

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.

UPHOLDING HUMAN
DIGNITY



Walking in the Holy Spirit in an Age of Concupiscence

Dear Men,

The word "*Selah*" appears in the Hebrew Bible 71 times. No one really knows the precise meaning of the word. Many think it gives musical direction to singers. My spiritual father believed that the word meant "Stop! Meditate on this before you go further." Over the years that is how I have understood the word and that is what I hope this newsletter will be for you—an encouragement to *Selah*.

I first heard the word "concupiscence" at a Bill Gothard's Basic Life Principles Seminar in 1978. Concupiscence is "an ardent sensual longing." We are not talking about sexuality alone but *unabashed pleasure seeking without any regard for whether it is right or wrong*. We who follow Jesus are living in the midst of such concupiscence that I think that Lot may have had it easier in Sodom than we do today. I firmly believe that a spirit of concupiscence prevails among so many would-be-followers of Jesus keeping them from walking in the full anointing and power Jesus promises. As I write, my heart goes out to parents trying to rear children in a Godly manner at this time. To teach children the way of the Lord in an age of concupiscence is very difficult without extended spiritual family who embrace the same biblical principles, goals, and values.

A Lesson on Concupiscence from the Cinder Cone

Just behind our home is one of the over-800 cinder cones that dot the area. From our back porch it appears that the cinder cone ascends to a ridge—levels off—and then ascends to a higher ridge. One day we climbed the hill and arrived at the first ridge. To our surprise, it didn't level off, for between the first and second ridge was a deep ravine. We traversed the ravine and reached the second ridge where the view was far more magnificent than on the first ridge.

On top of the higher ridge the Holy Spirit gave me a *rhema* about concupiscence among our Father's children: "*The first ridge represents the lives of so many who refuse to live wholeheartedly for Jesus. They seek religious activities that are pleasurable for them. These pleasure-seekers end up living lives of unempowered religious activity. The second, higher ridge represents those who seek not their own desires, but only that which pleases the Father.*" I had mixed emotions on that ridge—wonder at the beauty along with sorrow at the implications of the Holy Spirit's message. The Lord knows how much I desire for each of you and your families to know the spiritual beauty of the higher ridge. *Selah*



Dear Sisters in Jesus,

When is the last time you grabbed the hand of someone and just talked with our Father spontaneously in petition or praise—and then saw Him move in loving power almost immediately? While I was back in Connecticut sharing in some family matters this month He privileged me with encounters like that over and over again! Such joy! Such occasion to give Him glory out loud to others!

As I've been basking in the Psalms lately I've noticed time and again that our Father responded to the voice of His children in such ways that they were *overflowing* with testimony to His goodness. I want to be like that, and I shake my head in dismay when I miss a divine appointment that might have shaken someone out of doubt and disbelief to instead fix their eyes on Jesus in trust and see Him respond in power.

But experiencing our Father's faithfulness and sharing it with others is the LAST thing that the enemy of our souls wants, and sadly, the last thing our fleshly self-focus yearns for either. That's where diligent alertness against the concupiscence (kon-CUE-pi-sents) that strangles our obedient trust comes in.

Concupiscence Rends Obedient Trust

If you have glanced at Mike's letter to the men, you'll notice the word "*concupiscence*". The vast array of activities that overflow many congregations within Christianity have capitalized on our culture's quest for pleasure. Typifying "ecclesiastical concupiscence" today is the whole "church growth" movement which appeals to friendliness and enjoyable entertainment (whether through lively worship, fun youth activities, "lite" sermons) to attract people into congregations. No longer do the lifestyles of the people of God stand out in contrast to the concupiscence of the society around us. In fact, one of the most recent Barna Update surveys indicate that "born again" believers equal non-"born-again" in divorce, rending a covenant commanded to be permanent. (Of course, perhaps their definition of "born-again" ought to be examined!)

Preparing the Family of Jesus for the Dark Days to Come

Concupiscence—Loving the Sin that Hinders

When you study the history of Israel you notice that it was not just one act that moved God to spurn them. To become *reprobate*, that is, rejected by God, you have to make a series of sinful choices until you arrive at the point where the Bible states, “It is impossible to bring this person to repentance.” (It may not be impossible with God, but no human can do it.)

