

In God We Trust?



Amazing Facts
Study Guide

Amazing Facts Study Guide 25 - In God We Trust?

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 or embezzle money from God." But God's shocking message to His people is, "Ye 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 financially through real faith in God.

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

"And 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 tenth in Israel for an inheritance." "The tithes of the children of Israel ... I have given to the Levites to inherit." Numbers 18:21, 24.

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. I have no right to keep it. When I tithe, I am not making a gift; I am simply returning to God what is already His. Unless I am returning one-tenth of my income to God, I am not tithing.

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

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse." Malachi 3:10.

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

4. To what does the Lord refer when He speaks of His storehouse?

"Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries." Nehemiah 13:12. (The marginal reference calls treasuries "storehouses.")

Answer: In Malachi 3:10, God refers to the storehouse as "mine house," which means His temple or church. Nehemiah 13:12 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 (see margin); 2 Chronicles 31:11, 12 (see margin); 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. How does the Bible help us understand that this is not so?

"And he [Abram] gave him tithes of all." Genesis 14:20. And in Genesis 28:22, Jacob said, "And of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

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 preceded Moses' law.

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

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Matthew 23:23.

Answer: No! On the contrary, He endorsed it. Jesus was rebuking the Jews for omitting the more important matters of the law--"judgment, mercy, and 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.

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

"I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation." 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 that the tithe support the priests and their families.

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

"Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." 1 Corinthians 9:13, 14.

Answer: No! He continued it. His plan today is that tithe be used to support those who work solely in gospel ministry. If all people tithed and the tithe were used strictly for the support of gospel workers, there would be more than enough money to reach the entire earth very quickly with God's end-time gospel message.

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

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse ... and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Malachi 3:10.

Answer: He says, "Prove me now" and see if I will not "pour you out a blessing" too big 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 the words: "You can't outgive God."

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

"And here men that die receive tithes; but there he [Jesus] receiveth them." Hebrews 7:8.

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

11. What test did Adam and Eve fail, which all of us must pass if we would inherit His heavenly 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. They were to leave it alone. Eve said they were not even to touch it (Genesis 3:3). But they did not trust God. They ate the fruit and fell--and the long, horrendous, wrenching sojourn in sin began. To people today, God

gives His riches, wisdom, and all of the other assets and blessings of heaven. Everything is ours--except one-tenth of our income, which is His (Leviticus 27:30). But as with Adam and Eve, He does not take it by force. He leaves it within our reach but warns, "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 I return God's tithe, I make Him a partner in everything I undertake. What a fantastic, blessed privilege: God and I--partners! With Him as my partner, I have everything to gain and nothing to lose. It is an awesomely 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." Psalms 96:8.

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

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

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth 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. My first priority should be to give myself to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:5).
- B. I should give God my 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, I am not rightly using my God-given blessings (Luke 12:16-21).
- F. God returns more than I give (Luke 6:38).
- G. I should give in proportion to how God has prospered and blessed me (1 Corinthians 16:2).
- H. I should give as I am able (Deuteronomy 16:17).

We *return* tithe to God, to whom it already belongs. We *give* offerings. Offerings 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 (Psalms 24:1).
- C. The Lord owns the world and everything in it (Psalms 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 acknowledgement of His great investment in our business affairs--plus 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 ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? 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?

"Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." Malachi 3:9. "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Corinthians 6:10.

Answer: The curse of God will rest upon them. They will not inherit the kingdom of heaven.

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

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Luke 12:34.

Answer: Because our hearts follow our investments. If my focus is on accumulating more and more money, my heart becomes covetous, grasping, and proud. But if my focus is on sharing and helping others and blessing God's work, then my heart becomes caring, loving, liberal, and humble. Covetousness is one of the 20 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 love offerings?

"Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart." Hebrews 3:10.

Answer: He probably feels much as a parent whose child steals money from him. 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 Paul stress about the stewardship of the believers in Macedonia?

Answer: Paul had written the churches in Macedonia asking them to please lay aside some funds for God's people in Jerusalem, who were suffering terribly from 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 most 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 power" to 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 rather a glorious privilege that we will perform with great joy and satisfaction.

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

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith 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 your income and giving offerings to demonstrate your love and thankfulness?

Answer: