

# 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



## Making Level Paths for Our Families

Dear Brothers,

Matt's Mom called and told me to turn on the TV.

Before the reporter's words hit me, the image of the World Trade Center burning just caused me to start crying. I walked outside to where Sue was watering her flowers. She saw the tears in my eyes and all I could say was, "You have to come in and see this for yourself." As with many of

you we just sat there staring—numb with tears flowing down our cheeks. Later in the day I said to Sue, "A whole lot of people showed up in front of the Judgment Throne instantaneously."

Were those who died ready to face God? How many followers of Jesus were promoted to heaven ahead of us? I envy them. But tragically, how many entered an eternity where they would live in agony never to see Jesus? This thought grieves me. For instance, the Bible tells us that fornicators will not be welcomed in heaven. How many fornicators were among the dead? How many of the dead were never told about Jesus by their believing neighbors who saw their religious expression more in sitting in a church service than befriending a neighbor in the Name of Jesus?

This past weekend Sue and I did a *Demolishing Strongholds* seminar at the faith community in Redding, CA. where my sister Mary and her husband John attend. I listened with joy as John shared a testimony going back 25 years ago. He and Mary had been divorced for several years. During this time Mary had given her life to Jesus and wanted to remarry John. Prior to the remarriage and in answer to the prayers of many, John came to the Lord when Lars Wilhelmsen, a pastor in the area who had vowed to visit every home within a 10-block area of their church building within a year, knocked on John's door. As they talked, the Holy Spirit knocked on John's heart. How many people in your neighborhood have heard the Gospel from *your* mouth?

Jeremiah Is Still Speaking to God's People Today

Yes, I was angry as more and more pictures came

Dear Sisters in Jesus,

"What in the world could ever motivate someone to use himself as a human bomb?" Two weeks prior to the World Trade Center tragedy this question was asked us by a friend from Phoenix in response to the continual Palestinian suicide bombings against the Jewish people in Israel. He could not grasp an ideology that would be thought so noble that

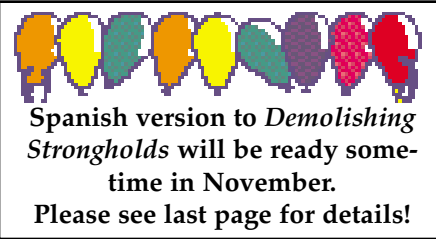
even young boys were being encouraged by their fathers to martyr themselves "for the cause."

But nobility has little to do with the radical Islamic agenda. The man who martyrs himself for the sake of *jihad*—the holy war against the perceived enemies of Islam—is promised instant transport to Paradise, where forty virgins await him to eternally gratify his sexual desires. Even for a culture as engrossed with sex as is the US, this motivation seems incomprehensible. (And undoubtedly, that dear young Moslem couple down your street would gasp in unbelief if you told them that. However, they were not the perpetrators of the goal to bring America to its economic and military knees before the demonic god of Islam, either.)

Keep in mind that Satan, the thief of people's souls, exists to kill, steal and destroy (see John 10:10). His demonic army agitates the minds, will, and emotions of individuals to serve as his hands, feet and mouthpieces to carry out his vile assignments. And why? To bring to destruction those who might *turn from* their lives of self-gratification and ignorance of Jesus, and thus humbly *turn to* the only true and living God to find forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus. *Those who believe lies become pawns in the hands of the master liar.*

### The Spiritual Counterfeit: The Destruction of Marriage

Let's return to this concept of suicide in exchange for eternal sex. Remember that the anti-Christ spirit is just that—*anti* anything that is of the character of Jesus. In the Hebrew Scriptures, our Lord repeatedly refers to Himself as the husband of His wife Israel. That's why in Jeremiah He speaks of Israel as a people who have



**Preparing the Family of Jesus for the Dark Days to Come**

across the TV screen, but a deeper prompting kept speaking to me: “That act of violence represented tremendous hatred. You must match it in love. The people in this country consider themselves innocent, but not so. They have murdered millions of babies who will never know what love is. They export sex around the world, destroying people’s understanding of intimacy. More weapons of destruction are produced in this country than in any other, and sold to both parties at war with one another.”

The morning of the tragedy I had just finished reading: “*The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians, who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and spared neither young man nor young woman, old man or aged. God handed all of them over to Nebuchadnezzar*” (2 Chron. 36:15-17).