Christians can become reprobate, just as the Israelites did: “If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God...Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb. 10:26,27;12:1,2).

In my notes from the Basic Life Principles Seminar are 13 steps into reprobation. There isn't space to define each one, but if you review them closely you can see that without the Spirit's guidance, things only get worse.

Natural Curiosity Must Be Biblically Guided

Those of us who want to train our children on the path of righteousness need to guide their natural curiosity. As we wrote in *Demolishing Strongholds*, every person has a need for freedom and boundaries in their lives. A child's natural curiosity enables us through the Holy Spirit to establish biblical parameters. Failure to guide their curiosity by establishing appropriate freedom and boundaries will result in a reprobate life which will grieve and quench the Holy Spirit. This is an area where grandparents and other mature people can help younger couples establish biblical parameters. [See Sue's column for more on how to do this.]

If your child learns freedom and boundaries from his/her parents, and later in life from others in authority, he or she will learn a life of trust. Sadly, parents who shirk from biblically guiding their children's natural curiosity condemn them to a life of *fear of authority and correction*—a life of manipulation—a life in which they fail to experience loving intimacy with God or others. Those raised with freedom and boundary are able to draw close to others because they know what *contributes to or hurts* relationships. Most of this development happens before the age of 4; that's why we adults don't remember someone telling us “Don't take your sister's doll,” or “Don't pull the dog's tail.” Your parents may have taught you moral or ethical principles, but unless they made it clear that these were scriptural commands, you didn't perceive that all of life's direction is found in the Bible. I discovered in my 40's that both of my parents were raised in homes in which the Word was read, but neither of them continued this practice with us kids. Instead, we were given moral principles

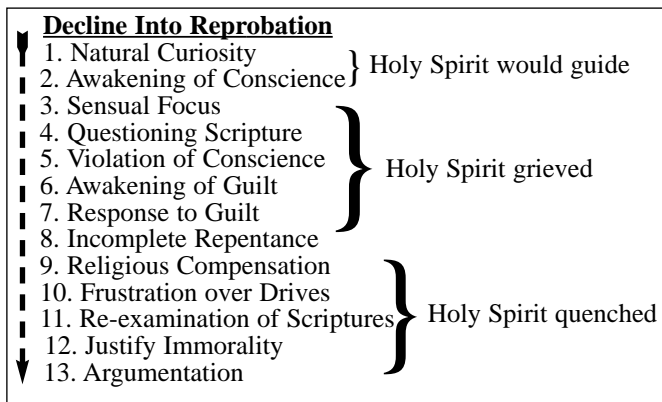
(SISTERS)

Halakhahs from Our Parents!

“Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck” (Pro. 1:8,9).

Many newsletters ago we wrote that until the turn of this century, the word “educate” referred to the teaching relationship of a mother with her children. Although husbands and fathers are responsible to God for the establishment of appropriate halakhahs for their families, mothers and grandmothers have an impressive role to play in teaching their children the ways of God.

I have no doubt that your heart's desire is for your children (or the children of your siblings or dear ones in Jesus) to be blessed by our Lord throughout their



lives. This takes consistent training beginning at the earliest possible time to teach children appropriate areas of freedom and boundaries. As you look at the chart to the left,

Decline into Reprobation, you can see that natural curiosity needs to be guided and directed toward what is right. It is not only important that children learn ‘right and wrong’; they must also grow in interpersonal responsibilities that will reflect the character of Jesus in them as they care for others. This is accomplished as you teach your kids to be responsible for household chores. Yes, many of us didn't like to have to empty the garbage or wash the dishes, but the degree to which our parents insisted that we share in these duties is the degree that many of us as adults today feel a sense of belonging with other people.

Children today are surrounded by the tempting lure of concupiscent activities which they and their friends can take part in together. We as women have the privilege to train them in activities of interpersonal responsibility that will attract others to them *because of their character*. Godly character doesn't happen overnight but is built decision by decision to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

During our years of serving at the retreat center Mike often asked groups at the end of their stay, “Who among you do you think the most highly of?” The person most often selected was the one who had shown the most kindness to others — even among youth

without the scriptural foundation.

