

# Lifebyte 41

## *A Turf War For Souls That You Must Win!*

**Living Righteously In The Days of Chastisement**



**Restoration Ministries International**

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Dear Friends,

This Lifebyte continues our emphasis on ridding yourself of ALL vestiges of iniquity so that you'll be *fully available* to lovingly serve our King and His purposes. And His heart's desire? That mankind enter into covenant union with Him as His Spirit-led family.

We're going to expand on a few points we made in Lifebyte 40, ***Do You Confront For Jesus? Or, Placate For Satan?*** But first, we want to anchor for you our Father's yearning to enter a *love relationship* with you, as well as the tragic consequences of *not* loving Him in the manner His Word calls for:

*"I the LORD thy God am a **jealous** God [permitting no rivals for love or devotion], visiting the **iniquity of the fathers upon the children** unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me, but **showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love Me and keep My commandments**" (Exodus 20:5,6).*

We've mentioned this before:

The Hebrew word for love in the above passage is ***ahav*** (ah-hahv'), a passionate desire to cherish and to be in your beloved's presence. This kind of love overflows with emotional connotation, a devotion which produces the fruit of obedience.

The Hebrew letters for *ahav* mean "a **window into the Father's heart.**" This intimate union is what our heavenly Father longs for with each child who embraces His Covenant. In essence, through His love for you that's expressed through His indwelling Spirit, He opens the window of His heart to you. To see into that window, you must be determined to love (*ahav*) Him "...with **all** your heart and with **all** your soul and with **all** your strength" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

To *ahav* your Father as He calls you to, your soul must be *free from iniquity and sin* [Diagram 1]. In other words, *no darkness* lurks in your soul.

Note that your Father shows love (*ahav*) to "**those who love Me and keep My com-**

**mandments.**" This same link between love and obedience is repeated in the Newer Testament:

*If you **keep My commands**, you will **stay in My love**—just as I have kept My Father's commands and stay in His love (John 15:10,CJB).*

*We know that in all things **God works for the good** of those who love Him, who have been called according to His **purpose** (Romans 8:28).*

If you love God and are fulfilling His purposes, then you must be keeping His commands! And, you're experiencing that intimate *ahav* with your Father.

### **What Impedes Your Ability To Love Our Father As He Desires?**

#### ***Unconfronted Iniquity and/or Unconfessed Sin.***

**In essence, our God is battling Satan over who will rule the souls of a mankind that's prone through free will to follow their sin nature. *It's a turf war!* Eternal consequences for each life depend on whether a holy God or an evil devil wins their soul.**

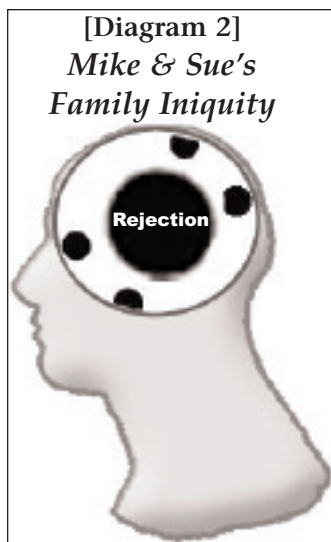


Remember, there are two evil forces at work that may have gone unconfessed in your life: **iniquity** and **sin**. **Iniquity** is a weakness, a predisposition in your soul (mind, will, and emotions) toward something that's contrary to God. Iniquity is passed along from generation-to-generation in a family from soul to soul.

Even though you're *not* guilty of the iniquity of your parents (see Ezekiel 18:1-32, for example), you *are* impacted by it. The iniquity of your forefathers is most often passed down via **generational strongholds** that have neither been confronted nor renounced and cast down.

Through those strongholds Satan and his demonic cohorts 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 as they continued unconfessed and unconfessed.

*Demonic strongholds* are areas of a soul that have been given over to Satan's influence and agitation. Strongholds often are constructed when a generation **fails to love** (*ahav*) God. Where a stronghold exists in your soul, it in effect shuts out the voice of the Holy Spirit *in that area of your soul*.