I know people have a difficult time with a God who is driven by the immensity of the sins of His people to bring about severe chastisement. Those of us who have walked in the prophetic over the years understand acts of God which uphold His holiness. Yet, we know even more His mercy. Every prophecy the Lord Jesus ever gave me came from His mercy and compassion—His desire to see people repent and turn from their sins and turn to Him. What the Lord was compelled to do in ancient Israel because of the depth of idolatry of His people had been prophesied by the prophet, Jeremiah, the author also of the Book of Lamentations. It is interesting that tradition has him writing Lamentations on the hill next to Golgotha.

The prophet’s words bear repeating because he is speaking to the church today:

*“Stand at the gate of the Lord’s house and there proclaim this message: ‘Hear the word of the Lord, all you [Christians] who come through these gates to worship the Lord.’ . . . To whom can I speak and give warning? Who will listen to me? Their ears are closed so they cannot hear. The word of the Lord is offensive to them; they find no pleasure in it. . . . My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have  dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water. . . . ‘Return, faithless people,’ declares the Lord, ‘for I am your husband. I will choose you—one from a town and two from a clan—and bring you to Zion. Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding’”* (Jer. 7:2; 6:10; 2:13; 3:14, 15). “*I have struck you as an enemy would and punished you as would the cruel, because your guilt is so great and your sins so many*” (Jer. 30:14).

[SISTERS] “defiled the land with your *prostitution* and wickedness” (3:2), who have “committed *adultery*” against Him and been issued a *divorce* document by Him [for breaking their covenant with Him] (3:8) for *being unfaithful* to Him (3:10). Their unfaithfulness was manifested by their trust in the military protection of Egypt and Assyria, and by their following after the idolatrous bondage that the peoples around them pursued.

God spoke in terms of spiritual intimacy and union to reveal His desire for a love relationship with His people. This very concept has been counterfeited by Satan through radical Muslim theology to appeal to the lust of the flesh as a motivating drive for destruction!

### **Return, O Backslidden People!**

Jesus Himself is returning for HIS BRIDE—not His queen, not His partner, but the Bride with whom He will be totally united in Spirit. What greater crime against the earthly representation of that spiritual union—marriage—can there be than the wholesale divorce rate IN THE CHURCH that parallels or supercedes that of those who make no claim to follow Jesus? The ripping asunder of the marriage covenant makes a mockery of the biblical concept of the eternal Bridegroom Who will reign in eternity with His beloved bride.

A recent Barna poll states, “The percentage of *born-again* adults who have been married and divorced is now statistically equivalent to that among non-born again adults.” Am I failing to feel compassion for my brothers and sisters who have undergone the agony of a destroyed relationship? Not at all, dear ones. But have those who claim to be walking in Jesus and inhabited by His Spirit, which would define those who are “born again”, repented of their *mistrust* of their heavenly Father to sustain them in the midst of their suffering and times of intense need?

Divorce is certainly not an unpardonable sin for those who humbly come before their Lord to recognize their violation of Him and receive His forgiveness. BUT, how many Christians justify their decision and rationalize their actions, believing that God would never call them to self-denial and suffering in order to uphold His righteousness? I am not referring to abuse and personal endangerment, which represent a minor percentage in divorces among those claiming to be “born again.” Instead, I am calling out with pain in my heart about the blasphemy against our Lord’s established covenant of marriage that is supposed to display to the world the degree of love and intimacy that will reveal how much followers of Jesus love one another!

How very grateful I am that Jesus has the power to restore and to heal broken, wounded relationships. (Mike and I are living proof of that!) His promise to forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1Jn 1:9) is a well-gripped lifeline in our own lives. If you have divorced

Our Father never envisioned His Church to be “user friendly.” God sends His people into the world to bring them to repentance, not to indulge their sinful nature. As a naval warship fires warnings across the bow of a ship to deter it from its course, God has been warning the church for many decades to change its course. I would encourage you to read the warnings he has given the prophet David Wilkerson for this country. His website is <worldchallenge.org>. During my 11 years of counseling church leaders there were two men that many leaders despised: David Wilkerson and Bill Gothard. The first has been warning them for some time to *get back* to the Word of God. The second teaches how to *live out* the Word of God.

