



*"Find Your Purpose and Reach Your Destiny"*

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WHY am I doing this?  
Why Should I Serve God?  
When All I get is Hardship?  
Malachi 3:13-18

## Introduction

Many Christians in the church are walking away from God. Many are leaving the church all together while some attend church but have no commitment or conviction to serve God. While others are hanging on for dear life anticipating the soon return of the triumphant king. From these three descriptions derive three specific categories of Christians in the faith.

- Those that need to mature and are not maturing.
- Those that need to mature and have stalled.
- Those that need to mature and are maturing.

To answer the question in the Bible Study topic why serve God when all we experience is hardship, we will reply in this manner...

We should serve God because He gives special attention to us and he cares for all who sever him

Malachi the Text reveals two groups of believers.... **THE FIRST GROUP**

- The first group is in Malachi 3:13-15. They are "**Discontent.**"  
The complained constantly and accused God of being unfair.

They went as far as to say there is no reward for serving Him (Malachi 3:14-15)

- **Discontentment** will not allow one to see the blessing; but instead they place their energy on the trouble and opposition they encounter. They play into their distractions.
- The discontent said you may as well be an arrogant and proudful, person testing God and escaping

**THE SECOND GROUP** – (Malachi 3:16-18) **They revered God;** they feared him and obeyed his commandments

- a) They admonished one another to continue in the faith/in spite of suffering
- b) They held each other accountable to disregard the prosperity of the wicked and do not allow it to distract them.
- c) God gave special attention to this category of saints and He promised that he would spare them in the day of judgement.

**NOTE** > you must make every effort to avoid the discontent, those who complain, those who do not appreciate God.

Let's examine Malachi's accusation to the people in **verse 14-15** *Ye have said it is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts? 15. And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.*

**FOUR CHARACTERISTICS of the FIRST Group (discontent)** group that we should to avoid at all costs.

1. **they –Judging God...**The discontent judge God rather than obey his ordinance's

One of the most prevalent sins of the Israelites in the wilderness was their spirit of grumbling and complaining against God. They chose return to slavery in Egypt than to trust God and endure hardship in the wilderness! (Ex. 15:22-27- they complained after three days out of Egypt).

2. **They Had a Selfish Attitude.** (Malachi 3:14) They are basically saying 'What are we getting out this?' God is ignoring us.

The Hebrew word translated “*profit*” was a technical term for *a weaver cutting a piece of cloth free from the loom*. The idea here is that these people expected their “cut” or percentage, much as a gangster would demand his cut for his dirty work.

### 3. The Lost Their Passion to Live Holy

They asked, “What profit is it that ... we have walked in mourning before the Lord of hosts?” (3:14). Outwardly, they went through the motions of fasting and humbling themselves before God. But they were not doing these things out of a heart of love and devotion for God.

Inwardly they were thinking, “This religion stuff is a drag! We want some fun out of life!”

### 4. The Lost Their Perspective – They became Distracted by the Prosperity of the Wicked.

Malachi 3:14 *Ye have said, it is vain to serve God....*

Whenever we start thinking that way, we have lost God’s eternal perspective and adopted the world’s temporal perspective. Asaph wrote about this in *Psalms 73*. He contrasted the prosperity of the wicked with his own trials and concluded that he was following God in vain.

Also, in Paul’s great **RESURRECTION** chapter, **1 Corinthians 15**. He states (15:19), “*If in this life only, we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.*” In other words, Why serve Christ if this life is all there is?

vs. 15:32 > *If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die (*

15:58 “*Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord*”

### THREE CHARACTERISTICS of the Second Group (Malachi 3:16-18)

#### 1. They Feared God and Esteemed HIS Name above the Opinions of Others

#### Three characteristics THE SECOND Group

Twice verse 16 emphasizes that these people feared God, and it further adds that they esteemed His name. “Esteem” (KJV = “thought upon”) means to meditate, to regard, and thus to set value on something.

In my opinion, the Christian world today needs a revived emphasis on the proper fear of God. We rightly emphasize God’s love, because “God is love” (1 John 4:8). But we are out of balance if we emphasize God’s love to the neglect of the fear that is due to His holy name.

John Bunyan’s excellent “**Treatise on the Fear of God**” (The Works of John Bunyan [Baker], 1:437-491). He writes, “When God comes to bring a soul news of mercy and salvation, even that visit, that presence of God, is fearful” (p. 438). In God’s presence, he says, “even our best things, our comeliness, our sanctity and righteousness, all do immediately turn to corruption and polluted rags” (p. 439).

#### 2. They Encouraged Each Other When Challenged by Satan.

**Malachi 3:16** *Then those who feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.*

“Then,” refers to verse 15- when the wicked (**THE FIRST GROUP**) called the arrogant blessed. **The SECOND Group** had to counter the evil talk of the **FIRST Group**. They had to be as bold for God as the **FIRST Group** was bold for evil.

We need fellowship with like-minded believers in order to stand firm against the wrong ideas that come at us from the world, the flesh, and the devil. If all you do is attend church and leave, but you don’t fellowship with other Christians during the week, you will struggle to maintain a godly perspective in the face of the evil around us.

#### 3. The SECOND Group Has Obtained Special Attention and Care from God.

The Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him...” (3:16). The Hebrew word “*hearkened*” means to *prick up the ears, as an animal does when it hears something*. The word “heard” means to bend over so as not to miss a word. The picture is that of a parent, eavesdropping on the conversation between his children

## **Conclusion**

It's easy to complain. Most of us have at some time or another. Complaining however, only makes matters worse for the believer. We must learn to trust God when the situation appears to be out of control. Blame and accusation only add to our problems when we center it on God.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. How would you reply to a bitter Christian who says they could serve God apart from attending church?
2. How has selfishness infiltrated the church/ how has the church handled this mentality?
3. How do we balance loving God with fearing God? How do we know when we are functioning in both roles equally?
4. What does serving God mean/ is it a position, a responsibility, or mindset?