

MALACHI | DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE



INTRODUCTION | MALACHI

A fire can be a consuming experience. A healthy fire allows for everything from protection to provision, yet when a fire begins to dwindle the consequences can be alarming. While a healthy fire burns with passion, provision, and protection, a dying fire is the gradual reality of darkness settling in and the increased chance of attack unless something is done. The book of Malachi reveals a similar image of the relationship between God and His people.

In Malachi – the last book of the Old Testament – the people of God have grown apathetic and rebellious toward Him. As darkness invaded their hearts, apathy, doubt, and rebellion replaced assurance, devotion, and reverence.

We are not unlike God's people in Malachi. The last several years have shown study after study where thousands of Christians began leaving the church, distancing themselves from God, and doubting His grace and love for them. Our church has not been immune to this epidemic. In Malachi, God responds to Israel through a series of questions that address their spiritual condition while bringing them assurance of His love for them.

My prayer throughout this series, and as we begin to close the year, is that we would see that God does not forget us, but rather is always in pursuit of us. If we listen to the heart of God through His word and remember Him through His work in Jesus, we will be brought to a burning assurance of His faithfulness to us, even when we are faithless. If we have grown distant or disillusioned, the book of Malachi is a beautiful picture of a God turning our hearts from ruin to restoration, from apathy to affection.

For His glory,

Pastor Marco De Leon

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DATE AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

(taken from the ESV study Bible commentary)

Malachi's ministry took place nearly a hundred years after the decree of Cyrus in 538 B.C., which ended the Babylonian captivity and allowed the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild the temple (*2 Chron. 36:23*). This was some 80 years after Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the rebuilding of that temple with promises of God's blessing, the engrafting of the nations, prosperity, expansion, peace, and the return of God's own glorious presence (*cf. Haggai 2; Zech. 1:16–17; 2:1–13; 8:1–9:17*). To Malachi's disillusioned contemporaries, these predictions must have seemed a cruel mockery. In contrast to the glowing promises, the harsh reality was one of economic privation, prolonged drought, crop failure, and pestilence (*Mal. 3:10ff.*).

After the return from exile, Judah remained an almost insignificant territory of about 20 by 30 miles (32 by 48 km), inhabited by a population of perhaps 150,000. Although they enjoyed the benefits of Persia's enlightened policy of religious toleration and limited self-rule, the Jews acutely felt their subjugation to a foreign power (*Neh. 1:3; 9:36ff.*), and they suffered persistent opposition from their neighbors (*Ezra 4:23; Dan. 9:25*). Judah was no longer an independent nation and was no longer ruled by a Davidic king.

Worst of all, in spite of the promises of the coming Messiah and God's own glorious presence (e.g., *Zech. 1:16ff.; 2:4, 10–13; 8:3–17, 23; 9:9–13*), Israel experienced only spiritual destitution. Unlike Bible books from earlier periods, the postexilic books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther are remarkably candid in their description of Judah as generally lacking miraculous evidences of God's presence. In contrast to both Solomon's temple and the prophetic promise of the restored temple (*Ezekiel 40–43*), the actual postexilic temple was physically and spiritually inferior. As *Malachi 3:1* implies, the Most Holy Place in this second temple had no visible manifestation of the glory of God. Though God was certainly alive and well (as revealed, e.g., by his remarkable providences in the book of Esther), it was a period in which God's people had to live more by faith than by sight.

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COMMUNITY GROUPS

What Is A Community Group?

Community Groups are small gatherings of people that meet weekly for friendship, accountability, study and prayer, laughter, and occasionally tears.

Community Groups (CGs) serve as the main vehicle of discipleship and care at Storehouse Community Church. In short, our CGs are a family of disciples making disciples of Jesus in ordinary life.

Each CG is unique and shaped by the people who attend and the city they meet in. And at the heart of each CG is a desire to gather as family and friends, grow in our relationship with Jesus, and go into our cities on mission.

Why Should I Join A Community Group?

The Bible teaches us that God is relational, personal, and invested which, in turn, means that we are created for friendship and community. It is in community where we flourish through relationship and challenge. CGs are more than a weekly event, but a time to grow and cultivate a relationship with God and others.

Where Do Community Groups Meet?

CGs are strategically planted throughout McAllen and its surrounding cities in an effort to engage our city and community. Whether meeting at a home, local coffee shop, or college campus, we desire to see every aspect of our cities blessed by God's people.

How Do I Get Connected?

