

TODAY!

What Would Jesus Be Doing If He Were You?

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

Insight 13. Collectively Becoming The Family Of Lord Jesus (Part 2)

Whatever You Do

Don't Let Your Heart Be Calloused, Your Ears Dull Or Your Eyes Closed!

In March 1994 after our Father gave us the Hebraic foundations He was restoring to His people, we journeyed to a small, rustic retreat center near Latrun, a few miles outside Jerusalem. About 4 AM on our final morning there I (Mike) ventured into the simple, rock-hewn chapel to cry out to God about why He had chosen *us* to share the Hebraic foundations. I poured my heart out, reminding Him of how much I'd failed Him in my life.

Suddenly His Spirit directed me to a little devotional book on a nearby chair. I opened it to the lesson for that day:

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for Us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’”

(Isaiah 6:8). Sobbing, I whispered, “You do this to everyone you recruit!” Only the grace of our King can soften a heart, penetrate dull ears, and open blind eyes so anyone can experience His forgiving love and His purpose for choosing them. A repentant heart makes all the difference to our Lord!

We'd already been warned by the Holy Spirit that we were being sent back to the United States with a very *unpopular* message because **Hellenism** and **Nicolaitanism** dominated Christendom in this nation. This Insight's heading aptly echoes for us today God's prophetic warning to Israel of old — because we today are as spiritually deaf, blind and hard-hearted as they were:

“In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: “You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them” (Matthew 13:14,15, repeating Isaiah 6:9,10).

Our Lord Jesus reprimanded His obstinate listeners with the same warning Isaiah proclaimed, as did Paul with Jewish leaders in Rome (Acts 28:25-27). We too cite this same passage because **spiritual dullness** to the *Lordship* of Jesus our King and to our *personal and collective responsibilities* to extend His Kingdom have been God's indictment against the religious system of **Nicolaitanism**.

“If you have ears to hear, then hear!”

King Jesus is establishing a Kingdom within the hearts and lives of those He has called-out to cooperate together!

Our Lord Jesus so often summed up His parables with the challenge *to hear with the intent of obeying*.

This repeated phrase is an imperative, a command, a non-optional directive that means to listen intently, then take action according to the will of our Father!

Jesus is *still speaking today* to warn those with calloused hearts, dull ears and blind eyes who are complacently entrenched within a **Nicolaitan** religious system which promotes polite listening but *neglects loving obedience* to our Father:

*“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only he who **does the will of My Father** who is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).*

*“For whoever **does the will of My Father** in heaven is My brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:50).*

Our Father’s will has nothing to do with you sitting in a “church” building or listening to professional Nicolaitans preach at you. Rather, He’s been warring against the entire religious establishment. His will is all about *extending the Kingdom for His Son, Jesus*. As our Lord’s called-out ones we *collectively fulfill our purpose in it as our King’s representatives by His Spirit*.

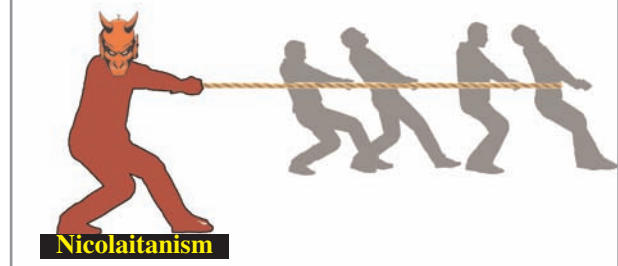
Just before Paul’s criticism of the Jewish leaders in Rome he had been appealing to them from the *Older Testament* to convince his listeners about Jesus and the Kingdom:

*“He explained and declared to them the **Kingdom of God** and tried to convince them about Jesus from the **Law of Moses and from the Prophets**” (Acts 28:23-27).*

In the words of King David: *“They will tell of the glory of Your **Kingdom** and speak of Your might, so that all men may know of Your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of Your **Kingdom**. Your **Kingdom** is an everlasting **Kingdom**, and Your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is faithful to all His promises and loving toward all He has made” (Psalms 145:11-13).*

Paul was trying to show the Jewish leaders that Jesus was establishing the Kingdom which was referred to in Older Testament. In reaffirming His goal of establishing a Kingdom, our Lord was doing away with the corrupt, non-God-ruled religious system. But only some had *ears to hear* what Paul shared.

Nicolaitanism: Attempts to pull people back into religion and away from the Kingdom.



If you’re not experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit working *in and through you*, and if you don’t have recurring testimonies of praise about our Father at work both *through you and around you*, then find out if you’re more Nicolaitan-entrenched than Kingdom minded.

