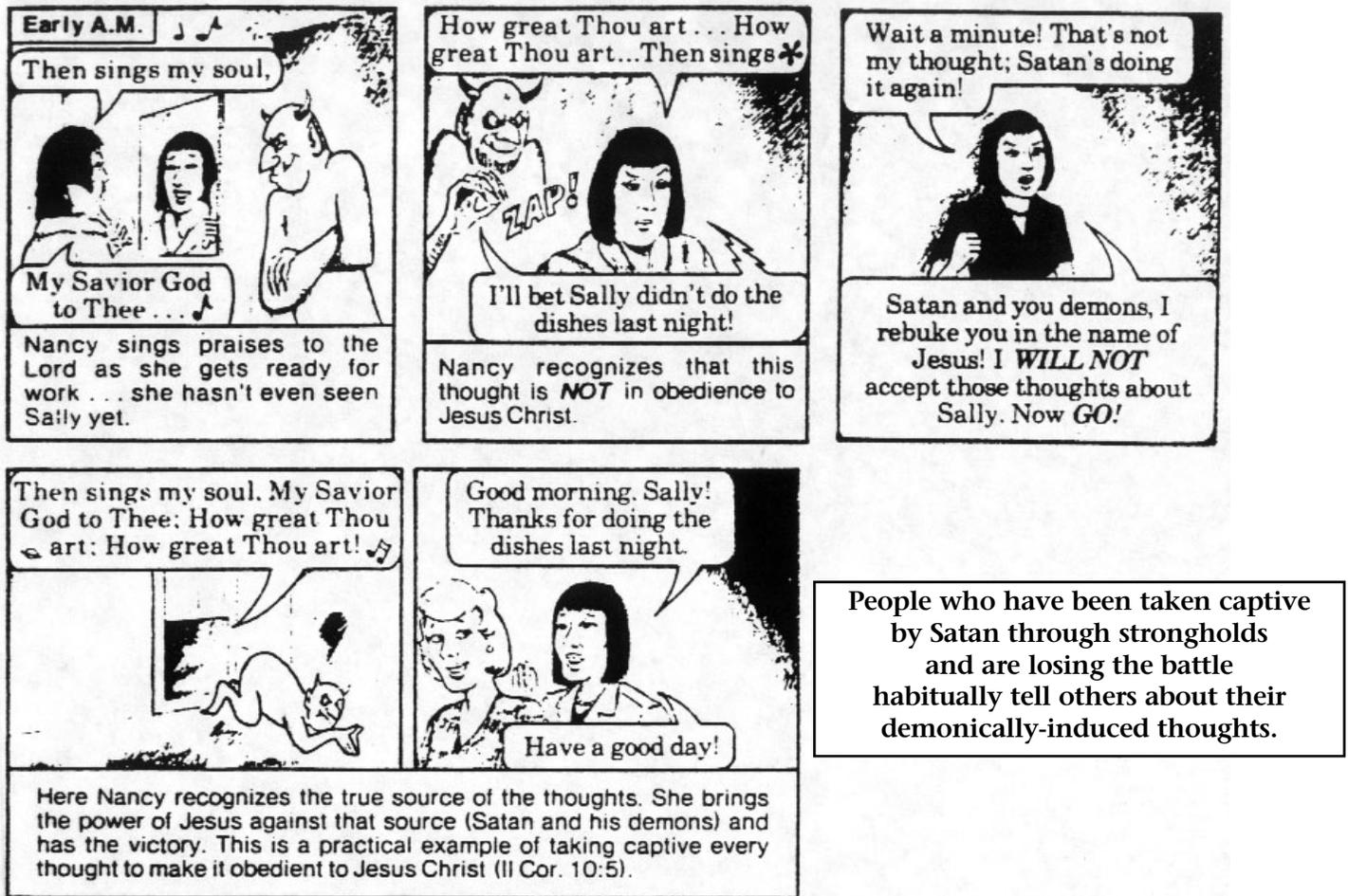


Follow the biblical pattern of James 4:7,8a: "Therefore, **submit to God**. Moreover, **take a stand against the Adversary, and he will flee from you. Come close to God, and he will come close to you.**"

Figure 111



suits, most psychology is *man-centered*, and personal satisfaction is its highest pursuit.

