

***Malachi 2:11-12***  
***Tying the Knot With the Enemy's Daughter Part II***  
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***Introduction***

Last week we took a look at Malachi 2:11-12. If you remember, Malachi 2:11-12 finds itself in the larger context of Malachi 2:10-16. In this section God rails against his people for breaking faith with one another, for not being faithful to each other in their covenantal relationships. Ultimately, what we have noticed thus far is that our sins against each other, our faithlessness against each other, is ultimately faithlessness against God himself. For example, we saw in vs. 10 that the Israelite's faithlessness against each other was ultimately a profanation of the covenant that God had made with their fathers. Then what we found in vs. 11 is that the Israelites profaned the sanctuary of the temple of Yahweh by marrying foreign, idol-worshipping women against the commandment of the Lord found in Deuteronomy 7:1-6.

You will remember that last week we asked the question, "Why did God take marriage to foreign women so seriously?" After all, the consequences for marrying the daughter of a foreign God, according to Malachi 2:12, was ultimately excommunication, the Old Testament equivalent to church discipline. We took a hike through the Old Testament to show the dangerous effects of intermarriage on the nation of Israel. In essence, God had called his people, Israel, to be holy unto himself, to be a different and peculiar people. He wanted his people to represent him, his righteousness, and his glory to the world. God knew that if his people were to bind themselves to the people of the world, they would be more influenced by them than vice versa, they would end up adopting the idolatry of the nations surrounding them and all the filth associated with it, and in so doing they would debilitate themselves from being God's representatives to the world.

What we saw was that intermarriage was Satan's inroad to house of God. He weaseled his way into God's ranks and polluted both his people and his temple by enticing the men of Israel to bind themselves to his daughters through marriage. You might remember that we took a look at Solomon and his disobedience in marrying 700 wives and princesses and 300 concubines. What we saw was that Solomon's wives did influence him and his heart turned from the Lord, which set a precedent for all of the Kings that followed him and ultimately led to the complete pollution and destruction of Israel. Solomon had a dual allegiance and unfortunately his allegiance to his foreign women won out over against his allegiance to Yahweh. His desire to please his foreign, idol-worshipping wives won out over against his desire to please Yahweh.

This week we are going to apply the truth that we learned last week—we are going to apply what we learned from Israel's bad example. Israel evidenced a lack of faithfulness to each other and ultimately to God by binding themselves to the world and her people. God had set up safeguards to keep his people from conforming to the pattern of the world and they completely disregarded them, and the result was complete pollution and corruption.

My Mom has about 15 sayings that she used to say all the time. I remember being annoyed by them when I was younger. One of the things she used to say was, "Show me

your friends and I'll show your future.” Although this statement is quite quirky and not always true (like any good proverb), there is a huge element of truth in it. In essence, she was teaching me that I needed to be careful in regard to who I bound myself to. In this saying she was warning me against the power of influence. I think we can reword my mother's infamous quote to, “show me your spouse and I'll show you your future.”

### ***Malachi's NT Counterpart***

The command laid forth here by God in Malachi regarding marriage to the daughter of a foreign god does have a New Testament counterpart/parallel. The fact is that we New Testament believers are called to do the same thing that Israel was called to do; we are called to represent Christ, his righteousness, his glory, and his good news to the world. The world ought to look at our lives, our passions, our relationships, our families, and our treasures and see something of the glory of Jesus Christ in it. In much the same way that God called his people, Israel, to not bind themselves to the people and powers of the world through contracts, covenants, and binding agreements, Jesus calls us to the same thing in the New Testament. Observe 2 Corinthians 6:14-18:

*<sup>14</sup>Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? <sup>15</sup>What agreement does Christ have with Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup>And what agreement does God's sanctuary have with idols? For we are the sanctuary of the living God, as God said:*

*I will dwell among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people. <sup>17</sup>Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord; do not touch any unclean thing, and I will welcome you. <sup>18</sup>I will be a Father to you, and you will be sons and daughters to Me, says the Lord Almighty.*

