

## *“How To Prevent Spiritual Drift”*

Malachi

### ~INTRO~

A FEW YEARS AGO...

- My family took a trip to Florida...
  - I had the chance to surf for the first time.
- I paddled straight out from where Stephani & the kids were sitting on the beach...
  - They were my reference point.
- I had a great time & everything felt fine...
  - I wasn't doing a great job but I was having a ton of fun...
    - Adamant about catching better waves so I could stand up!
- As time passed something felt off...
  - I was no longer where I started...
    - Steph & the kids were now far away.
- Nothing dramatic had happened...
  - No storm or wipeout or intentional decision to move farther away...
    - Just time / focus / & a slow drift.

I HAD DRIFTED SO FAR...

- That I couldn't just swim back...
  - I had to get out of the water & walk back to the place I originally stood.
    - This experience stood out to me...
      - Because it's a **vivid picture of how drift works**

TAKE THIS IN...

- Drift doesn't happen because someone intentionally moves away...
  - It happens because they stop paying attention to where they are.

THAT'S WHY I'VE TITLED TODAY'S MESSAGE...

- *“How To Prevent Spiritual Drift”*
  - (Malachi)

### ~CONTEXT~

BEFORE WE DIVE IN...

- It's important to understand when Malachi was speaking...
  - And why his message matters.

MALACHI WAS WRITTEN...

- After the exile during the same general period as Nehemiah.
  - The walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt...
    - Worship had resumed...
      - The temple was functioning again...

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- From the outside everything looked spiritually healthy.

BUT WHEN WE READ NEHEMIAH 13...

- We see what was really happening beneath the surface...
  - The people had slowly relaxed their commitments...
  - The people were compromising
  - The priests were allowing it

IN OTHER WORDS...

- This was a people who still believed in God...
  - But had drifted over time without realizing it.

THAT’S WHY MALACHI WAS WRITTEN...

- To the people of God (not a pagan nation)...
  - Who had kept showing up...
    - But had grown complacent in their faith...
      - And casual in the things of God.

### ~STUDY~

LISTEN TO WHAT GOD...

- Has to say to them...
  - (Read 1:6-9)

### #1 – Guard Spiritual Depth (1:6-14; 2:1-9)

GOD USES VERY STRONG LANGUAGE HERE...

- Because spiritual drift by definition is self-blinding...
  - And we typically think this warning is for someone else...
    - Or we become *defensive* instead of *reflective*.

(vv. 6-9) Drift exposed

### WHAT WENT WRONG:

Convenience over conviction

THEY OFFERED GOD...

- Blind animals = easier
- Lame animals = cheaper
- Leftovers = convenient

- What we’re seeing here is people who had become complacent!

(vv. 10-14) Drift confronted

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### THIS IS HOW GOD RESPONDS...

- To their half-hearted worship...
  - And partial obedience

### COMPLACENT MEANS...

- Marked by satisfaction with the status-quo...
  - Especially when accompanied by unawareness of dangers or deficiencies.

*“So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.” (Heb. 2:1) NLT*

### SPIRITUAL DRIFT HAPPENED BECAUSE...

- The people chose convenience over conviction...
  - Instead of saying *“God deserves the best”*
    - They opted for *“This is good enough”*

### LET’S CONTRAST THIS...

- With the heart of king David...
  - (2 Samuel 24:18-24) NLT
- David portrays the opposite of what was happening in Malachi’s time.

### THE WARNING FOR US:

#### WHAT DOES SPIRITUAL DRIFT LOOK LIKE?

- It starts with compromising in worship & the word.
  - Casual attendance & casual reading
- Would you show up late and unprepared to a job interview?
  - Why do we treat worship this way?
- Would you give your employer distracted, half-hearted work?
  - Why do we give God distracted attention?
  - Why do we serve God like it doesn’t matter?
- Would you speak to a boss/spouse the way you speak to God?
  - Why do we pray in rushed, half-hearted moments?

(2:1-9) Drift explained & warned

### HERE’S THE TAKEAWAY...

#### Spiritual drift happens...

- When we’ve grown casual with holy things.

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- When convenience replaces conviction...
  - Priorities turn upside down.

### WHAT DOES GOD DESIRE?

HE DESIRES THEIR HEART...

- With a call of His grace.

(Mal. 3:7) “... Return to Me, and I will return to you”

### ~ CALL WORSHIP TEAM (RESPONSE) ~

I REALIZE I’M TALKING TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE TODAY...

- Some of you are here pressing in...
  - And this is nothing more than a warning for the future.
    - Set the guard now so you don’t drift from where you’re at.
- Some of you have already drifted...
  - This should be a sobering moment to respond to Jesus...
    - Make the necessary adjustments...
      - Get back to basics of walking with the Lord.
        - (Mal. 3:7) “... Return to Me, and I will return to you”
- Some of you are here searching...
  - What you’re searching for isn’t found in a religious process...
    - Like the people of Malachi’s day had...
      - But is found in Jesus Christ...
        - Today He’s inviting you to a life-giving relationship.