
The Abundant Life | Kingdom Economics

Rob Rogers November 13, 2022

Introduction

Can anyone tell me what this is? This is the money you could be saving if you switched to GEICO!
I used to think that this was just money but after almost 20 years in vocational ministry...

- I've seen *money* tear marriages apart; it's lead to betrayal in friendships
- It's lured people away from God's calling on people's lives
- The love for the god of this age has brought corruption into governments that should be caring for their citizens, unethical, and unlawful practices within institutions and organizations, even churches
- I've seen it twist the motives of people that started their career with a desire to serve, into those who demand that others serve them

However

- When *money* is submitted to God, and leveraged in alignment with God's priorities, God's will, God's ways... it has brought care and provision to desperate people.
- It can bring food, water, shelter, to those without it.
- It can bring education to children that desperately need it.
- It brings redemption to someone that needs a second chance.
- It can bring freedom to people caught in slavery.

What does God want us to do with our money?

To make it personal: "What does God want me to do with my money?"

When you obey God with money, you are actively tearing down the idol that has more pull on the human heart than almost anything else. It brings such pleasure to the heart of God *and* if you take this seriously, watch out — because God is going to bless your socks off! Not necessarily with more money, maybe He will...maybe He won't... but He promises that He will open the windows of heaven over your life! This is **Kingdom Economics!** *So, if you've never trusted God with your money, I DOUBLE DOG DARE YOU to lean in, pay attention, and take action!*

This is the only place in scripture where God invites us to TEST HIM!

Today, He's daring us trust Him!

God invites us to test Him

Malachi 3:7-12

From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from My statutes and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?' ⁸ **Will man rob God?** Yet you are robbing Me. But you say, 'How have we robbed You?' In your **tithes and contributions.** ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you. ¹⁰ **Bring the full tithe into the storehouse,** that there may be food in My house. And thereby **put Me to the test,** says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows

of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. ¹¹ I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. ¹² Then all nations will call you **blessed**, for you will be a land of **delight**, says the LORD of hosts.

PERSONAL: I just have a confession to make. I haven't watched *all* of them, so this may not apply to everyone — but I just need to tell you that I absolutely cannot stand televangelists. It's not just a dislike of what they're doing... it's a detesting. It is utterly repulsive to me... not much gets under my skin. That does... because sometimes it is a deliberate leveraging of God's name to manipulate people into giving them money. And maybe they do use it for genuine purposes... but when they promise "the blessing of God" for just 20 bucks a month... or sent you a vial of genuine "holy water" that supposedly came of a rock from the holy land, and whatever you put the water on will be healed, or blessed, or fix your life's worst problems — I'm sorry... that's just not how God operates. He's not a genie... going to grant your 3 wishes... if you donate \$30/month, and if you donate \$60 then you get 10 wishes.

Someone shared with me recently that they hadn't been back to a church in two years. The pastor reached out and wanted to meet... sat down at the table and presented him with a BILL! And said, "You haven't given in the last 2 years, you owe us, "x" amount." He never went back.

This is spiritual malpractice. These are exactly the scenarios that create the perception that all the church cares about is your money... it completely misrepresents the heart of God for His people.

His desire for our resources

But God DOES make it crystal clear in this passage what His desire is with our resources.

In verse 8, God asks a question... and then makes a statement.

Malachi 3:8

Will man **rob** God? Yet you are **robbing** Me.

- I discovered this last week that the word, "Rob" is a pretty violent word actually. The Hebrew word used here... it's not just petty theft... it carries the picture of invading, pillaging, plundering, and doing irreparable harm — this is what the scripture says we're doing to God.

In Malachi, the Israelites ask, "God what are you talking about? Us? How could we rob You!? We would never! How have we pillaged YOU! You're God! *What are you talking about...*"

Malachi 3:8-9

...In your **tithes and contributions**. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you.

The word *tithe* means a *tenth*.

God is talking about bringing the *first fruits* of your labor, the *first ten percent* of your gross income into the storehouse — the church.

To an Old Testament Israelite, tithing meant much more than 10%. A tithe meant a tenth of your gross income would go toward the Levites, “pastors, priests, in the OT to fund ministry.” In addition to that there was 10% that went toward festivals, feasts, and holidays, along with 3.3% to the poor. On top of that there were gleanings for the poor, like in the story of Ruth, plus additional tithes/offerings that would come as needs arose (funding the temple, etc.). It was roughly 23-28%!!!

