

## RELATED SCRIPTURES

Numbers 18:20–24 | 2 Corinthians 9:6–12 | Acts 2:42–46

## STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 10.19.25

### SUMMARY

Although the Lord does not change (Malachi 3:6), Malachi reminds Israel that *they* have changed by not keeping God's commandments, such as withholding a portion of the tithe. The tithe given to God is a way that God provides for the people of Israel. Unlike the other tribes of Israel, the Levites were not given any land of their own. They were provided for by the tithes of the other tribes (Numbers 18:24), which allowed them to devote their time and energy to serving as priests. When Israel held back on their tithes, it forced the Levites to provide for themselves (Nehemiah 13:10), taking them away from their priestly duties. Further, it reduced a provision for the poor (Deuteronomy 14:28-29) as well as an opportunity for Israel to feast together (Deuteronomy 14:22-23). By withholding the tithe, Israel fails to honor God as well as love their neighbor. God's instruction to test him might sound like a contradiction to the commandment "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test" (Deuteronomy 6:16). In this instance he is asking Israel to put their faith in him that he will provide abundantly for them. Paul reiterates this to the Corinthians as he encourages them to give cheerfully, because "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:7-8). This sufficiency is the contentment which Paul writes to the Philippians, "Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content" (Philippians 4:11). Contentment does not come through self-sufficiency, but through Christ's strength in all situations (Philippians 4:13). When God's people give freely to him, God provides "until there is no more need" (Malachi 3:10) and the people find their contentment in him, making them "a land of delight" (Malachi 3:12) and "overflowing in many thanksgivings to God" (2 Corinthians 9:6).

### GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Malachi 3:7-12.

How does God being the creator and provider of all things affect how you think about tithing and giving to God?

In 2 Corinthians 8, Paul describes the joy of the Macedonians while giving from extreme poverty, which leads to his appeal in 2 Corinthians 9. In what ways does giving sacrificially lead to joy and thanksgiving?

If there's one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

### CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today's themes in what you bring before God.