

Discussing How To Restore The Early Church

Returning Intimacy and Power to the Father's Children

*"I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for,
it will be done for you by My Father in heaven.
For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them."*
(Matthew 18:19,20)



SECTION 5 - LESSON 31

THE HOME

The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth:

- *Do You Mirror Christ-likeness or the Judas Identity?*
 - *Scrutinize Your Faith Expression*
 - *Are You Hebraic or Nicolaitan?*
 - *Do You Forgive?*
 - *Are You Spiritually Free?*



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Section 5 Lesson 31

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Introduction

In this lesson and the next you'll have an opportunity to take a close look at *who you are* and *what you believe*. Within your marriage and home fellowship you can see if you're all on the "same spiritual page" in your convictions. Don't make any presumptions about each other! Take your time and thoughtfully and prayerfully go through the different questions we ask.

THE HOME

The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth: ***Do You Mirror Christ-likeness or the Judas Identity?***

"Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them" (Mark 14:10).

Just mention the name *Judas* and you immediately think of the villain who betrayed our Lord Jesus. That he did this is true. But, have you ever considered *Judas' point of view*? There are indica-

tions that he was counted among the Zealots, a group of Jews who vigorously sought the earthly reign of the coming Messiah. A key difference, however, separated Judas from his hoped-for Messiah: Unlike Jesus Who had a "vertical view" by living to fulfill His Father's will, Judas tunnel-visioned on a "horizontal view". He purposed to gain something for himself through Christ's ministry.

Note the timing of Judas' decision to approach the chief priests to betray Jesus for silver. Just prior to this event, Jesus had been honored by the woman who anointed Him with precious oil. Could something in the woman's sacrificial *humility* have prompted Judas to betray Him?

It's interesting that both the woman and Judas achieved lasting fame. Jesus prophesied that, "*Wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her*" (Mark 14:9). Wherever the Gospel goes, both the humble woman and the deceived betrayer are remembered.

The "**Judas identity**" didn't die with the man. That *motivation* is still betraying Jesus and those who wholeheartedly desire to follow in His steps. Until Jesus returns, there will always be people in Christendom like Judas, whose self-seeking, egocentric motive propels them to care for themselves rather than the interests of God.

Similar to Judas, they embrace *the con-*

cept of the Christ, but they're definitely driven by self-interest. An inner voice continually evaluates their relationships and circumstances by "What's in it for me?" That focus makes them worldly, not Godly; self-concerned, not God-concerned.

The "Judases" of each generation will betray the true followers of Jesus. Sadly, their attack is more pointed and hurtful than that of unbelievers who make no claims to be "Christian" at all! The *self-centered perspective* of Judases blind them to their wounding of their spouse or others close to them in the faith.

Luke warned, "**You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death**" (21:16). Eyewitness John added, "**They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, a time is coming when anyone who kills you will think he is offering a service to God**" (John 16:20).

Is your heart motivation that which Jesus calls for? Could you be a Judas with motives that don't align with God's? Do some self-examination. Check the items that best describe you in the lists below:

Christ-likeness
<input type="checkbox"/> I find myself rejoicing when I am challenged by people who are wholehearted for Jesus.
<input type="checkbox"/> I consider it a privilege to defend the reputation of those who follow Jesus.
<input type="checkbox"/> I avoid getting close to those who are lukewarm about their faith. Their habitual excuses only disguise their disobedience.
<input type="checkbox"/> I want to complete all our Lord has prepared for me to accomplish in His Name.
<input type="checkbox"/> When I'm with unbelievers, I present the same "me" as when I'm with people who love Jesus.
<input type="checkbox"/> My activity in the Kingdom of God is spurred on by my absolute confidence that there is a heaven and a hell. I want to pour myself out by bringing to Jesus as many as will respond to His Spirit and come.
I am in my current faith community because:
<input type="checkbox"/> They have a deep regard for righteousness.
<input type="checkbox"/> Their faith enactment and lifestyles are built on the Word of God.
<input type="checkbox"/> They are strong role models to help me follow Jesus.
<input type="checkbox"/> I get up early to spend time with my Lord and to glean guidance and application from His Word.
<input type="checkbox"/> The Biblical standards I live by and teach my family are higher than those my parents set.
<input type="checkbox"/> The choices I've made in my life to follow Jesus have stretched me.
<input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy encouraging others who follow Jesus wholeheartedly.

