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2025 ANNUAL THEME: "HOPE IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTY"

BIBLE STUDY May Theme: Trusting God

Financial Blessings (Malachi 3:8-12)

Topics

- Reflection Questions
- Important Emphasis
- Key Terms
- Scripture Reference
- Outline
- Introduction
- Background and Context
- Exploring The Text
- Check For Understanding
- Life Application

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- A. How do you perceive the act of tithing in your spiritual journey? Is it a mere obligation, or a heartfelt expression of faith?

- B. How can we experience God's provision when we step out in faith regarding giving?

- C. What does it mean to "rob God," and how can we ensure that our actions align with God's expectations?

IMPORTANT EMPHASIS

As Christians we must be willing to accept our responsibility as stewards if we are going to walk in God's supernatural provision. **Genesis 2:15**

Become a skillful manager (Steward) of God's resources and to create and build wealth in **God's economy**

- God has a financial system, and that system is governed by well-defined principles
- God does not have a problem with Christians having money as long as money does not control them. **Matthew 6:21**
- God has a financial system already in place and the Bible Outlines the plan for operating in His system.

The challenge is that people are interested in quick fixes not long-term solutions. What is your financial blueprint? **Matthew 25:14-30.**

The scriptures have much to say about how to properly use money. Dwight Nichols *God's Plan for your Finances* says that 16 of the 38 parables that Jesus gave in the New Testament are concerned with how to handle money and possessions. **1 Timothy 6:10**

Overpowering Blessings Deuteronomy 28:2-4

Overwhelming Grace Psalm 37:25

Overturning Resources Proverbs 13:22

God cannot trust these Christians with larger amounts of money because they are not faithful with what they already have.

Misconceptions about God's economic system. God doesn't need you to be his accountant. **Numbers 11:20**

Misconceptions continue to the present day when a preacher, deacon, trustee, teacher publicly states turn with me to Malachi chapter 3. People cringe instead of being excited to see what further insights can be gleaned from this marvelous minor prophet.

Malachi is about more than Money it speaks against a Mentality

Malachi begins with expressions of love from God.

Both the Jewish and Christian canons the book of Malachi is placed last among the prophets. Malachi is interpreted my messenger or my angel. In the **LXX** interprets Malachi by the hand of Mal' aki (by the hand of his angel or his messenger). Malachi begins with an oracle (massa in the Hebrew) it means to lift up. This is a lifting up of the voice. A prophetic utterance this bespeaks the weightiness of the subject.

The focus is on the temple and worship most likely the construction of the second temple in 515 B.C.

There was a challenge of the insistence that judgement begin with the priesthood is a consistent theme of the book as is the juxtaposition of the people's lack of morality.

Their religious leaders are held especially accountable as those who should model the virtues God desires. There is a connection between worship and praxis.

The disputations underscore the importance of the deity's name and his Sovereign activity in the past, present, and future.

Malachi at a Glimpse

God's Design

- Dispatched a Messenger
- Dependability of the Master
- Distasteful Mentality

God demands Honor and Respect

Why? Poor Service is rendered

- Defiled Food **Mal 1:7**
- Disobedient fellowship **Mal 2:7-10**
- Disappointing God the Father **Mal 3:8**
- Derailing their future. **Mal 3:11**

KEY TERMS

Blessings
Covenant
Devourer
Disobedience
Faithfulness
Fruits
Generous
God
Heaven
Honor

Judgment
Justice
Land
Love
Name
Obedience
People
Prayer
Promises
Robbed

Sacrifice
Sin
Stewardship
Storehouse
Teaching
Test
Tithes
Tithing
Truth
Unfaithfulness

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE

Malachi 3:8-12 (NASB)

8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings.

9 You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you!

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.

11 Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes,” says the Lord of hosts.

12 “All the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land,” says the Lord of hosts.

OUTLINE

I. The Principle of Proportionate Giving (3:8-10)

- A. Purpose: Giving to God's work shows faith and obedience.
- B. Practice: Calculate and commit to regular tithing.
- C. Promise: God ensures abundant blessings for faithful tithing.