There are two ways that you can get connected. You can visit our Connect desk on Sunday and our volunteers will help you through the process or you can visit storehousemcallen.com/community to learn more and sign up!

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RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

1. [The Word of the Lord: Seeing Jesus in the Prophets by Nancy Guthrie](#) - "In the Old Testament, God spoke to his people through prophets—men specially called to speak God's Word to his people. The New Testament makes it clear that such prophets, whether chastising or comforting, testified to Israel's final redemption and ultimate hope: Jesus the Messiah."
2. [Exalting Jesus in Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi by Micah Fries](#) - "*Exalting Jesus in Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi* is part of the *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary* series. This series affirms that the Bible is a Christ-centered book, containing a unified story of redemptive history of which Jesus is the hero."

Kids Resources

1. [What is the Mystery of Election](#) - The Gospel Project's Aaron Armstrong explains a word that appears in Scripture that is often misunderstood, misappropriated, and even maligned. Which is a shame because it is a beautiful word, one that offers so much hope because it puts God's sovereign goodness on display. What is it? Election.
2. [Malachi's Final Message: The Minor Prophets, Book 5 \(God's Daring Dozen Series\)](#) - Brian Wright and John Brown's colorfully illustrated retelling explains the book of Malachi in a way that 4–8 year-olds will understand, but this minor prophet has major lessons for readers of all ages. Collect *God's Daring Dozen* Box [Set 1](#) and [Set 2](#) for walking through all the minor prophets with your children. *God's Daring Dozen* is the first children's picture book series on the Minor Prophets in the history of children's literature. These books faithfully convey this neglected portion of God's word in a way that is engaging and understandable for adults and children alike.

MALACHI

FROM APATHY TO AFFECTION

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK ONE

MALACHI 1:1-5

DISCUSSION

- ❖ The doctrine of election teaches that God chose His people before the foundation of the world and at His own time, gave them the gifts of faith and repentance (*John 15:16; Eph. 1:4-5; 2 Thess. 2:13; Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:28-30*). In the following verses (*Malachi 1:1-5*), we see this doctrine in action as God elects Jacob and not Esau. How does this doctrine make you feel (sad, fortifying, bitter, joyful, discouraged, relieving, etc)? How have your emotions affected the way you look at parts of scripture that are difficult to accept?
- ❖ Many in our culture today are convinced that God only loves. However, the Bible proves otherwise (*Ps. 5:4-6; Pro. 6:16-19; Ps. 11:4-5; Mal. 1:3*). How is God's "hate" different from ours? Is there such a thing as "righteous hatred"?
- ❖ Are there times that you question and doubt God's love for you? If so, what commonalities or patterns do you see that lead you to doubt His love?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ❖ Parents, be humble and courageous in discussing and teaching the doctrines revealed in God's Word, especially on election, to your children. Pray Together: Lord, help me we trust that you have revealed what is good for us to know through your power, word, and sovereign will. Forgive my indifference towards your love and rebellion in not pursuing you through your Word. You are loving, great, and in control over all things, including judgment and redemption of sinners. Please strengthen me by your Spirit to remember Your faithful work for me, to trust you for the things in your Word I don't yet understand, and to graciously teach that which I learn to my children in our everyday lives. Thank you, Father. Amen.
- ❖ **Reflect Together:** Would God still be God if he never hated anything or let some sins be okay to commit? Why not?
- ❖ **Discuss Together:** How does the gospel of Jesus help us guard against forgetting and neglecting to share what God has done in his great love? (*John 6:37, 2 Tim. 2:10*)

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FROM APATHY TO AFFECTION

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK TWO

MALACHI 1:6-14

DISCUSSION

- ❖ This section of *Malachi 1* is specifically addressed to the priests, the leaders in their community. How do such leaders set the standard for the church?
- ❖ Sacrifices were meant to be of the highest quality. Through these sacrifices, the priests were meant to point the Israelites forward to Christ, yet they were offering polluted food on God's altar (1:7). What does this reveal about their heart toward God? How might we fall into the same trap of despising sacrifices?
- ❖ *Hebrews 13* describes sacrifices pleasing to God. As God's people, we are called to live sacrificially. What does it mean to live a sacrificial life? Do you intentionally offer yourself each day to God as a living sacrifice?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ❖ **Reflect Together:** A pleasing offering- How do we feel when we receive a gift that is given with love, thought, and care? As a child to parents, how is honor shown when an instruction is carried out immediately, completely, and with a joyful heart? How do we dishonor God with our time, our attitudes, and prayers?
- ❖ **Search the Scriptures Together:** What are some ways we may offer pleasing sacrifices to God? (Presenting ourselves - *Rom. 12: 1-2*, Through doing good and sharing - *Heb. 13:15-16*, By following Christ's example - *Eph. 4:31-5:2*)
- ❖ **Sing Together:** "[From the Rising of the Sun](#)" - *Malachi 1:11* "From the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same, the name of the Lord shall be praised. So praise ye the Lord."

