

# The Minor Profits - Malachi Chapter 02

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Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, thank you for joining us this morning. You realize that at this date, the month of November is already a third over. And with that, I would ask you to turn to Malachi chapter 2, and we will continue our exposition of the Minor Prophets. We are closing in on the Minor Prophets with Malachi being the last. And we pointed out to you in our previous session that it's a little bit of an unusual book in the way he presents the material, because Malachi is actually taking two parts. He's taking the role of being the spokesperson for God, and he's also taking the role of being the spokesperson for the nation to whom he is speaking, because he knows their attitude, he knows their response, he knows how his claim is going to come across to them, and he sets it forth. And you find that in verse 2 of chapter 1, I have loved you, says the Lord, but you say, that is, you people of Israel say, how have you loved us?

In other words, the demand from these people is that God prove himself to them, and they are charging him with a lack of love. How have you loved us? Really? You've loved us? Oh, well, convince me of that.

What's the evidence? And of course, he goes on to give the evidence. We find that motif not only in verse 2, but in verse 6, and in verse 7, and for the fourth time, in verse 17 of chapter 2, and it is found for the fifth time in verse 7 of chapter 3, the sixth time in verse 8 of chapter 3, and the seventh time in verse 13 of chapter 3. So that motif continues all throughout, and you need to keep in mind that it is an interrogatory that Malachi is using. He's interrogating, as it were, and he is then repeating what he knows their answer is to this question. So it makes a rather fascinating unfolding of the way this is presented. In chapter 2, he's going to address the clergy. There is room, of course, here for a lot of application because we have clergy today. In Malachi's day, they were not referred to as the clergy so much as the priesthood, and these were, of course, descendants of Levi through Aaron, and they constituted a special class, and we'll look at that in just a little bit. But I want you to look at the very beginning of it in verse 1 of chapter 2, and now this commandment is for you, O priests.

Here is a relatively speaking layperson who is addressing the professionals. This is a layman, Malachi, addressing the priests, and he is taking them to task. He says, What does it mean to take something to heart?

It means you get it, and you not only get it, you are willing to do something about it. This is nothing more than an expression for their lack of seriousness of purpose. It is a spiritual malady that has always impacted the clergy, and it then filters on down to the laity because as the clergy go, so go the laity. The rot starts at the top, and it filters down. It has always been that way. It was that way with Israel. It's that way today. We have issues in our country that we've been dealing with now for, well, for a long time. I mean a long time. This goes back to the 1920s when we were, as a nation, severely impacted by the German higher criticism that came over, and the neo-orthodoxy and so on, and the re-examining of the Bible in such a way as to question its authority and what it requires of us, etc., and there was a big split. Big split took place, well, you're familiar with the one that took place in the 1500s with Martin Luther and the Roman Catholics, and Protestants had their own split because there is the cleavage in Christendom and Protestantism over the issue of modernism, and it always comes down to the same thing. Guys, never forget this. The issue is authority.

[ 5 : 35 ] Always has been, always will be. That's the issue. What or whom do you accept as your authority for what you believe about anything? Most people, most people accept themselves and their own estimation as the authority. I've given you in the past the three sources from which authority comes, and you've got to pick one of three. There's only three. All information, all authority issues from yourself, human authority, which is what most of us rely on. Most of us trust our own wisdom and our own concepts and our own assessment more than we do anything or anyone else.

And secondly, the only other possible authority is satanic. But he's got a pretty bad track record, and when he's described as a liar from the beginning who spoke not the truth, he's not one to take your authority from. And the third authority is God, the scriptures. Those are the only three possibilities.

So what you believe emanates from one of those three. And for the believer who is serious about it, of course, our authority is the Lord. And the problem that these people have that Malachi is writing to is authority. The problem that Eve had when she was confronted with the serpent was authority. Am I going to listen to the authority that gave us life? Or am I going to listen to this new person who has something else?

