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"That was the best sermon on giving I've ever heard."

Four Steps To FINANCIAL FITNESS

Pastor Dan Barfell | 1.29.12

Step 4:

I the LORD do not change.
Malachi 3:6

Introduction:

• Here we are at the final step of *Four Steps to Financial Fitness*. So far we've begun to:

1. Think like _____, not owners
2. Manage _____ and
3. _____ debt

The fourth step to Financial Fitness is deeply and irrevocably imbedded in the "_____ of God.

Pastor Dan

I the LORD do not change.
Malachi 3:6

To prove His point that He is the unchanging God of the universe, the Almighty One explained that His immutability was the very reason they had not been destroyed.

Generations earlier, God had promised Jacob:

- A _____ and community of nations.
- _____ will come from his body.
- The _____ to him and his descendants. (Genesis 35:9-13)

But Jacob's descendants "turned away from my decrees and have not kept them." Throughout the Old Testament, God repeatedly _____ with His people to return to Himself.

Return to Me and I will return to you. (v. 7b)

Here, in Malachi 3:7, after pleading with His people to return to Himself, this God who does not change, poses the question He knew was on their mind:

But you ask, 'How are we to return?' Malachi 3:7

God's answer: **Stop** _____ **Me!**
Will a man rob God? Yet you rob Me. (v. 8)

The next question God anticipated they would ask logically follows:
But you ask, 'How do we rob You?'

God's answer: **You are robbing me by not**

...in tithes and offerings. You are under a curse – the whole nation of you – because you are robbing me. (v. 8b-9)

The Fourth Step to Financial Fitness is simply stated in one word:

Not Tithing = Robbing God = Under a _____.

Here's What God Says About Tithing

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse. (v. 10a)

"Tithe"

- Means _____.
- Belongs to the _____.
(Leviticus 27:30-32)
- Is always given _____.
(Proverbs 3:9, 10)
- _____ the rest of the 90%.
(Romans 11:16)

Tithing = Not Robbing God = _____.

The "storehouse" today is the _____
_____.

Here's Why God Says, 'Bring The Whole Tithe Into The Storehouse'

That there may be food in my house. (v. 10b)

Bringing the tithe into the storehouse is God's way for _____
_____ to:

1. Provide food for the priests, their families, and the other temple helpers. They, in turn, are to tithe also. (Numbers 18:21,24,26)
2. Help feed the _____ fairly and efficiently. This was perpetuated in the 1st Century Church in Acts 2:45; 6:1-4.

The local church is God's ordained vehicle for kingdom advancement and community transformation.

3. Demonstrate our _____ and _____ to the Lord.

Here's What God – WHO DOES NOT CHANGE – Promises About Bringing the Whole Tithe into the Storehouse:

"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!" (v. 10c)

Test Me –

_____ + _____ =

My Action Step for God's Challenge (choose only one)

- I am already walking with the Lord, tithing, and experiencing God's blessing and will continue to do so joyfully.
- I am not tithing now and am not going to.
- I will think about this further.
- I need to 'return to the Lord' in several areas of my life.
- I am going to test God for a reasonable amount of time (at least 3-6 months) by returning to Him and bringing my whole tithe into the storehouse (out of pure motives – love and obedience) and will expectantly wait to see how He truly blesses me.