

Seven Blueprints for a Burnout

Chapter 17

Audio Lesson: Old Testament number 90



Objective: To understand the symptoms of a heart that no longer loves God and how to return to Him.



“I have loved you,” says the Lord... “Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace...For you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall.

—Malachi 1:2, 4:1-2

“But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourself in god’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.”

—Jude 20-21

The literary form of Malachi is question-and-answer; the prophet makes a true statement, quotes the argument of the people, and then answers their argument with an explanation. There are seven examples of the people of God talking back to Malachi. These seven dialogues can be called, “Seven Whispers of a Heart Growing Cold Toward God,” because they describe the symptoms of people who have lost a love relationship with God. The mission of Malachi was to restore this relationship. The book concludes by telling us that Malachi achieved his objective because God’s people repented of their indifference.

The last chapter of the Old Testament also records God’s response to the repentance and revival of His people. Malachi presents the Second Coming of Christ, when the Son will rise with healing in His wings for the faithful, but severe judgment for the cold-hearted. He also introduces John the Baptist, the prophet who will come before Jesus and introduce Him as the Messiah.



1. True or false? Malachi's message deals primarily with spiritual indifference.
2. True or false? The opposite of love is always hatred.
3. True or false? God is more interested in how well we behave than how well we know and love Him.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. How does spiritual coldness usually begin?
 - a. With blatant idolatry
 - b. With long sermons
 - c. With deceivers who preach falsehood
 - d. With a lack of worship
5. Which of the following are evidence of a heart that is indifferent toward God? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. Humility
 - b. Serving others
 - c. Doubting God's love
 - d. Lack of motivation for God's work
 - e. Broken commitment to people
 - f. Loss of moral absolutes
 - g. Dishonesty with money
 - h. Leaving the faith
 - i. False teachings
6. When should a husband and wife be committed to each other?
 - a. Only when they feel very loving toward each other
 - b. Only when everything in life is going well for them
 - c. Only when their children are behaving well
 - d. In every kind of circumstance
7. Which of the following are absolute truth—things that are true for everyone—according to God? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. The Bible
 - b. Cultural customs
 - c. Morality
 - d. God's love
 - e. Consequences of sin
 - f. Dietary decisions
8. Which of the following does God say He hates most?
 - a. Accidental mistakes
 - b. Lack of understanding
 - c. Pride
 - d. Weakness

9. How does the book of Malachi end?
- a. With the destruction of Jerusalem
 - b. With a messianic prophecy
 - c. With the dedication of the new temple
 - d. With a genealogy of Jesus

10. What other New Testament character did Malachi prophesy about?
- a. The apostle Paul
 - b. Herod the Great
 - c. John the Baptist
 - d. Matthew



How would you describe the level of God's love for you? What is your level of love toward God? What are some things you can do to increase your love for God? What are some things you can do to show your love for God?



Thank God for His Word and this opportunity you have had to study through the Minor Prophets. Thank Him for learning that His greatest desire for you is for you to have a love relationship with Him. Ask Him to keep your heart from growing cold and to help your love for Him grow each day, and for you to share His love with others.



Going Deeper

1. How do you personally apply "The Blueprint for a Burnout" profiled by the literary form of Malachi? _____

2. How can doubting God's love lead to a negative attitude toward God's name and God's work?

3. How can doubting God's love have a negative impact on our commitments to God? _____

4. How can a lack of commitment to God lead to a lack of commitment to our marriage partner?

5. How can this lack of commitment impact the teaching of Scripture to give God the first tenth of all that we have? _____

6. How can this spiritual burnout lead to a life of denial? _____

7. In what ways have you ever devised a relative morality so you could live with a lifestyle you knew was immoral? _____
