

Testing God | Malachi 3:7-12

From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?' Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithe 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 a blessing until there is no more need. I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts. Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts.

Disobeying God

1. The Accusation

2. The Challenge

- a. "To procrastinate obedience is to disobey God." - Randy Alcorn

3. The Proof

- a. "You have sown much, and harvested little. You eat, but you never have enough; you drink, but you never have your fill. You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm. And he who earns wages does so to put them into a bag with holes." (Haggai 1:6)

Disregarding God

1. Mosaic Covenant

2. The Purpose of Tithes & Contributions

- a. "Every 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." (LEVITICUS 27:30)
- b. "AND WHEN THE LORD YOUR GOD BRINGS YOU INTO THE LAND THAT HE SWORE TO YOUR FATHERS, TO ABRAHAM, TO ISAAC, AND TO JACOB, TO GIVE YOU—WITH GREAT AND GOOD CITIES THAT YOU DID NOT BUILD, AND HOUSES FULL OF ALL GOOD THINGS THAT YOU DID NOT FILL, AND CISTERNS THAT YOU DID NOT DIG, AND VINEYARDS AND OLIVE TREES THAT YOU DID NOT PLANT—AND WHEN YOU EAT AND ARE FULL, THEN TAKE CARE LEST YOU FORGET THE LORD, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, OUT OF THE HOUSE OF SLAVERY." (DEUTERONOMY 6:10-12)
- c. "By defunding their priests, they silenced the spiritual instructors and public worship that intended to remind them that their economic alienation flowed from their spiritual alienation from God. By defunding the tithe, they undercut the safety net structure designed to assist those suffering extreme poverty. They were unwittingly starving the very mechanisms to alleviate their own poverty by defunding the religious and social structures that God had provided for their spiritual and material enrichment." (Matthew Harmon)

3. Fulfillment

- a. "But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you —see that you excel in this act of grace also." (2 Corinthians 8:7)
- b. "Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- c. "On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come." (1 Corinthians 16:2)

Delighting in God

1. Testing God & The Prosperity Gospel

- a. "When we pray, believing that we have already received what we are praying, God has no choice but to make our prayers come to pass. . . . It is a key to getting results as a Christian." (Creflo Dollar)
- b. "There are certain laws governing prosperity revealed in God's Word. Faith causes them to function." (Kenneth Copeland)

2. Why this example? Giving exposes idols of the heart.

- a. "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs." (1 Timothy 6:10)
- b. "I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:1-2)

3. Conviction & Repentance

- a. "Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:10)
- b. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9)

Benediction | 2 Corinthians 8:9

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