



Malachi 3:7-12

“A Little Lesson In Holy Economics”

October 21, 2012

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“Following Christ From City Center!”

MALACHI 3:7-12 "A LITTLE LESSON IN HOLY ECONOMICS"

1) v.7a,b INDICTMENT AND PROMISE: GENERAL DISOBEDIENCE.

Spoken By Prophet Malachi To All Israel, 500-450BC

a) v.7a General Indictment Of Israel's Forgetting God's Law.

7 From the days of your fathers Legacy = Learned Bad Behavior & Neglect From Forebears!
you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. A Generational Disobedience Problem
One Generation Turns Aside; The Next Generation Is Born Lost

b) v.7b General Invitation And Promise Of Renewed Divine Presence.

Return to me, //James 4:7, Repentance As An Invitation To Presence
and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts (armies). Zechariah 1:3, Lord Of Angelic Armies

2) v.7c THEIR QUESTION: HOW?

But you say, "How shall we return?" Not Even Aware Of Generational Departure

3) v.8a GOD'S COUNTER-QUESTION AND ANSWER.

8 Q Will a man rob God? No, Not In The Long Term
A Yet you are robbing me. A Crime, 8th Commandment, "You shall not steal."
Guess Who Loses?

2') v.8b THEIR QUESTION: HOW?

But you say, "How are we robbing thee?"

1') vv.8c-12 INDICTMENT AND PROMISE: SPECIFIC DISOBEDIENCE.

a) vv.8c-9 Curse: Whole Nation Of Israel.

9 Rom. 1:18-32, A Curse Is When God Leaves Us To Ourselves, Blessing Is Absent
In your tithes and offerings. Offerings Are In Addition To The Tithe (10%)
You are cursed with a curse because you are robbing me; the whole nation of you. National Sin/Judgment
Few Miracles, Conversions, Unity In The Church

b) v.10 Positive Results Of Tithing: Abundance Of Support.

10 Bring the full tithes into the storehouse, Again, Agricultural Imagery
that there may be food in my house; The Temple/National Worship/ Priesthood
and thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, A Dare From God!
if I will not open the windows of heaven (rain?) for you
and pour down for you an overflowing blessing. Agricultural Economy

b') v.11 Positive Results Of Tithing: Protection For Wasting.

11 I will rebuke the devourer (devouring locust) for you, What Eats Away At Prosperity?
so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil; Do You Have A Hole In Your Wallet?
and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts.

a') v.12 Blessing: By All Nations.

12 Then all nations will call you blessed, Promise To Abraham, Genesis 12:3
for your will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts. What If We Were A Church Of Delight?

James 4:7, "Draw near to God and he will draw near to you." God Enables Our Return, Offers A Reward

Matthew 23:23, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you **tithe** mint and dill and cummin (i.e. table spices), and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others." Major In Minors = Avoidance

A LITTLE LESSON IN HOLY ECONOMICS

"Will a man rob God?"

Malachi's sobering question.

M A L A C H I 3 : 8 a

We've all heard stories of *fox-hole* religion. When bullets whizz overhead and when crisis presses in, prayers and vows come easily to the lips, "Help me, O God. If you get me home alive, I promise to..., or never again to..." (you fill in the blank). Though some stick, much more often, when the crisis is past, the vows are forgotten or else renegotiated, as in the case of Burt Reynolds, who in the comic film *The End*:

"... plays a character who's been told he has a terminal illness. Unable to bear the thought of a slow, painful death, he decides to kill himself. But whenever he finds himself in the middle of a suicide plan, he changes his mind. At one point he decides to swim away from the California coast until the shoreline is no longer visible, then drown himself. Once offshore, though, he has the usual lack of courage. With each stroke back he sputters, 'God, if you help me get back to shore, I'll give you fifty percent of everything...' Exhausted, face down on the sand, he pants, 'Thanks God. I won't forget that ten percent.'"¹

Where Burt ended up is where Malachi wanted the people of Israel to end up, not with rash vows made in fear but ten percent given freely and joyfully out of a heart of gratitude across the generations. I like Lyle Schaller's definition: "Tithing is God's way of using just enough of our money to cause us to pray over how we spend all the rest!"²

A Brief Overview Of Tithing

As on many topics, there is a diversity of teaching within the Bible on tithing. The Hebrew

¹ Kenneth Swanson, *Uncommon Prayer* (New York, NY: Ballentine, 1987), 44.

