

## Genesis 3:1-5

<sup>1</sup> Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" <sup>2</sup> And the woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; <sup>3</sup> but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, lest you die.'" <sup>4</sup> And the serpent said to the woman, "You surely shall not die! <sup>5</sup> "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

The Lord gave man the entire earth to have dominion over, and the garden as His personal gift. Adam and Eve could partake of anything that was on the earth, except for one thing, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Understand that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was God's portion, and not man's. Today, many believers are as guilty of taking from God as Adam and Eve were with the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Today, it is not a tree that they robbing from Him, but the tithe! **Malachi 3:8-11**, <sup>8</sup> "Will a man rob God? Yet you are robbing Me! But you say, 'How have we robbed Thee?' In tithes and offerings. <sup>9</sup> "You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing Me, the whole nation of you! <sup>10</sup> "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test 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 a blessing until it overflows. <sup>11</sup> "Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it may not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast *its grapes*," says the LORD of hosts.

If you are a Christian, and are not paying your tithe, then you are robbing God of what belongs to Him, and you are a thief. If you try and justify not paying your tithe because of bills, debts, college tuition, vacations, a spouse, etc... then you are a thief with excuses. The bottom line is that you are a thief. Only, you are stealing not from mere man, but from the Living God!! Perhaps you justify your actions because you are in a season where the Lord is blessing you, in order to draw you into His perfect will. Don't misunderstand His blessings as a license for you to steal; because once He lifts His favor, grace and mercy from your life; then the full measure of cursed with a curse will become your reality. Being cursed was never part of God's plan. The curse entered in when Adam and Eve chose to disobey here in the garden. But don't try and blame them with everything either, because choosing to disobey God is something that all of us are guilty of. God promises blessings and protection to those who obey and honor Him; to those who don't, a principle as real as gravity is there for those who choose to disobey. Church, why is it so hard to honor God with what belongs to Him?? If you had a business partner, and he only received 10%, would you try and rob him? If not, then why are you robbing the Living God? What you don't understand is that it already belongs to Him! He doesn't need your money, you need His blessings! I understand that obeying comes at a cost; because I have had to choose in my adult life at times, whether to pay bills or my tithe. The choices have not always been easy; but this I can promise you, God has always honored the fact that I have always honored Him in this. What will He say about you?