

Lifebyte 40

Do You Confront For Jesus? Or, Placate For Satan?

Living Righteously In The Days of Chastisement



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Dear Friends,

We've recently returned from 5 weeks of traveling. Just prior to our trip we finished the video segments on Home Fellowships, completing everything our Lord assigned us back in 2000.

During our journey Mike kept hearing the Holy Spirit impress in his spirit, "You will be *shown* your future work." Over our years of ministry the Spirit has normally *told* us what our Lord wants us to do through words of prophecy. But now we were going to be *shown* it.

He indeed showed us through the interactions we had that we're to extend help to individuals and families who have an *earnestness of spirit* to live for Jesus no matter what the cost.

We were able to discern three important areas in which we could effectively be used by the Spirit at this time.

1. Christians who have been part of religious systems for a length of time maintain a certain *comfort zone* for themselves, even after they depart the system. To fully *be the blessing* of Abraham about which we wrote in Lifebyte 36 and speak of in our Home Fellowship video series (segment 2), is considered optional for "comfortable" Christians.

The Sodom factor that's so tolerated and enjoyed within many religious systems is not removed until people are either confronted by a prophetic message **or** life circumstances motivate them to fully rid themselves of the Sodom factor influence.

During our trip we found ourselves *discomforting* people, helping them rid themselves of their *soul*-based Christianity and becoming *Spirit*-led and -controlled in their pilgrimage of love-grounded obedient trust.

If you recall, the Sodom factor appeals to our *soul*, that is, our mind, will and emotions. This focus provokes us to perceive our spiritual responsibilities to our God through a filter of what feels good to us even if it's not scripturally aligned. This is why so many ungodly forms

of worship are attracting many today. A true prophetic message or severe circumstances are our Father's means to discomfort people *away from* a soul-based Christianity and *turn to* a Spirit-empowered Kingdom way of living.

This doesn't mean you sit back and wait for a prophetically-gifted person to show up! You may not find one in your midst. You and your family and your load-bearing fellowship family need to be as the Bereans of Paul's day, carefully examining Scripture and mutually discussing the truths our Father gave us to share with the intent of applying them.

This is an arena in which the Holy Spirit can clearly guide you via your spirit. And yes, you *will* be discomforted as you are shown how different and purposefully focused Kingdom living really is!

2. The Sodom factor has kept so many who desire to earnestly follow our Lord from a key foundational character quality of Jesus — *deference*. Without deference, no one can have the servant heart that's required for Kingdom living.

We realized the critical need for younger men and women today who want to be true to Jesus to learn deference. We encountered younger men who are becoming spiritually poised to lead our Father's children during the *Dark Days of Chastisement*. Now is the time to develop this foundational character quality of Jesus so that they may be equipped to receive the deference that's due Godly wisdom from others they will later lead.

If you've read our other writings on this subject, you know that deference means *limiting your freedom to not offend or produce unnecessary apprehension in those in rightful authority over you*. You refrain from doing anything of which you'd be ashamed if those in authority found out. These individuals are God's agents to develop Christ-like character in you, and you must be motivated to not let them down by squandering your relationship.

Men also learn deference by treating their wives considerately (1 Peter 3:7). A man is called to refrain from any actions or attitudes that would produce unnecessary apprehension or emotional discomfort in his wife.

When people learn to live in deference as Jesus did with His Father, a holy boldness in living for our Lord and representing Him takes place in ways that no other character quality can bring about. Deference and boldness for our Lord go hand-in-hand!

(For more on deference please see: *Lifebyte 5. When Fear Is Good*; *Lifebyte 9. The Book of Daniel (Chapters 1-3)*; *Pastoring By Elders*, Chapter 8. Deference: The Character of Jesus in His Followers).

3. We also observed how the Hellenist influence and the Sodom factor in the Nicolaitan religious system has trained so many to hide within themselves their feelings of woundedness and hurt, and/or bitterness. Epidemic numbers of Christians are living with these apprehensive feelings yet stashing them because they think that's what Christians are supposed to do.

Apprehension and fearfulness to confront actually nullify any Christ-like effect you could have in your relationship with others. *Recognizing, confessing and confronting* this prison of apprehension is the focus of this Lifebyte. We're presupposing that as a follower of Jesus you fully understand your non-optional responsibility to be the blessing of Abraham for the glory of our Lord. We're also presuming that you're aware that you must *rid yourself* of all vestiges of Hellenism and the Sodom factor.

As you continue through this Lifebyte you'll find several sets of questions. Please take the time to discuss these with those close to you so that you may apply to your lives that which the Spirit is telling you!

***"Because of the increase of wickedness, the LOVE of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm TO THE END will be saved"* (Matthew 24:12,13)**

We've written previously that this nation is in the ***Atomistic stage*** of societal melt-down — a survivor mentality of "everyone for himself" (see **Discussing**

How To Restore the Early Church, Lesson 3). As previous atomistic civilizations such as Rome and Greece have proven, nothing will stop the United States from its destruction.

