



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE—YOUTH

Year 3—The God Who Pursues Relationship: A Story of God's People

Module 5: The Message of the Prophets

Lesson 6: God's Desire for Israel to Overcome Complacency—Malachi 1-4

ENCOUNTER 1—Community Discussion

Read Malachi 3 together out loud as a group. Encourage each person to journal through the passage using these questions. After allowing sufficient time for reflection, invite the group to share their thoughts.

How is this God's story?
How is this others' story?

How is this my story?
How is this the world's story?

ENCOUNTER 2—Community Discussion

(Read the biblical reflection included with this lesson. The questions are designed for your group to enter into a meaningful dialogue about the Word. The bulleted teaching points are taken from the reflection and correspond to the questions.)

GOD'S STORY

As you look at how you spend your week, do you see your time ultimately under God in a big picture sense?

- Don't merely put God first in your life—put Him first in all things.

How are you tempted to redefine God in order to make your life easier?

- When you compare yourself to other people instead of Jesus, you may be able to convince yourself that your sin isn't so "bad." Your "golden calf" may not look like someone else's, but it's still a "golden calf."

OUR STORY

In what ways are you relying on God to shape and mold the person you are becoming? When you encounter difficult times, does your faith remain strong?

- On the day of the Lord, injustices will be made right, the ungodly will stand before God and the faithful will be rewarded.
- It goes against our earthly nature to wait for a reward we can't yet see when there is something quick and enticing in front of us.
- God keeps notes in a book of remembrance regarding those who serve Him (Malachi 3:16-18).

Where are you tempted to be complacent spiritually? What would effect would it have on others if you gave into complacency?

- Malachi 4:3 hints at the dichotomy of who will and won't be affected by Israel's complacency.
- A few of the benchmarks of faithfulness God is looking for are mentioned in Malachi 4:4-6 and include tithing, not intermarrying, not getting divorced, and so on.

OTHERS'S STORY

What do you feel people complain about when it comes to God?

- It's common to mistake God's timing and patience in not destroying us as Him not caring or dispensing justice as we see it should be dispensed.

How do you feel about being called, as Christian, to reach others for God?

- God picks undeserving people to do amazing things. He sees things in us that we may not see in ourselves, including the capacity we hold to be amazing at making a difference in the world.

THE WORLD'S STORY

When have you felt like becoming a part of the world rather than trying to being set apart from it?

- It's never worth sacrificing your standards to try to fit in. The precious treasures of your character that you cash in today decreases in its value to you tomorrow.

What ways can you help point people to God?

- The greatest weapon we have, God himself, has divine power to demolish strongholds even through His word alone.

PRAYER

(Lead your group in corporate prayer.)

*It is good to praise the LORD
and make music to your name, O Most High,
proclaiming your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night,
to the music of the ten-stringed lyre
and the melody of the harp.*

*For you make me glad by your deeds, LORD;
I sing for joy at what your hands have done.
How great are your works, LORD,
how profound your thoughts!
Senseless people do not know,
fools do not understand,
that though the wicked spring up like grass
and all evildoers flourish,
they will be destroyed forever.*

But you, LORD, are forever exalted.

*For surely your enemies, LORD,
surely your enemies will perish;
all evildoers will be scattered.
You have exalted my horn like that of a wild ox;
fine oils have been poured on me.
My eyes have seen the defeat of my adversaries;
my ears have heard the rout of my wicked foes.*

*The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,
they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;
planted in the house of the LORD,
they will flourish in the courts of our God.
They will still bear fruit in old age,
they will stay fresh and green,
proclaiming, "The LORD is upright;
he is my Rock, and there is no wickedness in him."
(Psalm 92)*

WEEKLY PRACTICE

(Read the weekly practice out loud, and challenge your group to practice *missio* beyond today.)

We are all on a journey with God, and often we hit dry patches that make us forget the times He refreshed us and cared for in abundance. Sometimes keeping a journal of our defining moments can help us remember the whole scope and sequence of things between us and the Lord. Here are some ideas beyond a daily log:

- **See the big picture:** Get a large yearly calendar you can put up on your wall. Write bullet statements on any day that you feel led by God in some way or that you take an intentional step toward Him.
- **Blog:** Create an online journal that you can either keep private or allow others to read. Don't just put on a happy face —walk through the ups and downs of life equally.
- **Scrapbook:** Get artistic and paste photos alongside of creative pictures or images that summarize events from your spiritual journey.
- **Audio/Video:** Record your prayer life on camera or over the microphone. Save it to a storage device or disk.
- **Recycle what you're already doing:** Use the various things you're a part of, such as social media or videos you've shot, to recall the experiences you've had with God and others who love Him.

BECOMING MY STORY

(Encourage the group to spend time this week in God's Word, allowing it to penetrate their heart and life.)

Deuteronomy 28

Revelation 22

Spend time this week reading and journaling through the above Scriptures. In the context of Malachi 1-4, consider the following questions:

How do you tend to talk yourself out of stretching toward God?

How do you tend to overlook how God is stretching toward you?

Consider other passages you might know related to Malachi 1-4 and read them this week, journaling as you go.