

Yeshua MISHPACHAH

A NEWSLETTER TO THE FAMILY OF JESUS FROM RESTORATION MINISTRIES

The Hebraic family is not simply an individual or private matter. Rather, it is an institution in which the whole community has a stake. Thus, the Hebrew word "mishpachah," meaning family, not only refers to parents and children, but to the whole extended family worldwide in the body of "Yeshua"— our Jesus.

Dear Friends,

Did you know that very few writings focused on the Father until the 1940's? As our Father restored the Jewish people to the land of Israel, He began to reveal Himself more and more to His people. The literature concerning the tender mercy of our heavenly Father has increased exponentially ever since.

At the retreat center we asked people if they had ever listened to a sermon about the Father. Only a few had. I share this because our Father is revealing Himself. He is recruiting older men who will reflect His fatherly qualities in their families and faith communities. Many of His children have a distorted view of Him, caused by abuse or perceived failure by their earthly fathers. This blockage has prevented many from experiencing our Father's caring concern.

Another important fact for us to remember is that the Hebraic Restoration you are now hearing about began to be revealed during the 1960's. This happened in conjunction with the Jewish people regaining Jerusalem in 1967 for the first time in over 2000 years, fulfilling Luke 21:24.

The Holy Spirit gave me three words of priority to use when we share the Restoration Diagram: *critical*, *essential*, and *less essential*. The *critical* are the priorities which matter for eternity. The *essential* are the primary support to uphold and spur on people to abide and grow in the *critical*. The *less essential* are just that: valuable but less essential than the other two priorities.

The diagram below shows the sequence of these priorities. The *critical* is our abiding, intimate relationship with our Father and with His Son: "*We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ*" (1 John 1:3). When this is a daily reality, the rest of the priorities can be fulfilled. Consider the implications of these priorities for your life.

When you think of yourself as a Christian, what comes to mind first:

Your intimate relationship with the Father and His beloved Son?

Or do your church, its building, and the activities and programs come to mind first?

Who is your primary support to spur you on to keep the *critical* priority?

[As an analogy of *misplaced priority* consider the following:

The wife whose *only* compliment from her husband is, "I love her because she's a great cook."

The teen who says, "I know my parents love me because they always buy me things."

The believer who acknowledges "I come to this church because of the great music."

Consider how *misplaced* priorities appear as *idolatry* to our Lord. They diminish the intimacy we so long for.]

"They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations" (Isaiah 61:4).

The relational priorities which the Father is restoring today have not been experienced by the vast majority of the Church since the early centuries. Relational intimacy and spiritual power are being offered to us. To equip and enable His people to live in His priorities, our Father has ordained that older men shepherd (elder) His people, nurturing and exhorting them.

The role of men who shepherded the early Church follows the pattern of the shepherding elder in the Older Testament. Through years of experience and wisdom development they could clearly differentiate the *critical* and *essential* from the *less essential*.

Elders who reflect the Father have both a shepherd's and a warrior's vigilance. From *Pastoring by Elders* we would like to share with you what this vigilance entails.

Chapter 14 A Journey Begins: A Destination and a First Step

Certain biblical patterns are captured in the word *vigilance*. To older men who shepherd home fellowships: Take note and apply them! [We are grateful to noted Argentinian church planter Ed Silvano for his insights.]

Seizing Your Neighborhood for Jesus

1. Establish a perimeter of holiness in each home of your faith community.

Remember, the primary reason for fellowship in homes is to *uphold righteousness*. The early Church understood that God answers the

prayers of the righteous. Pray for our² *do good, evil is right there with me*" (Rom. 7:21).

Satan's most common weapon of war is bitterness. That is why Paul warned, "*In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold*" (Eph. 4:26,27). God's people can be used by Satan when they give him a foothold from which to operate. Those who are plagued by bitterness may appear to want help, but in time they will defile others in your faith community: "*See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many*" (Heb. 12:15).

Why is it so important for perimeters of righteousness to be established?

- Perimeters *secure a sanctuary* of spiritual refuge and nurture in the home.
- Those within the perimeters *experience unity* as they pay the price of forfeiting their own desires in order to please their Lord.
- By upholding communal righteousness within the perimeters, their *prayers will be answered*.

It is important for an individual or family to establish *halakhahs* of righteousness for their home. With standards of biblical application established, they can scrutinize their homes for any unholy items or practices. Sinful reading materials, offensive television programs, unholy music, even certain foreign or pagan souvenirs will hinder intimacy with God and the effectiveness of prayer. So will alcohol or drug abuse, rage, or self-indulgence in excess of any kind.

2. Secure your perimeter and protect it from infiltration.

Securing the perimeter requires that elders be vigilant. When holy perimeters are established, Satan will attempt to infiltrate by any scheme or device possible. Sin will seek you out like never before as an active demonic weapon. Paul understood the intensity of this struggle when he lamented, "*So I find this law at work: When I want to*

were dropping out even before their first term was over. As the leaders investigated the causes, they discovered that 80% of those who had left were plagued by unresolved past bitterness with family members. The dropouts couldn't get along with colleagues because they reminded them of family members with whom they'd never learned to get along.