Alarms have sounded since the inception of this nation. When the thirteen colonies were still part of England, Professor Alexander Tyler warned:

A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves money from the public treasure. From that moment on the majority *always vote for the candidates promising the most money* from the public treasury, with the results that a *democracy always collapses* over loose fiscal policy followed by a dictatorship. [emphasis added]

Do you see, exercise of the *combined sin nature* of an unrighteous nation that can vote is what brings about its own destruction. And just think: Our government is attempting to export democracy to other segments of this sinful world!

In times of increased wickedness as we're experiencing today, it's vital that we who represent Jesus in being His blessing in the world not let our hearts grow cold. When wickedness abounds, most people become focused on their own self-preservation. That is, they tend to look out more and more for themselves and their own safety and pleasure, and less to the interests of others.

Yet take into your spirit this marked contrast to that isolationist slide: *"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others"* (Philippians 2:4).

Exercise of the combined sin nature of an unrighteous nation that can vote brings about its own destruction.

For followers of Jesus today, it isn't only the wickedness in the world that's tempting them into cold love. Several subtle demonic influences within the Nicolaitan religious system are also contributing to cold love among those who should be the most loving because they're bearing His name.

Without the self-sacrificial love the Spirit calls for and empowers within those who are determined to obey in obedient trust, we can never be the blessing of Abraham. Rather, our "love" will look like this: we'll mouth *spiritual platitudes* and respond with *reluctant obligation* in relationships that instead should be receiving the love of Jesus through us.

- **Is your heart growing *more* loving or *less* as your journey with Jesus continues? Describe yourself. Ask those who know you well to describe you.**

- **Examine the ways in which those you profess to love might recognize that love in action. In what ways do you manifest "cold love" rather than *agape* sacrificial love?**

Things we've observed over the years:

As we've conducted Hebraic seminars throughout the Bible Belt over the years we've marveled how many "churched people" would describe their relationships with others in their congregation as "a mile wide and an inch deep."

Throughout this country we'd ask people if they'd invited anyone from their congregation into their home just because they *cared* for them, not just for a scheduled meeting or Bible study. The response was negligible.

Note this: Christian pollster George Barna reported that the sinful lifestyle values and choices of non-Christians and Christians were *the same*.

Several years earlier Barna reported that the divorce rate in the Bible belt was *50% higher* than elsewhere in this nation. And, throughout the United States divorce is more prevalent among "Christian" marriages than among the unchurched. We're not sure what statistical base he used, but seeking the reasons behind this tragic reality have haunted us as we've continued to share the Hebraic foundations.

On this recent trip we were shown some of the root causes of what was destroying the lives of so many Christians.

1. True Faith Has Deep Feeling

The Hebrew word for "faith", *emunah* [em-oo-NAH], is an emotionally intense word. It is pregnant with steadfast trust in God, a trust that endures. *Emunah* is an emotional and responsive term that emanates from your heart toward the One Who has redeemed you. In essence, faith represents the highest value you have in life.

First, faith is believing that God exists in such a way that your diligent pursuit of and response to Him brings about wonderful spiritual reward (see Hebrews 11:6).

Biblical faith also represents your complete trust in the shed blood of Jesus as full payment for your sins so that you are forgiven by God and indwelt by His Spirit.

Faith is also a loving trust in God that produces in you obedient action in response to His Spirit and His Word. Confirmation that your faith is authentic is that you press on in obedience to that which He makes known to you. You hold nothing back in your desire to live in Covenant union with your Lord. The joy of walking in covenant union with Jesus propels you to fulfill your Lord and King's purposes (see Ephesians 2:8-10)!

The zeal of your heart's trust is evidenced in Jesus' description of those who serve Him with determination in His Kingdom:

*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then **in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.***

*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant **looking for fine pearls.***

*When he found one of great value, he went away and **sold everything he had and bought it** (Matthew 13:44-46).*

You can see that our Lord is revealing the intense emotional value with which we are to hold the Kingdom of heaven. As Jesus reiterated, His foremost command is to **love** the Lord our God with **all our heart**, soul, mind and strength. *That's* determination, not just mental agreement with some verses!

Can you hear the grateful intensity of the Psalmist as he internalizes his relationship with His merciful Lord?

*Teach me Thy way, O LORD; I will walk in Thy truth; **Unite my heart** to fear Thy name. I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord my God, with **all my heart**, And will glorify Thy name forever (Psalm 86:11,12).*

Confirmation that you have true love-grounded faith is your obedience put into action.

That which you sincerely value is **revealed** by your emotion and your responsive eagerness to prosper that relationship. And, your faith *needs* that intense emotional fabric of heart conviction. This trust-in-action is something our Hebraic ancestors understood all too clearly, as do our persecuted brothers and sisters around the world.

During our stay in Israel we encountered a Jewish neighbor, Yehuda Gabay. He invited us to his home to meet his family. As a child in his native Iran, he and his parents had been forced out decades ago when Jews were ordered to leave. His wife, Berthe, was a Jewish immigrant from Morocco.

