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1. Genuine.
  - a. Free from hypocrisy or pretense: sincere, authentic.<sup>1</sup>
  - b. Hypocrisy.
    - i. The English word comes from a Greek word that means the act of playing a part on the stage.
    - ii. To create a public impression at odds with one's real purpose or motivations.<sup>2</sup>
  - c. God is looking for genuine worshipers.
    - i. Jesus met a woman drawing water from a well in Samaria.
    - ii. She thought He was a prophet and asked Him about worship (Jesus revealed He was the Messiah).
    - iii. John 4:23: "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him."

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- d. God addresses Israel through Malachi about what was lacking in their worship.
  - i. Sincerity (worship had become routine)
  - ii. Truth (the priesthood had become corrupt).
  - iii. Commitment (divorce was widespread).
  - iv. Giving (they were neglecting their tithing).

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2. Sincerity.
  - a. "You can be sincere in your belief but also sincerely wrong." Unknown.
    - i. I could not find the source of that saying, but it is a common one I often hear in religious circles.
    - ii. Although the quote is accurate, it does not negate God's requirement for sincerity in our worship.
  - b. The Israelites had turned worship into mere habit.
    - i. Malachi 1:6–8: "A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, 'How have we despised your name?' By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, 'How have we polluted you?' By saying that the Lord's table may be despised. When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the Lord of hosts."
    - ii. The Israelites had stopped giving the best they had.
    - iii. They would just show up at the temple with an offering, often picking the worst of their flocks instead of the best.
      1. Cain did the same thing.
      2. Genesis 4:3–5: "In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their

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<sup>1</sup> Merriam-Webster, Inc. Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Arndt, William, Frederick W. Danker, Walter Bauer, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell.”

3. Cain showed up with any old offering, while Abel showed up with the firstborn of the flock.

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- c. “This is what we do on Sunday.”
  - i. What offering do we bring on Sunday (make no mistake, God requires us to bring an offering)?
  - ii. Do we show up out of habit?
    1. Habits are not necessarily bad.
    2. Only when we lose purpose and perform the habit for the habit’s sake does it become ‘polluted.’
  - iii. Romans 12:1–2: “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”
  - iv. The church doesn’t meet on the first day of the week to sing, pray, and listen to the preacher.
  - v. We meet to worship the Almighty God.
    1. Singing is worship, only if we sing as worship. Are we singing as worship?
    2. Praying is worship, only if we pray as worship. Are we praying as worship?
    3. Are we worshiping God through His word?
- d. Are we genuine (sincere) in our worship?

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3. Truth
  - a. “What is truth? Is truth unchanging laws? We both have truths. Are mine the same as yours?” Lyrics to ‘Trial before Pilate’ from Jesus Christ Superstar.
  - b. This lyric would seem to try and normalize a subjective truth.
    - i. Some truths do change.
      1. The grass is brown (truth).
      2. Six months from now, we can say, “The grass is green,” which will also be true.

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- c. Israel was changing the truth of God’s laws.
  - i. Malachi 2:4–7 “So shall you know that I have sent this command to you, that my covenant with Levi may stand, says the Lord of hosts. My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him. It was a covenant of fear, and he feared me. He stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.”
  - ii. God is rebuking the Levitical priesthood for changing God’s truth.
  - iii. Some truths do not change.
    1. “I am a human being.”

2. John 16:13: “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”
  3. John 17:17: “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”
  4. John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
- d. We cannot change God’s truth.
- i. Just as the Levitical priesthood changed God’s truth to fit their ideas, we also tried to make God’s truth subjective.
  - ii. We claim that times have changed, and God’s word must also change.
  - iii. We try to take subjective truths and twist God’s word to fit that subjective truth.
  - iv. A Facebook ‘preacher’ tried to twist God’s word concerning Jesus’ miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead.
    1. He said that Jesus was telling Lazarus to ‘come out’ as homosexual.
    2. We take society’s subjective truth of homosexuality (sexual immorality) and try to create an objective truth using God’s word.
    3. God’s word speaks quite a bit about sexual immorality since it was a common thing in the 1st century.
    4. Almost every list of sinful behaviors includes sexual immorality.
  - v. We must be honest with the text (the Bible).
    1. We cannot go looking to prove our stance on a subject.
    2. We must allow the Bible to speak and change our stance according to what God says.
    3. God’s truth has not changed from before the beginning of time till now (laws change, but truth does not).
    4. Instead of sacrificing animals and their fat portions to God, we are the sacrifice.
    5. The truth of sacrifice has not changed.

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4. My Messenger
- a. The meaning of the name Malachi is ‘my messenger.’
  - b. Malachi 3:1–4: “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the Lord. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.”

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- c. The one who is genuine in their worship will endure the day of His coming.
- d. The one who listens to and speaks the truth of God’s word will endure the day of His coming.