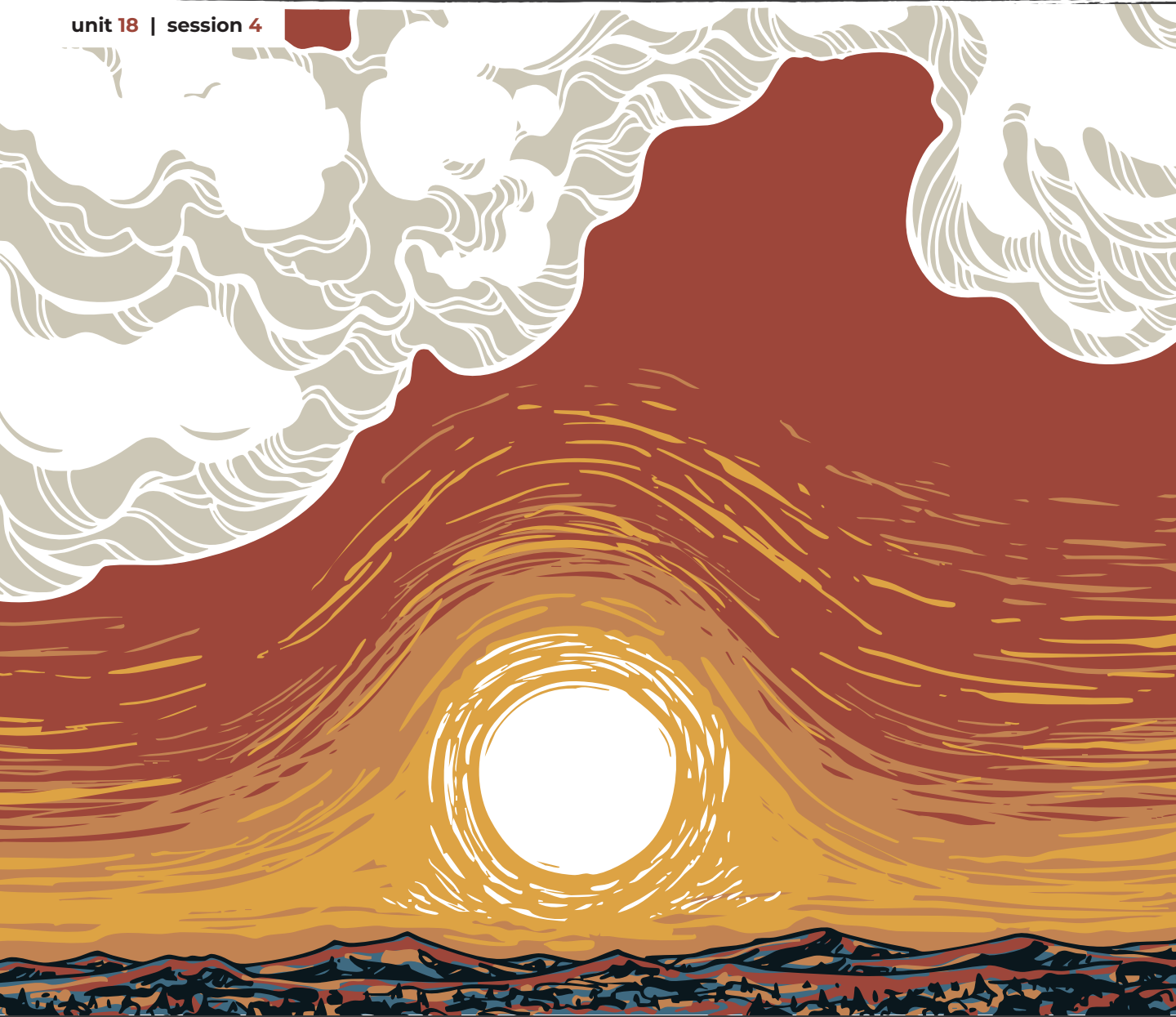


THE DAY IS *IS COMING*

unit 18 | session 4



CHRIST CONNECTION

Through Malachi, God promised a Messenger—Jesus—who would purify His people. Through His blood and sacrifice, Jesus purifies us, making us right with God because of His righteousness.

