

What does God expect of spiritual leaders?

- *that they set their hearts to honor God*
- *reverence, revering God and standing in awe of His name*
- *true instruction and nothing false coming from his lips*
- *walk with God in peace and uprightness*
- *turn people from their sin*
- *should speak to preserve knowledge and give instruction*
- *behave as a messenger of the Lord*

How were they falling short?

- *did not listen to God*
- *did not set their hearts to honor God*
- *turned from the way*
- *by their teaching had caused many to stumble*
- *had violated the covenant*
- *have not followed God's way*
- *have shown partiality in matters of the law*

What judgment did God pass upon them?

- *I will send a curse upon you and curse your blessings*
- *I will rebuke your descendants*
- *I will spread on your faces the offal from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it*
- *I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people*



Faith at Home

Read Malachi 2:1-3 to your family. Write on a sheet of paper: "Have I set my heart to honor God?" Ask each family member to ask himself or herself that question and think about it for a few minutes. Then ask them to share their thoughts with the family.

Teacher's Toolbox

*Getting your class into God's Word
and God's Word into your class*

ExcitingBibleStudy.com

Bible Series

Malachi 2

May 24, 2015

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HOW TO USE TEACHER'S TOOLBOX: Make a four-page folded teacher's leaflet from the first two sheets by printing two-sided (or by putting the blank sides together). The other two sheets are for duplicating, displaying, distributing, or otherwise using as called for in the lesson plan.



Faith at Home – A specific application of today's Bible passage to family life, to be used for individual reflection, family discussion, or class activity.



Getting Started

Personal sharing, brainstorming

- Ask learners to think of a religious leader they know personally who has had a positive spiritual impact on their life. It can be someone in their church now or someone they have looked to for spiritual leadership in the past. It can be a professional minister such as a pastor, missionary or church staff member, or a lay religious leader such as a Sunday School teacher or deacon.
- Let two or three volunteers tell briefly who they thought of and how that person affected their lives.
- **What are the qualifications we look for in a religious leader, such as a pastor, evangelist or preacher? If we were to begin today looking for a pastor or staff member for our church, what might be some of the qualifications we would list in the job description? What might be some of the unwritten qualities we would look for?** As members

brainstorm, have someone write their responses on the chalkboard. They may mention things such as education, experience, denominational background, age, looks, personality, leadership ability, doctrinal positions, spiritual walk with Christ, etc.

● **Today we will see that there are some specific things that God expects of those who serve Him as spiritual leaders of His people. We may find that some of the things we have mentioned are not necessarily on God's list.**

Exploring God's Word

Book outline

- Display Item 3, which lists five problem areas or shortcomings apparent among the Jewish people to whom Malachi prophesied.
- **These were spiritual shortcomings among the people in Malachi's day, and can also be found among God's people today. Chapter 2 deals with two of these problem areas: unworthy leaders and unhealthy marriages.**
- Circle or highlight those two points of the book outline.

Charting a passage

- Give each person a pencil and a copy of the chart on page 4, but without the information given in italics (duplicate Item 1).
- Have someone read aloud Malachi 2:1.
- **After issuing a rebuke for unacceptable worship in chapter 1, Malachi turned his attention from the people to the priests. If there was a problem with the**

people, it originated in the leadership. The priests, the spiritual leaders, were the ones responsible for telling the people God's truth and holding them accountable. If the people were offering unacceptable worship, then it must be because of unworthy leaders. This is the second problem area identified in this oracle.

- Have someone read aloud Malachi 2:2.
- **What did God point out as the main problem the priests had? (they had not set their heart to honor God)**
- **This is the number one qualification of spiritual leaders from God's point of view, that they set their heart to honor God. Write that in the top section of your chart.**
- **Now let's listen to this entire section about unworthy leaders, listening for information that we can use to complete the chart: God's expectations of leaders, how they were falling short, and what judgment they faced. Have someone read aloud Malachi 2:1-9.**

- Have learners get into groups of two or three to fill in the chart with information from the passage. After five minutes, lead them to share their findings with the whole class.

Summarizing a passage

- **In Malachi 2:10-16, the prophet points out two problem areas related to marriage: marrying the wrong person and divorcing the right person. Although he is speaking directly to men because women didn't have much say in marriage or divorce, today the teaching is applicable to both men and women in our society.**
- Have someone read aloud Malachi 2:10-12.
- **God wanted His people to marry each other, rather than going outside and marrying people who did not honor the Lord with their hearts. When the Jewish men married women who worshiped false gods, Malachi said they were breaking faith with their Heavenly Father and with one another. Some who did this continued to live as Jews, bringing offerings and sacrifices. But Malachi said that was not**

Wrapping It Up

- **God has high expectations of those who serve as spiritual leaders both at church and at home. Lead the class in prayer.**

acceptable. Those who married the wrong person, one who did not acknowledge Jehovah as the one true God, should be cut off from their people.

- If you teach single adults, ask them to discuss the implications of that passage for believers today.
- **In Malachi 2:13-16, the prophet focuses on divorcing the right person. Have someone read the passage aloud.**
- **The right person is the one to whom you are married now. Many people have experienced the pain of divorce in the past, but we need to hear the prophet speaking not about a previous marriage but about the marriage covenant that we are in right now. We can't un-end a previous marriage, but we can and must renew our commitment to be faithful to the marriage in which we find ourselves today.**

Making It Personal

Self-evaluation

- Give each a copy of Item 2. Allow two minutes for them to meditate on the sheet. Do not ask them to share.

What does God expect of spiritual leaders?

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How were they falling short?

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What judgment did God pass upon them?

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Self-Evaluation

Being a worthy leader

- Am I putting myself into position so that God could use me as a leader?
- Have I set my heart to honor God?
- Am I listening to God?
- Do I revere God and stand in awe of His name?
- Do I tell the truth about what God's Word says?
- Do I walk in peace and uprightness with God?
- Do I turn other people away from sin?

Having a healthy marriage

- If single, am I limiting my choice of a future spouse to someone who is a believer and honors God?
- If married, am I committed to keeping my marriage covenant with my current spouse, working through problems and difficulties rather than breaking the promises I made?
- Am I guarding my spirit, being careful not to break faith with my marriage partner (or future marriage partner)?

Spiritual Shortcomings

I. Unacceptable Worship

(Malachi 1:6- 14)

II. Unworthy Leaders

(Malachi 2:1-9)

III. Unhealthy Marriages

(Malachi 2:13-16)

IV. Unfaithful Giving

(Malachi 3:8-12)

V. Uncommitted Service

(Malachi 3:13-18)