Our August newsletter was entitled, “*Walking in the Holy Spirit in an Age of Concupiscence*.” I had first heard the word “concupiscence” at the same Bill Gothard seminar where I had learned the word “lasciviousness”—inclined to lust, arousing sexual desire, wanton. The day after we sent our August newsletter, David Wilkerson’s letter arrived. It was entitled, “*Turning the Grace of God into Lasciviousness*.” Sue and I had a strong sense concerning the angel’s words to John in the Book of Revelation, “*For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy*” (Rev. 19:10b). By how many different prophets and in how many different ways has the Lord been attempting to warn His people?

#### To Trust in Our Idols or To Trust in Jesus?

The Lord’s ten plagues against the Egyptians were His frontal assault against their false gods in whom they trusted. Even though our coins still say “In God we trust”, people will tell you that their security is in our financial markets and in our military might. Sadly, pollster George Barna tells us the values of the born-again are hardly different than those of unbelievers in this nation. As we have taught *Demolishing Strongholds*, for the past 10 years we have found the *stronghold of idolatry* to be the fastest growing among God’s people. Wherever idolatry exists, the strongholds of fear and insecurity begin to accompany it. If you are plagued by the symptoms of fear and insecurity, consider where your trust lies.

Consider this: *Can it be that God is taking on the “gods” of our financial and military institutions in which many of His children have wrongly placed their trust?*

Few present-day Israelites have faith in God; for the most part they have placed their trust in the Israeli Defense Force and in American aid. I received an article that recently appeared in the *The Jerusalem Post*.

By Michael Freund. (August 29) - The news, it seems, gives us no rest. Every hour brings with it another attack, another victim, more tears and more bloodshed. We reach for the tuner on the radio, like alcoholics grasping a bottle, punch-drunk from its effects yet unable to free ourselves from its stubborn hold.

[SISTERS] and/or remarried, come before His throne of mercy and confess your violation of His will. Receive His forgiveness, then GO ON. Seek His very specific path for you and serve Him in it wholeheartedly in your present situation without guilt or reproach.

Grievously, pride, self-righteousness, and pursuit of the world’s standards of happiness keep many from following the narrow path of Life that Jesus talks about. Isn’t it tragic that over 85% of the divorces in the US are filed by women? Isn’t it time we stop listening to Satan’s lies? The call of our Lord through Jeremiah’s tears resounds to us today: “*Return, backsliding children, and I will heal your backsliding*” (Jer. 3:22).

#### Jesus Has No Co-Equals

Among the many expressions of mourning broadcasted in the aftermath of the terrorist atrocities, the word “tolerance” has been emphasized. While our Lord has created all people in His image and therefore worthy of our respect and care, there is ONLY ONE RECONCILER Who can bridge the gap between sinful man and the holy presence of our Lord: God the Son, Jesus. The God we serve as followers of Jesus is NOT the same god of Islam, of Buddhism, of Hinduism or of any other -ism. Jesus is most definitely NOT in the same category as Mohammed or Buddha, for He is *God in the flesh*. The Deceiver would love to take this opportunity to perpetrate lies under the guise of “tolerant love” (another counterfeit). But this is the season for pulling out from your heart the biblical truths you’ve hidden there for such a time as this and APPLYING these truths to the conversations that this catastrophe has catalyzed.

At what other time can you recall so many total strangers pausing to talk with deep openness and concern with one another on the street or in stores? The morning of the incidents I was called aside by the man who sorts the mail at our general store to seek my “take” on the events: Was this a harbinger of the endtimes? Were we on the brink of Judgment Day? Because he and I had engaged briefly in past conversations that revealed my relationship with Jesus and His purpose for calling us to the prairie, we had already established a relationship of sorts to know where each other stood in certain areas. Therefore, we could build upon our past talks and encourage one another to continue to place our hope in Him.

Are you making the most of these opportunities because the days indeed are evil and the door of opportunity to openly share biblical truth may slam shut? The repentance that our Father is calling for is not a mutual toleration that gives credibility to all so-called approaches to our God. Each of us can probably recite with word-perfect accuracy that there is no other Name but Jesus by which people can be saved by finding reconciliation with our Father. But how many of us *truly grieve* with the trag-

With each passing day, the danger facing Israel seems to mount, as does our frustration. We all want to help, we all want to do something at this critical hour that will make a difference for our people. And yet, we seem at a loss as to just what we can and should be doing.