We spent joyful hours in wonderful conversation with this couple. Yehuda had a fair grasp of English, and Berthe, a TV news announcer, was fluent. As we got to know each other well, they understood that we were devoted followers of Jesus. At one point Yehuda commented archly, "The Jewish God, the Christian God, the Muslim god— they're all the same god!"

But Mike had learned the beauty of *emunah* and the Hebraic method of confrontation, and responded emphatically, "No, He's not!!! Jews and Christians are people of the Book. The Muslim god is no god at all!"

Yehuda and Berthe marveled at the intensity of my emotional response. My heartfelt relationship with my Lord led to their many questions wanting to know more about the true God. It was the joyous assurance in our Lord and the heart conviction of our testimony that attracted them to find out more.

Several days later Yehuda knocked on the door of our host's home. Our host, Bert, is a Jewish follower of Jesus. As Yehuda entered the living room he told us that he

wanted to talk about the Hebrew Bible. He told Bert, “I don’t speak English well and Mike doesn’t speak Hebrew, so I want to ask you questions in Hebrew and have you translate them for Mike to answer. Then tell me in Hebrew what Mike tells you.” We spent hours of deep, soul-searching discussion about Jesus and His fulfillment of prophecy as Messiah.

Several weeks later we purchased a book with testimonies of contemporary Israelis who’d become followers of Jesus. Wanting to give this to Yehuda’s oldest daughter, Galit, a soldier in the Israeli Army, we asked his permission. (She’d sat in on some of our conversations with eagerness to hear and discuss.) Nodding approval as he glanced through the slim volume, he added, “Mike and Sue are for real!”

What started out with heart-held *emunah* and Hebraic confrontation led to responsive and love-grounded sharing of Jesus with a family who’d become our friends.

- **How bold are you in your faith? Is there an emotional undergirding to your relationship with our Father in Jesus? Describe yourself. Ask those who know you well to describe you.**

- **As you ponder your relationship with our Lord, would you be inclined to base it more on the rationale of intellectual assent than on trust-filled obedience seen in your actions? Does it ever hurt your heart that your willful sin grieves HIM? Explain.**

2. Hellenism’s Contribution to Cold Love

The Hellenist philosophers who converted to Christianity in the second and third centuries did much to hack away the Hebraic underpinnings of relating to our God. Often referred to as “Church Fathers”, these teachers were more bent on adapting Christianity to Plato than on countering their pagan pre-conceptions with the Hebraic foundations of God’s Word.

Hellenism introduced a *philosophical approach* to discussing Christian truths. The Christian faith is presented in a rational, sensible and totally cognitive manner — appealing to people’s souls. Hellenism further hindered the expression of Christian faith through the influence of *stoicism*, a line of thought which denies passion or any demonstration of emotion.

Stoic repression has reaped generations of reserved Christians who are fearful of conveying the responsive emotions of their journey in Jesus. This constraint has been especially true concerning perceived *negative* emotions, which are considered by many Christians to reflect some form of character failure.

People who discount the *heart emotions* of man as made in God’s image have a difficult time with Jesus turning over the tables of the moneychangers (see John 2). Jesus is forceful and grieved and appalled by those who are defiling the Temple of His Father: “*Get these out of here! How dare you turn My Father’s house into a market!*” (v.16)

Do you think that Jesus is gentle and fragile-voiced when He calls the religious leaders “Hypocrites!”?

And think of Paul as he denounced the Judaizers who were insisting that Gentiles in Galatia must be circumcised:

“As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!” (Galatians 5:12). Was his faith intertwined with his emotions as the apostle ached to save these beloved people from legalistic perversion? You bet. Neither Jesus nor Paul were shackled by Hellenist thought or behavior as are so many Christians in the United States today.

Consider this: When the Bible is taught or discussed using the *Hebraic* style — with the sole goal of putting it into practice — *emunah*, the faith that’s imbued with emotional conviction, comes alive!

When your professed faith is put into practice as Jesus commands (see Matthew 7:24-27), you learn to increasingly value your relationship with Jesus your King. *Your faith is evidenced in your actions and life choices.* When tested, you WILL stand up with all the emotional conviction you need for your way of life in the Kingdom **and** for the One Whom you trust.

*If you have true faith,
you WILL stand up for your Lord.
Your faith WILL be seen in your actions.*

Do You Remember the Choo Choo?

Some of you may remember the old Campus Crusade choo choo train that has influenced so many evangelicals over the years. The train’s cars described the essence of Christian conviction as a sequence: faith, then fact, and lastly, feeling.

What they really meant by faith was *belief*, a passively cognitive acknowledgment of a particular truth. In other



words, in order to be saved all you had to do was give mental assent to four “spiritual laws”.

In contrast, as we shared earlier, faith is factual, biblical truth and heartfelt response to God all wrapped up in one. *Emunah* would better be described as this:



If you have true faith, you WILL stand up for your Lord. Your faith WILL be seen in your actions.