For God knows that if you eat of it, you will be like God. And in her innocence, of course, she was a pushover for Satan. And she transferred, without even thinking about it, she transferred her authority from God the Creator to Satan the creature, without even realizing what she had done. She was duped. She was deceived.

And of course, it cost everything. And that's what we're dealing with today, the consequences of that. So, what, Joe? Real quick, that's what the deceiver, the devil does all the time. He makes things look so good and this is right.

[ 8 : 16 ] He makes things look, that's what you should do. That's why he is so influential. He specializes, yeah, he specializes in it. He's a deceiver. And deception is when you cause people to think that things are other than they are.

That's always the basis of the lie and of deception. It doesn't matter if you're talking about religion, or politics, or money, or whatever. Deception works in every facet, in every area of life.

And when people are deceived, they don't have the information, they don't have the accurate information they need to process it and then reach a conclusion.

Because they are processing erroneous information. And then their conclusion is going to be erroneous. And then when they act on their conclusion, it's disaster.

And this is what the world has been dealing with ever since Genesis chapter 3. And Malachi recognizes that here. These people, to whom he is writing, constitute the, what we would say, the clergy or the priesthood of that day.

[ 9 : 24 ] And he says, behold, in verse 3, I am going to rebuke your offspring, and will spread refuse on your faces, the refuse of your feasts, and you will be taken away with it.

This is pretty nasty stuff. And this feast, etc., has to do with the provision that was given them by the people, by the other 11 tribes to support and sustain the tribe of Levi.

Continuing on, he says, Then you will know that I have sent this commandment to you, that my covenant may continue with Levi, says the Lord of hosts.

What's that all about? Levi is the priestly tribe. Levi is one of the twelve sons of Jacob. And Jacob, Levi, is designated as the priestly tribe.

And from the time of Levi on, well, actually, it's out of Levi, but the priesthood as such isn't actually established until you come to Exodus 20, with the law of Moses that is given.

[ 10 : 40 ] And here it is the Levites that are charged with the responsibility of being the priestly tribe, ministering to the other 11 tribes.

Well, let's take a little look. I don't want to spend too much time here, but it is important. So, let's go back, first of all, if we may, to keep your place here and come back to Numbers chapter 3 and verse 45.

Way back to the giving of the law. Numbers chapter 3. Everybody's got it but me.

Pages stick together. Numbers 3 and verse 45. Take the Levites.

Instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites, and the Levites shall be mine. I am the Lord.

[ 11 : 56 ] Now, it doesn't mean that the rest of the people were not the Lord's either, also, but, of course, they were. But he is designating a special kind of responsibility for the Levites.

They are going to have a particular accountability to the Lord, and they're going to receive particular provisions. You see, when they come into the land, and God divides up the land among all of the tribes, Levi doesn't get any land.

They're completely left out. They get no real estate at all. It's divided up among the other 11 tribes. And Levi has a special occupation for the service in the temple and caring for the material needs.

They are going to serve in the function of the priest, offer the sacrifices, be in charge of the animals, inspecting the animals, the whole nine yards. So they'll have no real estate. They'll have no property.

They've got no land to till. They've got no income from it. They've got no land for cattle to graze on. So they are dependent upon the other 11 tribes to provide for them.

[ 13 : 06 ] And that's the basis for the tithe. God isn't requiring the tithe because he needs the money. He's requiring the tithe to support and sustain the priesthood, the temple, and everything in connection with that, because these people will not have a gainful employment like the other people will have.

They're not going to be farmers and ranchers and herders and so on. So they need to be taken care of because they'll have no source of income other than what the people provide for them. And this is why, principally, they are to bring the tithes and offerings into the storehouse.

And the storehouse, of course, was the temple. And then it was divided up the animals. You know when they sacrificed the animals? And the priest was in charge of that, and they cut up the animals, and they burnt the animals, and the offering and everything.