The Judas Identity
<input type="checkbox"/> I find myself making (or thinking) snide remarks about others who are more devoted to following Christ than I am.
<input type="checkbox"/> I find myself agreeing with or repeating false accusations and slander spoken by others against someone devoted to Jesus.
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm OK with Christians who don't show any deep regard for following Jesus.
<input type="checkbox"/> I have little concern about any purposes our Father has ordained for me. My attendance at services is the major expression of my religious life.
<input type="checkbox"/> When I'm with unbelievers, I become more worldly in my words and activities.
<input type="checkbox"/> I pay little attention to the eternal outcome of my life or anyone else's.
I am in my current faith community because:
<input type="checkbox"/> I agree with their creed.
<input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy the worship service.
<input type="checkbox"/> I am not accountable to follow Jesus.
<input type="checkbox"/> Your own reason(s) _____.
<input type="checkbox"/> I don't generally spend time with the Lord or in His Word.
<input type="checkbox"/> The Biblical standards I live by and teach my family are lower than those my parents set.
<input type="checkbox"/> My religious life is more of a convenience or obligation than a sacrifice.
<input type="checkbox"/> I subtly dissuade those more zealous for God than I am.

Special Considerations for the Senior Generation

One of the great betrayals cited in the Older Testament is the failure of one generation to adequately prepare the next to live a Godly lifestyle. If you're over 50, ask yourself which statements most reflect you:

Christ-likeness

I've spent years applying the Bible to my life, and now younger people are turning to me for wisdom

I am more involved than I've ever been in the lives of other people, especially guiding the next generation to follow Jesus wholeheartedly.

I realize the Biblical fruit of my generation is discerned by how our grandchildren turn out. I'm relationally close to my children and help my grandchildren establish strong Biblical convictions.

I'd describe my relationship with Jesus as "filled with fervent love."

The Judas Identity

Most of my focus has been on achieving a comfortable retirement. I have little by way of Biblical counsel to give the younger generation.

My life consists of as few responsibilities as possible. I sought a pleasurable retirement, and I don't want to be pressured by the needs of others.

I raised my children, and now the most responsibility toward my grandchildren that I want is to be "Grandpa (Grandma) Santa Claus."

I'd describe my relationship with Jesus as "passionless."

On which list did you have more check marks, Jesus or Judas? How do you feel about yourself based on what you checked?

If you're a senior, what are you doing, or what do you need to change, to be available to help the younger generations?

If you had marks on the Judas side, what do you think Jesus would have you do about it?

List the names of your closest companions in the faith. Onto which list do they fall?

- If you've identified personal characteristics like those of Judas, then repent! Ask our Lord Jesus to help you *live for Him*. He'll faithfully circumcise your heart.
- If you're growing in Christ-likeness, be wary of close friendships with those who mirror Judas characteristics. Why? When you're following in Jesus' steps, you have made difficult choices to love and obey God, keeping his Word no matter what the cost. Don't squander it now with those who foolishly sought the broad path of destruction but have disguised it with religious trappings. Not only may you be enticed, you'll jeopardize the respect of those who want to press on wholeheartedly in Him!

THE HOME
The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth:
Scrutinize Your Faith Expression

The chart below lists various aspects of your belief. Take time to honestly reflect on which choice best represents your Christian walk. Put an 'X' through

the number on each line to indicate intensity. When you're done, draw a vertical line to connect your 'X's. Then discuss your results with your spouse and others who know you well in the faith. Particularly pay attention to those areas that you need to change in order to walk in greater Christ-likeness.

• I believe there is one God.	<u>100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0</u>	• I believe there is no one God.
• Jesus Christ is our only access to God the Father.	<u>100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0</u>	• Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Christians serve the same God.
• I have a daily consciousness of God's activity around me.	<u>100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0</u>	• I am unaware of the activity of God around me.
• I firmly believe that the Bible is God's infallible Word to guide my daily life.	<u>100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0</u>	• The Bible has errors and can't be fully trusted; it contains good moral teachings, but not inerrant truth and guidance.
• I study the Bible for guidance and application daily.	<u>100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0</u>	• I receive all of my Bible teaching from the pulpit or media.
• My life attitudes, behavior and choices have been built through biblical application.	<u>100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0</u>	• The attitudes and behaviors of my life have changed little over the years.
• Becoming more conformed to the character of Jesus is a foremost concern of my life.	<u>100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0</u>	• Jesus is too high a standard for any of us to attain; nobody can be perfect, so why try.
• I find myself repenting of sin daily.	<u>100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0</u>	• I am seldom aware that I sin.
• There is no one that I haven't forgiven; I pray for those who once hurt me and try to find ways to bless them.	<u>100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0</u>	• Some people I haven't forgiven, and don't see a need to until they ask me for forgiveness.
• I am very conscious of the anointing the Holy Spirit has apportioned to me to equip me to serve God and others.	<u>100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0</u>	• I have no knowledge of my spiritual gifts, and don't consider them vital to my Christian life.
• The Hebraic Restoration is our Father's means to restore the power and intimacy of the early Church.	<u>100 90 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0</u>	• There is no Hebraic Restoration; the Church today is the way God ordained it to be.