² *44 Ways to Expand the Financial Base of Your Congregation* (Nashville, TN: Abington, 1989), 47.

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word means simply *a tenth part*, and the concept was not confined to the Jews.³ It was common in the ancient world to set aside ten percent of one's possessions for the maintenance of worship and civic functions which were not separated. Most of Israel's neighbors practiced tithing. One female scholar comments, "Every people on earth has realized that there is Something or Someone beyond them which demands their devotion."⁴ The desire to give to God is part of the general revelation planted in every human heart. Therefore, when we read in Genesis 14:20 of Abraham who tithed to the priest Melchizedek, we need to understand it, not as something new, but as something Abraham brought with him into his new relationship with God. It was a symbol of loyalty and devotion God accepted.

It is difficult to systematize the diverse teaching on tithing from the books of Deuteronomy, Numbers, and Leviticus. The specifics of Who? When? and For whom? varied and developed over time. But the underlying assumption is that of Leviticus 27:30. "All the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the trees, is the LORD'S; it is holy to the LORD." The tithe is not like any other resource or money; it is special, set apart unto God and therefore *holy* as a reminder of God's universal ownership. Not yours, not mine, all of it the Lord's, with the tithe as a reminder.

Jesus also had a lot to say about stewardship. Twenty of his twenty-four parables deal with it in some way, but there is little explicitly on tithing, though once, while criticizing the Pharisees he did endorse the accepted practice, as long it was not used as a religious excuse to avoid the weightier issues of justice, mercy, and faith.⁵ As a loyal Jew who came to fulfill the law rather than cancel it.⁶ Jesus no doubt tithed and gave offerings, as did Paul⁷ and the rest of the apostles. But the argument is basically from silence. Is there little mention of tithing in the New Testament because all the authors were Jews and assumed it, or because it was no longer important? I think the former, but you will have to make your own decision.

We know that by the 4th century tithing was compulsory for Christians, that in the 6th century persons were excommunicated for not tithing, and that after the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century the compulsory system was in some places replaced by

³ Bennett W. Smith, *Handbook On Tithing* (Elgin, ILL: Progressive Baptist Publishing House, n.d), 29.

⁴ Elizabeth Achtemeier, *Malachi* (Atlanta, John Know, 1980), 190.

⁵ Matthew 23:23.

⁶ Matthew 5:17.

⁷ Philippians 3:6b.

voluntarism. While Baptists and other sister churches have long emphasized tithing, only in recent years have United Methodists begun to reemphasize the biblical pattern. It might interest you to know that at least 5,000 churches in America require tithing for membership and that many more use it as a litmus test for leadership with the slogan, *Leaders Tithe and Tithers Lead*.⁸ I like that, and at some point in the future it should become the standard here at Main Street. Not the amount because church offices are not for sale, but the percentage; that is what counts, a commitment to grow towards the tithe. Perhaps the best summary of the biblical teaching is that of Charles Isbell in his commentary on Malachi:

"The important point is that there is no push within the biblical text itself to harmonize or to homogenize these different views of tithing into a single universal rule.... Basic to all of the Old Testament passages that mention the tithe... is the assumption that *God is the real Owner of everything that people 'have.'* Tithing, however it was done, was merely human acknowledgment of that fact the people ought to stop and give thanks to God in some meaningful way for allowing them to enjoy His property for a while."⁹

Now to the text before us from Malachi: confrontive, full of promise and blessing. This is the classic biblical text on tithing, and it's goal is church vitality.

Indictment, Promise, And Questions

There is often a difference between responsibility and blame, especially over time. They do not always rest on the shoulders of the same generation. We may be responsible for dealing with pollution or racism or the fact that tobacco causes cancer, though begun by an earlier generation. Pointing to the failings of our forebears, as true as that may be historically, does not lessen our responsibility in the present. They did it to us in some ways, and we will do it to our offspring in different ways. What is the exploding deficit but a bill passed on to future generations? They will have reason to resent us for plundering the treasury and leaving them the tab. It's why God had to command us to honor our parents, because some of their actions are just plain dishonorable. Legacy is always a mixed bag. The generations sin equally, but often in different ways.

