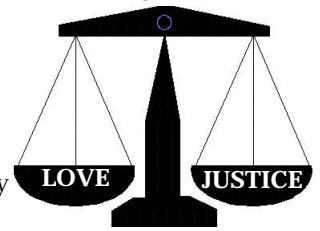


Yeshua MISHPACHAH

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.

UPHOLDING HUMAN
DIGNITY



Matt. 25:31-46

Love the Lord Your God with all...

Dear Friends,

Sue and I returned from several weeks away as Sue's Mom's passed away early in October. A bright spot during our travel was visiting our son Mike and his wife Leigh and daughter Katie. While with them we met an Amish family, the Flauds, from whom they had rented a house and become friends.

The time spent with the Flaud family was a breath of fresh spiritual air to us. What was supposed to be a short visit lasted hours. The father, Abram, honored me by taking me out to his workshop to talk on a personal level as fathers. As we talked, I shared the Hebraic foundations with him. Both of us were thrilled to see how much they were already part of his family's devotion to Jesus. He asked for copies of all of our books.

We had noticed that his wife, Priscilla, was fairly dark-skinned. Before we departed Abram asked if I could help find out from which Native American tribe she had descended. One of her ancestors had been kidnapped by an Indian tribe, then married a Native woman and raised several children with her. He adopted many Native ways before returning with them to the Amish.

In my spirit God reminded me that many Indian prophets have been saying, "When God

chastises the United States during the Dark Days, He will use the Native Americans to rebuild the Church He wants." Many more encounters on this trip revealed the Divine hand of God blessing us.

Following Jesus — Vertical First, THEN Horizontal

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as your self.' There is no commandment greater than these."

(Mark 12:30,31)

Can there be any doubt about the *intensity of love* our God requires of us? Sadly, during our trip east we also spent a considerable amount of time among Hellenized Christians enmeshed in Nicolaitanism. Our hearts hurt for them and their blindness to God's desire for a love relationship with them evidenced by life transformation through His Spirit.

We noticed that most conversations of a spiritual nature centered on the "horizontal" — that is, their religious activity. Not one testimony attested to the loving faithfulness of our Father.

We grieved that so few grasped how critical the above passage from Mark is to salvation: ***"For in Christ Jesus the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love"*** (Galatians 5:6).

We longed for the "vertical" dimension — that which both glorifies our Father and pleases Him.

"The Vertical"

The vertical dimension of your lives represents the facets that comprise your relationship with our heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus. Each particular part of the vertical enhances the quality of your love relationship with our Lord.

The vertical flows from your *heart's motivation* as empowered by the Holy Spirit, a yearning for an ever-increasing love relationship with our Father and His Son. This powerful intimacy can happen only when you accept the Gospel that Jesus speaks of in John 7:38,39a: ***"Whoever trusts in me as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who trust in him were later to receive.*** (See our March/ April 2002 *Mishpachah Yeshua* newsletter for more on

The vertical flows from your *heart's motivation* as empowered by the Holy Spirit, a yearning for an ever-increasing love relationship with our Father and His Son.

Preparing the Family of Jesus for the Dark Days to Come

the true Gospel that brings the indwelling Holy Spirit.)

So many religious practices have little or nothing to do with the vertical aspect of your faith walk. In fact, religious practices are often man-made, filling in for the lack of loving devotion to God.

Most of us struggle to maintain a strong vertical dimension in our lives. We grow accustomed to the distractions and clamor of the physical world. Our sight and other senses can block out our heart's desire to lovingly communicate with our Father.

But remember, He understands our weakness! That's why our Father gives His children the indwelling Holy Spirit when He consummates His Covenant with us. The *Spirit's presence in us* is what makes all the difference, and separates out from the rest of humanity the person who has embraced the Covenant offered by our Father through Jesus.

In a world system that is striving to unify all manner of religion under the guise of ecumenism, the Christian distinctive stands out: "*You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ*" (Romans 8:9).

You'd be amazed by the number of faithful churchgoers we know who confess a theology of their own construction — one that believes all "good people" go to heaven. How often does Scripture have to reiterate that *every human being is sinful* in our righteous Father's sight, and that without trust only in the gracious sacrifice of our risen Jesus, NO ONE can approach Him,

much less have an intimate love relationship with Him!

Only the Holy Spirit can enable you to grow in relationship with our Lord. His presence in you is the *evidence* that the VERTICAL is a reality in your life. Your spiritual development takes place as you repent for violating His commands and seek the powerful help that only the Holy Spirit can give.

