

Small Group Discussion Questions

Series: Offering What Matters

Speaker: Jay Haugh

Message: Beware of Artificial Spirituality

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Memory Verse: Malachi 3:8 NIV

Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?'" In tithes and offerings.

The goal of these questions is to foster meaningful discussion and to encourage participants to reflect on God's Word and lead to heart transformation. Feel free to modify or expand upon these questions based on the dynamics and needs of your Small Group.

Big Idea: God desires a heart that honors Him with sincerity, not artificiality.

Read Malachi 1

1. God begins the book not with a list of rules, but with a declaration: "*I have loved you.*" The people, feeling cynical and weary, respond by asking, "*How have you loved us?*" (v 2). When have you questioned God's love for you? What helped restore your trust in His love? How can we help others who may feel unsure of God's love?
2. God contrasts the heritage of Jacob with that of Esau to remind Israel that He cares for them (vv 2-3). He reminds them that Israel's status isn't an accident of history or a result of their own merit, but a result of His intentional, covenantal choice to care for them. Have you ever felt like you are being treated more like Esau than Jacob? What circumstances or heart issues were behind those feelings? Even Jacob wrestled with God and was changed in the process. Where in your life have you seen God's grace meet you in a struggle and shape you in ways you didn't expect?
3. It was common for gods to be considered regional but Yahweh's name will not be constrained by borders (v 5). We often subconsciously create "borders" for God in our own lives. Are there any regions of your life (e.g., work place,



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private habit, personal insecurity) where you have been acting as if God has no influence or power? How can we take a step of courage and invite Him into those territories?

4. Just as a son honors his father and a servant his master, God expects our honor (v 6). In the context of this passage how is God wanting to be shown honor? What are some ways we can show God honor today? How does our view of God impact the level of honor we show Him?
5. The priests were offering blind, lame, and sick animals on the altar—animals they wouldn't dare offer to their human governor (vv 7-8). We rarely give God nothing; instead, we often give Him what costs us nothing. Are there any places in your life right now where you are giving from your "empty" rather than your "best"? Why do we often feel more pressure to impress our "governors" (bosses, peers, or social circles) than we do to honor God?
6. God says He would rather shut the temple doors than accept half-hearted worship (v 10). Routine can be helpful, but it can also hide a disconnected heart. Do you ever struggle with your worship being more routine than relational? How can we stay spiritually present rather than drifting into autopilot?
7. God shifts the perspective from the failing temple to the whole world, stating that His name will be great among the nations (v 11). At NCBC we want to be part of making God's name great among those who do not yet know Him. How can we each individually play a part in making God's name great in our community?
8. God exposes how the people were profaning His name through their half-hearted worship (vv 12-13). A significant way that non-believers are going to experience God is through His people. How can someone's spiritual apathy or hypocrisy affect the way others view God or the church? What are some ways we might unintentionally send the message that worshipping God is a burden rather than a privilege? How can we better reflect the beauty and worth of God to a watching world?



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