Most scholars agree that being “*mismatched*” or “*unequally yoked* with unbelievers” is not most directly referring to marriage; rather, the context makes it quite clear that Paul is here referring to relationships with unconverted, idol-worshipping Gentiles. In the ancient world Corinth was a city of many gods, and the idol-worship in Corinth included much of the same vile and corrupt immorality that was associated with the idolatry spoken of in the Old Testament, and especially sexual perversion. The believers in Corinth were building relationships with these idol worshipping Gentiles by frequenting their idol temples with them and were being pulled away from Christianity in the process. Paul wrote them to warn them against being overly “yoked” with these unconverted, idol-worshipping Gentiles. His concern was that they had a dual allegiance, with Christ and with their unconverted, idol-worshipping Gentile friends, and it appeared that their allegiance to their Gentile, idol-worshipping friends was choking out their allegiance to Jesus.

Thus the main issue that Paul is dealing with here is having relationships with the world that vie for our allegiance to Christ. For some this can apply to business partnerships: how easy it is to bind yourself to an unbelieving business partner and the next you know you are feeling the pressure to engage in business practices which compromise the word of God all for the sake of your allegiance to your unconverted

partner. For others this can apply to family: some people will not think twice about compromising their allegiance to Jesus for the sake of their superior allegiance to their family. For others this can apply to a boyfriend, girlfriend, or a spouse: the desire to please your girlfriend, boyfriend, fiancé or spouse can be great, and many find themselves compromising their allegiance to Christ and substituting it with an allegiance for a lover. The question is this, do you have any relationships in your life that are vying for your allegiance? This is exactly what Solomon's problem was—his allegiance to Yahweh was compromised for the sake of a greater allegiance, his foreign, idol-worshipping wives. This is exactly the situation that the Corinthian believers were facing, their relationships with their Gentile, idol-worshipping friends were competing for preeminence in their lives. And what Paul is saying is that we must be careful to not bind ourselves to those who contradict our new life in Christ. Jesus simply will not settle for second place. He is either first or you are disobedient.

Many people incorrectly suggest that in this text Paul is primarily speaking against mixed marriages—a believer marrying an unbeliever. However, while I would suggest that Paul is not primarily warning the Corinthian believers against the danger of mixed marriages in this specific text, I would say that Paul is laying forth a general principle that would apply to marriage. Notice what Paul's primary concern is; Paul's primary concern here is not merely that the believers in Corinth are engaging in relationships with people and institutions with whom they have nothing in common, it is that they are binding themselves to people who actually contradict their new life in Christ. It would be like a Mexican with a prejudice against African Americans marrying an African American woman who has a prejudice against Mexicans. It is not just that the two are not compatible—it is not just that she likes to go hiking while he likes to go fishing, she likes to sip tea while he likes to play paintball—it is that they are completely contradictory, wholly opposed to each other.

The principle that Paul lays forth here is that Christians ought to be careful about how they to bind themselves to those who are opposed to Christ and his righteousness. This is not to suggest that we should not have relationships with unbelievers. Not at all! In fact, Jesus ate with the tax collectors and sinners and rebuked the Pharisees for not doing so themselves (Matthew 9:10-13).

*<sup>10</sup> While He was reclining at the table in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came as guests to eat with Jesus and His disciples. <sup>11</sup> When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" <sup>12</sup> But when He heard this, He said, "Those who are well don't need a doctor, but the sick do. <sup>13</sup> Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

On top of this, Paul encourages believers to make the most of their time when they are around unbelievers in Colossians 4:5-6. Notice what I said, I did not say that Christians need to limit their exposure to unbelievers. Paul is not here advocating a Monastic sort of life where we all go out and live in caves, or where we, like some of the Puritans, create separate societies for ourselves to guard ourselves against the stain of being in company with unbelievers. I said that Christians “ought to be careful” about how

they bind themselves to unbelievers. The problem with the believers in Corinth is that their relationships with these unconverted, idol-worshipping Gentiles were causing them to compromise their allegiance to Christ as their only Lord and Savior.