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FROM APATHY TO AFFECTION

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK THREE

MALACHI 2:1-9

DISCUSSION

- ❖ Re-read the passage once more. Why does God directly rebuke the priests when all of His people are guilty of not honoring or fearing Him?
- ❖ The Bible teaches us to fear God and stand in awe of His name. How does your knowledge of God affect (positively or negatively) your approach to God?
- ❖ How is life and doctrine connected in this passage? Why is it important to watch both our doctrine and our life?
- ❖ What kind of leadership does the church need? How does this passage point to Jesus?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ❖ Remember God's covenant with Levi, the priest (*Malachi 2:4-7*). The priest feared the Lord and stood in awe of His name. He walked in peace and uprightness and spoke with integrity. The current priests did not follow the Lord's ways and caused many to stumble with their instruction.
- ❖ **Activity:** Set up a small 'obstacle course' with couches, blankets, slippers, pulled out chairs, or tables. Assign a leader and a contestant. Tie a blindfold around the contestant, and have the leader give voice instructions to safely guide the contestant over, around, under and through without stumbling. Alternately, hold their hand or arm and guide silently. What was the difference felt for the contestant being guided and the leader giving the guidance? What would happen if fewer instructions were given by the leader or if the contestant hardly followed the directives?
- ❖ **Discuss Together:** How do leaders have a higher responsibility – in their decisions and integrity, or lack thereof, on the effect of others in their care, etc? See *Titus 1:5-9* for guidelines for church leaders.

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FROM APATHY TO AFFECTION

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK FOUR

MALACHI 2:10-16

DISCUSSION

- ❖ In this passage, we see the condition of faithlessness (to God, family, and the people of God). What would need to change right now in order to view your church community as brothers and sisters in Christ?
- ❖ Do you consume more than you contribute to your church? Are you more of a spectator or a servant? Why?
- ❖ What are the implications of a Christian marrying someone who does not know the Lord?
- ❖ When you confess sin, do you grieve over the offense to God or is your confession motivated by guilt rather than grace? Read *Psalms 51*. How does this Psalm impact how you approach God in confession?
- ❖ Though we can be unfaithful or faithless, Jesus is faithful – always. How does His faithfulness allow you to remember that you are forgiven and motivate you to be more faithful?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ❖ **Memory Verse:** *Malachi 2:16b* - "So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless."
- ❖ **Reflect and Discuss Together:** How was the Lord faithful to the Israelites? How was Jesus faithful to His father? How is God, who is one, faithful to himself and us?
- ❖ **Pray Together:** Lord, here is my heart, soul, mind, and strength. Help me be faithful in my spirit and in my family. Protect my marriage and help me disciple my children well as I follow you. Show me how to encourage and support the faithfulness of others. We love you and honor you. Amen

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FROM APATHY TO AFFECTION

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK FIVE

MALACHI 2:17-3:6

DISCUSSION

- ❖ Because those in Malachi's day weren't "struck down" by God while living in sin, the people of Israel consistently mistook God's patience against evil for God's "delight" in evil (2:17). Do you find God's patience toward those who don't believe "unfair" at times? Why is God's patience toward them just as important when He demonstrates patience towards you?
- ❖ God uses the example of refined metals when speaking about His return (3:1-4). Typically, metals are refined by heating them above their boiling point to create vapors which leave behind any impurities. In the season you currently find yourself in, have you noticed the Lord bringing to the surface any particular sins, impurities, or imperfections through the pressures or trials in your life? How have you responded to these discoveries?
- ❖ Look at *Malachi 3:6*. How does God's attribute of unchangeability bring you comfort in an ever changing world?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ❖ **Reflect and Discuss Together:** Is it wrong to complain to God? How are the complaints in *Psalms 3, 5, 7, and 10* different from the Israelites in Malachi? How can we be honest about our struggles, and yet not sinfully challenge God?
- ❖ **Activity:** Prepare in advance paper and pencils for each student, and a large sealable envelope with the words, GOD'S TIMING, printed on the outside. **Say:** There are all kinds of waiting experiences in our lives. **Ask:** What is there in your life today for which you feel as if you've been waiting a long time? Take a piece of paper and a pencil and write down a word, sentence or picture of that waiting situation. When you are finished, fold your paper. Ask each student to hold their folded paper as you pray: God, we sometimes get so tired, achy, and grumpy waiting for Your response and timing. You see everything we have written on these papers today. Please give us the courage and patience to give these things to You and to wait for Your timing through Your Spirit, instead of rushing ahead with our own plans. Amen.
- ❖ **Sing Together:** You Never Change - by [Gateway Kids Worship](#) and by [Austin Stone Worship](#)