Your loving-trust in God leads to a lifestyle of *faith enactment*. In other words, your relationship with our Father is evidenced by what you do as a *result* of that relationship. Your growth in the "vertical" is seen when you sacrificially "one-another" because of your relationship with your God. And out of *that* relationship, you can "*love others as yourself.*"

At our seminars on the Hebraic foundations this past decade, we encountered only 3 out of 100 "Christians" who knew that they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit. This was not by our judgment, but by their own admission! During the course of the seminar, most of the others realized that they had embraced a *false gospel* developed by man to appease guilt pangs.

Most recognized how shallow agreement with a few verses and struggling along trying to be "good" were, especially when so few were even aware that they needed to *repent* before receiving forgiveness!

Many felt their walk with Jesus was more like a bandaid that had been applied over a bullet wound. While others might

Your spiritual development takes place as you repent for violating our Lord's commands and seek the powerful help that only the Holy Spirit can give.

not be aware of the individual's personal pain because he (or she) was an active churchgoer, the *victim* knew he wasn't right with our Father. He knew he didn't have a love-grounded obedient trust walk with Jesus, but didn't know what to do about it!

How about you?

- Is the Holy Spirit indwelling you? Maybe you embraced a false, man-centered gospel and never turned away from your sin and received our Father's forgiveness. Perhaps demonic strongholds have hindered the Holy Spirit from impacting your soul (your mind, will, and emotions) so that you could be conformed in character to Jesus. What will *you* choose this day to do about it?
- Do those who intimately know you see the fruit and gifts of the Spirit at work in you? Do people perceive the ever-increasing character of Jesus growing in you?
- Do you attract people to Jesus by your walk with Him? If you're married, does your marriage attract people to Jesus by His loving work in you as a couple?
- Are you willing to call upon Him to bring about changes to conform you to His character and purposes?

"The Horizontal"

The horizontal dimension to your faith pilgrimage encompasses your faith practices and relationships here on earth. And that's *good!* There's nothing wrong with horizontal enactment! Even though we are "born from above", we do live in a physical realm, and to love our fellow man as we love ourselves is a biblical mandate. (Continued on page 4)

Facets of the True Vertical in Your Life

Goal: Increased loving-trust in God our Father, and walking in the freedom offered to you through Jesus our Messiah

VERTICAL: the motivation of your heart and spirit made possible through repentance and the indwelling Holy Spirit

Love for and trust in our Father (see Proverbs 3:5,6; Mark 12:30) are the heart issues that bring you continuing spiritual growth. Out of this growth, our Father and His Son Jesus receive glory from your life. At the same time, *you* grow in increasing Christ-likeness.

Worship and Praise (see John 4:24) are exuberant expressions that reveal your true heart toward our Lord. Through worship and praise your spirit is able to convey its most joyful expression of recognition of our Father God. Your expression isn't a form or style of worship or praise that pleases God, but emanation from a forgiven, repentant heart.

True, sacrificial love for others (see Matthew 25:31-46) can emanate only out of the quality of loving trust you maintain in the vertical. Your ability to genuinely care for those who can never repay your kindness can only be accomplished through the love and power the Holy Spirit provides. All other kinds of love fall short of the humble sacrifice that stirs the recipient to give praise to our Father. This is what truly sets followers of Jesus apart as we live out our lives in the horizontal. The inner motivation of your heart is to glorify our Father. This distinguishes your activity in the horizontal from all other motives of mankind.

Mutual encouragement (see Hebrews 3:13; 10:23, 24) by those who follow Jesus with all their heart and soul helps you avoid the traps of sin's deceit. Satan seeks to trap you in self-pity and despair, and entice you to entertain "pet sins" of which you refuse to repent. He tries to convince you that our Father isn't hearing you, or has even rejected you. Your self-consumed, self-pitying attitude sends the message to our Lord that *He is untrustworthy*. True fellowship counters deception with testimonies of answered prayer and our Father's faithfulness. Biblical encouragement can recount God's past and present acts of kindness toward you as His beloved child.

Fellowship with the righteous (see 1 John 1:3; 2 Corinthians 6:14) is critical to your faith expression. We have written how critical interconnected fellowship in homes was to the earliest Church. The primary purpose of their gatherings was to uphold communal righteousness by repentance, prayer, instruction in godliness, breaking of bread, and one-anothering in order for the Father to answer their prayers (see James 5:16-19; 1 Peter 3:12, Acts 2:42). The righteous walk in *obedience-based* trust. They seek God's guidance and His commands, following them without rationalizing the consequences to their obedience. Love for God and a desire to walk in the righteousness of Jesus boldly compels you to *know* and to *do* His will (Proverbs 28:1).