Hellenism: *God exists to love and to serve man.*

Hebraic: *Man exists to love and to serve God.*

"Christian counseling" pervades the religious scene. Much of it interferes with the individual's Covenant relationship with our Father. True biblical counseling holds a person accountable for his responses, and directs him toward the healing that only a walk of obedient love and trust in Jesus can bring. Sadly, much of counseling is technique-oriented or involves behavior modification, with little focus on the power of Jesus to heal, or the biblical steps of forgiveness and release of bitterness and unforgiveness toward others. The psychological method seduces your mind into believing that:

- Sharing the painful details brings me closer to others.
- Sharing what others have done to me helps you to understand me.
- Your understanding will ease my emotional hurt.

On face value nothing seems wrong with the above logic. It seems innocent to tell someone else the thoughts that demons have induced. Psychology has

bred a host of 'would-be Christian counselors' who believe they are helping as they mercifully listen to the negative thought life of others. Yet, when hurts from the past that only our Father can heal are shared, a breach of relationship with Him takes place. As He did with Israel, He'll turn you over to your "lovers." Deluded, you'll find yourself going from person to person with the same bitter stories. Equally as sad, you'll find too many ready to listen and to take up an offense against a person they've never met. Few if any will bother to call the supposed offender to verify your story.

It's easy to share under the guise of intimacy the demonic thoughts you entertain. But in time you'll schluck the people who listen: "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).

People who have been taken captive by Satan through strongholds and are losing the battle habitually tell others about their demonically-induced thoughts. Satan has a legal right to this area of their soul. Especially with bitterness, he wants to defile as many as possible.

Sadly, too many people derive a perverse satisfaction from listening to the bitter woes and negative

**Wherever you find fear and insecurity  
plaguing someone, you'll usually find  
unresolved bitterness at the root.**

thoughts that others haven't taken captive. Satan then uses the listeners to entice others into sinning through slander and gossip. The Bible doesn't lie: *"The words of a gossip are like choice morsels; they go down to a man's inmost parts"* (Pro. 26:22).

Listening to bitterness and resentment only makes you a partner in the prostitution of the person speaking. Your empathy only serves to keep the person from humbly seeking the healing Jesus gives. As Paul asked earlier, *"Are [you] stronger than [God]?"* You, the listener, end up becoming a robber. You steal from the Lord. Those sins of the person sharing belong to Jesus as the sin sacrifice. He, not you, died on the cross so that that person could be forgiven. You rob the person of the forgiveness Jesus would give if he or she repented. *Think about this.* The Lord's words to the Israelites may apply to all those who turn to man rather than to Jesus for healing: *"You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them"* (Matt. 13:14,15).

***"We will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete"***

The 2 Corinthians passage quoted earlier ends with the above verse. It seems strange until you have walked free from strongholds for some time and seriously applied the personal calisthenic to take your thoughts captive and bring them into obedience to Jesus. When you are clean of strongholds and are fervently taking your thoughts captive, you can caringly confront others about sin. You'll find deep inside that you care so much for a person gone astray that you can confront him or her in loving rebuke. When they repent, they are then available as fit vessels to serve our Father's purposes. This is the beauty of it all. The litmus test is the *love in your heart* for the person you confront.

Before the strongholds are gone and the Spirit of Jesus has exerted sufficient influence in a person's mind, people with the *same spiritual strongholds* are the first to find fault with each other. It is one of the easiest mechanisms Satan uses to agitate people against each other. Deceit often hinders the accuser from seeing his own faults.

Also, *stronghold projection* can hinder relationships:

- A person plagued with unresolved bitterness projects that others are bitter toward him/her.
- A person filled with jealousy or envy thinks others view them the same way.

