



Connection Group Participant Guide

November 14, 2021

Malachi 3:13-15

Teaching Point 1. These people were sitting in judgement of God, rather than submitting to His dealings with them. They grumbled against God, complaining that there is no reward for serving Him; you may as well be an arrogant, wicked person who tests God and escapes. Whenever we grumble about our circumstances or the wrong treatment that we have received, we are really elevating ourselves above God. We are saying, in effect, “God, I could run this universe better than You are running it! I’m just trying to serve You, and all I get is unfair treatment and trouble. But the guy who arrogantly defies You is living a happy life. I’d fix this problem if I were in charge!”

Application: We should serve God because He notices and cares deeply for all who serve Him. As Paul exhorts us from his prison cell, “Do all things without grumbling or disputing; that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:15).

Teaching Point 2. These people had a self-serving attitude. They ask, “What profit is it that we have kept His charge ...?” (3:14). In other words, “What’s in it for us?” They were grumbling that God hadn’t given them their fair share.

Application: Be careful here! The flesh is inclined to self-pity, self-focus, and self-centeredness, and the world feeds this. If there’s nothing in it for you, why do it? If the church isn’t meeting your needs, bail out. You deserve some happiness. You can’t worry about the needs of others! God understands. Your needs come first! So what’s in it for you, if you serve the Lord? He gives abundant blessings, both in this life and in eternity. But don’t forget the persecutions! “All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted” (2 Tim. 3:12). Self-centered people don’t last long in serving God.

Teaching Point 3. These people had focused on the seeming prosperity of the wicked, but had lost the eternal perspective.

Application: Asaph wrote about this in Psalm 73. He contrasted the prosperity of the wicked with his own trials and concluded that he was following God in vain. This was troublesome in his sight until he went into the sanctuary of God. There he considered the end of the wicked and the reward of the righteous. I encourage you to meditate on that Psalm whenever you’re tempted in this manner.