We know the vital issue of testing in the Christian’s life, and in particular, how it impacts the Kingdom Business professionals, faced as they are daily with a wide variety of temptations to compromise their integrity in the marketplace. We learned that if we persevere to the end, and pass the tests, we are given a great reward – the crown of life.

Now, let’s look at the other side of the “testing” coin – can we test God? And if we can, should we?

The key verses in this discussion are Malachi 3: 8-11, the famous passage on tithing, and one that has caused perhaps as much controversy among modern Christians as any in the entire Bible. What this passage essentially says is that if we do not tithe (give God 10% of our total income), we are robbing God, but if we do tithe, He will open the windows of heaven, pour out huge blessings, and rebuke the devourer for us.

It is in Verse 10 that the prophet Malachi quotes God as saying, “Try Me now in this”. It is the only time God actually invites us to try or test Him – and interestingly enough for we business people, it is in the area of finance!

Maybe first we should go over some old ground that still remains a thorny issue – should a New Testament believer -a Christian - tithe?
My personal take on this is somewhat controversial, based on my understanding of the entire Word of God, and it is that Christians ARE in fact commanded to tithe!

So where does it say that in the New Testament? It doesn’t of course. There are only a few references to tithing in the New Testament, and none are direct commands to tithe. The NT verses on tithing most often quoted are those in the Gospels, where Jesus tells the Pharisees they should pay their tithes, as well as concerning themselves with the “weightier matters” such as justice, mercy and faith (Matthew 23: 23, Luke 11: 42).

In the Old Testament, it is a totally different story – God commands His people a number of times to tithe, telling them the tithe is “holy to the Lord”:

- And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s. It is holy to the Lord … and concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock … the tenth one shall be holy to the Lord (Leviticus 27: 30 – 32)
- You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year (Deuteronomy 14: 22)
- Bring all the tithes into the storehouse (Malachi 3: 10).

A hoary old argument against tithing is that it is part of the Mosaic Law, but this is countered by looking at verses as far back as Genesis 14: 20, where we see Abraham tithing to Melchizedek (usually seen as symbolic of Jesus), covered in more detail in the New Testament book of Hebrews (Chapter 7, verses 1-10).

The argument goes that Jesus did away with the Law, and therefore did away with tithing – but Jesus nowhere says he does away with the Law, but on the contrary, that He fulfills it (Matthew 5:17). So if Jesus fulfills the Law, and tithing is commanded within the Law, then how are we as followers of Jesus absolved from tithing? We may as well say that we can now murder, steal and commit adultery, because Jesus did away with the Ten Commandments!

Tithing, to a Kingdom Business Professional, is a fundamental. If you say you are a Christian business person, and then say you don’t believe in tithing, then I would say you are not serious about your call. Tithing both opens up the blessing, in effect switches on the promises God makes to us about blessing and prosperity, and just as importantly, “rebukes the devourer” – in other words, stops our money from disappearing and being wasted.

Surely it is not an insignificant fact, that in all the Bible, God only once invites us to test Him – and that is in the area of tithing! That is an incredible, awesome invitation! The Creator of the world invites us, His creation, to put Him to the test.

In several places, however, learn that the Israelites tested God when He did not invite them to, with mostly disastrous consequences. It led to them wandering around the wilderness for 40 years: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial (testing) in the wilderness, when your fathers tested Me; they tried Me, though they saw My work. For 40 years I was grieved with that generation…so I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter My rest.” (Psalm 95: 7-11).

In Exodus 17: 2 and 7, Moses accuses the Israelites of “tempting” or testing the Lord when they ran short on water – they tested God, and in so doing, failed their own test: “He named that place
Masseh, because the Israelites tested the Lord when they asked, 'Is the Lord with us or not?' He also named it Meribah, because they quarreled.” (Exodus 17: 7 New Century Version).

When His people rebelled and quarreled at the bitter waters they invoked God’s anger, and put themselves in a very perilous situation – for “rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry”. (1 Samuel 15:23) So this is not a place you want to be, Kingdom Business Professionals, testing God and quarreling with Him, and being lumped together with the witches and sorcerers!

So when we test God legitimately, by tithing as He invites us, we can expect to see the results He promises in His Word – but it is important then to wait on Him in Godly patience, and not use the tithe as some sort of “magic wand” to try to control God. He will do it, in His way, in His time, and for our ultimate good.

Business people are often strong and impulsive – qualities that go with strong leadership. But we must always be aware that our leader – our CEO – is Jesus Christ, and after we have trusted and obeyed His Word, we must then be prepared to let Him do things in His way. We must take our hands off the tiller – it is Jesus who is the captain of our ship.

As we test Him in tithing, we must also be open to further testing ourselves. As He leads us upwards, from success to success, and to ever greater wealth and prosperity, we must be aware that there will be ongoing tests to be endured and passed.

As God opens the windows of heaven to us, pouring out blessings that are too great even to be contained, it is only those of His people who have allowed themselves to be tested, who have come through the fire as “gold”, who will be trusted with great wealth.

We are undoubtedly entering the end times, and the time of the “wealth transfer” from sinners to Christians (Proverbs 13: 22). But this wealth will only be transferred to clean and pure vessels, vessels that have been tried and tested, and proven their integrity beyond doubt. God will not transfer great wealth of the end times to anyone who can’t be trusted, who will use the wealth for selfish and perverted purposes.

As heirs of Abraham (Galatians 3:29), we are heirs to the great and enduring promises God made to Abraham: “I will bless you, and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12: 2 and 3)

As we have said many times before, the key in this passage is “you shall be a blessing” – the blessings will only flow to us, if we make sure they flow through us, as we in turn bless others, and keep the stream of blessings flowing. If we stop it and dam it up, and keep it for our selfish use, the flow will stop and we will end up like the Dead Sea – sterile, dead and good for nothing.

So, the answer to the question we have posed, is it right to test God, is of course yes – as long as it is done in the right way for the right reasons. As we tithe, we are actually commanded by God to “test” Him – but only that one time in the Bible, and as we have seen, only if we in turn are open to further testing by Him, so we can be clean and pure vessels to receive and then pour out freely the wealth transferred to us.