An important observation: Wherever you find fear and insecurity plaguing someone, you'll usually find

*unresolved bitterness* at the root. As needy as a person who comes to you sharing his fears and insecurities sounds, make him face and repent of the bitterness that is the root. I personally believe that our Father turns a bitter person who has failed to grasp how much He has forgiven him over to the demons of fear and insecurity to be tormented until he does choose to forgive. Then our loving Father can forgive him. Again, don't ever get between our Father and His rebellious child!

### **Some Warnings to Consider**

**1. Parents.** Be careful not to get between parents and their children in the gossip and slander they try to tell you. *"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse"* (Mal. 4:5,6). In our last newsletter we mentioned a prophetic sequence beginning with the work of "Elijah."

Get both sides together before you listen. So much God-desired reconciliation between parents and children is hindered by well-meaning yet misguided counselors who hear only one side of the story.

**2. Marriages.** If you are a woman having problems with your husband, pray and fast before you talk to anyone else. Don't immediately get on the phone to share your woes. Isn't there a God who sees? If need be, go to a godly older woman, or better yet, ask another couple to sit down with you and your spouse. Be sure not to share your problems with men, especially with male clergy. As surveys have shown, pastoral marriage counseling too often leads to unfaithfulness, either emotionally or physically.

Stay away from female counselors who aren't ministering with their husbands. You will only find the rift with your husband growing because her example may lead you toward what she perhaps has in her own marriage — *relational independence* rather than *mutual interdependence*. We've seen too many women turn away from their husbands for the short-term gain of self-gratification rather than committing themselves to be peacemakers in their homes.

Rather than seeking others to take sides with either of you, maybe you both need to renew your own commitment to your marriage covenant. Before anyone else gets involved, sit down and discuss which issues of your covenant are problematic. The Hebraic perspective looks at an issue as "WE have a problem WE need

to address." The Hellenistic viewpoint accuses, "YOU have a problem that I want solved." Once you have talked with each other for clarification, you may agree to ask a godly couple for help if necessary. Remember, our Father is FOR your marriage! When each of you is walking aligned with His will, He is then free to weave your hearts together to fulfill His purposes for you as a couple.

**3. Let Go of the Future.** Any anxiety about or conjecture concerning your future is stepping on God's domain. You don't step on His turf or sit on His throne without ramifications. Let go of any concern and take your thoughts captive until the trust of Jesus controls your heart. Stepping into God's domain or infringing on His character has a bad ending.

**4. Release all Bitterness.** The poem below was given to me by our dear friend, Frank Murray, shortly after I had been wrongfully fired from a job. He told me, "You have to see this as the hand of God or else you will become embittered." As we knelt together he read this poem to me, penetrating my wounded heart.

#### STEP BY STEP

"As thou goest, step by step I will open the way before thee"  
(Proverbs 4:12, New Translation).

Child of My love, fear not the unknown morrow,  
Dread not the new demand life makes of thee;  
Thy ignorance doth hold no cause for sorrow,  
Since what thou knowest not is known to Me.

Thou canst not see today the hidden meaning  
Of My Command, but thou the light shalt gain;  
Walk on in faith, upon My promise leaning,  
And as thou goest, all shall be made plain.

One step thou seest — then go forward boldly,  
One step is far enough for faith to see;  
Take that, and thy next duty shall be told thee,  
For step by step thy Lord is leading thee.

Stand not in fear, thine adversaries counting,  
Dare every peril, save to disobey;  
Thou shalt march on, all obstacles surmounting,  
For I, the Strong, will open up the way.

Wherefore go gladly to the task assigned thee,  
Having My promise, needing nothing more  
Than just to know, where'er the future find thee,  
In all thy journeying I go before.

Frank J. Exley

May God deliver you from all your strongholds and fill you with the truth of His Spirit!