You can be assured our great-grandchildren and their historians will say bad things about us as well- and rightly so. What our greed did to the economy, the epidemic of childhood obesity and diabetes, that we let the infrastructure rot and never addressed the

⁸ Schaller, *44 Ways*, 39.

⁹ *Malachi* (Chicago, ILL: Moody, n.d.).

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combination of promiscuity and violence that is current curse of abortion. The Baby Boomers- my generation- embraced wholesale promiscuity in the 1960's, then covered it with convenience abortion in the 1970's, and now we wonder why so many of our children and grandchildren ignore marriage, shack up, and have so many babies out of wedlock with so little conscience. We have trained our children in our favorite sins, and we have not taught them the ways of God. Malachi 3:7 deserves to be inscribed as the epitaph of my generation, "From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them." And to my self-indulgent and coddled generation, the invitation remains open, "Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts."

It is time to unhook ourselves from the obsessions of this me-first, pleasure-first culture and to rebuild the neglected spiritual and moral foundations, and if the church does not take up the task, and if the preachers wimp out from fear and bending to the increasing high-pressures of political correctness, and if we do not get our house in order, who will? I am not a prophet like Malachi; my audience is not the nation but this church. This is where I fight and where the battle is either won or lost. I am not a prophet, but I am a careful observer, and what I see makes me tremble. But perhaps it's always been this way. There is no golden age to which a return can be arranged.

The problem of God's people not tithing in Malachi's day was not new. In fact, it was old. The present generation had not been instructed, so Malachi began with an historical summary: verse 7, "From *the days of your fathers* you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them." One generation wandered off the way, and the next was born in the wilderness. The sins of the parents become the unthinking habits of their children. We are often separated from God's best, not by what we know and violate as what we don't know and therefore ignore. It is the blind spots in a car's field of vision that cause accidents, and it is the blind spots in the church that rob us of God's best. Some of the things we need to know we have not been taught, though they are plainly on the pages of the Bible. What one generation assumes, the next neglects and the third forgets. Every generation has to go back to the basics, and one of those is the discipline of giving the tithe back to God. And for some that will take some time to grow into, but you can start today. Know what percentage you give and take a step forward in 2013.

As a child I was taught to give, a quarter or fifty cents in an envelope on Sunday mornings, but I was not taught to tithe. It was not modeled for me by my parents because it was not taught by our pastors. Our little envelopes did not have the boxes to check for bringing your Bible or your tithe, nor do I ever remember a sermon on the subject till I visited a Baptist Church soon after my conversion. I began tithing shortly after I entered the ministry, and frankly wonder what blessings I missed from not starting the practice earlier. I am a better Christian for marrying Lori, and you will often hear me praise her excellencies,

first because they are all true, and secondly because the men of this church need to get with the program and follow my example! I don't hear enough men bragging on their wives!

The lasting impression from my childhood is that money is secret, not something you talk about at church or at home. The same way with spiritual gifts, prayer for healing, the reality of the Evil One, evangelism, human sexuality, and a number of other critical Christian topics. They were simply not on the menu, and so there were deficiencies in my spiritual diet that needed supplemental nutrition later on. What I received was good stuff; what was left out was also important. I understand now why these topics were avoided (they were uncomfortable and demanding in terms of world view and lifestyle), but that does not free me from responsibility in the present. To say, "Well, I never heard of that before," is no excuse to ignore it now.

Malachi's generation had not been instructed and needed teaching on the tithe. This is why the Lord sent him as prophet and issued such a gracious invitation in verse 7, "Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts." Respond to the grace of God's word through the prophet, and God will manifest his presence. Obey Malachi's word, and God's himself will come to you. That is as close to a spiritual law as I know. Turn to God, and God will turn to you. Pursue the Lord, and he will let himself be found. But don't mistake your turning for your own unaided initiative; underneath your desire for God is God's own gracious desire for you, what we Methodists call *prevenient grace*. Since God always makes the first move towards us, our faith and return is always a response.

