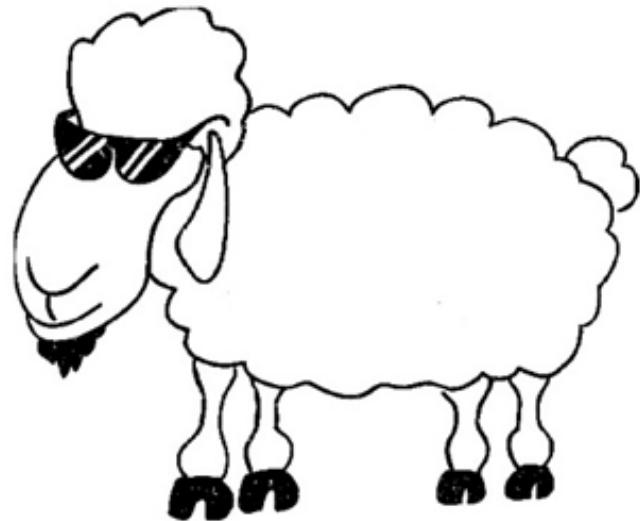


Youth Ministry 2:2
Bible discussion lessons for youth groups
from the Old and New Testaments

Bible 101 - year 2

Author: John Gerig;
Editors: Luba Karetnikova & Julie Gerig
Artist: David Kuyavsky

Malachi



CONTENTS

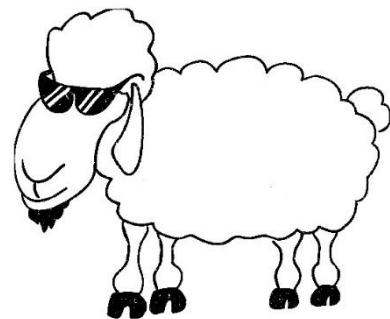
1. Above All Else! – Malachi 1: 6-14 (Respect for God).	2
2. One + One = One – Malachi 2:13-16 (Divorce).	6
3. The Buck Stops Here (Tithing – Malachi 3: 6-12).	9
4. Jesus is coming (The Second Coming – Malachi 4).	12

Above All Else!

Malachi 1:6-14

1. How do we show respect:

- to our parents?
- to our teachers?
- to God?



2. What were the **two** tasks of the prophets in the Old Testament?

Answer: They revealed the future to people

They communicated messages (and warnings) from God.

How were the Israelites showing dishonor to God?

1. They did not _____ the Lord's table, by offering 'defiled food' on the altar (v. 7)
2. They brought blind, lame, sick animals for sacrifice (they did not give God _____) (v. 8)
3. They considered _____ God to be a burden (v. 13)
4. They broke their _____ (v. 14).

3. How do we honor God with our lives?

ROOM	USE OF THE ROOM	OUR LIVES
1.	Reading and thinking	What we believe and fill our minds with.
2.	Eating and Drinking	Physical Appetites
3.	Relationships and Conversations	Time spent with God and other people
4.	Our work	Serving others and using the gifts God gave us
5.	Entertainment	How we relax and have fun
6.	Places where messes can be hidden.	Confession of secret/hidden sins

Our attitude toward God is important to Him.

4. This week I will invite God into my (room)_____.

Above All Else! (Respect for God – Malachi 1: 6-14)

Significance for teens:

It's easy for all of us to compartmentalize our lives. We might feel that if we honor God by going to church on Sunday, we don't have to think much more about it the rest of the week. We also see this 'just get by' attitude among God's people in the Old Testament. But God wants us to give ourselves to Him completely.

1. Hook

Begin with prayer. Write the word "Respect" on the board and have individuals or teams see who can come up with the most words using the letters of this word. They can only use as many letters as are in the word. For example, one 'r' but two 'e's. Possible words: tree, trees, pet, pets, per, steer, see, tee, peer, pest, prep, rest, pee, seer, sees, etc.

Today's topic is 'respect.' Ask, 'How do we show respect to our parents?'

Possible answers: by listening to them; obeying them; consulting with them; answering them with a good tone of voice; not rolling eyes, etc.

Ask, 'How do we show respect to our teachers?'

Possible answers: listening to them; calling them Mr. Mrs; doing their assignments; trying our best in class, etc.

And ask: 'How do we show respect to God?'

Possible answers: obeying him; giving Him time; not using His name in vain; caring about what He cares about; etc.

2. Book – Malachi 1:6-14

Today we begin a new section of the Bible—the books of the prophets. The Old Testament prophets had two tasks from God. The most well-known was to proclaim the future, such as the coming of the Messiah. But they also had a second, less pleasant task. They exposed the sins of the Israelites and warned them of God's punishment if they didn't change their ways.

