

# REFINER'S FIRE



# A SERIES IN MALACHI



## REFINER'S FIRE: MALACHI 2:17-3:15

### Community Group Study Guide - Week of November 15, 2020

When the Lord commands us to do something, He does so because that's the absolutely best thing for us. So when the Lord commands us to love Him with all our heart, all our soul, all our strength, and all our mind, He does so because anything less will lead us away from the fully blessed life. Division in the heart leads to a lack of joy, satisfaction, blessing. The Lord calls us to pursue Him with a devoted heart, not a divided heart, because a divided heart is an empty heart.

The divided heart describes someone in love with two people. A Christian with a divided heart 'loves' God, but also loves the world. They live a life in limbo, vacillation, and misery. Why? Because you never fully enjoy God. Your love for the world, sin, things of the flesh, leads you to resent God. Why? Because our God is a jealous God and He won't let His beloved succumb to scum. He'll pursue. He'll rebuke. He'll discipline. So you never get the best of either God or the world. This is the pitiful state of lackluster, lukewarm, languishing spirituality. A heart divided is like a house divided, it cannot not stand.

Jesus Christ warned, "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money." This is what was happening in the time of Malachi, the prophet. The people of God claimed to love God, but their hearts were far from Him. How does God reveal their divided hearts? He pointed to their bank accounts. Jesus taught, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

### DISCUSSION GOALS

#### Head

To check our hearts to see if we are serving God out of whole-hearted love.

#### Heart

To trust that we will be blessed when we test His promises instead of His patience.

#### Hands

To be faithful stewards of the gospel and all gracious favor that the Lord has extended to us, especially our finances.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### In-Person Worship Services

THIS Sunday, November 22 at 9:30AM and 11:30AM.

Please go to <https://brookline.mosaicboston.com/serve> to sign up to serve on the Mini Mo or Usher Team.

We will hold **Prayer Services** at 5PM in the Temple sanctuary on **Nov. 22 and 29, and Dec. 6**. These services will be open to the public.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

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## **Read Malachi 2:17-3:15**

1. Does God really become "weary"? What is the text talking about when it says that the people have "weari[ed]" God?
2. What situations may have caused the people to ask for the "God of justice"? What situations in our present day and location tempt members of Christ's church to cry out for the "God of justice" in the same tone?
3. What is the (wrong) presupposition at the back of our mind when we are upset that God is not blessing us materially for our obedience? How does reminding ourselves of the gospel lead us to repent from this kind of thinking?
4. **Read Malachi 3:1-4.** What figures and periods of redemptive history are referred to in this verse? What is the difference between refining and judgment? When one understands what will happen upon Christ's final judgment, should they ever actually desire that God send justice?
5. What is revealed about God's character by the fact that He sends messengers before judgment? How are Christians to respond at the news of coming judgment? What must our heart view be toward those who do not believe in Christ as Lord and Savior? How do we sustain this view toward them?
6. **Read Malachi 3:7-8.** How were the people robbing God? To whom were they comparing themselves? How does assessing the heart behind one's giving serve as a test for the status of one's relationship with God?
7. What is stewardship? In what areas of life must Christians be faithful stewards?
8. What is the difference between testing God's patience and testing God's promises? What is the risk involved with testing God's patience? What does it look like to test God's promises in daily life?