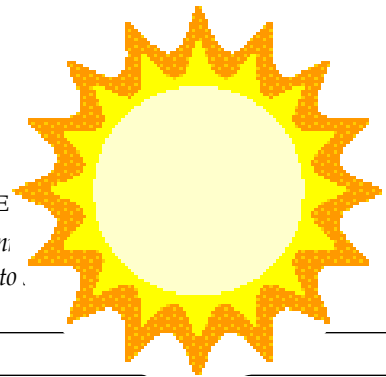


Y e s h u a M I S H P A C H A H



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.

The Grief Connection to Love

Dear Friends,

We're focusing this month on helping our Father's children avoid the cancerous snare of what the Bible calls "cold love". Have you read David Wilkerson's recent newsletter entitled "*The Unrelenting Love of God*"? Wilkerson voices deep concern and sorrow over how few Christians *trust in* the unrelenting love of our Father, and how few are *experiencing His love*. Rather, they're mired in the pit of *self-condemnation*. They can't believe that through the Spirit they can be transformed into the character of Jesus.

Going to the High Places

Sue and I are continuing to write chapter installments of *Going to the High Places*, our study guide of Hannah Hurnard's classic *Hinds' Feet On High Places*. In the process, we're gaining insight into hindrances that hamper many Christians from fully trusting that our Father truly loves them, and that they can experience this love on a daily basis. Wilkerson's letter confirmed to us how much this study guide needs to be presented!

In *Hinds' Feet On High Places*, five chapters pass before the main character, Much-Afraid, ever leaves the Valley of Humiliation to begin her journey to the High Places of wholehearted intimacy with the Shepherd. Our Father's children need *unrelenting determination* to journey into all the Lord promises!

Sadly, it seems as though fewer and fewer Christians are leaving the Valley of Their Strongholds so that

they can press on into joyful maturity in Jesus. If you've sampled much contemporary Christian writing, you may have noticed that much of it appeals to those entrenched in the Valley. Most modern writers have avoided the *repentance aspect* of the pilgrimage, the decision to turn away from the sinful attitudes, actions, and self-gratification that keep people pacing back-and-forth across the Valley. They neither walk in the victory of forgiveness nor do they press on in the Spirit's power.

Let me give you an example. A few days ago I was talking to my friend Barry Eitelman from Abilene. He and his family are working together through *Going To The High Places*. Barry and I were discussing Much-Afraid and the nature of the journey out of the Valley and why so few leave their old Valley lifestyle behind. Barry's a veterinarian so I gave him this analogy to contrast *Going To The High Places* with prevalent Christian teaching of today:

Suppose a man came to your clinic with a sick dog. The man would be very happy if *you* gave his dog a quick shot so the dog would be better. [Current Christian teaching]

But what if your prescription called for *him* to put balm on his dog every 4 hours for 2 weeks in order for the dog to be healed. Now how does he respond? The cure requires extra effort on his part. It's not a quick fix! [*Going To The High Places*]

Far too many Christians who initially put their trust in Jesus continue to live in the valley of attitudes and behaviors that reflect *no Christ-like character change*. Much of modern Christian teaching emphasizes selfish ease, encouraging people to stay in their Valley of familiarity and carnal pursuits. But in the Valley of Their Strongholds they discern no trust in our Father's unrelenting love, for they cannot experience it there. The clamor of the world, their own fleshly desires, and the unclean spirits they're entertaining shout down the Spirit's call to press on.

While on our trip back East in April, we spent time with family members who are wrestling to get into the *Hinds' Feet* material. I reminded them that our family stronghold is *rejection*, the valley of demonically-influenced behavior with which we grew up and are most familiar. That spirit's agitation drove us to seek achievement and recognition to compensate for the emotional emptiness we felt.

In our own Valley of rejection we'd seen that the Apostle John's words fit us: "*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world*" (1 John 2:15,16). When we sought worldly pursuits, we could neither trust in nor experience our Father's love. The Valley of our Strongholds barricaded us within.