That meat, that animal meat, wasn't wasted. And it wasn't burned up. It fed the Levites. That was their source of food, among other things, because the people were to bring the tithe of their barley, their grain, their crops, their grapes, their fruit, all the rest of it.

So what we've got here is a kind of built-in, if for lack of a better term, because it communicates, and you know what I'm talking about. But what we've got here is a kind of built-in welfare system for the priestly tribe.

[ 14 : 29 ] This was how they were supposed to function. And in Numbers chapter 3 and verse 45, Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel and the cattle of the Levites, and the Levites shall be mine.

I am the Lord. And then there is yet another reference, and it's too in Numbers chapter 25 and verse 12. Well, we're nearby.

Chapter 25, verse 12. Therefore say, Behold, I give him my covenant. Well, let's begin with verse 10.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned away my wrath from the sons of Israel, in that he was jealous with my jealousy among them, so that I did not destroy the sons of Israel in my jealousy.

And we don't tend to think of God as being jealous, but he is. God is jealous for his people in the same way that you are jealous for your wife. And it's a legitimate jealousy.

[ 15 : 40 ] It is God simply saying that he has made special favor of Israel, bestowed special honor upon them. Israel, he told Amos in chapter 3, Israel, you only, you only, of all the nations of the earth have I chosen.

So that means Israel has a special relationship and special responsibilities to the Lord. But, they already signed on for this. The Lord told them, if you do thus and so, and thus and so, and thus and so, and the people said, you tell the Lord all that he has spoken, we will do.

And then, the covenant was signed, and they entered into a special kind of contract. Now, the problem is, Israel is violating the contract, repeatedly. And you know what?

Israel, and the present generation of Israel, is still in disobedience to that contract. And they are still a people set aside by God, who one day will be recipients of that promise fulfilled, because even though Israel did not keep their word, God keeps his.

And boy, we can really be thankful for that. What, Joe? And these, the Jews themselves got very jealous, and they are jealous, when God turned to the Gentiles, to us.

[ 17 : 02 ] It's true. They couldn't stand that hardly. They got so jealous. They did. Had a taste of their own medicine. Yeah, absolutely. So here, where am I?

And Genesis... You were in Numbers 25. Numbers 25. Numbers 25. Thank you.

Yeah, Numbers 25. Verse 13. Verse 13. Therefore, verse 12, Behold, I give him my covenant of peace.

And this is the establishment of the covenant that he's talking about in Malachi. And it shall be for him and his descendants after him, a covenant of a perpetual priesthood, because he was jealous for his God, and made atonement for the sons of Israel.

On what basis does God claim to be jealous? And how can we charge the Most High with jealousy when we tend to look upon it as a negative, as a vice, not a virtue?

[ 18 : 18 ] And we've already talked about your jealousy for your mate, which is certainly legitimate. But God's big beef, if I may call it that, is idolatry.

That first commandment, you shall have no other gods before me. Why not? Because there are no other gods before me.

And to the extent that you dabble in that, you are dabbling in unreality. And if God is anything, He is a God of what is real.

And what is not real is false. It belongs to the lie. God hates everything having to do with untruth. That's the whole rubbing factor about idolatry.

Don. Idolatry, in our definition today, does not mean an idol. It means money, power, whatever. So actually, it carries on.

[ 19 : 24 ] Good point. Good point. I guess we would consider ourselves more sophisticated idolaters. Yeah. More sophisticated idolaters.

Our idolatry, our idolatry, can be our mate. Our kids.

Our 401k. Our car. Can you imagine somebody being in a worshipful kind of position?

Or? Fishing. Oh. Well, listen. Moving right along.

Why did you look here when you said that? What about woodworking? What about woodworking? Well, like I said, moving right along.

[ 20 : 26 ] Give us a break. Doesn't jealousy also show great love on that side? In other words, God so loved, that's when you get jealous is when you so love something or someone.