An old saint once said to me, "Phil, if you feel far from God, guess who moved?" I wish I could tell you that repentance is a once-for-all deal. It is not. It begins at a point in time but never finishes. All our life long God will be shedding new light from the Spirit-illuminated Scriptures and calling us to turn to him in some new way that forms an ever-rising spiral. The only path to holiness and real happiness is to live in repentance, not sackcloth and ashes but sensitivity to God's perspective. It may look like the same issue over and over but at a new and deeper level. For some it is their tongue, and the Lord will put a check in their spirit whenever they are about to say something they shouldn't. For others it is the issue of honesty in financial matters. For some it is building the habit of Sunday worship. All are forms of repentance. *Repent* is not necessarily an angry word. Basically it means *to turn around* or *change your mind*. Repentance is an invitation to life abundant; it simply describes what it means to walk with God. God gives light, and if you respond, there's a new turn in your life, and the name for this is *repentance*.

When we as believers learn to repent quickly, at the first slight tug of God's bit in our mouth, we learn to live with very little guilt: "Yes, Lord, I hear you. I never saw that before. Thank you for loving me enough to protect me from sinning through ignorance. I turn to you

and change my thinking. Make this new insight a habit in my life." Verse 7, "Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts." It's a law of life. And if we don't turn and return, then guess what? We get to keep going in the same direction, only the now the light gets dimmer and dimmer and the voice fainter and fainter.¹⁰

What an incredible invitation to come home to God, and to do it over and over, each time at a deeper level of love and obedience. In the Book of James the same invitation is restated for a new generation, "Draw near to God, and God will draw near to you."¹¹ If you feel far from God, guess who moved? I assure you that the prayer "Show me where to repent" always gets an answer. I dare you to pray it. "Show me, O Lord, where to repent, how to return to you." I never pray that prayer but what I don't get a swift, specific response.

Questions At The Center

At the center in verses 7 and 8 is an interesting bit of dialog between God and his people. We might laugh if it wasn't so tragic. "*How* shall we return?" they ask, "*How* are we robbing thee? We didn't know anything was wrong. What are you talking about, Mister Malachi?"

The people are absolutely unaware. They're ignorant; their spiritual leaders- their pastors and priests- have failed to teach them. Amnesia has set in, and it is the fault of the preachers! We would all be embarrassed to find out how many pastors do not tithe, and even more the excuses used to justify it. "I give my time, so I don't have to give money." "When they pay me more, I will start giving." I have heard them all, even used them a time or two!

Imagine a leper colony where for five generations all who are born there contract the disease. There is no contact with the outside world. Finally a doctor arrives with medicine for a cure. But the people resist, "How are we ill?" they reply. "It is you who are different. What disease made your skin so smooth?" It is easier to believe a lie you've heard a thousand times than to accept the truth you have heard only once.

None of the ancient Hebrews had a personal copy of the Scriptures. All hand-copied; only a small percentage could read. No printing presses. The people were dependent on the priests who had not been teaching them their duties, so God raised up a new prophet- Malachi. The people were responsible, but they were not to blame. After Malachi they were both, and that is the danger of coming to church week after week. This is not primarily

¹⁰ Romans 1:18-32 is the classic text here. Three times it announces, "God gave them up." In the vernacular, God said, "O.K., have it your way! Your will be done."

¹¹ 4:8a.

entertainment or inspiration; it is instruction and persuasion, meant to be put into practice. If after today you decide to do nothing, whether to begin tithing or at least move in that direction, then you are accountable before God for the truths you have heard, and I am off the hook. Hello? At the end of life I will be asked a question you will not, and it is, Did you teach my people?¹² I intend to be able to say *Yes*.

And at the center of the center of this passage is a question and a contradiction, "Will a man rob God?" I believe Malachi took a long pause after that question to let it sink in. What if God were to reverse the tithe today: "Your income for the next six months will be ten times what you gave in the last six. Thus says the Lord." Would that make you glad, sad, or mad? "Will a man rob God?" No, not in the long run, and maybe not even in the short run. "Yet you are robbing me," is the answer and the contradiction. Who is it that's really missing out here? The last four and a half verses give us the answer.

The Curse And Blessing Of God

It is difficult to know how much, if any, of the biblical material about the nation of Israel is applicable to modern nations. We are not a theocracy ruled by God but a republic ruled by elected officials. But I find myself raising a question when I read about the plague of drugs, a million abortions each year, the murder rate, prison populations, natural disasters, gangs as substitutes for families, the continuing scandal among religious leaders, the decline in sexual morality, and the lack of vitality in our churches: Is the blessing of God with us? Or have we moved out of the light, deeper into the shadows, and towards the darkness? Are we moving into a new age of barbarism? I think so. Verse 9 presents us with a new angle of vision to look at the church first and then the nation, "You are cursed with a curse because you are robbing me, *the whole nation of you*." In the last judgment each individual will give an account, but in history God often deals with wholes, with large groups.