Preparing the Family of Jesus for the Dark Days to Come

2 Your journey to “High Places” represents your pilgrimage to the salvation in which your name is proclaimed before the hosts of Heaven. The Holy Spirit increasingly sanctifies you into the very nature of Jesus. As Wilkerson writes, “Any believer can become as much like Jesus as *he or she desires*.”

The process of our sanctification requires an unrelenting desire to become more like Jesus. Our old carnal nature has nothing in common with the character of Christ. That old nature always resists the Holy Spirit. It must be crucified along the journey to the High Places of Christ’s character. Each of us must let go of the old nature that was formed in the Valley of Our Strongholds and turn to the Holy Spirit to impart the character of Jesus on our way to the High Places. Breaking free from the Valley of Our Strongholds that are so familiar to each of us, we must be determined enough to journey into the unknown — to the High Places of Jesus’s character.

All of us are “Much-Afraid” of sorts as we attempt to keep our “Valley identity.” Consider getting a copy of *Hinds’ Feet On High Places* and downloading our series *Going to the High Places* from our website. Find the beauty of transformation as you “**continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose**” (Phil. 2:12,13).

“Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it” (Matt. 7:14).

Our Lord has been revealing the unprecedented cooperation that demonic principalities have been exercising in the US.

We recently felt compelled to research the demonic influences assaulting this nation, beginning with its founding. Today, two hundred-plus years later, demonic battalions have earmarked arenas of morality, education, the justice sys-

tem, marriage dissolution, and wholesale desensitization to sin in general. These are now coming together to bear the fruit Satan has planned — the ultimate destruction of our nation.

One sphere of demonic operation in particular illustrates our point. So many children of Christian parents are being indoctrinated by a totally godless education system, a system that denies moral absolutes and the basic sinfulness of mankind.

Removing the Lord of the universe from the forum in which most young people receive their education minimizes His reality in their everyday world. God becomes identified with Sunday morning services and mealtime prayers — a *function*, not an ongoing relationship. He is thus disconnected from their daily lives.

A quick perusal of Proverbs confronts you with repeated admonition to choose between the *way* of life and righteousness, and the *way* of wickedness and death. The word most often used for “way” is *derekh* [dare-ECK], a *journey* of lifestyle decision making. Think about the pressures being put on young people today, particularly as they’re urged to exercise “tolerance” and “unity” in regard to every religion and moral issue. Could *you* withstand this daily confrontation in a system in which your parents are urging you to succeed, when you can’t even mention the reality of your Savior and His perspective?

Our website article, *He Has Showed You* (available under **Hebraic Articles**), uncovers the diabolical plan that has now brought this nation to the brink of self-destruction. A small yet increasing number of courageous parents and faith communities have discerned the snare of godless humanist education and have taken the training up of succeeding generations into their own hands.

Who better than God-loving parents and supportive faith communities to train up our children? Who better to role model, “**Love the**

Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37)?

Now is the Time! Prepare Yourself to Love in the Dark Days Ahead

Measures for martial law have already been put on record as Executive Orders by former President Clinton. Because fear has overtaken so much of the populace, President Bush is exercising some of these Executive Orders. People are willing to forfeit personal rights if they perceive they’ll be protected from harm.

But consider this: The next Presidents will be in position to take this unchecked authority to a higher level of unquestioned domination. Our nation is no different than the Germany of the 1920’s that ushered in Adolf Hitler as their protector and economic savior.

In the near future, when more of these orders are put into effect, the Dark Days of chastisement will wilt the love of all but a few. But take heart! Some are now preparing themselves to be loving representatives of Jesus when others have hardened their hearts.

This preparation process is all the more painful for those who truly follow Jesus no matter what the cost. They may feel isolated because they aren’t encountering many wholehearted followers of Jesus in their relational realm. The support they could receive from intergenerational extended spiritual family may not be in place yet.