Malachi was a prophet in Israel during the time after the people returned to Israel after their captivity in Babylon. The spiritual condition of the people was terrible. They did not honor God. They did not tithe (give God a tenth of what they earned or gathered); they married pagans who worshipped other gods; they did not observe the Sabbath.

Read the text from Malachi 1:6-14. Ask, 'How did the Israelites disrespect God?'

Fill in the blanks on the handouts:

1. They did not respect the Lord's table, by offering 'defiled' food on the altar where they made sacrifices to God (not what God commanded) (v. 7)
2. They sacrificed blind, lame, and sick animals (they did not give God the best) (v. 8)
3. They considered honoring God to be a burden (v. 13) instead of a privilege.
4. They broke their promises; (vows) (v. 14).

3. Look

We don't have temple worship anymore, like they did in Israel in Old Testament times. But if we are Christians we belong to God through Christ. How should God's people honor Him today?

Many years ago, an interesting story was written. Read the story, 'My Heart Christ's Home' by Robert Munger. You can search for a copy of it on the internet.

Here is one site that has it:

<https://keys4.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/my-heart-christ-home.pdf>

Write the names of the rooms in the table.

1. The Library/ Study
2. The Dining Room
3. The Living Room
4. The Workroom
5. The Rec Room (Den)
6. The Hall Closet

This story is long, so it is worth thinking about how to keep the group's attention while reading. Options: if you are a good storyteller, tell this story in a clear, interesting way. Or rewrite the descriptions on different cards or sheets of paper and have different kids read about each. Or you can show slides representing each room. It is important that the story is told in an interesting, relevant way.

At the end, remind the teens that our relationship with God is important to Him. The best way to respect and honor Him is to welcome Him into all areas of our lives.

4 – Took

If anyone has noticed an area of their lives where they are not honoring God, give them time to think and finish the sentence, 'This week, I will invite God into my _____ (room).'

End with a prayer that we would honor God in our lives not only in our 'spiritual activities,' but in all areas.

Leader's Guide

Here is a summary of “My Heart – Christ’s home”

“My Heart—Christ’s Home”, by Robert Boyd Munger, is a classic Christian story where the author invites Jesus to move into the "house" of his heart, exploring each room (mind, emotions, habits) to allow Christ to clean out sin and take control, leading to a deeper, surrendered life with God.

It's a room-by-room allegory, from the living room (fellowship) to closets (hidden sins) and the workshop (actions), showing how Christ transforms every area, helping believers give Him full authority.

Key themes & rooms explored:

The Invitation: The story begins with the narrator inviting Christ in, based on Revelation 3:20 ("Behold, I stand at the door and knock").

Library/Study (Mind): Examining impure thoughts and filling the mind with God's Word instead of worldly input.

Dining Room (Appetites): Considering what desires should control one's life.

Living Room (Fellowship): A place for daily quiet time with Jesus, reading the Bible.

Workroom (Actions/Creation): Focusing on creating things of eternal value.

The Rec Room (Friendships, activities and amusements) Looking at what we do for leisure.

Hall Closet (Hidden Sins): Cleaning out hidden areas and negative thoughts.

The Goal: To make Christ Lord of all, allowing Him to be "at home" and rule over every aspect of life, moving from a servant to a fully surrendered heart.

Originally published by InterVarsity Press as My Heart—Christ’s Home by Robert Boyd Munger. ©1954 and 1986 (InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA).

One + One = One

Malachi 2:13-16

1. Why do moms and dads split up?

What kind of feelings can kids experience when their parents divorce?



2. Why does God want people to stay married?

They belong _____ – v. 15

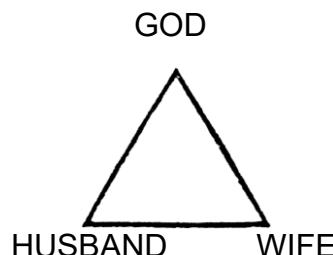
God wants godly _____ – v. 15

Vows must not be _____ – vv. 15-16

It _____ the person they should protect
v. 16

What are **some** results of divorce? – v. 13

3. What can we do now to **try to** prevent divorce in our future?



What do children whose parents are divorcing need to know? Here are a few tips

- Parents are responsible for their actions. Children are not to blame. Children cannot fix the situation and should not take on false guilt.
- It is okay to love both parents. Don't think of one parent as good and the other as bad. Love, forgive, and pray for both of them.
- Learn from this experience. Listen to your parents about where they went wrong; let your parents be part of your life.
- Trust God to give you strength, love, forgiveness, and answers in His time. It may take a while.