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THE HOME

The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth:

Are You Hebraic or Nicolaitan?

“Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans.

Repent therefore!

Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth”

(Revelation 2:15,16).

In the two columns below you will have opportunity to see how Hebraic or Nicolaitan you are in your faith practice. Place a checkmark next to the statements that best describe you.

After you’ve gone through the lists, talk over your answers with those close to you. Mutually determine the areas of practice that are key to your corporate fellowship. Also ascertain in which areas you should press on and which need to be changed.

Hebraic Practices

Faith Practice

Living to glorify our Father in loving, trust-grounded obedience.

A 24/7 lifestyle of obedient trust which represents Jesus in the flesh to all you meet; fulfilling His purposes is your prime concern.

Personal and communal righteousness is critical for fellowshiping with others; smaller number in homes increases accountability.

Personal Doctrine vital: Spirit-directed biblical principles which guide you into a way of life that is fruitful and pleasing to God.

Leadership: Older wise men shepherd God’s people; personally role model life they teach.

Reliance on personal relationships as extended spiritual family.

Home-based hospitality reflects Jesus to those yet to believe.

Salvation understood as an ongoing pilgrimage with our Lord, bringing about greater conformity to Christ-likeness.

Family

Marriage covenant a physical representation of your Covenant with our Father; divorce not an option.

Nicolaitan Practices

Faith Practice

Personal gratification and feel-good complacency are your foremost motives.

Religious practice occurs at a particular designated building; large numbers and public meeting place reduce accountability.

Sin is rarely addressed, and righteousness is not considered vital to fellowship.

Denominational Creed vital: cognitive assent to biblical postulates that have little or nothing to do with your *way of life*.

Leadership: Seminary-trained younger clergy; emphasize Bible education, not role modeling a way of life; little clergy/lay interaction.

Reliance on public building for services; heavy dependence on paid professionals for worship, counsel, activities.

Religious practice and daily life separate and compartmentalized.

Salvation viewed as a point in time, with little responsibility to change or walk in obedient trust.

Family

Marriage a conditional commitment between people; may be broken by divorce.

___ Authority given by God to husband to love and serve his family.

___ Responsibility for raising successors in the faith the primary responsibility of the *parents*.

Ministry to the Hurting

___ Obedience-based, grounded in God's love; if God's Word calls for it, do it. Initial step: bring them to the power of Jesus. Personally responsible to repent—to turn away from sin and come to our Father through Jesus. Only Jesus can heal, no technique ever heals.

___ Stipulate that they confess sins and/or forgive others from their heart, as appropriate.

___ Aim is spiritual heart transformation by the Holy Spirit.

Work Place

___ Regarded as mission field; God puts people in jobs so they may serve His Kingdom.

Outreach

___ Regards neighborhood, workplace and school as mission field of opportunity to reveal Jesus "with skin on".

Charity

___ Purpose: to restore dignity to those in need: "*So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets*" (Matthew 7:12). All interaction with others guided by this foundational biblical principle.

Senior Citizens

___ Have achieved life pinnacle; the wise serve as shepherds and role models; prime representatives of our Father's love for His children.

___ Authority concept and enactment not recognized; often usurped by wives.

___ Spiritual training outsourced to religious system and youth professionals.

Ministry to the Hurting

___ Feelings-based; heavy reliance on psychological technique. Dwells on past to blame other(s) for personal problems. Power of Jesus to heal is optional or irrelevant.

___ Bitterness entertained; often not confronted to point of forgiving and asking forgiveness.

___ Person's sin often overlooked in the counseling process; empathy for their hurt prevails rather than repentance in the Spirit.

___ Aim is modification of behavior and attitude.

Work Place

___ Seen as opportunity for economic gain and personal prestige; compartmentalized away from spiritual opportunity to share or serve.

Outreach

___ Basically unconcerned with people around them, including neighbors and family members. Leave it to the professionals. Keep religion "private".

Charity

___ Purpose: to remove problems; dignity of recipient irrelevant. Financial giving represents total expression of involvement.

Senior Citizens

___ Look to escape from as many responsibilities as conscience will allow; relegated to the outskirts of spiritual responsibility.

Discuss your responses with your family and close friends. If you've found you're more Nicolaitan than Hebraic, don't be too concerned. What's impor-

tant is that you're convinced that our Father *is* restoring Hebraic understanding to His children. With that foundation the Holy Spirit can do much to help you.