In their quest to raise up a God-fearing generation to follow them, today’s parents find little or no help from the senior community. Parents of past generations were undergirded by their own parents and the older folks in their faith community who reinforced the spiritual/moral fiber of the children. Today’s generation of parents is almost devoid of senior involvement. A recent Barna Report found withdrawal by seniors

3 from their faith communities to be on the rise.

But difficult undertakings that require steadfast dependence on the Holy Spirit are nothing new for those who follow the Master wholeheartedly! Let's help each other reaffirm God's ways of keeping those in Jesus from being seduced by the growing darkness.

In His discourse on the Signs of the End of the Age, Jesus warns, "Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold but he who stands firm to the end will be saved" (Matt. 24:12,13). How do we stand firm? What can we do to keep our hearts from being hardened?

"For in Christ Jesus...the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love"

(Gal. 5:6).

History demonstrates that as evil abounds throughout a society, an emotional callousness covers the mind, will and emotions of the people. Demonic evil slowly but surely smothers compassion. But we who are in Christ don't have to follow others into this darkness!

We are empowered through the Holy Spirit by our trust in Jesus to keep expressing His love through us as His vessels. We are constrained by God's Word to be different from the evil the world so relishes. (See 1 Corinthians 13.) How vital the charge to love is to those who take up the journey of Christlikeness!

As His Word commands, we can mirror His love to those in need of Him without engaging in their sin. Through the Spirit of Jesus, we can always be light no matter how dark our circumstances. That's a lesson our millions of persecuted brethren around the world practice in the extreme!

Don't Let Your Love Be Stifled

You're familiar with the phrase, "Men don't cry." That Stoic expression is a product of generations of

Hellenist influence on the American male mindset. Hellenist philosophers denigrated emotional expression and emphasized hiding your feelings.

But think for a moment about that mighty warrior king David, who wasn't fearful to release the pain in his heart for his dying infant or even for his suffering friends-turned-enemies! Can you hear his voice brimming with emotion? "I went about mourning as though for my friend or my brother. I bowed my head in grief as though weeping for my mother" (Psa. 35:14).

Men who give in to stifling their pain are hindered from fully experiencing the way our Father created them to be. How often does the Word express the wide range of emotion that our Father has revealed of Himself? Mankind was designed in His image to wrap their emotions around who and what they value. The value you place on people you care about is fleshed out in your loving, affectionate expression toward them.

A large part of Christianity, however, perpetuates the lie of Stoicism by emphasizing a *cognitive, creedal adherence to doctrines*. Many Christian men in the US are more concerned with *being right* than with *living His love* as Jesus did, with affectionate expression and appreciation of those with whom He walked.

Feminism wrongly encourages men to express their inner feelings in order for them to express their "feminine side." But nothing could be further from the truth. Hellenism, not masculinity, stifles expression of emotion in this culture. The shortest yet most expressive verse in the Bible is, "Jesus wept" (John 11:35).

Put yourself in the place of the men who retrieved the broken body of their beloved brother: "Godly men buried Stephen and **mourned deeply for him**" (Acts 8:2). According to this verse, these men grieved with "great lamentation" over their fallen friend,

beating their chests in pain and sorrow.

Today's Stoic men are calloused to their inner feelings. Their dearth of loving expression drags down everyone around them. Rather than affectionate appreciation to hallmark their faith, men who *pride* their religious knowledge and tradition lack grateful exuberance toward God and heartfelt response toward others.

That old scripture song, "They'll know we are Christians by our love", voices a biblical truth. Yet, do men today desire to experience affectionate love themselves so that they can pass it on to others?

How wonderful it's been to hear from men who have embraced the Hebraic facets of trust and are able to recognize how their feelings can cooperate with their faith expression. Their Spirit-empowered love becomes affectionately expressive as does their worship of God.

Grief: God Tenderizes Hearts

Have you ever experienced the grief of losing someone to whom you had failed to show loving appreciation while they were still alive? Grief is the sharp sorrow or emptiness you experience when someone or something of great value is taken from you. Your grief and your willingness to let yourself grieve are God's way of tenderizing your emotions.

