

## The Floodgates of Heaven

### Scripture Reading — Malachi 3:9-12

*Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this . . . and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven. . . . — Malachi 3:10*

This is one of the more well-known verses in the book of Malachi. It seems to offer a simple formula to receive God's blessings. Give to God, and he will give back even more. But people who care only about material blessings are going to be disappointed.

What God is really saying is that if his children are in a good relationship with him, he will bless them abundantly. In my personal experience that has not meant riches or perfect health. But I've found that when my relationship with God is close, two things happen.

First, I'm quicker to notice the types of blessings God promises. I notice that my efforts are more productive with fewer things going wrong. This is a real material blessing. Second, my expectations in life become more reasonable, resulting in more contentment with less stuff. Often that contentment comes through the humble realization that in most of the world people would call me blessed with riches. This is a spiritual blessing.

Both the material and the spiritual blessings come through first drawing closer to God. God is not interested in religious formulas that appear to coerce him into blessing us. Instead, God wants a relationship in which he can be our loving, generous Father. Do you have that kind of relationship with God?

### Prayer

*Father, thank you for putting our relationship first. Help us to give with the right motives and appreciate you over all the blessings you provide. Amen.*

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