



Inner Growth - Tither

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. *Malachi 3: 8-10*

Tenth - Genesis 14:20

Income - Proverbs 3:9

Time - Ephesians 5:16

Heart - Psalms 51:10

Eye - Psalms 32:8

Receive - Proverbs 19:20

Will a man rob God? The answer is yes. Not many Bible verses begin with a question, but this one stands out above the rest. However, we did deprive God: that is what He said in Malachi, in which the name means "messenger" in chapter three, verse eight. The question asked by Malachi is an expression of shock and disgust.

Wherein we have robbed thee? The next question is in the same verse, which is a rare occasion to have two questions in one verse. However, God knows how we think. Of course, if someone said we did something wrong, our first response would be, "what did I do?" All of us have failed by robbing God with tithes and offerings.

According to the covenant between God and Israel, the people were to bring ten percent of

everything they possessed to the temple. The requirement of this portion not only supported the Levites, who maintained the temple, but the tithes also helped to care for widows, orphans, and others, as in Leviticus twenty-seven, verse thirty. Verse eight indicates that Israel has been "robbing" God by keeping these tithes and offerings. Since Israel violated the covenant, they could expect the promised curses, as in Deuteronomy twenty-eight, fifteen through sixty-eight. Verse ten of Malachi is one of the more popular Scriptures cited by the so-called "Prosperity Gospel," despite it having no bearing on a modern believer. The verse, in no sense, implies a guarantee from God that those who donate to His cause will be materially blessed: or at least not in the way we expect. The general principle is sound: we ought to work for the will of God rather than for our ends, as in Matthew six, nineteen through twenty, Second Corinthians nine, verses six through twelve, respectively. However, God does not guarantee wealth or success to the Christian believer under any circumstances. Tithes and offerings came to fruition in the first part of Genesis chapter four with two brothers, Cain and Abel. However, the offering begins in verse three, where the older brother Cain brings fruit from the ground that he offers to the Lord. Then Abel brings his to God in the following verse. The previous verses revealed that the brothers Cain and Abel had a relationship with God. Both brought Him offerings from their respective areas of work. Cain brought crops from the ground and worked as a farmer. Abel, a keeper of sheep, brought fat portions from a slaughtered firstborn lamb. Overall, verses three through six do not explain why God did not accept Cain's offering but approval for the younger brother Abel. Still, in most cases, giving does come from the heart. Since God knows the heart of every person, He knew something about the approach of the offerings from these two brothers.

Today, when someone gives a gift of something to us, we may have an idea of whether the offering is sincere. Some people can tell through the approach in their body language, while others may examine the delivery, gift presentation, or meaning of the

gift when they open upon discovery. The other idea may be the response when the receiver asks, "what's this for?" upon inquiry and conclude by the offerer's response. God knows the heart of Cain and Abel and realizes Cain's offering was not sincere.

A Tither is a person that gives a tenth of what they earn to the Lord. It could be a believer or someone that desires to bless the work of God to contribute that portion to support His sanctuary. Abram, at the time in Genesis twenty, verse fourteen, we read of the first in giving tithes to the Lord. He blesses God by showing appreciation for giving ten percent of what he got.

Abram is returning from defeating the four kings of the east to rescue his nephew Lot and all of Lot's possessions. In doing so, Abram has also recovered the pillage taken by the enemy, including all they took from Sodom. Bera, the king of Sodom in Genesis fourteen, verse two, has come out to meet Abram, as has the king of Salem: a mysterious figure called Melchizedek. Here, King Melchizedek, priest of the Highest God, continues his blessing for conquering Abram, begun in the previous verse.

The blessing states that the Lord was responsible for this victory, which Abram knew. Abram responds by tithing on the pillage he has recovered from the four kings of the east. He gives ten percent of it to this priest of God, Melchizedek. The recovery of goods from another city may be a custom response to a blessing at this time, but it certainly would not have been required of Abram. As the victor, the spoils of war would likely have been his to claim: He chose not to keep them. This act of tithing will also serve as an example to Israel and God's people in the future.

A tither is someone who believes in God, and those that claim to serve and live for Him give a portion of their income. The Israelites were to contribute by the commandment of the Lord the first of their crops to the Lord out of gratitude for his bountiful provisions as in Deuteronomy twenty-six, one through three, and nine through eleven, respectively. Our income is earning something coming into you in the form of revenue. Believers today give their portion of their regular job income to support the house of God tend to forget other

areas that generate funds, such as investments and other sources where they may collect funds. However, giving is up to the believer who tithes and no one else but between them and God.

A tither is a believer who tithes but gives a portion of their time to God daily. Did you know that a percentage of your time in the twenty-four hours of a day belongs to God? Ten percent of a twenty-four-hour day works out to two hours and forty minutes. The time may include praising, worshipping, singing, reading, meditating, and praying to God. We all have priorities with family, work, and other obligations, but God should be first.

A tither should have a clean heart when they are giving. The person's emotions should not have contamination or be full of lust, evil plans, and rebellion against God. We should desire a new heart full of love for God and detest evil. Sin in his heart brings nothing but guilt, grief, and remorse. All of us need spiritual heart surgery that only God could come from God. Jesus cited the heart as the source of either good or evil. He explained: "The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."

Cain, Adam's firstborn, from Genesis four five, gave his offering but did not get respect from God as a result. Abel's brother became irate, and his expression revealed it. In verses six and seven, God gives three questions in which God knew where Cain's heart was: there was something in there that God questions him. A tither will follow the guidance of the Lord because He has His eye on them. Those who follow godly wisdom can expect to learn the best way to live life. A loving parent keeps his eyes on his child. He sees where the child endangers himself, perhaps by not looking as he crosses the street. Then the parent calls the child and tells him what to do. How does the Lord teach and guide believers? Jesus said He goes before His sheep, and they follow Him.

A tither freely receives, freely gives. By divine design, the natural human body has one mouth but two ears. That correlates to practical, physical needs as part of biology. Yet it also provides a living parable: poetically

suggesting that listening is twice as significant as speaking. Solomon notes paying attention to good advice, as in Proverbs one seven through eight, and eight thirty-two through thirty-six, which leads to a wiser future.

The allusion here is to moral correction and discipline. This proverb also notes that it's important to "accept" learning from others.

Simply hearing advice without acting on it is as useless as buying medicine and letting it sit unopened. Carefully considering correction and discipline and following through with actions prepares a person for the future. How one responds to adverse circumstances in later years shows whether one acquired wisdom during younger years.

In his younger days, the apostle John leaned on Jesus' chest. He was a member of Jesus' inner circle of disciples, John thirteen twenty-three, Luke eight fifty-one, and Mark nine two, respectively. In John's old age, God used him to write five New Testament books: the gospel of John, First, Second, and Third John, and Revelation, in which his wisdom shines. He met persecution wisely when he was old, showing he had carefully listened to and heeded Jesus' teachings.

Will a man rob God? Yes: from knowing Him.

To know God is to obey. Obedience brings reward. However, our hearts should not focus on the physical but spiritual.