

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.

SERMON REVIEW

ROBBING GOD | MALACHI 3:6 - 12

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2017

SERMON THEME//

The God of infinite resources is waiting to bless those who will faithfully obey him with their finances.

LEADER//

Acknowledge up front some ground rules. 1) Give space for everyone to share and interact. 2) Keep an atmosphere where everyone is comfortable to share not just their answers, but their lives and faith. 3) Challenge everyone to keep discussion away from the quality of the sermon and focus on the content of it, what God would have us do in our lives with it.

This sermon dealt with money, and our use (or lack of use) of it for the Kingdom of God. This may push some people's buttons! Money evokes emotional responses in people. Be aware of this, and help discussion remain on point and not critical of anyone or anything.

Finally, remember to start with prayer.

OPENING UP//

- What's the worst deal you ever got, either online or in person? How much time and money was wasted?
- Likewise, what was the best deal you ever received? What made it so? What was the return on it?
- Is it more joyful to give or to receive? Tell of a time you found joy in giving (not to brag or be prideful, but to give God the glory).
- Why do people get all sorts of crazy when speaking about money? Why is it such a sensitive issue with people? What does this show about humanity's heart?



LEADER//

Remember, the discussion is about challenging the self, and growing to trust God more with our resources and finances.

DIGGING DEEPER//

- As we read this passage, we must ask ourselves: Have we ever held back giving to God was what his and thus, robbed God? What does God say about this?

Malachi 2:17-3:5 (ESV)

⁶“For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. ⁷From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts. But you say, ‘How shall we return?’ ⁸Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, ‘How have we robbed you?’ In your tithes and contributions. ⁹You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. ¹⁰Bring 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. ¹¹I will rebuke the devourer^[a] 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. ¹²Then all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a land of delight, says the LORD of hosts.

Footnotes:

[a] [Malachi 3:11](#) Probably a name for some crop-destroying pest or pests

- As we read this text, where did you see yourself in this passage?

SERMON DISCUSSION VIDEO//

Watch the sermon discussion video, taking note of what you found intriguing, insightful, and challenging as you consider how to take the word preached and make it the word lived.

DISCUSS THE SERMON//

LEADER//

While a fair amount of processing is necessary and helpful, remember that the point of this discussion is to take the word preached and consider how to make it the word lived.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Take the questions from *“What do you think about this?”* to *“What does this mean for your life?”*

- Were there any of Pastor Adam’s thoughts that stuck out to you, or struck a chord with you?
- Pastor Adam has said, “We live in an age when many people want to offer God good intentions. They want to offer God activity and activism. What God tells us is that one of the fundamental acts of faith is simply this: tithe.” What are your thoughts on that statement? Do you think this is accurate? Would most Christians agree with statement? Why or why not?



- It often seems easier for people to give of their time instead of their money? What does that reflect about people's heart, or their attitude towards the local church?
- God's dispute with Israel is serious. The Lord takes it personally when we fail to submit our finances to him! Israel is doing it, thinking that it's no big deal. But for the Lord, it's theft.

Knowing this, can anyone say they haven't robbed God? Do you think people, after realizing they are robbing God, would do anything to change that? Why or why not?

Reread Malachi 3:8 - 10 to see what God says about the blessing of tithing.

- Pastor Adam closed with a section called ***Living Devoted*** where he posed two questions. Spend the rest of your time giving your personal answers to these questions, and also discussing how you can living out these challenges in your marriage and/or life

1. *Am I embracing God's Word or making excuses?*

- How do people try to sanctify their excuse(s)? (That is, give reasons that seemingly are full of holiness or integrity as to why they don't faithfully tithe)
- Confession time: What excuses have you made?
- What would happen if all of Peace Church tithed? What sort of impact would that have on our families, community, and culture?

2. *Do I believe God's promises?*

- God promises blessings. Do you believe him? How is that belief evident in your life?

End your time by sharing some of the blessings you've received by living into God's promises.

Start with the blessing of being obedient in regards to tithing, but it doesn't have to stay there. [Remember things said during this time to come back to during the closing prayer as a time of thankful to God and giving him glory.

CLOSE IN PRAYER//

LEADER//

Your time of prayer should have two focuses.

1. 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.
2. 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.

To facilitate a deeper sense of community, encourage everyone to pray.

