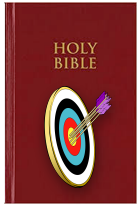


Spot On

Restoring the Hebraic foundational emphasis on the processes of how you live your life:



- the responsive actions our Lord commands all of His followers,*
- and their responsibility to deferentially obey by grace the One they love*

Spot 11. There Are Consequences For Spiritual Adultery

From Satan's tempting of Eve, through both Testaments of the Bible, to certain practices and teachings within Christianity today, an insidious trap has continually been set to lure God's people into **spiritual adultery**. You wouldn't tolerate ongoing unfaithfulness in your own marriage, and **spiritual adultery** is not acceptable to our Father and His Son either. Adultery involves violation within a marriage. However, little is taught from the pulpit about the covenant of marriage between God and Israel or between Jesus in His betrothal to His collective bride of called-out ones.

The word *betrothal* isn't used much today. It means that a person is promised to be married to another. And contrary to common thought, Jesus is NOT a "bachelor" — He is betrothed/engaged to His collective called-out ones, the Church, and is eagerly awaiting spiritual consummation with them! We who love and serve Jesus as our Lord are eagerly awaiting when we'll be gathered together in a *wedding banquet* with our Bridegroom, the Lamb of God (Revelation 19:9).

The concept of the Lord of the universe being "married" in a spiritual sense permeates both testaments. Words breathed out from God through His prophets refer to a *marriage covenant* that's being defiled using terms such as unfaithfulness, adulterous, taking other lovers.

In the Hebrew of the Older Testament, God is called the *Husband* of His people Israel (e.g. Ezekiel 16:32). As an aggrieved Husband He calls Israel to return from their faithlessness "*for I am married to you*" (Jeremiah 3:14). This is no "religious declaration" or appeal to their intellect from an absentee deity. The Creator of the marriage covenant is *jealous* for Israel having compromised their spiritual union with Him by adding other entities to their worship and religious practices. In our Lord's anger He makes crystal clear the offense through which they have provoked Him: "*You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own Husband!*" (Ezekiel 16:32).

Does it shock you that God reveals *His jealousy* for His beloved time and again throughout Scripture? His "*jealous anger*" (Ezekiel 16:42) is a "*consuming fire*" from a "*jealous God*" (Deuteronomy 4:24). A righteous jealousy is part of His holy and sinless character: "*Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God*" (Exodus 34:14). When His own people veer off His path to "venerate" or call upon any other spiritual entity, His *jealous anger* is aroused even more than a husband whose wife engages in sex with another man. (See Deuteronomy 6:15.)

It's obvious that the same God is speaking through both testaments of the Bible. And, the same Satan who brought temptation and disruption into the spiritual intimacy the first couple enjoyed with God in Eden is still at work trying to seduce you into **spiritual adultery**. Why is

awareness of this so important? Because Satan's tactics haven't changed. And here's where the popular NIV falls short in its translation of Paul's warning in 2Corinthians 11:2,3 of the devil's ongoing endeavor to seduce you.

NIV: *"I am jealous for you with a **godly jealousy**. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid **that just as Eve was deceived** by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow **be led astray** from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ."*

Now the literal translation from the original Greek: *"For I am jealous for you with a **jealousy of God**, for I betrothed you to **one husband**, a pure virgin to present to Christ; and I fear **lest somehow**, as the **serpent deceived Eve** by his cleverness, your thoughts **should be seduced** from the simplicity and purity in Christ."*

Paul's heart is genuinely jealous for the called-out ones in Corinth to whom he has shown such devotion and concern. They were called out by the Holy Spirit to be set apart as the bride of Christ, their Husband in the Spirit. Yet there is demonic encroachment going on around these believers—and Paul can see the same kind of vulnerability to spiritual seduction as overtook Eve. But keep in mind that his focus isn't on Eve as the deceived, but on *the serpent who seduced her*.

In the very next verse Paul goes on to reveal the nature of this seduction: someone who preaches "*another Jesus*"; believers receiving a "*different spirit*" other than the Holy Spirit; or receiving as true a "*different gospel*" than the one Paul proclaimed. Any one or all of these would constitute **spiritual adultery** against the pure message of belonging to Christ by grace through obedient trust!

Spiritual seduction in any form is the beguiling enticement to keep you from considering the spiritual validity of what is being presented to you.

Paul warns against certain workers sent by Satan whose agenda is to turn away potential followers of Jesus from the truth which He alone embodies. Again you can see subtle yet important differences between the NIV and the literal translation.

NIV: *"For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, **masquerading** as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself **masquerades as an angel of light**. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also **masquerade** as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve"* (2Corinthians 11:13-15).

Literal translation: *"For such are false apostles [people who are sent on assignment], deceitful workmen, **transforming themselves into** apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself **transforms himself into** an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his servants also **transform themselves into servants of righteousness**; of whom the end will be according to their works."*

Satan has taken captive *willing individuals* to do his work of deceiving people and luring them away from the authentic Person and Good News of Jesus. But these individuals have more than just an outward appearance of being someone they aren't. They are *wolves* adorned with sheep's clothing. They have the aura of spiritual wisdom, the smooth talk which

attracts many, the projection of a god whose door is wide open to even the unrepentant who won't give up their sins. Driven by a desire for acclaim and praise and money, these servants of Satan have made themselves his accomplices to *compromise truth with falsehood*—and they have no qualms about impersonating authentic followers of Jesus.