II. The Promise of Prosperity (3:11)

- A. Purpose: Trusting in God's protection over our resources and endeavors.
- B. Practice: Learn to seek divine guidance in financial choices and stewardship.
- C. Promise: God ensures our efforts are protected and successful.

III. The Proof of Provision (3:12)

- A. Purpose: Recognizing God's provisions as a testimony to others.
- B. Practice: Share personal testimonies of financial blessings and God's faithfulness.
- C. Promise: God ensures that our generous giving will produce overflowing provision.

INTRODUCTION

There are a number of reasons that individuals give for not tithing.

Christians give several reasons for not tithing, including, but not limited to the following:

- **Financial Constraints**
- **New Testament Interpretation**
- **Lack of Trust**
- **Personal Conviction**
- **Misunderstanding of Tithing**

However, Rev. Dr. Luther S. Allen III provides an excellent challenge or counter to these excuses for not tithing. In a February 2024 issue of the Christian Education Informer, Dr. Allen wrote an article entitled “Mature Generosity: How Giving Glorifies God and Builds God's Kingdom. In the article, Dr. Allen asserts that as believers in God and committed disciples of Jesus Christ, our generosity is an observable, measurable marker of Christian spiritual maturity—since our money and our use of it clearly identify our personal and ideological priorities. When we are open to giving to others, we reflect the nature of God, who gave life to creation. Conversely, when we are selfish and retentive of our blessings, we fail to reflect the love and grace that God has bestowed freely through Christ.

Tithing in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, tithing was a specific requirement for the Israelites. It involved giving a tenth of one's produce and livestock to support the Levitical priesthood, the temple, and religious festivals. This practice was part of the Mosaic Law and was seen as an obligation to maintain the religious and social structure of Israel. Key passages include Leviticus 27:30-32, Numbers 18:21-24, and Deuteronomy 14:22-29. Tithing was a way to acknowledge God's provision and to support the community's spiritual leaders (Malachi 3:8-12). It is also suggested that Levi (although not yet born) paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham in that Levi was “seminally present” in Abraham (**Heb. 7:9–10**).

Tithing in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the emphasis shifts from a legalistic requirement to a principle of **generous** and **cheerful giving**. While tithing is not explicitly commanded, the spirit of giving is encouraged. Jesus mentions tithing in **Matthew 23:23**, criticizing the Pharisees for their legalistic approach while neglecting justice, mercy, and faithfulness. The Apostle Paul emphasizes giving according to one's means and with a willing heart in **2 Corinthians 9:6-7**. The focus is on **generosity**, supporting the church, and helping those in need, reflecting a heart transformed by grace rather than adherence to a specific percentage.

Malachi 3:8-12 addresses the theme of tithing and God's promise of blessings for obedience. The passage begins with a rhetorical question about robbing God, highlighting the people's failure to bring tithes and offerings. God challenges them to bring the full tithe into the storehouse, promising to open the windows of heaven and pour out abundant blessings. This section emphasizes the principle of proportionate giving, the promise of prosperity, and the proof of divine provision. It underscores the importance of faithfulness in giving and the assurance of God's protection and blessings for those who trust and obey Him.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Book of Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament in the Christian Bible and the final book of the Nevi'im (Prophets) in the Hebrew Bible. It is traditionally attributed to the prophet Malachi, whose name means "my messenger" in Hebrew.

The historical context of Malachi is set in the post-exilic period, likely during the 5th century BCE, after the return of the Jewish people from Babylonian exile and the rebuilding of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. During this time, the Jewish community was struggling with issues of religious and social reform. The initial enthusiasm following the return from exile had waned, and the people were facing economic difficulties, spiritual apathy [indifference or laziness], and moral laxity [permissiveness]. The priesthood was corrupt, and the people were neglecting their covenantal obligations, including proper worship and tithing.

The covenantal obligations neglected by the priesthood and the people include:

- **Improper Sacrifices:** The priests were offering blemished and unacceptable sacrifices, violating the covenantal requirement for pure offerings (Malachi 1:6-14).