An ad on TV depicts young teens asking their parents to tell them the boundaries about smoking, drugs, and relational involvement. These same kids may break the boundaries, but that is where their conscience is awakened because they were *told the boundaries*. *Selah*

My Navajo friend, James Skeet, told me that the Navajos do not correct their children until after age 5. The Navajo culture suffers from a lack of true community, often preferring to go it alone rather than cooperate with each other. This lack of cooperative community has left them open to financial exploitation by other cultures. I encouraged James to lead the way in establishing *halakhahs* for his people, that is, to scrutinize the cultural practices in light of God's Word. Please keep him your prayers.

Living For Jesus is to Live in Cooperative Community

Requirements:

- Apply the Principles of His Word
- Walk in Your Anointing
- Obey the *Rhema*

The Holy Spirit—The Power to Live For Jesus

The three requirements listed above can be viewed as legs of a three-legged stool. If one is shorter than the others, the stool will topple. The Holy Spirit is needed to keep everything in balance, because none of these elements is possible without the Spirit.

Parents with wisdom and understanding will emphasize a *walk with the Holy Spirit*. Paul grasped this importance when he urged, "*So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature...The one who sows to please his sinful nature [concupiscent desires], from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life*" (Gal. 5:16;6:8).

You can count on this one thought: *If you desire to live for Jesus, you can't do it without the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit*. The Bible tells us that He is the power of God sent forth by both the Father and the Son to enable us to live a life pleasing to our Lord. The foundations to following Jesus as listed above are impossible to live unless you are indwelt by the Spirit. The Spirit is received when you have embraced the Gospel God established and He seals you with the Spirit as a sign of consummating His covenant with you. Pray for the Spirit to fill each of your family members. Lay your hand on the heads of each family member as a covering and pray for the Spirit's empowerment for them. It's amazing how many men find themselves praying prophetic blessing for their family! *Selah*

• Apply the Principles of His Word—Establish *Halakhahs*

Wherever God's children seek cooperative community, there must be biblical principles to which all adhere. In other words, '*What are the freedom and boundaries of our relationships?*' It is the absence of *halakhahs* that has contributed to the lack of cooperation within so many families and home fellowships. When people don't know the freedoms and boundaries they become apprehensive. An apprehensive person is unable to love others. Instead, he or she becomes self-seeking.

Fear of scrutiny and personal responsibility are the two ³

(SISTERS) groups who in other circumstances might value academic or athletic prowess!. In other words, kind people epitomized their interpersonal responsibility toward others and were highly esteemed because of it.

***"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets"* (Matt. 7:12).**

It's not enough for us to teach our children to carry out certain tasks just because it's proper that they learn to do their share of chores. Just as vital to the spiritual well-being of a child is the need to understand *why* he or she is sharing in the workload of the home. And much of that *education* of interpersonal responsibility falls on the mom.

These are some sample home *halakhahs* (the way you walk out God's Word) that go beyond the task to the *why* of the matter:

"We pass the serving plates around the table so that each person can learn to give as well as to receive. Each child clears his or her own plate from the table and should offer to carry the serving dishes as well."

"We pick up our toys (clothes, books) so that our home environment is organized and we don't have to scurry and search in a fluster to locate a particular item."

"We write thank-you notes (or take dictation from little ones and send artwork) so that those who have done something special for us by word or by deed will know that their kindness has been appreciated."

"We limit the number of evenings we're involved in outside activities so that tranquillity rather than agitation reigns in our home."

"We limit our TV viewing so that we can spend time sharing our own experiences and thoughts with each other rather than those of fictional characters."

As you and your family or loadbearers come up with life *halakhahs*, be sure to search the Word of God to recognize how often the lessons you are trying to appropriate appear! What an imprint this will make on your heart and on your children's hearts as they see how very practical the Bible is in everyday life!

