

The Gathering Growth Guide

The Big Oh! Week 1 // Give God your worst

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Malachi

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS WILL BEGIN AGAIN THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 15th. SIGN UPS ARE HAPPENING EACH SUNDAY AT THE CONNECTION DESK.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

This week we kicked off a brand new 4-week series called "The Big Oh!" that takes a look at what we should do when the plan of God is more shocking than safe. The part of God's plan that shocked each of us in week 1 is the reality that even though God loves us and we ruin his love, God still wants us to give him our worst because God is the best at repurposing trash into treasure. This week's Big Idea says it all: **giving God our worst frees us to receive his best.**

1. **How we RUIN God's love:** The prophet Malachi told his audience in the second verse the biggest truth of all: God loves us. But then he went on to show 3 ways that we ruin – or trash – the love and mercy of God. First, we ruin it in our message. God rebuked the priests and religious leaders for lowering his standard and not making holiness a priority. That led to the second and third ways that we ruin God's love: in our marriages and with our money. We live in a culture that holds onto its money longer than its spouses, and God called the people out on that. But God – unlike us – is merciful and calls us back to himself. He wants our worst so he can repurpose us into his best!
2. **How God REPURPOSES our lives:** There are 2 ways that God takes our worst and exchanges it for his best. The first way is one you and I may be able to guess, and that is at the cross. The message of the cross is what makes Christianity different from other religions and other self-help philosophies, because the cross stands as clear reminder that we can't fix ourselves. And while we're saved at the cross, we're changed in the church, and that's the second way God repurposes our lives. He plants us in a body of people who are also being repurposed and he makes a beautiful people out of us all!

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What was one helpful or troubling insight or principle from this week's message, if any?
- Do you like to be shocked or surprised? What kind of emotions do you experience when you are?
- Of the 3 ways that we ruin God's love – in our message, in our marriages, and with our money – which one hits the closest to home in your life?
- Read Malachi 3:8. How does seeing our resources as actually GOD'S resources help this verse make more sense? How would you react to being robbed? How does that help you understand what God is saying when it comes to how we handle HIS money?
- As bad as we've trashed God's love, he still promises to repurpose our lives at the cross and in the church. How does forgiveness at the cross and family in the church give us the parameters we need to change?
- Read Romans 5:20 to find out how God responds to our sin. How does this blow away the excuse that "I'm too bad for God?" How should we respond to such grace (see Romans 6:1-2)?