Right. And then they turn from you or you get jealous or somebody else comes in. The betrayal. Love is there too. The betrayal. The Lord says, the Lord says, look to Israel. He said, I betrothed you to me as a mate, as a wife.

And I was your husband. And you've played the harlot. You've gone astray on me. You've gone after other lovers. After all I've done for you, beginning with Egypt, the Dead Sea, water from the rock, manna from heaven, all the rest, and you turn your back.

And the Lord uses a prophet that we've already studied, Hosea, to describe that. And when he had Hosea go and marry Gomer, she was already an adulteress.

She'd already had illegitimate children. And he did that because that was the picture of his relationship to Israel, that they had betrayed him.

[ 21 : 40 ] And it was, I don't know, I can only imagine I can only imagine the pain that a husband must feel or a wife if their mate deserts them for another person when they had already promised and to keep thee only unto myself so long as we both shall live.

That's a covenant. It's a contract. You put your integrity on the line when you enter into that relationship. And to walk away from it and to go after another suitor has to leave the one behind with an indescribable, agonizing pain of rejection.

rejection. And I don't think there is any pain that quite equals the pain of rejection. If we can feel that on a human level, what must the deity feel on a level that only he possesses?

how would you multiply that? I don't know. I can't answer that. But you only of all the nations of the earth have I chosen.

And they went a-whoring not just one not just one other mate but multiples. And it was just and of course it was to their own detriment that they did.

[ 23 : 26 ] So, back to this passage. Verse 13, It shall be for him and his descendants after him a covenant of a perpetual priesthood because he was jealous for his God.

That's a good thing. And made atonement for the sons of Israel. So, let's come back now to our Malachi text if we may. And there are other passages that relate to this covenant kind of situation.

And it's very, very important because when God makes a covenant he keeps it. He puts his integrity on the line. And that's the whole basis of the relationship between God and Israel.

And that's why, in fact, that's the only reason why the nation Israel still has a future. Not because of their faithfulness but because of God's faithfulness.

That's the whole basis for the new covenant. Days are coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Judah. And the house of Israel. Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers which they broke.

[ 24 : 33 ] But this will be a new covenant and I will put my word into your hearts and so on. So that's the whole basis for Israel having a future. You will know in verse 4, you will know when I have sent this commandment to you that my covenant may continue with Levi, says the Lord of hosts.

That's not at all done away with. My covenant with him was one of life and peace. Does God have a big thing about being recognized and about people having an awe-inspiring vision of him?

Of course he does. And why does he? Because he's entitled to it. I heard someone say one time, well all of this business about God and his glory and God wanting to be glorified and God seeking glory and everything.

Doesn't that strike you as a rather selfish scheme of the universe? Is for God to just get all bent out of shape about not recognizing his glory?

Think about that. On the other hand, with whom should he share it? Who else is eligible to share in his glory?

[ 26 : 03 ] Who else is creator and sustainer of everything? Who else has the right to be worshipped and to be held in awe and to be plenty ticked off for those creatures who refuse to do so?

Well, we can all be thankful that God is a lot more long-suffering than I am because I win to put up with you for a while. And you know what I'm talking about.

We cut each other all of this slack and yet we have no idea of how much slack God cuts for us while we are thumbing our nose at him.

Incredible. That is just absolutely amazing. Oh, the depths of the fullness of the richness, the wisdom of God, how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out.

I tell you this, my covenant. Verse 6, true instruction was in his mouth and unrighteousness was not found on his lips. He's talking about those previous.

[ 27 : 09 ] He walked with me in peace and uprightness and he turned many back from iniquity for the lips of a priest should preserve knowledge. The lips of a priest, actually we can say here, the lips of anyone in a position of spiritual authority and recognition should preserve knowledge and men should seek instruction from his mouth for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

But as for you, he's talking to these priests here, the priests of Israel, as for you, you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by the instruction.

You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts. Levi was designated as the first priest and these who came after him have not followed in his train.