3. Hellenist Intrusion: The “Super-spiritual” Influence Of Cold Love’s Demands

If you remember from our previous writings, Hellenism places *man* rather than God at the center of all things. Man may *acknowledge* the existence of a true God, but the God of the Bible is not in control of His creation. In fact, God is as *man defines Him*. And, this man-centered influence has achieved widespread acceptance in Christendom, spawning numerous errant teachings.

The man-centered view has produced several of what we call “super-spiritual” movements in the last fifty years of Christendom. Let’s discuss this term and how it might apply to you or to those close to you.

One form of super-spiritual people are “**the demanding types**”. Their prayers *demand* of God and try to show they are in control of Him. You often find them stridently yelling at God in prayer to do as their “faith” commands that He do.

Jesus speaks directly against those who make sure their “faith” is seen and heard by others:

*And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be **seen by men**. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. . . And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard **because of their many words** (Matthew 6:5,7).*

The humble of heart trust that their heavenly Father has their best interest at heart and will respond according to that which will prosper their character in Jesus:

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that **if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us** (1 John 5:14).*

*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your Name, Your kingdom come, **Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven...** (see Matthew 6:9-10).*

The other form of “super-spiritualism” is what we call “**looking for a lightning bolt**”. Hellenism separates life into the spiritual realm (holy) and the physical plane (profane). Only “holy” people, like clergy and TV evangelists and maybe overseas missionaries, can be used by God. The rest, who are the “profane” lay people, never expect God to use them.

As a result, these individuals are always looking for some divine “lightning bolt intervention” to be the answer to their prayers. In their eyes, God is totally responsible to answer their prayers through *miraculous response alone*. When questioned about disconcerting

situations or painful relationships, they often reply, “I’ll just continue to pray about it”, or, “God will work it out.”

Don’t get us wrong, we believe wholeheartedly in earnest, persevering prayer! We love to have testimonies to our Father’s glory. But the “lightning bolt” mentality totally nullifies the idea that God may use a *human being* as His answer. They’re so bent on wanting a ‘lightning bolt’ that they’re blinded to the biblical reality that God may want to use *them* to be *His answer!*

As you read your Bible, observe how many instances in which God *sends a human* in answer to someone’s prayer. These responses are numerous! Make sure you’re open to the reality that God may want to use *you* as part of His response to your own prayer.

Our Hebraic forefathers in the faith also understood the human/spiritual interface of God’s will being carried out on earth. Throughout the Older Testament right into the Newer, those who loved and served their God clearly understood that He indeed uses *human agents* to carry out His will on earth.

For instance, Cornelius and all his family were devout and God-fearing (see Acts 10). Yet, God had to send the apostle Peter as an answer to the centurion’s prayer. Go through your Bible to find the many people God used as answers to prayer. And, always be prepared when necessary to *be the answer* to your own prayers—even if you must confront! (see also Esther chapters 4-7)

4. The Hellenist Influence on Iniquity and Sin:

How These Provoke Cold Love

Remember, a core teaching of Hellenism is that man, not God, is at the center of all things. When Christians

make life choices and goals that reveal that they themselves are their chief priority, their sin-nature-controlled soul dictates their whole perspective of Who God is to them. They perceive that they can never really live up to the holy standards God establishes in his Word for the good of those who love Him. So, over time His commands are disregarded and eventually dismissed as something “legalistic”.

This world view is what keeps the **Sodom Factor** flourishing in congregations today. In Sodom Factor thought, righteousness is NOT a criterion for fellowship. In fact, followers of Jesus today who yearn to please their Father and live by His Spirit within the boundaries of the Bible are called “legalistic” by those who are complacently entrapped in their unconfessed sin.

Hellenism’s influence on Christendom has occurred over the course of many centuries. This is why the **Sodom Factor** — a toleration for sin that’s excused as “grace” — is so rampant among Christians today. And, this is why their morals and life choices are no different than those of unbelievers.

There are two evil forces at work here that go mostly unconfessed in Christian fellowships today: **iniquity** and **sin**. Many think these two biblical terms are synonymous, but they aren’t!

Three times in Psalm 51 these words are addressed separately:

- “Wash me thoroughly from mine **iniquity**, and cleanse me from my **sin**” (v.2).
- “Behold, I was shapen in **iniquity**; and in **sin** did my mother conceive me” (v.5).
- “Hide thy face from my **sins**, and blot out all mine **iniquities**” (v.9).

Iniquity is a weakness, a predisposition toward something contrary to God that is passed along from generation-to-generation in a family. **Sin** is an attitude or action in direct rebellion against God’s Word.

One of several examples in the Bible of the weakness of iniquity being *passed along for generations* begins with Abraham:

- Fearing King Abimelech, Abraham **lied** that Sarah was his sister (Genesis 20:2).
- Their son Isaac, fearing King Abimelech, **lied** that Rebekah was his sister (Genesis 26:7).
- Wanting his father’s blessing, Jacob **lied** telling Isaac that he was Esau (Genesis 27:32).

Note that the *iniquities* of our forefathers, that is, their *predisposition* to a weakness, are passed along to us — **not** their sins. The Lord assures us:

“I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me” (Exodus 20:5).

