

Prophetic Insights

“Do You Know How To Give Honor?” (part 2)
January 6, 2014

“When the foundations are being destroyed, what can the righteous do?”
(Psalms 11:3).

What a desperate plea from the heart of David in this psalm as he calls to mind the animosity toward the upright in heart (v. 2)! Many of you may be equally chagrined over the wickedness going on today—the vile is everywhere! Is it any wonder David later laments, *“The wicked freely strut about when what is vile is honored among men”* (Psalms 12:8)?

We’re living in a time in which the evil this nation flaunts isn’t going to cease. BUT at the same time, this widespread corruption is a neon signpost from our Father to those who claim to belong to our Lord Jesus: to make sure that they, their family, and their faith community are *set apart from unholy living* and are living righteously in His sight.

This is the second installment of our earlier Prophetic Insight, *“Do You Know How To Give Honor?”* When we send out Prophetic Insights, it’s because the Holy Spirit Who so clearly knows our hearts and yours is prompting us to send out a warning about sin(s) you may be entertaining. Out of our Father’s holiness and love, His Spirit purposes for you to recognize your sin and experience godly sorrow over it so you will repent (2 Corinthians 7:10), and then do whatever is necessary to gain a clear conscience both with God and with man.

The Holy Spirit was sent to convict the world of sin (John 16:8). He is also exposing the generational sin even among Christians of failing to honor their parents and others whom the Bible tells us to honor. Do YOU rationalize your own dishonor of them because of a haughty

heart that pours out slander and unforgiveness from your mouth with no mercy?

“There is a generation who curses their father and does not bless their mother; a generation that is pure in their own eyes, yet is not cleansed of their filth; a generation whose eyes are ever so haughty, whose glances are so disdainful”
(Proverbs 30:11-13).

As we’ve ministered throughout Christendom we’ve found few people who have truly honored their parents. Their words, attitudes, and actions reveal a profound bitterness toward the very people who chose life for them. And their one-sided perception of how greatly their father and/or mother failed in parenting keeps many adult children on a prideful throne of judgment against their parents. From our Sovereign God’s perspective, however, there is *only one Judge*, and He shares His throne with no one (James 4:12).

We wrote in our previous Prophetic Insight that many individuals feel they honored their parents because they didn’t do anything to *dishonor* them. Or so they think. But they are viewing their conduct through a false, self-defending filter which is quick to hide their own culpability, whether by word or deed.

Several months ago we sent a candid letter to Mike’s siblings whose attitudes and actions had dishonored their parents in a number of ways. But as we bore witness to their dishonoring behavior which they wouldn’t want from their own kids toward them, those who responded refused to admit any sin, and therefore couldn’t repent. As the Proverb decries,

they're too pure in their own eyes to recognize their sin. Could it be that you and/or your own family have closed your eyes, covered your ears and hardened your hearts to what our Father COMMANDS those who call themselves His own:

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise—‘that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth’” (Ephesians 6:1-3; see also Exodus 20:12; Matthew 15:4).

If you're a non-Kingdom-minded pew sitter, it's likely that you're blind to the *intensity of honor* our heavenly Father is calling you to regarding your parents and others who are deserving of your honor. There's a certain misguided self-satisfaction in hiding out in a crowd every Sunday morning where you can enjoy spiritual songs and familiar rituals and traditions—but not be expected to come with the clean hands and pure heart which God's Word commands (Psalm 24:3,4; 2Timothy 2:22).

Yet purity of heart toward God and a life that reflects a desire to please Him are no longer parameters that are expected among most congregations. Compromise with sin is excused under “grace”, and the holy name of Jesus is tarnished by the sin-tolerant lives of His self-proclaimed followers. God's parameter of repentance is generally ignored from the pulpit, so people in the pew ignore it as an essential part of their own lives. When was the last time anyone was dismissed from your fellowship family for failing to repent of known sin? Never?

If this describes your spiritual life, then attending a service isn't really much different than going into a movie theater.

In both cases you watch a performance which neither changes your life nor convicts you of unChristlike attitudes, actions or words. But do you realize that your self-satisfied dullness is a sin against a holy and righteous Father who has made the way through His Son for you to live with clean hands and a pure heart? (See 1 Corinthians 14:26 and Colossians 3:16 for God's parameters for a gathering of our Lord's followers to *participate together* as His Body.)