We need to be careful about how we bind ourselves to those who are not merely incompatible with us, but contradictory to us. We need to make sure that we are not binding ourselves to the people or institutions of this world in such a way that would compromise our relationship to Jesus through his word. This is clearly Paul's concern with the Corinthian believers. Notice the Old Testament passages that Paul uses to support and strengthen his plea and warning to these Corinthian believers. In the Old Testament these passages were directed to the Israelites, God's Old Testament people, when he was calling out to be different, separate, and distinct from all the other nations around them. God had called them to represent himself, his glory, and his righteousness to the nations, and thus he safeguarded them against being defiled by the filth of ancient idolatry by commanding them to not bind themselves to the idol-worshipping people of world. We see that this same commandment is carried forth here in 1 Corinthians 6. Look at vs. 16-17: since we are God's people we ought to 'come out from their midst and be separate.' What we see is that we are to be careful about how we bind ourselves to the people of this world because when we bind ourselves to the people of this world we run the risk of being more influenced by them than they are by us, we risk the possibility of having a competing allegiance. And what happens when they influence us more than they do us? We lose our ability to represent God, his righteousness, his glory, and his gospel effectively, and our greatest concern shifts from faithfulness to Christ through his word, to pleasing the one with whom we have bound ourselves to.

### ***To the Unmarried***

I especially want to get the attention of all of you who are not yet married, whether you be 5 or 70. I am assuming that the majority of you, yet not all of you, who are unmarried hope to be some day. You really need to consider the principle that Paul lays forth here. Would you not agree with me that marriage is the most intimate and binding human relationship on earth (an intimacy and bond perhaps only rivaled by our relationships with each other in the body of Christ—John 17:20-23)? In fact, Paul suggests that the husband and wife become 'one flesh' to such a degree that when a man mistreats his wife he is actually mistreating himself, because she became part of him when their marriage was consummated (Ephesians 5:28-33). What do you have in common with unbelievers? It does not matter how flighty the butterflies in your stomach might be when you are around her, nor how strong or deep the emotional attachment, believers and unbelievers are, as Paul suggests, not just like bright light and dim light, they are polar, yea contradictory, opposites, like light and darkness. Would it not be at least some sort of a contradiction for you to enter into life's most intimate and binding relationship, to become one flesh, with a person with whom you are not merely incompatible, but with a person who is dialectically opposed to the very foundation of your life, Jesus Christ.

Consider the following: (1) while you see that you are not your own—you see Jesus as the King of your life (1 Cor 6:19-20), unbelievers consider themselves to be their own autonomous boss; (2) while your controlling aim in life is to bring glory to God (1 Cor 10:31), an unbeliever has no concern for the glory of God; (3) while you love God

(Matthew 22:36-37), an unbeliever is an enemy of God (Romans 5:10); (4) while you consider yourself an alien, a sojourner, a passerby, a vacationer, a temporary resident on this earth because heaven is your true home (Hebrews 11; 1 Peter 1:1), an unbeliever considers this world to be their home; (5) while you use all of your energy to store up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21), an unbeliever strives to store up treasures on this earth; (6) while your goal as a parent is to raise your children in the fear of the Lord guided by the word of God alone (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:4), an unbeliever's goal is to raise their children in a way that will make them acceptable and successful in the eyes of the world whether it goes against God's word or not.

*<sup>14</sup>Do not be mismatched with unbelievers. For what partnership is there between righteousness and lawlessness? Or what fellowship does light have with darkness? <sup>15</sup>What agreement does Christ have with Belial? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? (2 Corinthians 6:14-15)*

Look with me quickly at 1 Corinthians 7:39

*A wife is bound as long as her husband is living. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants—only in the Lord.*

Notice here that Paul is speaking about widows, those whose husbands have died. He suggests to widows that they should feel the freedom to marry upon the death of their husband, but only if the person they want to marry is 'in the Lord.' Paul is suggesting that she is free to remarry providing the fact that her lover is a believer. The logical conclusion here is that Paul is opposed to believers marrying unbelievers.

