

Cyber Truths By E-mail

6. A Woman Imprisoned (March 30, 2005)



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Dear Friends,

Sue and I are just a few feet apart as we work at our respective desks each day. One of the saddest parts of this ministry for me is to hear her conversations on the phone with married women whose husbands have no heart to follow Jesus. These are the phone calls that cause us both to feel so helpless.

We hadn't appreciated how important a common accord of spirit between husband and wife was until our research in Israel. Shortly after we committed our lives to Christ in 1977, our Lord showed Sue and me His way of establishing His truth for us so that we would both have the same conviction to the same truths. Along the way we were taught the importance of establishing halakhahs for our lives. Through looking into the Word and discussing it, we found that the Holy Spirit caused us both to embrace His way of life for us with equal commitment.

The halakhic method was reinforced during our research in Israel as God's way for a husband to "cleanse his wife by the washing with water through the word" (Ephesians 5:26). (See our book, *Christian Halakhahs* for more on applying God's Word through halakhahs.)

As we've written in a previous newsletter, Nicolaitanism permits men to outsource their wives (and children), spiritually neglecting them for others to teach. This abdication of a husband's full responsibility to God for his family is the #1 contributor to why families in Nicolaitan systems have little regard for righteousness, with the same moral depravity as those who don't claim to be "Christian".

Women, make an appeal that your Father will honor!

We have anguished in prayer for years concerning how we can help wives who walk as though they are imprisoned by husbands whose path is heading for hell. During our prayer walk to our favorite heron rookery this past Sunday, the Lord gave me some guidance for you women whose husbands are self-satisfied and spiritually complacent, with little or no devotion to all that our God requires of them.

The Holy Spirit reminded me of Daniel, Shedrach, Meshach, and Abednego. We wrote about them in this most recent Lifebyte, *Book of Daniel* (Part 1). The solution the Lord gave me was for imprisoned wives to make an appeal that will stir God to get involved.

Appeals, as you will see in the *Lifebyte, Book of Daniel* (Part 1), require a heart of perfect deference toward the authority of your husband. The four young men had such hearts of deference, and God used them to affect a, entire heathen empire. And Jesus walked in deference toward His heavenly Father. The Centurion who approached Jesus about healing his sick servant also had this deference (Matthew 8:5-12). Jesus, in fact, commended him: "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great trust" (8:10).

Ladies, the kind of appeals that our Father honors requires that you have a completely clean conscience, especially toward your husband. We'd like to give you some ideas to consider if you make an appeal to your husband to follow our Lord wholeheartedly and apply His way of life for your family with greater earnestness:

1. Conquer your own innate tendencies.

You need to understand your own heart's fleshly motivation, and what you as a woman have inherited from the Fall. This isn't a put down! Paul reminds us, "But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning..." (2 Corinthians 11:3). Don't bristle! Eve gave this same excuse to God for her sin, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate" (Genesis 3:13).

The grievousness of Eve's sin wasn't about eating the fruit. Rather, it was what the fruit represented: "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). Her disobedience would enable her to be like God in recognizing evil (an unknown concept to her up until that time!) as well as good. Because of this desire for power God had not given her — the same craving Satan had which had gotten him cast out from heaven — the Lord cursed all women with the desire to usurp their husband's authority. (See Genesis 3:16). Our Lord knew that only the sanctification of Jesus in the heart of women can undo this motivation.

This is very vital for you to understand. The sanctification of a woman removes her yearning to rule, control, and manipulate. It is the most crucial facet of her transformation process into Christ-likeness!

Before you even consider an appeal to your husband, you need to scrutinize your heart. Is there agape love or self-empowering control in your motivation? You may remember from our survey of women at our retreat center: Over 93% of the women picked control rather than love when asked which they would

choose in dealing with their family. They envisioned particular outcomes and were determined to see that they were achieved!

Over the years as we've ministered to numerous men and women both married and single, we've observed a key difference between the genders as to the types of sin they commit. The passage of Scripture that continually comes to mind is, "The sins of some people are obvious and go ahead of them to judgment, but the sins of others follow afterwards" (1 Timothy 5:24).

Men's sins, in general, are overt. Usually they aren't hidden but can be seen by those around them. A man's sins are often seen through his actions. On the other hand, the sins of women are more attitudinal. This is why it's so much harder for many women to confront their own sin. Control and love can look the same on the surface, but the fruit each motivation produces in a family is entirely different. Control produces apprehension in a husband and in the children, and causes a manipulative spirit to prevail in the family's interactions. Love produces humility and servanthood, resulting in a peaceful home void of apprehension.

Ask some older women who follow Jesus with loving hearts to check you for your motivation. If this isn't possible, then fall upon the Holy Spirit for the scrutiny of motive you require.

To Make an Appeal Is To Confront Your Husband In Love

If you've read our book, *Growing Relationships Through Confrontation*, then you know that sometimes we must confront others for our own sake of well-being. We support others for their sake,

but we confront them for our sake. We confront with the goal to remove anything that hinders our relationship.

When we are forced into a decision of conscience because their behavior or actions is driving us further from them, we must confront them. We realize this is difficult for you. But we want to remind you of how a man is changed: (1). by role models he esteems; and, (2). by being confronted. A man is never changed by education. Education only increases his knowledge. This is why Bible studies and Sunday schools are so ineffective in producing men who boldly follow Jesus and fulfill their full responsibility to Him.

A woman is changed by: (1). role models she esteems; (2). by education (she's willing to put into practice what she hears or reads); and (3). somewhat by confrontation (although her emotions may block the content of the confrontation). We fully realize that we are encouraging you to use a method with your husband that most likely wouldn't work well to move you to change. But so much is at stake, including his eternal destiny, and possibly that of your children. And, you are the wife God has called to live in union with him as his helper. If you don't confront him through appeal, who will?

