**A Biblical View of the Family**

*The Covenant of Marriage and Love*

**Genesis 2, Malachi 2**

**The Crises in Marriage: “*I’m in Love*”**

**The Solution: *Covenantal Love***

**Malachi 2:13-16, Ezek. 16:6-8**

* **What is a Covenant?**
* *A solemn commitment expressed with vows before God and illustrated by a sign.*

**What Does Covenantal Love Look Like?**

Eph. 5:25; John 15:12-13; Phil 2:3-4; 1 Cor. 13:4-8

***The Hierarchy of Covenantal Love to “in love.”***

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**Digging Deeper**

**Ice Breaker:** *Some of you share the story of when you* ***fell in Love*** *with your spouse. Have fun with this.*

The fact that there is a crisis in marriage in our culture is not new information and it affects us all. Let’s commit to

1. Being “in Love” and committing to a “Covenantal Love” are different, but both are a wonderful thing. Tony Suggested that the problem is that we put too much on the emotion of “in love” and don’t really understand Covenantal love. What are your thoughts on this?

2. A Covenant is defined as “*A solemn commitment expressed with vows before God and illustrated by a sign.*” Slowly Read and discuss Malachi 2:13-16 and Ezekiel 16:68. Compare translations (especially on Malachi) and take your time on this. *Discuss the importance of your vows you made before God.*

3. Covenantal Love is a love that is “other” focused whereas “in love” tends to highlight our self-interest. Read through and discuss the following passages that Tony suggested illustrates what Covenantal Love looks like.

* Eph. 5:25 & John 15:12-13
* Phil 2:3-4 (*how prevalent is this humility in our Christian relationship, especially marriage?*)
* 1 Cor. 13:4-8 (*take your time with this one, maybe discuss one verse at a time*).

4 End this discussion with the idea of “pursuing” one another. Pursuing each other’s best interests seemed natural early in our relationships.

* *Why does it tend to wain as time goes by?*
* *When you are not being pursued, what are some of the lies you might believe about your spouse’s love for you?*
* *Come up with some practical suggestions for ways to maintain or restore the important aspect of pursuit in marriage.*