And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, “The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation” (Exodus 34:6,7; see also Numbers 14:18, KJV; Deuteronomy 5:9, KJV).

- **Describe the iniquity, that is, the particular predisposition for weakness(es), that you inherited from your parents.**

INIQUITY is a weakness, a predisposition toward something contrary to God that is passed along from generation-to-generation in a family. SIN is an attitude or action in direct rebellion against God's Word.

- **What have you done to rid yourself of these weaknesses? Do you think that you are responsible for the sins that you've committed in light of the weakness you've inherited? Explain.**

We Need To Acknowledge the Iniquities of Our Forefathers

If you've gone through our workbook *Demolishing Strongholds* then you're familiar with what we're about to share. Even though you are *not* guilty of the iniquity of your parents, you *are* affected by it. Thus, you must acknowledge iniquity as a generational reality in your life:

*And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed **their sins**, and the **iniquities of their fathers** (Nehemiah 9:2; see also Daniel 9:16, Jeremiah 14:20 KJV).*

You confess *your* sins first, assuming personal responsibility for them. Nobody "made you do it." Confessing your own sins also acknowledges that you *did not appropriate* the grace of God (see Romans 5:20) which is sufficient for you to overcome the weaknesses passed on by your forefathers.

Again, when you confess the iniquities of your forefathers, it's important that you distinguish between your *own* iniquities and sins, and the weaknesses your forefathers passed along to you

through *their* iniquities. You are *not* guilty for their sins or their iniquities. Nor are you punished for what they have done. You are accountable only for your *own* sins and iniquities which you have not brought under the atoning blood of our Lord Jesus.

This is wonderful news!

*The son shall **not bear the iniquity of the father**, neither shall the father bear the **iniquity of the son**: the righteousness of the righteous shall be **upon him**, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be **upon him** (Ezekiel 18:20).*

By confessing the iniquities of your parents, you are telling God you're aware of the weakness that has come down to you. Also, you are affirming your desire to build your life based on *applying His Word*. We'll discuss this shortly.

Keep in mind that the iniquity of our forefathers is most often passed down via **generational strongholds** that are neither confronted nor renounced and cast down. We'll come back to this too in a bit.

Good Deeds Outside Of God's Will Are Works Of Iniquity

Within Christendom iniquity entices people to do their *own* will, even that which *seems* good but barges in where God has not directed. Deeds that are done in our own volition but not according to our Father's will are iniquity — law-lessness — from His perspective.

You certainly can't rely on manifestations of "signs and wonders" to discern

By confessing the iniquities of our parents we are telling God we are aware of the weakness that has come down to us. Also, we are affirming our desire to build our lives based on applying His Word.

if the action has been prompted by God! Look at these startling words that confront the self-will of the presumptuous:

*Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who **does the will of My Father** who is in heaven. **Many** will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I **never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness [iniquity]**' (Matthew 7:21-23)*

The Greek word for iniquity, *anomia*, means “without law” or “contempt for law”. This is an important distinction for us today who are inundated by conferences and teachings that incite Christians to expect the “miraculous” *outside* the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

People will proclaim the great things they did, even announcing they’ve done it in Jesus’ name representing His authority! But our Lord will reject them because they didn’t do it *in the Father’s will* according to His Word.

Be aware: Many good things are being done throughout Christendom by people who see *themselves* at the center of, and in control of, their world. They do what *they* want to do, picking and choosing what appeals to them from God’s Word and ignoring the rest.

BUT they refrain from humbly seeking God’s *rhema* before they act. No matter how good the good they’re doing seems, if it *isn’t the Father’s will* it is ini-

quity. Let’s pay close attention to the warning of Matthew 7:21-23. (For more on *rhema*, see **Discussing How To Restore The Early Church, Lesson 39.**)

Several biblical responsibilities stand prominently before us if we’re to rid ourselves and our families of the influence of iniquity from past (and present) generations.

- One. Build our lives on God’s Word and live in His Spirit according to His commands so that His name won’t be brought down (see Romans 2:5-8).
- Two. Demolish any strongholds we may have, and replace with godliness the unrighteous behaviors and attitudes we’ve walked in through their influence (see 2 Corinthians 10:4,5).

Halakhahs, God’s Antidote For Iniquity

The Psalmist prays, “*Order my steps in Thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me*” (Psalm 119:133). We’ve written often about your need to establish biblical applications for your life. These become life principles that guide your character in Christ’s likeness and are pleasing to our Father. (If you haven’t done so yet, please read and discuss our brief book, **Christian Halakhahs—Loving Jesus Through The Way You Apply His Word**. It’s a free download.).

How else can you rid yourself of all those ungodly attitudes and behaviors that have been passed down to you by your parents? You access the powerful *sword of the Spirit* and *apply* it to your life:

*For the word of God is **living and active**. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the **thoughts and attitudes of the heart** (Hebrews 4:12).*

Christendom exhibits a history of *self-willed actions* which have brought about even more self-willed actions. Christianity in the United States during the past few decades has demonstrated little more than the outworking of iniquity built upon iniquity (see Romans 6:19, KJV).