There are lots of ways to rob God. We rob God *doctrinally* when we water down the Christian faith as contained in Scripture and the creeds. We rob God *morally* by ignoring or softening his commands. We rob God *liturgically* by worship that is half-hearted. We rob God *evangelistically* by our fear of speaking the name of his Son Jesus. And all our robbing of God visits itself back on our own heads in spiritual weakness, which is where we now are. On the street they say, "What goes around comes around." But the roots are in Galatians 6:7, "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, *for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap*." In other words, we create the messes in which we live and pass on to the next generation. And the only way forward and the only way up and the only way out is repentance, to accept God's invitation, "Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord."

¹² See James 3:1.

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I few years back I had a friend who was living in rebellion against God. Despite patient counsel he refused to repent or even acknowledge his sin. I laughed when he told me everything he had was breaking all at one time. His income was adequate, but there was a hole in his wallet. Just when he was about to get even, something else broke. This is more than Murphy's law. It's God's law, and the name for this process of resistance is *a curse*. It is the opposite of blessing, understood as God lifting the right hand of protection and pressing with the left hand of judgment. But God in his unchanging mercy put a new co-worker beside my disobedient friend, a new and vibrant Christian. Even while judgment was pressing down, mercy was nearby! No one escapes Murphy's Law; it's part of living in a fallen and frustrating world. But there is a place beyond Murphy when we spoil everything we touch. At such times it is good to ask the Malachi question, "Where did the blessing go? And what is God saying?"

The two primary benefits of tithing are found in verses 10-11; they are abundance and protection. You have enough, and it is protected.

These were lean times in Israel. No one had seen a dark cloud in months. The ground was powder, the wells low, and the grain stood stunted and brown. The agricultural situation was bad and getting worse, sort of like our economy. Hello?

Conventional wisdom says that in hard times you give less to preserve what you have. But Malachi, who has God's fresh word of prophecy, invites Israel to do just the opposite and take a gamble with the Lord: verse 10:

"Bring the full tithes 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 an overflowing blessing."

Their felt need was rain. What's yours as an individual? Ours as a church? As a nation? Rain may still be one of them. How about a new hunger to know and seek God? Loss of appetite is a sign of illness, the doctors say. What about when people are hungry for everything but God's presence? Is that not a sign of advanced spiritual disease?

This issue of honoring God with a tithe off the top is not tit-for-tat, nor is it God the heavenly banker or slot machine. It is not mechanical but personal and covenantal. Tithing is an opening on my side and a channel from God's supply to my need on the other, whatever that need may be. Tithing gives me confidence to pray when there is a need, financial or otherwise: "You and I are in relationship, Lord, and the tithe is a symbol of that relationship. Therefore I ask you to meet this need as you see fit, and if you don't mind my suggestion, here it is...." I pray that way all the time.

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In order to understand the promise of protection found in verse 11 we need a little lesson in weather and in entomology (i.e. the study of insects). During a time of drought in the Middle East, locust eggs fall into the sand and invisibly accumulate. You can't see them, but disaster is waiting to happen. Then, when the rain finally comes, the microscopic eggs burst forth and the insects swarm in such numbers as to block out the sun and eat everything in sight. But God promises *to rebuke* the devouring locust for his people (literally, "the one that eats") and thus to interrupt the natural biological processes you would expect. Tithing is like insulation in a house; it doesn't keep all the cold out, but it does make a big difference.

You see, if you don't have God's protection, you need a lots of money as insulation, because something, or rather Someone, will always be eating at what you have. How much is enough when you aren't walking with God? But if you have God's protection, you don't need as much. Things last longer. Driving an old car doesn't bother you. You don't try to impress people with the quality of your stuff but with the quality of your life.

Did you know that without God's protection God's provision isn't much good? Did you know that with tithing comes an extended warranty on everything you own? Ask anyone who tithes. I have never in thirty-five years as a pastor met anyone who tithes who regrets it. God asks a seventh of our time- a Sabbath, a tenth of our wealth- a tithe, and all of our heart. Sabbath keeping and tithing are two foundation stones of a healthy lifestyle and a solid financial plan. It is God's wisdom for our rest and our provision.