But what we need to understand is that 10% is not the finish line... it's the starting point! It's not the ceiling, it's the floor — where they began.

INTERESTING: In a report on generosity of Christians — most Christians don't tithe.

According to State of the Plate's 2016 Report:¹

- Only 10–25 percent of church members tithe.
- Only 5 percent of the United States population participates in tithing.
- On average, Christians give 2.5 percent of their income, which is down from the 3.3 percent given during the Great Depression.

I'm convinced that our lack of trust in God with our finances, spills over into a lack of trust in God in every other area of life. Because money is tangible and practical — if you can't trust God with what is tangible, you will never trust God with what is intangible!!!

PERSONAL: When I first came to Christ, I didn't earn a whole lot... I was living paycheck to paycheck. I actually believed that because of that, God would understand if I didn't tithe — that somehow, I was exempt from God's financial plan. It wasn't until years later that I began to understand that *it's not about the money! It's about the heart! It's not about the dollar, it's about my devotion!*

- This is why Jesus rebukes the Pharisees and praises the widow's mite! God doesn't care about the amount... he cares about the heart! The widow gives all she had... and compared to other people it was nothing. Yet Jesus praises her for it because it's not about the dollar! Like the Israelites in this passage... like me when I was younger... or maybe some of you today *are either unaware of God's will for our finances... or we know what God wants and we just think that for some reason we're exempt from God's financial plan.*

And if that's you... God says, it's not just petty theft, you're literally plundering God!

- Don't be mad at me, it's in the BOOK! He said it! I'm just the messenger.

APPLICATION: Now, here's the hard reality... you might...

- Be going through a really difficult financial season right now — and you're not sure how to begin...
- You might be the single mom, working two jobs just to make ends meet...
- Or you're up to your eyeballs in debt, and you're desperately trying to climb out of it...
- Cost of living is on the rise... inflation and gas prices sure aren't helping... maybe a recession is around the corner...

God. Sees. You.

God. Sees. You. He knows what you're facing, He know how difficult it has been. He knows what's around the corner. **He's inviting you today... to trust Him with your finances and see what He might do on your behalf.** He's inviting you to trust that you're not alone in the difficulty.

¹ <http://www.stateoftheplate.info/state-of-the-plate-2016-survey.html>

**He sees you, He knows your situation. Your struggle.
Your pain. How hard you're working.
He's inviting you to trust Him in what is tangible —
and watch and see what He does.**

- OBJECTION: I know it sounds crazy! I know you have a billion questions! And you probably think I'm an insensitive jerk! But this isn't Rob's invitation — I didn't inspire these words — this isn't my idea. Because in human terms it doesn't make sense — but this is how the Kingdom works.
- **God is asking you today**, *"Will you trust Me, daughter of the Most High?" Will you trust Me, son of the King? I dare you to trust Me... and see what I'll do in your life."*

God owns it all

King David and the nation of Israel are raising money to build a temple. David prays.

1 Chronicles 29:11-14

¹¹ Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for ALL that is in the heavens and in the earth is Yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head above ALL. ¹² Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over ALL. In Your hand are power and might, and in Your hand it is to make great and to give strength to ALL. ¹³ And now we thank You, our God, and praise Your glorious name. ¹⁴ "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For ALL things come from You, and of Your own have we given You.

Three Principles from David's Prayer

- God owns it all.
- All wealth comes from God.
- We give back what's already His.

The promises God gives us

Malachi 3:10

Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. And **thereby put Me to the test**, says the LORD of hosts, if **I will** not open the windows of heaven **for you** and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. ¹¹ **I will** rebuke the devourer **for you**, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the LORD of hosts. ¹² Then all nations will call you blessed, **for you will be** a land of **delight**, says the LORD of hosts.

What God says repeatedly in this passage is, "I will — for you." *I will* open the windows of heaven *for YOU!* I will meet every need — for you! I will, rebuke the devourer, for who? FOR YOU! I will protect fruit of your labor, for you! Why? Because I love you. Because I'm so for you, you can't even imagine..."

