



MALACHI

“Sincere Heart”

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August 29, 2010
Malachi 3:7-12 (ESV)

KEY THOUGHT:

If I've turned away from God, then he wants me to come back to him with a sincere heart. God is after the genuineness and sincerity of my heart (v. 7).

MARKS OF A SINCERE HEART TOWARDS GOD

1. Returning to God what I've _____ from him (vv. 8-9).

- God is after sincerity. But, how can I say that I sincerely want to restore my relationship with God if I'm keeping something that I've stolen from him? That's dishonest.
- Not tithing is an example of keeping something that I've stolen from God. To refuse to tithe is to rob God. Thus, if I refuse to tithe while claiming to want to return to God, then that shows insincerity.

The Connection between Tithe & Sincerity of My Heart

God owns everything (Psalm 24:1) including all of my income. He says to return to him 10% of his money (i.e., tithe) that he has blessed me to possess. I get to retain 90% of what belongs to God and manage it according to his will, but the 10% he wants back to demonstrate my trust, love, and gratitude to God (Lev. 27:30, 32; Matt. 23:23; Prov. 3:9-10; Gen. 14:19-20). Because God does not give me permission to keep the 10%, I am stealing from God if I keep it for myself. However, if I return what I've stolen, then that shows my genuine desire to restore my relationship with God.



- Stealing from God happens in various ways and is not limited to robbing God of his tithe. Because God owns everything, robbery occurs any time I'm unwilling to release to God for his use anything he has entrusted to me to manage—e.g., time, talents, gifts, etc. In each case, I am to return to God what I've stolen if my heart is sincere towards him.

2. Abandoning all _____ of piety (v. 10a).

- Whether it's claiming to return to God the whole tithe when I am actually holding something back or any other deception, God cannot stand insincerity that is masked by a pretense of piety.
- It is far better to know my sin, be genuinely sorry for it, admit my weakness to God, and cry to him for help, than to fake piety.

GOD'S RESPONSE TO A SINCERE HEART

Abounding _____ (vv. 10b-12).

God loves to bless his people (Matthew 7:9-11) but he cannot bless insincerity.

CENTRAL TRUTH

God is after the sincerity of my heart for him.

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