

GOD'S GIVING CHALLENGE

Malachi 3:10-12

Introduction

Luke 12:34, Luke 16:11, Malachi 3:10-12

- I. Tithing is a **Message** of **Priority** with God – Malachi 1:8, 14, Proverbs 3:9-10

- II. Tithing is a **Means** of **Proving** God – Malachi 3:10, Luke 6:38

- III. Tithing is a **Manner** of **Provision** by God – Malachi 3:10, Proverbs 11:24, Malachi 3:11, Hebrews 13:5

- IV. Tithing is a **Method** of **Participating** in God's Work – Malachi 3:10

- V. Tithing is a **Matter** of **Protecting** Your Investment – Matthew 6:19-21

Conclusion

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Getting Started

1. What does our society teach us (e.g., politics, media, and pop culture) regarding the accumulation of money? How does our society view people who have a lot of money (i.e., Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, Donald Trump, etc.)? **Many people admire and respect those with riches and wealth. Still others will endeavor to learn how to create wealth in a similar fashion as those who have gone before. Their motive may be simple: they desire to learn how to make a lot of money for themselves and their families.**

2. As a child, what type of financial philosophy did you see modeled in your home? How was money valued? In what way did your parents view those with more (or less) money than you? **We learned a lot from our family of origin. Recognizing these financial messages helps us stay clear and focused as we move forward in our lesson.**

Going Deeper

1. Read Malachi 3:10-12. In what way can the act of giving money away be a kingdom investment? What thoughts come to mind when you think of giving money away before any other financial option or obligation? **This has been a challenge for many, especially if a person is facing a season of financial challenge and limitation. Pastor Jeremiah said, "What we do with our money and our possessions is a pretty good barometer of our attitudes toward God."**

2. Read Proverbs 3:9-10. Describe your thought process during times when you have practiced the biblical discipline of first fruits. Was it easy or difficult at first? Did it get easier? What did you learn? **The Bible is clear: God – our King and Lord – demands what is best. We are to be committed to excellence in everything we do. He expects the best we have to offer, whether that is with our money, our worship, or anything else we do in His name.**
3. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6, 8. When you give, what do you think? What do you feel (e.g., confident, nervous, excited, fearful, etc.)? **Many have reported that confidence seems to come after (sometimes a long time after) the giving occurs. They believe with their heads that it is a good thing to do, but their emotions don't immediately follow that thinking.**
4. Describe a time when you have practiced financial generosity and have experienced that you were better off after giving than before. **We heard that our outward obedience is evidence of our inner commitment. God has challenged our faith by saying, "You think you cannot afford to tithe? Well, test me. And what you will find is that you cannot afford not to tithe. Tithing is the only safe way to handle your money."**

5. Read Galatians 6:7, 9. Paul says that “in due season” we will reap a reward if we do not lose heart. What thoughts and emotions come up when you discipline yourself in tithing? **Pastor Jeremiah said, “A discipline is something that goes against our natural inclinations and is therefore not always easy. Just as an athlete goes through his exercises even on days when he doesn’t feel like it, so tithing must be accomplished in the face of fear or uncertainty.”**

Applying the Message

1. Trusting in God’s reward system is a daily act of faith. Do you find this type of lifestyle challenging, invigorating, or something else? **Tithing does not come naturally at first. It requires a rigorous decision on the front end. Tithing should not be something we reevaluate each week any more than we reevaluate whether to brush our teeth or do anything else that we believe is a priority for life.**

2. What do you need to do (or stop doing) to move forward in a lifestyle of giving before receiving? **The Bible is clear: you must decide if you are going to trust God, to take Him at His Word. When God says, “Try me now.” That is your invitation to make a decision to trust Him. The only way to decide is to decide now . . . not when things get financially where you want them to be. In fact, the way to get them where you want them to be is to decide today that you are going to obey God in the matter of the tithe. The first step of the discipline is *the decision*.**