

Background/Context for Malachi 2:10-16

Malachi now announces the third disputation with a general description of Israel's unfaithfulness against one another, which profanes the covenant with God. Malachi then condemns two marital offenses: intermarriage with pagans and divorce based only on incompatibility. Twice Malachi says "guard yourselves in your Spirit" (vv. 15-16). Unfaithfulness in marriage often begins with wrong thoughts and unsound impulses centered in the mind.

- I. Your marriage impacts the church (Malachi 2:10-11). Matt highlighted in his sermon that the phrase "profane the covenant of God" referred to the Mosaic covenant where ALL the people agree to keep the commandments of the Lord. In verse 11 the people were called out by God for profaning the covenant in their marriage covenant.

What are the ways your marriage impacts the church?

How does divorce not only disrupt nuclear families, but also church families?

What are God's thoughts on divorce (read Matthew 5:32, 19:1-9; 1 Corinthians 7:10-17)?

- II. Your marriage impacts your relationship with God (Malachi 2:11-12). Here the faithfulness is taken a step further. It's now an abomination because the profaning is not just the covenant but the sanctuary of the Lord. The sanctuary is referring to the Temple, which was the physical representation of God's presence to bless His chosen people.

What specifically were they doing?

Why would God forbid intermarriage with surrounding nations?

How were they choosing these wives over God and more than that, to the exclusion of God?

Why would the apostle Paul say in 1 Corinthians 7:39 that loving the Lord is the #1 criterion for whom you choose to marry?

- III. Your marriage impacts your kids and the world (Malachi 2:13-15a). They are puzzled why God is not smiling on their religious activity. They had not learned the lesson that religious activity itself cannot please God. God then explains that the problem was that their hearts were far from Him.

The men were looking around at the foreign women and decided to divorce their wife in order to marry women of foreign gods. They were dishonoring God in two ways. How were they dishonoring God?

Both Ezra and Nehemiah speak of dealing with the same issue in Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 13:23-27. Read the passages and summarize your findings.

Marriage is a covenant, not a contract. What differentiates the two?

True or false: "My spouse is supposed to make me happy. If they don't, then I'm free to go find someone else." Explain your answer.

How we handle our marriage covenant has huge implications for our children. How is this true? How are families the building blocks of society?

- IV. Your marriage must be guarded at all costs (Malachi 2:15b-16). Divorce is never ideal but allowances are made "because of the hardness of your hearts" (Matthew 19:7).

What are precautions a spouse can take "to be on your guard" so that unfaithfulness will not occur?

Ten Passages to Pray for Your Marriage

Pray through the following ten passages for your marriage:

- Joshua 1:9
- Proverbs 24:3-4
- Psalm 1:1-3
- Psalm 51:10
- Song of Solomon 4:10
- Isaiah 62:5
- 1 Corinthians 14:4-8
- Ephesians 5:21-33
- Philippians 2:3-7
- Colossians 1:13-14