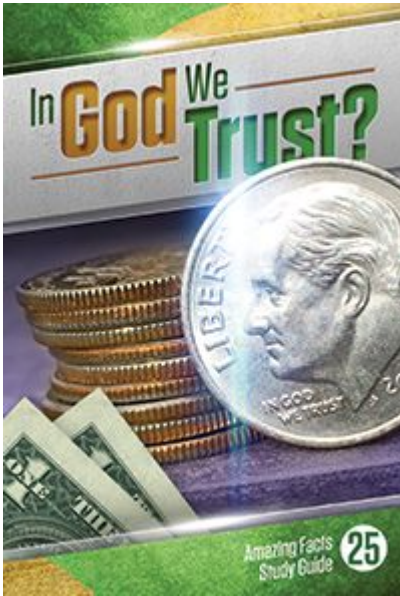


In God we Trust



Lesson 25

Do you trust God—really? The truth is, a lot of people might say yes, but they don't act like it. And worse, because they don't trust Him, they might actually steal from Him! "Come on!" you say, "No one would steal from God." But God's shocking message to His people is, "You have robbed Me!" (Malachi 3:8). Real records prove that billions of people steal from God, and as amazing as it may seem, they use that stolen money to subsidize their own reckless spending! Yet many are unaware

of their larceny, and in this Study Guide, we'll show you how to avoid that same mistake and how to prosper through real faith in God.

1. According to the Bible, what portion of our income belongs to the Lord?

"All the tithe of the land ... is the Lord's"
(Leviticus 27:30).

Answer: The tithe belongs to God.



2. What is the "tithe"?

"I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance" (Numbers 18:21).

Answer: The tithe is one-tenth of a person's income. The word "tithe" literally means



“tenth.” The tithe belongs to God. It is His. We have no right to keep it. When we tithe, we are not making a gift; we are simply returning to God what is already His. Unless we are returning one-tenth of our income to God, we are not tithing.

3. To where does the Lord ask His people to bring the tithe?

“Bring all the tithes into the storehouse”
(Malachi 3:10).

Answer: He asks us to bring the tithe into His storehouse.



4. What is the Lord’s “storehouse”?

“Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse” (Nehemiah 13:12).

Answer: In Malachi 3:10, God refers to the storehouse as “My house,” which means His temple, or church. Nehemiah 13:12, 13, further points out that the tithe is to be brought to the temple treasury, which is God’s storehouse. Other texts that refer to the storehouse as the temple treasuries, or chambers, include 1 Chronicles 9:26; 2 Chronicles 31:11, 12; and

Nehemiah 10:37, 38. In Old Testament times, God's people brought 10 percent of all their increase—including crops and animals—to the storehouse.



5. Some have thought that tithing was part of Moses' system of rites and ceremonies that ended at the cross. Is this true?

"And he [Abram] gave him a tithe of all" (Genesis 14:20). And in Genesis 28:22, Jacob said, "Of all that You give me I will

surely give a tenth to You."

Answer: These passages reveal that both Abraham and Jacob, who lived long before Moses' day, tithed their income. We can therefore conclude that God's plan of tithing is not limited to Moses' law and applies to all people of all times.

6. For what was tithe used in Old Testament days?

"I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, the work of the tabernacle of meeting" (Numbers 18:21).

Answer: The tithe in Old Testament days was used for the income of the priests. The tribe of Levi (the priests) received no portion of land for crop growing and business operations, while the other 11 tribes did. The Levites worked full time taking care of the temple and ministering to God's people. So God's plan was for tithes to support the priests and their families.



7. Did God change His plan for tithe usage in New Testament days?

“Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple,

and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar? Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel” (1 Corinthians 9:13, 14).

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8. But didn't Jesus abolish the plan of tithing?

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, 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” (Matthew 23:23).

Answer: No. On the contrary, Jesus endorsed it. He was rebuking the Jews for omitting the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy, faith—even though they were

meticulous tithers. He then plainly told them they should continue tithing but should also be just and merciful and faithful.

9. What startling proposal does God make to people who feel uncertain about tithing?

“ ‘Bring all the tithes into the storehouse ... 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’ ” (Malachi 3:10).



Answer: He says, “Try Me now” and see that I will give you such a blessing that it will be overwhelming to receive! This is the only time in the Bible that God makes such a proposal. He is saying, “Give it a try. It will work. I promise you.” Hundreds of thousands of tithers the world over will gladly testify to the truth of God’s tithing promise. They have all learned the truth of these words: “You can’t out-give God.”

10. When we tithe, who really receives our money?

“Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he [Jesus] receives them” (Hebrews 7:8).

Answer: Jesus, our heavenly High Priest, receives our tithes.

