

Have You Seen What We've Seen? (Observation 4)

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

We wrote in Observation 3 that many of today's parents and grandparents have found themselves becoming our Father's child later in life. Many are born again and received the indwelling Holy Spirit after their children grew up and left home. With the help of the indwelling Holy Spirit in applying God's righteous commands to their lives, they've realized as so many others have that *"the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart"* (Hebrews 4:12). Often when this piercing work of the Spirit using God's perfect Word is accomplished, a parent or grandparent of grown children is pricked by guilt. They realize how they failed their children in their upbringing *by not role modeling Jesus as Lord and instructing them in the way of life our Lord requires*.

According to God's inerrant Word, a father is to lead his family as a righteous and loving role model for them, enacting and instructing a *way of life* that pleases our Lord. The Hebraic restoration is our heavenly Father's means to restore a key role and life purpose which many of today's fathers have lost. The first Hebrew, Abraham, was our heavenly Father's choice then and now as a role model for all husbands and fathers:

*"For I have made Myself known to [Abraham], in order that he may command his children and his household after him, **that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him**"* Genesis 18:19

As you study Abraham's life, you find in him a man who immediately obeys the God he trusts. Today's fathers as well as mothers need to be as immediately obedient to our Lord as Abraham was. They need to be resolute in leading their family *to and through* the narrow gate. Out of love they must confront any sin and unChrist-like attitudes and behaviors that they see in their children. This is why we've written a lesson and produced a two-part video segment by the same name: ***Children: Born With A Sin Nature—Destined For Eternity***.

Use our pdf: Discussing How To Restore The Early Church <<https://restorationministries.org/download/42.lesson42.pdf>>. Video: #76 in Jesus In Your Home <<https://youtu.be/2zgOtuu0stg>>; and <<https://youtu.be/IzgeC-t33pM>>

Consider just three of the numerous commands on child-rearing in God's Word. Have you lovingly put all three of these into practice in your own home?

"Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him" (Proverbs 22:15).

"Do not withhold correction from a child, For if you beat him with a rod, he will not die" (Proverbs 23:13).

“Fathers do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord [i.e the way of the Lord]” (Ephesians 6:4).

Many parents think that only fathers and mothers who were mean or unloving would provoke their children to wrath. That's not necessarily so. In our book, ***Demolishing Strongholds*** we discuss the *seven needs* which our Father instilled in every human. One of these needs is “Freedom and Boundary” (Genesis 2:16,17). Here's a personal anecdote to describe this innate need for freedom within specified boundaries.

Years ago we lived on a navy base and directed our chapel youth group. At the end of the weekly Wednesday night gathering our house, some of the kids would go straight home as their parents had required. But others would go down to the base canteen for ice cream or soda. After a few months one of the teens whose parents insisted he come home immediately after the meeting said to those who were heading off to the canteen, “I envy you guys. You get to go have fun and I have to go home. I wish my parents weren't so strict.” One of those heading off to the canteen responded, “Don't envy us. Your parents love you. That's why they have you go home. Our parents don't care about us. I wish I had your Mom and Dad.”

Christian parents who've refused to confront their children's sin nature have contributed as much as unbelieving parents have to the rebellion which encompasses this nation. And ***if*** in raising your children you role modeled a way of life in headlong pursuit of the world's values rather than in loving and humble service to our Lord Jesus, then your child's wrath may come when they point the finger at you at the Judgment Throne. According to God's Word you raised them to be *enemies of God* in the path you've shown them (James 4:4). Your children may be harboring wrath against you even now no matter how respectful they may seem on the outside. But if you're a parent who only after being *genuinely* born again realizes how far short you were in following our Lord's way in raising your children, please do this:

First ask forgiveness from our Father for not living out His way of life and instilling that loving and obedient way in your children. Repentance reveals that you recognize that you were sinning, even in your ignorance, and that you don't want to repeat that path again. It's also important that you ask forgiveness from your children and/or grandchildren for not having trained them in the way of the Lord. (Making them go to church or even teaching them about the Bible isn't what the *way of the Lord* means as a life pattern and purpose!) After your children become adults (especially if they then encounter the grace of God in Jesus), you may find them tempted to be provoked to wrath against you when they realize you didn't raise them to live a life pleasing to our Lord (Ephesians 5:10; Colossians 1:10).