4. The best thing to do in difficult times is to stay close to God, not distance yourself from Him.

One + One = One (Divorce – Malachi 2:13-16)

Significance for teens:

In many places in the world, about 50% of marriages end in divorce. That means that many kids have not grown up observing a healthy, long-lasting marriage. Divorce is a common solution to an unhappy marriage. But God's plan is for a husband and wife to become one and stay together.

Be sensitive during this lesson to kids who are from divorced homes. Often the kids think erroneously that the divorce was their fault; if they had only been a better child, or if they hadn't been born, the parents would have stayed together.

1. Hook

Begin with prayer. Ask, 'Why do moms and dads split up?'

Possible answers: lack of respect for each other; debt and other financial difficulties; addictions; love has grown cold, etc.

How does divorce affect children? Ask, 'What kind of feelings can kids experience when their parents divorce?'

Possible answers: they blame themselves; they feel pain; they feel anger; they suffer a loss; they refuse to accept the situation.

2. Book – Malachi 2:13-16

Today we will see that the Israelites did not only dishonor God in their sacrifices, but they also dishonored Him by breaking their marriage vows. Divorce was very common in those days, just as it is today. God spoke to the people about this through the prophet, Malachi.

(Review the two tasks that the prophet had in the Old Testament: 1) to reveal what God said about the future, and 2) to reveal what God said was sin).

Last time, we saw that God's first message through Malachi was to honor God. The second message was that God does not permit divorce.

Before reading, suggest that the group 'pay attention to what the verses say about why God is against divorce.'

Read Malachi 2:13-16. Ask, 'So why is God against divorce (answers from the text)?' Fill in the blanks:

They belong to God – v. 15

God wants godly offspring – v. 15

Vows must not be broken – vv. 15-16

It harms the person they should protect – v. 16.

Ask, 'According to verse 13, what are the results of divorce?'

Answers: tears; God refuses to accept our offerings; a wall between us and God.

3. Look

Ask, 'What can we do now to prevent divorce in our **future**?'

Possible answers: draw closer to God; remain pure now; be honest with ourselves and others; look for good examples of marriage; learn to express our emotions; learn to forgive others; forgive our parents if they divorced and left us.

Show the triangle on the handout. In marriage, when a husband and wife draw closer to God (moving upward on the sides of the triangle), they simultaneously draw closer to each other. We can draw closer to God now, choose a partner who wants to draw close to God and continue drawing closer to God in marriage.

'If your parents are divorced, it can be really hard and even mess up your life. But if you trust God, He can use even divorce for good in your life.

On the handout, you will find four good pieces of advice to help you grow through the experience of your parents' divorce. Discuss the four tips on the handout. If you are a group leader who has experienced parental divorce, this would be a great time to share who helped you and what helped you during that difficult time.

4 – Took:

The best thing everyone can do through all of life's challenges is to stay close to God, not distance yourself from Him. Over and over His people are unfaithful to Him and reject His love, so He understands what you are going through and He can help you through this. Be a faithful Christian who learns to trust God, even if it takes some time. Learn to forgive and ask for forgiveness, and grow into the character of Christ. These are the things you can do now, whether you are living with your parents' divorce or becoming a faithful marriage partner for your husband or wife in the future.

Conclude with a prayer that we may draw closer to God.

Leader's Guide

The Buck Stops Here

Malachi 3:6-12

1. What is tithing? _____

2. What the Bible says about tithing:

Malachi 3:6-18	Reasons for tithing, according to Malachi: God's _____ (curse) if you do not tithe (v. 9) God's _____ if you tithe (vv. 10-12) God's _____ to tithe (v. 10)
Jesus	Give tithe and show _____ (Matthew 23:23)
Paul	Let us give according to our _____. (1 Corinthians 16:1,2)

3. True or False

T F 1. People have a right to want to make as much money as they can.

T F 2. People in poorer countries deserve some of what we have.

T F 3. Money is the root of all evil.

T F 4. People should always share what they have with others.

T F 5. It is sinful to spend money on yourself for things you don't really need.

T F 6. The local church should never ask for money.



4. Application: *you can start NOW. Just do it!*

Begin a habit of giving that can last the rest of your life.

The Buck Stops Here (Tithing – Malachi 3: 6-12)

Significance for teens:

People disagree about whether tithing is commanded in the New Testament. The only reference to it is when Jesus was criticizing the Pharisees that they tithed but missed more important matters. However, all of Jesus's followers are expected to give generously to God and those in need. While teens don't have a lot of their own money, they can still begin the habit of giving a portion of what they have to the Lord.