Iniquity has been spreading throughout western Christendom as the sin nature of religious leaders (cloaked as “success” adapted from worldly goals and means) has infiltrated the mainstream religious system. Multitudes of conferences and books and DVDs prove how church leaders have been “successful” in attracting numbers to their mega-churches.

Certain men at the center of western Christendom have become household names, some even topping the *New York Times* best-seller list with books that meet the approval of both the unchurched as well as the churched.

However, earnestly seeking God’s infinite wisdom from His Word and applying it is no longer cherished. His pure Word no longer “meets the needs” of moderns who need buzz words and glitz to tickle their interest. Only that which responds to the yearning for success *on man’s terms* finds a market among those who cling to their own lordship and extend to God a Sunday morning nod.

When “Christians” persist in doing their own will, God turns them over to a reprobate mind — they believe they can go on *without* God’s wisdom or will, and yet still be acceptable to Him. In reality, they have placed themselves *above God* by following their own will rather than His.

Since they desire to live under the illusion that the god of their making is satisfied, God sends them a spirit of delusion so that they go on believing the lie (see 2 Thessalonians 2:11).

In contrast, consider the purpose and joy of those who choose instead to work according to the will of their Father:

Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of the Lord abstain from iniquity.”

Now in a large house there are not only gold and silver vessels, but also vessels of wood and of earthenware, and some to honor and some to dishonor.

Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work (2 Timothy 2:19-21).

Departing from the unrighteousness of iniquity means that we stop doing the evil that is dictated by the weaknesses we inherited from our parents. In earnest we must apply His Word and seek His *rhema* in trusting obedience following that which His Spirit reveals.

In this way we can fulfill the will of our Father, through which He will be glorified in the works *He* wants us to do. Please remember: Every good deed you do must be motivated by God’s love and purpose — not by your self-will.

Demolishing Strongholds Is Also God’s Antidote For Iniquity

Many today are coming to understand how iniquities are passed from parents to children “*to the third and fourth generation*” via demonic strongholds. By renouncing these demonic influences, many individuals and families are finally experiencing freedom over long-standing conflicts and habits.

Strongholds are areas of your soul that have been given over to Satan’s control

through your disobedience. By clinging to unrighteousness in an area of your mind, will or emotions, you yield ground that in effect shuts out the voice of the Holy Spirit in that area of your soul.

Until the strongholds are demolished and the “ruts” of behavior or attitude are filled in with righteous responses, these sinful weaknesses are passed along from generation-to-generation in a family until someone begins to confess their sin and deal with the iniquity they carry with them.

As you were growing up, how you viewed and interacted with the world around you was continually influenced or controlled by the strongholds in your soul — the weaknesses within your family. In one family these weaknesses might be overwhelming feelings of fear and insecurity; in another, rejection; in still another, bitterness, and so forth.

Through those strongholds the devil had a place to operate from within the souls of your family for generations (see Ephesians 4:27) — ever more entrenching these weaknesses with each generation.

But there’s great news! You and your entire family and relatives have divine power in Jesus to *take back* the ground you and your forefathers have given over to Satan (see 2 Corinthians 10:3,4). Once the strongholds have been demolished, you and your family are able to “*take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*” And thoughts which you submit to Jesus are *able and available* to do the will of our Father, thereby enabling you to escape a life of iniquity.

If you *don’t* make your thoughts obedient to Christ, you’ll succumb to spiritual pride and self-righteousness that excuses sin and falls prey to religious deceit. Any thought that you refuse to bring into submission becomes fuel to

feed pride and self-will. Be alert and diligent! When you’ve demolished the strongholds behind iniquity, be sure you bring your thoughts into submission to Jesus.

5. Satan’s Placators Promote Cold Love

We shared earlier that one of the influences of Hellenism on Christendom is an abhorrence to negative emotions. Most Christians perceive any negative feelings as personal character flaws. So negative feelings are never discussed, but are blindly covered over. People who give in to this deceit of denial are “**Satan’s placators**”.

Placators *hide* their own negative attitudes of fear and insecurity or resentment or seething, begrudging bitterness. Some operate under a veneer of extreme spirituality. Their conversations are filled with a lot of “Christianese”.

In reality, like all other humans on earth, they too get their feelings hurt. Yet, self-pitying, they suffer in silence rather than revealing their hurt and confronting the person or situation that has brought it about. This self-inflicted martyrdom makes them feel more Christ-like. But that’s not so! Rather, it makes them more resentful and prone to gossip or slander — often disguising their gossip/slander as a prayer request.

Over time their habitual response of hiding their inner self causes them to **purchase favor from others**. They refrain from saying or doing anything that would offend the *perceived* more dominant person. Shallow over-friendliness hides their true feelings — the darkness festering within.