- **Corruption and Injustice:** The priests were not teaching the law properly and were showing partiality [bias, prejudice, preference, favoritism, and subjectivity], leading to corruption and injustice (Malachi 2:7-9).
- **Faithlessness in Marriage:** The people were being unfaithful in their marriages, including marrying foreign women who worshipped other gods, which was against the covenant (Malachi 2:10-16).
- **Neglecting Tithes and Offerings:** The people were withholding tithes and offerings, robbing God and failing to support the temple and its services (**Malachi 3:8-12**).
- **General Disobedience and Cynicism:** There was a general attitude of disobedience and cynicism [pessimism, sarcasm, skepticism, distrust, and doubt] towards God's commands and promises (Malachi 3:13-15).

Malachi addresses these issues by calling the people and the priests to repentance and faithfulness. He emphasizes the importance of sincere worship, social justice, and adherence to the covenant. The book also contains messianic themes, pointing to a future day of the Lord when God will judge the wicked and purify the faithful.

Our focus for this Bible Study lesson is Malachi 3:8-12, where we are reminded of the importance of faithful stewardship and the abundant blessings that follow obedience to God's commands. This passage offers a powerful promise that if we honor God with our finances, He will open the windows of heaven and pour out an overflowing blessing.

EXPLORING THE TEXT

I. The Principle of Proportionate Giving (3:8-10)

A. Purpose: Giving to God's work shows faith and obedience.

8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you!"

Malachi 3:8-9 addresses the issue of withholding tithes and offerings, which is described as "robbing God." The passage highlights that the people of Israel are under a curse because they have failed to fulfill their obligation to bring the full tithe to the temple. This act of withholding is seen as a sign of their rebellion against God, reflecting a lack of faith and obedience. The text emphasizes the importance of giving as a demonstration of a healthy relationship with God.

Malachi 3:8-9 holds relevance for Christians today as it addresses the concept of faithfulness in giving and the spiritual implications of withholding what is due to God. The passage highlights the idea of "robbing God" by not bringing tithes and offerings, which serves as a reminder of the importance of stewardship and generosity in one's spiritual journey.

Additionally, the passage underscores the promise of blessings and divine provision for those who are faithful in their giving, reinforcing the principle that generosity leads to spiritual and material abundance. (2 Corinthians 9:6-7; Matthew 6:19-21; Acts 20:35; 1 Timothy 6:17-19)

B. Practice: Calculate and commit to regular tithing.

10a Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house,

Malachi 3:10a emphasizes the importance of bringing the full tithe to the temple, ensuring that the needs of the religious community and its services are met. It reflects a call to faithfulness and obedience in giving, highlighting the role of tithing in supporting the spiritual and communal life of the Israelites. (2 Corinthians 8:1-5)

C. Promise: God ensures abundant blessings for faithful tithing.

10b & 10c ...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.

Malachi 3:10b and 3:10c convey a powerful promise from God regarding the blessings that follow faithful tithing. In these verses, God challenges the people to "test" Him by bringing the full tithe into the storehouse. He promises that if they do so, He will "open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows." This signifies that God is willing to abundantly bless those who demonstrate faith and obedience through their giving. The imagery of the "windows of heaven" suggests an outpouring of divine favor and provision, emphasizing that God's blessings will be plentiful and overflowing for those who trust in His promises.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. How does the concept of "robbing God" in Malachi 3:8-10 challenge our current approach to giving and stewardship?

EXPLORING THE TEXT

II. The Promise of Prosperity (3:11)

11 Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes," says the Lord of hosts.

A. Purpose: Trusting in God's protection over our resources and endeavors.

Trusting in God's protection over our resources and endeavors involves several key practices:

Prayer and Reflection: Regularly seek God's guidance through prayer, asking for wisdom in managing resources and making decisions.

Faithful Stewardship: Practice responsible management of resources, recognizing them as gifts from God to be used for His purposes.

Generosity: Embrace a spirit of giving, trusting that God will provide for your needs as you support others and His work.

Scriptural Study: Engage with biblical teachings on stewardship and provision, reinforcing trust in God's promises.

Community Support: Surround yourself with a faith community that encourages and supports your spiritual and financial growth.