Have some fun: Sit down with your family or with a fellow loadbearer and try to recall chores you were responsible for when you were growing up. These were means of instilling in you a sense of belonging and of responsibility toward your other family members. Chances are, you won't be able to recall when you first started making your bed or clearing the table or scooping up the dog do. But you can bet that your parents will remember when they first started "putting you to work"!

main hindrances we have seen over the years that keep people from applying God's Word to their lives. It's as if Satan whispers, "If you're ignorant of His Word, you can't be held responsible." He knows our carnal nature wants nothing to do with either the knowledge of God's Word or being responsible for living it. Further, he relies on the Hellenistic style of teaching in the church to convey biblical facts without application. Knowing is *not* doing, and *knowing without doing* is unacceptable to God [see James 2:14-26]. *Selah*

Yet, the Word of God speaks for itself: "*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart*" (Heb. 4:12). When I establish a *halakhah* for Sue and me, I'm saying that this is a SPECIFIC WORD of God for us. It is a biblical principle I am now accountable to uphold and enforce. When I establish a *halakhah* I often find myself repenting for not having applied it earlier—my sin is evident now that I see it in His Word.

Today, so few Christian parents are taking the time to apply God's Word for themselves or their families. Their failure often condemns their children to a reprobate life. Indulging their concupiscence, the kids grow up to be "pleasure-seeking Christians" rather than servants of the Most High God. True freedom for ourselves and our families comes from permitting the "*double-edged sword*" to do its work. It's not too late!

• Walk in Your Anointing

I fear for those who think that just walking in their anointing indicates that they are pleasing to God. Jesus addressed the so-called anointed who live without the principles of His Word: "*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. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!'*" (Matt. 7:21-23). What is a lawless person? Someone who breaks God's law. *Selah*

Knowing the anointing or gifting apportioned to you by the Holy Spirit enables you to carry out your part in the cooperation needed in your faith community. Anointing is often withheld from those who seek the respectability the world offers. There are many today who point to their wealth and respectability as evidence of God's blessing and anointing, when it can actually be evidence that they have departed from living for Jesus. When individuals or faith communities seek respectability from other people, they usually end up doing that which is detestable to God in order to get it. The more Christians seek to be accepted by the world, the more they become like it, and to their detriment the grieved and quenched Spirit departs. There should be no greater fear in our lives than to seek friendship with the world. Our job on earth is not to gain the respect of the world but to save people *from* the world!

God's children are at war for the souls of mankind. Our giftings enable us to do our part in the cooperation needed to both wage and win the battle. Sue and I wrote *God's Instruments for War/Discovering and Coordinating* ⁴

(SISTERS) Healthy families are actually a *team* who learn loyalty and self-control as they have to deal with emotional circumstances on a regular basis. Those little contributions you made to the well-being of others outside your own self were the beginning of preparing you to serve. Whether or not you knew you were serving Jesus when you were serving others depends on whether your parents lived Him out consistently in their daily lives. Most kids (including adult children!) love to hear the good things from their past so they can tell their own children, and it's important for you to be refreshed in some of the ways in which you learned to set aside concupiscent gratification in order to serve the people around you.

Quiz your parents if they're still alive (or aunts, uncles, siblings) and find out what they required of you (or wish they had!) in order to instill a sense of *family belonging*. You might even ask them, do you cut *your* kids more slack on godly standards than your parents did with you? Do your parents feel that they can speak openly and honestly with you when they are concerned about *your* children's behavior or attitudes?

Perhaps you're at a loss of what you were expected or required to do to contribute to family well-being. My own mom didn't want my sister or me to do housework. However, I do recall how important doing well in school was to her, and how proud she was of any awards or achievements I might have earned because of that expectation! So, a family *halakhah* was for us to work hard and please our parents.

I also recall that money was in short supply, and that begging for things that we couldn't afford not only got me nowhere, but also grieved my mother because she was doing the best she could with the small budget she had. I also (gradually) learned the joy of gratefulness, a trait that appears time and again in Scriptures and prompts me to urge others (and remind myself) to enact it!

Rephrase the bold declaration of Joshua to become a standard for *your* family: "*As for us and our household, we will serve the Lord!*" (Joshua 24:15). People are so disconnected and fragmented in their relationships today that they have no loving accountability to *encourage or spur them along* in their walk with Jesus (the kind of relationships the writer of Hebrews 10:24 knew we needed!). The *halakhahs* of love and obedient trust that you impress on your children's or grandchildren's hearts (or on the hearts of children who are significant to you) are heritage seeds for the generation to come.