“Blessed are your eyes [if] they see, and your ears [if] they hear”
(Matthew 13:16, paraphrase).

Our Lord voiced these words to His disciples just before He explained the parable about the seed and the soil:

*“When anyone hears the message **about the Kingdom** and does not understand it, the **evil one comes and snatches away** what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path” (Matthew 13:19).*

Have you ever asked yourself this: *“How does Satan snatch away God’s truth?”* The enemy does this through religious leaders who can *speak about* God and His Word but are unable to personally lead others in a way of life that extends His Kingdom through His followers on earth. The smoothly running attractiveness of their religious establishment is the first priority of leadership within organized religious systems. There’s piddling emphasis on extending the Kingdom of God. This is the sad fruit of a Christendom that’s been conquered by **Nicolaitanism** using **syncretism** and **revisionism**.

If you're one of our Lord's family members, picture yourself standing in front of Him as He voices this warning:

“Be careful, be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees’... Then they understood that He was telling them to guard against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Matthew 16:6,12).

Our Lord didn't come to *add* anything to the corrupted practices of the Judaism of His day. Rather, He strived to *clarify the Older Testament* for them and make clear that *His Kingdom was coming*. Jesus made sure that religious leaders both then and now know His appraisal of their self-obsessed, man-centered religion:

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, [Nicolaitans too] you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are” (Matthew 23:15).

Any religious system today that claims to serve our Lord but comes between the King and His followers is something He's warring against:

“Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth” (Revelation 2:15,16).

Our Lord's war against Nicolaitanism has been going on for some time. But this battle has been kept hidden by clergy and the religious establishment for decades. If I (Mike) hadn't worked as a counselor within the system for many years, I'd have remained oblivious to it. Over 1,500 clergy are resigning every month in this nation. And within some denominations over 50% of clergy have had or are having adulterous or homosexual affairs.

God's grace isn't aligned with the Nicolaitan system. He's warring against it so He can free those who are held captive in it. But they must seek the truth for themselves: ***“If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free”*** (John 8:31,32). Our Lord is a KING Who is establishing a Kingdom. And He is recruiting loving and obedient subjects—His family—to extend His Kingdom. Are you one of them?

“The kingdom of God is within you”
(Luke 17:21).
The Kingdom is a way of life that emanates from the heart of His own and is shown as they lovingly serve to extend His Kingdom.

You Must First Seek the KING And His Kingdom!

It's important that you understand that the Kingdom of our Lord and the “Christian” religious system have nothing in common. His Kingdom is *within the hearts* of His followers.

[To deepen your heart understanding of the nature of the Kingdom and the heart response of His beloved family subjects regarding His Kingdom, prayerfully read Matthew, chapter 13. Also, go over our series, *Kingdom Living Today*, free at our website.]

The warning our Lord issued to those trapped within a man-altered Judaism He also gives today to those trapped within the Nicolaitan system: ***“Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is near”*** (Matthew 4:17). If Nicolaitanism has held you captive for some time, you need to repent of the vestiges of its influence in your life as His Spirit makes you aware of them.

In His Kingdom His subjects are poured out as they pick up their cross daily to actively carry out by His grace their particular purpose in His Kingdom. They're characterized by *hearts of love, ears that hear and understand His Kingdom commands, and eyes that see His divine interventions and miracles.*

Our own warning: If you don't know what spiritual gift(s) the Holy Spirit has apportioned you, and if He isn't using His gifts through you in extending the Kingdom, then you've missed one of the three key scriptural points for salvation.

1. **You must be born again.**
2. **You must receive a baptism of repentance.**
3. **You must be baptized with the Holy Spirit.**

If you and those in your faith community have no ongoing testimonies to the Holy Spirit's power at work around you or His use of you to bless others, be warned. It's likely that you and/or they are holding onto something in this world that you fear losing. Pay keen attention to our Lord's words to you:

"The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (John 12:25).

We've been emphasizing in these Insights that you need to seek first His Kingdom *and* His righteousness. In the illustration below you see that Kingdom life begins in your own life (Luke 17:21) and in your home. That means you

intentionally allow no unconfessed sin to be tolerated in your own life or in those who live with you in your home. Willingness to repent out of love for our Lord and for those alongside you who trust and follow Jesus is essential! You also limit your biblical fellowship to those who purpose to live likewise in obedient love as authentic followers of the King.

Jesus speaks of the "Kingdom of God" over 50 times.

In living repentantly you open the way for your Father to hear your prayers and for His Spirit to operate freely through each of you. In that way you can be used by His Spirit to reach out to those who have yet to encounter Jesus as their Lord, and be effective ambassadors of Him through your loving witness and actions.

