

# DISCOVERIES

By Mark Finley

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# 17

## **Financial Advice The World's Wealthiest Man and Wisest Book**

Sardis was one of the wealthiest cities in the world in the fourth and fifth century before Christ. Gold coins were minted in Sardis. The city was rich with huge gold deposits. Croesus, the King of Sardis, was certainly one of the wealthiest men in the world. He once asked a philosopher who the happiest man in the world was. Expecting the philosopher to reply that Croesus was the world's happiest man, he was astounded when the philosopher profoundly said, "I cannot tell you my majesty until I see how that man dies."

In other words, if you do not die well, you have not lived well. If you have spent your riches on yourself and do not die with the satisfaction of giving you have really missed life's true joy.

The world we live in is a world bent on getting. It is a society caught up in acquiring things. We seem to be obsessed with the materialism of the moment. Yet our security is crumbling. The economy is in a steep decline. Banks are failing. The national debt is at an all time high. The infrastructure of America is rapidly deteriorating. We are embroiled in a long, painful and costly war. The stock market is on the verge of a major crash. Unemployment is rising. Home mortgage foreclosures are at an all time high. Something is terribly wrong.

Does God have a plan for us to thrive in the midst of serious economic times? He does. First, He invites us to take a spiritual inventory of our lives (Psalm 90:12 and Luke 12:19). It is possible to spend all of our lives attempting to acquire things only to lose it all in a massive heart attack brought about by the stress of acquiring things. It is possible to work sixty hours a week to pay the mortgage on a house you cannot afford only to break down your immune system and get cancer. Does this make sense? Are there other more important priorities? Jesus was right on target when He said, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?" (Matthew 16:26). Jesus' counsel is to "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." (Matthew 6:20). Make decisions which count for eternity.

A last day financial crisis is coming which will drive many people to total despair. Everything they have worked for will be gone in a moment. (James 5:1-3). There will be a conflict between employees and employers. (James 5:4, 5). Money will devalue rapidly.

### **God's Answer to Our Financial Problems**

1. We are stewards. God is the true owner of this world. **Genesis 2:8; Psalm 50:10;**  
**Genesis 1:28 & 2:16, 17**

2. As we acknowledge God as owner of all and the one who gives us the ability to get wealth, our lives will be blessed. **Deuteronomy 8:10**
3. We acknowledge God's ownership of everything we have by faithfully returning our tithe to Him. **Haggai 2:8, Genesis 14:19, 20 & 28:22**
4. The tithe is one tenth of our increase or income. **Leviticus 27:30**
5. Faithfulness in tithes brings God's blessings. Unfaithfulness in tithe is robbing God. **Malachi 3:8-10**

Some of the world's richest people have been faithful in returning their tithes. People like J.C. Penny, William Colgate, Henry Heinz, Milton Hershey, John D. Rockefeller and R.L. Le Tourneau were all tithe payers. God promises to provide for His people if they are faithful in returning their tithes. **Malachi 3:11, Psalm 37:25, Philippians 4:19 and Proverbs 3:9, 10**

Giving starves selfishness. When we give we open our heart to receive. Withholding hardens our hearts. It produces a selfish spirit. Giving opens our hearts liberally to receive all of the abundant blessings God has for us.

### **How Is the Tithe Used?**

Tithe is used specifically for the preaching of the gospel. It means a tenth. This tenth is carefully set aside to proclaim God's last day message to the world. Millions of Christians around the world participate in God's tithing plan. They have the incredible joy of seeing God use the funds they return to spread the gospel around the world. Returning tithe brings the deep satisfaction of advancing the kingdom of God.

There is no greater motivation to give than the cross. Christ has given His life for us. Through the cross, He gives us life, breath and all of the good things we have. Heaven has given us its supreme gift in Jesus. We can do no less than give of our means for the spreading of the gospel to see people saved in His kingdom.

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## **Words to the Wise**

*John D. Rockefeller, Sr.*, when asked if he tithed replied: "Yes, I tithe. My first wages amounted to \$1.50 a week. The first week I took the money home to my mother, and she held the money in her lap and explained to me that she would be happy if I would give a tenth of it to the Lord. I did and *from that day to this I have tithed every dollar that God has entrusted to me*, and I want to say to you that if I had not tithed the *first* dollar I made, I would not have tithed the first million dollars I made. Train the children to tithe and they will grow up to be *faithful stewards* of the Lord."

