

Yeshua

MISHPACHAH

A NEWSLETTER TO THE FAMILY OF JESUS FROM RESTORATION MINISTRIES

The Hebraic family is not simply an individual or private matter. Rather, it is an institution in which the whole community has a stake. Thus, the Hebrew word "mishpachah," meaning family, not only refers to parents and children, but to the whole extended family worldwide in the body of "Yeshua"— our Jesus.

Dear Friends,

When our Lord tells us that our trust will result in stream of living water flowing through us, is that your experience?

Streams of Water

In our May letter we mentioned "relational responsibility." Current statistics about marriages and families indicate a tremendous erosion of relational responsibility within the Christian community. Part of the reason is that we often unintentionally teach the Bible as an end in itself. Rather than seeing the Word as God's means to understand who He is and our responsibilities to Him, we study and memorize verses, believing that this pleases Him. Jesus faced this problem in His own day when He warned the people, "You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that **testify about me**, yet you refuse to **come to me** to have life" (John 5:39,40). He is telling us that a trusting relationship with Him is the primary focus of the Bible. Through a trusting relationship He will transform us into His image and cause us to fulfill His purposes.

We have written about the influence of relationships in pre-

vious letters and in *Restoring the Early Church*. For instance, "He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm" (Pro. 13:20). If you commune in intimacy with Jesus, you will become like Him. A criterion for staying close to Him: "Trust in **Jesus** with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge **Jesus**, and **Jesus** will guide your paths" (see Pro. 3:5,6).

Enabling us to draw near our Lord and to live a life in conformity to Him is the indwelling Holy Spirit:

"We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: 'For who has known the mind of the Lord that

he may instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ" (1Cor. 2:12-16).

Don't be a Blasphemer!!!

The passage from 1Cor. quoted above is crucial to knowing and following Jesus as He really is. What sets believers apart from unbelievers? The Holy Spirit who indwells us!! Be careful that you do not diminish His importance or nullify His purpose for indwelling you. Some faith communities have gone so far in their teachings as to quench the Holy Spirit. Biblically, they have become "blasphemers," attributing the Spirit's work to something other than the hand of God. Note Paul's warning: "Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil" (1Thess 5:19-22). Remember Hymenaeus and Alexander were "handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme" (1Tim. 1:19,20). As you will see in our discussion of the tribe of Ephraim, "blasphemers" are the ones who attack and slander those filled with the Spirit who know the mind of Jesus and have the reckless courage to follow Him.

The Fruit of Our Disobedience

The Old Testament often provides physical examples that can help us to more fully understand New Testament truths. What does the Hebrew Bible reveal about the consequences of disobedience? King Saul disobeyed God. The Lord had spoken through the prophet Samuel that Saul was to attack the Amalakites and “destroy everything.” When Saul’s soldiers began to keep things for themselves, he grew fearful of them and disobeyed God. [Consider in your own life what *fear of people* rather than *holy fear of God* will yield: “Fear of man will prove to be a **snare**, but whoever trusts in the Lord is kept safe” (Pro. 29:25). See that word “trust” again?]

Many of God’s people forfeit tremendous blessing because of their fear of what other people might think. Saul lost his kingdom: “But Samuel replied: ‘Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in **obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king**’” (1Sam. 15:22,23).

Saul’s disobedience and rejection prompted him to pursue and almost kill David, a man after God’s heart. So too, as a consequence of their disobedience, the Ephraimites attacked or harassed those who were obedient to God.

² Ephraim’s Disobedience

We can learn a great deal about the consequences of our failure to obey the Word of God if we study the tribe of Ephraim. In the Book of Deuteronomy God issued specific commands to the people of Israel before their entry into the Promised Land:

“When the Lord your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—seven nations larger and stronger than you—and when the Lord your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the Lord’s anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you” (Deu 7:1-4). These commands to the Israelites are repeated several times in the Hebrew Bible.

The Book of Judges reveals to us that the tribe of Ephraim failed to keep God’s command: “Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites living in Gezer, but the Canaanites continued to live there among them” (v. 1:29).

In further disobedience, the Ephraimites arose against those who heeded God. After Gideon won the great battle against the Midianites with only 300 men, he was confronted by the Ephraimites on his way home: “Now the Ephraimites asked Gideon, ‘Why have you treated us like this? Why didn’t you call

us when you went to fight Midian?’ And they **criticized him sharply.**” (Judges 8:1).

When he returned from a mighty battle against the Ammonites, Jephthah was threatened by the Ephraimites: “The men of Ephraim called out their forces, crossed over to Zaphon and said to Jephthah, ‘Why did you go to fight the Ammonites without calling us to go with you? We’re going to **burn down your house** over your head.’” (Judges 12:1).

When King Hezekiah wanted to reestablish the celebration of the Passover, he sent word to all Israel to come and celebrate in Jerusalem: “The couriers went from town to town in Ephraim...but the people **scorned and ridiculed** them” (2 Chr. 30:10).

The Psalmist describes the cowardice of those who disobeyed God: “The men of Ephraim, though armed with bows, **turned back** on the day of battle; they **did not keep** God’s covenant and **refused to live** by his law. They **forgot** what he had done, the wonders he had shown them” (Psa. 78:9-11).