Bitterness operates like witchcraft to control, manipulate, or exercise power over others. The "grace of God" the apostle refers to is sufficient for a believer to choose to forgive. *Missing* that grace demonstrates a lack of appreciation for the preciousness of Jesus's shed blood. Those bitter tentacles can reach into the lives of others in the faith community to cause grievous trouble in the whole flock.

People project their unresolved family conflicts onto others with whom they will have close contact in the future.

Can you see how the poison of bitterness can infect others? Ponder this anecdote from our sheep flock. A local 4-H'er offered us his ewe. She was a good-looking sheep and we gratefully added her to our flock. Not too long after, we noticed she was limping. Close inspection revealed the shepherd's bane: foot rot. A highly contagious affliction, foot rot destroys the hoof tissue, crippling the sheep and hindering her ability to graze. To our dismay, the entire flock had been infected. How many hours were spent dipping hooves into copper sulfate and cutting away rotted tissue! The lesson we learned has spiritual implications: No matter how wonderful a sheep looks on the outside, if the infection of bitterness is present, you can be sure that others will be contaminated by it. Bitter people and infected sheep cause trouble and defile many!

The leaders of a certain missionary organization became very concerned because 50% of their missionaries

• This very same situation occurs when a person who didn't get along with his or her parents marries.

• The way a woman responds to her father's authority tends to be the way she will respond to the authority of her husband.

• The way a man treated his mother tends to be the way he will treat his wife. A mother is very aware of her son's shortcomings and will call them to his attention. When he marries and his wife tries to tactfully do the same, his response to her is likely to be, "You're just like my mother!" He will often project the same resentment onto other women that he meets later in his life, whether in workplaces or church settings.

The same scenario operates in a woman's response toward other men. Even unresolved conflicts with siblings will tend to cause negative reactions toward others whom they will meet later in life.

When Mike was counseling church leaders, one shared this: "I like to watch the reaction of clergy to you. If they have a good relationship with their fathers, they get along with you. But if there is unresolved bitterness toward their dad, they speak against you. That response is how I recognize which ones I want to befriend and which ones to be careful of." Mike was surprised by this observation, but because of his caring relationship with his own father, he knew it was true.

Bitterness is the foothold from

which the spirits of antichrist and³ weigh carefully what is said" (1 Cor. 14:29); and, "Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good" (1 Thess 5:19-21).
(2) **Misuse of psychology** imprisons believers in their past to explore the causes of their pain rather than to release the pain through heart forgiveness. Bondage keeps the sufferer from repenting for his or her bitterness and from relying on the grace and power of God to heal their emotions. Many of those who counsel others to explore their bitter memories are themselves still prisoners of bitterness. The severe words of Jesus should be weighed: "Woe to you, you make a person twice as much a son of hell as you are" (Matt. 23:15). Our Father uses that suffering to transform the character of His Son Jesus in His children. Our past hurts have been altered by Him to develop our character and should be viewed as "**marks of ownership.**" Those who can accept this truth have been shown the beauty that was born out of their suffering and the hope and patient endurance that the Father has brought about through that pain (see Rom. 5:3-5)..

The antichrist spirit denies the Gospel of the Hebrew Bible. The person influenced by this spirit fails to forgive others. Many who profess to follow Christ are in fact deceived and display no evidence of the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. Without Jesus, they are a lawless people with no regard for the commands or the holiness of God. In fact, "[The man of lawlessness] opposes and exalts himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God" (2 Thess. 2:4).

Lawlessness appears in the antinomian attitude of those in the Church who abuse grace by believing that God excuses their sin through blanket forgiveness. Out of ignorance or defiance, they fail to understand that grace is a spiritual empowerment to repent and to obey God's commands.

Vigilant elders can discern three practices by which demonic spirits are deluding the Church today:

(1) **False prophets** manipulate forecasts of the future for personal gain or recognition. Some claim special insight into "end time" scenarios. Yet, Jesus advises, "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matt. 24:36). Other false prophets often demand immediate response without providing time for those present to test what is shared. Paul understood the danger of false prophecy (see 1 Thess. 2:2), and in two of his letters warns the people to weigh and test what is shared: "Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should

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(3) **False worship**, especially through certain music and forceful incantations, conjures a soulless mood in the same manner pagans use. Worship leaders and facilitators who have "unclean hands and impure hearts" seek a form of worship that pleases them but not the Father. What kind of worship does please our Father? Scripture is clear: "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in **spirit and truth**, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks" (John 4:23); and, "You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a **broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise**" (Psalm 51:16,17).

