

RENEWING MY FAITH

Renewing My Worship

[Ice Breaker: Finish this statement: "To me, worship is . . . ?]

Accept God's Love (read Malachi 1:1-5)

[The Israelites (descendants of Jacob) were not convinced of God's love because of the hard times they had been through. They questioned God's love. However, the Lord gives a brief history lesson pointing out how He demonstrated His love by preserving and restoring them to their homeland. By contrast, Esau/Edom was rejected as the nation through whom the Messiah (Jesus) would come.]

1. How did the Lord show His love to the people of Israel? What happened to the love relationship God had initiated?
2. How does a contemporary Christian know, in spite of our sin and rebellion, that God loves us? Does God's love change? (John 3:16, Romans 5:8)
3. Why do we have problems accepting God's love . . . what unique difficulties might get in the way of receiving his love?
4. How does a lack of acceptance of God's love affect our worship?

Offer God My Best (read Malachi 1:6-9,14)

[The worship of God had lost it's vitality and had become more of a business for the priests than heartfelt adoration.]

1. Who is the target of the Lord's probing questions? What's wrong with their gift giving?

[Our lives should be "living sacrifices" to God (Romans 12:1; 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Matthew 22:37) From a practical stand point, it made sense for the Jews to keep the best animals for themselves and to sacrifice the unwanted ones.]

2. How might our worship become routine . . .How do we become lax in our worship services?

3. Ponder and Discuss: "Christian worship is both an action to be taken and an event to participate in but never merely something to observe."

4. How is our faith be renewed through acceptable worship?

Wrap up:

➤ Finish this sentence: "One way I can give God my best during a worship service is . . ."

Prayer:

LIFE Groups

A safe environment to nurture caring relationships and spiritual growth.

- L** ♦ Learn..... applying Biblical truth for everyday living
- I** ♦ Invite.....welcoming others to our fellowship
- F** ♦ Fellowship.....nurturing Christ centered caring relationships
- E** ♦ Evangelism..... reaching others with the hope of Christ

RENEWING MY FAITH

Renewing My Service

God remembers the faithful. It will be worth it all in the end.

[*Ice Breaker:* What was the most significant thing that happened this week?]

Appearances Are Deceiving (read Malachi 3:13-15)

1. What's wrong with the attitude of the Israelites?
2. What would be the better question to ask in verse 14? Why?
3. How did these feelings affect their relationship with God?

God Knows And Claims His Own (read Malachi 3:16-4:3)

1. Was God talking about the same group of people in verses 16-18 as He was in verses 13-15?
2. How will everyone get their just desserts in the end (v. 16-18)?

3. What distinguishes the righteous from the wicked? (see v. 18; 1 Peter 2:9)

4. How do our priorities change when we realize that one day unbelievers will be judged and condemned?

God Calls For Patient Faithfulness (read Malachi 4:4-6)

1. With Malachi's death, the voice of God's prophets would be silent for 400 years. Considering this, what is the importance of verses 4-5?

2. To whom does "the prophet Elijah" refer? (see Matthew 17:10-12; 11:12-14; Luke 1:17)

3. As we wait for the final judgment, how do these verses challenge and encourage us to live?

Wrap up:

➤ What was the most meaningful thought or sentence you heard today?

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RENEWING MY FAITH

Renewing My Giving

How will giving to God help renew my faith?

[Ice Breaker: When told “eat whatever food you find in the house”, what do you look for?]

Reverence of God Refocuses Life (read Malachi 2:17-3:5)

[Renewing our giving is a vital part of renewing our faith. With a right attitude about giving, a person can go far in renewing all areas of his or her faith. The Israelites had lost their focus on the “God of Justice”, and God was not pleased.]

1. How did the people need to refocus their lives. . . how had they wearied the Lord . . . where had their understanding of God gone awry?
2. Discuss how the two analogies in verse 2 describe the purpose of God’s coming.

Acknowledge His Ownership (read Malachi 3:6-9)

[The sacrificial system of tithes and offerings in the Old Testament were supposed to represent devotion to God because of His goodness towards His people. The Israelites giving was second rate at best. (see Malachi 1:8) They may have feared losing what they had worked so hard to get. However giving originates in the heart of a giving God who pours out more blessings on His people than we can ever deserve.]

1. Discuss how withholding our possessions from God is robbing Him. Whose are the possessions in the first place? Why?

2. Review these important verses:

John 3:16

1 John 2:2; 4:10

1 Chronicles 29:10-14

2 Chronicles 8:12

- Give what we can
- Give sacrificially
- Give out of a grateful heart

Giving to God Brings His Blessings (read Malachi 3:10-12)

[These verses are a ray of hope in a passage that showed the short comings of the people. It proclaims, “there’s a better way!”]

1. Discuss the blessings that giving to God brings.

2. What should be our attitude about giving? (see 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Matthew 10:8)

Wrap up:

➤ What was the most meaningful statement or Scripture you read today?

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