[Diagram 2] For example, in our families, *rejection* was the ruling iniquity that had been passed along for generations. Other less-influencing strong-

holds were independence, sexual impurity, and religiosity. Rejection kept us

from experiencing the love of our Father or walking in obedient trust. We found ourselves busy in religious activities without ever experiencing our Father's heart.

The longer you've been involved in the Nicolaitan religious system, the more you may have learned to live with both iniquity and unconfessed sin influencing your mind, will and emotions. Remember, people are attracted to marriage partners, congregations and denominations with similar tolerated iniquity because they seem comfortably familiar. We experienced that ourselves!

[Diagram 3] Until your strongholds are demolished and the "ruts" of former unrighteous behavior and/or attitudes are filled in with living God's way, these sinful weaknesses will be passed along from generation-to-generation to your progeny. Worse still, these iniquities will intensify in their influence and control in the following generation. Iniquity's evil grasp will continue until someone breaks the cycle by confessing their sins and confronting the iniquity they've given ground to.



You must scrutinize your life in light of *all* of God's Word! Only by the standard of the *holiness of His Word* can you judge your iniquitous behaviors and attitudes and thereby turn from them and walk in His way as you respond to the Spirit's quickening power:

*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).

To examine closely any darkness in your life requires an *earnest spirit* to discern everything in your soul that's contrary to God's will and way. It requires an *earnest spirit* to rid yourself of iniquity and to confess your sin. It requires an *earnest spirit* for you to want to develop the character and motives of Jesus by hearing and responding to only His Spirit's voice and not those other conflicting voices of iniquity.

Forsaking the unrighteousness of iniquity means that you *completely stop* practicing the evil that is dictated by the weaknesses you inherited from your parents. You have divine power in Jesus to *take back* the dark areas of your soul that you and your forefathers have given over to Satan (see 2 Corinthians 10:3,4). Your life motivations and goals can then powerfully exhibit His transforming work as you begin to walk righteously in those formerly unrighteous areas of your soul.

Once the strongholds have been demolished, you must *"take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."* Thoughts which you submit to the character and purpose of Jesus are *able and available* to do the will of our Father, thereby enabling you to escape the influence of iniquity and experience His love.

**Remember:** After you've demolished the strongholds that have kept iniquity habitually manifesting itself in your life, your task isn't complete until you bring your thoughts into submission to Jesus, and your life looks as though Jesus is living it through you by His Spirit.

## Jesus Christ As Your Lord/King Must Be Your Only Standard Of Measuring Your Spiritual Progress

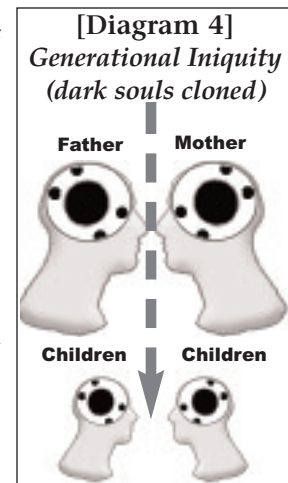
*"Who is My mother, and who are My brothers?" Pointing to His disciples, He said, "Here are My mother and My brothers. For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother"* (Matthew 12:48-50).

Before you were born again into the family of Jesus, you related to your biological relatives and others through your soul. From infancy onward your family relationships were formed around your iniquity-tainted mind, will and emotions.

[Diagram 4] The soul you received from your parents at conception had the same predisposition to certain areas of darkness as they had. Your soul is a "clone" of theirs. With some variation you'll be controlled, agitated and influenced by the same unconfrosted strongholds as they have.

If you've gone through our workbook *Demolishing Strongholds*, you recognize that strongholds are *relationship destroyers*. The goal of demonic activity is to keep you from experiencing *ahav* with your Father, the loving Lordship of Jesus, and relational intimacy with others.

