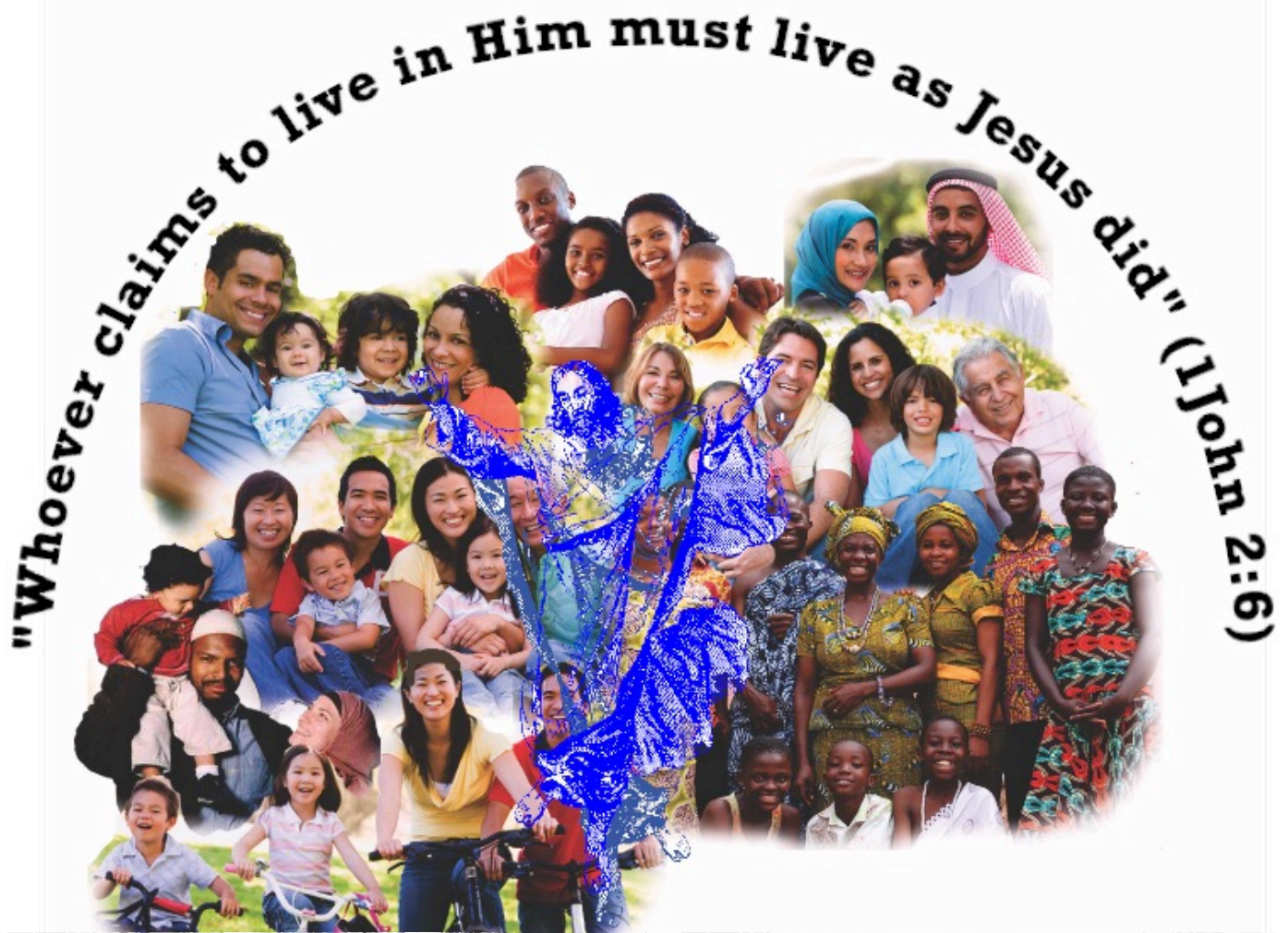


Being The Reality Of Jesus To A Wicked World

Reality 19. Women Young Or Old: Don't Defame Our Lord!