By integrating these practices, we demonstrate trust in God's protection and open ourselves to experiencing His faithfulness in our lives. **(Philippians 4:19)**

B. Practice: Actively seek divine guidance in financial choices and stewardship.

To seek divine guidance in financial choices and stewardship, consider the following practices:

Prayer: Regularly pray for wisdom and discernment in financial decisions, asking God to guide your choices.

Biblical Study: Engage with scriptures that address stewardship and financial management, such as Proverbs and the teachings of Jesus.

Consultation: Seek advice from spiritual leaders or mentors who can provide guidance based on biblical principles.

Reflection: Take time to reflect on your financial priorities and align them with your faith values.

Community: Participate in a faith community that supports and encourages responsible stewardship.

By integrating these practices, you can align your financial decisions with your spiritual beliefs and experience God's guidance in your stewardship journey.

C. Promise: God ensures that our efforts are protected and successful.

God ensures that our stewardship efforts are successful by providing guidance, protection, and blessings as we faithfully manage the resources He has entrusted to us. This involves:

Divine Guidance: Through prayer and reflection, God offers wisdom and direction in our financial decisions, helping us align our actions with His will.

Protection: God promises to protect our resources and endeavors, as seen in Malachi 3:11, where He rebukes the devourer to prevent loss and ensure the success of our efforts.

Abundant Blessings: As we practice faithful stewardship, God opens the "windows of heaven" to pour out blessings, ensuring that our needs are met and our generosity is rewarded (Malachi 3:10).

By trusting in God's provision and following His principles of stewardship, we can experience success and fulfillment in our financial and spiritual lives.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

2. How does trusting in God's protection over our resources influence our approach to financial decisions and generosity?

EXPLORING THE TEXT

III. The Proof of Provision (3:12)

12 "All the nations will call you blessed, for you shall be a delightful land," says the Lord of hosts.

- A. Purpose: Recognizing God's provisions as a testimony to others.

In Malachi 3:12a, the phrase "all the nations will call you blessed" signifies that the Israelites will be recognized by other nations as recipients of God's favor and blessings. This acknowledgment comes as a result of their faithfulness in tithing and obedience to God's commands.

- B. Practice: Share personal testimonies of financial blessings and God's faithfulness.

Sharing personal testimonies of financial blessings and God's faithfulness is important because it serves as a powerful witness to others about the reality of God's provision and care. These testimonies can inspire and encourage others to trust in God's promises, reinforcing the idea that faith and obedience lead to tangible blessings. Additionally, sharing such experiences fosters a sense of community and mutual support, as individuals see the impact of God's work in each other's lives. It also helps to build faith, reminding both the speaker and the listeners of God's ongoing presence and involvement in their lives.

- C. Promise: God ensures that our generous giving will produce overflowing provision.

Malachi 3:12b states, "for you shall be a delightful land," says the Lord of hosts. This phrase signifies that the land of Israel will be seen as prosperous and blessed

due to the people's faithfulness in tithing and obedience to God's commands. The abundance and prosperity promised by God will make the land attractive and admired by others, serving as a testament to God's favor and the benefits of living according to His will. This reflects the idea that obedience to God leads to visible blessings and a positive reputation among other nations.

The message in Malachi 3:12b holds relevance for Christians today as it underscores the principle that faithfulness and obedience to God's commands can lead to blessings and a positive impact on one's community. By living according to God's will, Christians can experience spiritual and material prosperity, which in turn can serve as a testament to God's favor. This encourages believers to maintain their faith and commitment, trusting that their actions will not only benefit themselves but also inspire and attract others to the faith.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

3. How can the promise of being a "delightful land" in Malachi 3:12 inspire us to live in a way that reflects God's blessings to others?

LIFE APPLICATION

Think about it—

- In what ways can we test God's faithfulness, as encouraged in Malachi 3:8-12, while maintaining a spirit of humility and reverence?
- How does this Malachi 3:8-12 challenge us to trust in God's promises, even when circumstances seem uncertain?

RESOURCES

Adult Questions for LESSONMaker, LOGOS Bible Software

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