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Episode 212 - Robbing God

How do we rationalize that cheating God makes good sense?

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Jerry Green:

Welcome, friends, to this March 8th season of Faith Made Simple with our pastor and teacher, Todd Smith. I'm Jerry Greene, and for the past seven seasons I've had the privilege of serving as host of the podcast. We're so grateful the Lord has afforded us the opportunity to meet with you each week and share his infallible Word. Our teacher, Pastor Todd, has a passion for explaining Scripture because, as we've said all along. Understanding and obeying God's Word is key in the Christian's life. James 1:25 tells us that God blesses those who are obedient. So let's listen now as Todd shares his thoughts for today.

Todd Smith:

Hey friends — great to have you on the podcast again. I trust the Lord is showing His grace and mercy in your life. Today I want to talk about a subject that might make you squirm a little: robbing God. I don't recommend it.

There's a prophet in the Old Testament named Malachi. One of the major confrontations in his book is this: the people are robbing God in a number of ways. Malachi speaks as an oracle — a heavy, direct warning — to a generation that had grown spiritually apathetic and morally lazy. Comfort has a way of breeding disobedience, and comfortable Christianity is one of the most dangerous zip codes you can live in.

Malachi writes in a series of pointed questions and answers. One of the questions the people ask is: "In what way have we robbed you?" The prophet doesn't pull punches. Take Malachi 1:8 — they were bringing lame, blind, and sick animals as sacrifices. God asks, would you present that to your governor? No. You wouldn't. You were commanded to bring the first and the best (see Leviticus 22), but they were giving the last and the least. That's robbing God.

Then it gets personal and financial. In Malachi 3:8 he asks, "Will a man rob God?" — and answers, yes: by withholding tithes and offerings. He calls the people out: bring the full tithe into the storehouse so there may be food in my house, and then test Me — see if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour out blessing. It's a startling challenge.

If you study Jewish practice, giving back then wasn't a simple 10% for many families — with special offerings it could average far higher. Still, the principle is timeless: New Testament

giving isn't merely a percentage; it's a posture. The question becomes, how much of what God has given me will I keep for myself?

Too often, evangelical Christians treat God as if He needs our money. He doesn't. He owns everything. The stewardship question is: how much of God's resources entrusted to me will I steward for myself? Sadly, cultural averages show many keep the vast majority and give only a sliver. Generosity is meant to be a hallmark of the people of God, not an afterthought.

Generosity is not just about giving — it flows out of how we spend. If you're enslaved to debt and poor spending habits, giving will be strained. Fix the spending; free your budget; then generosity becomes possible. The gospel flips our mentality from ownership to stewardship. We don't own it — we manage it for the glory of God.

God invites us to test Him here. He says, "Trust Me with first and best, and watch what I do." I remember picking up my son from Sunday school once and finding a dollar he'd taken from the offering bucket. We returned it and apologized. Whether you're four or forty, it's surprisingly easy to take what belongs to God. Will you trust Him enough to give?

Jerry Green:

Thanks, Todd. Before we move to questions, a reminder: Faith Made Simple is a free ministry — subscribe, share on social media, leave a comment and a rating if this has been helpful. Todd, we often play tricks with our minds when it comes to sin. How do people rationalize cheating God?

Todd Smith:

Rationalization is the heart of it. We confuse wants and needs, turning desires into necessities. "I can't afford to give" becomes the default line. But the better question is: can I afford not to give? Every good gift comes from above, and New Testament stewardship means managing God's grace — time, talent, and treasure — faithfully. It's not about the dollar amount to God; it's about the heart. Remember the widow's mite — it wasn't large, but it was costly to her. God looks at the heart that trusts Him enough to give first and best. Move from an ownership mentality to a stewardship posture, and you'll see generosity become a mark of your life.

Jerry Green:

Good word. Malachi flips our perspectives: give first, trust God for the rest. That, my friend, brings us to the end of this episode of season eight. Lord willing, we'll be back next week with another podcast. Of course, we invite you to visit Crossroads Community Church in Valencia, California, where God's Word is taught verse by verse. For more info, visit FaithMadeSimple.net. So on behalf of Todd and the team here at Faith Made Simple, we look forward to our next visit. Until then, live blessed by being a doer of God's Word.