

### *Paying Versus Giving*

In our current times, we find the true concept of giving to be completely misunderstood. For many in religion the concept of giving is like paying one's taxes. This idea is a result of the tithing of the Israelites in the Old Testament and a connection made by many a false teacher to the giving of one's money in the New Testament. Under the Old Testament, the tithe they gave was in essence a flat tax; ten percent of everything that one had was to go to God. Today, we see that taxes are taken out of our checks and given for many government programs to help those who do not have. The problem with these programs is that we mix up taxes with giving.

I believe each person ought to be ready to help his fellow man as much as he can. Furthermore, the church stands ready to help those who are needy, so as to show that we care about them as we also share the Gospel with them. I think these handout programs cause many to think there is no need to give to one in need because, "I already gave with my taxes." However, I don't know a single person alive who gives happily of his money to the government. In fact, many of us spend money on computer programs or accountants to find legal loopholes to keep us from having to pay the government too much.

Yet, we need to understand that taxes are taken from us (we render unto Caesar, Matthew 22:21), and we do not give willingly. If I had a choice, I would never give a penny to our government, but would instead give to the church and to those in need. However, I have no choice because death and taxes are certainties of life.

Despite the government taking money from us, let us remember that God is not glorified by government programs, but He is glorified by His church (Matthew 5:13-16; 6:1-4, 19-21; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 2 Thessalonians 1:12). We are to give cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:6ff) to do the work of the church, knowing that we are pleasing God and bringing glory to Him in these things. Let us be sure to purpose in our hearts to give as we have been prospered by God (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), knowing that all good gifts come from Him (James 1:17).

**[Editor's Note:** There is certainly a difference in attitude between paying for something reluctantly and joyfully giving for some purpose. Yes, the latter ought to characterize the Christian in his giving back to the Lord as we purpose (2 Corinthians 9:7) in line with our prosperity (1 Corinthians 16:1-2) from among all of which Almighty God has made us stewards of what really belongs to Him (Psalm 50:10). ~ Louis Rushmore, Editor]

*By Jeremy Young*