When you confront someone in authority over you, you must approach him in the form of an appeal. This is made easier if you have developed the three character qualities that Daniel, Shedrach, Meshach, and Abednego displayed. These character qualities caused our Lord to involve Himself with their situation. The three are personal responsibility, deference, and God-dependence. Again, you may want to read the Lifebyte, Book of Daniel (Part 1), to

understand these character qualities more fully.

First, you have a personal responsibility to our Lord concerning the truths you know to be true. As with the four men in Babylon, they could not violate God's Word even if it meant their own lives. You need to be certain that the truth you are going to appeal to your husband about is something that your conscience cannot violate. In other words, as with the four men, your participation would be sin if you did it. This is the critical foundation for your appeal. Your fellowship with your Father is at stake if you do not confront!

Second, your approach must be in total deference to your husband's authority. Your deference is intimately connected to your God-dependence. Because of the Holy Spirit in you, you don't want any control over the outcome! You know that our Lord sees the nature of your heart, and that you refuse to sin. Whether your husband even listens or changes is not in your hands. If you have an outcome in mind, that is, to "get him to change", you will use manipulation to get your way. Your control and manipulation will prove disastrous!

We've written in newsletters and articles about the four types of biblical fool a person can be (See Restoring the Early Church, Chapter 3, A Hebraic Perspective: The Foundational Thinking of the Early Church.)

1. Simple fool (peti)

Found in Proverbs 1:4, 22 and elsewhere, this denotes an ignorant or immature person who is vulnerable to error but still teachable. All of us should remain simple and teachable throughout our pilgrimage to salvation. The peti who is willing to seek help should be welcomed when he sees his own need

for correction and is willing to learn and apply wisdom to a certain area of his life.

If your husband is a Simple Fool, praise God! The appeal will be that much easier. And, the fruit it produces in both your lives will only add to our Father's glory. Even Nebuchadnezzar's servant was teachable enough to hear Daniel and the three men's appeal and to change his thinking.

If your husband is any of the three types of fool below, he is already in trouble with God. The leaders of the earliest Church would have turned such men over to Satan for the destruction of their sin nature, as Paul advised: "...hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 5:5). Satan is God's last instrument of mercy for a person who refuses to listen to human intervention.

Still, if your husband is one of the three types of fool below, you must make your appeal to him no matter what type of heart he has. God will take over after that. Your prayer and fasting both before and after your appeal hold great merit and will guard your heart from becoming impatient and manipulative.

2. Hardened fool (kesil)

This fool is stubbornly set in his ways: "As a dog returns to its vomit, so a kesil repeats his folly" (Proverbs 26:11). He so enjoys his evil ways that intervention by an elder, or an appeal by his wife, will probably prove futile. (See 1:22, 18:2, 6.) The evil, similar to the kesil in his moral deficiency, adds insolence and anger to his unwillingness to change (see Proverbs 29:9). He'll probably respond with quarreling and wrath if you try to correct him. (See 12:15; 14:9,29; 20:3; 27:22.)

3. Mocking fool (letz)

Described in Proverbs 21:24: "The proud and arrogant man — 'Mocker' is his name; he behaves with overweening pride." This fool disrupts the discussions of righteous men and women and heckles people of wisdom, including his wife and her walk of faith. He delights in stirring up controversies and sets himself up as an authority on every subject (see 29:8; 22:10; also Ps. 1:1). His arrogant pride keeps him from admitting his need for correction (9:7,8). No elder or wife can help such a man change until he is brought up short by encounters and circumstances God sends his way.

4. God-denying fool (nabal)

This fool denies that God has an influence in his life: "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalms 14:1). His disdain for holiness and obedience to God closes off any opportunity for an elder or wife to confront or correct him effectively. Disregarding the God of the Bible, the nabal creates for himself his own version of god — an unintrusive, all-accepting blasphemy of the One True God.

You must remember that you have no control over the nature of your husband's heart. But you cannot violate your conscience and entertain sin because of him. You must confront him through appeal. This is not rebellious, but is your responsibility before your Lord as this man's covenant partner.

In 1 Samuel 25 we are told about Abigail, who was married to the God-denying fool, Nabal. Through her actions she showed personal responsibility, deference, and God-dependence. As a result of his hardness of heart, Nabal died, and Abigail was wed to King David. The idolatry of a nabal leaves no room for God in his life. Oh, he may be reli-

gious, but a religion of his own making. Woman, if you have a husband like this (and we've met them!), you have our deepest sympathies. If you make an appeal, and your husband is a Simple Fool, he will appreciate what you did. Together, through humility and discussing God's Word, you can both follow the path of obedience to God's Word together with the same commitment. We've heard joyful testimonies from women of wisdom who have walked this path of appeal and found new and deeper unity with their husbands!

If your husband is any one of the other fools — hardened, mocking, or God-denying — and refuses to listen, we encourage you to take the matter to a leader in your faith community. Why? Your husband's unconforted sins may be hindering your prayers from being answered.

If you are in a fellowship of homes based on communal righteousness, we encourage you to take the matter to the men who are eldering the group. If you have none, then make your appeal to two men who head families. The confirmation of two or three is God's means to confirm all matters.

For you are in a Nicolaitan system, we realize that few leaders in this system will help you. But your due process will further stir God to involve Himself because of your clear conscience before Him. His character doesn't change! What He did for Daniel, Shedrach, Meshach and Abendego, He is still doing for those who walk in the same character qualities.

We hope this process will bring hope to the many of you who are imprisoned by sinful, unconforted husbands.

Caring in Jesus for your pain,
Mike & Dowgiewicz