Restoring Interpersonal Responsibility

A few weeks ago Mike and his brother Tom were discussing their Mom's enforcement of chores around

Spiritual Gifts as Weapons of Warfare to help followers of Jesus to each do their part.

David encapsulates a pattern of living for the Lord when he pleads, “*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you*” (Psa. 51:10-13). •David knew he needed God for a steadfast spirit. It wasn’t just something he could accomplish in his own strength. •David feared the loss of the Holy Spirit’s presence. (Just the thought of this has brought tears to my eyes many times.) •He needed again the joy of his own salvation to sustain him. With these in place he could then confront sin in others. *Selah*

• Obey the *Rhema*

Rhema is God’s specific guidance for you, your family, faith community, and even your business. It is God’s personal direction so that He may fulfill His purposes through you. *Rhema* is not only for the individual, but for a community that seeks to cooperate together as God directs. One form of guidance is through reading the Scriptures where the Holy Spirit gives you insight from a specific passage. My Bible is filled with dates I’ve written next to each verse where the Spirit has given me *rhema*.

I received a gift of prophecy 23 years ago. It has led to the Holy Spirit revealing to me messages for others. I often receive a message when I ask for wisdom about someone for whom I’m burdened. Yet I’ve never received a prophecy for myself—God has sent others gifted in prophecy to guide my path. I believe the words of the prophet Amos still apply today, “*Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets*” (3:7).

The Holy Spirit also speaks through gifts of knowledge and wisdom. Just this morning I was commending my brother Tom [who is married to Sue’s sister, Billie], for calling me recently. I was in the throes of a plumbing problem when Sue and I held hands and prayed for wisdom. [“*If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him*” (Jam. 1:5)]. Seconds later, Tom called from Connecticut with God’s guidance.

Are you receiving frequent *rhema* from the Bible? Do you nurture friendship with people gifted with prophecy, knowledge, or wisdom? If you don’t, then how do you gain insight of what God wants for your life? *Selah*

To live for Jesus we must be willing to forfeit our own rationale and seek Him for guidance and wisdom in all matters of our lives. The Bible gives us

- the foundations for establishing our *halakhahs*.
- the *rhema* God gave others anointed by His Spirit and the fruit of their obedience. *Selah*

How many people do you know who have the confidence of our forefathers (who trembled at God’s Word) to say, “*In the Name of the Lord Jesus get up and walk*”? We must let the Holy Spirit take hold of us and go to the second ridge if we are ever going to see this again! *Selah*

Your brother,
Mike

Proverbs 17:3



(SISTERS) the house when they were kids. It was only a few years ago that Mike had discovered that his Mom’s mother and father had raised their children according to biblical applications. After Mike began to read the Bible as a new believer, he realized that his Mom had taught her children moral principles but had failed to offer the *biblical basis* for the interpersonal responsibility she enforced.

How many of us may find ourselves like Tom and Mike, living out moral principles they were taught by their parents but never appreciating the basis found in God’s Word! The Lord willing, this winter Mike and I hope to write the halakhic basis for many of the interpersonal responsibilities that we and you might be involved in.

A dear sister gave me a list a few years ago of responsibilities that even little children could take part in, such as sorting silverware from the dishwasher, separating out each family member’s laundry, and setting the table. Maybe you have some ideas to share that will help other mothers educate their children in acts of loving kindness!

I’m asking you as women to pause and think about specific chores and assignments that opened you up to interpersonal responsibility, and at what age (more or less) that you were expected to share in the tasks that contributed to the good of your family. (Mike has told me that from as early as he could remember, Saturday mornings were set aside for him and his three siblings to thoroughly dust and vacuum the house before any other activities were allowed!)

If you could let me know by September 15, we could include some of these in the next newsletter to stir one another to stem the tide of concupiscence in the next generation. Possibly, with God’s grace, we mothers and grandmothers and sisters can rebuild the foundations of interpersonal responsibility and remind the children in our lives, “*Do not forsake your mother’s teaching.*” We may not have gotten it right ourselves when we had the opportunity, but that doesn’t mean we can’t be a blessing to other women still privileged to be raising and training children in godly living!

Walking together on the journey,
Sue