### **Making a Commitment**

Listen to me. I know from experience what life is like as a single man. Kristal and I will be celebrating our third wedding anniversary this coming May and we only knew each other one week shy of year when we got married, thus it was only four years ago when I was in your shoes. I remember being single quite well. The fact is that God has created us humans to crave intimacy and companionship. Remember what God said after creating man, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Genesis 2:18). I get the feeling that God looked down at Adam and really said, "Wow, this is not good. I had better create him a helper real quick." It reminds me of how Kristal responds when she hears that I am changing one of James' poopy diapers, "Ohh, that's not good. I had better get in there before he gets it everywhere." God really saw that man needed someone, a helper, a companion, a mate, a lover. God has created us to need each other. He has created with desires and passions that are meant to be fulfilled by each other. He has not intended for us to be alone and he has given us desires and cravings for intimacy and companionship that can only be fulfilled by each other.

Paul speaks about this craving primary for sexual intimacy in 1 Corinthians 7, he calls it "burning." There really were three things that we as humans, created by God, crave: commitment, intimacy, and companionship. I can remember myself desiring someone to be with, someone who was going to commit their entire life to me, someone who was going to be there with me and for me every night when I got home from work,

school, or wherever I was. In essence, I craved a life-time buddy, someone who was always going to be there.

Why am I telling you this? Because, if you do things God's way (provided that he has not called you to be single) you will be there some day, if you are not already there right now. And you will see your friends with their girlfriends and boyfriends, and before long you will find yourself attending wedding after wedding after wedding. No lie, from the year 2000-2005 I was a groomsman in 10 weddings, an usher in 1, and I officiated another. When you see your friends get married you will say in your heart, "I want that," and your desires for companionship and intimacy will sky rocket. And if you do not commit to the Lord beforehand to marry "only in the Lord," the desires are too strong, you *will* compromise. At this point I would ask each and every unmarried believer here this morning to make a commitment to the Lord that you will only marry 'in the Lord.'

I can attest to this fact. I got my undergraduate degree at a smaller Christian liberal-arts college. About 70% of the people on campus identified themselves as Christians. The other 30% were either agnostic, atheistic, Jewish, or they just didn't give a hoot. While I was at this college I knew quite a few believers who would do what we called "Missionary Dating." Both girls and guys would do it. A young guy would become fond of an unbeliever in one of his classes and he would begin dating her, regardless of the fact that she was unconverted. And because they had not made a strong commitment to marry 'only in the Lord,' the desire for companionship and fulfillment attached with mutual affection led them to compromise their convictions.

By the way, you have no business dating anyone if you have no intention on marrying that person. As Christians we ought to be completely against recreational dating—the risks are simply too high, it is like playing Russian roulette, putting yourself in the path way of . If the goal of dating is ultimately to commit yourself to that person in marriage, and you will only marry 'in the Lord,' you ought to commit to the Lord that you will only date 'in the Lord' as well.

### *Worldly Criteria*

One of the things that I have noticed about many professing Christians is that one of the reasons why they compromise in dating or marrying unconverted men or women is because they have completely adopted the world's criteria for picking a wife or husband. The question is, "What are your primarily looking for in a spouse?" I have compiled what I have noticed to be the world's primary criteria for choosing a spouse (or girlfriend or boyfriend). The average unconverted guy looks for the following qualities in a woman: beauty—she must have a nice figure (this is usually at the top of the list), career (how much money is she going to make), personality (she has to be the life of the party), and she must stroke the ego. The average girl looks for the following qualities in a guy: he must be 100% manly and yet 100% gentle, he must be a hunk with a hot bod, he must make good money, and he must himself had better have a good personality. Notice the criteria here, almost all of the things listed deal with externals. This is not to say that it is wrong for a guy to desire a good looking woman, in fact, I would suggest rethinking a wedding if you are not attracted to the man or woman you are going to marry.

