

God's people suffer when they turn away from God but they prosper when they trust Him in all areas of life. Have you found that to be true in your own experience?

- Invite members of the class to share personal experiences of blessings they have received from God when trusting Him and being faithful in service and giving.

### Wrapping It Up

- Although we, too, have observed the ungodly prospering while the godly go wanting, today's study reminds us that, in the end, God will reward those who are His and judge those who are not. And, meanwhile, there are tangible and intangible blessings that come to those who serve the Lord. Those who refuse to serve Him don't even know what blessings they are missing.
- Call on someone to lead the class in prayer.

# Teacher's Toolbox

*Getting your class into God's Word  
and God's Word into your class*

ExcitingBibleStudy.com

Bible Series

Malachi 3-4

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**HOW TO USE TEACHER'S TOOLBOX:** Make a four-page folded teacher's leaflet from the first two sheets by printing two-sided (or by putting the blank sides together). The other two sheets are for duplicating, displaying, distributing, or otherwise using as called for in the lesson plan.

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**Faith at Home** – A specific application of today's Bible passage to family life, to be used for individual reflection, family discussion, or class activity.



### Getting Started

#### Reaction

- Write the following statement on the chalkboard:

**God's blessings to us will be in direct proportion  
to our faithfulness in giving.**

- Have members respond to the statement, telling whether or not they agree and why they feel as they do. Allow for differences of opinion. Encourage both agreement and disagreement with the statement.
- **While we should not consider our giving as investments which we expect God to repay with interest, there are promises in the Bible that our faithfulness in giving will bring blessing to our lives. Some have**



### Faith at Home

Ask family members to share specific ways that God has blessed their lives.

experienced those blessings in material ways; others have received blessings of another kind. With this statement and our discussion of it fresh on our minds, let's dig into a passage of Scripture that should give us some insight into how God responds to faithful giving, and how He responds to unfaithful giving.

## Exploring God's Word

### Scripture choir

- Give each person a copy of Item 1, a scripture reading divided by choir parts: soprano, alto, tenor and bass.
- Divide the class by the pitch of their voices:
  - If you teach a co-ed class, have the men with lower voices be basses, the men with higher voices be tenors, the women with lower voices be altos and the women with higher voices be sopranos.
  - If you teach men or women only, divide the class into four groups of about equal size. The lowest voices would be basses, the highest voices would be sopranos.
  - You may prefer to enlist four readers to do the parts as solos.

### Matching

- Give each person a pencil and a copy of the following, but without the answers (duplicate Item 2).

#### Matching

Match the terms from the focal passage (numbered items) with the appropriate definitions/explanations (lettered items). NOTE: Two lettered items are

used twice.

- (L) 1. I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way
- (G) 2. the messenger of the covenant
- (J) 3. the day of his coming
- (H) 4. a refiner's fire
- (K) 5. a launderer's soap
- (I) 6. offerings in righteousness
- (F) 7. my decrees
- (A) 8. return to me
- (M) 9. tithes
- (C) 10. offerings
- (D) 11. storehouse
- (E) 12. cast their fruit
- (L) 13. I will send you the prophet Elijah
- (J) 14. that great and dreadful day of the Lord
- (B) 15. curse

- A. repent
- B. total destruction
- C. gifts to God over and above the tithe
- D. storage facility near the temple
- E. release grapes from the vine before they fully ripen
- F. God's laws
- G. the Messiah
- H. melted metal to remove impurities
- I. gifts to God untainted by

- unconfessed sin
- J. time of judgment
- K. alkaline solution used to whiten cloth
- L. John the Baptist
- M. gifts to God representing ten percent of one's gain

- Allow the class 10-15 minutes to study the passage and complete the activity. Encourage them to work with other members as they do so. Refer to the information learned through this activity as you lead the class to study the passage.

### Questions and answers

- Have someone read aloud Malachi 3:1-5.
- **What are some of the promises God makes in these verses?** (to send messengers; to purify people and make them acceptable unto Himself)
- Have someone read aloud Malachi 3: 6-12.
- **What accusations did God make in these verses?** (the people had not obeyed His law; they had withheld their tithes and offerings)
- **What promises did God make in these verses?** (to return to them if they would return to Him; to open the floodgates of heaven and pour out blessing; to protect them from potential problems)
- Have someone read aloud Malachi 3:13-18.
- **Why did the people think it**

was “futile to serve God”? (because they saw the ungodly prosper while the godly did not)

- **What promise did God make in these verses?** (ultimately there would be a clear distinction made between the righteous who served God and the wicked who did not)
- Have someone read aloud Malachi 4:5-6.
- **What does God say would happen if the people refused to repent, even after the new Elijah came to turn back their hearts?** (He would strike the land with a curse)

### Studying related passages

- Have someone read aloud again Malachi 3:7.
- **God calls His people to return to Him and promises that, if they do, He will return to them. Although this passage does not tell us how to return to God, several other passages do.**
- Lead the class to study the following passages and tell what they say about returning to God: Zechariah 1:1-4; Isaiah 1:16-19; Jeremiah 4:1-4; 2 Chronicles 7:14; and 1 John 1:9.

## Making It Personal

### Personal sharing

- **Remember that Malachi's message is delivered to God's people, and his point is that**

# Scripture Choir

TENOR: See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me.

ALTO: Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant,

SOPRANO: Whom you desire,

ALTO: Will come,

BASS: Says the Lord Almighty.

TENOR: But who can endure the day of his coming?

SOPRANO: Who can stand when he appears?

BASS: For he will be like a refiners' fire or a launderer's soap.

ALTO: He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver;

SOPRANO: He will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.

TENOR: Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by,

BASS: As in former years.

SOPRANO: Ever since the time of your forefathers you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them.

BASS: Return to me, and I will return to you,

SOPRANO: Says the Lord Almighty.

ALTO: But you ask,

TENOR: How are we to return?

BASS: Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me.

ALTO: But you ask,

TENOR: How do we rob you?

BASS: In tithes and offerings.

SOPRANO: You are under a curse—the whole nation of you—because you are robbing me.

ALTO: Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.

BASS: Test me in this,

TENOR: Says the Lord Almighty,

BASS: And see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not cast their fruit,

TENOR: Says the Lord Almighty.

SOPRANO: Then all the nations will call you blessed.

ALTO: Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.

TENOR: See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes.

SOPRANO

AND ALTO: He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children,

TENOR

AND BASS: And the hearts of the children to their fathers;

ALL Or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.

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