## THE BIBLE SAYS

- Haggai 1:6** People's vain attempt to make money only to see it disappear.
- James 5:1, 2, 3** God's word predicts a rapid, sudden economic collapse.
- Luke 12:15** Life consists of much more than money.
- Psalms 116:12** Our giving acknowledges God's goodness.
- Acts 20:35** It is always more blessed to give than to receive.
- Deuteronomy 8:18** God gives us the ability to get wealth.
- Haggai 2:8** All things in this world belong to God.
- Psalms 50:12** God declares "every beast of the forest is mine."
- Leviticus 27:30** All the tithe is holy unto the Lord.
- Malachi 3:8-10** We rob God when we are unfaithful in returning tithe.
- Psalms 37:25** God is always faithful to those who trust Him.
- Genesis 14:18-20** Abraham was faithful in his tithing and God richly blessed.
- Matthew 23:23** Jesus endorses the tithing precepts.

## Quick Quiz

Our heavenly Father has *so much* He longs to teach us! Think of each seminar session as one in a series of steps leading upward—a series of “lessons from heaven.” May we learn our lessons well, so we in turn can teach others. God’s Word, the Bible—our Textbook for this seminar—offers **Learning Unlimited!**

### #17 - The World’s Wealthiest Man and Wisest Book

1. Concerned for our spiritual welfare, the Savior warns: “Take heed, and \_\_\_\_\_ : for man’s life consisteth *not* in the abundance of the THINGS which he possesses.”  
**To check your answer, see Luke 12:14.**
2. T “The Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous” have no intrinsic, permanent value, and God says  
F *they’ll throw their money into the streets* when the Lord returns – and they are lost.  
**To check your answer, see Ezekiel 7:19.**
3. God, by virtue of His Creatorship, owns all things: He says not just “The \_\_\_\_\_ is Mine, and the \_\_\_\_\_ is Mine,” but also “the \_\_\_\_\_ upon a thousand hills... the \_\_\_\_\_ is Mine, and the fullness thereof.”  
**To check your answer, see Haggai 2:8; Psalm 50:10; Compare Psalm 24:1.**
4. God as our Maker rightfully claims the tithe – or *tenth* – as His own portion of our income: “All the tithe...is the \_\_\_\_\_ : it is \_\_\_\_\_ unto the Lord.”  
**To check your answer, see Leviticus 27:30.**
5. Since our abilities, skills, talents, health, and strength all come from God, He pointedly *reminds* us that “It is **He** that giveth thee \_\_\_\_\_ to get \_\_\_\_\_.”  
**To check your answer, see Deuteronomy 8:18.**
6. T A thoughtful, thankful Christian will *want* to know how to show his *gratitude* for all God’s  
F *priceless* blessings.  
**To check your answer, see Psalm 116:12.**
7. The Bible clearly shows that hoarding of riches and financial distress will be widespread when Jesus returns: “Ye rich men, *weep* and *howl* for your \_\_\_\_\_ that shall come upon you. Your *riches* are corrupted, and your *garments* are moth-eaten. Your \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are cankered.....Ye have *heaped treasure together* for the \_\_\_\_\_ days.”  
**To check your answer, see James 5:1-3.**
8. God “calls a spade a spade” and comes right out and says, “Ye have \_\_\_\_\_ Me. But ye say, Wherein have we \_\_\_\_\_ Thee? In \_\_\_\_\_ and offerings. Ye are *cursed* with a *curse*: for ye have \_\_\_\_\_ Me, even this whole nation.”  
**To check your answer, see Malachi 3:8-9.**
9. But instead of *curses*, God offers *blessings* to the faithful: “Bring ye \_\_\_\_\_ the *tithes* into the storehouse....and \_\_\_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_\_\_ enough to receive it!”  
**To check your answer, see Malachi 3:10.**

10. T In the New Testament, Jesus Himself put His *stamp of approval* on God's plan for support of  
F the church and personal financial security, saying we *ought* to pay tithe.

**To check your answer, see Matthew 23:23.**

11. God doesn't really *need* our money, but He does want our *hearts*, and He knows that "Where your \_\_\_\_\_ is, there will your \_\_\_\_\_ be also."

**To check our answer, see Matthew 6:21.**

12. On the lines below, briefly tell in your own words how you would explain to an honest inquirer how the Bible teaches us to *order our priorities* and to put *first things FIRST*."

**To check your answer, see Matthew 6:33 & Proverbs 3:9-10.**

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## **A Thought for Today**

### ***Malachi 3:8-10***

"Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed you?' In tithes and offerings. you are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. 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".





