

Recap of 1/15/17 (Malachi 3:13-15):

1. "... our 'sacrifices' for God easily become manifestations of our sin, not our love for him. We use them as a bargaining weapon: 'If I do this for you, God, will you do this for me?' We try to use these sacrifices to control his behavior and bring him down to our level. But this will never lead us to deeper intimacy with God." (Tim Stafford)
2. "Religion is not a matter of bargaining, but it is the love of God producing in the believer love, thankfulness, and instinctive obedience." (Jamieson, Fausset, & Brown)
3. In contrast to the "what's in it for me group" of 3:13-15, Malachi introduces in 3:16-18 a second group; a group he describes as those who fear the Lord (vs. 16), those who honored His name (vs. 16), those who are His treasured possession (vs. 17), and those who serve God (vs. 18).
4. This group talked with each other (apparently encouraging each other in their faith), God listened and recorded their faithfulness. Believers can have a powerful effect upon each other's faith and obedience (Hebrews 10:24,25)
5. Believers need each other because:
 - Christian maturity cannot be achieved alone (Galatians 5:22-23)("one-another passages" of the New Testament)
 - Our most effective witness is our love for one-another (John 13:35).
 - We need each other's gifts in the church to accomplish God's work.
 - We need others to keep us on the right path (Galatians 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:14; Prov. 27:9,17)
 - We need the personal ministry of other believers (prayer, encouragement, hospitality, practical helps, etc.)
6. The Hebrew word translated "serve" in vs. 17 is often translated "worship" in other passages of the Old Testament. As Wolf says: "By serving God we worship Him, and worship cannot be divorced from service." Worship is more than a set of songs on Sunday morning or an emotional response to God, it is serving God by serving each other.