9:16] If he follows the Spirit’s lead and preaches the Gospel, then he does it without concern for payment. This leads to eternal reward at the Judgment Seat of Christ [9:17,18,25]. To expect payment for preaching isn’t the direction of the Spirit, but simply providing a service for a fee (a job). [9:17] Either way he was paid, but one reward was eternal and the other was temporal. Paul preferred the eternal reward to the temporal. In fact, so adamant was he about the distinction that he would have preferred to die rather than exchange temporal reward for eternal reward. [9:15b] So how would the Gospel be hindered by the pay-for-preaching plan? Once the distinction is recognized, it then becomes an exchange of eternal reward for temporal. In doing so one’s preaching then qualifies as wood, hay and stubble [1Cor.3:10-15]—not worthy of reward and not the leading of the Spirit.

For example, I will cover the case of Galatians 6:6.

I will use Nestle’s Greek (a majority vote scheme between Tischendorf, Westcott / Hort, and Weiss and the basis for modern translations like the NIV). Immediately underneath the Greek is a phonetic equivalent, then a literal translation—first by the individual Greek words and then contextually.

<i>Κοινωνειτω</i>	<i>δε</i>	<i>ο</i>	<i>κατηχουμενος</i>	<i>τον</i>	<i>λογον</i>	<i>τω</i>	<i>κατηχουντι</i>	<i>εν</i>	<i>πασιν</i>	<i>αγαθοις</i>
<i>koinoneo</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>ho</i>	<i>katecheomnos</i>	<i>ton</i>	<i>logon</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>katecheonti</i>	<i>en</i>	<i>pasin</i>	<i>agathos</i>
<i>hold common</i>	<i>and</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>him being taught</i>	<i>the</i>	<i>word</i>	<i>with</i>	<i>instruct</i>	<i>in</i>	<i>things</i>	<i>benefits</i>
<i>And [let] him [being] taught the Word commonly hold with the teacher all beneficial things.</i>										

Here are the reasons this verse is not a reference to financial support of one's teacher.

- The very first word, *κοινωνειτω* (pronounced koy-no-NEH-tow), means *to share with others*. However, this is a special type of “share.” We might use the English word “share” when we are referring to a financial contribution to a brother, church, or ministry. There are much better (and more frequently used) Greek words to select if this was meant (ἐλεημοσύνη= alms, ἀποδίδωμ= pay, ὀψώνιον= allowance, etc.). “share” means *to hold in common (as a partner)*. You may recognize the word from the phrase *koine Greek*—the Greek dialect created by Alexander the Great as a common language

shared by all his armies.

An example would be if you went to a movie with your wife or girlfriend (presumably, you don't have both) and bought a single bag of popcorn. You don't split the bag 90%-10% or even 50%-50%. Rather, the bag becomes *common property*(neo) which either party takes as they see fit.

You can obviously see the problem here between a stipend for your teacher and co-ownership of *all beneficial things*—that is, your estate.

- Note below that the definite article “τῷ” (translated as “with”) is in the singular, dative form. The dative, definite article (there are no indefinite articles in Greek) identifies the indirect object (the person or thing that receives the action) of the verb (Koinoneito) regardless of whether the article is neuter or masculine. So, what is the object of the “holding in common” (partnering)? The possible objects are the (1) teacher, (2) the items to be commonly held, and, (3) the Word. However, “things” is not singular and may be eliminated. Also, if the definite article was meant to be masculine, then the instructor is the one shared. Hardly! That leaves the article as neuter. The only neuter, singular object identified in the verse is “word”. This means that the object to be “held in common” is the beneficial things of the “word” (which is singular and neuter). It may be loosely paraphrased and amplified as, “The one being intensively taught should commonly hold those beneficial things (doctrines, valuable lessons learned, applications, etc.) with the instructor.”

is this important? Primarily because it promotes like-mindedness, but also this type of dialog/fellowship allows higher order cognitive instruction—synthesis (extrapolating a principle beyond what you have been taught). [Remember, this isn't referring to Sunday School as typically practiced it in most churches. Synthesis is the whole point of intensive instruction.]

The next reason for interpreting it as an admonition to share God's Word is the context of the chapter. Recall that I described these verses as the ‘no-man-is-a-spiritual-island’ verses. Verse 6:1 primarily addresses the spiritual realm, rather than the physical. Verse 6:2-5 also primarily addresses the spiritual realm [compare 2Cor.10:12-18]. Downstream of 6:6 verses 6: 7-9 speak of the spiritual battle in a disciple's life. There is no reason to believe that 6:6 is a momentary lapse in the context and direction of Paul's message by jumping to the physical realm of pay-to-play.

- In Greek, the word order of a phrase or clause is an indication of emphasis. Because the word translated as *communicate, contribute, share* is the first word, then it is an indication that it is also the primary emphasis. But, it isn't the only issue of importance. Lost in the debate over the meaning of that word is the meaning of *κατηχομενος* (cheomnos) and *κατηχουντι* (cheonti). The root word in both is *κατηχο* (pronounced kat-ay-kheh'-o). This is the Greek word from which ‘catechism’ is derived and it is *thorough instruction or schooling*. This is not your typical 20-min. Sunday School lesson once per week. It rarely happens in churches today, yet *indoctrination* is Paul's clear expectation of converts. This choice of words strengthens the argument that Paul is not referring to donations in this verse.

Given these reasons, I hope it is clear now why the King James Version translators choose to use “*communicate*” as the proper translation of *koinoneo*.

