

Christian Life Center, A Foursquare Church | 951-689-6785

INSTRUCTIONS IN THE GARDEN AND IN THE LAND OF CANAAN

1. In Genesis 2:15-17 God said to Adam that he could eat of all the trees in the garden but not to eat from the one tree in the middle of the garden. He also told them the consequence would be spiritual death.

2. In Joshua 6:15-19 God told Joshua that Israel was not to touch the devoted things in the city of Jericho. These were dedicated/devoted to the LORD.

THE FIRST OF THE LAND OF PROMISE

Joshua 6 and 7 - The story of the fulfillment of the land God promised to Israel begins in Joshua 6 when God detailed how they were to begin the conquest. The first fruit of the land was to be the fortified city of Jericho, the first city conquered in Canaan.

1. **Jericho, the first fruit of the Promised Land** - When God finally brought Israel to the boundary of Canaan, He commanded them to take the fortified city of Jericho and utterly destroy it. The words God used were. *"…the city and all that is in it are to be devoted ("accursed" in the KJV) to the LORD."* (Joshua 6:17). This act dedicated the first victory entirely to God.

2. **Israel disregards God's command** - God was establishing the principle of "the first" with the new generation of warriors and clearly stated the consequences for disobeying His command in Joshua 6:18-19 *But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury*. This was carried out when Achan kept back a portion of the spoils in Joshua 7.

3. **The blessing for obedience** – God made an extraordinary promise to Joshua and the people of Israel in Joshua 1:1–5. He was going to give them the (entire) Land of promise not just a small piece of territory, but a land beyond anything they had ever possessed! But there was one condition: God's promise had to be fulfilled God's way, not theirs.

They had to trust Him, obey His Word, and follow His and Joshua's leading. **The promise was God's, but they had to walk it out in faith and obedience**!

THE TITHE, GOD'S CHANNEL FOR DIVINE PROVISION

God has given us a powerful principle by which to govern (steward) our finances and experience His Divine abundance! This is found in the last Old Testament book of Malachi.

Malachi 3:10-12 *Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit," says the LORD Almighty. "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty*.

1. **The Tithe begins with a clear understanding of the following basic principles**:

   - God is the Owner of all things; I am the manager over what He has given me. (Psalm 24:1; Malachi 1:6; Luke 6:46-49)

   - God is Number One and He deserves the very best. When I give the "first fruit," or first ten percent of my income, I am declaring that He deserves the very best and that He is the Source of everything. (Proverbs 3:9; Malachi 1:6)

2. **The word "tithe" means a tenth.** Less than ten percent is not a tithe and anything over and above ten percent is an offering. The tithe is a fixed percentage that does not change.

3. **The tithe is that portion which *already* belongs to God** (Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 3:7-8). When we tithe, we are giving back to Him that <u>which is already His</u>.

4. **The tithe is not an issue of the Law, it was in existence <u>*before*</u> the giving of the Law.** It began in the Garden of Eden when God gave Adam the entire Garden but commanded him not to touch the one tree in the middle. Abraham and Jacob tithed (Genesis 14:18-20; 2:20-22) and Jesus endorsed it as a standing, Biblical principle which was in effect before the Mosaic Law (Matthew 23:23).

5. **Holding back the Tithe is robbing God** (Malachi 3:8). The LORD makes a strong statement in Malachi 3:8, saying that to hold back the tithe is actually "robbing" Him. (John 10:1, 10; 12:6) The consequence of this behavior was illustrated in the account of Achan as he kept back a portion of the spoils from Jericho in Joshua 7.

6. **God uses the Tithe as an instrument to pour out His abundance to us** (Malachi 3:10). He literally invites us to prove His Word and then to experience blessing to such a degree that "there will not be room enough to receive it."

7. **God promises to protect our assets and belongingness** (Malachi 3:11). God promises divine protection as part of His covenant regarding our tithe. If we are faithful to give God the tithe, God is faithful to protect all our other assets!

KEY SCRIPTURES

Deuteronomy 28:1-14 If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God: ...*The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom.*

Matthew 6:31-33 *Therefore do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.*

SEVEN PRINCIPLES

Biblical principles that position us to receive God's blessing...

1. **Who's in charge?**
   - God is the Owner of all things, I am the manager over what He has given me. Stewardship deals with the person, not the purse.
   - 1 Chronicles 29:10-18; Psalm 24:1, 50:10; Luke 6:46-49

2. **Who's number 1?**
   - When we give the "first fruit," or first ten percent, we are honoring Him and declaring that He is the Source of everything.
   - Proverbs 3:9-10; Malachi 1:6; Colossians 1:15-18

3. **Faithful in little, faithful in much**.
   - Stewardship in our tithing and our giving deals with our present resources. God increases as we are faithful over what we have today.
   - Matthew 25:21; Luke 16:10-12

4. **Give and grow**.
    - Biblical stewardship produces growth. By obeying God's Word, our faith grows; by using our spiritual gifts, we grow and mature spiritually.
    - Genesis 12:2; Matthew 25:19-23; Luke 17:5-6; 2 Corinthians 9:10-11

5. **Cheerful attitude.**
    - In 2 Corinthians 9:7, cheerful is the Greek word meaning hilarious giving. It is giving with genuine willingness and joy.
    - Stewardship begins with loving, not giving. We can give without loving but we cannot love without giving.
    - Romans 12:1; John 3:16

6. **The river.**
    - We must be a river of resources, not a reservoir. God will continue to give to us what He knows will flow through us.
    - Proverbs 11:25; 22:9

7. **God's "big shovel."**
    - We cannot out give God!
    - Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6



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