

This is Who We Are Part 3

We Put God First Part 2

Intro: *We are continuing a series focused on our core value **We practice gratefulness and generosity in everything we do.** This is all about you walking in God's very best for your life and generosity has always been His plan. **GENEROUS: arranging my life around the thrill of being used by God to make a difference.***

Isaiah 32:8 (NLT)

But generous people plan to do what is generous, and they stand firm in their generosity.

Joke: 2 Men crash a plane on a deserted island in the Pacific. One panics, one relaxes because his pastor will find him.

When God is first, everything comes into order.

- It's not that we never have problems! But would you rather go through trouble with things in order or out of order?

Malachi 3:6-12 (NKJV)

⁶ "For I am the Lord, I do not change; Therefore, you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob. ⁷ Yet from the days of your fathers you have gone away from My ordinances and have not kept them. Return to Me, and I will return to you," says the Lord of hosts. "But you said, 'In what way shall we return?' Do Not Rob God" ⁸ "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. ¹⁰ Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," Says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing That there will not be room enough to receive it. ¹¹ "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the Lord of hosts; ¹² "And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land," says the Lord of hosts.

- **My ordinances:** principles of ordinary behavior THIS IS WHO WE ARE!
- Malachi is a book about returning to God in our faith, family, and finances!
 - Chapter 1 – Faith; 2- Family; 3 Finances; 4 - God returns to us!
 - Tithing is an ordinance, a principle of ordinary behavior, with God!
 - Giving the first portion is ordinary behavior for redeemed people to thank God!
 - This passage is so simple: If I tithe, I'm under a blessing. If I don't, I'm under a curse

1. IT TEACHES US TO PUT GOD FIRST (Review)

Deut. 14:23 TLB

The purpose of tithing is to teach you to always put God first in your lives.

Proverbs 3:9-10

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

- Tithe (the first and best 10%) percentages are applicable to everyone
- Every pay day, we get to tell God, "I trust you."
- It's not LAW, it's LOVE. Abraham tithed. The tree in Eden- Adam tended it but didn't eat it...until later.

2. IT BUILDS OUR FAITH

○ Faith Foundation

Matthew 23:23 (NKJV)

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone."

- Jesus says, "This is very basic faith."
- We are first BRINGERS then, GIVERS
- It takes faith to bring God the tithe first. It doesn't take faith to give Him what's left over.
- Our faith is intertwined with tithing and giving. This is who we are?
- The fewer decisions you have continually to make about things God has said, the simpler your life will be. It's not an option.

The tithe defines if we are owners or stewards.

- When we are owners, we're responsible for all of the provision and direction, resulting in all of the physical and mental stress rampant amongst owners. When we live as stewards, the pressure is on Him and life is simpler. Just listen to a tither talk.
Ex. Adam and Eve moved from stewards to owners, Jesus never took ownership of His life.

- **Faith Investment**

Matthew 6:21 (NKJV) *“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

- My Heart Always Goes Where I Put God’s Money
- Notice the order. Invest your treasure, and your heart will follow.
- We don’t give by feeling, we give my faith (It’s a covenant-relational agreement between God and His people.) When we give people an opportunity to give, it’s an open door to the blessed life!
- What we do with our resources in this life is our autobiography. It matters. It’s an investment of faith.

3. IT PROVIDES FOR THE WORK OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.

Malachi 3:10 (NKJV) *Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.*

- The nation is in a recession and Hezekiah reads the law and finds that they were supposed to be tithing
- The King commanded them to contribute support to the priests that they might devote themselves to the Word of God!

2 Chronicles 31:4 (NKJV)

Moreover, He commanded the people who dwelt in Jerusalem to contribute support for the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to the Law of the Lord.

- **The storehouse is my local church.**

- Christ builds His church, and He uses His money in our pockets to build it. Someone is paying for it. Facilities, utilities, staff.
- Not only this (That there may be food in my house), but that excellent ministry happens.... Making Jesus famous in our homes, communities, and the world. This is what we do! What an honor and privilege.

- **The storehouse/supply/church is His bride**

Illustration: *If I were going away and asked 3 men to be stewards for me and to take care of my wife while I was gone: \$10,000 each. They can keep the other \$9,000. I'm just asking for 10%*

1st man: gives the \$1,000 every month

2nd man: gives \$2,000 every month.

3rd man: \$700 the first month, \$400, the second and nothing the last month!

- I'm learning a lot about their character: how much they value me and my bride
- Tithing might be more personal than you thought. This is His bride we are talking about.

- He's going to bless those who will value what He values.

RESPONSE:

Exodus 13:1-2 (NKJV)

13 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ² "Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast; it is Mine."

1 Corinthians 15:20

But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

- Globally, 5% of people tithe....Put God first. Imagine the impact the body of Christ can have if every Christian tithed?
- God commands it! Jesus was it! That's enough for me. This is what we do, this is who we are! **WE PUT GOD FIRST!! Are you part of the WE?**
- If you are a tither, THANK YOU! If you aren't yet, IT'S TIME!

90 Day Tithing Challenge

LIVE IT:

1. Be a Bringer: Begin the 90 Day Tithing Challenge. This isn't a tool to get something from you. It will help you experience God's best.
2. Be a Giver: Begin giving over and above the tithe. Create room in your budget to invest in what God is doing.