

## LifeGroup Questions

Based On: Malachi 1:6-14 & 3:8-12

January 25, 2015

### Overview

What is God worth? This seems almost like a sacrilegious question to ask. How can someone ascribe a value to the creator of the universe? It would be impossible to place a price upon God, the creator of everything and giver of life. How would you ever know if the value was enough? In the Psalms we are reminded time and again that God has specifically invested in each one of us. Psalm 139:13 reads: "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." If we cannot place an exact value upon God, is there a way we devalue Him? There are people that don't value God at all. They don't acknowledge that He exists let alone His presence in their life. This is not the group being addressed in the book of Malachi. This Old Testament prophet is addressing the people of Judah who were not sacrificing to God the way they should. They knew what God demanded for sacrifices and yet they brought in the worst of their flocks instead of their best. To give of your best requires faith. Religion without faith is just rituals. This is what happened to the people of Judah. They were going through the meaningless motion of trying to please God by offering the lame, blind, and diseased animals. In Malachi 1:8 the prophet even tells them that they hold their local governors in higher esteem than God. So what does this have to do with us today? We are not required to bring animal sacrifices to God, but we are still required to give God our best. Do you give God your best when it comes to your worship, time, finances, and devotion? The answer to this question revolves around faith. Can your relationship with God be described as an active faith or empty rituals? The struggle the people of Judah faced is the same struggle a lot of believers still face today. God's preference is for everyone to approach Him with faith, even the size of a mustard seed, rather than meaningless religion.

### Bible Study: Malachi 1:6-14 & 3:8-12

1. Read Malachi 1:6-14. What do you believe was causing the people of Judah to give God blemished sacrifices? In what ways can even making small compromises lead someone away from God?
2. Why did God want the best from the flocks and not just accept any animal that was sacrificed? How does selecting the best animals represent faith?
3. Read Hebrews 11:6. How is this verse just as true for the Old Testament as it is in the New Testament?
4. Discuss as a group how you would define "giving God your best" for a believer today.
5. Rituals can be a tool for providing structure and reverence, but there is also a danger in them becoming empty activities. How can you guard yourself against a ritual filled relationship with God rather than a faith filled relationship? How can someone tell the difference?
6. God does not need sacrifices or human efforts in order to be exalted. How in both the Old and New Testament are acts of worship more for the worshiper than for God's benefit?
7. Read Malachi 3:8-12. These verses also deal with sacrifices and offerings. Discuss how these verses represent a principle, not an equation (bigger offering doesn't mean more blessing). How can giving an offering with the expectation of a blessing hurt your relationship with God?