

THE BLESSED LIFE—2
THE BLESSED TEST

GOD IS TESTING YOU

Here's what I hope you will understand as we are talking about 'The Blessed Test'; God is actually testing you. He wants to know if we are going to be faithful. Here is the question if you are taking notes, God wants to know this; God wants to know, Will you love and trust money, or will you love and trust God? God wants to know, will you love and trust money and things, and material resources, or will you love and trust God?

- **WILL YOU LOVE AND TRUST MONEY OR WILL YOU LOVE AND TRUST GOD?**

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. 11 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? Luke 16:10-11

You see, here is what God knows; God knows that for most of us money and things will be the number one competitor for our hearts. Truthfully, many of you, you are going to find yourself wanting to be defensive as you hear this. The reason is because for most of us, money is the number one competitor for our hearts, because money is a counterfeit god. Money promises what only God can provide. Let me show you four things.

MONEY PROMISES WHAT ONLY GOD CAN PROVIDE

- **SECURITY / FREEDOM / POWER / SIGNIFICANCE**

Money promises.....

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. Matthew 6:24

Do you understand that money / material possessions can become a counterfeit god.

The love of money is the root of all evil.

Are you going to love and trust money, or are you going to love and trust God?

Now, most of us would say, "You know, I like money, I need money, I could use more money; but, I don't love money.

I don't love money, if it's the root of all evil, that's not me. I need money, and I wish I had more, but I don't love it."

10 Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income. Ecclesiastes 5:10

THE BLESSED TEST

- **I WILL GIVE GOD MY FIRST AND MY BEST SO HE CAN BLESS THE REST.**

A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD. Leviticus 27:30

(the Hebrew word for tithe is the word ma`aser, it means a tenth)

Story..... "I Am The Lord Of Your Fries!"

8 "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me." But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse — the whole nation of you — because you are robbing me. Malachi 3:8

The people began to give less than their best! Defective animals....

In a sense, serving leftovers to a Holy God. God basically said, alright if you don't want to remember me, I will just let you do it without me. All of a sudden their crops were not doing as well and the economy tanked and he said if you want to ignore me, let's see how well it goes for you.

Does that sound familiar to us? Just look at our nation!

THE BLESSINGS OF THE TITHE

1) TITHING PROVIDES FOR GOD'S WORK THROUGH HIS CHURCH.

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Malachi 3:10a

Tithe is one of the ways that I determine whether or not someone is committed to our church!!!

Understand what I mean.... Who is going to benefit more a spectator or a participant?

Spectators are those that... They come, They eat, and They leave.

Participants are those that... Their plugged in, growing, serving fellowshiping , Living Life Together!

It is my opinion that if the church would rise up and give the tithe, we wouldn't need the government to meet people's needs, the church could meet people's needs in the Name and for the Glory of Jesus Christ, when God's people return the tithe. The tithe provides for the work of God through His church.

2) TITHING TEACHES ME TO PUT GOD FIRST.

The purpose of tithing is to teach you always to put God first in your lives. Deuteronomy 14:23 TLB

I can tell you who is a tither and who's not. It is so clear. You might as well hold up a sign, it is so clear. The tither's are kicked back smiling and nodding, chilling, blessed, relaxed and the rest of you are going, "Crud, holy cow, wished we hadn't come today!

Are you telling me 10%, are you crazy? You have no idea!" You are worried! "Do you realize 10%, do you know what that would take? I mean, we would have to rearrange everything! You tell me 10%! I would have to reorganize! Re-prioritize and make major changes to put God first! Is that what you are telling me?" "YES! YES! THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'M TELLING YOU! THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT I'M TELLING YOU!

There is a very tangible and practical way that you would having the honor of rearranging your life to say, "I choose to put God first!" I may not drink my expensive coffee to put God first! I may not have Cable TV to put God first! I may drive my car for 5 years instead of 3 years to put God first!

3) TITHING INCREASES MY FAITH IN GOD.

Here is what it does; it teaches me that 90% with the blessings of God goes further than 100% without

The tithe; it teaches you to trust God! It builds your faith! Here is the crazy thing, God is testing us; but not only that, in this one area, he let's us test Him back. This is the only place in Scripture we are allowed to test Him.

'Test me in this,' says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.' Malachi 3:10b

Here is the thing; in the Bible numbers represent different things. Seven is God's number the number of perfection, 6 is one less than perfection, Satan's number 666; different numbers mean different things. Ten is often a picture of the number of testing.

Think about this; when God tested us for obedience, how many commandments did he give us? Say it aloud; God gave us Ten Commandments.

When God tested Pharaoh's heart in the Old Testament, how many plagues did he send to test Pharaoh's heart? He sent Ten.

In the New Testament, how many virgins were tested to see if they were prepared for the return of the bridegroom? There were ten.

How many lepers were healed to test to see who would come back to give gratitude to Jesus? There were Ten.

How many disciples did Jesus have? There were? Actually twelve! I was just testing you! Okay!

Ten is the number of testing, and God wants to know, will you love and trust money, or will you love and trust God?

Will you return 10% to God? Here is the deal, you can test him.

"Test me" God says. This is the test, this is the bless test. Now, let me just pause for a moment, because many of you right now, you in your mind are saying, "But the tithe is under the Law, we are not under the Law anymore." Okay, and what I have seen is for years, people use that as a rationalization to explain away the tithe. Here is what you need to understand. The tithe predated the Law. Abraham tithed to Melchizedek 400-plus years before the Law.

...For you are careful to tithe even the tiniest income from your herb gardens, but you ignore the more important aspects of the law—justice, mercy, and faith. You should tithe, yes, but do not neglect the more important things. Matthew 23:23 NLT

You need to get over your fear, look at Jesus clearly affirming it in the New Testament. It was assumed, it was the beginning point, it was the beginning point.

You want to argue Old Testament - New Testament; in the New Testament the standard always goes up.

The Old Testament says, "Don't murder." In the New Testament Jesus says, "Don't hate." The standard went up.

Old Testament says, "Don't commit adultery, in the New Testament Jesus says, "Don't lust." If you've lusted you've committed adultery in your heart. Standard goes up.

Old Testament says, "Tithe." New Testament says, "Your life." It's everything!

The tithe is the beginning place. It breaks the grip of materialism and trust in money and things and we return to God what belongs to God.

And here is what we give, we give our first and our best to God, so He can bless the rest. It is an act of faith and worship, which is exactly how God gave to us. We give our first and our best.

Matthew 23:23, you are going to see in the New Testament, Jesus unquestionably, clearly affirms the tithe; in the New Testament. Sure, the tithe as Law has gone away, the tithe as principle is here to stay.

WE GIVE TO GOD FIRST

- IT REQUIRES FAITH TO GIVE FIRST. IF YOU GIVE LAST, IT DOESN'T REQUIRE FAITH.

Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing...
Proverbs 3:9-10

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

What did God do? God gave his first, His one and only Son, His best, when did He give? He gave before we believed. He gave first, believing that we would see His gift to us, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son", that when we saw that, that our only reasonable response would be to give Him our whole lives. God gave first, and we give our whole lives back.