THE HOME
The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth: *Do You Forgive?*

“And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart”
 (Matthew 18:34,35).

We’ve discussed forgiveness as a key stipulation in both your Covenant with our Father and your marriage covenant. Forgiveness *from your heart* is crucial for any intimate relationship to exist. And, as Jesus warned, forgiveness keeps us from being tortured by our Father.

Not many like to think of our Father “torturing” those who refuse to forgive. Yet Jesus already warned us, *“If you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins”* (Matthew 6:15).

To our Hebraic forefathers **pride** and **unforgiveness** bring similar consequences. As the Apostle warns us, *“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble”* (James 4:6). Whatever shape opposition from God takes, it’s not good!

During our years of ministry we’ve found *bitterness* to be the most common sin among people who call themselves

“Christian”. Because it’s often covered by a veil of deceit, most fail to see the seething resentment they entertain. But this is where we need to help each other *work out our salvation*. Why would you want your spouse or someone else close to you in the faith to have to endure torture?

There’s more to forgiveness than mere words. We developed the chart below so that you can see what our Father really demands from each of us. When you forgive someone, you’re only getting yourself out of negative territory with God. Forgiving only releases you from your torture cell.

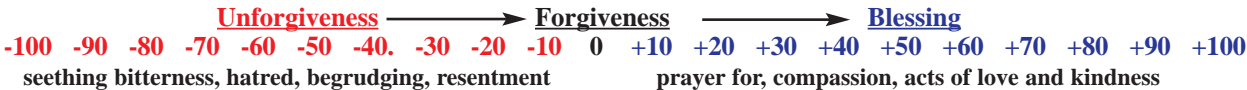
As you can see in the chart, when you forgive, you get out of negative territory to “0”. However, if you never get beyond “0”, you’ll ultimately return to negative territory and reenter your torture cell.

Our God commands us to *“bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you”* (Luke 6:28). A forgiving person must press into as much positive territory as possible. Only here will your emotions be healed by Jesus our Healer as the Holy Spirit empowers you to bless.

We forgive because we are commanded to.
We are healed as we bless those toward whom we were once bitter.

Turning Bitterness to Blessing
Comparison of the Hebraic and Nicolaitan Approaches

Hebraic: The Bible mandates that you forgive from your heart *without exception*; to belong to Jesus *is* to forgive. Forgiveness gets you out of *negative* territory on the chart to ‘0’. The emotional healing accomplished by Jesus occurs as you enter *positive* territory through prayer for, and good deeds toward, the one who has hurt you. The further a forgiving person goes into positive territory, the less likely that bitterness will return.



Nicolaitanism: Forgiveness is optional, and bitterness is seldom confronted; past circumstances such as “*abuse*” and “*dysfunctional family*” are grounds for not forgiving. The unforgiving arrogantly believe their offender has to ask forgiveness first. Few even get back to ‘0’; those who do usually return to negative territory—unforgiveness.

THE HOME

The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Growth: *Are You Spiritually Free?*

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).

We’ve discovered from our research that spiritual forces (unclean spirits) are inherited from past generations. If these aren’t cast down and their effect replaced by godliness, they’ll negatively impact your current relationships. They keep you from experiencing the freedom Jesus promises, and inhibit the quality of relationship our Father desires for you to have with Him and with one another.

To help you identify and overcome these destructive spirits by trusting in the Name of Jesus, we’ve written a workbook entitled ***Demolishing Strongholds***, and a video series by the same name. These materials, as well as another video series entitled ***Certain Of What We Do Not See***, are valuable tools for pressing on in freedom in your faith pilgrimage.

To discern if you need help in this area, we’ve put on the following page a list of the demonic strongholds we’ve encountered. Go through the list with your spouse or close friends in your extended spiritual family. Determine if any of the demonic strongholds listed there are influencing or agitating you.

Over the years we’ve found that people tend to marry others with the same demonic strongholds. They feel comfortable with each other, even if it’s the spirits that are attracting them!

For the two of us the attraction was influenced by the spirit of rejection. The

familiarity bred by the common spirits brings about a deceptive sense of acceptance and compatibility.

As we’ve conducted Demolishing Strongholds Workshops in congregations throughout the country, we’ve found that the majority of those in each congregation are influenced by the same demonic spirits. In one congregation it may be bitterness, in another, pride, and still another, fear and insecurity. It appears that the demonic strongholds bring the faith community together because the people feel accepted and comfortable in their shared bondage!