Pinpointing Key Facets Of The Hebraic Foundations

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Reality 19. Women Young Or Old: Don't Defame Our Lord!

As I write this Reality I hope that through it you'll be resolutely determined by grace to keep from defaming Jesus in any way. Please keep in mind that even if you're not a woman, you certainly know many whose hearts will be challenged by these Realities to cry out to Jesus for His Spirit to give them peace! So share it with them. And do ask the Spirit to breathe life into this material so you can make it more than just "information" that informs your mind but doesn't impact your heart.

“If one person sins against another, God may mediate for the offender; but if anyone sins against the LORD, who will intercede for them?” (1Samuel 2:25).

The Bible makes an important distinction about sin. When you sin against other people, the Spirit of our Lord will help you to repent and to ask their forgiveness and make restitution if necessary. But there are also sins which directly insult God, sins against the LORD which defame Him. In this Reality I'll discuss a particular sin which most directly insults the character of our God: it's **fretting and worry!** Our Lord Jesus warns us to not worry, because worry directly challenges our Father's loving care and the sovereign authority He has given Jesus.

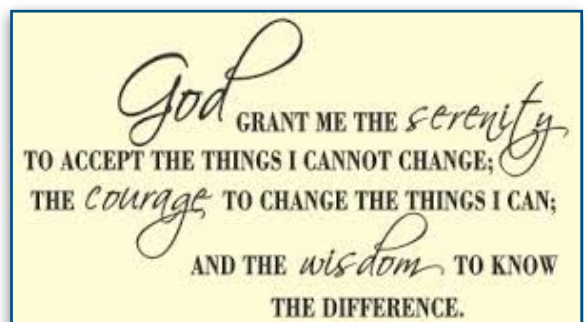
As you read our Lord's admonition to His disciples, ask yourself if YOU are plagued by worry or fretting even about everyday matters, never mind "big" ones like a serious medical condition or loss of your job. Worry is how the "pagan world" responds to their circumstances. But our Lord has called you out of that system and into His Kingdom way of obedient trust. As you're personalizing His command to not worry, consider from HIS perspective what your worrying reveals about your sinful distrust that He's Sovereign and that He cares for you:

“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? If you then are not able to do the least, why are you anxious for the rest?... And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them” (Luke 12:22-30).

What's the antidote to worry? Here's what our Lord commands you for this day, whether things are going well for you or not. Making God's righteousness and His Kingdom your priority removes any reason to fret that something is beyond His intervention:

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (Matthew 6:33,34; see also Luke 10:40-42).

The temptation to worry isn't sinful, but it leads to sin if you refuse to cry out to our Lord Jesus for His peace through His indwelling Spirit. Your persistent worry is audaciously doubt-filled regarding your Lord. And the fretting you voice to others shows you think you're in control of your own life. Before you hold onto worry and fretting especially about the future, do a personal "trust-check" of the One Who's actually in charge:



*“When things are going well, enjoy yourself; but when things are going badly, **consider that God made the one alongside the other, so that people would learn nothing of their futures**” (Ecclesiastes 7:14).*

The future is God’s domain; don’t affront Him by worrying! And if your prayers aren’t being answered, or if you have no testimonies at all of God-sized answers that inspire awe and praise in those who hear your testimony, **STOP AND CONSIDER WHY!** This is important, because you may be in an **“unanswered prayer futility loop”**—blaming God that He doesn’t care and is ignoring your prayer.

Here are some things to keep in mind when you begin to pray with obedient trust. First, make sure that you and those who are interceding with you aren’t clinging to any sins. Until the answer comes, you’ll need to stay submitted to our Father and resist the devil wholeheartedly (James 4:7). Your enemy is a deceiver and an enticer, and he’ll try to find ways to trip you up. If you want an answer from our Father, then keep unconfessed sin out of your lives! And as His Word makes crystal clear, He is a Jealous God and tolerates prayer to NO ONE but Himself through our Lord Jesus alone. (See Exodus 20:4,5.)

