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WEEK 5 | THE BLESSED LIFE PART 2 - FIRST THINGS FIRST

PRAYER

Lord, we rejoice in you today, knowing that in you we have all that we need. We see that you are a good God who gives us your all, therefore the only right response would be to give you our all. Help us not to hesitate, but to lean in towards you with all our hearts, all our being, and with all we have. Let our souls find complete rest in you as we trust in Jesus' name, Amen.

WARM UP (OPTIONAL)

Has there ever been a time when you wanted something, but it didn't turn out the way you expected?

NOTES

WORD

⁸ Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. ⁹ You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. ¹⁰ Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need. ¹¹ I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it will not destroy the fruits of your soil, and your vine in the field shall not fail to bear, says the Lord of hosts. ¹² Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the Lord of hosts.

[MALACHI 3:8-12](#)

Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord." ² And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a worker of the ground. ³ In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, ⁴ and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, ⁵ but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. ⁶ The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? ⁷ If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."

⁸ Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. ⁹ Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" ¹⁰ And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.

[GENESIS 4:1-10](#)

If God is first in our lives, this should be reflected in all areas. We can recognise what masters our lives by seeing what is the first thing we think about, we talk about, and we give passionately towards.

When we look at the difference between Cain and Abel's sacrifice towards God, and how God was pleased with Abel's sacrifice but not with Cain's, we can see four things:

- 1. Abel offered his first (firstborn sheep)**
- 2. Abel offered his best (fattened, very valuable sheep)**
- 3. Abel offered that which cost an actual life. This would be a precursor of the sacrifice that Jesus would take by laying down his life to cover us.**
- 4. Cain's motive behind his giving was revealed when he committed the first murder in killing his brother.**

Let us be a people who would give firstly, freely, and lavishly towards our God in response to the life that was given for us and to us.

GUIDE QUESTIONS

(NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE)

1. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your ability to worship God with your finances? Why have you rated yourself this way?
2. When you walk into a room and see there is a need there, how easily or quickly do you respond to help fulfil that need? What if that need is financial?
3. How can you practically give God your first, your best, and that which is sacrificial to you? Do you see yourself as giving in the same way as Abel?
4. Malachi 3 is the only place in Scripture where we find God telling Israel to put him to the test in lavishing blessings from heaven. What did this look like in that day and age, and what does it look like in your own life today?
5. Malachi 3:8 talks about robbing God in tithes and offerings. What do you think this could mean in its context? How does it speak to you?