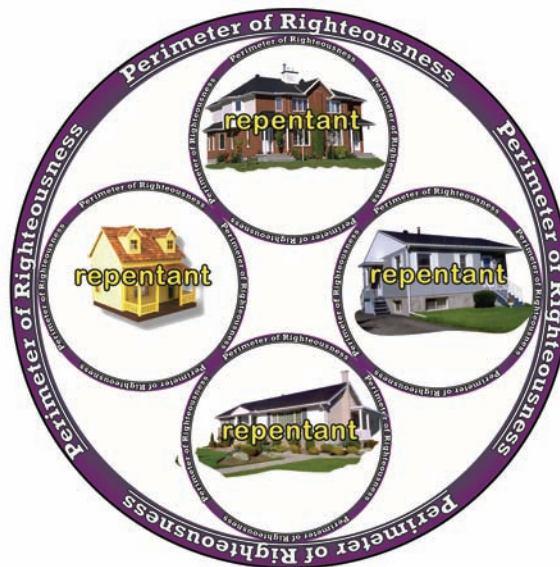
Guidance from the Spirit of Christ is our Lord's promise to you:

"I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:19,20).

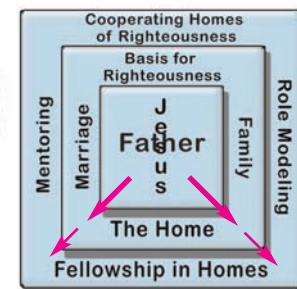
Our Lord's Kingdom is Established and Extended Through Homes of Righteousness

Repentant hearts, repentant families, and repentant home fellowships are like ever-extending love-motivated **perimeters of righteousness**.

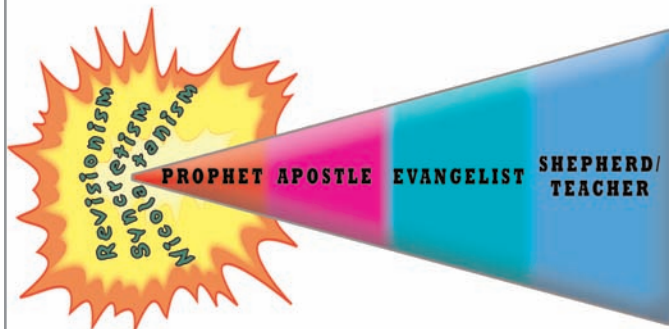
Perimeters of righteousness provide secure bases for spiritual and emotional nourishment. They are also a base of operation to reach out beyond your home and neighborhood to help establish other perimeters of righteousness. This is the way of extending the Kingdom with spiritual power.



The Essential Relational Priorities of Kingdom Living



For some time now our Lord has been restoring the Spirit-given anointings that will destroy the Nicolaitan-spawned deception which Satan has been using to snatch understanding of the Kingdom. Watch for these anointings! None of these individuals will be well-known as so many Nicolaitan clergy are today. Instead, they have humble hearts accompanied by power of the Spirit to extend the Kingdom.



“It was [Jesus] Who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be shepherd/teachers to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Ephesians 4:12-16).

Until you are privileged by our Lord to be personally and collectively raised up into unity and maturity by these Spirit-given anointings into the fullness of Christ, keep yourself repentant before our Lord. The pervasive influence of Nicolaitanism has held back the full

restoration of these anointings. But not for much longer. In our time this promise is being fulfilled:

“[Jesus] must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as He promised long ago through his holy prophets” (Acts 3:21).



Our Experience

When people who’ve been around organized Christianity for many years first begin to understand the nature of the Kingdom of the King, Satan immediately tries to snatch that budding understanding (Matthew 13:19). At the end of one of our seminars several years ago we could see Kingdom understanding being grasped by a certain man. The Spirit told me to warn him, “When you get home tonight your pastor is going to call you to make you a leader in the congregation.” The man called the next day and told us that his pastor did call—and he accepted the leadership position. Nicolaitanism reached out and snatched him from Kingdom-hearted understanding and response.

If snatching your understanding doesn’t work, the devil will entice you to become more focused on worldly goals: *“The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are **choked by life’s worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature**” (Luke 8:14).* You know deep within whether your motives are focused on storing up riches for yourself in heaven (Matthew 6:20,21; Luke 12:33; James 2:5) or on getting all you can on earth (1Timothy 6:10,17).

But if you’ll humbly keep turning to your KING and asking Him to guide and empower you, you’ll be *“the seed on good soil [which] stands for those with a noble and good heart, **who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop**” (Luke 8:15; 16:13).*