

GROWTH GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

MALACHI: THE DANGERS OF HALF-HEARTED DEVOTION

SERIES THEME//

God called Malachi to declare a powerful message to his people: Beware of half-hearted living. God doesn't want the leftovers. He wants all that we are. He has called us to be a nation of priests, and our lives are meant to be a living sacrifice. In this, the last book of the Old Testament, we discover just how precious Jesus really is, because he has done everything we could not and empowers us for every good endeavor.

Malachi comes in the form of a *disputation*: God is leveling charges at Israel.

Disputation [dis-pyoo-tey-shuh n]

noun

1. the act of disputing or debating; verbal controversy; discussion or debate.

SERMON REVIEW

THE LEFTOVERS | MALACHI 1:6-2:9

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 2017

SERMON THEME//

God wants us to offer a heartfelt sacrifice of worship worthy of His glory.

LEADER//

Be sure to go over your notes from the sermon to remind yourself of the content.
Begin with prayer. Ask for the Holy Spirit to help you understand and obey his word.

READ THE PASSAGE//

MALACHI 1:6 - 2:9 (ESV)

⁶“A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, ‘How have we despised your name?’ ⁷By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, ‘How have we polluted you?’ By saying that the Lord's table may be despised. ⁸When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts. ⁹And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the Lord of hosts. ¹⁰Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. ¹¹For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. ²But you profane it when you say that the Lord's table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food may be despised. ¹³But you say, ‘What a weariness this is,’ and you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as



your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the Lord.¹⁴ Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.

2 “And now, O priests, this command is for you.² If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart to give honor to my name, says the Lord of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings. Indeed, I have already cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart.³ Behold, I will rebuke your offspring, and spread dung on your faces, the dung of your offerings, and you shall be taken away with it.⁴ So shall you know that I have sent this command to you, that my covenant with Levi may stand, says the Lord of hosts.⁵ My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him. It was a covenant of fear, and he feared me. He stood in awe of my name.⁶ True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity.⁷ For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.⁸ But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts,⁹ and so I make you despised and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways but show partiality in your instruction.”

WATCH THE SERMON DISCUSSION VIDEO//

DISCUSS THE SERMON//

LEADER//

Make sure this discussion keeps the proper focus - on the content & application of the sermon, not the quality.

- Summarize the disputation between God & his people from this passage.
- What was the “big idea” from this sermon? How did the message support & drive home this idea?
- What from the passage or the sermon stood out to you? Was your main “take-away” different from the pastor’s “big idea”? How were you challenged by this message?
- In the book of Malachi, we’re seeking to **diagnose the dangers** of half-hearted devotion that Malachi is revealing. What were some of the dangers brought to light in the sermon?
- These dangers aren’t unique to the book of Malachi. How do we see these dangers play out in our lives today?
- What are common “symptoms” that can help us diagnose these dangers taking root in us or in others?



LEADER//

Your growth groups are meant to be safe spaces for believers to confess sin and encourage one another toward holiness. As you talk about how to diagnose these dangers, take a minute to remind your growth group that confessing sin and lovingly calling one another to holiness is a healthy and desirable part of participating in a growth group. Think about how you might model this as a leader.

- Where do we see the gospel shining through in this passage? Put another way, how does this passage of scripture hint at/connect to the life, death, resurrection, and redemption of Jesus?
- The call to “live devoted” in this sermon is a call to offer God our best because we value him the most. Biblically speaking, what does it mean to offer God our best?
- The sermon asked what our worship on Sundays reveals about our hearts for God. What’s your answer?
- The sermon also highlighted the reality that our lives are always an act of worship; it’s just a question of who/what we’re worshipping. When we see where we devote our energy, passion, and love, we’ll know what we worship. When we discover what can shake our peace, we’ll know what we worship. When we put our finger on the things that we’re willing to die defending and protecting, we’ll know what we worship. In all honesty, what idols does this reveal in your life?
- In light of everything you’ve studied and discussed from God’s word, are there any clear action steps that your growth group can apply together? How will you not only be hearers of the word, but doers? (James 1:22)

CLOSE IN PRAYER//

LEADER//

Your time of prayer should have two focusses. First, your growth group should pray to thank God for his word and ask for his help as you seek to be doers of the word and not hearers only. Second, your time of prayer should be a time of lifting up each other’s needs to the lord. Make sure to allow time before the prayer to ask if there are any prayer requests. Think about how you might model vulnerability & honesty as you ask for prayer.

Try to involve everyone in your time of prayer. This facilitates a deeper sense of community. Here are some ideas on how to do that:

- Pray in a circle. Have every person pray for the person on their right.
- Assign prayer requests to other members of the group.
- Gather in a huddle, hold hands while you pray, or lay hands on those asking for specific prayers. This posture includes the whole group in a relational way.
- If someone in your group is musical, close your time by singing together. Songs of worship are simply prayers that we all sing together!

