

Primary Scripture:

Mal. 3:5-10 “So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,” says the LORD Almighty.

“I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. 7 Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says the LORD Almighty.

“But you ask, ‘How are we to return?’

“Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

“But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’

“In tithes and offerings.

9 You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. 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 there will not be room enough to store it.

Secondary Scripture:

2 Cor. 9:6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

2 Cor. 9:7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2 Cor. 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

Discussion Questions:

1) We're in a series about intentionally living beyond ourselves to invest in God's Kingdom. But we often feel stretched. In what ways do you feel stretched? Do you have a specific example of being financially or time wise or with energy?

2) If you had triple the money, time and energy than you have now, what of God's causes would you love to invest more in? (This is not a trap question, it is fun to dream of God's causes.)

3) Last week we discussed margin and contentment as the keys to feeling rich. Have you had any thoughts or discussions on this?

4) Today we asked the lifelong difficult question, "What is God's and what is mine?" How do you approach answering this question?

5) In the message we challenged everyone to consider that if something is God's, it is "returning" not "giving." If this is true, how does this shift your approach?

6) The Old Testament describes "tithes, free will offerings and sacrificial offerings." The New Testament describes giving sacrificially and cheerfully. The authors of Scripture seem to delineate different forms of giving. We can tend to just consider giving of a paycheck, but what other incomes or ways can we be generous?

7) We challenged people to "scheme to give the way you scheme to spend." Do you know anyone who loves to be generous? What do they love about it? What experiences of giving or receiving generosity have you loved? And when God tells us in Malachi that we are robbers, this is the concept he's getting at.