At least, this increment had not. they had abandoned. They had forsaken him. Verse 9, I also have made you despised and debased before all the people, just as you are not keeping my ways, but are showing partiality in the instruction.

Obviously, these people gave special consideration to those who were well-connected. This is a double standard for treatment, and I don't know that there is anything right now in our day that so turns American citizens off as to see double standards of treatment all throughout our government.

[ 29 : 02 ] It seems like if you are rightly connected, you can avoid prosecution for just about anything. That is a shameful thing.

You know what it does? It causes people to lose confidence in the authority of their government because justice is supposed to be displayed with equity all over the place.

It's supposed to be an exact thing whereby it doesn't make any difference who you are or what your name is or what your position is, as we've heard so often.

No one is above the law, but, yeah, it makes us wonder. You know, it makes us wonder. And it causes people to be skeptical and it causes people to say, vote?

To hell with it. Why should I vote? It doesn't matter anyway. They're going to do what they want to do. They're going to pass the laws they want to pass. You know, in other words, it's people saying, I don't have any confidence in the government.

[ 30 : 08 ] Why should I put my stamp of approval on this or that? It doesn't mean anything anyway. And that's a terrible, terrible position for a nation to arrive at.

Because we need, we desperately need to have confidence in those who are calling the shots, who are ruling and reigning over us.

And much of that has eroded. And someone has said that that the United, in the United States, you can get the best justice that money can buy.

Well, let's move on. Okay. So, now he's got a real beef here coming up and it's going to be sin in the family.

Do we not all have one father? Has not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously each against his brother so as to profane the covenant?

[ 31 : 13 ] There's that covenant again of our fathers. That covenant that was established became the standard. Let me put it this way. The covenant was the Jewish constitution.

That was their constitution, as it were. And they are in violation of it. Judah has dealt treacherously and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem for Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the Lord which he loves and has married the daughter of a foreign God.

As for the man who does this, may the Lord cut off from the tents of Jacob everyone who awakes and answers or who presents an offering to the Lord of hosts and this is another thing you do.

You cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand.

Boo-hoo! Why doesn't God, what have I done wrong, what's wrong, blah, blah, blah, on and on and on. This is just so much superficiality and blather and God is sickened with the whole thing.

[ 32 : 40 ] He's really upset with him. Yet you say, for what reason? Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth against whom you have dealt treacherously though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

What not? When I read this, it seems like you could throw this right back before Israel went into captivity. In other words, it's the same old, same old as it was before.

That's true. And the moral of that story is human nature doesn't change. Human nature doesn't change. We tend to think that those people who lived a long time ago were a bunch of rubes and they didn't know which side was up.

But when it came to immorality and all the rest of it, they could keep up with you and with me because that's what human nature is. It's just, and fellas, this is, this is why Jesus died.

For the likes of these kind of people. And I'll tell you what, that calls for an incomparable kind of love and forgiveness that we cannot begin to identify with.

[ 34 : 05 ] When we see world over and through history how man the creature has told God the creator in more ways than you can imagine, get lost, I want to do my own thing, and what right do you have this, this, thus and so, and going after strange gods and all the rest of it.

And yet, this creator God had an incomparable kind of compassion for these strayward, straying ones that he was willing to become flesh and die on the cross and give up his life for the likes of us.

I'll never get over that. And if you think you ever get over it, there's something wrong with you, because it's not the kind of thing that you get over. It is amazing grace beyond, well, because she is your companion and your wife by covenant, but not one has done so who has a remnant of the spirit.

And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then to your spirit. Let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth, for because I hate divorce, says the Lord, the God of Israel.

Now, some have misunderstood the teaching that is involved here, and I'd like to just clarify for a moment, and that is, God is not, God does not forbid divorce.

[ 35 : 44 ] Does he hate it? Yes, he does, but he doesn't forbid it. In fact, there are even stipulations given in the law of Moses under which a divorce can be obtained, but that doesn't mean God likes it.