Your *sufferings* (see Romans 5:3-5; 8:14-17; Hebrews 5:8; 1 Peter 2:20,21) are character transformers, not trials to avoid at all cost. You yearn to give the Potter freedom to change within you all that He desires, and to form in you whatever will suit His purposes. It isn't that God changes anything *around* you; He changes *you*. Your identification with Jesus in His sufferings increases profoundly even as your peace and joy in Him increase (see Romans 12:2; Philippians 2:1-16).

Having your needs met God's way (see Genesis 1:26,30; 2:8,9; 15-25) is the only way you can really experience the freedom offered through Jesus. Your need for dignity, authority, blessing and provision, security, purpose and meaning, freedom and boundary, and intimate love and companionship can only be experienced when your generational strongholds are demolished. As these needs are met, you experience a greater fullness in your relationship with both our Father and His Son Jesus, and with other people.

Removal of generational strongholds (see Ephesians 6:12; 2 Corinthians 10:3-6) frees your soul, that is, your mind, will, and emotions, for the Holy Spirit to change you into conformity to Jesus. Even many who have embraced the true Gospel still find themselves struggling with bondage to strongholds passed along from generation to generation. The transformation promised to them as part of their sanctification is impossible until these influences are demolished. Demolish the strongholds that impede your soul's transformation into Christ-likeness! Then you can reflect the character of our Lord Jesus to Him.

Repentance that produces righteousness (see 1 John 1:9) is key to your ongoing relationship with both our Father and His Son Jesus. You can have no true fellowship in Jesus with others in the horizontal if this vertical fellowship is obstructed through abiding in tolerated sin (see 1 John 2:7-10). Repentance is your first step in embracing the true Gospel, and it is the glue that maintains your fellowship until you are welcomed into heaven.

Embracing the true Gospel (see John 7:38,39), the one Jesus speaks of, is the first step of living in the vertical. As you embrace the conditions of the Covenant offered by our Father, He seals you with the Holy Spirit guaranteeing His part of the Covenant promises. The salvation offered in the true Gospel is not a point in time, but the *culmination of a pilgrimage* (see Galatians 5:19-21; 6:7-9; Philippians 2:12,13) which ends when our Lord proclaims your name in front of the hosts of heaven (see Revelation 3:5).

The Horizontal-only in Your Life, or Living a False Vertical

HORIZONTAL-ONLY: your physical world activities and relationships; People and Activity are pre-eminent

False Vertical: your physical world activities and relationships; People and Activity are pre-eminent

Not embracing the true Gospel (see Galatians 1:8) leaves you unsaved and unchanged. You may embrace a variety of religious activities, but you live unempowered by the Holy Spirit. Your knowledge increases, but your motivations are still worldly (see 2 Timothy 3:1-7). You remain susceptible to the spirits of lawlessness and anti-Christ that control so much of Nicolaitanism (see 1 John 4:1-3). The Anti-Christ spirit doesn't mind pointing the way to Jesus, but it never permits you to *enter into* the Covenant our Father offers. You live religiously, but not in relationship with our Lord. Your so-called "faith" rests on your religious knowledge and activities, not on Jesus (Habakkuk 2:4). You are still beset by the same sins you have always dealt with (see 1 John 3:6). Your prayers go unanswered, bringing no glory to our Father (see Psalm 34:13-17; 1 Peter 3:12).

Strongholds are not demolished (see 2 Timothy 2:25b,26), compelling you to seek out companions with familiar spirits. Unclean spirits within influence people to marry and/or attend faith communities controlled by the same generational strongholds. By not having your God-given needs met, you are vulnerable to adopting the world's ways. The Church Growth Movement and mega-church thrust succeed from a worldly framework because they attract people who have never found freedom in Jesus and still live under the influence of demonic forces. Surveys determine what appeals to worldly people, and religious programs become marketing schemes to attract both the lukewarm and unbelievers. Worldly strategies are lawless at their core, lacking the power to convict people of their sin. They enable countless numbers to call themselves "Christian" while embracing all of the motivations that align them with the world. As self-labeled "Christians" they live as enemies of God (see Philippians 3:18-20; 1 John 2:15,16).