After you enter Covenant with your heavenly Father through love-grounded obedient trust in Jesus your reconciling



Redeemer, you are born from above. You have entirely new relationships based upon your spirit, not your soul. This is why Jesus could describe His real family as *“whoever does the will of My Father in heaven.”*

If you’re still tolerating areas of darkness in your soul and are *not* Spirit-led, you’re committing *spiritual adultery* against our righteous and loving God! Without the perspective of our holy, jealous Lord, these words will sound harsh:

*For I have come to turn ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law— a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’*

*Anyone who loves his father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me; and anyone who does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me (Matthew 10:35-38).*

Are you like the many Christians who evaluate their lives “horizontally” against the sinful ways of unbelievers, feeling good that you don’t do “those kinds of things”? Please think again. Your spiritual progress can only be measured against the *character of Jesus*.

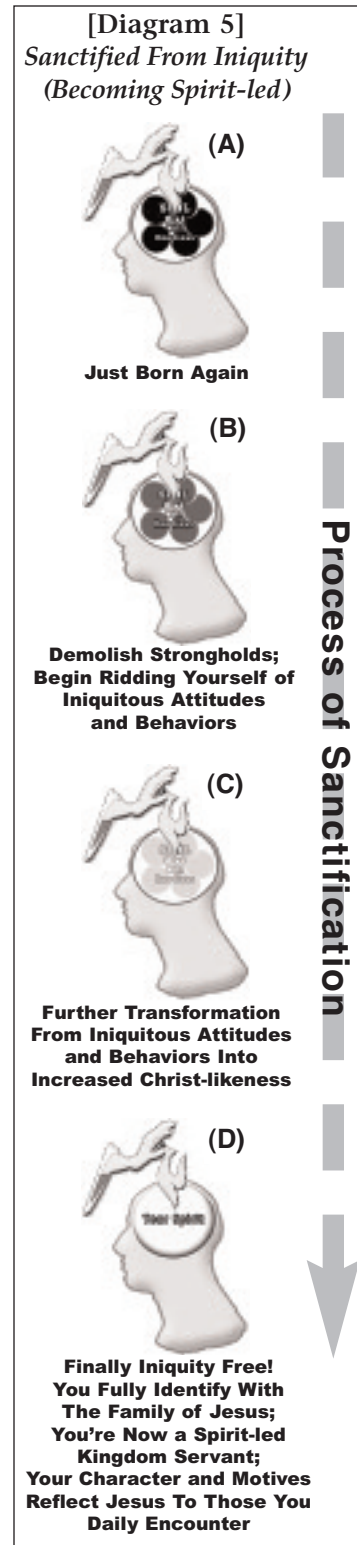
He’s the Head of His called-out ones, and the King of His bondservants. Ask Him in prayer to show you what you lack in reflecting Him in character and motive to the world around you. He’s eager to respond and to empower you through His Spirit to fill in those old ruts!

**This should be an important part of your prayer time as His follower. Don’t look back feeling good about how much you’ve changed, and never compare yourself to others. Instead, seek**

**with an earnest spirit for our Lord Jesus to show you what else needs to be yielded to continue being changed to the glory of our Father.**

[Diagram 5 ] This diagram shows the *process of sanctification*. Through this process you are changed from an iniquity-controlled “dark soul” into a Spirit-led follower of Jesus. (A) Sanctification begins with embracing our Father’s Covenant. He seals you with His Holy Spirit, consummating the Covenant. At this point you are just born again. You no longer belong to Satan, but that doesn’t mean you’re free from the iniquity of past generations.

(B) If, before conversion, you haven’t demolished the strongholds that have been passed along from your parents, now is the time. Then you begin the



sanctification process of evaluating your attitudes and behaviors in light of God's Word, always looking to Jesus as the standard by which you judge these. *What would Jesus do* becomes far more than a slogan for you. It's the lifeline of your progress into spiritual maturity.

(C) With your strongholds demolished, you continue to be sanctified as your soul loses dominance in guiding you. Your *spirit*, led by the Holy Spirit, controls your attitudes and behaviors.