If you belong to our Lord Jesus and have asked Father's forgiveness and your offspring's forgiveness for not having fulfilled all that the Bible requires of you as a parent, then you must stand your ground on behalf of your own dignity. Dignity is the first need that God instilled in humans (Genesis 1:26,27). You were made in God's image, and our Lord Jesus died for you. You're of great worth to Him! If you allow your dignity to be undermined even by your family and relatives, you'll never be able to be a ***loving, forgiving*** and ***compassionate*** representative of our Lord Jesus, as someone who stands

up for righteousness and confronts sin. Unless you cast off the shackles of indignity and put on the garment of dignity that our Father intends for you, you will always be ensnared by demonic strongholds of insecurity and/or fear of rejection (Proverbs 29:25).

In our book, ***Demolishing Strongholds***, we discuss the seven needs our God instilled in every human being. One of the most vital is a need for *dignity*.

- A person who has dignity knows how to give respect and honor when it's appropriate.
- This person will defend the dignity of not only themselves and those who are dear to them, but also stand up for the dignity of those who are oppressed and unjustly maligned and mistreated.

Here is a distressing example of dishonoring parents:

Many adults are robbing their parents of the honor due them by refusing to *seek their advice*. This is a subtle form of enacting wrath, whether it's done by adult children or teens. Because of this "passive aggressive" behavior (trying to control the parents by intentionally refusing any counsel they might offer), our heavenly Father is making sure that things aren't going right especially in the grown child's life. They may be successful by the world's standards, but they find themselves feeling hollow inside.

When your children, young or adult, repeatedly fail to heed your wise advice, you are emotionally hurt on a couple of levels. You're disappointed not only by their current resistance to you; you're also hurt later by their lack of success through their own poor choices. You can bet that you missed something in their upbringing that has caused them to not fully trust you or give you the deference which your position as their parent deserves. That missing element is revealed in their repeated resistance to your advice!

Please consider this: Did you cater to your child's will, disciplining them far less than your parents or grandparents did in raising you? For example, were your children allowed to put up a stink about what they'd eat versus trusting you that you had their health in mind? If you didn't exercise biblical disciplining or failed to say, "NO!" when it was needed, then you screwed up as a parent no matter what you think about yourself.

Don't allow yourself to persist in *intransigent stupidity!* Make sure you don't stay grudgingly or fearfully silent if you find in your children or grandchildren attitudes or behaviors that attack your dignity as a parent or grandparent. Your dignity is being attacked *if* you find yourself hesitating to give the next generations wise and godly advice for fear they won't listen or will cut off contact with you. Every child, no matter how old, needs to hear wise and godly counsel from their parents and grandparents. And if you're in a position of having to live with the consequences of your children's or grandchildren's decision, then you need to be firm and candid in making sure your advice is thoughtfully considered. *If* you don't speak up when your dignity is being violated, YOU are forfeiting it!

An older man in our neighborhood recently told us that he suffers severe allergies when he's around dogs. When his adult children come to visit him and his wife from a few miles away, they often bring their dogs. He repeatedly asks them to not bring the dogs, but even his wife supports the grown children's right to bring them. She fears that the kids won't visit without

their dogs, and the man always gives in to her. But when they leave he despises himself as his allergies rage on long after their departure!

Seeing his deep sadness over the dishonor being done to him, we encouraged him that he needed to determine the level to which his children regarded him versus their right to bring their dogs. We told him to ask his kids, “Do you love the dogs more than me?” If they hesitate in answering, then tell them, “I guess I’m worth less to you than a dog is.” His face brightened as he was encouraged to stand up for his own honor and dignity.

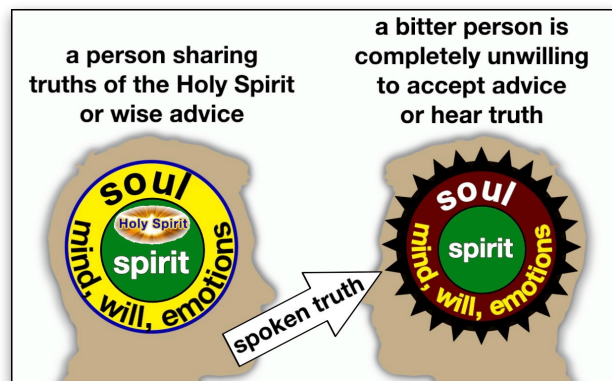
If you feel your dignity is being taken away by someone else, you need to speak up and let them know the offense they’re giving you. **If** you don’t tell them, you’ll develop an attitude of bitterness or resentment against them— and then you’re sinning!