Spotting a Bitter Person

- Those who are bitter focus on *their own rights*. Their wrong expectations of other people lead to frustration and impatience. Bitterness compels them to find people who will empathize with their misery.
- People who are agitated by bitterness *distrust and resist* those who are in authority. Because they are so determined to avoid criticism of any kind, they often require minutely detailed instructions for any given task or assignment. They *fail to follow through* on the advice and counsel given them by those seeking to help. The bitter person may also experience conflict in maintaining correct priorities.
- Individuals wrapped in bitterness are particularly alert to the *discontent of others* and gain personal satisfaction when they listen to bad reports. Their personal dissatisfaction may lead them to promote discontent in other people. They may take up offense against someone who has done them no wrong.
- Because of their own personal anguish, bitter people *magnify and exaggerate problems*. They are habitually unable to restore relationships with people from their past or with individuals who remind them of previous painful relationships.

Bitter people wield two weapons designed to damage others in their family or faith community:

- Gossip—detrimental information shared with those who are not part of the problem or the solution.
- Slander—Error or partial truth spoken in order to hurt others or to gain support for themselves.

The Double Whammy of Bitter Envy & Selfish Ambition

The Bible refers to a certain type of bitterness called bitter envy: "If you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such wisdom...is earthly, unspiritual, of the

devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice” (James 3:14-16).

Far too many men and women fail to mature in their faith pilgrimage because of bitter envy and selfish ambition. Bitter envy is often a product of sibling conflicts. One sibling, either due to his or her own wrong focus or as a result of pressure from parents, grows up comparing his/her life with one or all of his/her brothers and sisters. This inappropriate focus, called bitter envy, keeps them trapped. They often feel they have gotten “the short end of the stick.” Throughout their lives bitter envy will cause these individuals to compare their circumstances with those of others they meet. Resentment or jealousy toward another will grow if that person is perceived as better off or more accomplished. The apostle John describes such people: *“But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him” (1 John 2:11).*

To compensate for the ugly inner feelings caused by bitter envy, such people focus on getting ahead any way they can. A person driven by selfish ambition becomes an *idol* unto himself. He acts without any consideration of God’s will or of the people he hurts. His life may exhibit a series of financial problems, wrong goals and decisions, and severed relationships. He lives a lie yet cannot see it.

3. Expand the perimeter.

In keeping with our Father’s goal of reconciliation with the lost, expand your perimeter. Pray for your neighborhoods, schools, workplaces. Establish relationships with unbelievers to reach their hearts. Those in your faith community should use their homes, schools, and workplaces as primary places to represent Jesus to the world. Inviting a person

into your home is one of the most affirming actions you can take.

Bringing unbelievers into your faith community in the hope that there they might get saved is counterproductive. Your relationship with that individual is the key for his eyes to be opened to the holiness of God as he sees Jesus working in and through you. People need to be connected to *other individuals*, not to a group *per se*.

Because Christ died for sinners, He calls everyone who is known by His Name to be part of His purpose. Relationships with unbelievers enable you to establish beachheads in enemy territory. To wage effective warfare:

- Make a prayer list of the unbelievers with whom each person in your faith community has contact and is burdened for their salvation.

- As a community, intercede for each unsaved person on a regular basis. Weaken the power of the enemy through prayer for those people.

- As a follower of Jesus, you have authority over the spirits that will try to interfere with the salvation of the ones for whom you are praying. As you pray, serve eviction notices to the spirits in the name of Jesus. You will find yourself rejoicing even as your forefathers in the faith did: *“Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name” (Luke 10:17)!*

- If you have the courage, request those in your faith community to put a sign on their homes indicating that this is a house of prayer and that you will pray for any of the needs in the neighborhood. Ask each fellowship family to keep a prayer notebook with four columns in it: date, petitioner, prayer request, date answered. Then have each one ask their neighbors for any specific prayer needs that they can note down and pray about. (They should urge the neighbors to let them know when and how the prayer was answered so they can write that in the notebook!)

Consider the same plan for your workplaces and schools.

4. Destroy Satan's perimeter by multiplying your faith communities.

Any goal that does not include provision for new faith communities to be formed is an exercise in futility. Plan ahead for new faith communities that could accommodate new converts. Our Father, in the name of His Son Jesus, has given us the power and authority to plant new faith communities. Shepherds need to be purposely training successors to train, nurture, and equip the new flocks.

As your faith communities multiply, they can remain affiliated and coordinated through the relationships of the shepherds. Remember, in your expansion you are developing extended spiritual family or kin folk. The different fellowships can gather if they desire for any number of purposes, be they social and/or spiritual, just as extended families do.

An exhortation: We have included the above excerpt as an encouragement for those of you who are endeavoring to take the first steps to live out the Hebraic priorities. We cannot stress enough the insidiousness of the antichrist and lawless spirits. As new people join you in fellowship, ensure that all bitterness has been repented of and reconciliation accomplished where possible. Bitterness that remains will only defile you, hinder your communal righteousness, and cause your prayers to go unanswered.

Our love,

Mike & Sue Dorgiewicz

Email

Mike: mikedowg@aol.com

Sue: Suedowgie@aol.com

Web: Restorationministries.org