

## DAY 6

1. Do you see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked in your own life? If yes, is that easy to tell? Can you base this entirely on appearances? Why or why not? Read James 2:14-26 for clarification.
2. How are you serving God in your life? Does this service come at home, at church or at your workplace? Describe some areas of your life where you serve God well

## LIVE IT

The proper response to God's unchanging nature is action. It is not enough to merely think or ponder His truth, we must live it out in our own lives. God, through Malachi, warns His people of the dangers of a stagnant and hard-hearted faith. The major way that God allows our faith to grow and remain fresh is through living out what He says.

## DO (ACTION STEP)

Think about the section of text regarding finances, both here in Malachi and the additional texts given from the New Testament. Take one step this week to better honor God with your finances. This could be a change in attitude or a specific action.

## SHARE

Speak with others who fear the Lord. Talk about His awesome power and unchanging nature.

## MEMORIZE

"Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord paid attention and heard them, and a book of remembrance was written before Him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed His name." - Malachi 3:16

## PRAY

Pray that God would refine you and give you an understanding of the refining process in your life. Pray that you would respond to God's refining not with complaining, but with praise that God refines those He loves.

## ACT

Do one act of service this week that helps the widows, fatherless, or helpless in your community.

## TALK

Use the themes and messages from this week to influence others for Christ! Work these things into conversation with friends, kids, coworkers or whoever will hear.

# MALACHI

WHAT GOOD IS IT TO  
FOLLOW GOD

MALACHI 3

WEEK 3



GRACE  
FELLOWSHIP

Malachi chapter three introduces two new people into the narrative: God's future messenger, who will prepare the way before Him, and God on earth, coming to refine His people. As Christians, we can recognize the two characters as John the Baptist and Jesus.

The introduction of these two people, however, does not prevent God from acting on his anger towards the Israelites. He pronounces judgements on those who do not fear His name and explains how tithing reflects that lack of fear. Nevertheless, God expresses this comforting truth, "For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed." (v. 6) It is God's choice to pursue our holiness and protect us from His wrath.

Despite this, the Israelites ask "What is the profit of our keeping [God's] charge?" (v. 14) In other words, what good is it to follow God? God answers this question towards the end of the chapter, saying that their reward is, "they shall be mine." (v. 17) The creator and sustainer of the universe claims those who fear and follow Him.

## A CLOSER LOOK

In verse 16, Malachi records, "Then those who feared the Lord spoke with one another. The Lord *paid attention* and *heard them*, and a *book of remembrance* was written *before* Him of those who feared the Lord and esteemed His name." Malachi makes it explicitly clear that God pays attention to those who honor His name.

The italicized phrases in the above verse are three distinctly different ways of saying the same thing: God knows who fears His name. They are three different ways Malachi says that God sees the progress that His people make in their sanctification (becoming more and more like Jesus). Not only does God see it, He acts on it in love and spares His children from ultimate judgement.

*For the week, read chapter three daily.*

## DAY 1

Chapter three introduces what the Jewish people call "the Messiah," meaning "Anointed One." As Christians, we know Him as Jesus. He was to save and glorify His people so that they may be pleasing to the Lord.

1. Malachi describes the Lord's coming as a refining process for His people. Look up the definition of "refine." What imagery does Malachi use to describe the coming of the Messiah? What may this reveal about the work that Jesus continues to do in the life of His people?
2. In what ways do you feel like God is refining you? How has that process revealed itself in your life? Was this a particularly pleasant experience?

## DAY 2

1. In verse 5, God gives an exhaustive list of those who are deserving of His judgement. With which of these categories do you find yourself struggling? Read Matthew 5:21-48 to understand what this means for modern Christians.
2. After this list in verse 5, God says in verse 6, "I the LORD do not change." What is the relationship between God's unchanging nature and our protection? What does this mean considering our sin?

## DAY 3

1. The Israelites ask God how they may return to Him and God gives them one answer, what is it? Why is God so concerned about this area of their life? What do God's people demonstrate when surrendering this area of their life over to Him? (Read 1 Corinthians 4:7. We serve a God who has everything, and everything we have He has provided for us)
2. God goes so far as to say that when His people fail to honor Him financially, they "rob [Him]!" (v. 8) What does this mean? How can God's creation rob Him?
3. Honoring God with your finances is something that He commands. Read Luke 21:1-4, 2 Cor. 9:6-7, 1 John 3:17. How does this area of your life currently line up with the commands of God, especially in light of a NT interpretation of giving?

## DAY 4

1. God says that the Israelites had spoken "arrogantly" against Him. What were the Israelites saying that offended God? Why would these words and questions anger God? (Read Israel's questions in v. 14-15 immediately after reading v. 6)
2. Have you ever been in a season of life where you asked these same questions as the Israelites? Describe that time. How did God speak to you or answer you in that time? Write down some thoughts and be prepared to share them with your group.

## DAY 5

1. Verse 16 says that "those that feared the Lord spoke with one another." What did they speak about? What does this reveal about the Christian life? (Hint: The answer is not explicit in the text, but God's response can give you a clue)
2. Reflect on the Closer Look section. Does it feel like God is paying attention when you live a life of holiness? Why or why not? How does verse 16 relate to 2:14?