

**RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION
FOR THE CHURCH LIFE**

“He Sought the Seed of God”

Scripture Reading: Mal. 2:15-16; 3:14; 4:5-6; Luke 1:16-17; 2 Tim. 2:20-21;

- I. “But did He not make *them* one? And the remnant of the Spirit was His. And why the one? He sought the seed of God”—Mal. 2:15a:**
- A. In marriage God has made the husband and wife one in order to produce “the seed of God,” i.e., godly children.
 - B. “Behold, children are the heritage of Jehovah, / The fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a mighty man, / So are the children of [one’s] youth”—Psa. 127:3-4.
 - C. “For to you is the promise and to your children, and to all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God calls to *Himself*”—Acts. 2:39.
- II. “Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one be treacherous to the wife of his youth. For I hate divorce, says Jehovah the God of Israel; and he *who does it behaves in violence*, says Jehovah of hosts. Take heed then to your spirit, and do not be treacherous”—Mal. 2:15b-16:**
- A. Every young person must consider his or her marriage very carefully; all the brothers and sisters are priests:
 - 1. If we cannot live well with our spouse, we cannot serve the church; if our married life is improper, our priesthood will be finished; it will be brought to nothing.
 - 2. Jehovah hates divorce; and the one who divorces his wife behaves in violence (v. 16); in the sight of God, divorce is a violent act.
 - B. Malachi 2:15-16 tells us to take heed to our spirit; brothers and sisters, take heed to your spirit; do not argue; do not excuse yourself; you have to take heed to your spirit.
 - C. Your spirit is the source of your behavior; God cares for your spirit (Zech 12:1), and you have to take heed to it (cf. Acts 24:16; Rom. 8:4-6; 2 Cor. 2:13).
- III. “You say, It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept His charge and have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts”—Mal. 3:14; 2:13:**
- A. They said, “It is vain to serve God,” and they asked, “What profit is it that we have kept His charge and have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts?” (v. 14).
 - B. They worshipped and served God, but they did it mournfully, not at all happy that they were required to do these things—v. 14; cf. Deut. 16:15.
- IV. I am about to send Elijah the prophet to you...And he will turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers”—Mal. 4:5a, 6a:**
- A. God promised to send Elijah the prophet to them before the great and terrible day of Jehovah comes (Matt. 17:10-11; Rev. 11:3-4):
 - 1. Elijah will turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to the fathers; this is the closing word of Malachi and the last word of the Old Testament—v. 6.
 - 2. John the Baptist was the first one in the New Testament who was filled with the Holy Spirit; because he was filled with the Holy Spirit he could fulfill the words spoken concerning him—Luke 1:16-17.

- B. “And many of the sons of Israel he will turn to the Lord their God. And he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers to children...to prepare for the Lord a people made ready”—Luke 1:16-17.
- V. **“If therefore anyone cleanses himself from these, he will be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, useful to the master, prepared unto every good work”—2 Tim. 2:21:**
 - A. These four items together would make Timothy a vessel unto honor according to a certain standard—2 Tim. 2:21:
 - 1. The word honor is related to our nature.
 - 2. The word sanctified indicates our position.
 - 3. The word useful implies the matter of our function.
 - 4. The word prepared reveals the matter of our training.
 - B. When God bestows grace on the church, He needs vessels; there is the need for more Timothys to be raised up—2 Kings 4:1-6; 2 Tim. 2:2, 3:17:
 - 1. It is true that we can save men from the world, but there is a greater need for raising up people from among Christian families—2 Tim. 3:15a.
 - 2. We have to expect the second generation, men like Timothy, to come from our own families—1:5.