

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

GOD SEES IT ALL | MALACHI 2:17 - 3:5

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2017

SERMON THEME//

To endure in righteousness, we must have faith in God's goodness.

LEADER//

Acknowledge some ground rules up front.

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.

Remember to start with prayer.

OPENING UP//

- Do people share too much information about themselves on the Internet? If so, is it a good or bad thing? Why or why not?
- How much of your unfiltered life would you want to be broadcast live on the Internet?
- [Rhetorical question to consider]
What would happen if every single private thought you had became a post online for the world to see? What would be realized about you? Would you lose friends? Could you show your face at church the next Sunday? Who would be the people to "like" or "retweet" those posts?
- Would you want to know people's innermost thoughts 100% of the time? Why or why not?



DIGGING DEEPER//

The theme of this sermon was that to endure in righteousness, we must have faith in God's goodness. As we re-read our text, watch to see where you see yourself in this passage?

Malachi 2:17-3:5 (ESV)

¹⁷ You have wearied the LORD with your words. But you say, "How have we wearied him?" By saying, "Everyone who does evil is good in the sight of the LORD, and he delights in them." Or by asking, "Where is the God of justice?"

³ "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

⁵ "Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

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

LEADER//

Leader say: Let's see what else Pastor Adam had to say, or what other insight we can glean from him as we watch the sermon discussion video.

SERMON DISCUSSION VIDEO//

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

DISCUSS THE SERMON//

LEADER//

As people discuss this sermon, they should spend time reflecting on how easy it is to complain about the "problems of the world" without carefully reflecting on how we contribute to them. Think about how you might guide discussion along those lines.

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



- What from the sermon discussion video did you find most helpful as you consider the message of the sermon?
- What do you think about the statement, “discontent is a breeding ground for idolatry.” Is this true? If so, how? Give an example.
- There are so many ways we can express discontent. From our passage, how was Israel doing this? What are some of the ways we do this today?
- Where do you find yourself discontented in our lives? And what are the dangers of that discontentment?
- This passage points towards the future - Christ’s return. What about this future promise have we already experienced? What about this future promise have we yet to experience?
- Think about what it means for the Lord to return. What kind of picture do we have of this day? How can a focus on this reality help us endure sin and temptation? How can it help us forgive other people? How can it help us to live in grace, rather than anger and revenge?
- In the passage we’ve read today, God calls on Israel to live for the justice that they’re hoping the Lord will bring. Re-read Malachi 3:5
 - In this verse, he lists a number of society-impacting sins. How and where do we see these kinds of things at work in our world? To what extent do we tolerate them?
- What are some ways you can hold out the light of justice in our world (In the workplace or job site...In the community... In the home...)?
- 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 live out these challenges in your life.

Am I giving thanks, whatever the circumstances?

- When is this easy?
- When is this hard?
- When is this ‘straight up impossible’ - and are we still expected to do this even then?

Am I living this day like it’s the Day?

- What is meant by “the Day”?
- How are you living like this is the Day?
- As we close, where do you need to grow in or be reminded of this challenge?
- What sort of attitude would we have if we held this in view every day?



CLOSE IN PRAYER//

LEADER//

Your time of prayer should have two focuses:

- 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 to 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!

