

Christian student ministry workers in Sweden developed a series of questions to ask when reading a Bible passage. Called the “Swedish Method” because of its origins, these questions can be used when reading the Bible by yourself or with others.

The daily readings in this family worship guide have a few questions. However, we encourage you, as appropriate for your family, to ask the following general questions of the text each day.



Is there something that ‘shines’ from the passage—whatever impacts most, or draws attention?



Is there something you don’t understand, or a question the passage raises in your mind?



Is there a personal application to your life?



Is there something you plan to share with someone else – and who will you share it with?



How do ideas in the passage interrelate? Or with other passages in this book – or in the whole Bible?

Worshipping Together is part of the vision and is a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Frankston, Victoria, Australia. frankstonrp.org.au bit.ly/WTrpcaf

The concept and layout draws heavily from *Let’s Worship God*, a ministry of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Airdrie, Scotland. airdrierpcs.org

The readings are from Tim Chester’s 3-year weekly reading plan. bit.ly/WkBbl or bit.ly/3yrBbl

The quote on the cover is from the article *What Shampoo and Family Worship Have in Common*, Written by Randy Greenwald, (Quoted from *Tabletalk* magazine, Nov 1997.)

Notes this week are drawn in part from commentaries on Malachi by John Calvin, Anthony Selvaggio, James Boice, James Smith, Roger Ellsworth, and notes from the HCSB Study Bible, and the Reformation Study Bible

Worshipping Together



We love God because He first loved us.

And we love to tell God that we love Him.

Joyful and faithful worship together twice each Lord’s Day is the highlight of our week. We are glad that they said, “Let us go to the House of the Lord.” Corporate worship prepares us for the week and prepares us for Heaven.

In addition, we regularly worship God as families and as individuals.

One father put it this way:

The back of my shampoo bottle says, “Lather, rinse, repeat.” Simple enough that even I can do it. Though family worship may be a bit more complicated than shampooing hair, it ought not to be rated with “home dentistry” in the scale of difficulty.



If you could buy family worship in the store, it would come in the form of a Bible, and the directions would simply say, “Read, pray, repeat.” Men should gather their families at least once daily. They should read a portion of the Scriptures to them. And they should pray with them. There need be no fireworks or pizzazz to keep the kids interested. There needs to be only a father* with a heart-love for God – who desires to see that love appropriated by his children.*

Read, pray, repeat.

* Fathers leading their family in worship is always the goal. When, in the Lord’s providence, the father is absent or uninterested, a godly mother will lead her children

Reading Malachi 3:1 My Messenger is coming

Notes (See back page for authors)
Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. In the Hebrew, the first word of this short book is “burden” and the final word is “curse”. Yet the book is not all doom and gloom. Malachi brings a message of hope in the midst of warning and judgment.

After this book, there will be no word from the Lord for 400 years. Malachi’s last written word of “curse” will be broken by the coming Living Word of blessing – the Lord Jesus Christ. This coming of God’s messenger is promised here in Malachi 3. In fact, 3 different messengers are represented in v1. Malachi, the author’s, name means “my messenger.” Secondly, the “my messenger” who will prepare the way is a clear reference to John the Baptist (Matthew 11:7, 10). Finally, the Lord Himself is promised – the Messenger of the Covenant – the One who is coming.

This Messenger of the Covenant will come suddenly. The RSB notes that *this word is almost always associated in Scripture with an unhappy and calamitous circumstance (Num. 12:4; Is. 47:11; cf. 2 Pet. 3:10)*. Hope and warning. Let the reader be aware!

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
- Who are the messengers in verse 1?
 - What was Malachi’s role in announcing Jesus?
 - What was John the Baptist’s role in announcing Jesus?

