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*“Return to Me”*

*Our heart toward God is often revealed by the questions we ask and the sincerity by which we worship and serve Him*

*Malachi 1:1-14 ESV*

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The oracle of the word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi. 2I have loved you, says the Lord. But you say: How have you loved us? “Is not Esau Jacob's brother?” declares the Lord. Yet I have loved Jacob 3but Esau I have hated. I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals of the desert. 4If Edom says: We are shattered but we will rebuild the ruins - The Lord of hosts says: They may build, but I will tear down, and they will be called ‘the wicked country, and the people with whom the Lord is angry forever’. 5Your own eyes shall see this, and you shall say: Great is the Lord beyond the border of Israel! 6A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My fear? Says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, ‘How have we despised Your name?’ 7By offering polluted food upon My altar. But you say, ‘How have we polluted You?’ By saying that the Lord's table may be despised. 8When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil?

Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts. 9And now entreat the favor of God, that He may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the Lord of hosts. 10Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand. 11For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering.

For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts. 12But you profane it when you say that the Lord's table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food may be despised. 13But you say: ‘What a weariness this is,’ and you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? Says the Lord. 14Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.

**1) God loves us and has our back despite our feelings and claims.**

**vs 1-4**

**2) God deserves our best, yet He's often given our leftovers.**

**vs 6-14**

### **God's Love is Evident by the Cost for our Freedom...**

3All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. 4Even before He made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and with-out fault in His eyes. 5God decided in advance to adopt us into His own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what He wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure. 6So we praise God for the glorious grace He has poured out on us who belong to His dear Son. 7He is so rich in kindness and grace that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His Son and forgave our sins. Ephesians 1:3-7 NLT