It means that God hates divorce, but he makes provision for it. And the reason he does is because of the hardness of your heart. The main reason that, well, the Marriage on the Rock series is back there.

The main reason that people come to disagreement, it's, and I don't want to get off the track here, but I've got a couple of minutes. Let me just insert this, if I may, because it's the basis, it's the basis for all disharmony in all relationships, not just marriage, but in the family, in the workplace, in the neighborhood, in the church, whatever.

This, that I'm going to mention, is always, always, always the culprit for why people start drifting apart.

In a marriage relationship, it is an emotional distancing, where they are not as close as they once were. And if the emotional distancing gets so pronounced, that they no longer even want to remain in the relationship, then it is a physical distancing and separating called divorce.

[ 37 : 25 ] They no longer want to be in the presence of that person. This is the one with whom they stood before the altar and made those vows. What happened? I'll tell you what happened.

It's the offense. Unresolved offenses. People say things and do things to each other that hurt.

hurt. They hurt the heart. They wound their mate. It causes them great pain and that wound invariably becomes a part of their human spirit.

They storehouse it. They warehouse the wound in their memory. and they begin unknowingly unintentionally they begin building a case and it's all one offense after another that's added to it and they accumulate.

And finally if they get to the place where there are so many offenses and so much hurt and so much harm is done the person just says I want out.

[ 38 : 40 ] I don't want to be subjected to this anymore and that's the result of the offense. All distancing, all emotional distancing between mates, between family members, between whomever always begins with the offense.

An offense is something that you say or something that you do that really hurts the other party and is never resolved.

left. And fellas, here is where the silver bullet lies. Because when we come to the recognition that we have offended the other party and this is a process that's spelled out in Marriage on the Rock, but when we come to the conclusion that we have offended the party, then we need to take action.

And you cannot undo what you did. you cannot take back what you said. But you can apologize.

That tends to heal the wound. Because the process is we offend them and there is a pullback and emotional distancing and when we recognize that we have hurt that one, we have offended them, we can go to them and admit what we did.

[ 40 : 08 ] I know what I said to you was not right and I should not have done what I did and I've come to recognize that I would take it back if I could but I can't and I'm asking, I'm asking for your forgiveness.

Would you forgive me? And you know what? They don't have to. They don't have to. They should but they don't have to. The ball's in their court.

If they don't want to forgive you, then they become a participant in the problem. Now you're both in the wrong, see? But there can be a real breakthrough here and this is such a dynamic principle.

The apology and the forgiveness requested and forgiveness extended and then comes a good part. Then you kiss and make up. And every relationship can be injured by this.



In the workplace, in the neighborhood, in the school, wherever, in the church, people do things and say things and you know what? Very seldom is it ever made right.

[ 41 : 24 ] What happens is you just keep your distance. You just stay away from that person. And we see this in churches. It splits churches. People get something in their cross.

Somebody offended them. Somebody hurt them. Somebody wounded them. So what do you do? Well, I won't go to that church anymore. And they just peel off and go somewhere else. And there's no victory.

And the only one that is happy about the whole thing is the devil who sows the discord. And he has won the day. And neither of the party, the offended or the offender, neither of them even have a clue that they have disturbed the peace.

The apostle Paul talks about this a lot. And this situation here in the divorce thing is just, oh my. So, when God says he hates divorce, he really means he, and the reason he hates divorce is the same reason he hates all sin.

God hates divorce because he loves people. He hates to see people wounded and hurt and injured in their heart because God loves them and God cares for them.

[ 42 : 32 ] And he doesn't like the things that humans do to each other. And boy, are we ever up to our eyeballs in that right now. And you know, all of this crime and stuff that's going on, people are wronging and offending and hurting and injuring their brother and their sister.

Because we're all related. We're all related. Think of that. A man who walks in and puts a gun in a teller's face to hold up a bank and demands that she put all the cash in, he's robbing his sister.

