



Revived Relationships Pt 4_God's Word for Parents and Children!

February 23, 2020

Text: Malachi 4:1-6

The Problem

The bottom line: we've either lost sight of or refused the sufficiency of God's Word in family!
And it shows...

1. Biblical Worldview of "Christians": Adults under 10% nationally, children around 5%
2. Christian children losses after High School: 70-88%
3. One half of one percent of all people 18-25 have a Biblical Worldview
4. ONE in FIVE Americans has NO religious faith or affiliation at all now!
5. 85% of women who have abortions are unmarried. Abortion rate: 3000 babies per day in the U.S.
6. 72.3% of black children are born into a home without fathers. Fatherlessness continues to be a primary cause for poor education, poverty, emotional problems, crime, and abuse. (Visit TooManyAborted.com or fatherhood.org)
7. Divorces continue. Porn addiction continues. Marriage rates among millennials is falling. Homes continue in unbiblical disarray. Churches continue to compromise the Scriptures as it relates to men and women, children and family.

Thoughts on the Text:

1. The last verse of the Old Testament is an encouragement to many. The very thought of the hearts of fathers turning "back" to the children and the hearts of children turning "back" to the fathers speaks of renewal, revival, and reformation!
2. Yes, the "back" is implied in the Text. Apparently, the hearts of the fathers and children had turned away from one another and God was not happy. He speaks of smiting the earth with a curse if the "revived relationship" doesn't happen!
3. So what is going on in this Text?
 - The prophet Malachi (his name means "My messenger") may have been writing during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. We don't know much about him; tradition says he may have been one of the priests that attempted to preserve the Scriptures.
 - MacDonald writes: "The problems in Malachi are the same as those in Nehemiah—mixed marriages with pagans, unjust financial practices, withholding of tithes from God's house, and general spiritual apathy. Either they are the identical problems mentioned in Nehemiah or a repetition or continuation of them not too long after his time. Because of the lackluster religious life of the post-exilic Jews, Malachi sought to stir them up by using his vivid method of dialogue with an unfaithful people."
 - Indeed, Malachi book is described as a "burden" (Mal 1:1). He rebukes both the priests and the people. Both rebukes however, continue the prophetic mission we read of through the Old Testament: calling out a departure from God's ways and God's Laws. Specifically in Malachi, we see corrections as it relates to polluted worship, personal character, unbiblical divorce, tithes and offerings, and finally due to all the iniquity, we read of a coming judgement.
 - But there is hope...
4. Who are the fathers and the children?
 - In context, it seems like the fathers and children spoken of are more than just those in individual households.

- Given the tone and tenor of the book, Malachi seems to be saying that when “Elijah” comes, he will unite households by causing a return to faithfulness.
 - The fathers may represent Moses (Mal 4:4) and the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, etc.) and the children the remnant...the faithful, repentant hearer.
 - In other words, the people would return to the pure word of God, re-embracing the Law and its messianic implications!
 - According to New Testament revelation, what Malachi was prophesying was that the forerunner of Christ (John the Baptist, Matthew 17:0-13) would prepare hearts to receive the Messiah, and through Jesus, revival, renewal, and restoration would come to individuals and to families!
5. What can we learn?
- That family reformation comes through Jesus!
 - That the only way to reconnect the hearts of parents and children is through Christ!
 - That the Gospel is our only hope!
 - That we do not have to live “cursed” family lives if we would turn to Christ and His Word!
 - Let us turn then to the Word of God and be revived!

The Picture (and it’s a beautiful picture!)

God’s Word envisions the glory of an upright and well-ordered family and the authority of such to raise up generations who love the LORD! Indeed, it is a grand, multi-generational vision of love, teaching, support, discipleship, service to the Kingdom and Church, productivity, and blessing.

But...Imagine!

Imagine a man or husband or father who loves God with all his heart, mind, soul and strength. Imagine him working hard, with a long-term vision of where he and his family might be by God’s grace. Imagine his priestly pursuit of holiness, refusing to hurt himself and his family through his own unrighteousness, and his willingness to repent quickly when he fails. Imagine how he lovingly, tenderly, but firmly declares God’s Word in his home and in the community.

Imagine a woman or wife or mother who loves God with all her heart, mind, soul, and strength. Imagine her working hard many times outside the house, but certainly at home. Imagine how she pursues God’s long-term vision for her life. Imagine how chaste she is, how virtuous, how modest! Imagine how she lovingly and tenderly instructs her children and others in the Word, much like Timothy’s mother and grandmother.

Imagine homes filled with biblical care groups and hospitality. Imagine open doors and open hearts, dinner tables filled with friends, fellow church members, laughter, Scripture, encouragement, and meaningful conversation...less television and more discipleship. Imagine how many problems would be solved without a class, a program, or a counseling session through prayer, Scripture, and true Christian friendship. Imagine the teachable moments to train children how to serve others..