REMEMBERING THE PAST

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Malachi

GOD WILL PURIFY HIS PEOPLE

MALACHI 3:1-6

1 "See, I am going to send my messenger, and he will clear the way before me. Then the LORD you seek will suddenly come to his temple, the Messenger of the covenant you delight in—see, he is coming," says the LORD of Armies. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming? And who will be able to stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire and like launderer's bleach. 3 He will be like a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver. Then they will present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. 4 And the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will please the LORD as in days of old and years gone by. 5 "I will come to you in judgment, and I will be ready to witness against sorcerers and adulterers; against those who swear falsely; against those who oppress the hired worker, the widow, and the fatherless; and against those who deny justice to the resident alien. They do not fear me," says the LORD of Armies. 6 "Because I, the LORD, have not changed, you descendants of Jacob have not been destroyed."

GOD WILL HEAL HIS PEOPLE

MALACHI 4:1-6

1 "For look, the day is coming, burning like a furnace, when all the arrogant and everyone who commits wickedness will become stubble. The coming day will consume them," says the LORD of Armies, "not leaving them root or branches. 2 But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, and you will go out and playfully jump like calves from the stall. 3 You will trample the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day I am preparing," says the LORD of Armies. 4 "Remember the instruction of Moses my servant, the statutes and ordinances I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. 5 Look, I am going to send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. 6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse."

MAIN POINT.

Following God means letting Him purify us.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

IMPUTATION

When God pardoned sinners at the cross, our sins were imputed, or transferred, to Christ, who became sin on our behalf. Our sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ's righteousness was imputed to us (Rom. 5:17; 1 Cor. 1:30). When God the Father looks at those who have trusted in Christ, He does not see their sins but the righteousness of Christ as belonging to them (Rom. 4:6).

DISCUSSION

GOD WILL PURIFY HIS PEOPLE

MALACHI 3:1-6

- What are people's issues with God or reasons for unbelief today?
- Since God doesn't change (v. 6), what causes distance in our relationship with Him?
- Who are the two messengers in 3:1? Why does Malachi then ask who would be able to stand when the "Messenger of the covenant" comes?

GOD WILL HEAL HIS PEOPLE

MALACHI 4:1-6

- How is the fire's purpose in 4:1 different from the fire's purpose in 3:2-3?
- Read Verse 2. What does the Lord want us to realize about the reality of belonging to Him?
- What was God's last instruction to Israel (v. 4)? Based on their history, why would God say this?



HOW HAS GOD DIRECTED US IN THE SAME WAY HE DID ISRAEL (4:4)—TO REMEMBER? WHAT HAS HE GIVEN US TO HELP US?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Have you ever heard the phrase, "Don't forget where you came from"? We usually say this to someone who has reached a higher status in life. What we mean is that remembering our beginning, our history, and our progress is important. We mean that looking back is valuable because we can see how far we've come. Looking back helps us to remain humble and grateful instead of becoming arrogant. In our walk with the Lord, forgetting where we came from is dangerous because we forget that we were dead in our sin and slaves to sin. We risk thinking our goodness comes from our ability instead of from knowing Jesus and being transformed by Him. But when we remember where we came from, we are filled with gratitude. We remember that we were spiritually dead and without hope. We realize that we can only boast in Jesus because without Him, we would be lost (2 Cor. 10:17).



DAY ONE

PSALM 51:10-13

Do you have a favorite shirt or clothing item? Imagine getting a huge, stubborn stain on it. You try everything to get it out, but the stain won't budge. You know it's there, it bothers you, and you can't quite feel good wearing it. Sometimes, our hearts can feel like that. We mess up, we make bad choices, and that "stain" of sin can feel heavy and impossible to remove on our own. We notice it even when no one else does.

King David knew this feeling all too well. After making some really big mistakes, he wrote Psalm 51, a raw and honest prayer for forgiveness. In verses 10-13, he cried out to God, begging for cleansing and renewal. He didn't just ask for a quick clean-up. He wanted his heart to be transformed. He wanted a true change that only comes from God.

When we follow God, we are spiritually cleansed too. When God purifies us, He doesn't just wipe away the stain; He makes our hearts new, fresh, and ready to follow Him with a "steadfast" (firm and unwavering) spirit. He restores our joy and reminds us that we're His, and He gives us a "willing spirit"—the desire and the strength to keep following Him.