In the US in particular, demonic principalities have sullied the beauty of grieving. Movies viewed by millions (Christians included) portray violent death scenes in which little or no grief is shown. The media exalt heroes who "gut it out" emotionally rather than display appropriate grief. The hearts of many have indeed grown cold.

For us who follow Jesus, the intensity of our grief is directly related to the value with which we hold someone or something. While grief is most often connected with someone who has died or is suffering

4 incurably, other situations can devastate your heart as well.

I remember my anguish when we left the retreat center in 1993. Even though we knew it was God's will to leave that ministry behind and press on to Israel, I was so distraught that it took 3 months before I could even visualize anyone's face from among the dear friends we made in our 10+ years there.

Unspent grief can be a prison of co-dependency. Several years ago I met a woman whose depressed husband had impulsively killed himself a month earlier. She had two teenagers, and I could see that she was in the bondage of having to "be strong" for not only her children but also for her husband's parents.

God gave me guidance to share with her that she must now let herself grieve his loss so that her children and coworkers can respond to her without apprehension. I found out later that she was indeed able to grieve, and to then move on in the healing that God gave her.

Consider other areas in which people may need to grieve rather than stifle their emotions:

- Adopted children who one day come to grips that they were given away by their birth mother. At an appropriate moment, adopted children *may need* to face their grief. It actually helps them to identify more strongly with the family who adopted and loved them.
- Children of divorce who confront the deep sorrow of not having their two parents to come home to each day. Studies indicate that children of divorce have much less chance as adults to establish strong meaningful relationships that endure. The need for these children to grieve is often overlooked in the whole divorce mess that so embroils their parents.

- Divorced people need help to grieve their broken marriage covenant. They didn't get married with the intent of divorcing each other. A terrible reversal or series of painful patterns destroyed a once loving relationship, leaving gaping emotional wounds. In the absence of true grief over what they lost, divorced people can become defiled with bitterness and later drag many others into the "blame game."

- Parents who have had a child precede them to the grave often need special help to face their grief. Many spend years afterwards trying to get past their child's death, often finding it hard to express affection to others because unresolved grief still blankets their hearts. Parents whose children have suffered from desperate life choices such as drug abuse, abortion, attempted suicide, also need the relief that grieving brings.

- Even the loss of a favorite pet, a cherished home, a special group of friends can be catalysts that prompt the need to express grief.

Grief is God's gift to keep us from hardening our emotions. Over the years we have met so many younger men and women, especially the children of divorce, who guard themselves from the affectionate wisdom of older people. The divorce indeed pained them, but their *guardedness* became the true assault on their emotional well-being. The very people God would use to help them are walled out.

"I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women" (2 Sam. 1:26).

David shared a wonderful covenant friendship with Saul's son, Jonathan. After Jonathan's death

David mourned deeply for his beloved friend. Because they had expressed their love for each other while both were still alive, David could so vividly put into words what his friend meant to him.

- Take the time to see if you still have wounded emotions that were precipitated by a person or event from your past.
- Have you *lost* someone or something that you never stopped to really express how much they (or it) meant to you?

If you don't grieve when you need to, you'll eventually grow hardened and bitter.

1. Your conversations will take a more cynical focus.
2. You'll withhold the level of affection and support that others need from you.
3. Your failure to grieve becomes compounded. Over time, your bitter-based cynicism will drive people away from you because they tend to withdraw from callous treatment and lack of affectionate expression.

In this way Satan is the victor as he destroys relationships and holds people captive to bitterness and withdrawal in their hearts.

Grief Articulates Affection, Affection Articulates Intimacy

Grief reflects your heart's appreciation of the people or things you cherish. Throughout life we all lose people and treasured items for a variety of reasons. Some losses, though, can leave us *emotionally wounded*.

