

Southern Asia Division 3

Stewardship Certification *Handout*



Signs of Ownership & Lordship

Aim: To explore the biblical principle of God’s Lordship and how it is manifested through the practice of tithing, offerings, and donations.

Introduction

Several reasons exist for the practice of tithe, offerings, and donations. One of them is that they are signs of acknowledgment of God’s Ownership and Lordship.

Part I: The First Test of Ownership and Lordship

Participants’ Involvement

What was the essence of the test that Adam and Eve went through in Eden? Read Genesis 3:4,5.

There is something strange in this proposition of the devil (Gen. 3: 4-5). Humans were already _____ God. They were created in His image: Sharing honor, privileges and responsibility. What was therefore the essence of the devil’s suggestion?

- Why don’t you aspire to be _____ yourself?
- Would you continue to acknowledge God as your _____?
- Would you continue to acknowledge God as your _____?

Ellen White confirms the nature of the test in Eden:

Herein is set forth a principle that is seen in all God’s dealings with men. The Lord placed our first parents in the Garden of Eden. He surrounded them with everything that could minister to their happiness, and He bade them acknowledge Him as the _____ of all things. In the garden He caused to grow every tree that was pleasant to the eye or good for food; but among them He made one reserve. Of all else, Adam and Eve might freely eat; but of this one tree God said, “Thou shalt not eat of it.” Here was the test of their _____ and _____ to God. (*Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 62).

The test in Genesis 3 is one of **LORDSHIP/OWNERSHIP** and the forbidden fruit was a sign. We can paraphrase their response to the test:

“We will _____ the owners/the lords in place of the real Owner/Lord.”

Part II: Lordship in the Bible

Ancient Israel, Read Exodus 20:1-6

The general introduction to the Ten Commandments and the 2nd commandment affirm God as Lord

Read Deuteronomy 6:4, 5

Lordship is at the foundation of the identity of Ancient Israel. The confession of faith of Judaism, the Shema Yisrael, declares the exclusive Lordship of God.

Apostle Paul, Read Romans 10:9

The first coming of Jesus has not annulled the principle of Lordship and Ownership.

Jesus is referred more than _____ times as _____ in the New Testament.

Jesus, Read Matthew 7:21

Lordship has to be demonstrated through concrete, tangible actions.

Part III: Lordship of Time and Space

Read Acts 17:26

Human existence takes place along two dimensions: _____ and _____.

How does one show that God is Lord in these two dimensions of life?

Time

The Bible provides a clear sign to acknowledge the Lordship of God over time. Read Ezekiel 20:20.

“Hallow My _____, and they will be a _____ between Me and you, that you may know that I am the _____ your God.”

Space-Material world

God has also provided clear signs to acknowledge His Lordship over space; over the material world.

“He asks us to ACKNOWLEDGE Him as the _____ of all things; and for this reason He says, Of all your possessions I reserve a _____ for Myself, besides _____ and _____, which are to be brought into My storehouse.” (Counsels on Stewardship, pp. 80-81) The same idea about the symbolical function of tithe and offerings is reiterated, “Tithes and offerings for God are an acknowledgement of His claim on us by _____ and they are also an acknowledgement of His claim of _____ . Because all our power is derived from Christ, these offerings are to flow

from us to God. They are to keep ever before us the claim of redemption, the greatest of all claims, and the one that involves every other.” (*Testimonies*, Vol. 6:479).

A close parallel exists between the two signs of God’s Lordship: Sabbath keeping and Tithing.

“God has sanctified the seventh day. That specified portion of time, set apart by God Himself for religious worship, continues as sacred today as when first hallowed by our Creator. In _____ manner a tithe of our income is "holy unto the Lord.”” “While we as a people are seeking faithfully to give to God the time which He has reserved as His own, shall we not also render to Him that portion of our means which He claims? (*R. & H., May 16, 1882*)

Part IV: Instructions about Tithe and Offerings

There are clear instructions about tithing and offerings for God’s people.

Participants’ Involvement

Read Leviticus 27:30, 32; Numbers 18: 21,26 and discuss the characteristics of the tithe.

Leviticus 27:30, 32

- Tithe _____ to God.
- It is _____ to the Lord.
- God shares in the _____—no selection by quality.

Numbers 18: 21,26

- God gave the tithe to the _____.
- The Levites were to _____ tithe.
- Tithe is an _____ to the Lord.

Participants’ involvement

Read Deuteronomy 15:21; Deuteronomy 16:16-17 and discuss about the characteristics of offerings.

- Offerings should be our _____
- Offerings are an essential element of collective _____
- Offerings are not given as an amount but in _____ (as a _____).
- Divine giving _____ our giving.

Participants’ involvement

What are the similitudes and differences between tithe and offerings?

Part V: Tithe and Offerings in the Context of Revival and Reformation

Outside of the books of Moses, references to the tithing system are related to revival and reformation. A revival took place during the time of King Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29-31). The major components of Hezekiah’s revival: The temple was repaired; The worship services were restored; Passover was celebrated once again; Levites are reinstated to ministry.

Read 2 Chronicles 31: 5-6

“As soon as the commandment was circulated, the children of Israel brought in abundance the fruits of grain and wine, oil and honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the _____ of everything.”

An equivalent process is described in the book of Nehemiah (Neh. 10:37-38; 12:44; 13:5, 12).

Ezra read the law; Corporate worship was restored; People committed to faithfulness to God in tithe and offerings; _____ for the tithe and offerings were established.

Participants' Involvement

Why is there a close relationship between the practice of offering and tithing with revival?

In the time of prophet Malachi there was an appeal from God to His people. Read Malachi 1: 6

“A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the Father, where is my honor? And if I am a _____, where is my reverence?”

The primary issue was not acknowledging God as Master, as Lord. Lordship was under attack!

Chapter 3 of Malachi presents the plea of God to His people.

Read Malachi 3: 7

It is a call to return, a call to revival. After listening to God, the people are asking a pertinent question: How should we demonstrate that we have returned to you? Before He provides the answer, He reminds the people how they have departed from Him.

Read Malachi 3:8,9

They were robbing God, not of material possession, but of the honor that He deserves as God by keeping the tithes and offerings.

God ends the conversation with a well-known appeal. Read Malachi 3:10

The process of revival and reformation can be summarized in three steps:

- (1) Extended dialogue over apostasy.
- (2) A call to return to God.
- (3) Reform our ways which include returning a faithful tithe and offerings.

Conclusion

Our responsibility is to lead people to recognize God as _____ and _____. One practical way is to teach them to return a faithful _____ and _____ as signs of God's Lordship.