11. What test did Adam and Eve fail —a test which all must pass if we would inherit His kingdom?

Answer: They took things that God said were not theirs. God gave Adam and Eve the fruit of all the trees in the Garden of Eden, except one—the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16, 17). The fruit of that tree was not theirs to eat. But they did not trust God. They ate the fruit and fell—and the long, horrendous, wrenching world of sin began. To people today, God gives His riches, wisdom, and all of the other blessings of heaven. All God asks is for a tenth of our income (Leviticus 27:30), and as with Adam and Eve, He does not take it by force. He leaves it within our reach but says, “Don’t take that. It is holy. It is Mine.” When we knowingly take God’s tithe and appropriate it for our own use, we repeat the sin of Adam and Eve and, thus, display a tragic lack of trust in our Redeemer. God does not need our money, but He deserves our loyalty and trust.

Make God Your Partner

When you return God’s tithe, you make Him a partner in everything you undertake. What a fantastic, blessed privilege: God and you—partners! With Him as a partner, you have everything to gain and nothing to lose. However, it is a dangerous venture to take God’s own money, which He has earmarked for the saving of souls, and use it for our own personal budgets.

12. In addition to the tithe, which belongs to God, what else does God ask of His people?

“Bring an offering, and come into His courts” (Psalm 96:8).

Answer: The Lord asks us to give offerings for His work as an expression of our love for Him and of our thanksgiving for His blessings.

13. How much shall I give to God as offerings?

"Let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

Answer: The Bible does not specify a set amount for offerings. Each person decides, as God impresses, how much to give and then gives it cheerfully.



14. What additional Bible principles does God share with us regarding giving?

Answer: **A.** Our first priority should be to give ourselves to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:5).

B. We should give God our very best (Proverbs 3:9).

C. God blesses the generous giver (Proverbs 11:24, 25).

D. It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35).

E. When stingy, we are not rightly using our God-given blessings (Luke 12:16–21).

F. God returns more than we give (Luke 6:38).

G. We should give in proportion to how God has prospered and blessed us (1 Corinthians

16:2).

H. We should give as we are able (Deuteronomy 16:17).

We return tithe to God, to whom it already belongs. We also give offerings, which are voluntary and should be given joyously..

15. What does the Lord own?

Answer: A. All the silver and gold in the world (Haggai 2:8).

B. The earth and all its people (Psalm 24:1).

C. The world and everything in it (Psalm 50:10–12). But He permits people to use His great riches. He also gives them the wisdom and power to prosper and to accumulate wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18). In return for furnishing everything, all God asks is that we return to Him 10 percent as our acknowledgment of His great investment in our business affairs—as well as offerings as an expression of our love and gratitude.



16. How does the Lord refer to people who do not return His 10 percent and give offerings?

“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed

You?’ In tithes and offerings” (Malachi 3:8).

Answer: He refers to them as robbers. Can you imagine people stealing from God?

17. What does God say will happen to those who knowingly continue to rob Him in tithes and offerings?

“You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me” (Malachi 3:9).

“Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:10).

Answer: A curse will rest upon them and they will not inherit the kingdom of heaven.



18. God warns us against covetousness. Why is it so dangerous?

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Luke 12:34).

Answer: Because our hearts follow our investments. If our focus is on accumulating more and more money, our hearts become

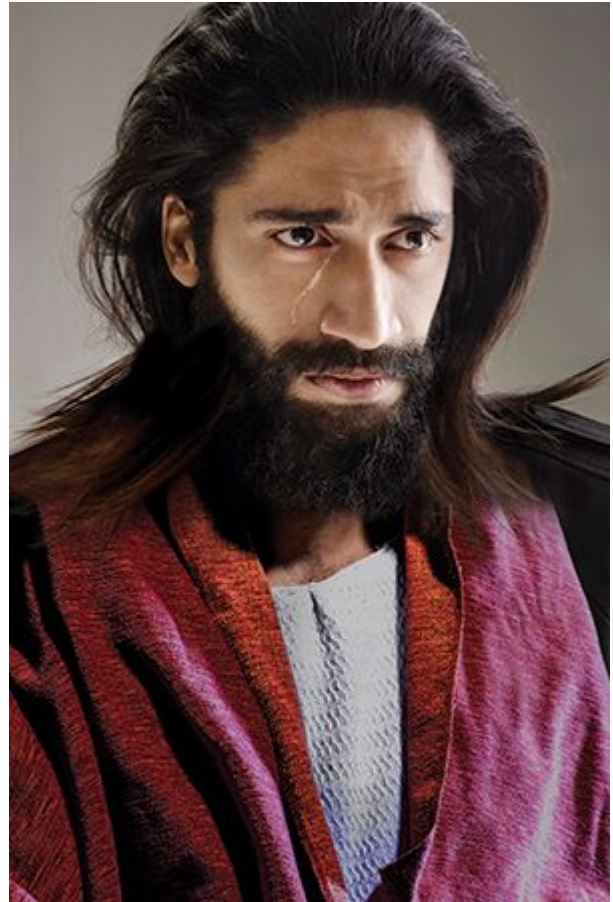
covetous, discontent, and proud. But if our focus is on sharing, helping others, and God’s work, then our hearts become caring, loving, giving, and humble. Covetousness is one of

the terrible sins of the last days that will shut people out of heaven (2 Timothy 3:1–7).