This is where your relationship with Jesus is so vitally important. If you don't turn to Him for the healing that only He can do in your heart, you'll begin to *emotionally guard yourself* from being hurt by those with whom you really do want to grow in relationship.

5 People who have been healed by Jesus are able to love. They can give themselves freely in other relationships, enjoying intimacy and experiencing love in return. Those who are not healed will avoid intimacy and the relational accountability that connectedness calls for. They'll seek out activity-based relationships which Hellenist churches offer so readily.

The unhealed are often found in vicarious proximity to others in church pews and Sunday school classes. They may appear friendly or even warm, but inside lays a dark emotional emptiness. The emotionally guarded long for closeness but are too fearful to drop their guard.

During one church retreat we conducted years ago I remember one of the elders and his wife making a startling confession to the others who had come with them:

We've never really loved you folks. Years ago we were very close to three other couples. Over the years two of them got divorced, and it hurt us so bad that we swore we'd never let anyone hurt us like that again. Today we've seen the darkness of our own hearts, and we repent and ask your forgiveness.

Because of the activity basis embraced by much of Hellenistic Christianity, the emotionally wounded are more the rule than the exception. The focus on *activity* keeps people from getting the *relational* help they really need. If others find out you have emotional problems, you're most likely told to see a professional counselor or pastor for help rather than offering to walk through your pain with you.

The wounded are often fearful of vulnerability. *Guardedness* has blinded them in their own dark pit of self protection. As Jesus tells us, "If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit" (Matt. 15:14). But what healing He could bring if a

brother or sister in Jesus could come alongside and encourage the wounded one through His Spirit!

Failure to Grieve Can Bring In Spirits of Independence and Divorce

Satan uses strongholds—demonic relationship destroyers — to wreak havoc in your relationships. Spiritual strongholds of Independence and Divorce habitually manifest many of the following symptoms:

Insensitive: Unaware of your impact on others, you create a bull-in-a-china shop atmosphere.

Lonely/Aloof: Sense of detachment; unresponsive to others' needs.

Self-determined: You rely solely on your own analysis and appraisal for personal decisions.

Devil's advocate: You take a contrary position in discussions and argue without considering others' feelings or needs.

Withdrawn: You remove yourself emotionally or physically from real or perceived hurtful and rejecting situations.

Excuse making: You rationalize with the intent to blame other(s).

Lack of trust: You're unable to rely or depend on others; your underlying attitude is, "If you hurt me or let me down, I'm gone." That puts great pressure on a relationship to never confront problems.

"Martyr complex": Deceived sense that others will be better off if you leave, or that you've failed in everything that's gone wrong.

If any of the above symptoms are currently your experience, we want to refer you to our book *Demolishing Strongholds*. If you don't deal with demonic influence, you're not only hurting those around you but exposing yourself to further demonic agitation.

"You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy" (John 16:20b).

If you've refused to let yourself become calloused, you already understand the joy that follows grief. Joy, like grief, is an expression of your heart. These are not cognitive responses; joy and grief both reflect your *inner person*.

Consider the impact that your grief and sorrow have on you when you realize that you've sinned against God. That inner hurt when you realize you've grieved the One you love is made joyous when you repent and experience His forgiveness. And this pattern can permeate your other relationships.

Before you lose anyone else in your life, why don't you make your life and the lives of others for whom you have deep affection more joyous! Stop and consider the people you value:

- What is it about them that makes them special to you?
- If you lost them, how would you feel?
- Have you *expressed* your affection to the people for whom you have deep devotion?
- If you haven't or can't, what is hindering you? Can you talk about it with someone you know cares for you?

Don't let yourself live with a hardened heart. This is all the more crucial as the darkness of cold love descends on this nation. We followers of Jesus can't let ourselves grow cold toward others. We need to make the love of God our banner and show it to others for the glory due our Father. Ask our Lord to help you grieve where it's appropriate. God can use grieving to do wonders for your heart. Don't give way to cold love. Let's mutually encourage each other while we can!

Mike & Sue

