

## LOVE THE ONE YOU'RE WITH

### **Summing up Malachi:**

Malachi 1-4

Don't rob:

God,  
Others,  
Yourself,  
Your marriage,  
Your kids.

### **Back to the basics of marriage:**

Malachi 2:13-16, 1 Corinthians 7, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, Ephesians 5:1-33

- ▶ Marriage is not easy, or fair.
- ▶ Love is a choice, not an emotion.
- ▶ Mastering the marriage cycle:

JOY → DISILLUSIONMENT → MISERY →  
UNDERSTANDING → MATURE LOVE

- Submission is putting the needs and interests of someone else above your own.
- Expectations unsaid will always go unmet.

### **Taking it home:**

- ▶ If I'm not working on my marriage, I'm working against it.
- ▶ Marriage has to be a pursuit of holiness, not happiness.

## Food for Thought

For the week of June 10, 2012

(Questions and Scriptures for further personal study)

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1. Many of us have been through the "cycle of marriage" Chris talked about, or have been through a similar cycle in other relationships. Take a minute to review the cycle and then really think through what it is like for two people to be in each stage of the cycle. How would you describe what each stage looks and/or feels like?

In what ways have you or others you know traveled through these stages effectively or ineffectively?

2. Submission is one of those things that can be hard to talk about and even harder to practice, yet Jesus tells us to submit to one another. Fortunately, the Bible gives us some instruction on what it looks like to put someone else's needs above our own. Read Ephesians 5:25-33 and Philippians 2:5-11 and take some notes on how we can "imitate" God's love and Christ's attitude.

### **Ephesians 5:25-33**

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her [26] to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, [27] and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. [28] In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. [29] After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-- [30] for we are members of his body. [31] "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." [32] This is a profound mystery--but I am talking about Christ and the church. [33] However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. [NIV]

### **Philippians 2:5-11**

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

[6] Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,  
[7] but made himself nothing,  
taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.  
[8] And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to death--  
even death on a cross!  
[9] Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,  
[10] that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
[11] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father. [NIV]

Christ's love for the church is not just a great example of submission; it also shows how it was meant to be a model of how men should love their wives. What are some things that keep people today from truly loving others in this extreme way?

3. We heard this week that love is a choice and that it cannot be built upon emotion. At the same time, God gave us the capacity to experience a wide range of feelings in our lives. Read the following passages and note in your own words what feelings can come from a loving marriage.

**Proverbs 5:15-19**

Drink water from your own cistern,  
    running water from your own well.  
[16] Should your springs overflow in the streets,  
    your streams of water in the public squares?  
[17] Let them be yours alone,  
    never to be shared with strangers.  
[18] May your fountain be blessed,  
    and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.  
[19] A loving doe, a graceful deer--  
    may her breasts satisfy you always,  
    may you ever be captivated by her love. [NIV]

**Song 4:9-10**

You have stolen my heart, my sister, my bride;  
    you have stolen my heart  
with one glance of your eyes,  
    with one jewel of your necklace.  
[10] How delightful is your love, my sister, my bride!  
    How much more pleasing is your love than wine,  
    and the fragrance of your perfume than any spice! [NIV]

Can you think of any dangers associated with making these kinds of feelings the ultimate goal of a marriage?

4. The best description of love is found in 1 Corinthians 13. As you read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, replace the word "love" with your own name. Now take a minute to consider how true what you just read is of your relationship with your spouse (or family or good friends).

**1 Corinthians 13:4-8**

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. [5] It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. [6] Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. [7] It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

[8] Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. [NIV]