1. Hook

Begin with prayer.

Review the four sections of the Old Testament (the Law, Historical Books, Poetic Books, and Prophecy).

Remind the kids that the two tasks of a prophet were foretelling the future and warning people about their sins.

Finally, review Malachi's previous warnings: 1) Give God proper honor and 2) Keep your marriage vows.

In this lesson, Malachi speaks to another problem among the Israelites—they did not give a tenth of their income to God, which was what His law required.

Ask, 'Do you have spending money? How much of that money is yours?' Before answering this question, show the video, 'God's Pie' on YouTube. This video illustrates that all money comes from God; it's only right we give some of it back to him.

The original video with Spanish subtitles, 'God Pie' is on youtube from Central Films.

There are several remakes of the video you may want to check out as well.

Ask: "What is tithing?" (Answer: giving 10% of your income to God).

Ask: 'Where did this idea, giving 10%, come from?'

Answer: From the Old Testament; ten symbolizes completeness; giving 10% is a symbol of 'giving everything.'

2. Book – Malachi 3: 6-12

Today's reading from the book of Malachi addresses Israel's failure to give their tithe to the Lord. Read Malachi 3:6-12 and the table (see handout) for the reasons why tithing was so important for Israel.

The first reason was God's punishment (curse) if the Israelites did not give Him tithes (v. 9). The second reason was God's blessing if they gave Him tithes (vv. 10-12). *For the Israelites, blessing meant good harvests from the Lord.* The third reason was to show their obedience to God's command to give Him a tithe (v. 10). At that time, tithes would have been brought to the temple.

What did Jesus say about giving? Read Matthew 23:23. He told the Pharisees to keep tithing, but not to forget to show mercy. In other words, their personal care for each other was as important to God as their money. This was the only place Jesus mentioned tithing, but he talked about giving a lot. He even commanded a young rich man to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor.

The apostle Paul wrote a lot about giving.

Read I Corinthians 16:1-2. He said that we should give according to our income. Nobody was to think, 'I don't have much, so I shouldn't need to give.' Everyone can give a portion of what they had, even if it is a little.

3. Look

Play "True or False" to discuss the application of the lesson.

Read each sentence twice, giving the group a chance to think, and then count to three. At three they show either thumbs up (agree with the sentence) or thumbs down (disagree). Then have them explain why they answered as they did. Some of the questions can be right or wrong depending on circumstances. Get them thinking, don't just feed them your answers. If you don't agree with their answer, ask what the group thinks.

1. People have a right to want to make as much money as they can. (Let the teenagers discuss this question. You can give your opinion at the end.)

2. People in poorer countries deserve some of what we have.

3. Money is the root of all evil. (Remember, the Bible actually says that "the *love* of money is the root of all evil"—1 Timothy 6:10).

Ask: 'Can a person who has no money love money?'

4. People should always share what they have with others.

Ask: 'Does this apply equally to everyone? And is there a limit to how much a person should share?'

5. It is sinful to spend money on yourself for things you don't really need.

6. The local church should never ask for money.

The Bible says a lot about our attitude toward money. Money, even if we have little of it, can be a test from God, to see where our hearts lie: do we consider how to use money to please God, or will we simply try to get more for ourselves?

When we give to God or to help others, we acknowledge that everything comes from Him anyway, and that we trust Him enough to give some of it back to Him.

4 – Took

Tithing is no longer required of us like it was for ancient Israel. But giving was important to Jesus and to the early Christians in the Bible.

Since God asked for 10% from the Israelites, many people still feel like giving 10% of their income is a good amount to give away.

Application: Just do it! Start giving God a percentage of your money. If you don't know how much to give, try starting at 10%. It's a great life habit; you will not miss the money if you decide that its God's right from the start. End with prayer.

(Idea: perhaps you could raise funds within your group for a ministry project, or for someone in need?)

Jesus is Coming

Malachi 4

1. Why didn't people recognize Jesus when He came to earth the first time?

2.



What will the 'Day of the Lord' – the second coming of Jesus – be like?

Like a _____ - v.1

All proud and evil people and their works will be _____ - v.1

All who honor the Lord will be free and happy, like well-fed calves released from the _____ - v.2

The prophet _____ will come – v. 5

He will call people back to _____, _____ relationships (v. 5)

3. Jesus came the first time as the _____ of the world;
the second time He will come as the _____ of the world.

He will judge believers as well as unbelievers, but we will be *justified* (declared righteous) because of Jesus, who paid for our sins at the cost of His life.