Through what we have learned and experienced, we’ve been able to help many break the demonic enslavement of their strongholds. Our workbook is written to help you demolish the demonic strongholds in your life, family, faith community and workplace. Our Father’s goal for His children is that you walk free in Jesus and serve His purposes in the power of His Spirit — the only spirit you want to be hearing!

***“So if the Son sets you free,
you will be free indeed”***
(John 8:36).

Go over the list on the next page. After you’ve filled it in, determine if you need help. If you do, as always, these materials are a **free download** from our website.

OVERVIEW OF TYPES OF STRONGHOLDS

This is a list of demonic strongholds (**bold type**) with their related symptoms below. Place a checkmark next to any symptom that is **habitually present** in your life. We stress **habitually** present rather than occasionally.

DECEIT

- Lying
- Fantasies
- Delusions
- Rationalization
- Wrong Doctrine/
Misuse of Scripture
- Flattery
- Syncretism

CONFUSION (DOUBT & UNBELIEF)

- Suspicious
- Apprehensive
- Indecisive/Double-minded
- Skeptical
- Unsettled
- Easily Distracted
- Lack of Commitment
- No Love of Truth
- Distorted Judgment

INDEPENDENCE & DIVORCE

- Insensitive
- Aloof
- Selfish Ambition
- Devil's advocate
- Withdrawn
- Makes Excuses
- Lack of Trust
- Willful

CONTROL

- Manipulative
- Striving
- Lack of Trust
- Devil's Advocate
- Insensitive
- Desiring Recognition
- Seductive Empowerment
- Cursing
- Emotional Outbursts
- Schemes, Intrigues

WITCHCRAFT/ FAMILIAR SPIRIT

- Blasphemy
- Preoccupied with Evil
- Psychic Experiences
- Rebellious
- Manipulation
- Devalues Life
- Identifies with Sinful Nature
- Fixated on Future

BITTERNESS

- Resentment
- Racism
- Unforgiveness
- Anger/Hatred
- Begrudging
- Violence
- Revenge
- Chronic Grumbling
- Presumption

REJECTION

- Addictive Behavior
- Compulsions
- Seeks Acceptance
- Unworthiness
- Withdrawal
- Shallow Relationships
- Loneliness

STUPOR & PRAYERLESSNESS

- Distanced From God
- "Cold" Love
- Hardened Heart
- Distracted
- Spiritual Blindness
- Laziness
- Deceived Self-appraisal
- Unresponsive

SEXUAL IMPURITY

- Lust
- Sensual Enticement
- Denial/Rationalization
- Control
- Masturbation
- Fornication
- Adultery
- Frigidity
- Homosexuality
- Pornography/
Fantasy

INFIRMITY/ DESTROYING

- Physical Manifestations
- Unconfessed Sin
- Abuses Body
- Devalues Life
- Chronic Grumbling
- Thoughts of Suicide
- Drawn to Danger

HEAVINESS

- Depression
- Despair
- Self-pity
- Loneliness
- Unconfessed Sin
- Suicidal Thoughts

PRIDE

- Ungrateful
- Self-righteous
- Self-centered
- Insensitive
- Materialistic
- Seeks Positions
- Stubborn
- Mocking
- Vain
- Spiritual Adultery
- Impatient

REBELLION

- Self-willed
- Stubborn/Insolent
- Pouting
- Strife
- Factious
- Divisive
- Anger Leads to Argument
- Independent
- Unteachable
- Ungodly Influence
- Lawless

IDOLATRY/ WORLDLINESS

- Worldly Values
- Frustrated
- Hopeless
- Greedy/Selfish
- Financial Problems
- Wrong Goals/Decisions
- Living a Lie
- Apathetic
- Pleasure in Wickedness
- Syncretistic

JEALOUSY

- Spiteful
- Gossip/Slander
- Betrayal
- Critical Nature
- Judgmental
- Suspicious
- UnChristlike Competition
- Cruelty

RELIGIOSITY/ SPIRITUAL LETHARGY

- Religious Busyness
- Knowledge Without Love
- No Spiritual Power
- Spiritual Blindness
- Hypocritical
- Legalistic Perversion
- Presumes on Grace

FEAR & INSECURITY

- Inferiority
- Inadequacy
- Timidity
- Pleasing People, Not God
- Lack of Trust/Worry
- Phobias
- Anxiety Over Injury, Death
- Perfectionism
- Dread of Failure
- Inability to Set Goals
- "Motor-mouth"

FALSE PROPHECY/ ANTI-CHRIST

- Denies Jesus as God and Man
- Bondage to Man-made Teaching
- Manipulation
- Prophecy for Pay
- Prey to Cults, Heresies
- Encourages Lawlessness
- Counterfeit Miracles
- Contrives Dreams/Visions