There's a connection between Sunday service spectating and dishonoring parents:

- **So many who enjoy man-orchestrated “church” services are the same people who've failed to honor their parents.**
- **The majority of people who have left the religious system to pursue grateful Kingdom service for the Lord they love are repenting of their dishonor!**

The dishonor within one generation is straining and even destroying the marriages and families in succeeding generations. In almost every Christian family are multiple generations imprisoned by the *ongoing apprehension of codependency* produced by the failure to honor parents, especially fathers. Review our diagram on the next page:

There are the *abused* who fear getting on the wrong side of the *abusers*, so they don't speak up. And many of the *abusers*, rather than facing how they hurt others, live in denial by creating for themselves a fanciful view of how “good” they are because they do “good deeds” on behalf of select other people.

Whenever the *abused* does have the courage to point out how the *abuser* is hurting them, the abuser climbs into his or her “ivory tower” of self-deceit. And when *succeeding generations* try to confront the *abuser*, he or

Family Codependency



she disclaims, “I did the best I could!” The gears keep spinning, and relational apprehension continues into succeeding generations. The choice: be an abuser or abused.

Codependency and the emotional prison it creates starts with one generation which dishonors its parents and doesn’t ask forgiveness. **How about your family: Do your family members live with codependent tension toward each other?**

“We pray for you that you would have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way”
(Hebrews 13:18).

Do you know what it means to have a *clear conscience*? It’s a conscience that’s cleared of offenses toward God and toward other people. The goal of a clear conscience is summarized in the Greek word *aproskopos*, which is translated, “void of offense” and is affirmed by Paul in Acts 24:16: “*So I strive always to keep my conscience clear [void of offense] before God and man.*”

A *clear conscience* means you do nothing that would cause others to stumble nor give occasion to fall into sin. Denoting a smooth road, it signifies you’re not leading others into sin by your way of life. It’s also a conscience that’s not troubled or distressed by the guilt of offenses because it’s clean.

Because of our sin nature, the quality of maintaining a clear conscience is possible only as we have our hearts cleansed by the blood of Christ *and* purpose to be conformed to His image and character. None of our best human efforts could ever gain for us a clear conscience; only “*the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanses our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*” (Hebrews 9:14). A clear conscience allows you to look every person in the eye knowing that not one can point a finger and say, “**You wronged me and you never tried to make it right.**”

So, as you consider your parents, on what areas do you need to focus in order to gain a clear conscience? Please, don’t let too many days go by before you and your family (your faith family included) take the time to discern if you’ve met our Father’s requirement to give honor. Be honest with yourself and each other as you answer these questions:

- Would your heavenly Father commend you for how you treated your father and/or mother?
- For what thought, word, deed, or motive do you need to repent?
- From whom do you need to ask forgiveness?
- What needs to be changed in you so you may be blessed by those who should be honoring you?

If you’re older and are experiencing ongoing tension with your adult chil-

dren or in-laws, you can be pretty sure you and/or they have dishonored parents. Now is the time for you to get a clear conscience! Out of the love of Jesus in you, don't let another generation have to choose between being an abuser or abused. And move away from evaluating your life by the "creature comforts" you've obtained. What a shallow and futile example you've set for your progeny by depending on earthly security!

The press may be touting this land's growing economy and opportunity, but the populace itself is emotionally hollow. Neither the rising Stock Market nor your own financial well-being is a measurement of our Lord's evaluation of you or this country. His Word stands by what matters to Him at the Judgment Throne.

- Are you among the many who evaluate your children's success by their financial security and prosperity?
- Do you evaluate your own spiritual life by the comfort, convenience and complacency your faith community affords?

How greatly our Lord grieves as He sees the ugly mingling of worldly ways and values within the lives of those who say they belong to Him. Please, take seriously His warning to the collective body of Christians in the city of Laodicea long ago. The principles and the consequences when they are violated remain the same:

*"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, **because you are lukewarm**—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of My mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and **do not need a thing.**' But you **do not realize** that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked"* (Revelation 3:15-17).

Trust the way in which our Lord Jesus sees you more than trusting in any deceived self-appraisal of yourself. In the pattern of David in Psalm 26:2 ask the Holy Spirit to examine your heart and convict you of the sins of which you haven't repented—especially the ways in which you sinned against your parents.

As you can tell by what the Spirit is giving us to write, this is a serious matter to Him. We're doing our part to make His warning known so that you might repent and wholly love and serve our Lord with clean hands and a pure heart. Now is the time for you to do your part: gain a clear conscience!

Mike & Sue
(Galatians 1:10, 4:16)