



**TOUGH  
LESSONS  
FOR TOUGH  
HEARTS**

**Malachi 1:1-5**

## **Jed Diamond, Marriage Counselor says there are four stages of marriage**

- Stage 1: Falling In Love
- Stage 2: Becoming a Couple
- Stage 3: Disillusionment
- Stage 4: Creating Real, Lasting Love

## Jed Diamond, Marriage Counselor says there are four stages of marriage

- Marriages that dissolve get stuck in the Disillusionment phase without pushing through as a couple, to reach Real, Lasting Love
- It sometimes takes years

The last book in the New Testament begins with Jesus talking to a church that passed through stage 1 and 2 in flying colors

- **Revelation 2:2-3 NLT** 2 “I know all the things you do. I have seen your hard work and your patient endurance. I know you don’t tolerate evil people. You have examined the claims of those who say they are apostles but are not. You have discovered they are liars. 3 You have patiently suffered for me without quitting.

The last book in the New Testament begins with Jesus talking to a church that passed through stage 1 and 2 in flying colors

- **Revelation 2:4 NLT** “But I have this complaint against you. You don’t love me or each other as you did at first!
- They were becoming disillusioned with each other leading to disillusionment with Jesus

The last book in the New Testament begins with Jesus talking to a church that passed through stage 1 and 2 in flying colors

- **Revelation 2:5 NLT** Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first.
- Remember, turn and do

## **The last book in the New Testament begins with Jesus talking to a church that passed through stage 1 and 2 in flying colors**

- The last book of the Old Testament says basically the same thing to God's people
- They had become disillusioned that led to a form of religion without any love or respect for their God
- The blessings promised by God through His prophets has not occurred

**The last book in the New Testament begins with Jesus talking to a church that passed through stage 1 and 2 in flying colors**

- They refused to admit it was because of their sinfulness
- Their hearts became hard and they voiced questions to God that was close to being blasphemous



**The last book in the New Testament begins with Jesus talking to a church that passed through stage 1 and 2 in flying colors**

- We have seen this in Christians as they come and go from our congregation
- God has a word for them and us
- **Malachi 1:1-6 NIV**

## Setup

- It has been about 100 years since the remnant of Israelites returned to Judah and Jerusalem
- The temple has been built, so this prophecy was after Ezra
- It was probably given between the two governing times of Nehemiah

## Setup

- It addresses some of the same sins Nehemiah address when returning to Judah
- It is the last word of God in the Old Testament and around 400 years before John the Baptist

**God begins by addressing their major issue. They did not believe God really loved them.**

- **vs. 2a NIV** “I have loved you,” says the Lord.
  - Hebrew = I loved then, I love you now and I will love you in the future

**God begins by addressing their major issue. They did not believe God really loved them.**

- **vs. 2b NIV** “But you ask, ‘How have you loved us?’
  - You may have loved us once
  - You may have loved our fathers
  - I don’t see any evidence of your love now
  - I’m not sure I can trust you

**God begins by addressing their major issue. They did not believe God really loved them.**

- Everything else negative flows from this thought/belief, perspective of life
- They do not know God, do not trust God and have set themselves up for failure
- They were going through the motions of religious activity without any impact on their lives

**God begins by addressing their major issue. They did not believe God really loved them.**

- Overall, the Church's influence on Americans is beginning to fade. A growing number of Americans have given up on God—or at least on organized religion. They have become “Nones,” a term popularized by Pew Research. And their numbers are growing.
  - They would ask today, “How have you loved us?”

## **God tells them they cannot correct this attitude/path until they stop and remember**

- It is not up to God to change their minds/outlook
- It is not up to God to demonstrate again His love for them
- If we stop and sincerely desire to return, God will bring to our remembrance times His love was evident



## God tells them they cannot correct this attitude until they stop and remember

- Since God is the same yesterday, today and forever- His love remains there for you now
- **vs. 2c-3 NLT** And the Lord replies, “This is how I showed my love for you: I loved your ancestor Jacob, 3 but I rejected his brother, Esau, and devastated his hill country. I turned Esau’s inheritance into a desert for jackals.”

## God tells them they cannot correct this attitude until they stop and remember

- I chose you and your people to be my greatest treasure on earth
- You were the ones I revealed myself to
- You were the ones who received all of my promises
- You were the ones I sent my prophets to
- You were the ones I gave my Law to

## God tells them they cannot correct this attitude until they stop and remember

- You know me because I have loved you
- Be very careful here. God did not choose to love Jacob and destroy Esau
  - Esau (Edomites) were destroyed because of their sinfulness and resisting God

## God tells them they cannot correct this attitude until they stop and remember

- When it comes to the blessings God has given Christians in comparison it appears He hates non-Christians, but we know that is not true
  - God wills that none should perish
- They chose to walk away from God

## God tells them they cannot correct this attitude until they stop and remember

- In comparison to the great blessings of God upon Jacob it looks like God hated Esau, but only in comparison
- **Revelation 2:5 NIV** Consider (remember) how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first (for the reasons you did at first).

## God tells them they cannot correct this attitude until they stop and remember

- Sylvia Smith, 6 Step Guide on How to Fix and Save a Broken Marriage
  - Identify what made you fall in love
  - Start to listen to each other again
  - Reflect on what has made your marriage feel broken

## God tells them they cannot correct this attitude until they stop and remember

- Sylvia Smith, 6 Step Guide on How to Fix and Save a Broken Marriage
  - Talk to each other
  - Don't let distractions get in the way of your relationship
  - Find a way to connect again

## A tough heart takes a tough God to soften it

- A loving heart alone will not soften a tough, calloused heart
  - Think of a strong-willed child
- God is seen at times as just a loving God and that is a part of His nature
- But He is also righteous and holy



## A tough heart takes a tough God to soften it

- He is jealous about his righteousness, holiness and His children
- God will allow consequences of our sin to have its way in our lives for a season
  - Moses on the backside of a mountain tending sheep
  - David with Bathsheba, sword never leave your family

## **A tough heart takes a tough God to soften it**

- God will allow consequences of our sin to have its way in our lives for a season
  - Israel 70 years captive to Babylon
- This is God's love demonstrated, it is his grace shown
- The other nations around Israel seemed to be blessed rather than them

## A tough heart takes a tough God to soften it

- **vs. 4-5 NLT** 4 Esau's descendants in Edom may say, "We have been shattered, but we will rebuild the ruins." But the Lord of Heaven's Armies replies, "They may try to rebuild, but I will demolish them again. Their country will be known as 'The Land of Wickedness,' and their people will be called 'The People with Whom the Lord Is Forever Angry.'"
- Do you call that blessed?

## A tough heart takes a tough God to soften it

- **vs. 6 NLT** When you see the destruction for yourselves, you will say, ‘Truly, the Lord’s greatness reaches far beyond Israel’s borders!’”
- This could have been you, but God loved you and treasured you and will continue throughout eternity

## Summary

- The question is not, “Why does God allow bad things to happen to me?”, but rather “Why does God allow good things to happen to me?”
- How do I know God loves me?
- If He didn't you would not know anything about Him. He would just let you die in your ignorance and be separate from Him for eternity

## Summary

- If He didn't love you He would not give you a chance to repent and turn to Him or at best, a one and done
- If He didn't love you He would not have sent Jesus to make a way for you to be reconciled to Him
- **Jeremiah 31:3 NIV** "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness."



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