While I would not question the validity of the criteria laid forth above, we must assert the fact that these things should not be your primary criteria for deciding who you are going to marry (and thus date). What should you look for? Turn with me to the book

of Proverbs. The book of Proverbs was written by Solomon to, most likely, his son. Solomon was King of Israel and he knew that his son was going to take his throne and he wanted to pass to his son all of the nuggets of wisdom which God had blessed him with that he might have a successful rule. One of the largest themes of the book of Proverbs actually is what to look for in a wife. Remember from last week, Solomon had 700 wives and princesses and 300 concubines. Surely Solomon knew from first hand experience the importance of choosing the right woman to marry. I believe that Solomon wrote a great deal of these proverbs to his son pleading with him to not make the same mistakes that he made. Solomon knew the tragedy of binding himself to wrong women, and very well could have provided these Proverbs to help his son steer clear of the mistakes he made.

Just look with me at a few of the proverbs which speak about women. First of all Solomon pleads with his son in Proverbs 7 and 9:13-18 to not follow after the harlot, the one who woman who entices you to give yourself to her sexually. What we see from Proverbs 7 is that being lured in by the harlot leads to destruction (Proverbs 7:20-27). In other words, steer clear of sensuality. Solomon goes on and in 18:22 he says,

*A man who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.*

Thus, Solomon encourages his son to find a wife. However, he does give hefty warnings about picking the wrong kind of wife. Look with me at Proverbs 12:4 and 19:13-14

*A capable wife is her husband's crown, but a wife who causes shame is like rotteness in his bones. (Proverbs 12:4)*

This verse has everything to do with the moral purity of a wife. In other words, you are to look for a woman who has excellent character.

*A foolish son is his father's ruin, and a wife's nagging is an endless dripping. <sup>14</sup> A house and wealth are inherited from fathers, but a sensible wife is from the LORD. (19:13-14)*

“A wife’s nagging” refers more to strife and quarrels than to a wife who simply annoys you through the roof because she won’t let you think for yourself. It has to do with a woman, and I am sure that we can all think of some examples in our head, who does not know how to get along with anyone—a woman who is always at odds with at least someone. This is why other translators translate it as ‘quarrelsome wife’ instead of ‘wife’s nagging.’

Solomon’s teaching regarding women comes to a climax in Proverbs 31. Generally, Proverbs 31 is addressed and applied to women, because in this chapter the author lays forth a description of an ideal, godly woman. However, I would suggest that the primary purpose of Proverbs 31 is not to provide women a standard to attain (although that is a fine way of dealing with Proverbs 31), rather it is the climax of the book of Proverbs. Here we find the author laying forth what to ultimately look for in a wife. Take notice how this section begins.

*Who can find a capable wife? She is far more precious than jewels.  
The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will not lack anything good.  
(Proverbs 31:10-11)*

The author then goes on and describes this woman to be an excellent manager of her own house, a teacher of her kids, and productive member of society. Then we get to the climax in vs. 30. What we find in this verse is the foundation of all noble and godly living, the fear of the Lord. What we find here is the foundational quality to look for in a wife.

*<sup>30</sup> Charm is deceptive and beauty is fleeting, but a woman who fears the LORD will be praised.*

In essence Solomon is pleading with his son to not be misled by the enticement of sensuality and physical beauty. He is suggesting that the pleasure that fleeting beauty may bring you is deceptive. He then contrasts the charming and beautiful with the “woman who fears the Lord.” It is not that the woman who fears the Lord is not beautiful, it is just that her beauty is not based on outward adornment, rather her beauty flows from the fear of the Lord. This really is the greatest criteria in choosing a woman or a man. In other words, the Proverbs 31 woman was not who she was because she tried hard; rather, she was who she was because she feared the Lord. Do not base your criteria on externals, because externals are fleeting and deceitful, base your criteria on whether or not this or that person fears the Lord.

Let me lay forth for you the primary things that I looked for, the primary criteria I used when discerning who the Lord would have me to marry. There are four and I will lay each forth in the form of a question. (1) Is this person a Christian, does she fear the Lord, is Christ her all in all? To compromise on this is a sin. Point blank, if Jesus is not her all in all, you have no business going on even one date with her, and I will never even think of asking a girl on a date unless I already know that Jesus is her all in all.