(D) Your identity with Jesus as your Lord and King becomes authentic when you're completely iniquity-free. Yes, this is a reality for you if you will, in earnestness of spirit, *cooperate* with what the Lord Jesus wants to change in you! It's only as you are *Spirit-led* that the Kingdom of God in your heart becomes real for you.

You don't feel like your old soul-controlled self anymore. Instead, you begin to experience *ahav*, and with devoted, sacrificial love as your foundation, you can reflect the character and motive of Jesus to others.

Again, in Diagram 4 you were pictured as under the influence of your family's iniquities. Your attitudes and behaviors imitated your parents to one degree or another.

In Diagram 5 you can see that something dramatic has taken place. You've shifted from *soul-controlled relationships* with their iniquity influence, into *Spirit-led relationships* who are pursuing the will of your Lord together. You belong to a whole new family in Jesus! From His vantage point, which family do you think He wants you to value more?

Remember, there's a *process* involved as you free yourself from iniquity-influenced attitudes and behaviors. The

process is going to require diligence, perseverance, and an earnest desire for you to become more like Jesus. This is where valuing the family of Jesus, those who "*are doing the will of our Father in heaven*", becomes a critical choice for you as you relinquish the control and/or influence of your iniquity-controlled biological relatives.

Paul makes very clear that if you are to become part of Jesus' spiritual family you must be set apart from the world's ways and transformed into His likeness:

*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; see also Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:17,18).

- **List the generational strongholds you were conceived with. How have these affected your life?**

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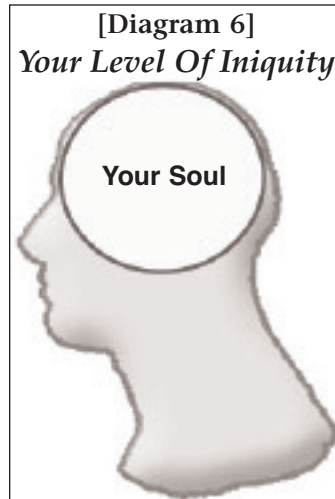
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- Using Diagram 6, color in black the amount of darkness you feel is still plaguing your soul. If you've colored in areas, describe what is still causing the darkness. What can you do to change this? If you have no darkness, how did you become free?




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- Describe your feelings toward your biological family. How do these compare to your extended spiritual family? When push comes to shove, to which family — biological or spiritual — are you most devoted? Describe why you answered as you did.

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***“Praise be to the LORD my Rock,  
who trains my hands for war,  
my fingers for battle”  
(Psalm 144:1)***

Even now some of you are being stirred by Christ's love to confront the iniquity among your relatives and others our Lord puts in your path. We've

received distressed calls from people who forgot to bind the spirits in Jesus' name *before* they confronted their loved ones, and all hell broke loose! It's important as you engage in this *turf war* for the souls of others that you remember the Psalmist's words, above. Spiritual warfare must be learned through experience as you look to your Lord for strength and righteous motive.

We wrote in an e-mail recently:

When you face disruptive, agitating spirits in strongholds while you're helping another person, you DO have authority in Jesus to bind the spirits from speaking or interfering with you. The spirits are going to do all they can to get you annoyed, resentful, and even bitter toward the person our Lord wants you to help. Count on it!!! They don't want you to love that person, but to develop an attitude that will nullify what you set out to do in the Spirit of Christ. You must lovingly persevere in your endeavor until such time as the person is free, or they reject Jesus, choosing to cling to their darkness.

We're warned by the faithful apostle that rebellious rejection is the willful pathway most will choose: *“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil”* (John 3:19).

Keep reminding yourself that the unclean spirits in the soul [the “dark areas”] of that person are *speaking through* the person they're influencing. Wherever the demons have legal access to parts of the person's soul through iniquity and ongoing unrepentance, they will speak from their territory. The adversary's workers want not only to control the person, but to discourage

*you*—to prevent *you* from being Jesus' instrument to bring spiritual freedom.