We’ve written before that **prayer is spiritual warfare**. Let’s review what took place as God responded to the prayer of a particular man who was in righteous standing with Him — and the battle God’s messenger faced against demonic foes:

“Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia” (Daniel 10:12,13). Stay repentant!

Also, Mike and I have observed Christians over the years who pray for a particular answer from our Father yet defame Him and our Lord Jesus to others by their worry while they’re waiting for His answer. Too often they pray without thanksgiving accompanying their petitions (Philippians 4:6). So when He does answer, their doubtful worry along the way dampens the rejoicing and hearty praise which others would have shared with them. Mark Twain once wrote, “I’ve had a lot of worries in my life, most of which never happened.” And as Leo Buscaglia famously warns, “Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only saps today of its joy.” Remember this **before** you open your mouth to voice fretting and worry!

I’ve learned over the years how important it is when I’m making requests of my Father that I pray the NEED and not the ANSWER. He sees the whole picture and I’m limited to just a few pieces. His ultimate purposes are far greater than I can imagine, and He has at His disposal all kinds of ways to answer if I don’t target fixate on just one! If you make sure you have no unconfessed sin, then He’s going to answer as the Perfect Father with one of these responses to your petition: “Yes”, “No”, or “Not yet.” Waiting can expose you to temptation to defame Him.

I wrote previously about the "Jezebel" spirit that means **I have no co-equal**. When you worry, you’re eliminating the Lordship of Jesus and putting yourself in control. And if you’re an older woman who is prone to ongoing worry or fretting, you’re repeatedly defaming our Lord instead of lifting Him up in **peaceful trust**. If you’re married, your worry and fretting defame your husband by insinuating that he’s inadequate and that you need to take charge. If this describes you, then heed this reality: **If you worry, our Lord will give you cause to worry!** Return to Him in repentant obedient trust and experience His peace.

A wife is a public compliment to her husband, or she's defaming him!

Since World War II, many Christians have increasingly embarked on what's called an **"egalitarian marriage"**. In this arrangement husbands and wives **possess equal authority** with equal commitment to their jobs and to their families. Both wage-earning and family responsibilities are divided down the middle. A husband's protective authority to **include, exclude, commend** and **correct** may be acknowledged, but it isn't respected or practiced as God-given. And there's a knotty side effect in egalitarian marriages: a wife is much more prone to worry because her husband doesn't enact any protective authority or direction.

Think about it. Why do so many women who aren't under God-given protective authority *worry*? Within our brain we women have a larger corpus callosum which processes information faster than a man's can. We may more quickly come to a conclusion that feels right because our brain says it is. But a man's slower paced thinking likely includes variables we didn't think of—variables which help in mutual **wise decision making**. And if we chafe while waiting for his less speedy input, we're prone to fret no matter what the answer—and even take matters into our own hands.

We older women must lead the way in unwavering trust in our Lord Jesus.

Here's an assuring promise from our Lord that never fails those who trust Him: *"You [Lord] will keep in perfect peace [no room for worry!] those whose minds are steadfast [unwavering], because they trust in You"* (Isaiah 26:3). If you're married or a woman who's willing to help younger wives stay at peace with rightful priorities, 1Peter 3:1-6 is very clear on the kind of relationship with a husband that forestalls any worry.

"For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting themselves to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you became her children doing good and not fearing any terror" (1Peter 3:5,6; see also Ephesians 5:23).

Please, don't give way to worry like those around you who fret. If any of these women claim to belong to our Lord Jesus, **confront them!** Tell them they're sinning against Him and defaming Him by their worry. Neither our Lord nor a husband nor anyone else likes to be defamed by having their reputation sullied. Stop this defamation if you're doing it yourself, and speak up when others keep bringing up their worries. Turn these ladies to Jesus to repent. Then pray with them that whatever need they have, they'll commit fully to Him and receive His peace!

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (John 14:27).

Sue (with loving support and input from Mikel!)