## May Jesus Reign in Our Hearts

No one who truly follows Jesus can handle more than one step of faith at a time. And because of your intimacy and trust in Him, you don't need more than one step. Our Father and His Son, Jesus, know Who they are and the confidence we can have in the Bible's revelation of them. The Godhead is the only reality. Everything else is untrustworthy. The Lord isn't giving us a vain command when He says, "**Take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**" Our Father understands far more than we do where this discipline ultimately leads—It leads to the sanctification of our souls—fleeing the earthly and embracing the heavenly.

Don't think that Sue and I are removed from the abusive attacks Christians can use to hurt one another. We receive some very scathing correspondence. Each time, we battle through the sting until our motives and actions are redemptive. Christ must prevail before we act. It's grievous at times to recognize how far *His* thoughts and actions are from *our* initial responses.

Much of what we have been writing is captured by the prophets of previous millennia: "*Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. 'For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts'*" (Isaiah 55:6-8).

Join us in your determination to bring glory to our Father. Scrutinize yourself to see if there is anything hindering you from following in Jesus' steps in the freedom of love and obedient trust. Permit the Lord to give you His thoughts, for His wisdom is THE solution to all your problems. Don't permit anyone to cut in on your relationship with your Father.

Joyful in His faithfulness,

*Mike & Sue*

*The power of the righteous consists not in their number but in the grace of the Spirit. There were twelve apostles. How little leaven! But these twelve turned the world upside down. Let only ten change, and soon they will be twenty, the twenty will become 100, the 100 will become 1,000, and the 1,000, a whole town.*

*Just as the lighting of ten candles can give light to a whole house, so it is with spiritual acts. Let only ten change and we can start a fire that will give light to all.*

John Chrysostom

**Do not be afraid to go back and Demolish Strongholds whenever anything is blocking the Truth and Love of Jesus in your life.**

## PRAISE

1. How thankful we are that Kevin, the young man working on our website, has been able to do so much with it to make the information more accessible and user-friendly! May our Lord receive praise and glory around the world from those who are hearing His call to restore the intimacy and power of the earliest Church!

2. Our Father has graciously raised up a number of willing followers of Jesus who are eager to help us create "**Prairie Parables**"—short stories to illustrate application of His Word in everyday settings. May they be clear, encouraging, and useful to those who are pursuing the will of our Lord wholeheartedly!

3. Last month we asked you to pray for **Chad and Chris Parlier** and opportunities for them among the handicapped at both Chad's workplace and in their neighborhood. This past week our Father opened two doors of access for Chad to help his clients get jobs. He also brought to them a couple down the street desperately needing respite time during the week as they care for their handicapped child. Our Lord stirred Chad and Chris to step into that relationship themselves to bring the loving response of Jesus to that family!

## PRAYER

1. For **James & Joyce Skeet**. James may be consulting with a large mission agency that has recently ceased all ministry to Native Americans. Pray that the Lord would give James & Joyce wisdom, and the mission the courage to share as the early Church did—imparting justice and dignity.

2. A statistic jumped out at us from our friend Chuck Crismier's latest book, *Renewing the Soul of America*: Grievously, 100,000 people **over the age of 55** get divorced in the US each year, breaking marriage covenants of 30 or more years of duration. How tragic that such purposelessness and self-gratification have destroyed relationships that could have borne such fruit of wisdom for the next generation! Please pray with us for mature married couples to renew their commitment to each other, and particularly that they seek a special work for them **as a couple** that our Lord can raise up for His purpose and glory.

3. Uplift **Tom Woodruff** in Texas as he labors to stream our seminar videotapes into useable footage for the website. This culture thrives on video presentations, and perhaps more hearts will be opened to deepening their walk with Jesus if they can *see it presented*.

4. Our dear book distributor, Patsi, has been overwhelmed by purchase orders on behalf of her many clients, so we will be retrieving our 7000+ books from her in Colorado to distribute them ourselves. Please pray for us as we learn what is necessary about sales tax laws in AZ and how to keep track of inventory and distribution on our computers!

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## Restoration Ministries International

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