

CouplesInBloom.com – Crutch To Crux

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Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul all refer to the book of Malachi. Like Melchizedek the king of Salem and priest of God, Malachi the prophet has no known lineage. The Jews call Malachi the “seal of prophecy”, being the last Old Testament prophet to speak until Jesus Christ was incarnated on the earth. The four short chapters of the book of Malachi conclude the Old Testament and introduce the New Testament with a curiously unpopular message. First we will examine the message; then we will examine human aversion to it.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all refer to Malachi in the context of preparing for Jesus out of love. The apostle Paul refers to Malachi in context of God reminding mankind of Him initiating His love for them. The message of the book of Malachi is ***vertical love***: the ***reciprocated affection between the Christian heart and the person of God***, specifically on a one-on-one basis. Malachi has nothing to do with horizontal love, nothing about loving our neighbor, which has its place elsewhere... but not here. ***This*** is very important.

I love you is the first message from God through the prophet Malachi ⇨ Malachi 1:2, and love between father and child is God’s last message through Malachi ⇨ Malachi 4:6. Malachi addresses Jesus’ greatest commandment of loving God ***completely isolated from*** His second greatest commandment of loving our neighbors ⇨ Matthew 22:37-39. This is ***1) most important*** to God, ***2) least talked about*** by God, and ***3) most averse*** to humans:

1) Both Old and New Testaments are purely clear that loving God is ***most important*** to God ⇨ Deuteronomy 6:5; Matthew 22:37-38. God *is* love, so loving Him *is* wonderful.

2) Vertical love is ***scarcely addressed*** in the Bible because God does ***not*** want an automaton for a bride; He wants to be passionately ***wanted***... just as we do, being made in His image ⇨ Genesis 1:27. Instead of demanding His heart’s desire, God briefly states it in Malachi ⇨ ... waiting to see who responds with the kind of passion He loves us with.

3) Of all the things that Christians mature into, the deepest and ***most averse*** one for us is: ***loving God the person completely isolated from loving our neighbors***. Christians have struggled with this since time began. It happens when we do not view God relationally as a ***person***, but impersonally with religiosity. Malachi says this & ***Christians get defensive*** ⇨ Malachi 1:2, 6, 13; 2:14, 17; 3:8, 13-14. ***What*** drives such strong aversion to ***this*** love?

The apostle Paul says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God” because it sounds stupid to believe in an invisible God... ***until His power has been intimately experienced***. This is why: ***a)*** those *inexperienced* with the power of God say believing in God is a ***crutch*** for weakness; ***b)*** Christians *inexperienced* with the power of God struggle with evangelism; and ***c)*** Christians *inexperienced* in intimacy with God feel a ***strong aversion*** to loving His ***person***, the ***crux*** of Christianity, God’s heart and Heaven.

Intimacy reserves one’s deepest parts for their one and only beloved, as in marriage... the mere earthly copy of eternal relationship with God. Maturing from ***crutch to crux cures this aversion!*** As Jesus is the corner stone *or* a stumbling block, so loving God the ***person*** is the ***crux*** of Christianity: vital *or* tormenting; *which one* depends on our choice to have intimacy with God and receive the power He only gives to His beloved, or not. ♥