At this point you might want to read our brief book, *Growing Relationships Through Confrontation* <<https://restorationministries.org/download/grtcr.pdf>>.

Here’s another distressing thing we’ve seen when children hold wrath against parents:

Too many grandparents and Christians in ministry who are trying to help younger people are having their own dignity assaulted, feeling walled off and disheartened because their wise counsel is ignored or discounted. But these caring folks are often unaware of the bitterness the younger person has against one or both of his (or her) parents. Therefore he resists receiving wise advice or truths of the Holy Spirit.

Mike: Many years ago a young relative traveled to see Sue and me. While he was visiting we went fishing with a wise friend of mine. As we talked on the way to the river, the young man let it be known how deeply bitter he was against his dad. My friend had recognized earlier in the conversation that some sage advice I was giving was being blown off by him, and told him, “What Mike has been sharing with you is something you really need to listen to and follow. As long as you remain bitter toward your dad, you’ll never give Mike the respect you owe him either.”



“Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise —‘so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth’”
(Ephesians 6:2,3).

We have just a short comment for you if you are holding onto bitterness toward one or both of your parents. You were once their sperm and egg! And whatever they did to contribute to your bitterness, our heavenly Father allowed it to happen to you. **First take it up with Him!** And then see if you still want to remain bitter, or if you choose instead to forgive as you want to be forgiven by Him.

“Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate” (Mark 10:9).

Here’s something you may not know when it comes to fanning the *flames of bitterness in marriage*. During our years of ministry we’ve observed too many parents of married children who hastened their children’s divorce when they were having very serious marital tensions. The older couple took sides rather than become reconcilers, refusing to even consider that their own adult child had contributed to the problems they were experiencing. These parents were displaying **extreme prejudicial favoritism!** Many of the parents fanned the flames of bitterness against their offspring’s spouse by maligning the in-law parents. Even family members who weren’t directly involved found themselves taking up bitterness and offense against the in-law spouse! Entire families became irreconcilable. These bitterness-flaming parents were acting as **“recruiters for hell”** – bringing many others with them in their blame and fault-finding.

Please search your soul deeply as you answer these questions. Then see if your spouse and/or parents agree with your responses.

- If you’re an adult child with bitterness toward a parent, what are you going to do about it?
- If you’re now a parent of a divorced child, or even parents of children who lack the love of Jesus in their marriage, what are you doing about it?
- How many people did you have praying for them to reconcile and find healing in Christ?
- As the parent of a child who is divorced or facing divorce, did you or are you expediting the divorce through your mouth? Did you concern yourself at all about how deeply hurt their children would be? In their misery they will be cursed with the inability to fully trust other people or even the Father Himself!
- As a parent, have you asked the Holy Spirit where you failed your own child(ren) in their upbringing? Have you then asked their forgiveness?
- Were both you and your spouse totally in agreement about the marriage of your child in the first place? Did you ever ask our Father if this marriage was His will for your child?

You know family members, relatives, and/or close acquaintances who are carrying *unresolved bitterness*. Does it hurt you at all that they won’t be welcomed into heaven? On the next page is a helpful illustration if you have any interaction at all with a bitter person. We know from our years of experience that the **bitter person** isn’t the one who is sinning most deeply among all the people involved. It’s the **key person** who could have and should have confronted the bitterness. They are perpetuating evil by letting others get hurt by the bitter person. Just remember this: bitterness is shaking your fist at God! We prayerfully hope you grasp the severity of being bitter or being the key person who should be the first to confront someone who is bitter. In Christ there is no excuse!



