

The Way of the Lord

11. Your Relationship With Your Father (Part 2)

In our last segment we made clear to you that our heavenly Father wants both your *emunah* and your *ahav*. If you recall, *emunah* is your heartfelt confidence and unwavering trust in your Father. *Ahav* is that special love that encompasses your desire and delight and spiritual passion for your Father. You LONG to be in His presence.

Both your unwavering trust AND your wholehearted love are foundational to you becoming and remaining your Father's child. Your loving, obedient trust is a way of life for you. Your LOVE and OBEDIENT TRUST are two of our Father's stipulations for you in order to embrace His Covenant. This is the Covenant Jesus proclaims at the Last Supper: "*This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you*" (Luke 22:20).

Most of the earliest followers of Jesus were JEWISH! They clearly understood how significant biblical covenants are, because that's how God established His relationship with them in the Hebrew Scripture. It's sad that so few people today understand the nature of covenants like those God made with Noah, Abraham, Moses and David. But centuries BEFORE the coming of Jesus, Jeremiah had prophesied that God would make ANOTHER covenant — an EVERLASTING one.

GOD initiated each and every covenant He made with His people, because He loved them and chose them to represent Him to the nations. His covenants include distinct guidelines:

- Our Father's STIPULATIONS for people to accept the covenant.
- His promises of BLESSING for obedience to His covenant.
- His JUDGMENT for breaking the covenant.

The writer to the Hebrews builds the foundation for the Messiahship of Jesus on the NEW COVENANT Jeremiah had prophesied: "*For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant*" (Hebrews 9:15).

Every covenant was SEALED with a bloody sacrifice. So what a thundering impact JESUS must have had on His disciples when He told them, "*This is MY blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins*" (Matthew 26:28). Suddenly in that upper room, a NEW COVENANT was being offered to mankind in which GOD THE SON was the Sacrifice!

You need to fully grasp this NEW COVENANT our Father is offering you through the death and resurrection of Jesus. Keep in mind that the two most important covenants in God's sight are the one you can have with HIM, and your marriage covenant. So, are these two covenants connected in some way?

Yes! Our Father wants a marriage covenant to PHYSICALLY represent the spiritual Covenant we have with HIM. As we continue this series, you'll realize how intricately linked these two covenants are. And, you'll understand why Satan is so bent

on destroying marriages.

The word *covenant* can mean “to live in union with”. The covenant our Father offers you in Jesus invites you to live in UNION with Him. Union implies intimacy and oneness. It’s an ongoing pilgrimage of living as His child and doing His will.

Your goal in keeping YOUR part of the Covenant is to live in a way that brings glory to your Father and pleases Him. In fact, ANY goal or purpose that DOESN’T glorify your Father will ultimately become an IDOL in your life. Focusing your heart on anything else EXCEPT bringing praise to our Lord leads to a trap of self-absorption and self-gratification. You may be enticed away from God and ultimately break your covenant with Him.

Let’s use a marriage analogy to describe our covenant with Father God. If you claim to be a “Christian” WITHOUT seeking to live in union with your Father, it’d be as if someone gave Sue and me a list of characteristics ABOUT each other BEFORE we ever met. If we liked what we read about each other, we were then told by some religious authority, “You two are married!”

Remember, we never even met, and certainly have no viable relationship. But we’re assured by others, “You’re married!” After all, I know ABOUT her and she knows ABOUT me, but we don’t KNOW each other. That’s NOT a marriage covenant! Yet this is exactly how many who CALL themselves “Christian” are seen from our heavenly Father’s perspective. They know things ABOUT Him, but don’t know Him PERSONALLY.

If you DO embrace the true Gospel, the Gospel of our Father’s Covenant with you in union with Jesus, the Holy Spirit will be ALIVE in you. Listen to the promise of Jesus that’s based on TRUST in Him: “*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 trusted in Him were later to receive...*” (John 7:38,39).

How does a *living stream* get formed in you? When you embrace our Father’s stipulations for entering His Covenant, He places His Holy Spirit within you, guaranteeing that if YOU don’t break the Covenant by forsaking Jesus and His Word, you’ll receive your salvation at the Judgment Throne. At His Throne, Jesus will proclaim your name from His Book of Life!

Our Father seals you with the Holy Spirit as a sign that you belong to Him. “*Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set His seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come*” (2 Corinthians 1:21,22). The presence of the Holy Spirit not only enables you to flow with streams of living water which refresh and revitalize others. The Spirit also empowers you to live in *intimate union* with your Father.

If you’ve embraced our Father’s Covenant, then a wonderful miracle has taken place within you! Think of a woman who’s pregnant for the first time. She EXPERIENCES the presence of that baby within her. She has a physical and emotional UNION with that new life.

Lord Jesus talked about trust in Him according to the promises found in the *Older Testament*. The Older Testament was the ONLY Scripture in existence when Jesus said, “*Whoever trusts in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.*” It’s in the *Older Testament* that we learn about streams of living

water. And in the *Older Testament* we find our Father's stipulations for embracing His Covenant.

Think about whether the gospel message YOU received included these scriptural mandates:

1. Your Salvation Pilgrimage both begins and continues with your ***Repentance***.
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2. Your Salvation Pilgrimage both begins and continues with your ***Love***.
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3. Your Salvation Pilgrimage both begins and continues with your ***Obedient Trust***.
4. Your Salvation Pilgrimage both begins and continues with your ***Forceful Conviction and Determination***.
5. Your Salvation Pilgrimage both begins and continues with your ***Forgiving Others***.

Knowing and agreeing with our Father's criteria for entering into His Covenant is going to take your prayerful consideration. Use one of the resources below to pursue this important issue further. It's essential that you are in *Covenant union* with your Father if you're to live the way of our Lord.

For Further Study:

- *The Gospel of the Covenant Is the Pilgrimage to Salvation*
- *Jesus in Your Home* Video Series, Section 2: Segments 1 thru 4
- *Discussing How to Restore the Early Church*, Section 4: Lessons 24 thru 29

Each is a free download on our website: <restorationministries.org>