

The Way of the Lord

24. Passive Aggression: An UnChristlike Response (Part 1)

We realize you've been viewing this series because your heart motive is to become more like Jesus. We think this segment and the three to follow will help you tremendously in that ongoing process. First, ask yourself this: Have you *counted the cost* and prepared your heart in obedient trust for *whatever* changes our Lord wants to make in you? If so, let's look at a very common hindrance that can keep you from growing in His character.

Before we do this, we do need to anchor a point about these present times regarding a key part of our Father's purpose for revealing the Hebraic foundations now. It's a warning for today that we need to take seriously. "*See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the **hearts of the fathers** to the children, and the **hearts of the children** to the fathers; or else I will come and strike the land **with a curse***" (Malachi 4:5,6).

God sounded this prophetic alarm over 400 years before the birth of Jesus. It was during the time of Nehemiah when the first exiles had returned to Jerusalem from Babylon. Those people for the most part *weren't obeying* God's commands. In particular, *fathers* were failing to instruct their children in the way of the Lord.

Why was it so essential that *fathers* teach their children about God and His righteous way of life? Because that's the reason God called out and chose their ancestor Abraham: "*For I have chosen [Abraham], so that he will **direct his children** and his household after him to keep the **way of the LORD** by doing what is right and just*" (Genesis 18:19). The issue of fathers *turning* to children is an age-old tension. John the Baptizer was called by God to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus. John's father Zechariah prophesied that John was to turn the *hearts of the fathers* to the children and the disobedient to the *wisdom of the righteous* (Luke 1:17).

Today God is restoring the Hebraic foundations of the trust-based obedience of our spiritual father, Abraham. And this means our *heavenly* Father is again at work to turn the hearts of *fathers* to children, and children to fathers. Unlike the prophet Malachi's indictment against Israel, this turning isn't to *forestall* a curse on the United States, but rather to *remove* the curse that's being enacted all around us. There's a curse on this land because *fathers* have neglected to be *the source* for passing along biblical wisdom to succeeding generations.

We hope you're as grieved as we are that so many who call themselves "Christian" today live by the same immoral and unethical standards as unbelievers. In a matter of three generations this nation has dropped from a **65% biblical literacy rate** to **4%**. A lot of fathers have failed to instruct their children! Is it any wonder God warns *fathers*, "*Don't provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4). It's the failure of *fathers* that's brought about the economic and moral disaster we now experience. But we could remove the curse if we would *repent* and *return* to the way of the Lord, and train our families to do so also.

Given this nation's spiritual and moral decline, you may be wondering why Christianity *doesn't* have more influence in our society. Let me ask you this: What

do so many professional clergy and prison inmates have in common? Both have unresolved issues, mostly *bitterness*, with their fathers. Their lives look different on the outside, but they're trapped by the same negative motives that bring about "passive-aggressive behavior." It's not just clergy and convicts who are driven by this dark response. In this segment and several to follow, we'll discuss how *everyone* who hasn't been trained in the way of our Lord as a child exhibits symptoms of passive aggressive behavior.

This may be a new term to you. *Passive aggressive behavior* is an all-encompassing description of the unChristlike symptoms that demonic strongholds produce. Your sin nature *thrives* on this response! Remember, demonic strongholds are relationship blockers. These unclean spirits prevent people from experiencing love in both their relationship with God and with other people. Even after the strongholds are demolished, the *symptoms* the spirits produced need to be changed by the Holy Spirit into Christ-like character qualities.

Passive aggressive behavior is the cursed result of *fathers* who refused to turn their hearts to children and teach them the wisdom of God's Word. And *all* of us will reflect symptoms of passive aggressive behavior until the demonic and sin-based motivations are changed into the character qualities of Jesus.

Let's discuss what passive aggressive behavior looks like. Please honestly examine yourself, and be open to letting others point out any of the following symptoms that apply to you. Remember, these are keeping you from being an *instrument of love* in our Lord's hands.

Passive aggressive behavior may be summed up as a *habitual resistance* to receiving input from other people, and/or an *unwillingness to follow through* on responsibilities, and/or an acute *insensitivity* to problems in a relationship.

- Passive aggressive people are determined to keep themselves in control of their own lives.
- Passive aggressive behavior begins to be formed at a young age as a form of self-protection to ward off any further emotional pain.
- Passive aggression often results in outright rebellion against authority, and anyone else who infringes on their perceived rights.

Common Passive Aggressive Behaviors

- **Insincere**. Passive aggressive people rarely mean what they say, or say what they really mean. The most accurate gauge of a passive aggressive person is whether or not they *follow through* on what they say. Often only extreme emotional duress in those who are depending on them to act will prompt them to fulfill their promises.
- **Forgetful**. The passive aggressive person avoids responsibility by conveniently "forgetting" what he or she was supposed to do. This negligence distresses the people who are counting on them.
- **Blame Others**. Passive aggressive people deny responsibility for their actions and are quick to make excuses. Because they are blind to their own shortcomings, everyone else is at fault.
- **Keep Anger Inside**. The passive aggressive rarely display any negative emotions. They *seem* to accept whatever you say but hold ill feelings inside that keep honesty

at bay. From childhood they perceive that *displaying* anger is wrong, so they bury their emotions and go through life trapped in a prison of seething resentment.

- Fear of Vulnerability. They resist any dependency on others, and do anything to remain in control. They may overwhelm you with kindness or generosity to keep you feeling obligated to them, or to hinder you from confronting *their* negative motives. They resist any support from others that would leave them feeling obligated or needy.
- Fear of Intimacy. The passive aggressive person is often unable to trust others, and guards himself against intimacy and attachment. A passive aggressive person may withhold the emotional support that intimate relationships need as a way of punishing someone for trying to get close.
- Willful Resistance. The passive aggressive person undermines and/or sabotages plans he or she hasn't initiated. When they resist you, you may find yourself having to *coax or negotiate* to get them to follow through on their responsibility. They will even manipulate you into feeling guilty for asking them to fulfill their responsibility, which is exactly how they want you to feel.
- Victimized. Passive aggressive people often feel they deserve better, and hold a record of wrongs against those they perceive have let them down. He or she is always the "innocent victim" of *your* unreasonable expectations.

Did you recognize any of the symptoms of passive aggressive behavior in yourself or in those close to you? In segments to follow we'll continue to delve into this unChrist-like motivation so that *you* may freely live the way of our Lord.

For Further Study

- Hebraic Article: *Mutually Growing Christ-like Relationships*
- Teaching E-mail 27. *Breaking The Chain of Sin and Strongholds*

Each is a free download on our website: <restorationministries.org>