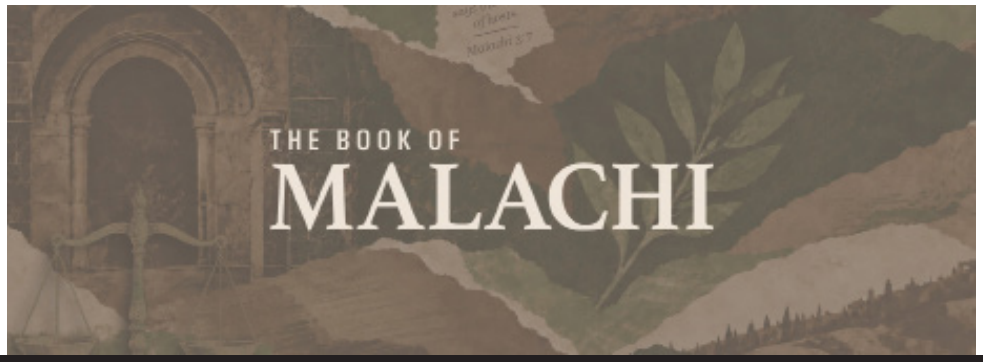


CONVERSATION STARTER

When you have to wait longer than expected for something, what do you usually do to pass the time?

DEEPER

NOTE: This discussion guide will challenge each of you to practice humility and vulnerability. Allow yourself to be open to sharing the hard things in your life with your friends. Indeed, your Life Group is designed to love and care for you through both the good and the bad. You might consider splitting up the men and women to encourage deeper authenticity.

Read Malachi 3:13-18

1. When life has not gone the way you hoped, what have you been tempted to believe about God? Or when you feel disappointed with God, what do you tend to do? Pull away, move toward, pray more/less, stay busy, get angry, or something else?

2. Is there something you've been praying for, waiting for, or trying to be faithful in that has left you disappointed? What did you hope God would do, and what has the waiting been like for you?

3. The people in Malachi's day looked at their circumstances and concluded that serving God was pointless. Have you ever found yourself wondering whether obedience, prayer, or faithfulness is worth it? What was happening in that season?

4. Malachi describes God's people as his treasured possession. When you feel overlooked, disappointed, or as though your life is not what you hoped it would be, what makes it hard to believe that you are precious to God? How does Jesus' work for you speak to that?

5. When you share a disappointment with others, what kind of response tends to help you most? How can our group listen with compassion and also help one another remember what is true about God?

6. What is one specific step you could take this week to bring your disappointment to God or to receive encouragement from someone you trust? Is there someone you could encourage by reminding them that God has not forgotten them?

NOTES

PRAYER PROMPT

Invite each person to pray, as they feel comfortable: "Father, I'm disappointed or struggling with _____. Please help me remember that through Jesus, I belong to you. Show me how to trust your faithfulness in _____." Then pray for one another by name, asking God to help each person feel cared for and encouraged.