The usual array of pro-Israel activities - contacting one's elected representatives, combating media bias or even writing a check - just doesn't seem to cut it anymore. People are dying in the streets, being shot on their way to work or blown up at the local pizza parlor. There must be something more, something that each and every one of us can do to directly affect the situation, no matter who or where we might be. And, in fact, there most assuredly is. However you might define yourself - be it Jew or Christian, agnostic or simply confused - the key to Israel's victory may very well lie in the palm of your hands or, more precisely, in the words of your heart. Israel's best defense is the power of prayer, and it is time we unleash this weapon with all the fury and determination that we can muster.

To modern ears, it might sound archaic, even simplistic. But modern solutions have failed us miserably in recent years, with diplomacy and statesmanship bringing us all to the edge of the abyss. For all of our advanced technology and finely-honed military prowess, Israel seems at a loss as to how to extricate itself from the current impasse. Perhaps it is time to put aside our cynicism and our doubts, and to do what people in trouble have always done in their hour of need - turn to their Father in Heaven and plead for help.

### Keeping Our Families Out of Bumpass Hell

While on our trip to Redding, Sue and I visited Lassen Volcanic Park. Within the park is an area known as "Bumpass Hell." It is named after a man named Bumpass who first found the site and lost his leg when he fell into a boiling cauldron. As we climbed the path out of the area I received a *rhema* for this newsletter: *"The board walk across the geothermal area represents the narrow path of obedience I desire my people to walk. My ways are level paths for my people. They must apply my Word to all areas of their lives. Destruction lies outside the path of protection."* The visual image really had my attention and was especially strengthened by the strong smell of steaming sulfur.



### Intimate Relationship Versus Religious Activities

***"Make level paths for your feet, so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord"*** (Heb.12:13,14).

As God is bringing the Israelites back to the land during our day, He is sending forth a message to us Gentiles to restore the trust-filled faith of our father

[SISTERS] ic certainty that those *without* the Spirit, Who dwells only in those who know Jesus as their Lord and Master, will spend eternity apart from Him in the reality of hell?

I listened with horror as a cleric representing a Christian denomination encouraged people to get into their Bible *or Koran* to find comfort and peace! The Koran can never lead the heart to the truth of salvation through Jesus alone! A religion whose name means "submission" is looking to bring to *submission to Islam* the entire world, according to the Koran.

You're probably aware of the mighty mercy of our God in bringing to thousands of former Muslims the dreams and visions of Jesus that have led them to seek Him out as their Lord and Savior. In Atlanta we got into a conversation with a bank teller from Iran who had been a Muslim. A friend had covertly discussed Jesus with her, and she was then visited by Him in her home. He revealed Himself as indeed God the Son, and she responded by dashing over to her Christian friend's home and pumping her for more about this Jesus! Because of her newfound trust, she then emigrated to the US, where she was still gratefully living for Him.

Pray earnestly that our Lord will use this time of anxiety to turn many from all faiths to Himself through Jesus!

### Do People See a Difference in You?

This is the time to *bring hope* to the hopeless who may be losing their livelihood and the financial resources upon which they've placed their trust. As the director of our medical-share program wrote, "We now see how vulnerable and fragile [secular institutions] are. In two hours between \$10-\$50 billion in damages were inflicted by a few men...It is as yet uncertain how the institutions that took the risk will fare." The cost to insurance providers will be staggering, probably driving many under. It is as yet unseen how the stock market will respond to this crisis. It is estimated that over 45% of Americans have investments in stocks. Many may be reeling if their financial basket of eggs shatters.

Prayerfully seek our Lord to reveal any area of your life that could hinder your wholehearted availability for His purposes. You may be His instrument to turn people away from the regret that leads to death in order that they may discover in Him the godly sorrow that leads to repentance. A dear missionary to Irian Jaya told us that her motto was, "Always be ready to preach, pray, or die for our Lord." Amen!

You may learn that your fellow churchgoers or people at work came to Jesus because it seemed like a wonderful way to get out of a life mess, similar to the cry for rescue issued by the Israelites of Jeremiah's day. (See Jer.

Abraham. Yet, religious activities rather than loving trust in our Lord make it hard for His people to hear. Remember that our Father desires that our activities flow out of our love relationship with Him. *You cannot love Him as He deserves unless you ask Him to enable you to love Him as He deserves.* In other words, we must humble ourselves and ask for help.