(2) Is this person a humble repenter? The fact is that your spouse will sin against you and fail you no matter what. I am not saying that your spouse will necessarily have an affair, but your spouse will wrong you in the course of your marriage. When I was looking for a spouse I knew that this was a reality, there is no getting around it. And I knew it would be ridiculous to look for a perfect girl, someone who would never wrong me, mistreat me, or sin against me in whatever way, so I decided that consider the next best thing. I came to the conclusion that the next best thing to perfect girl would be a girl who couldn't live with herself unless she strove to love others as Jesus loves her. There are so many girls and guys out there who say they love Jesus but then give little care to others. There are many girls and guys out there who are unapproachable about their sin. If you confront them about a matter they simply justify their actions and get angry. They are too proud to consider that they might be wrong. I knew that life with a proud, unrepentant woman would have been miserable.

(3) Can this follow me as I seek to lead our family according to God's word? For women: is this the sort of man that you can follow? There are so many women out there who have a passion for Jesus, who have no problem taking constructive criticism, but at the same time they have an authority complex. I can remember a time or two while at

college when one of my friends would ask me to consider this or that girl on campus because of her passion for God, and I would shot them down because of an evident authority complex in her life—I simply could not imagine her submitting to me as I lovingly submit to Christ. It is not that men should Lord authority over their wives like radical Muslims, however as soon as the wife refuses to follow the lead of her husband the structure and organization of the house falls apart. Imagine if there were not a chain of command in the army—if Generals suddenly became one with Privates. There would be complete chaos and confusion. Why, because there would be no distinct roles or chain of command. The same thing happens in the family when men and women do not fulfill their God-given roles.

I just want to list a few extra things for you to consider about the thought of marrying an unbeliever. (1) An unbeliever, being devoid of the Spirit, cannot love you with the love of Christ. It is not that they might not want to; it is that they are incapable of it. Only one of God's Spirit-filled children can extend to you the grace that they have been given in Christ. (2) If you love your future kids you will not marry an unbeliever. Do you want your kids to have a mommy and a daddy who will teach them the word of God, and exemplify for them the joy of knowing Jesus? (3) What we are seeing is that covenant faithfulness in our relationships with each other ultimately comes from our love and fear of God. The Israelites failed to fear God's word and they failed to love God and thus they were slack about the heart of the covenant which God made with them (to love the Lord your God and to love your neighbor as yourself). When you marry someone who does not first and foremost fear and love God, the whole foundation of your marriage is immediately put into question. A commitment which is not based upon a superior commitment to Jesus Christ is a fickle commitment; a love which does not flow out of a superior love to Jesus Christ is a watered down love. An unbeliever's love for you flows forth from their own depraved heart, while a believer's love for you is the result of the overflow of their love for Christ and Christ's love for them. Thus, marrying an unbeliever is about the most foolish decision that a Christian can make.

### ***Conclusion***

My friends, I have seen so many young men and women compromise their convictions and their standards. Some of them, just like the Israelites, fell into the dirt of their boyfriend or girlfriend's sin. Others ended up getting married and continue struggle to this day. Without a doubt, because God is the God of redemption, he has taken some of these unbiblical marriages and turned them around for the good, but we must remember that the ends never justify the means.

God calls us to be separate, distinct, and different from the Godless people of this world. We are warned not just in the book of Malachi of the dangers of binding ourselves too closely with unbelievers but also in 2 Corinthians 6. We need to not bind ourselves to unbelievers in such a way that compromises our sole allegiance to Jesus Christ. Many times there is a tendency to think that you are above influence, but you are not. Your pride will be your downfall. So many professing Christians have adopted the world's criteria for who to marry and have ended up binding themselves in life's most intimate relationship, marriage, to those who are diabolically opposed to the very foundation of their new life in Christ. They have bound themselves to and started families with those who have no desire or intention on raising their kids in the admonition of the Lord, and

who are completely incapable of loving as Jesus loved. The warning of Malachi stands just as much today as it did then.

Beware of binding yourself to anyone in such a way that will vie for your sole allegiance to Jesus Christ. You want to bind yourself to one who will encourage your sole allegiance to Jesus Christ, to one who knows that your love for them will only abound all the more when it is the result of the overflow of your love and allegiance to Jesus Christ.