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FROM APATHY TO AFFECTION

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK SIX

MALACHI 3:7-12

DISCUSSION

- ❖ In verse 8, the LORD says to the Israelites, “Will man rob God?” and then directly answers, “Yet you are robbing me.” How were God’s people robbing God and what was the remedy? Likewise, how do we fail in this area and what leads us to repentance?
- ❖ In the midst of their disobedience, God is generous to the Israelites. He pursues and blesses them. Take a moment to reflect on the unmerited favor God provides you. How does He pursue you despite your sin?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ❖ **Activity:** Choose one child to be Malachi. Give him or her the scroll. Malachi places the scroll under the chair and sits down in the chair, eyes closed and his or her back to the other children. The remaining children stand against a wall behind Malachi. Choose a child to get the scroll. Silently, that child sneaks up behind Malachi, takes the scroll, and returns to where he or she was standing. The children hold their hands behind their backs (pretending to hide the scroll) and chant: “Malachi, Malachi, where’s your scroll? Somebody stole it, we’ve been told! Guess who stole your scroll from you?” Malachi stands up, faces the other children, and has three chances to guess who took the scroll. If Malachi guesses correctly, he or she may choose the next Malachi. If Malachi guesses incorrectly, the child who took the scroll becomes Malachi. Play as often as you like or until each child has a turn as Malachi. Explain that instead of scrolls, all of the Israelites were robbing God by not giving their tithes and offerings to God’s house, which was an important commandment he gave them through Moses.
- ❖ **Search and Discuss Together:** Read *Ephesians 1:3*, *Psalms 119:1-2*, *1 Peter 1:18-19*, and *2 Corinthians 9:7*. What are blessings God has given us? How does understanding the context of *Malachi 3:7-12* and the noted verses change the way you view tithing?
- ❖ **Reflect Together:** What keeps you from obediently taking care of or wisely using (stewarding) God’s good gifts for His kingdom? Return to God and surrender what keeps you from trusting his provision and purpose as his redeemed child.

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FROM APATHY TO AFFECTION

DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE | WEEK SEVEN

MALACHI 3:13-4:6

DISCUSSION

- ❖ All believers are called to serve God through the use of their spiritual gifts. This is especially true within the context of the local church. Are you actively serving God through the local church (men's, women's, kids, hospitality...etc)? If not, what has stopped you? How do you reconcile your reasons with passages such as *1 Peter 1:10-11, Ephesians 4:11-16, and Hebrews 10:24-25*?
- ❖ It can be difficult to serve God full heartedly if we are constantly comparing ourselves to what others are doing or not doing. How often do you compare yourself to others in the context of serving? Looking at *verses 14 and 15*, what is a danger we can face while serving if our focus is on the people around us and not on God?
- ❖ Read *Malachi 3:16-18*. God paid attention to the repentant and humble hearted. God even went as far as to call them His. How does this truth give you hope and encouragement when you sin and feel unworthy of coming before Him?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

- ❖ **Memory Verse:** *1 Peter 5:10* - "And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."
- ❖ **Activity with Memory Verse:** This can be done in your CG or family at home. Give one child a ball of yarn. She should say the first word of the verse, hold the end of the yarn, and then toss the yarn ball to another child. The next family member will catch it, say the next word, pinch the yarn between their fingers, and then toss the ball to someone else. Continue forming a web until the family says the entire key passage. Each time you said part of the verse, you passed the yarn onto another family member. Now look at the web! When we share Scripture with one another (as in *Malachi 3:16*), it might not feel like a big deal, but it has a big impact – especially in remembering God's work done in his love for all who believe and follow Him. God has called us to be in relationship with Him through Christ, leads His children in truth by His Word and Spirit, and He will continue to restore His people for His eternal glory.