

Small Group Discussion Guide

The Promise of Provision: For the week of February 27 - March 5, 2022

Main Thought and Scriptures:

In our world of geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty, and rising inflation, it's easy to be filled with worry over our finances and future. Jesus addressed the economic uncertainty of His day, telling them not to worry because God promises to provide for those who put Him first and trust in Him rather than in money (Matthew 6:19-33). Faithful Jews put God first and demonstrated their trust in Him through faithfully giving tithes and offerings.

"...Return to me, and I will return to you," says the Lord Almighty. "But you ask, "How are we to return?"⁸Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, "How do we rob you?" In tithes and offerings.⁹You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me.¹⁰Bring 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.¹¹I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the Lord Almighty.¹²Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the Lord Almighty." (Malachi 3:7-12 NIV)

We trust God for our provision and put Him first through tithes and offerings. (v. 8)

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' In tithes and offerings."

- In the Old Testament Law, the tithe was a required tenth of one's income to be returned to God. He owns all and allows us to steward the other 90%.
- The New Testament challenges us to exceed the requirements of the Law because we are now under grace (See Matthew 5:17-6:4 & 2 Corinthians 9). The tithe, therefore, should be the baseline—not the ceiling—of our generosity.

We are to bring the FULL tithe into the "storehouse" of the local church. (v. 10)

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house..."

- The storehouse was the Old Testament temple, the parallel to today's local church.
- The tithe is designated to further the ministry of the church and the expansion of God's Kingdom.

The tithe is the TEST that triggers God's abundant provision. (v. 10)

"...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.'"

- This is the only instance in Scripture where God says to "test" Him. When we do, we will see that He is indeed faithful to His promise to provide for those who are faithful.

The tithe is a test that ensures God's protection. (v. 11)

"I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,' says the Lord Almighty."

- God's Word teaches that we cannot afford NOT to tithe.
- The tithe keeps our hearts centered on the Lord as our ultimate source, supply, and love of our lives.

Discussion Questions:

- As you reflect on this discussion and the weekend sermon, what is the Lord highlighting to you and why?
- How have you seen God provide for you as you were faithful with the tithe?
- How do you think you can begin honoring God through tithes and offerings? What practical faith steps can you take in that direction?

Prayer:

- Pray for one another to trust God to fully tithe, and that we will all experience God's abundant provision and protection as we do.
- Pray for a friend or family member who does not yet know God.