

Small Group & Personal Study

This Weeks Memory Verse: Malachi 3:10

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 you will not have room enough for it.

Small Group Study Questions:

Meditate on this weeks the memory verse, Malachi 3:10

Read Proverbs 3:5-10

1. Why do you think so many of us are reluctant to give our whole offerings to God?

I believe it is two things we struggle with in life when it comes to this subject; faith and idolatry.

First, the lack of faith and trust in God to do what he says he would do. I see that in both Malachi 3:10 and Proverbs 3:5-10. We are told to trust God. God doesn't say to us; let me show you first so you will trust in me. Instead, he says trust in me and I will show you my faithfulness. That requires faith! Jesus said to Thomas, "because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet have believed." John 20:29. We are blessed by God when we demonstrate faith.

Second, we have accepted money as an idol. We can behave in a way that money is what is most important in life. We believe that having more will somehow make our lives complete, therefore we are driven to greed and selfishness. Jesus said, "no one can serve two masters. Either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money." Matthew 6:24. When we have a perspective of our money and our gifts from God we can use them to His glory. The bible doesn't say money is the evil but rather the love of money. 1 Timothy 6:6-10 says, "6But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

2. How is failure to bring forth our offerings a condition of the heart? What does it say about our trust in God? What does it say about our worship?

Let people share their thoughts on these questions.

Proverbs 3:5 says, "trust with all your heart."

I must ask myself;

- Do I really trust Jesus in my heart as the Lord of my life?
- Am I leaning on my self?
- What do I look to and value most?
- Who or what do I worship?
- Has money become an idol for my life?

- Has lack of faith in God been demonstrated by my unwillingness to trust him with my offerings?
- If I say I love God am I bringing him my first fruit?

3. How does being wise in our own eyes and leaning on our own understanding affect our willingness to tithe?

When we worry about money, or when we spend all our energy trying to find ways to get rich, we are depending upon our own ability and not on God. Sometimes we can think way too hard about how we are going to make ends meet and at the end of the day God just wants us to trust in him. I went through this recently when I left my old job and took a substantial reduction in pay. Being that we were not getting rich quick anyway, taking a cut in pay couldn't make sense on paper we had to move in faith. God has provided every step of the way and is using this step of faith to strengthen my faith and dependence upon him. Had I never made a decision to step out in faith I would have missed that blessing.

4. Does the world agree with God's word about tithing? What does the world teach us about our money? How does that differ from what the Bible teaches?

Many people are turned off by the fact that God wants us to give to the church. Partly this is because of corrupt churches and clergy. But it also is because we live in a world that values money greatly. The world believes that it is my money and God can't have it!

But the Bible teaches all gifts are given by God. The creator of the universe certainly can handle our money as well.

Matthew 6:25-34 is a great teaching from Jesus about trusting in God to provide.

5. What does God promise to me if I will give to Him my first fruits?

In our memory verse this week, we see the God will open the floodgates of heaven and pour out his blessings.

6. How have you personally experienced blessings as a result of your faithful tithe?

Let people share their personal stories. This can be a great time of encouragement to others and a special way of praising God as we acknowledge the work of His hand on our lives.

Personal Daily Reading Plan:

- Day 1 – Malachi 3:6-12
- Day 2 – Matthew 26:6-13
- Day 3 – Mark 12:41-44
- Day 4 – 2 Corinthians 8
- Day 5 – 2 Corinthians 9