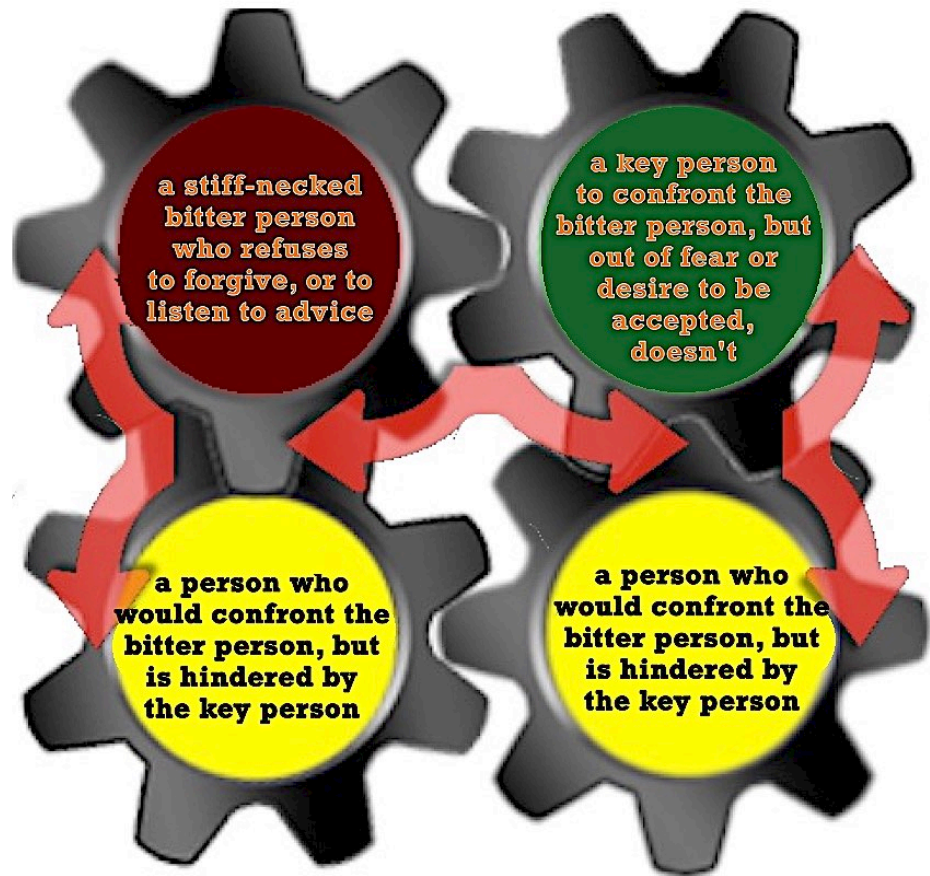
Lifting up our Lord Jesus by encouraging His character in each of His own,
Mike & Sue

Relational Injustice –Christians Snubbing Our Lord’s Command!

Both the **bitter person** and the **key person** who should willingly confront the bitter person violate the cardinal command of our Lord Jesus: “*Always do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets*” (Matthew 7:12).

The lack of Christians resolutely living by this Christ-given standard is the reason families and this nation at large are being destroyed: *bitterness is not confronted!* Our Lord Jesus and His **love**, **forgiveness** and **compassion** are being

defamed by Christians whose values, attitudes and actions are as sinful as unbelievers. We know that hell awaits the bitter person. But what about the person who allowed them to go unopposed? In our Father’s sight, how guilty are they?



NO LOVE, NO FORGIVENESS, NO COMPASSION, NO JESUS!

A **bitter person** never experiences the love which others may be giving them! And the **key person** habitually deceives themselves into believing they are the “*caring good guy or gal.*” Nothing could be further from the truth! The **key persons** who refuse to confront the **bitter person** are *influenced* or even *controlled* by demonic strongholds of rejection and/or insecurity.

The **key person** is prolonging the soulish darkness of the **bitter person** by allowing them to live unforgiven by our Father while sliding them toward hell (Matthew 6:14,15). They’re also allowing others to be defiled by the **bitter person’s bitterness** (Hebrews 12:15). Many don’t even know why the **bitter person** mistreats them. And the idea that “I’m the caring good guy” blinds the **key person** to the hurt they are allowing by not confronting the **bitter person**. If you’re aware of bitterness in any of your relatives or friends and do nothing to confront it, don’t claim to belong to Jesus. **The silent key person is guilty of the vilest of sins!** They are *anti* the way that Christ would act, and are just as guilty as the **bitter person**. That’s the truth!