For those who refuse to love Him, Satan has introduced a myriad of religious activities that appeal to people's concupiscent/lascivious motivations. If your Christian life is comprised of activities that serve your *own* desires but bear little reflection of Jesus, then it's time to tremble. You don't want to come to the Judgment Throne just as you are—the decision of the Judge will not be what you want to hear.

### Christian Relationships:

#### Value Based, Positionally Based, or Activity Based

It's nearly impossible to live on this earth and not form relationships. Our Christian relationships tend to reflect the intensity of our relationship with our Lord. The strongest are called "value based" and the weakest, "activity based."

#### Value Based Relationships

Our emotions are attached proportionally to those things we value the most. When these important values are attacked, our frustration and anger are readily aroused. True followers of Jesus have established a value based relationship with Him. In this relationship the Word reveals a way of life that is opposite the relationships of the world. From the time of our conversion, the basis to our relationships must change in order to *truly follow Jesus*. Jesus reveals this new value system when He tells His audience about His true family:

*"[Jesus] replied to him, 'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' Pointing to his disciples, he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does what my Father in heaven wants is my brother and sister and mother'"* (Matt. 12:48-50).

Followers of Jesus place tremendous value, even unto death, on their ongoing relationship with our Father. Since Jesus is the Firstborn among the rest of us who have been adopted into our Father's family, He is our role-model for living out the values of the Father. The Bible tells us to "find out what pleases Him"; in response our love relationship will compel us *to do*.

A key facet of value based relationships is that you have to make choices. In other words, you make a series of decisions in your life that indicate those things you value over other alternatives. As a result of choosing to love and obey our Lord, we are attracted to others who place comparable value on their relationship with our Lord. It is because of the *value* we place on our love relationship with our Father and our desire to please Him that when we find others of like

[SISTERS] 2-12 (or even the whole book!) to discern the consequences of looking for a way out of trouble but not seeking a heart relationship with our Lord.)

Don't be fooled by people's Christian lingo that sounds biblical but emanates from lives that give no evidence of the power of God to change lives day by day as decision by decision is made to live in obedient trust. So few "altar calls" today demand the requirement given by Jesus to "repent": to *turn away from* all that hinders your soul (false idols like prosperity or misplaced priorities or anything more important to you than He is) and *turn to Him* for the forgiving cleansing that can revive you.

Legions of churchgoers and non-churchgoers alike live under the delusion that a "cheap grace", one that calls for no change by the Holy Spirit nor any yearning to follow the narrow path of Jesus, will bring them safely to heaven's door.

This is so important for each of us to grasp. If we are to be vessels of salvation truth in the hands of the Spirit, we must truly be clean! Paul does not mince words about trying to mix the pleasures of our old way of life with a life of obedient trust in the Spirit (see Romans 8:5-8 for starters).

As Mike wrote, thousands instantly encountered death in a moment's cataclysm. Does your heart quake at the thought that someone *you* love will spend a Christless eternity because you weren't prepared to lovingly rattle their cage with His truth?

Just as grievously, mockery of the saving power of Jesus spreads throughout the land because the "non-born again" see *no difference* in the lives of those who claim to be one of Jesus' own! I remember a dear woman from years back who longed to have her husband share her walk with the Lord. Sadly but tellingly, however, the man responded in genuine puzzlement as he confronted her and another couple from her congregation: "I know you think that you're Christian and I'm not, but I have to tell you, I *don't see any difference* between you and me!"

Ask yourself: Do your lifestyle choices and values differ from those of people around you who make no claims to heeding the Holy Spirit? Are you in as frantic a race to compress a week of activities into each day as most everyone else you know? Do leisurely evening meals together as a family seem more like a dream of your own childhood than a reality for your family? And most revealingly, do you want your children to ingest a walk with Jesus that is activity-laden but void of the spiritual fruit of love, joy and peace in their home and in their lives?

What are you willing to lay before His consuming fire in order to let Jesus be seen in you?? Lives depend on it. Earnestly seek His face and He will faithfully respond *in detail!*

### **Wives: PASS THE BUCK!**

How many times have we heard women moan that

mind, these relationships grow into the sweetest fellowship. Value-based relationships in Christ are the strongest and most enduring, and they also bring the greatest glory to our Father. These are the type of relationships your family needs to see *you* sharing in.