19. How does Jesus feel when we rob Him of His sacred tithe and offerings?

“Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart’ ” (Hebrews 3:10).

Answer: He probably feels much as parents do when a child steals money from them. The money itself is not the big thing. It is the child’s lack of integrity, love, and trust that is deeply disappointing.



20. What thrilling points does the Bible stress regarding the stewardship of the believers in Macedonia?

Answer: The apostle Paul had written the churches in Macedonia asking them to lay aside funds for God’s people in Jerusalem, who were suffering through an extended famine. He told them he would pick up these gifts when he came to their cities on his next visit. The thrilling response from the churches in Macedonia, described in 2 Corinthians chapter 8, is heartening:

A. Verse 5—As a first step, they rededicated their lives to Jesus Christ.

B. Verses 2, 3—Though in “deep poverty” themselves, they gave “beyond their ability” to



Love caused God's people in Macedonia to give
liberally to the famine-stricken Christians in Jerusalem.

give.

C. Verse 4—They urged Paul to come and pick up their gifts.

D. Verse 9—Their gifts followed the sacrificial example of Jesus.

Note: *If we truly love Jesus, giving sacrificially for His work will never be a burden but a glorious privilege that we will perform with great joy.*

21. What does God promise to do for those who are faithful in returning tithes and giving offerings?

“ ‘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. 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; ‘ and all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land,’ says the Lord of hosts” (Malachi 3:10–12).

Answer: God promises to prosper His faithful financial stewards, and they will be a

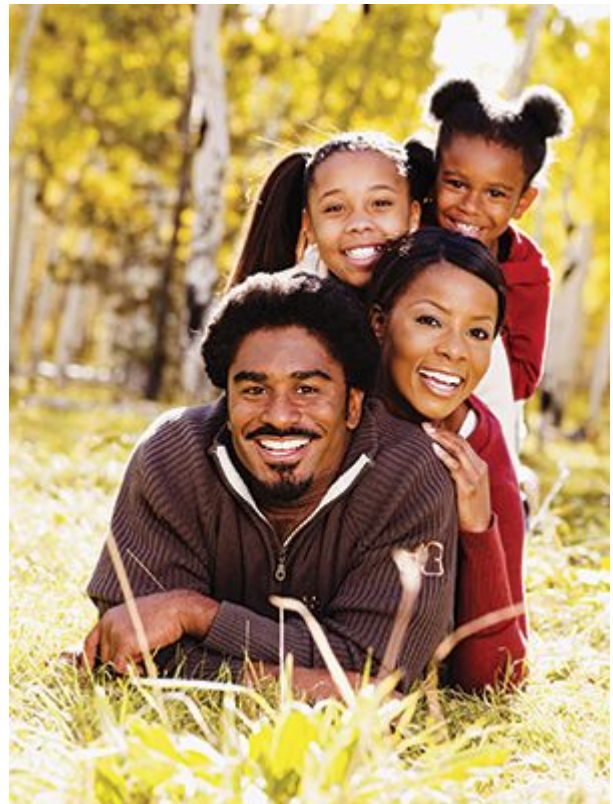
blessing to those around them.

Consider the Following Ways God Blesses:

A. God promises that your nine-tenths will go further with His blessing than your total income would go without it. If you doubt this, ask any faithful tither!

B. Blessings are not always financial. They may include health, peace of mind, answered prayers, protection, a close-knit and loving family, added physical strength, ability to make wise decisions, a spirit of thankfulness, a closer relationship with Jesus, success in soul-winning, an old car kept running longer, etc.

C. He becomes your partner in everything. No one except God could ever structure a plan so utterly fantastic.



22. Are you willing to begin tithing and giving offerings to demonstrate your love and thankfulness?

Answer:

THOUGHT QUESTIONS

1. If I don't like the way my church is using my tithe, should I stop tithing?

Tithing is a command of God. Tithe is holy money that belongs to the Lord (Leviticus 27:30). When you tithe, you tithe to Him. God is big enough to take care of the money you give for His church. Your responsibility is to tithe. Leave it to God to deal with those who misuse His funds.

2. I am frustrated because financial difficulties have made it impossible for me to give more than a very small amount beyond my tithe. What can I do?