4. Jesus is returning. Will you be ready?

Jesus is coming (The Second Coming – Malachi 4)

Significance for Teens

Jesus Christ should be at the center of our ministry. He came the first time to save us from our sins. We celebrate His first coming every year at Christmas. But He promised to come a second time, this time to judge the world. We have time NOW to gladly receive His gift of forgiveness. This lesson is very appropriate for giving teens an opportunity to ask for Christ's forgiveness and trust in Him, as we look ahead to Christ's second coming.

1. Hook

Begin with prayer. Soon we will celebrate Christmas. Ask, 'Why didn't people recognize Jesus as God's Son when He came to earth?' Possible answers: he was just a baby/child; they were expecting a military leader who would free them from the Romans; He was born in such a poor, humble family (Mary was young, Joseph was a carpenter, from a very ordinary small town, Nazareth), etc.

2. Book – Malachi 4

The Jews in the Bible expected the Messiah to come as a conqueror to save the nation from its enemies, but He came as a Savior, to save people from their sins. How could they be so mixed up?

The Bible predicts two times when Christ would come to earth. The first has already happened, but the second is still to come. Both coming were described in the Old Testament, but the Jews did not know to distinguish between them. They liked and understood the scriptures that described Christ as a liberator of Israel, who would save their nation from earthly enemies. But He came as a humble man and suffered a violent death to save ALL people from the spiritual bondage of sin.

See the timeline on the handout, which shows the sequence of the two times Christ appears on earth.

Ask: 'What do you think Christ's Second Coming will be like?' The book of Malachi, chapter 4, presents a picture of the end of the world. It is difficult to say for sure how everything will happen, but we know for certain that Jesus will return because He promised His disciples that He would come back.

Read Malachi, chapter 4. According to these verses, how can we describe the 'Day of the Lord?'

Like a furnace (v.1 – perhaps the world will be destroyed by fire).

All proud and evil people and their works will be destroyed (v.1)

All who honor the Lord will be free and happy, like well-fed calves released from a stall (v.2) *Some translations do not include "from a stall."*

Ask, 'What kind of 'stall' are we in now, or what keeps us from complete freedom?'

Possible answers: feel cooped up by a sinful world; physical limitations, unfair circumstances we can't change, etc.

The prophet Elijah will come (v. 5)

Ask, 'what kind of prophet is this?'

At the First Coming, John the Baptist was a similar prophet who came before Jesus. You can read Matthew 11:11-15.

We do not know exactly who it will be at the Second Coming: a true prophet of old, a real return of Elijah, or a new prophet that is like Elijah.

And He will call people back to right, loving relationships (v. 5)

3. Look

Jesus came the first time 2,000 years ago and will come a second time, but nobody knows when. (Show the timeline on the handout). Jesus came the first time as a Savior of the world and He still is our Savior. The second time He will come as the Judge of the world and usher in His forever Kingdom.

Tell the story of the **Savior-Judge**.

" Once there was a man who fell out of his boat and began to sink. He tried very hard, but he could not swim to his boat. He cried for help, and another fisherman heard his cries and rowed quickly to the man, helped him get back into his boat and saved his life.

Several years went by and the man who'd nearly drowned became a criminal. Once, he was arrested for robbing a store and was brought to trial. On entering the courtroom, he was pleased to see that the judge was the man who had rescued him many years before. But at the end of the trial when the man was sentenced to jail, he was perplexed and asked the judge, 'Don't you remember who I am?' The judge replied that he did remember. 'Oh yes. On that day I was your savior, but today I became your judge.'

4. Took

If there are kids in your group who have not confessed their sins and received Christ's forgiveness, today would be a good day to talk about that. You can share about how you came to Christ, or share the main ideas of the gospel:

1. God created us in His image and loves us. He wants us to enjoy fellowship with Him in this life and eternity (John 3:16).

2. But His image in humanity has been broken by sin. Our sinfulness stands between us and God (Romans 3:23).

3. The consequences of sin are separation from God and eventually, death (Romans 6:23).

4. Jesus lived without sin and died, taking the consequences of our sinfulness upon Himself (Romans 5:8).

5. We can't be saved by our own good deeds, or else Jesus would not be needed (Ephesians 2:8-9).

6. A person needs to accept this free, but priceless, gift from Jesus and be restored to a right relationship with God as His child (John 1:12).

You can lead the students in a prayer of confession and turning to Jesus, which the teens can repeat silently, or you can invite them to talk with you after class.

I always like to hand out feedback cards where kids can mark if they decided to trust Christ today, or in the past. Turning in a card should always be optional.

Repeat once again that Jesus will return and that we want to be ready to welcome that day with joy – like children of God.

If this lesson is near Christmas, you can end with a short video about Jesus' birth – his first coming!