

# STUDY NOTES

ADVENT 2017

A SERIES *at* NEW CITY CHURCH

[www.newcityphx.com/sermons](http://www.newcityphx.com/sermons)

The following content is based on the message “Advent: Joy” on 12/10/17 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these Study Notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

## PRAYER

*Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.*

SCRIPTURE: 2 CORINTHIANS 8:7-9

## WHAT IS A TITHE?

The tithe is an Old Testament concept that goes all the way back to Genesis. Rabbis of the NT period understood the laws as referring to three separate tithes: a Levitical tithe, a tithe spent celebrating in Jerusalem, and a charity tithe. Some people say that Jesus didn't talk about it, but he actually did in Luke.

*“Woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.” - Luke 11:42*

- *What has been your experience with churches talking about tithing/giving?*

## WHY DON'T WE TITHE?

The following are some common reasons why people don't tithe:

- 1) No one sees that I don't tithe.
- 2) I can't afford to tithe.
- 3) I earned the money, so I deserve it.
- 4) I don't trust the church with my money.

5) Tithing doesn't work. I didn't get blessed afterwards.

6) I don't really trust that God will provide for me.

- *Which one of these things resonates with you the most (maybe being the reason that keeps you from tithing or the reason that makes tithing difficult)?*
- *Why is the reason that keeps you from tithing not a healthy reason to withhold tithing?*

## WHAT RETURN ON MY INVESTMENT DO I GET?

The master will not force your offering. Not under compulsion. But, it is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom (Luke 12:32). As we joyfully receive it, we experience his love, taking pleasure in him and giving back.

- *God promises blessing to those who tithe. How would you feel if that blessing is not in the form of extra financial resources, but rather in the form of kingdom blessing?*

Giving to the church might not feel like it provides a return on investment because we can't measure everything that a church does. Some organizations can measure life change by how many houses they build (intervention), but the church can't easily measure how people's lives change by being a part of a local church (prevention). Imagine what could happen in the church left the neighborhood.

- *Why do you think it seems easier to intervene in someone's pain rather than be a part of preventing some pain?*
- *How has your life been impacted by the church in immeasurable ways?*
- *What could change in a city if the local church no longer existed in it?*
- *God never asks people to give something that they don't have. How is God leading you to be more generous with what you've been given?*
- *Pray with each other to have the strength to practice generous living through tithing.*

## SCRIPTURE FOR FURTHER STUDY

### **Some Old Testament Teachings on Tithe:**

Abraham presented a tithe of war booty (swag) to Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18–20).

Jacob pledged a tithe of all his possessions (Genesis 28:22).

Tithes to support the priests (Numbers 18:20–32)

The law in Deuteronomy stipulated that a tithe of agricultural produce would be used for a feast at the sanctuary celebrating God's provision (Deut. 14:22–27).

Same law called for A third year's tithe for care of the priests, orphans, widows, and foreigners (Deut. 14:28–29).

“Beware lest you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.' You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth.” (Deuteronomy 8:17-18)

“Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. 9 You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. 10 Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.” (Malachi 3:8-10)

### **Some New Testament Teachings on Tithe:**

“But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. (Luke 11:42)

“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Luke 12:32-34)

“But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.” (2 Corinthians 8:7-9)

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)