Scripture says:

Colossians 3:12-24 (KJV) *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another,*

and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. **14** And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. **15** And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. **17** And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. **18** Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. **19** Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. **20** Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. **21** Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. **22** Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: **23** And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; **24** Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

The Precepts, Patterns and Principles

Again, we believe there is no true health and healing without His Truth. Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” (2 Tim 3:16-17)

- **Genesis 1:26-28 (KJV)** And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. **27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. **28** And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.
- **Genesis 9:1 (KJV)** And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.
- **Genesis 18:19 (KJV)** For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.
- **Exodus 13:7-9 (KJV)** Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. **8** And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. **9** And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the LORD'S law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt.
- **Deuteronomy 4:9 (KJV)** Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;
- **Deuteronomy 11:18-23 (KJV)** Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. **19** And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. **20** And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: **21** That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the

land which the LORD swore unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth. **22** For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him; **23** Then will the LORD drive out all these nations from before you, and ye shall possess greater nations and mightier than yourselves.

- **Deuteronomy 32:46 (KJV)** And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.
- **Psalms 34:11 (KJV)** Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
- **Psalms 78:1-8 (KJV) Maschil of Asaph.** Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. **2** I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: **3** Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. **4** We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. **5** For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: **6** That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: **7** That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: **8** And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God.
- **Ephesians 6:4 (KJV)** And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The Proverbs

Proverbs was written primarily from a parent to a child. In addition to great wisdom, they provide both hope and warning. Both are needed to see renewal and restoration in families. Let us heed them!

- **Proverbs 1:8-9 (KJV)** My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: **9** For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.
- **Proverbs 3:1-6 (KJV)** My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: **2** For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. **3** Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: **4** So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man. **5** Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. **6** In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.
- **Proverbs 15:20 (KJV)** A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish man despiseth his mother.
- **Proverbs 22:6 (KJV)** Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.
- **Proverbs 23:24-27 (KJV)** The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him. **25** Thy father and thy mother shall be glad,

and she that bare thee shall rejoice. **26** My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. **27** For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit.

The Plan

So then extrapolated from Scripture, we can sketch together a general plan to revive our families:

1. **Pray** for each other!

- **Matthew 19:13 (KJV)** *Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.*
- Let us not fall for lie that a simple list will solve all our family problems!
- As we attempt to obey the precepts of Scripture, which we must do, let us be reminded of how desperately we need the LORD!
- We need Jesus to change the hearts of parents and children, to save, to transform, to sanctify, to soften, and help us forgive!

Cotton Mather (1663-1728): A Father's Resolutions. Here are 3:

—At the birth of my children, I will resolve to do all I can that they may be the Lord's. I will now actually give them up by faith to God; entreating that each child may be a child of God the Father, a subject of God the Son, a temple of God the Spirit—and be rescued from the condition of a child of wrath, and be possessed and employed by the Lord as an everlasting instrument of His glory.

—As soon as my children are capable of minding my admonitions, I will often, often admonish them, saying, "Child, God has sent His son to die, to save sinners from death and hell. You must not sin against Him. You must every day cry to God that He would be your Father, and your Saviour, and your Leader. You must renounce the service of Satan, you must not follow the vanities of this world, you must lead a life of serious religion.

—Let me daily pray for my children with constancy, with fervency, with agony. Yea, by name let me mention each one of them every day before the Lord. I will importunately beg for all suitable blessings to be bestowed upon them: that God would give them grace, and give them glory, and withhold no good thing from them; that God would smile on their education, and give His good angels the charge over them, and keep them from evil, that it may not grieve them; that when their father and mother shall forsake them, the Lord may take them up.

2. **Teach** them!

- **Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (KJV)** *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: **5** And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. **6** And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: **7** And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. **8** And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. **9** And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*
- Who? Fathers! Mothers as well but we must return fathers to their place of authority and responsibility. This is so important!

- When? All the time!
 - How? Diligently!
 - What? The “commanded” words; the Word of God!
 - Where? *Everywhere* is a great answer, but certainly at home! Reform the home! As we have seen, the home should be the primary place of instruction and love, joy and spiritual formation!
3. Educate towards a Biblical **Worldview!**
- **Luke 6:40 (KJV)** *The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.*
 - **2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (KJV)** *(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*
 - **1 John 4:2-3 (KJV)** *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.*
4. **Worship** together!
- **Joshua 8:34-35 (KJV)** *And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.*
 - **Matthew 19:14 (KJV)** *But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*
5. Renew **Honor!**
- **Proverbs 10:1 (KJV)** *The proverbs of Solomon. A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.*
 - **Ephesians 6:2-3 (KJV)** *Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*
- Note: Recommend listening to these:
<https://www.crcchesapeake.org/sermons/2019/5/honoring-our-parents-pt-1-esteeming-women-and-mothers>
<https://www.crcchesapeake.org/sermons/2019/6/honoring-our-parents-pt-2-respecting-men-and-fathers>
6. Use Proper **Discipline**
- **Proverbs 23:13-15 (KJV)** *Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. 14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. 15 My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.*

- **Hebrews 12:5-11 (KJV)** *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: 6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. 7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? 8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. 11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

7. Have **Fun** together!

- Fellowship and fun. Laughing and play. Food and feasting. Trips and staycations. Find ways to enjoy one another!
- The Christian life should be filled with richness and community, both in the home and without. Oh LORD, let our families be marked by joy!

Proverbs 15:13 (KJV) *A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.*

Proverbs 17:22 (KJV) *A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.*

Deuteronomy 12:7 (KJV) *And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.*

Oh LORD, revive our households! In Jesus' Name! Amen!