You know that? He's related. We're all related. Someone says, yeah, well, maybe that's why we fight so much. It's because we're all family. Isn't that a sad, pathetic kind of thing?

And the Bible, and through Christ, and through the new birth, we are called to peace and a new capability, a new responsibility, a new provision is made for us to maintain the peace and to be kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ's sake has forgiven us.

That's to be our modus operandi. And so often, we just don't do it. And why would we refuse to apologize to someone?

[ 43 : 53 ] Whether it's our mate, or a boss, or a neighbor, why would we refuse to apologize when we know we were in the wrong? It's an ego thing, guys.

It hurts our ego. It hurts our ego. It hurts my ego to say, I was wrong.

wrong. You'd be surprised how many husbands cannot, well, they can, but they will not do that because they think that somehow it diminishes them and makes them less of a person to admit that they were wrong.

Hey, we already suspect that you're not perfect. We've already got an inkling of that. So what's wrong with being wrong and acknowledging, hey, that was my bad.

I really blew it on that. I have to take responsibility for that. I have no excuse for saying what I did or for doing what I did. I was out of line, and I want to apologize.

[ 45 : 05 ] I'm really sorry. I'd like to take it back if I could, but I can't. But I really would appreciate you forgiving me and giving me another chance in this.

Fellas, there isn't anything that heals a relationship like that. And if you haven't heard any of these, I would encourage you and your wife, I've dropped the ball on this for a long time in that I haven't mentioned the availability of these Marriage on the Rock CDs, but they are very basic and very straightforward.

And what they are designed to do, actually, is to provide a kind of biblical counseling session for a husband and wife who can do it in complete privacy, and it doesn't cost \$75 to \$150 for a session with a marriage counselor for whom you have to make an appointment and all the rest of it, you know, and you can listen to this and discuss it, and it can revolutionize, I mean, absolutely revolutionize a marriage.

And there are several back there and you're welcome to, those are all free, all those CDs back there, they're all free, take whatever you want and give them away to whomever you wish, and we appreciate that, but this marriage thing today is in such a state of chaos, and we've got, well, we've never been here before, I mean, I'm talking, people living together without benefit of marriage, and that too is a whole subject in itself, and the same-sex marriage, that just defies description, I don't even want to go there, that's just so weird, but this, God is really, God is really concerned about men who abandon their wives, and in that culture, it was especially critical because the wife was so utterly dependent upon the husband, and in many ways they are today too.

By the way, I don't know if you are aware of it or not, but statistics will prove this out, and it has done it time and time again, that probably the shortest, surest road to poverty is divorce.

[ 47 : 40 ] If you don't think so, just talk to some of these people in government who have to deal with child services and alimony and being behind in their payments and all the rest of it, and the husband not wanting to make the payments, and the wife living on food stamps, and all of that, it's the result of damaged, injured, unhealed relationships, and it is tragic.

And I want to close with this because our time is gone, but I can understand this in the world because the world doesn't have what the Christian has to work with.

We have operating assets, spiritual operating assets that the world doesn't know anything about. But if we don't know what they are, and we don't utilize them, you might as well not have them.

And that's what this Marriage on the Rock series is all about. Because, sad to say, sad to say, that the divorce rate for those who profess to be Christians is not much better than those who have no connection with the Lord at all.

God. And that is a sad, sad commentary. It ought not to be so. When young couples come in to me for premarital counseling, I don't know how many times I've done this over the last 50 years, but I tell them then and I tell them now and I mean it with every fiber of my being, that God has designed marriage to be the closest thing you're going to get to heaven on this side of heaven if it is done God's way.

[ 49 : 26 ] Sad to say, a lot of Christians, a lot of people who love the Lord, going to be in heaven when they die and you'll see them there. But they would rather do marriage their way than they would God's way.

And when you do, there's always a price to pay for that and it's not worth it. So, well, I've had my say and my time has gone and we'll consider chapter two done here, but we've got two more chapters and we'll be finished with Malachi.