



Lesson 1: Define Love

Malachi 1:1-5

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The people of Malachi's time were, at best, ambivalent to God. Their actions demonstrated that they didn't believe God loved them. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. Consider how God fulfills all of these descriptions of what love is. Consider who fulfills the descriptions of what love is not. How could this passage have also helped the people in Malachi's time to understand better what God's love really looks like?

Read 1 John 4:16-21. What does John say we have come to know and believe? How does John help his readers to have confidence that God does, indeed, love them? Why are we able to love others?

Read Romans 9:10-20. What had Esau done that God rejected him? What had Jacob done that God accepted him? Is God unjust in this? Who can answer back to God, protesting His choice?

Read Romans 9:22-26. God has created as He has created. Paul quotes Hosea here and what promise does God give to Hosea? Who is this referring to? Is that an example of God's wrath or God's mercy?

Read Hebrews 12:7-11. What does the writer of Hebrews remind us of the purpose of discipline? Is discipline fun? Why is it necessary? How do we know that God does, indeed, love the Jews of Malachi's time?

Read Matthew 6:25-33. How do we know that God does know what our needs are? What should we fix ourselves on? If God is, as He says, aware of your needs, what should be the result in our attitudes?

As you spend time with God today, consider how you may demonstrate that you, like the people of Malachi's time, don't really believe that God loves you. Consider all the ways that He has proven Himself faithful in the past month. Read Matthew 6:34 and ask God to increase your faith and soothe your anxiety.