

"THE TITHE CHALLENGE"

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- **Malachi 3:8-12 (NKJV)** "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. ¹⁰ Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try 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 such blessing that *there will not be room enough to receive it.* ¹¹ "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," says the LORD of hosts; ¹² and all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land," says the LORD of hosts.
- Why is 'giving' so important and why do I (Pastor) speak on tithing?
- "Bring all the tithes . . . try/put Me to the test . . . pour out blessing . . . rebuke the devourer."
- This is the Bible . . . a basic truth! It is fundamental to the Christian life!
- Earlier in the scriptures, the writer ask, "How do we turn back to the Lord," and the Lord ties tithing to their 'returning' to Him.
- I am speaking with an appeal today . . . as a question . . . why would Christians not tithe? I have been wrestling and struggling with this for a long time. If this passage is in the Bible, and it is actually God speaking to His people, saying this is the way you return to Me in your tithe and offerings, "bring the tithe, I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes", then why don't Christians tithe? My wife and I have followed this for many years. I have personally tithed long before I was called into the ministry (since the age of 11 years old). When we didn't have enough for food or bills, we would still give the tithe first as a conviction of our heart. Even in most difficult times in our lives, God always brought us out on top.
- Statistics in our nation say that a very small percentage of Christians tithe . . . and then Christians wonder why their needs aren't met!
- God says, "I will bless you."
- Blessing: tangible and intangible favor (money, tangible; favor-blessing, intangible).
- Having money or not having money is not the issue. Living in the favor of God means there is NO WORRY! If all monetary sources dry up, God is still our source . . . not my job, or the government!
- There are so many who say they love God, and worship Him, yet they struggle with giving the tithe.
- Tithe: the first tenth, off the top!
- Two answers why people don't commit to giving God the tithe of everything they receive: 1) Because they doubt the integrity of God's Word, whether or not it is true. 2) Because they think God may not keep His promise. (How can I tithe? I don't have enough now to live!)
- BUT GOD SAID HE WOULD PROVIDE!
- **Hebrews 6:13-16 (NKJV)** For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, ¹⁴ saying, "*Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.*" ¹⁵ And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. ¹⁶ For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation *is* for them an end of all dispute.
- This is a discussion about God's integrity and whether He keeps His Word and He is believable!
- "Men indeed swear by the greater" . . . saying, "I promise, I give my word," carries weight. When we're not believed, we may say, "May God strike me with lightning if I don't keep my word" . . . that is something greater. When we say that, we believe God may just do that if we don't keep our word, but we do it to add weight to our integrity. (I wouldn't recommend you do this . . . just give your word!)
- If we say we swear on a 'stack' of Bibles, we don't really believe in God's integrity, because we don't need a stack of Bibles, we only need one Bible! A 'stack' of Bibles is no more true than one Bible!
- What would happen if we really took Jesus at His Word?
- If we understand verse 16, and go back to verse 13, we see it more clearly, "because He can swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself."
- "He swore by Himself" means God was swearing and placing His character, His integrity, and His throne on the line.

God was saying, if I don't keep My Word, My throne is no longer valid, My authority is no longer good, and I am no longer God! His character and integrity are not!

- When God makes a promise and says . . . bring your tithe, and surrender it to Him, and He will pour out a blessing that *there will not be room enough to receive it*, and He will rebuke the devourer . . . for Him to not keep His Word, He would have to disown His throne, and His very nature as God.
- For a Christian to say, "I love God, but I'm not a tither!" is saying, I love God but if I can't make it now on 100%, I can't see how I can make it on 90%!"
- God is saying I will put my grace on the 90% so that you will be blessed and have your needs met. I am committing My throne and My very God-head on this fact that you can trust Me, that I want to bless you more than you want to be blessed. I will bless you!
- Tithing isn't about money! It is about discipleship, and who you are as a Christian, and lordship!
- Are you going to tear out the pages of the Bible you don't want to believe? If you decide what you want to believe, then how do you decide which ones you don't?
- In Romans 10, it says we shall be saved, and other passages say we will have eternal life. We believe God has forgiven us of our sins, and we have a ticket to Heaven. We believe those scriptures that say these things because WE WANT TO BELIEVE THEM! Do you know why you don't believe the scriptures about tithing, and God blessing? Because you don't want to believe those scriptures.
- If you decide which scriptures you want to believe, then I ask, "Who is God? Who is in charge?" You are if you negotiate and reason the scriptures you choose to believe. If you negotiate, you are in charge!
- The way people reason is ridiculous . . . trying to figure out how to not believe scriptures, and not obey them.
- The "Word" is our LIFE! Lordship is taking God at His Word . . . not negotiating/analyzing it, to decide whether to believe the Word or not. It's saying "YES" to the Lord, that He owns our life, and if it's in the Word you are going to believe it without scrutinizing it.
- Example: Adultery in the Old Testament was, "Don't have sex with." Adultery in the New Testament was, "Don't even lust in your mind!"
- Example: In the Old Testament it says the tithe belongs to the Lord. In the New Testament everything you are and have belongs to the Lord.
- In many countries tithing isn't an issue. But in America, many have 'American independent attitude'.
- Many don't tithe but will rail against liberals who believe in homosexuals being ordained, when both are believing whatever they want.
- Do you believe the integrity of God's Word? Saying you can't afford to tithe is saying you don't trust God.
- **Hebrew 6:17 (NKJV)** Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath ¹⁸ that by two Immutable things, in which *it is* impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.
- Confirmed two Immutable things . . . it is impossible for God to lie. 1) Promise: God said, "I promise you." 2) God confirmed promise with an oath (pledge), covenant cut in blood, a guarantee that God is keeper of His Word.
- God is the ultimate Creator God; He needs nothing.
- 'oath' means: fence in, limit, restrain
- God 'fenced in' Himself and restrained Himself to His Word. What He is saying is, if you tithe, I (GOD) have to commit Myself to My Word and bless you.
- Who are we that God our Creator respects us so much that He would swear by Himself in order to get His promises to us!
- Some say, "He is my Savior, but not my Lord!" God is one and the same; He can't be one or the other!
- I am presenting you make a four-month tithe challenge to prove God. It is about God keeping His Word; prove Him and put Him to the test. When you cast all your 'cares' on Him, you have no more worry . . . it's not about me or you, it is about God!
- God, I'm going to commit my tithe to You because of Your Word. If I go under, God, it's your fault, not my fault!
- Do you honestly believe the Bible? Then tithing is part of your Christian worship!
- Three options: I am a tither; I am taking the tithe challenge today; I am disobedient to God.
- I want to pastor 'tithers'! This house has so much to do for God! We must all be together!