4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 67c²
- Commit in prayer to heeding God’s messenger, by God’s help
 - Pray for a member of your church
 - Pray for your family
 - Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

¹ You will notice we only have a printed guide for 6 days. We recommend each Lord’s Day you review the previous week’s readings and/or the previous or current week’s sermons and pray together

² Psalm selections are taken from the *Book of Psalms for Worship*. We encourage our congregation to sing the same selection each day for a week to gain familiarity with the selection

Reading Malachi 3:16-18 The Lord took notice and listened

Notes (Today’s notes are all from Roger Ellsworth’s commentary on Malachi)
These people spoke to ‘one another’ ...While the text does not specify what these people said, the fact that they all feared the Lord means they spoke words consistent with that fear and words that would encourage and promote it.

What resulted from their speaking? The Lord promises to remember them (v. 16). The Jews were familiar with the idea of kings recording the names of those who had done good (Esth. 6:1–2). God also has such a book. It consists of the names of the God-fearers of whom he has been speaking. We are not to conclude from this that God has a bad memory. It is rather God stooping to their level to speak in a way they could easily understand. He was assuring them that he will not forget those who do not forget him! The God with perfect memory keeps perfect records!

...The Lord will not only remember these people but also treat them as his own special treasure...[A]t the end, he will find them all, put them into his treasure chest and will look upon them with pride and satisfaction. They will be his crown jewels. God’s people may not appear to be much now, but they will be known to be much then (see Dan. 12:3).

...The difference between believers and unbelievers may not always be apparent in this life, but, in the words of T. V. Moore, there is coming a ‘... great day of final adjustment ... in which all seeming anomalies of the present shall be fully explained and wholly removed forever.’ What day is this great day? It is the day when this life is over and eternity finally dawns.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
- What did the people who feared the Lord do?
 - What did the Lord do in response?
 - What did the Lord promise in response?

4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 67c
- Pray that you will fear the Lord together with other believers
 - Pray for your family
 - Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member
 - Pray for the reading and preaching of God’s word tomorrow

Reading

Malachi 3:13-15 Harsh words against the Lord

Notes

(Today's notes are all from James Smith's commentary on the minor prophets)

Yahweh charges that the words of the people had been hard or harsh against God. They had used offensive language. Again the hardened sinners denied the accusation by means of a rhetorical question. So the Lord spelled out what those offensive words were.

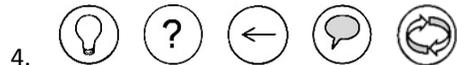
First, the people were negative in their attitude toward serving God. "You have said, It is vain to serve God."...They thought that serving God demanded too much and returned too little! They saw no value in keeping the ordinances and ritual observations. "And what profit is it that we have kept his charge." They were observing his ordinances, especially the ritual observances. They fasted, mourned, lamented, and walked in sackcloth "before Yahweh of hosts." Worshipping God was as boring to them as a funeral ritual. When the people said "we have walked mournfully before Yahweh of hosts" most likely they were exaggerating in order to articulate their disgust for temple ritual..

Second, the people viewed the wicked as more blessed than the righteous... The proud (zedim) in the Old Testament are the self-willed, malicious, unprincipled, and turbulent; those who defied God by disregarding his precepts. The skeptics also claimed that "the workers of wickedness are built up," i.e., they prosper in spite of their wickedness. In the opinion of the skeptics, those who arrogantly disregarded God's law were happy and prosperous. "Also they try God and are delivered." They seemed to challenge God and yet escape any punishment. Thus in the eyes of many, serving God was of no benefit, and disobeying him brought no punishment.

Questions

(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. How were the people's words against the Lord harsh?
2. Why is serving the Lord worth it even if no immediate benefit?
3. Where else does one of God's people struggle this way?



Praise

Pray

Psalm 67c

1. Confess, in prayer that it is worth it to serve the Lord
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading

Malachi 3:1-4 Purifying fire, cleansing soap

Notes

(See back page for authors)

Smith comments that *the Jews expected Messiah to come to judge the heathen. Malachi warned the skeptics that they would be the first to be judged.* Yet this warning of judgment is not without grace. Rather it is a warning of a gracious, yet painful, purifying. God will not let His people remain in their sin.

