



Going Deeper into

Malachi 3:6-12 – “Returning to God”

1. **As creatures whose entire lives are about changing, it can be hard to understand the truth behind God’s statement, “For I the LORD do not change.”**

How have you changed during your life? What values and attitudes toward life did you once have that you have left behind? Have these changes been good, or have they hurt you and others in your life?

Read Numbers 23:19 and 2 Timothy 2:13. How does your failure to always be faithful hinder your ability to trust in God’s faithfulness?

Read Ephesians 1:13-14 and Philippians 1:6. What aspects of your spiritual life have you been failing in, that you need to entrust to God, believing that he will complete the work he has started in you?

Pray: I praise you, Lord, that you are constant and unchanging. Thank you for the changes you have brought about in my life; help me to trust you to continue helping me grow until the end. Amen.

2. **In Malachi 3:10, God encourages the people to bring the full tithe into the storehouse and to test him to see if he won’t respond with blessings. However, in verse 7, we see that this call is in the context of his desire for the people to repent and return to him.**

Pastor David stressed that God is not creating a transactional relationship with the people in verse 10. How have you been tempted to treat your spiritual life as a transaction with God?

How have you experienced the temporal removal of God’s blessings due to disobedience or neglect in your walk with him?

Describe what it is like when you confess your sins and return to God. Do you feel that you are leading that action, or can you feel God's prompting to repent and return to him?

Pray: Heavenly Father, thank you for not abandoning me when I sin against you and for seeking to restore me. Forgive me for the ways I sometimes approach you as if our relationship was built on trading favors, and help me to trust that you will provide and care for me. Amen.

3. In Malachi 3:11-12, God expresses his desire to bless the people of Israel and to delight in them.

Think about your relationship with your parents or children. As a child, did (or do) your parents want to bless you and give you good things? As a parent, did (or do) you desire to bless your children? How does your experience in your family relationships help or hinder your understanding of God as a parent who wants to bless his children?

Do you believe God wants to delight in you? Name the things that you believe God delights in about you. List the things you feel detract from his delight in you.

Read Psalm 147:10-11, Proverbs 11:20, Proverbs 12:22, and John 6:29. Based on these verses, what causes God to delight in a person? Do you have and express the things that God delights in?

Pray: Thank you, Father, for blessing me and delighting in me. Help me to see myself in your eyes, not based on my sin or good behavior, but based on my faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ. Amen.

Believing in Jesus Christ is the single greatest thing we can do to please God. If you have not yet believed in Jesus, we want to encourage you to learn more about him and to seek to believe in him. If you don't have faithful followers of Jesus in your life that can help you, Pastor David and Pastor Brian are available to talk with you about why we believe in Jesus, and to help guide you as you seek to know him.