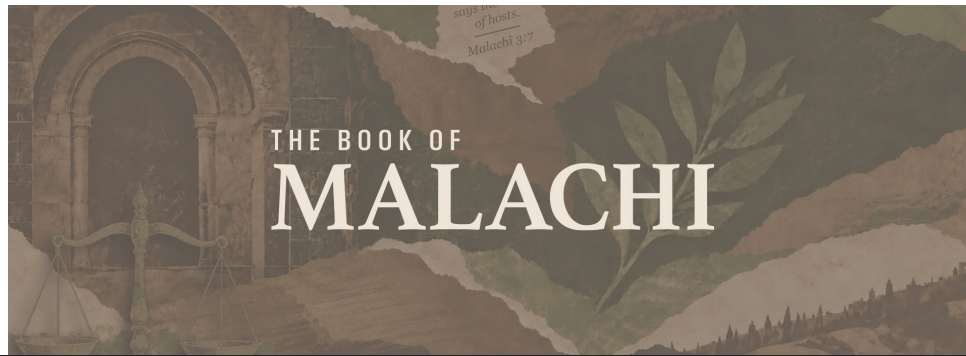




CONVERSATION STARTER

Think of a leader—not necessarily a church leader—whose character made you want to follow them. What made their influence so compelling?

DEEPER

Read Malachi 2:1-9

1. The priests' failure began in their hearts before it appeared in their leadership. They no longer took God's honor seriously or stood in awe of his name. What are some signs that a person may be serving God outwardly while becoming apathetic toward him inwardly? How can we recognize that drift in ourselves?
2. Godly leadership depends upon character, not merely gifting, knowledge, or charisma. Why are we sometimes tempted to overlook a leader's character when that person is talented or effective? What qualities should Christians value most in those who lead them?
3. Who is currently being influenced by the way you speak, worship, work, and make decisions? What might they be learning about God from your example?
4. A godly leader speaks "true instruction" rather than reshaping God's Word around personal opinions, cultural pressure, or the desire to be liked. What pressures might tempt Christian leaders—or any of us—to soften, distort, or selectively apply biblical truth? How can we grow in receiving truth even when it challenges us?
5. Godly leaders help turn people away from sin. This requires both the courage to speak honestly and the love to seek another person's restoration. What would help you become more willing to receive correction, or lovingly offer it when necessary?
6. What does healthy support for church leaders look like? How can we support them without placing them beyond accountability or expecting them to be perfect?

7. Every human leader falls short, but Jesus is the perfect High Priest who never misleads, compromises truth, or abuses his authority. Through Christ, believers have access to God and are being transformed into a royal priesthood. How often do you take advantage of your direct access to God? And where do you especially need to trust Jesus' leadership right now?

NOTES

PRAYER

Thank Jesus for being our perfect High Priest and faithful Shepherd. Ask God to deepen our awe and love for him, guard our church's leaders from compromise, and form each of us into people who speak truth, walk uprightly, and lovingly lead others away from sin. Pray specifically for Gateway Church's pastors, elders, ministry leaders, Life Group leaders, and future leaders.