



## LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

### “The Blessed Life: What Test?”

Ps James Lowe - January 17, 2016

#### WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

- What is one of the hardest life in life you ever faced?
- Have you ever overcome a "test" you initially failed?
- What challenge are you currently facing that you are confident you will handle well?u

#### WORD (10-15 minutes)

##### **Sermons can be heard online**

Jeremiah 17:7-10 (ESV) The Bible tells us that the person who trusts in God will be blessed even in tough times. But the human heart is deceitful, and is wayward. When we fail to trust God, we suffer.

Whenever we get paid for our work, we take a test. The test concerns who we will honor and thank for our provision.

Malachi 3:6-11 (ESV) *“For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. 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?’ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. 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. 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.”*

##### **1. Tithing is a test.**

Tithing means a tenth or 10%.

Ten is often a number associated with testing in the Bible.

- Number of plagues in Egypt = 10
- Number of commandments given to Israel = 10
- Number of times Israel was tested in the wilderness = 10 (Numbers 14)
- Number of times Jacob's wages were changed = 10
- Number of days that Daniel's test lasted = 10
- Number of virgins who were tested in Jesus' parable = 10
- Number of days of testing in Revelation = 10

Tithing is a two way test. God says we can test him in tithing.

## **2. Tithing is biblical.**

Genesis 14:18-20 Abraham tithed to Melchizedek, who represents Christ (500 years before the Law).

Genesis 28:22 Jacob tithed to the Lord (400 years before the Law).

Leviticus 27:30 Israel was commanded to tithe from all of their earned income.

Deuteronomy 26:1-2, 13-14 The tithe is holy and all of it belongs to God.

Matthew 23:23 Jesus taught tithing.

Hebrews 7:8 Jesus receives our tithes.

## **3. Tithing is a blessing.**

2 Chronicles 31:4-10 King Hezekiah reinstated tithing as a practice in his day among God's people. As the people obeyed, they were greatly blessed and the work of temple was blessed and provided for.

Two consistent testimonies are heard from Christian believers regarding tithing: (1) Those who tithe say they are so blessed. (2) Those who don't tithe say they can't afford to. The fact is they will never be able to afford to tithe *until* they tithe. Why? Because according to the Bible they are under a curse and won't be fully blessed until they tithe.

Not tithing is a sin. God provides all we receive, every blessing. He allows us to keep 90%, but requires us to give 10% to his bride, the church. To fail to tithe is to steal from God and from his bride. How do you think God feels about this?

### **DISCUSSION (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.**

- Why is tithing important for a Christian?
- What has been your experience in regards to tithing?
- When money is really tight what should we do and how should obey God in regards to tithing?

### **PRAYER (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- Pray and commit to God to begin tithing from your earned income.
- Pray and ask God to help you budget and manage your money well, and so help you be a generous giver.
- Pray and ask God to bless you and to rebuke "the devourer."