What To Take Away From This Discussion

Our Father intended that the marriage covenant represent in the physical world the *spiritual marital intimacy* He shares with those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Our God *does* respond with anger in His jealousy for His people—a holy anger He reveals through prophetic messages to bring the backslidden to repentance so they may return to spiritual intimacy in Jesus.

How would you know that you're being spiritually seduced or have already been seduced into ***spiritual adultery***? There are two prevalent seductions operating throughout Christianity today: **1. Financial appeals. 2. Pulpit oratory.**

1. Financial appeals

A prevalent method of seduction in Christianity is when leaders/teachers appeal for money. Instead of just letting you know the needs and allowing you to trust the Holy Spirit to guide you if you're to donate or not, these leaders seduce through marketing schemes: "If you give thus-and-such an amount, we'll send you ... [some token trinket or CD or whatever]." One counterfeit told his listeners, "God has told me He's going to take my life if I don't raise 'X' dollars." Another used the scheme of putting the donor's name on bricks of the edifice he wanted built.

Yet another common seduction: "If you're suffering, just put your hand on your TV while I pray. And, send whatever you can to keep this ministry on the air." Paul emphatically warns about walking according to "***the ruler of the power of the air[waves], of the spirit who is now operating in the sons of disobedience***" (Ephesians 2:2).

These seductive schemes of those masquerading as "***angels of light***" are no different than Roman Catholicism selling indulgences through votive candles and masses for the dead to reduce their time in purgatory. It was this seductive practice which incited the opposition of the Reformers. Any form of enticement to get you to *give something* or to *do something* is a slippery path to ***spiritual adultery***. That's why Paul made sure everyone knew the purity of his motives: "***Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, as those of God***" (2Corinthians 2:17).

2. Pulpit oratory.

Another form of seduction into ***spiritual adultery*** is teaching Bible content without letting the listeners discern in their spirit whether they agree with the teacher's conclusions. Any time the Bible is taught without the opportunity for the listener to probe and ask questions, then seduction into ***spiritual adultery*** is occurring. Consider why the Holy Spirit made sure the Jews in Berea were commended when they heard Paul's preaching: "***Now the Berean Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness, daily examining the Scriptures [the Hebrew Bible] to see if these things were true***" (Acts 17:11).

Picture the TV images of religious teachers standing in front of a large silent audience. Since the people are just sitting there listening and swallowing all that's said, you can imitate their passivity in the comfort of your own living room believing what's being taught. But to our Father, you've been seduced!

The non-interactive pulpit teacher was introduced by "Church Father" John Chrysostom who convinced the clergy that "pure oratory" is what God meant by preaching. Chrysostom's style of "stand behind the pulpit with no questions asked" remains unchallenged because of the power of the spirit of Nicolaitanism—"conquer the laity."

We've noted this anecdote in previous materials and it's worth repeating:

"While we were writing our book, *Restoring The Early Church*, a leader from a particular denomination told us, "We can't have our people *trusting Jesus* as you write about. That would cause mayhem! We need to *control and direct* the spiritual activities of the people in our congregation."

What this church leader was really saying aligns with the seduction used by both marketing schemes and pulpit oratory: "Don't let followers of Jesus trust in the Spirit of our Lord within them. We need to be able to manipulate them and convince them that we as clergy are the bearers of truth, representing God in all matters. If they turn to the Spirit of our Lord, THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH, we'll lose our position, our prestige, and our source of income." (See John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13; Romans 8:14; Acts 19:24-27.)

Our warning to you:

Anytime someone hinders or prevents you from turning to the indwelling Holy Spirit for guidance and confirmation and/or from searching the Scriptures for yourself and/or from asking questions, you're being seduced into ***spiritual adultery***. If you lose your love of the truth, you will be vulnerable to lies that are being peddled at you. And our heavenly Father will send a strong delusion so you will believe those lies because they allow you to find your pleasure in unrighteousness. Please read 2 Thessalonians 2 recognizing that Paul is warning *our Lord's people* against the "lawless one" and what happens to those who willingly believe lies.

The faith community at large in Corinth were surrounded as we are today with epic immorality and compromise with the world's ways even among self-identified Christians. That's why Paul's strong warning to them is so pertinent to us now: "**Test yourselves** [*discern if there is indeed any evil in you*] if you are [*genuinely*] in the faith; **prove yourselves** [*of worthy authenticity*]. *Do you not perceive yourselves that Jesus Christ is in you, unless you are counterfeits* [*spurious, spiritually worthless*]? But I hope that you will know that we are not counterfeits" (2Corinthians 13:5-6, literal translation).

Don't take for granted that your heart motives are OK just because you refrain from outward immorality of any sort. It's that *inner test* of your motives, your thoughts and any compromise with what seems right but isn't of our Lord which constitute ***spiritual adultery*** in our Father's sight. Prayerfully seek the discernment of the Holy Spirit so that He might reveal any deception you may have given way to, and repent. Living without any appearance of evil or entertainment of evil through the Spirit upholds His holy and true reputation.