



Living Water
Church

Diving Deeper: A Gather Group discussion guide
or personal devotional guide



His Way or Your Way?

Introduction: Two brothers bring an offering to the Lord. Cain brought his offering on his terms, while his brother, Abel brought his first fruits and the fatted portions. Abel brought his best to God, while Cain offered his left overs. The Lord accepted Abel's offering, but rejected Cain's. The people in Malachi's day were guilty of bringing the offering of Cain. They brought their tithe "Their Way" instead of honoring God "His Way."

Text: Read Genesis 4:1-5, Malachi 1 & 3

Discussion:

1. Icebreaker: Have you ever been on a team or in a study group where some didn't put their best effort in the sport or assignment? How did that make you feel? Why is it frustrating when people slack and do not put their heart into it? What does it communicate when you do something half hearted?
2. Read Genesis 4:1-5. Note the difference in the offerings of the two brothers. When you give God an offering do you give him your "first" or "leftovers?"
3. Read Malachi 1:6: What is God asking the people? How did the people dishonor God?
4. Read Malachi 1:7-8, 13-14 The people of God were supposed to offer their first fruits and their best portions. The sacrificial lamb was to be spotless. However, the priest and the people had disregard for the Lord and offered animals "Their Way." They would offer a blind, lame, sick, or stolen animal. How does God view this type of offering?
5. A tithe means tenth. If you make \$100.00 a week then a tithe would be \$10.00. If you make \$1,000.00 a week then you would give \$100.00. This would be considered your first fruits—the best portion. What does it communicate to the Lord when you give less than what you should be giving?
6. Why is tithing a heart issue?
7. Read Proverbs 3:5-10 What does the Bible say about our giving?
8. Why is tithing a trust issue?
9. Read Malachi 3:7-12. The Lord says to bring the whole tithe to the storehouse. This is your place of worship. Have you ever heard people justify not tithing because they give to other organizations and charities? Why is this not a substitute to the tithe?
10. The "What" is to bring the tithe. Discuss/Write about the "Why" of bringing the tithe.
11. You will handle money God's way or Your way. If we handle money God's way then we will see ourselves as a steward. If we handle money our way we will see ourselves as one who acquires. Discuss/Write what it looks like to view your life as a steward of God's blessings. Write/Discuss what it looks like when you view your life as one who is to acquire.
12. Read Matthew 6:31-33 What is Jesus teaching you about your money?
13. Why is tithing a faith issue?
- 14.

Think About it:

Most Americans are in debt to much of what they have, credit cards are out of control, and marriages struggle because money is not a blessing to most, but a curse. We spend more than we make, we don't budget or plan, we do not give, and our life spins out of control. God had given us a plan on how to view and use money. His way produces blessing and provision. Our way leads to debt and destruction. Why not follow His Way?

Moving Forward:

Take time this week to take a serious look at your finances. Make a budget. Begin with your first fruits, then list all your main bills, food, gas, and necessities. Then begin to attack the smallest debt, save, and then enjoy. Get your financial life on God's path. Allow God to have your best—give him your heart. Allow God to have your future—give him your trust. Allow God to increase your faith—give him your all!