Did you know that there is an indirect relationship between tithing and seeing people come to Christ? The direct relationship is that tithing funds church staff, programs, building payments, missions, and training opportunities. But listen to verse 12, "Then *all nations* (that sounds like the Great Commission to me) will called you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts." God's desire was to so bless Israel that people would be drawn to them as to a magnet.

As in atomic physics, there is a critical mass in giving when the reaction takes off to release great energy. A tithing church is a happy church. This is the indirect relationship. No money problems and the only arguments are about where to spend it for good, not whether we have it or not. A tithing church can say to visitors, "Let the plate pass you by today. Feast on our abundance. We won't pester you with sales and raffles. A tithing church might be able to make sure none of its members were on public assistance. We finance God's work God's way." A tithing church is a delight to lead because it frees pastors from always pestering God's people about money, so make me a happy guy!

Conclusion

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When you go to buy that new car, or trade up to your dream house, or make a new investment, or max out your plastic, or indulge yourself in any way, first ask the Malachi questions:

- 1) Am I using God's tithe for my lifestyle?
- 2) Do I sense God's blessing and protection in my life?
- 3) Is my church a delight because we are obeying God together?
- 4) Are diverse peoples, what Malachi calls *the nations*, being drawn to the Lord because his people are such an attractive alternative?

That is the starting point in holy economics. It's about issues much larger than money. Will you be a part of what God wants to do here? You have two weeks to decide.

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October 21, 2012, Main Street UMC

STUDY AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS ON MALACHI 3:7-12

3:7a-b

1. According to v.7 who sinned first? Who bore the consequences?
2. How are the sins and omissions of the fathers and mothers passed on? What are some of the sins that our parents' generation has passed on to us?
3. How is v.7b a call to an *about-face*? Do you think they noticed God's absence?
4. Why must God raise up prophets when the pastors, priests, parents, and teachers are not doing their jobs? When important material has been strategically neglected?

3:7c-8b

5. How is the question, "How shall we return?" a positive initial response?
 6. Notice how v.8a answers their question with a question, "Will a man rob God?" How is answering a question with a question a good teaching device? How jolting is the answer, "But you are robbing me?" Which of the ten commandments does this break?
 7. Notice how the "How" question of v.8b stands in parallel to the earlier "How" question in v.7c. This sets up the idea that to return to God they must quit stealing from him. Discuss this concept. Have you asked God to show you the specific issues and details in which you are to return to him? What if you asked?
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8. The answer to the second “How” question is much longer. Remember that Malachi is speaking to the nation as a whole, and to individuals within the whole. What is the difference between the “curse” and the “blessing” of God in this passage?
9. Why is it so easy to use God’s money for our purposes? Why so many excuses?
10. In an agricultural economy where crops were wealth, what would it mean for God to literally “open the heavens” and send down abundant rain? To “rebuke the locust?”
11. How is v.12 the opposite of vv.8c-9. What would it mean for church to be a *delight*?

Biblical Tithing Principles

The Lordship Principle

The tithe is one of the most basic relational covenants between man and God—it is a dedication of all our property and a recognition that everything we have comes from the Lord. (Genesis 28:20-22)

The Tenth Sheep Principle

The tithe was never intended to be complicated—the tenth part is a biblical symbol of the whole, and our way of consecrating all we have for the Lord’s use. (Leviticus 27:32-33)

The First Fruits Principle

It is never God’s intention to deplete man of his resources, but through faith and obedience to release to him the blessing and abundance of His resources. (2 Chronicles 31:5)

The Storehouse Principle

The tithe is not used for the meeting personal needs or directed by personal agendas, the ultimate purpose is that there would be no lack in the house of the Lord. (Malachi 3:8-10)

The Relationship Principle

Jesus emphasized that tithing was not to be merely a loveless ritual, giving us a false sense of pride, but that it was to be given in the context of our loving relationship with God. (Luke 11:42)

The One Heart Principle

The tithe is one of the most powerful expressions of unity in a community of believers, and demonstrates a greater ability to accomplish God’s will together than as individuals. (Acts 4:32-35)

The Joyful Giver Principle

Since the sacrifice of faith offered by Abel (Genesis 4:4), the joyful offering of material possessions remains a beautiful reflection of the love that God first showed us in the sacrifice of His Son. (2 Corinthians 9:7)