Your interpersonal relationships lack the loving intimacy that only the Holy Spirit can give (see Galatians 5:22,23). Because of tolerated sin and undemolished strongholds you have tension in your marriage, your home, and other vital relationships. You can be around people, but never feel like you belong. Bitterness, temporal values, and/or moral impurity are habitual pet sins of which you refuse to repent (see Hebrews 12:15; 1 John 2:15,16; 1 Corinthians 6:9,10). These sinful attitudes and pursuits are key indicators that you have not embraced the true Gospel. Thus, without the indwelling Spirit of Jesus, you are still destined for hell (Romans 8:8; John 3:18-21).

You fellowship with unrighteousness (see Jude 3-4,18-19), with little concern for the importance of righteousness in your own family or those you fellowship with. You refrain from the kind of accountability that would expose your sinful ways. You seek out Hellenist communities that are bastions of presumption and lawlessness. You believe that "grace" gives you freedom to keep on sinning (see 1 Peter 2:16). It's more convenient for you to have others teach you the Bible than for you to know and apply it yourself. You may be proud of your Bible knowledge, but your life is devoid of testimony to Jesus (1 Corinthians 8:1).

Yet the horizontal can become a snare that can inhibit your vertical pursuit. This is especially true when religious practice becomes an end in itself. You can be trapped in a "false vertical". The Jewish people were chastised by God because they cherished religious forms rather than a love-grounded relationship with Him. Going through the motions, they lacked a heart's desire to relate to Him in love as their trusted Father. (See Deuteronomy 6:5.)

The Danger of a "False Vertical"

Western parents raise their children to grow in increasing independence from us as they

mature. We realize that they have to go out into the world and be responsible for themselves. But this propulsion to independence is the exact *opposite* of our Father's desire in our relationship with Him!

When we are adopted as His children and He places His Holy Spirit in us, He wants us to become *increasingly dependent* on Him. Our deepening loving-trust in our Father is what enables us to appreciate Him as "ABBA", "DAD." Think of yourself on His lap! THEN both your worship and your praise as well as your faith enactment of loving others will express in the horizontal that which is passing *through* you

from the vertical.

If you find that you aren't growing in loving-trust in our Father, you may indeed be ensnared in the horizontal-only, be it religious practice or church activities. You peddle along frantically in your own strength as an independent agent. Over time, religious forms will compensate for a *lack* of intimacy with our Father and with Jesus. Rather than your faith expression being a conduit that pours out of a vibrant relationship with our Lord, religious activities and practices become placebos

Our deepening loving-trust in our Father is what enables us to appreciate Him as "ABBA", "DAD."

— enabling you to feel good about being “Christian” *without* having to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. You end up violating the “greatest commandment” but remain unconvicted because everyone around you is doing the same thing!

Some spiritual facets that *should* involve the true vertical are counterfeited in a *false vertical*. For instance, if your worship is not an exuberant expression of *interconnectedness with God*, it may be a soulish high conjured up by lively music and winsome worship leaders. You may feel temporarily refreshed by your experience, but does self-gratifying “worship” please our Father?

Without a viable, intensifying relationship with our Father and Jesus, “Christians” will seek out other people and religious activities to compensate for the hollowness of heart they are experiencing. Christendom is filled with “run-arounds” — you’ve probably encountered many yourself! — people who are seeking from the physical realm that which can only be experienced through the Holy Spirit by a repentant heart. Over time their Christian life is filled with religious forms and ritual, but devoid of life-changing intimacy with our Father and His Son.

Many Christians live from Sunday morning to Sunday morning, craving a spiritual fix of worship songs and pre-digested Bible teaching. Few examine themselves to see if they have the “pure hearts and clean hands” that the psalmist indicated as the prerequisite character for our Lord’s blessing (see Psalm 24:3-6).

Worship leaders are increasingly under pressure to use music to conjure a “worship experi-

ence.” Yet, our Father will only accept worship in “*spirit and truth*” — from repentant children who are free from unconfessed sin.

The Bible assures us that our Father answers the prayer (and hears the worship) of the righteous. Paul emphasizes this repeatedly to the Corinthian believers who were surrounded by the same degraded corruption as today’s society: “*Come to your senses! Live righteously and stop sinning!*” (1 Corinthians 15:34). The wicked and unrepentant He chastises in His love to *bring them to repentance*. Our Father yearns for a right relationship with His children, and loves us enough to *get our attention!*

If your prayers aren’t being answered, ask yourself if you’ve strayed from His righteous path and put yourself on your heart’s throne. While He may be in the process of strengthening your perseverance and trust, He may also be nudging you to respond to His Spirit’s conviction of dabbling in unrighteousness.