But there's a condition. Trust me with the money I've entrusted to you. Bring the tithe into the storehouse. Test me, and wait and see what I will do for you. You'll be called blessed... and YOU WILL be a land of delight!

OBJECTION: *Well, Rob the New Testament never addresses tithing — this is an Old Testament principle that was fulfilled in Jesus and it's not necessary for Christians to practice tithing today.*

- ***Well, put bluntly, you're wrong. I love you, but you're wrong.***

It's about your trusting God

Matthew 23:23

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you **tithe** mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness. **These you ought to have done**, without neglecting the others.

- Jesus tells the Pharisees you should be tithing! Without neglecting justice, mercy, and faithfulness — but Jesus doesn't say, “Tithe? Forget about tithing! Do these other things instead...”
He doesn't do away with the practice of tithing —instead, He doubles down on it!

If you withhold the tithe from God, not only are you robbing God — you're robbing yourself! I think God is in heaven going “C'mon! If you only knew what not tithing is actually costing you... you wouldn't hesitate for a second!” It's not even necessarily about you being greedy or stingy... *it's about you not trusting God!*

- Maybe things are tight financially for you right now — because you're not trusting God with your money.
- Maybe your faith has totally stagnated — because you're not trusting God with what is tangible!
So, of course you can't trust Him with the intangibles of life...

***Those that do tithe... the stories are overwhelming of provision showing up from the most unexpected places in the most unexpected moments.
But it's always enough! Often times, MORE than enough.***

Proverbs 3:9–10

Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

Deuteronomy 8:18

Remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth.

Deuteronomy 16:17

Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.

Luke 6:38

...give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.

Maybe you've been living out this practice of tithing for a long time already — or maybe this is new information for you — maybe you, like me, thought that you were somehow exempt from God's financial plan — and maybe this is a gut check for you today.

But there's one last thing I want you to see... Pastor David brought this up last week and it's a brilliant insight.

Return to me and I will return to you

Malachi 3:7

Return to Me, and **I will return to you**, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, 'How shall we return?'

Malaichi 3:8

...In your **tithes and contributions**.

And as we look out at the state of the world, so many people, many Christians, are in are in a constant state of outrage — because of what's happening politically, socially, in our education system, the efforts to indoctrinate our children.

And honestly, there's a lot to be deeply concerned about in our culture.

But if the average Christian is giving 2.3%... and God says in Malachi 3 to **the nation** of Israel... return to me by doing what? Tithing! And if you obey me in this, I'll return to you... and if you don't do this, your nation will continue to be cursed.

I'm not the sharpest knife in the drawer but I'm wondering if there might be some correlation between our lack of obedience in our tithe, and the current state affairs in our country?

We say we want revival, we pray for revival — but this passage begs the question — **are we tithing for revival, because God tells here, if you tithe, I'll return to your nation!**

OBJECTION: Rob, are you saying if we begin to tithe, that the Holy Spirit will begin to move in our nation again? *No, that's not what I'm saying. But that sure seems to be what God is saying.*

God loves a cheerful giver

2 Corinthians 9:7

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, **not reluctantly** or **under compulsion**, for God loves a cheerful giver.

Our invitation from God is to test Him in this and see what He'll do in our midst, if you and I will trust God with the tangible practical resources He's entrusted to us — and do it with cheerfulness! I believe God will begin to open doors that have been closed, to softened hardened hearts, the bring new life and those whose faith has long been cold and lifeless — and, if we obey God in this — we'll see revival again.

**We can only become hilariously cheerful givers
if we've encountered the extravagant generosity of God in the person of Jesus.**

2 Corinthians 8:9

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.

True gospel gives us the power to be radically generous, courageously obedient, and a hilariously giving people.

Discussion Questions

1. How are Kingdom Economics different from Earthly Economics?
2. Have you ever “tested God” to see if you tithe, that He will open the windows of heaven for you? What were the results? Specific examples.
3. What is the difference between a “tithe” and an “offering”? Do you do one... or both? How?
4. Discuss: “If you can’t trust God with what is tangible, you will never trust God with what is intangible.”
5. Do you really believe that God sees YOU, and knows what YOU are facing? How does this affect your practical reality?
6. Read Malachi 3:7-8. Do you think that revival could happen in our country — if Christians began to tithe — as an act of obedience?

NOTES