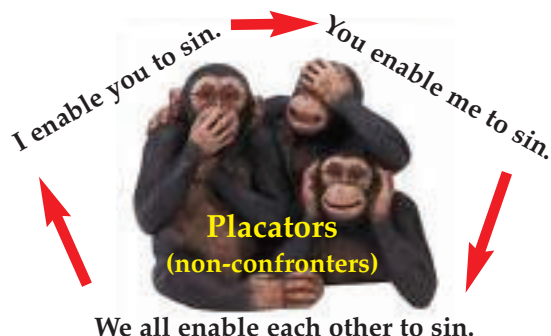
Our Hebraic ancestors understood that suppressing negative emotions

imprisons you, keeping you from actively loving as Jesus would. Negative feelings are a prompt to address the person or situation and make it redemptive. Let's put it this way: Negative feelings initially are like the pain when you touch something hot. You need to *do* something about it!

People who placate or gloss over potentially painful situations are very popular in Christendom because they *seem* so caring. In their attempt to appease and pacify they often don't see that they're suppressing problems that need to be brought to the surface. Their efforts are often like putting a bandaid over an infected wound and waiting for it to heal because they fear the pain of cleansing the wound.

Because of the many placators throughout Christendom, iniquity and sin are rarely confronted. And because of the *lawlessness* in much of western Christianity, God is now made in the image that man (who's really at the center of his life) wants Him to be — all "loving" with no holy standards by which we must live, or confront.

As a result Christendom today is becoming a placation culture—*iniquity and sin within fellowships are unconforted.* Placation is due largely to the influence of the Sodom Factor among those who call themselves Christian but tolerate compromise. It operates something like the monkey diagram:



Among the chief toleration of sin in Christendom is the epidemic number who hold negative attitudes toward others but refuse to confront as the Bible calls for so that loving fellowship can be restored.

In our book *Growing Relationships Through Confrontation* (a free download and a must read!!!) we describe the *gears of co-dependency.* We've adapted them here to show you how placators, who *fear confrontation,* are permitting the iniquity of strongholds and/or sin to hurt others.



If you remember, from our workbook *Demolishing Strongholds:*

Strongholds are relationship destroyers. Where they are present, *apprehension,* that is, *ill feelings,* and *emotional discomfort* exist between people.

Followers of Jesus who *should* confront have often been indoctrinated by Hellenized Christianity that confrontation is *unloving* — it may bring up negative emotions. Or, they fear the demonic counterattack of facing down the strongholds, or fear confronting a person who's sinning, as Jesus demands (Matthew 18:15-17). We **are** commanded to "*go and show him his fault*" so that repentance and restoration can ensue.

These words of Jesus are NOT optional. He knows that love cannot grow wherever the apprehension that's caused by strongholds or unconfessed sin exists.

Satan's fertile soil to conduct evil is interpersonal tension. Where apprehension exists, the love of Jesus is lacking.

Many Christians who live with any form of apprehension toward others put on a false front. Why? Negative attitudes are seen as a character flaw, so you don't let people know your true feelings. Also, many don't want to be confronted about their own un-Christlike attitude, or fear they may have to confront the person they're holding these feelings against.

Love cannot grow wherever the apprehension caused by strongholds or unconfessed sin exists.

4. How To Confront In Jesus

To confront others redemptively, it's helpful if you have the *eternal* perspective of other people that our Father has:

- Like you, they were given a spirit at conception that longs to return to its Creator. When you were born again, you received the Holy Spirit Who helps your spirit get back to God.
- Like you, they received a sin nature-controlled soul from their parents at conception. That sin nature is going to do everything it can to keep them out of heaven.
- Your responsibility to Jesus is to complete your salvation pilgrimage by passing through the narrow gate and being welcomed at the Judgment Throne. **And**, you need to help others do likewise. This isn't optional if you love and serve your King in His Kingdom.

Now with these points in mind you need to *first* keep yourself out Satan's trap of producing apprehension in you toward anyone else. Once you're apprehensive, you can't love that person as Jesus commands you and empowers you to. And, without His love you won't have the thoughts of Jesus — the mind of Christ. Thus, you won't respond or act as He would.

You have to *really* fight with determination to not let yourself remain apprehensive. Picture yourself looking out the front window of your home and your thirteen-year-old daughter is in the front yard. A van pulls up and two men jump out with the intent of kidnapping her. How determined are you not to let that happen? Are you going to let it happen?

Even more so because of loving obedience to your Redeemer, *don't let the love of Jesus be destroyed by apprehension!* As soon as you experience ill feelings or emotional discomfort toward someone, that's your cue to take redemptive action.

- **Do you have an *eternal* view of yourself, that is, that you want to obediently follow through with Christ's commands along the narrow path to heaven? Describe yourself.**

- **Do you have an *eternal* view of others, in particular of your family and extended spiritual family? Describe yourself.**

- **When was the last time you confronted someone with whom you are in fellowship over sin or a situation that pained you? Are you reluctant to confront? Why?**

How To Protect Yourself

When your feelings are turning negative toward someone because they're hurting you, ask yourself:

- Is what they're saying or doing *intentional* or *unintentional*?
- If it's unintentional or just a social gaffe, do you have the grace to overlook it? Or, will you speak about their offense as gossip and slander to others? If yes, you must go to the person first and address the matter.
- If it's intentional, and your feelings are negatively affected, you must confront it.

“Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD” (Leviticus 19:17,18).

Painful, bitter fruit comes from non-confrontation. If you learn to tolerate bad feelings and apprehension with others, over time you'll be unable to love others as Jesus would have you. Also, you'll be come addicted to hearing gossip and slander about others.

This will lead to a stronghold of **witchcraft** being formed in your soul. Witchcraft gives you *control* over others through feelings of power because you have negative information about them.

You'll grow addicted to more and more negative information about other people. The more you glean bad reports, the better you feel. Power, power, and more power!!! *Don't!* (See our July, 2000 Newsletter: **Lashon hara—Bad Mouthing**).

To experience true healing in relationships, you must confront whatever is causing you to lose your love and become apprehensive. In the process you must provide the opportunity for the other person to share his feelings. And you must be willing to share your feelings when you're hurt. Don't attack with words such as, “*You hurt my feelings!*” Instead, “*My feelings are being hurt by what's going on. Can I share how I'm feeling so we can come to a resolution?*”

If you're going to follow Jesus and remain loving as He would, you must confront. We strongly encourage you to train yourself by using our short book, **Growing Relationships Through Confrontation** (a free download). Notice in the title *how* you grow loving relationships: by confronting.

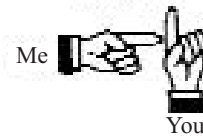
Again, confrontation is *not* conflict. Conflict has to do with someone winning and someone losing. Conflict causes arguments. Conflict over interpersonal differences causes you to blame the other person.

Confrontation, on the other hand, is addressing what's causing the apprehension. Confrontation is aimed at removing whatever is hindering love.

Confrontation



Conflict



“*We have a problem*”. “*You have a problem*”.

If you learn to tolerate bad feelings and apprehension about others, over time you'll be unable to love others as Jesus would have you. Also, you'll become addicted to hearing gossip and slander about others.

Further insights into godly confronting are on the next page. We encourage you, if there's *any apprehension* in your relational network, especially with your family or fellowship family, *confront the source*. Don't let iniquity or sin drive you from loving people as Jesus would!

Once *you're* free you can be a reconciler between other parties using the same goals and methods you used for yourself.

- **Are you a Placator or a Confronter? Describe yourself.**

- **What do you do when your feelings are being hurt? Is this a lifelong pattern?**

- **What do you do when others share negative information about other people? When was the last time you repeated a bad report or listened to one?**

- **Do others live with ongoing apprehension about you? Ask them. Where are any of you on the “gears of co-dependency” chart on page 13? What do you purpose to do to stay off the chart?**

SUPPORT

- You support others because they are made in God's image, and Jesus died for them.
- Support encourages the other person.

What to support

- The other person's anxiety, fear, doubt.
- The right for him or her to feel or think differently.
- The reality of his or her perceptions.

How to support

- Pray together for wisdom and truth.
- Let the other person speak his or her case.
- Listen! Listen! Listen!
- Restate back what he or she is saying.
- Verbalize his or her feelings.
- Ask for his or her preferred solution.

Don'ts:

- Don't rush in too quickly with solutions.
- Don't tell him how he *shouldn't* feel.
- Don't cut him or her off too soon.
- Don't judge him — describe instead what you perceive the underlying problem to be.
- Don't give unsolicited advice that is irrelevant to the present issue.

- Use ***Demolishing Strongholds***. If you're confident that the iniquity of strongholds is at the root of the apprehension, insist they go through the workbook, preferably with you.
- Use ***Growing Relationships Through Confrontation*** to train yourself, your family and fellowship family to confront redemptively.
- Just remember: When you support the person whom you are confronting or admonishing, you're recognizing his or her reality. Don't let yourself become frustrated if they don't see it your way. You may need to pray more.
- You confront others for yourself, so that you can stay free of apprehension. Confrontation is your way to legitimize your position or ideas.
- Together YOU BOTH make explicit your differences and the resolutions that God intends.

A Simple Concept...

***DIFFICULT TO DO CONSISTENTLY
WITHOUT LOVING AWARENESS,
PATIENT PRACTICE,
AND FERVENT PRAYER***

CONFRONT

- You confront to keep yourself out of apprehension.
- Confronting encourages you (and that's *good!*).

What to confront:

- Problems that are not being solved.
- Differences that hamper the relationship.
- Sins, attitudes, behaviors that are detrimental.

How to confront:

- Treat the issue as a situation you *both* need to solve.
- Acknowledge the other person's position.
- State your differences clearly and succinctly.
- Check to see if you are being understood.
- Be responsible for your own feelings.
- Fully explore the differences.

Don'ts:

- Don't attack his or her character or imply motives.
- Don't railroad your own solution, even if you are in a position to do that.
- Don't problem-solve until you have both discussed the issues to one another's satisfaction.