Hosea writes a scathing indictment against the Ephraimites and their disobedience: “Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone!”; “Ephraim will be laid waste on the day of reckoning. Among the tribes of Israel I proclaim what is certain”; “Ephraim is oppressed, trampled in judgment, intent on pursuing idols”; “What can I do with you, Ephraim? What can I do with you, Judah? Your love is like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears”;

“Ephraim mixes with the³ nations; Ephraim is a flat cake not turned over”; “Ephraim is like a dove, easily deceived and senseless—now calling to Egypt, now turning to Assyria” (Hos. 4:17; 5:9,11; 6:4; 7:8, 11).

Points for You to Ponder

Faultfinding those who are wholehearted about the purposes of God may be an indicator of your *own disobedience*. Satan will connect you with other like-minded, disparaging people. Your shared murmurings and criticisms will center on discrediting others.

Also, if you find yourself running for human help in crisis after crisis after crisis.....Stop!!! Discern your area of disobedience. Don't be idolatrous by seeking the help of men rather than repenting before your holy God. The Psalmist understood the blessing of confession and the consequences of unconfessed sin:

“Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord’—and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah” (Psa. 32:1-4).

A more thorough study of the above examples will show that God attempted to show mercy

to the Ephraimites on many occasions. Even in the New Testament, God seeks to bring people to repentance first through His kindness. Habitual disobedience to God's Word leaves you open to demonic captivity and bondage. If you do not repent, you will find yourself increasingly critical of others who obey God wholeheartedly. If you refuse to repent and choose instead to continue in disobedience, Satan will enlist you as an *“accuser of the brethren”* (Rev. 12:10).

Much of the division in the Church today is created by those who fail to remain open to God's continued efforts to restore and give full meaning to His Word. The following is from a farewell sermon of Pastor Robinson given on the eve of the Pilgrims' departure from Holland to the New World:

“I charge you before God and His blessed angels, that you follow me no further than you have seen me follow the Lord Jesus Christ. If God reveals anything to you by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it as you were to receive any truth of my ministry, for I am verily persuaded the Lord hath more truth yet to break forth out of His holy Word. For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of those reformed churches which are come to a period in religion, and will go, at present, no further than the instrument of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; whatever part of His will our God has revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it; and the Calvinists,

you see, stick fast where they were left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things. This is a misery much lamented, for though they were burning lights in their times, yet they penetrated not into the whole counsel of God, but were they now living, would be willing to embrace further light as that which they first received, for it is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick anti-Christian darkness and that perfection of knowledge should break forth at once.”

We have mentioned before that our Lord continues to *restore* and uphold His Word. The Reformation was the beginning of God's Restoration. Be careful that you do not live as the Ephraimites, finding yourself opposing those who are *pressing on* obediently with all that the Lord is restoring.

The verse below is just as applicable for the Church today as it was when it was first written:

“The prophet, along with my God, is the watchman over Ephraim, yet snares await him on all his paths, and hostility in the house of his God” (Hos. 9:8). More and more of God's people are on a prophetic mission carrying with them the message of Restoration. What awaits them in the Church today?

To get a spiritual snapshot of yourself, ask those who know you:

- “Does my life exhibit a willing obedience to God even in tough circumstances and

relationships?”

- “Do you get a sense that I am yielded to God’s control of my life?”
- “Do I have a track record of “half baked” ideas that frequently end in failure?”
- “Do you find me giving excuses after these fiascoes, insinuating that God let me down?”
- “Do you find me speaking negatively against my brothers and sisters?”
- “Would you describe my life as “Spirit-filled”, evidencing the spiritual fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control?”
- “Do you feel I have the mind of Jesus in decisions, or do you find me relying on my own reasoning?”

Pertaining to this last question, we use the phrases “going vertical” or “going horizontal”. “Going vertical” means seeking

⁴the Lord and His guidance without any consideration or discussion about the ramifications. “Going horizontal” is weighing all the pro’s and con’s of a decision, concerned about the ramifications and outcomes without fully seeking God’s will. When you have assurance from God in the vertical, He will show you the horizontal. We call this **“Confirmation before action.”**

Just as we are enjoined to follow the good examples in the Bible—the selflessness of Paul, the trust of Ruth, the courage of Esther—so too should we learn from the negative cases. Turn away and flee from slander, gossip, and bad reports. Guard what comes out of your own mouth and even what emanates from your thoughts. Since all Scripture is profitable for equipping God’s people for productive lives, examine your life and relationships in the light of His truth.

Pray for those areas of disobedience, finger-pointing, excuse-making, and self-reliance to be exposed and to become as detestable to you as they are to God. His desire for each of His people is a life that pleases Him: bearing good fruit

in every work, growing in knowledge of Him, strengthened by His power to have great endurance and patience even as you give Him thanks! (See Col. 1:9-12.)

While teaching at the retreat center for over 10 years, we noticed a correlation with how people spent their time and their proclivity to faultfinding. On the last page of this letter we have included a worksheet which we used at the center to help people take a close look at the use of their time.

How people use their time, especially their discretionary time, is often indicative of what they value most. Discretionary time is that time each day where you can choose what you want to do. We noticed that people who use a vast amount of discretionary time for their *own gratification* are often the same ones who cast dispersion on those who wholeheartedly serve the Lord. We encourage you to fill in the chart and discuss it with someone close to you.

IN His Name,

Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz

Restoration Ministries International

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