And here's the cool part: When God purifies us and restores us, it doesn't just benefit us. David said, "I will teach the rebellious your ways, and sinners will return to you." Our changed lives, our renewed joy, and our willingness to follow God become a powerful testimony. When others see how God has worked in us, it points them to Him too. Letting God purify us isn't just about feeling better; it's about becoming a vessel for His grace to reach others.

- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE A "STEADFAST SPIRIT" AND A "WILLING SPIRIT" IN YOUR DAILY LIFE?**
- **HOW CAN YOUR LIFE, AS SOMEONE PURIFIED BY GOD, POINT OTHERS TO HIM, JUST LIKE DAVID DESCRIBED?**

PRAY

**GOD, CREATE IN ME A PURE HEART AND RENEW
A STEADFAST AND WILLING SPIRIT WITHIN ME.
RESTORE THE JOY OF YOUR SALVATION SO THAT MY
LIFE MAY POINT OTHERS TO YOUR AMAZING GRACE.**



DAY TWO

JOHN 15:1-3

Have you ever seen a plant get pruned? It can be a little harsh. Branches that seem perfectly fine—and maybe even have some fruit on them—get cut right off. But anyone who knows gardening will tell you that pruning isn't about destroying the plant; it's about helping it to grow stronger and healthier to produce more fruit in the long run. Jesus used this exact image to explain our relationship with Him.

Jesus is the Vine, and we are the branches. And God is the ultimate gardener. This passage tells us two important things about how God works in our lives to purify us. He cuts off branches that don't bear fruit and He even prunes branches that do. So what does this mean? God will remove things in our lives that aren't helping us grow closer to Him, that are stopping us from bearing fruit. He removes these things so that we can fully thrive in Him.

But what about the branches that produce fruit? Even when we're trying our best and living for God, we might still have "dead ends" or areas that need refining. Maybe it's a tendency to gossip, a struggle with pride, or a habit of procrastination that keeps us from being fully effective for God. God, in His love, carefully prunes these areas, not to hurt us, but to purify us, so that we produce more of His character. The good news? Jesus says, "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you." Through faith in Him, we are already declared clean. But God's purification process continues throughout our lives. It's about letting Him work in us, even when the process is painful, and trusting that those painful snips are for our ultimate growth and fruitfulness, so our lives can truly reflect Him.

- **WHAT ARE SOME AREAS THAT MAY NEED "PRUNING" IN YOUR LIFE (HABITS, ATTITUDES, INFLUENCES)?**
- **HOW DOES TRUSTING GOD AS THE "GARDENER" CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON CHALLENGES IN YOUR LIFE?**

PRAY

HEAVENLY FATHER, THANK YOU FOR THE PRUNING
PROCESS IN MY LIFE. I KNOW IT'S FOR MY GOOD
EVEN WHEN IT'S PAINFUL. HELP ME TO BEAR MUCH
FRUIT FOR YOUR GLORY.



DAY THREE

HEBREWS 12:7-11

Nobody starts off being really good at a sport. It takes practice, conditioning, strengthening—and often a coach pushing you to get better. It can be frustrating and hard, but in time, you’re not only better, you’re stronger. And a good coach will push you to a potential that you may not even see in yourself.

Today’s passage can be a bit challenging because it talks about “discipline” and “suffering.” But it’s crucial to understand that God’s discipline is often about purification and training. Just like a good coach, God allows or brings certain difficulties into our lives, not to hurt us but to refine us, to remove the things that hold us back and help us grow.

Good parents discipline because they love their children and want them to learn right from wrong. God, our perfect Father, does it even better and with a perfect purpose—“so that we can share his holiness.” He’s working to make us more like Jesus, to develop godly character in us. This process can be painful in the moment, just like intense training is. It’s not fun to have our pride humbled, our selfishness exposed, or our comfort disrupted.

But when we allow God to purify us through these experiences, we become more righteous, more in line with His will, and experience a deep, lasting peace that isn’t dependent on our circumstances. Embracing God’s discipline means trusting His perfect love and His perfect plan to make us truly free and truly holy.

