

The Way of the Lord

26. Passive Aggression: An UnChristlike Response (Part 3)

In Segment 19 of this series we discussed how essential it is to *uphold communal righteousness* in our relationships in Jesus. This is foundational to those who follow Jesus as Lord! The failure to *mutually* live righteously in Christ is one of the reasons so many Christians today lack the spiritual power Jesus promises.

The *second* foundational building block for Christ-like relationships is one you'll need in order to help rid yourself of passive aggressive behaviors. This building block evidences the love of Jesus through *load-bearing*. Load-bearing undergirds all of the "one another" commands in the Newer Testament. It's the interpersonal support we followers of Jesus give to each other as we *together* pursue growing in Christ's character.

Think about the *attitude of Jesus* that the following verses so vividly recount:

- "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in **humility** consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the **interests of others**. Your attitude should be **the same** as that of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:3-5).

- "Be **devoted** to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another **above yourselves**. **Rejoice** with those who rejoice; **mourn** with those who mourn" (Romans 12:10,15).

Jesus left the glory of heaven to humble Himself and become human. That kind of humility is foundational to our relationships with each other. Being willing to love in a way that puts others *ahead of ourselves* begins with husbands in their relationship with their wives. From there it reaches out to all other relationships (Ephesians 5:25-29; 1 Peter 3:7).

Picture the beginning of a relationship like *your* index finger extending to touch *their* index finger. As your relationship grows and more Christ-like qualities permeate it, it's like the fingers sliding down alongside each other. As more of Jesus replaces any of your passive aggressive symptoms, your relationship reflects His love and power at work in you. When your relationships deepen and support for others in your family and fellowship family have matured in Christ, look at the load they can bear *together*, as in a firemen's carry!

Maybe you weren't raised in a home where Christ-like load-bearing was lived out. Perhaps you began to follow Jesus later in life and don't know what bearing one another's loads looks like. If so, you'll need to *intentionally* pursue the *load-bearing* kind of relationships that so wonderfully characterize Jesus.

As you help one another identify and get rid of passive aggressive symptoms, be patient and non-judgmental. Set aside any resistance. Remember, passive aggression is a pattern of behavior that's been anchored deep within your heart, often beginning early in life. Cooperate *together* to help each other change through demolishing strongholds, repenting, and healing toxic memories.

A sign that someone's heart is being transformed by Jesus is a shift in their motives. Especially look for increased *trust in God* and a willingness to receive input from other people. You'll see genuine humility develop as they grow more concerned with upholding the dignity of others rather than protecting their *own emotions*.

One of the most hurtful consequences of passive aggression is an *inability to trust God*. You're also unable to receive with confidence whatever input others need to give you. Pull out your concordance and look up the word **trust**, especially the verses that describe trusting *God*. Not only is your trust in God important to Him; you'll also discover how much He blesses those who place their trust in Him. Here are just a few of these blessings:

- “*The LORD’s unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in Him*” (Psalms 32:10).
- “*Whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe*” (Proverbs 29:25).
- “*Anyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame*” (Romans 10:11).
- “*You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You. Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD, is the Rock eternal*” (Isaiah 26:3,4).

Trust is a deep core motivation that we often don't think about closely enough. At the conscious level we either sense that we trust someone or we don't. But we generally don't stop to investigate *why* we distrust another person. Most people overlook how foundational trust is to an intimate relationship. For example, over the years we've come alongside many married couples. We found that it was easier for spouses to *love* each other than to fully *trust* one another. We'd ask if they had any points of *apprehension* about their partner, and learned most had quite a few things that formed a basis for distrust. Quite often their distrust signaled some of the symptoms of passive aggressive behavior we cited in Segment 24.

We began to recognize that both passive aggressive behavior and the symptoms of strongholds hindered the development of trust in a couple. Because of this, their *love* was kept from growing stronger as the years passed. Ongoing emotional apprehension about how someone will act blocks their ability to love each other as *Jesus* would have them love.

One of the stipulations for our Father entering into a Covenant relationship with you is that you *trust* Him. Trust isn't the same as *belief*, which requires little more than mental agreement. *Trust* goes far deeper than belief. It flows out of the emotional conviction of your heart and reveals your confidence in the reliability, truth, and power of God.

I was changed from believing to *trusting* around 30 years ago. I went rock climbing with my friend Dirk. He tied me to a tree on top of the cliff wall, securing the belaying safety line to his harness at the bottom. About halfway up the 150-foot cliff Dirk let go of the rock and just hung there with me holding him by the safety line! Then he finished his climb. Now it was *my* turn. With Dirk on the belay line at the top, I began my ascent. When I was halfway up he peered over the edge and yelled, “Let go! *Trust* me. Nothing bad will happen!” As I looked up at his smiling face I could see he was confident in something I wasn't: that the safety line would hold me. But I also realized that if I *didn't* trust Dirk, I'd be undermining our relationship. So I let go of the rock. As I dangled there by this thin rope, the word *trust* kept ringing through my head. I knew this kind of trust was what *my heavenly Father* wanted from me. That day I quit believing and began *trusting* God.

Over the years, as we've mutually confronted our various symptoms of passive aggressive behavior together, our trust in *each other* has grown. And with that trust

has deepened the love of Jesus for each other. When you know you're trusted, your dignity is enhanced. And dignity is the first need God instilled in humanity because we are made in *His image*. When someone upholds your dignity you feel valued. You're also more willing to share your deeper emotions and motives with that person. We encourage you to take to heart what we've been discussing, because this *is* the way our Lord would have you share His love with others.

For Further Study

- Hebraic Article: *Mutually Growing Christ-like Relationships*
- *Discussing How To Restore the Early Church*, Lessons 43, 46, 50
- *Going to the High Places*, Chapter 18
- Book: *Restoring the Early Church*, Chapters 11 and 12
- *Jesus in Your Home* Bytesize Video: Segments 97 to 102

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