

A Credible Faith

Lesson 2

Malachi 2:10-16

June 13, 2021

Credibility Gap in Being Faithful to Our Mates

Introduction

As Christians, we are often under scrutiny by non-believers. They look at our actions, listen to our words, and notice when we behave in a way that does not reflect what they understand about Christianity. But they are not wrong in their scrutiny. While we are certainly not perfect beings and are sinners at heart, as Christians, we are called to a higher standard—we are called to love each other and behave in a way that reflects that love.

Unfortunately, our choices and actions always reflect what we really believe, and sometimes that causes us to lose credibility with non-believers. In the eyes of a non-believer, when a Christian chooses to divorce, they find it a reflection of that Christian's belief about marriage. But, in remaining faithful to our partner, both physically and emotionally, and choosing to stay married—except when it's a Biblically acceptable reason—we are reflecting the understanding that marriage is built on a foundation that God created.

Memory verse: "Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring. So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth."—Malachi 2:15

Pray and read Malachi 2:10-16. What questions or observations do you have about this passage?

What does the passage say?

1. Who created us, and is our Father? (Malachi 2:10)
2. How has Judah been unfaithful? (Malachi 2:11)
3. What will happen to the man who marries a woman who worships a foreign god? (Malachi 2:12)
4. What else does Judah do? Why? (Malachi 2:13)
5. What does the Lord witness? (Malachi 2:14a)
6. What has Judah done to the wife of his youth? (Malachi 2:14b)
7. How do we belong to God? What does God seek from us? (Malachi 2:15)
8. What is the man who divorces his wife doing to his wife? How should we protect our marriages? (Malachi 2:16)

What does the passage mean?

1. Marriage problems stand between a believer and God. What do we need to do in our marriages to be right with God? (Malachi 2:14; Matthew 5:23-24; Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Peter 3:7)

2. From Adam and Eve, God designed his people to be in union with other believers. How is dating and marrying a fellow believer obedience to God's will? (Deuteronomy 7:1-4; Proverbs 31:30; 1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14-16)

3. There are so many ways that a marriage can be harmed. How can we avoid worldly influences on our marriages? (Proverbs 2:6; Matthew 22:37; 1 Corinthians 10:30; Ephesians 5:10, 17)

4. “Even if marriages are made in heaven, man has to be responsible for the maintenance” (John Graham, *Reader’s Digest* [11/79], p. 157). What can we do to cultivate our marriages? (Song of Songs 8:7; Romans 12:10; 1 Corinthians 16:14; Ephesians 5:22, 28-29, 33; Colossians 3:19)

Applying the passage

1. All relationships have conflict—we are all sinners, after all. What conflicts in your relationships keep you from getting closer to God?

2. Think about your current relationship. What do you do to cultivate your relationship?

3. Write a prayer asking God to be a part of your relationships.