The size of your gift is not important if you are doing the best you can. Jesus said that the poor widow of Mark 12:41–44, who gave only a pittance (two mites), gave more “than all those who have given to the treasury” because the others gave “of their abundance, but she ... put in all that she had.” The Lord measures our gifts by the amount of sacrifice we make and by the attitude with which we give. Jesus counts your gift very big. Give it with joy and know that Jesus is pleased. Read 2 Corinthians 8:12 for encouragement.

3. Doesn't stewardship involve more than the proper handling of my money?

Yes. Stewardship involves the proper handling of every talent and blessing that we receive from God, who gives us everything (Acts 17:24, 25). It involves our very lives! Faithful stewardship of God's gifts to us also includes our time spent:

A. Doing the work that God has assigned us (Mark 13:34).

B. Actively witnessing for Christ (Acts 1:8).

C. Studying the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2:15).

D. Praying (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

E. Helping those in need (Matthew 25:31–46).

F. Daily surrendering our lives anew to Jesus (Romans 12:1, 2; 1 Corinthians 15:31).

4. Aren't some preachers being paid too much money?

Yes. The flaunting of riches by some clergymen today is reducing the influence of all ministers. It brings reproach upon the name of Jesus. It causes thousands to turn away in disgust from the church and its ministry. Such leaders will face an awful day of reckoning in the judgment.

Ministers of God's End-Time Remnant Church

However, no minister in God's end-time, remnant church is overpaid. After internship, all ministers receive virtually the same salary (varying only a few dollars monthly) regardless of their job title or the size of their church. In many cases, spouses work in the public marketplace to supplement the pastors' incomes.

5. What if I cannot afford to pay tithe?

God says if we put Him first, He will see to it that our needs are all met (Matthew 6:33). His mathematics often work just opposite to human thinking. Under His plan, what we have left after tithing will go further than all of it would without His blessing!

QUIZ QUESTIONS

1. The word "tithe" actually means "tenth." (1)

_____ Yes.

_____ No.

2. The tithe already belongs to God. (1)

_____ True.

_____ False.

3. I am not tithing unless I return one-tenth of my income to God. (1)

_____ True.

_____ False.

4. Jesus endorsed returning tithe. (1)

_____ Yes.

_____ No.

**5. Which of the following are Bible guidelines and principles for freewill giving?
(5)**

_____ Give if you have anything left.

_____ Give cheerfully.

_____ Give liberally.

_____ Give so you will feel good.

_____ Give as God has prospered you.

_____ Giving is more blessed than receiving.

_____ God will return more than you give.

_____ Give if you feel like it.

_____ Give so people won't think you are stingy.

**6. According to the Bible, the source of income for gospel ministers should be
(1)**

_____ Bingo games.

_____ White elephant sales.

_____ Tithe.

_____ Bake sales.

_____ Raffles.

7. What Old Testament patriarchs who returned tithe before Moses' day are mentioned in this Study Guide? (2)

_____ Adam.

_____ Jacob.

_____ Noah.

_____ Isaac.

_____ Abraham.

_____ Methuselah.

8. According to Malachi 3:8, of what sin are people guilty who do not tithe and give offerings? (1)

_____ Idolatry.

_____ Breaking the Sabbath.

_____ Murder.

_____ Robbery.

9. According to the book of Hebrews, who really receives our money when we tithe? (1)

_____ The pastor.

_____ The needy.

_____ Jesus, our heavenly High Priest.

10. According to 2 Timothy 3:1-7, one of the 20 sins of the very last days that will shut people out of God's kingdom is covetousness. (1)

_____ Yes.

_____ No.

11. Bringing the tithe into God's storehouse means (1)

- _____ Using it to buy spiritual books.
- _____ Spending it for any spiritual cause.
- _____ Giving it to the treasury of God's church.

12. What does God promise the faithful tither in Malachi 3:10? (1)

- _____ He will never get sick.
- _____ He will never lose his job.
- _____ He will receive more blessings than he can handle.

13. God gave Adam and Eve a test regarding eating a piece of fruit. According to this Study Guide, what similar test does He give His people today? (1)

- _____ Reading the Bible daily.
- _____ Witnessing.
- _____ Returning tithe.
- _____ Praying.

14. Tithing was a part of Moses' law, which ended at the cross. (1)

- _____ Yes.
- _____ No.

15. How does God measure my gifts to Him? (2)

- _____ By how much I give.
- _____ By the amount of sacrifice.
- _____ By the attitude with which I give.

16. Faithful stewardship involves not only my proper handling of money, but also the amount of time I spend in activities such as prayer, witnessing, study of the Scripture, and helping others. (1)

- _____ Yes.
- _____ No.

17. I am willing to begin tithing and giving offerings.

_____ Yes.

_____ No.

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