

“Returning to God with Giving”

Malachi 3:7-12

Introduction

When children play together, whether they know each other or are playing together for the first time, they are often unwilling to share their toys. Their little hands may grip a toy tightly, stubbornly refusing to allow another child to play with it. It is almost as if they think they must protect what is theirs because nothing more will be provided for them. Christians who do not willingly give their resources to God are like these stubborn children. They do not recognize that everything belongs to God and not to them, and He is worthy of their trust. Giving is the tangible way committed believers demonstrate their love for and dependency on God.

Giving can easily be overlooked, but giving is crucial because it reveals whether or not we, as believers, recognize God as our source. When we do not give, we are not depending upon God as the foundation of all we possess. We are essentially stealing from God, as the people of Israel once did. To take what should go to God and use it for other purposes is theft. Many people are living with theft—stolen cars, stolen houses, stolen possessions—because they use God's money to get those things. Giving reflects our level of spiritual commitment. If we do not give, we are not committed to God being our provider and our spiritual priority.

Giving also provides the resources for impactful ministry by building up the storehouse. In the Old Testament, the storehouse was where ministry took place regarding food provision and the ministry of the Word. It was where both physical and spiritual needs were met. In the New Testament, the storehouse is the church. When the people of God do not give, they deprive the church of the necessary resources to minister to people physically and spiritually.

Giving involves both tithes and offerings. Tithing is the biblical practice of giving ten percent of one's income. An offering is what one gives over and beyond the tithe, simply out of gratitude for what God has done. When we withhold our tithes and offerings from God, which truly belong to Him, we lose the experience of God's presence. Our disobedience blocks the intimacy of our relationship with God. On the other hand, when we give generously, we experience God's blessing. The window of Heaven will be opened to us, and even the curse of blessings we have lost in the past can be reversed. God's blessings will overflow in our lives. However, we cannot expect these blessings if we are stealing from God. He is patiently waiting to restore our relationship with Him and pour out His blessings on us if we will simply return to Him through our generous giving.

Getting Started

1. Why is giving a difficult topic or one that many Christians overlook?
2. What does giving or a lack of giving reveal about a person's view of God?

Let's Get Personal

1. What does your giving say about your spiritual commitment to God? What keeps you from giving?
2. How has your view of giving changed in light of this message? How will you approach giving differently?
3. How is the church affected when people do not give? What ministry opportunities are prevented by a lack of giving?

Take the Next Step

1. In what ways do you need to trust God more as your source and provider?
2. What current opportunities do you have to be generous with your tithe and offerings?
3. How has giving been a blessing in your life? How can you share your story of blessing with others?
4. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: Malachi 3:7-12; Luke 6:38; 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; Proverbs 3:9-10; Deuteronomy 26:1-15; Deuteronomy 14:23; Leviticus 27:30; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; 1 Chronicles 29:9; Hebrews 7:8; Philippians 4:15-19.
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Renew Your Mind

“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.”

Malachi 3:10