- **CAN YOU THINK BACK TO A TIME WHEN A DIFFICULT SITUATION HELPED YOU GROW OR CHANGED YOU FOR THE BETTER?**
- **WHAT’S ONE AREA OF YOUR LIFE WHERE YOU THINK GOD MIGHT BE TRYING TO “DISCIPLINE” OR REFINE YOU RIGHT NOW, AND HOW CAN YOU RESPOND BY SUBMITTING TO HIM?**

PRAY

**FATHER, THANK YOU FOR LOVING ME ENOUGH TO
REFINE ME. HELP ME TO ENDURE HARDSHIP WITH
FAITH, TRUSTING THAT YOU ARE WORKING FOR
MY GOOD.**



DAY FOUR

ROMANS 3:21-24

Do you ever feel like you have to earn your way into heaven? Like you need to be good enough or make up for certain sins? Well, it's impossible. We will never be good or pure enough on our own. But here's the good news—we don't have to be! Today's passage tells us that being "right with God"—being pure and acceptable in His eyes— isn't something we can achieve by following a bunch of rules or by our own efforts. It's a gift! Paul uses the word "righteousness," which means being declared just, holy, and innocent. We can't earn it because "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Every single one of us falls short of God's perfect standard.

So, how do we get this righteousness? It's given "through faith in Jesus Christ." We must believe that Jesus, through His death on the cross, paid the price for our sins. When we trust in Him, God declares us righteous, not because we've earned it, but "freely by his grace." Grace means undeserved favor. It's God giving us what we don't deserve because of His perfect love.

Following God, then, isn't about our efforts to purify ourselves to earn His love. It's about letting Him transform us by accepting the purification already provided through Jesus. It's about accepting His gift of grace and righteousness, which sets us free from the burden of trying to be perfect on our own—because we just can't. When we lean into this truth, our lives begin to reflect His purity, not because we're trying harder, but because we're receiving His life-changing gift.

- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ACCEPT GOD'S GRACE RATHER THAN TRYING TO EARN IT?**
- **KNOWING ALL HAVE SINNED, HOW DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU HEAR THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS IS "FREELY GIVEN" IN JESUS?**

PRAY

JESUS, THANK YOU FOR THE INCREDIBLE GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH YOU. I CONFESS THAT I OFTEN TRY TO EARN MY WAY TO YOU, BUT I RECEIVE YOUR GRACE WITH A GRATEFUL HEART.



DAY FIVE

TITUS 2:11-14

Have you ever gotten a gift that you weren't expecting—and maybe that you really didn't deserve? Maybe it was a cool new game or a chance to do something awesome—even though you hadn't really earned it. That feeling of undeserved kindness? That's a little like grace.

Titus 2:11-14 talks about something even bigger. This passage starts by saying God's grace—that undeserved kindness—has appeared. It's not hidden; it's right there, available to everyone, offering salvation. But here's the cool part: This grace doesn't just save us from something; it teaches us!

It teaches us to say “no” to things that aren't godly and to worldly desires that pull us away from God. This isn't about God being a downer or killing our vibe; it's about His grace empowering us to live a better, freer life. It teaches us to live “sensible, righteous, and godly” lives. This means making wise choices, doing what's right, and living in a way that honors God, even when it's tough.

Why does grace do all this? Because Jesus's sacrifice was for the purpose of freeing us from all sin and making us clean, setting us apart as His cherished possession, eager to actively pursue goodness. When you commit to following Jesus, His grace doesn't just forgive your past; it actively cleanses you from the inside out. This purification empowers you to be “eager to do good works”—to naturally want to make choices that honor God and bless others.

- **WHAT DO YOU THINK PURIFICATION LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICAL TERMS FOR STUDENTS TODAY?**
- **HOW CAN HAVING A HEART “EAGER TO DO GOOD WORKS” IMPACT YOUR FRIENDSHIPS, YOUR FAMILY, OR YOUR SCHOOL?**

PRAY

**LORD, CONTINUE TO PURIFY MY HEART AND MIND
BY YOUR SPIRIT. HELP ME TO BE EAGER TO DO WHAT
IS GOOD, REFLECTING YOUR LOVE AND TRUTH IN
EVERY PART OF MY LIFE.**