I have written before that our mouths speak forth first and most often that which we value most. Do your words reveal the incredible value of your trust in Jesus? Even now in light of the current tragedy, do your words reflect fear and insecurity, or confidence in the Only One who can save us? No matter who carried out these despicable acts against this nation, don't let your words be those that seek revenge; rather, pursue the path of justice and love.

Your wife and children need to *see* your relationship with your Lord. Out of *this* relationship make level paths for your family. Use your dinner time together to evaluate the events your family faced that day in light of God's Word. The dinner table is *your* table as the spiritual leader of your household. It is your family time to *share your testimony* of seeing God's activities around you that day and to guide the conversations of your family so that the foundations found in the Bible apply to their lives. You don't have time for dinner together as a family? You most likely have lost them already then to the activities of Satan. Do all you can to get them back to the dinner table. Dinner with your family can be a life-changing experience.

### **Positionally Based Relationships**

Unlike value based relationships that require a conscious choice, people are often plopped into positional relationships. All of us were born into a particular family without the chance to choose our relatives or circumstances. People who fail to *biblically question* the doctrine of the denomination they were raised in make their faith positional rather than value based.

Family members using the phrase, "Blood is thicker than water," are reaffirming their positional relationship. Mothers can cause unnecessary tension in their son's marriage by emphasizing their position against the value relationship he has with his wife.

Where positionally based family relationships are strong, it is often very difficult for people who would choose to follow Jesus to establish value based relationships. Often your extended family perceives these other relationships as a threat to the good order and controls already being practiced within the family.

### **Activity Based Relationships**

Relationships that form because of common activities are the most pervasive throughout Christianity. They insidiously block out a Christian's ability to establish value based relationships. Because of the programmatic methodology of the church growth move-

[SISTERS] they'd LOVE for their husbands to be the spiritual head of the household—or even to be the key decision-maker—but their man is unwilling or unable. So they find themselves stepping in as the answer person, and stepping out (ahead of God) to "walk in their spiritual gifting" while their husbands sit silently by.

To whom do your kids turn when they need answers—to you or to your husband? That's an indicator as to where the buck stops. The "buck" is not a dollar bill but rather a little figurine used by Naval officers in the wardroom to indicate who has the authority and responsibility to maintain order. Our Lord expects households in which a husband is present for him to be the responsible party with whom the buck stops. (See 1 Cor. 11:3 and Eph. 5:23.)

After our Redding, CA seminar this past weekend we were privileged to share supper with two couples plus the mother and sister of one of the women. As one of the wives bemoaned her frustration that her kids were irresponsible in a number of decisions, Mike asked her, "Where does the buck stop?" She immediately responded, "With me." The other three women nodded as they, too, were buck-keepers. All declared that they wanted freedom from this burden they knew wasn't from God, but were fearful that their husbands wouldn't take the buck either!

Mike challenged the women to orally and meaningfully pass the buck to their husbands on the spot, and to hold each other accountable as sisters in Jesus to *not take it back*. He then challenged the men to orally agree *take the buck* and walk in their God-given authority. It was important that they verbalize their intent so that their words would reflect the purpose in their hearts. The men, too, promised to help one another faithfully be responsible in their homes.

Two days later one of wives called excitedly. That very day her husband had for the first time lifted the car keys from their teenage son until he followed through in a particular area of responsibility. Then this father spoke with firm but calm authority to another son who was acting disrespectfully, confident that his wife would back him up. Another "buck action!" This woman was rejoicing in the sanctuary of God-given peace that was enveloping their home!

So often in Scripture our Lord addresses women first. Once we walk in obedient trust, He then places pressure on our husbands to put on the mantle of responsibility He's given them. Don't be deceived like Eve was. The world's ways of satisfaction for women are not His, nor will they bring peace or joy. Ask yourself: Does the buck stop with me? Am I willing to pass this on to my husband and hear his words that he accepts the buck?

You will most surely be tested in this right away. But be a Sarah: Don't give in to fear and worry but trust wholly in our Lord's power to intervene and to change the course of your life according to His purposes.

If you are not married, encourage your married

ment, leadership of a faith community *need to have a personal relationship* with the individuals they are leading. How else can they fulfill: *“Obey the ones leading you and submit to them; for they watch on behalf of your souls as those who will render account. May they do this with joy and not groaning, for this would be profitless to you”* (Heb. 13:17, from the Greek).

