



As the discussion leader, here are a few things to keep in mind for your Life Group: • **Pray** for your group discussion time! • **Review** your notes from Sunday's message and familiarize yourself with the discussion questions prior to your group meeting. • **Choose** a few questions from the guide which you feel will generate the most discussion in your group. For questions with multiple parts, answer the first part before reading the next part to the group. These questions are designed to build on the answer of the previous part before moving on.

### ***Getting to Know Me***

Have you ever experienced a time in your life when it was hard to follow, let alone serve, God? How did you overcome this?

### ***Exploring the Word – Malachi 1:1-14***

1. As you listened to the message, what points stood out?
2. Malachi, the final book in the Old Testament, is also the twelfth and final minor prophet that God sends to Israel. Why are Malachi and the two other books studied in this series considered “minor prophets?” How do these books compare to other prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel?
3. Read Malachi 1:1-5. The Hebrew word for oracle - the message that Malachi is about to give - is *massa'*, which means “burden.” Why is Malachi called by God to give a message of this nature? What does this have to do with us?
4. Read Galatians 6:1-2. Why does Malachi begin his message by affirming God's love for the Israelites even though he needs to correct them? Have the people responded favorably to his message thus far?
5. Read Malachi 1:6-10. What evidence is given that the priests are not honoring and respecting God? In what ways can seemingly small compromises lead us away from Christ?
6. Read Malachi 1:11-14. What are some excuses given in the text for not serving the Lord? Have you ever made excuses for not serving God on a ministry team?
7. What ministry team are you currently serving on? Take time to pray in your group for one another's ministry and an increased commitment to Christ.



### **Malachi 1:1-14**

#### **I. The nature of covenant love (vv. 1-5)**

- Covenant love accepts the burden of responsibility for others.
- God loves exclusively in the context of covenant love.
- Covenant love is sacrificial commitment for the benefit of “the other”.
- Covenant love is total dedication in spite of the other's failures.
- Covenant love is not irresistible.

#### **II. The action of covenant love (vv. 6-10)**

- The action of covenant love is servng “the other”.
- To ascribe glory to something is to appreciate its beauty and worth.
- Acknowledgment is innately different from appreciation.
- Service for God is defiled if it is not sacrificial.
- Covenant love cannot condone exploitation.

#### **III. The capability for covenant love (vv. 11-14)**

- Excuses to not serve reveal a failure to understand God's love and sacrifice.
- Choosing to serve sacrificially is choosing to love covenantally.
- It is not too difficult to serve anyone, but it is difficult to love everyone.
- Life contains fun, but is not comprised of it.
- Refusal to serve sacrificially is to cheat both God and people.