Hiding Out in the Horizontal

Horizontal-only religious relationships can’t spur others on to grow in the vertical. Bible studies that focus on knowledge acquisition rather than life application of the Word fall into this category. And, as Scripture admonishes, many who *listen* to Bible teaching fail to put it into practice: “*You will be ever hearing, but never doing.*” Their minds may be gratified but their lives reflect no change. Hellenist Bible teachers offer no access to their personal lives. Therefore they can’t role model a *way of life* that pleases God. Newer followers of Jesus don’t see the Word being lived out as an example, the teaching pat-

tern of Jesus and other rabbis of His time.

The things that you choose to talk about with both followers of Jesus and unbelievers reveal a lot about what’s going on in your heart. As Jesus said, just as a tree is known by its fruit, your words can reveal what’s going on in your heart (see Matthew 12:33-37).

I was encouraged in the Lord the other day when a brother from Abilene called. He had received some specific insights from Psalms 44 and 45. He was so delighted in the *rhema* that our Father gave to confirm matters we’d discussed that he wanted to share these with me right away! The vertical dimension that poured out onto the horizontal edified us both in our Father’s faithfulness to give us His guidance.

It’s important to “bear witness to what you’ve seen and heard” from our Lord with unbelievers too. How are they going to know He’s real if we don’t tell them about His personal care for each of those who trust Him and walk in His Son?

Maybe you’ve experienced the inner anguish that I have when I chose *not* to testify of His intervention in my life, either out of laziness, self-interest (I was either reading or otherwise preoccupied), or fear of rejection. That reality of missing an opportunity has helped me to determine to be more responsive to the Spirit’s nudge and make every conversation count!

From the horizontal-only dimension, *problems and suffering* are antagonists to avoid rather than God’s instruments to help us grow. People are referred to professional counselors to help them deal with their problems —

the Hellenist approach. From a relational Hebraic perspective, load-bearing spiritual family come alongside the hurting to pray with them, fast with them, and help them search the Scriptures for *rhemas* and *halakhahs* that get to the root of the situation.

Surveys show that pleasure-seeking among “Christians” parallels the bent and activities of the world. The way of righteous living has become blurred among so many who are convinced that God’s grace stands *opposite* His law. On the contrary, the opposite of God’s law is *lawlessness*. The spirit of lawlessness, along with the spirit of anti-Christ, rules so much of Nicolaitanism (see 2 Thessalonians 2:3-7; 1 John 2:18).

Anchor this truth in your innermost being: **God’s grace gives us the *desire* and the *power* to keep His commands** .

- What topics fill your conversations with other Christians? What proceeds out of *your* mouth (see Luke 6:43-45)?
- If our Father were listening in, would He find gratitude and recognition of Him permeating your thoughts and speech? Do you mention to others His specific loving and faithful activity on your behalf?
- Do you worship with your family at home during the week? Do you and your family members spontaneously burst into songs or praise from their spirit? If not, why not?

**Your Home and Family:
The primary place for
vertical development**

If someone spent time in your home with you, what

would evidence that you “*love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength*”? If God is not of *supreme* importance, writes Abraham Joshua Heschel, then His is of *no* importance.

Very early in our marriage, our Father impressed on Sue and me to get up early together to pray before I headed off to work. This was a profound challenge for Sue, who enjoyed staying up late to read or work on craft projects, then get up late.

But she recognized that our Lord was calling us *together* to seek Him, so she changed her habits so we could spend time together with Him before the day’s activity set in. Years later, at the retreat center, we encouraged staff members to join us as family before Him each day. If our Lord Jesus could rise early to be with His Father and hear from Him, should we do otherwise?

- Do you set aside time for prayer and the Word each morning? Does your spouse and/or family join you, or does late night TV hinder any of you?
- Do you eat meals together as a family each day? Do you guide the conversations to help each person review their day in light of God’s Word? If you live alone, do you have a loadbearing friend in Jesus who you can email or call often to encourage each other in God-sightings?

Marriage is ordained by God to mirror the unity of heart and purpose that our Father wants us to have in the spiritual realm through Jesus. He also designed the marriage relationship to reproduce generations who

would succeed us as our Father’s loving and obedient children (see Malachi 2:14,15).