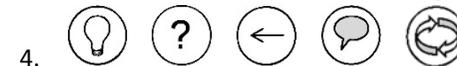
Malachi uses two images here of painful cleansing. The Messenger will be a refiner's fire – burning away all impurities of His people. Boice notes that refiners of silver *melt ore in small, portable furnaces. As the ore melts, the dross rises to the top and is then scraped off by the refiner. The workman keeps peering into the crucible, removing dross until he can see his face in the molten metal as in a mirror and knows that the work is done. In such a manner, God will apply the heat of affliction and discipline until he can see His image in His people.*

Secondly, the Messenger will be like a laundryman's cleansing soap. Just as a child often dreads being scrubbed clean by a parent, so Malachi's readers would know this cleansing could be painful. This cleansing lye soup, applied vigorously by the Lord, might well hurt. But the resulting cleanness would be worth it. The Levites, representing the people, would once again present offerings in righteousness because their hearts and lives have been purified.

Questions

(see back page for explanation of symbols)

1. How does God purify like a refiner's fire?
2. How does God cleanse like launderers soap?
3. What is the result of God cleansing His people?



Praise

Pray

Psalm 67c

1. Commit in prayer to seek God's cleansing work in your life, with God's help.
2. Pray for a member of your church
3. Pray for your family
4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Malachi 3:5-6 Coming in judgment

Notes (See back page for authors)
Not only does God promise His *purifying* work of His people, He also promises *punishment* for the wicked. Ellsworth comments that *the Messiah would come in the capacity of 'a swift witness' against sorcerers, adulterers, perjurers and oppressors of the helpless (v. 5). In other words, the Messiah would not delay in confronting such people with their sins. To state it another way, the coming of the Lord would only bring trouble to those who were in the grip of cynical unbelief, for the Lord would come only to judge and purify them. Malachi's generation did not understand that the coming of the Lord would only be a comfort to those who were ready for it, that is, to those with hearts of faith. They thought when the Lord came, he would straighten out everyone except his own people. They did not realize that he would start obliterating evil by taking dead aim on the hearts of his own cold, unbelieving people!*

Again and again, God comes in judgment against the wicked. Most severe is His judgment against the wicked among those named as His people. How much better that we accept His painful cleansing and repent than suffer His just punishment against those who will not repent. When we do, we know His unchanging mercy.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. Against whom does God announce judgment?
 2. What is the result of fearing the Lord?
 3. Why are God's people not destroyed?
 4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 67c
1. Seek in prayer hearts of faith to be ready for the Lord's coming
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member

Reading Malachi 3:7-12 Bring the whole tithe

Notes (Today's notes are all from James Boice's commentary on the minor prophets)
The people... had not given the "whole tithe" (Mal.3:10), and they had certainly not presented even what they did give with a willing and thankful heart. They had to change in this area.
Many believers today also need to change. Sometimes...I am asked whether Christians today are obliged to tithe. I suspect the questioner wants to know how little he must give to Christian causes and how much he can keep for himself. I reply with what I believe to be a proper statement of the case, namely, that the tithe was an Old Testament regulation designed for the support of a particular class of people...

On the other hand, I also point out that although the tithe is not mentioned [in the NT], the giving of weekly offerings is (1 Cor. 16:2). And more importantly, it is generally the case that in the New Testament the obligations of the Old Testament legislation are heightened rather than lessened. That is, the law is interpreted in the fullest measure. So while we are not required to give a specific tenth of our income, it is hard to think of a normal Christian, blessed with the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, doing less...

I wonder how many believers today even approach that ideal. I wonder if God would not say to most today, "You rob me" (Mal. 3:8). Why should this be? Why should we who have been blessed so abundantly be so ungenerous? I think the reason is that we really do not trust God to take care of us. We think we have to store up the money for ourselves against the day when money may run out and God will be unable to provide.

- Questions** (see back page for explanation of symbols)
1. What is the tithe?
 2. What reasons might we find for Christians tithing today?
 3. What is God's promise for Malachi's readers?
 4.     

- Praise Pray** Psalm 67c
1. Commit in prayer that you will not rob God
 2. Pray for a member of your church
 3. Pray for your family
 4. Pray for a non-Christian friend/family member