Instead of servant, role-modeling leadership we have corporation-style control and direction without personal involvement. The sad part is, so many Christians like it this way. Organizational control produces the least personal accountability to God or anyone else. All you need to do is attend any of the designated activities. You vicariously have a relationship because you find yourself sitting in a row alongside other people. In reality you are no more relationally closer than you are with a gas station attendant or supermarket clerk

Activity based programs are so widespread because they are the most efficient to manage. Very few in leadership are needed in order to direct the activities of so many. On the other hand, in value based relationships a leader who follows Jesus probably would have a difficult time leading more than 6-10 people. For most leaders, more than this would be impossible for them to have the time to know others personally. The leader would never be able to render account to God for each one.

Several years ago a friend of mine purchased a 200-year-old house in Connecticut. As he was tearing out a wall during remodeling, he found 12 dead mice, one-behind-the-other, stuck in the narrow passage behind the wall. They were emaciated, having been in the wall a long time. As best as he could determine, each followed the other until the first got stuck and the passage was too narrow for any of them to turn around. How would you like to die nose-to-tail? Isn't that what the activity based church is doing to so many?

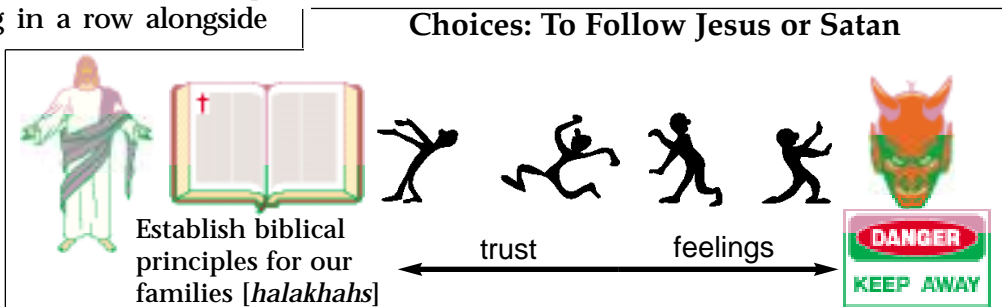
With clergy leading this country in divorce—600,000 congregations throughout the land producing so few *changed lives* to bring this nation under the trust-filled Lordship of Jesus—a Christianity in name only where the values of those who sit in pews on any given Sunday are hardly different than those who don't—because of unfaithfulness among His people there is Judgment: *“For it is time for judgment to begin with the family of God; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”* (1Peter 4:17). The “Jeremiahs” have been warning long enough; only a value shift borne on repentance may still save us. *Selah*

Your brother in trust,  
Mike

Psa. 32:10

[SISTERS] friends to walk in the protection our Lord provides through husbands who walk in His authority. Offer to be an accountability partner for a friend who is wavering in her resolve to walk in quiet confidence as her husband learns what godly authority looks like on a day-to-day basis. Old behaviors are like ruts in a road, ruts that can be pretty deep. Layer by layer these old ways get filled in by righteous responses that are modeled and encouraged by those who have been walking in them in obedient trust. Each of us can help another bear their load with confidence in the One Who changes hearts and lives!

Walking together on the journey, Sue



Isn't it time for us husbands and fathers to truly lead our families into establishing the way of the Lord for our households? Satan has introduced through a psychological view of life the concept that all Christian pursuit should be pleasurable—“If it doesn't feel good, it can't be of God.” That makes it all the tougher for us men who build our path on the Word of God. Men who stand on God's principles appear uncaring to those bent on giving in to the sinful “feel good” desires of others. Yet, we are the most caring! Our path leads to life! Theirs ultimately leads to death.

Love for our Lord compels us to uphold the freedom and boundaries of the Bible regardless of whether they make people feel good. In loving our Lord and standing on His Word, we confront the sinful concupiscence that Satan uses to lure our families away from loving obedience to our Lord.

May our children never have to confess before God for our failures, as the refugees did who came back to Jerusalem with Nehemiah: *“[Our fathers] were disobedient and rebelled against you; they put your law behind their backs. They killed your prophets, who had admonished them in order to turn them back to you; they committed awful blasphemies. So you handed them over to their enemies, who oppressed them. But when they were oppressed they cried out to you. From heaven you heard them, and in your great compassion you gave them deliverers, who rescued them from the hand of their enemies”* (Neh.9:26,27). *Selah*