But they won’t choose to draw near Him if they don’t see their parents treasuring that relationship. If you don’t nurture the children in your life into the reality of Jesus as *your* Lord, then the world, their flesh, and the devil will guide them into *that* prison!

- Do you as a parent fully comply with Deuteronomy 6:4-8 and Ephesians 6:4 in our Father’s ways of training up godly children? How are you passing along a faith in Jesus to your children or grandchildren?
- Are you participating in their spiritual training, or is someone else doing it for you? Are you willing to call upon Him in humble and obedient trust to shoulder this privileged responsibility yourself?
- Are your moral standards more lenient than the ones with which you grew up? Why? Have God’s standards changed, or have you chosen to bend them to conform to your own sensual or worldly desires?

TV has become the idol of choice in many “Christian” homes today. It provides, along with the Internet and the telephone, the most expedient means for demonic influence to control the home. It’s sadly amazing how many church people find enjoyment watching or reading about the sinful activities and lifestyle choices that God condemns in His Word. And many hotly rationalize or defend their decision!

- Is time spent in front of your TV or computer greater than other activi-

ties that you do in your home? Is your TV or computer situated in such a way that it looks like an idol you worship?

- Are there shows you watch or websites you surf that Jesus would refuse to view with you?

The *peace of God* — the well-being, harmony, wholeness — in our homes is the number one responsibility of those who exercise authority there. When Jesus sent out His disciples, he restricted them to stay only with those who understood the importance of peace (see Matthew 10:13-15). We don't know the complete interpretation of this passage, but we do know that *"it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment"* than for the man who doesn't know how to keep peace in his home.

- Would Jesus feel at peace in your home? Do you?
- What habitually robs your home of peace? Getting ready to leave for work, school, activities or services? A family member's self-centeredness? Something else?
- How should you rectify the "peace robbers" in your home? Discuss viable solutions with your family.

"For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?"

(1 Peter 4:17).

None of us likes to hear about God's judgment. Yet, He has demonstrated His past judgment on mankind — after the Flood

only 8 people remained on earth! The Bible tells us that He will judge again with fire. As difficult as it is for many to believe, the "Christian" community has been under His judgment for some time now.

We've written many times before of the epidemic divorce rate in Hellenized "Christianity" that exceeds that of the un-churched (50% higher in the "Bible Belt"). Think about the tragedy being played out daily among the children who have experienced the lacerating insecurity of broken relationships. How will they ever understand the eternal covenant of our Lord with His Bride the Church when they've seen their own parents forsake their marriage vows?

It's painfully inevitable that without the intervention of a living relationship with Jesus, these children of shattered covenants will repeat the destructive pattern of their parents in another generation of woe. The sins of the fathers (and mothers) truly will be visited upon the third and fourth generation of those who fail to love God and follow His ways.

Can this destruction be anything else than God's judgment on His own household? Do any of us who pursue the vertical with all our hearts really think God is passively observing this pain and doing nothing? The Bible tells us He is long-suffering, but only until His Name is brought into disrepute.

Judgment isn't *coming*, it's here, now! It has begun among everyone who calls himself "Christian" but has lived in blatant disregard for His holiness and purposes. Too many have assumed the name "Christian"

lightly, forcing our holy God to act on behalf of His own Name.

I know personally from this recent trip that those chained inside Nicolaitanism are dull to our warning. But I trust that you who are outside the Nicolaitan trap and are earnestly pursuing the vertical will be even more wholehearted in your desire to fully relate to our Father and His Son, Jesus. Your phone calls and letters are tremendously encouraging to Sue and me. They give us hope in the midst of such demonic opposition to our ministry.

If you are intent on remaining within the horizontal-only framework or are embracing the false vertical, we grieve for you. You know that your conversations have nothing to do with glorifying our Father because you can't find Him at work in your life. You may be undergoing the suffering that's calling you to repent and find restoration in our Lord.

Heed that bow shot of loving chastisement by our Father and repent! Call upon Him as you turn away from what He reveals is hindering your walk with Him. Receive His forgiveness, cleansing, and refreshing fellowship and intimacy! His ears and heart are always open to those who yearn to leave sin behind in order to walk in His Spirit and His love.

We are seeking *"reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others"* (2 Timothy 2:2). May we bring Him praise in the love and service He is calling each of us to.

To all who embrace the vertical, our Lord Jesus,

Mike & Sue

