

God of Our Hearts

Scripture Reading — Malachi 1:8-9

“Now plead with God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?” says the Lord Almighty. — Malachi 1:9

God is not petty. He does not expect that we will ever come close to repaying him for what he has done for us. Yet God is not to be mocked either. The tone of today’s verses reminds us that God will not tolerate our poor treatment of him. If we are not willing to give him our best, we cannot expect him to accept our efforts.

Christianity can sometimes seem confusing. Our God is not concerned so much with what we do but why we do it. God looks deep into our hearts. He honors the smallest gift that was lovingly given. But he rejects the largest gifts that were given half-heartedly or out of a sense of obligation or fear.

This doesn’t mean that people with even the best intentions never do unkind things or -offer bad gifts. God needs to correct even our best intentions. But the correction he gives to a right heart is gentle and much easier to receive.

In contrast, when our heart is in the wrong place, correction comes with greater difficulty. The misguided heart will eventually have to choose between God and whatever else competes with him. There will be heartache over whichever side loses. But it’s far better that we eventually sacrifice the other attachments of our heart than that we reject God and later be rejected by him forever.

Prayer

Dear Father, in your love you did not spare your greatest treasure for us—your Son, Jesus. Yet our hearts are often divided between you and other things. Help us to be devoted to you alone. Amen.

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Written by Scott DeVries — <https://today.reframemedia.com/authors/scott-devries>

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