*Does this mean that all pastors (and other paid employees) are sinning by receiving a salary?*

No! God does not hold us personally accountable for what we don't know (or understand). Once

a pastor recognizes and understands Paul's position, *then* it becomes a sin for him to *expect* payment. From that point on he and any other paid employee, will never be as effective, or as blessed in the ministry until they settle that issue in God's favor (and theirs, ultimately). This is not to say that a pastor (or evangelist, music director, janitor, organist, etc.) can't receive freewill offerings commensurate with their efforts, but they should not receive a salary.

We have become so accustomed to the traditions of church infrastructure that we are as blind to its abuses as the Galatian church was to the error of circumcision for salvation. Ask yourself this question: Who should witness? The answer is that every believer should witness. *Every* believer should be 'thoroughly explaining the Gospel' to people today—that's the Great Commission. Should every believer expect money for his or her 'preaching' to the unsaved? Of course not! How would you feel if someone came to your door and asked for 25¢ before they would share God's Word with you? Would you feel that the Gospel was being hindered? Of course, you would. But that is exactly what is happening in most local churches today when the pastor is an employee of the church. I don't care how much that door-to-door evangelist claimed to love the Lord, what their credentials were, or how successful they had been in the past. To expect payment for sharing God's word is to make the love of God a business and not a passion driven by the Spirit. If the door-to-door evangelist does not ask for money to share God's Word, but does accept an invitation to step inside and have a glass of lemonade, then has the Gospel been hindered? The glass of lemonade was worth about 25¢, wasn't it? What if the homeowner didn't have any lemonade and gave the evangelist 50¢ to buy a soft drink from the machine at the drugstore at the end of the street? Do you see the difference? One method relies on self for support, while the other method relies on God for support. Does your local church expect you to pay "your fair share," or do they simply accept freewill offerings to continue the Lord's work? Which method "hinders" the Gospel and relies instead on human wisdom?

We are not under the Law. [Gal.5:13] Neither were Abraham or Jacob when they made their freewill offerings to acknowledge and further God's work.

Evangelism, teaching, exhortation, etc. are all gifts of the Holy Spirit [see SPIRITUAL GIFTS]. Should you charge people for sharing the gift(s) God gave you for free?

*But I heard a well known Christian financial counselor say that since all skills—even your ability to make a livelihood—are gifts from God, then working for a living was accepting salary/pay for exercising your God given gifts. He used the argument to support salaries for ministries. So what about your job skills? Are they a gift from God also?*

Yes, they are an exercise of God given skills. God designed you with certain job skill strengths and weaknesses. We exercise these strengths and weaknesses before we are saved also. It isn't until you are saved that you receive Spiritual gifts. The Spiritual gifts are specifically designed for use in your growth as a disciple and to further God's kingdom. Because this is done through the use of God's Spiritual gifts, then you can't lay claim to any personal achievement. Instead, it is God who works through you and rewards you for being submissive to His guidance.

As far as this financial counselor's advice goes, I would dump it in favor of the example of Paul's life. Paul used his job skills to make a living so that he could fund the use of the Spiritual gifts God gave him. Those in the ministry should look to Paul as their example. He made tents for a living. On weekends he made full use of his Spiritual gifts [Acts 18:3,4]. When God needed Paul full time, he stopped working for that period [Acts 18:5] and lived off savings and handouts. The long-term practice, however, is described in Acts 19:8-10. For two years, Paul taught in the school of

Tyrannus. It is believed that he rented the school in the hot afternoon when normal classes and businesses closed down for an afternoon siesta [see Moffatt's version and margin note in RSV]. Paul would work in the mornings and evenings and teach during the siesta time. This was convenient for the townsfolk who wished to hear him since they could do so without it interfering with their work. It was good for the lecture hall administration who would otherwise have received nothing for that period. It was also a good arrangement for Paul who could then work in the mornings and evenings and teach every day in the afternoon. Seems like it was good for everyone except modern day ministers seeking a salary.

I know that advocates of this idea stick to Mosaic Law verses when trying to support their position. I am not under the Law, so I feel differently. [Gal.5:18] It is also interesting to note that their ministry probably gains personally (financially) from the position they have taken. I'm sure that Workman Ministries would also gain financially *if* it promoted that doctrine. However, knowing the truth has always (in my mind, at least) been more important than getting money. As such, you may notice a difference between the financial policy of WORKMAN MINISTRIES and the financial policies of other ministries.

*What about Gal.6:6? Doesn't it support salaries for Pastors'?*

No, it doesn't. Unfortunately, this verse is frequently (and mistakenly) used to support the idea of a salary for the pastor, or, at the very least, required support. There are two reasons why this is wrong.

1. The first reason is due to the neuter, singular, dative form of the definite article "unto" ("...communicate (or share) 'unto' him that teacheth..."). The dative, definite article identifies the indirect object of the verb (communicate/share). The two likely 'objects' identified are the teacher and the objects to be shared. However, neither is neuter *and* singular. The only neuter, singular object identified in the verse is "word". This means that the object to be shared is not the "good things" (which is plural), but the "word" (which is singular and neuter). The literal Greek states, "And let him share the [one] being instructed [in] the word with the [one] instructing in all good things." It may be paraphrased as thus, "The one being taught should share the Word with the instructor teaching sound doctrines." It refers to a sharing together of insights received when meditating on scripture. This is good for two reasons. The first is that every Spiritually gifted teacher is blessed by growth in their charges. The second is that no teacher has learned *all* there is to know about any scripture.

The second reason is the context of the chapter. These are the 'no-man-is-a-spiritual-island' verses. Verse 6:1 primarily addresses the spiritual realm, rather than the physical. 6:2-5 also primarily address the spiritual realm [cp. 2Cor.10:12-18]. Verses 6:7-9 speak of the spiritual battle in the disciple's life. No reason is given for supposing that 6:6 is a momentary lapse in the context and direction of Paul's message by jumping to the physical realm (salary).