

Supplemental Questions for The Twelve

MALACHI

Response Time is A Factor (Introduction)

- Does how we *respond* to God and His word in our lives as Christians say something about how we listen to Him and His ways? How might some believers be tempted to ignore God's word in certain matters?
- If following Christ at times doesn't have the appeal that the self-focused shiny things of the world have, we might be tempted to shrink into half-hearted obedience. We may try to play both sides having one foot in and one foot out of the world. Or we might try to incorporate a worldly view into our Christian faith in an attempt to converge a fleshly worldview with the teachings of Scripture. How are we tempted to push God into the corners of our lives in favor of the distractions of the world?

What's In A Name? (Malachi 1:2-9)

- Even today, to get a good sense of the cultural pulse of God's people within the church, a good place to start is with Christian and pastoral leadership. A church often reflects its leadership. If the leadership has a high or low view of God's word and character, those who follow that leader will likely reflect the same sentiment. How have you seen good leadership influence a church body positively to reflect Jesus well? How have you seen the opposite in Christian leadership and influence?
- How does our *worship* of God reflect what we think of Him? If we think little of Him, what will our worship of Him be like? If we think highly of Him, what will that worship look like?

Shut The Doors (Malachi 1:10-14; Isaiah 1:12-14; Matthew 23:15)

- Why do you think expressions of worship that are not genuine are so abhorrent to God? What do those half-hearted expressions say about how we value our relationship with Him?
- It's a hard question to ask, but is God pleased with your worship on Sundays? How do you regard His "name"?

Playing Favorites (Malachi 2:1-9)

- In what ways might partiality and favoritism in Christian ministry be hurtful to others and to the cause of the Gospel?
- Even though in Christ today all those who call on Him for salvation are welcomed to God's presence and the "priest" takes on a different role than in the Old Testament, how important is it that leaders in the local church share true instruction and Biblically sound wisdom in their influence in the church? Do you think God is still concerned about how the church is shepherded by its leaders?
- How can a good pastoral example set a church up for growth and success? How can a poor pastoral example put a church in peril and steer it off course?

That Check Engine Light (Malachi 2:10-14, 17)

- When the check engine light in our car comes on, it means that there's already a significant problem that needs to be addressed. God's people and the religious leadership in Malachi's day seemed surprised that God was unhappy with their attitude toward Him. How is it possible to let things slide for so long that when the "check engine light" has to come on from God, we're surprised that God would have anything to say? Does that signify spiritual neglect, indifference, a casual posture?
- It seems that things had gotten off track in a big way. Their desire for money and sex was at the forefront of their experience even before God, and living in obvious sin did not register with God's wayward people when they became angry over God's refusal to bless them. If a person lives in willful rebellion to God's righteousness while still expecting God's acceptance and blessing regardless, what does that communicate about what that person thinks of God??
- Similarly to routine car maintenance, what are some practices, habits, and perspectives that we as Christians can employ to keep that "check engine light" from going off in our lives in relationship with Jesus?

The Windows Of Heaven (Malachi 3:6-18)

- How is tithing connected to our relationship with God?
- How does our response to God's call to return a portion of what we are blessed with reveal our priorities and trust in God's work through the local church?

A Promise Made, A Silence Kept, And An Angel's Blessing (Malachi 3:1-5)

- The promise of the Messiah coming to fulfill all that the Old Testament looked forward to was kept in the arrival of Jesus. And now as much as ever, the call to make a genuine choice to follow Him is laid before us. The power of the cross calls for a decision. Looking back on your own life, how did you respond to the call to make a decision in following Christ? Did you run from it a first, have to hit bottom, or accept Him right away? That decision is specific to each person, and each story is different. Take a moment and share how or remember how you came to follow Christ and finally accepted Him as Lord.
- The days were long as God kept silence from Malachi's day until the coming of John the Baptist some 400 years later. Though God was surely at work, His clear authoritative direction was not explicitly given. Have you had times where you were waiting for God to give you some direction in life, and the answer seemed to take forever? What was it like to wait during uncertain days for God to move in answering that need?
- God answered their deep desire to hear from Him not just through a prophet but in coming to them Himself in the person of Jesus. What do you think it may have been like then to see God's promises of a redeeming Messiah come to pass right in front of them? With such anticipation for Messiah, how might personal *expectations* for what He might accomplish have gotten in the way for some so that they missed what Jesus was actually doing?
- The Minor Prophets called for God's people then to remain faithful and look forward for all that God would do in keeping His promises. How do the Minor Prophets encourage you to remain faithful and look forward to God's work as well?