Often when we're visiting someone and Mike discerns the negative influence of strongholds, he goes off to a private place (usually a bathroom!) and declares: *"In Jesus' Name I bind you spirits from interfering with our time here. We are on our Lord's purpose and you will not interfere with us."*

Almost immediately a "change in spirit" occurs on the premises. On some occasions we've had to bind the demons right in the person's face when they're so disruptive that the person is acting uncontrollably.

Keep in mind if you're going to confront strongholds (iniquities) in other people, you're engaging the demons in an all-out war for the soul of that person—the turf of their mind, will and emotions that has not been yielded to the Holy Spirit. For most of you, this is going to demand far more than you've ever given in service to Jesus before. It will exact an emotional toll. You may find yourself second-guessing your own actions and motives as you try to help the ones you love. Beware: If you have a gift of mercy, or shrink away from any form of emotional tension, you may be seduced into undermining the efforts of others for loved ones to become free.

Yes, you do need to be concerned about the feelings of other people. But never, NEVER fear the hurt that the person will face in your loving exposure of the darkness they're hiding in. You are like a surgeon who needs to operate to remove a cancer. Temporary pain from a loving and caring brother or sister who's unmasking hidden iniquity is part of the process of effecting healing.

Often as you attempt to free others, especially those who are controlled by fear and insecurity or rejection, the spirits in the person will feign deep emotional hurt. You may wrongly perceive the pain as emanating from the *heart of the person* when, in fact, the emotional display or outburst is prompted by the demons hiding behind strongholds in the person's soul.

Wherever we've encountered the stronghold of fear and insecurity, it's always been accompanied by the stronghold of *control*. Control will counterattack, insinuating that you yourself are "trying to control" the person. Or, the control spirit will try to make you feel bad about the hurt you're causing so that you'll back off. The demonic spirit will prompt your relative or friend to "bad-mouth" you to others, and you'll find yourself branded as "judgmental"!

We realize that to fight a turf war for the souls of those you care about is new to most of you. This is especially true if you've been comfortable sitting with other iniquity-plagued people in a pew for a good part of your life. You will definitely need the prayerful support and encouragement of others who are pressing on with you in righteous, iniquity-free living.

In Lifebyte 26, *"Will Jesus Find Faith Within You?"* we offered the biblical criteria for fellowshiping together:

- 1. Your fellowship with others must spur you on to glorify our Father and Jesus through praise, worship, and living testimony** (1 Corinthians 10:31).
- 2. Your fellowship with each other must spur you to grow in Christ's likeness** (see Philippians 2:12).



- 3. **Your shared fellowship must spur you toward repentance and the narrow gate** (Matthew 7:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:12).
- 4. **Your fellowship as extended spiritual family must spur you to reveal Jesus to the lost in your daily lives** (2 Corinthians 5:18,19).

And, keep in mind that spiritual battles are won by *earnestness of spirit* in:

- **Prayer** — We're talking about the effective prayer of people who are living righteously. The prayers of the righteous act like an artillery barrage before a battle. It "softens up" enemy territory (see James 5:16).
- **Preparation** — Be walking in righteousness yourself, that is, with no unconfessed sin (see 1 John 1:9);
- **Persistence** — Dedicate your heart to help the person become free from iniquity and unconfessed sin. Purpose that you're not released from this until they are free, or, they have flatly rejected Jesus' freedom and instead chosen the darkness of their iniquity and sin (see John 3:19-21; 1 John 5:16).
- **Are the four purposes for fellowship found in your own faith community? Yes or No? If "no", which ones aren't part of your own faith practice?**

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- **Describe your fellowship family and its ability and preparedness to wage spiritual warfare for the souls of others.**

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- **If you *aren't* fighting for the souls of others, what changes do you and your fellowship family need to make?**

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**Talk it over with your faith community.**

***"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people"*** (Proverbs 14:34)

The same turf war that's being fought over your soul is being carried on over this nation. It can't be won on the national front until it's won in the souls of our Father's children. Our Lord has made clear through timeless parameters the conditions for Him to bless any nation:

***If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land*** (2 Chronicles 7:14).

We know from Christian pollster George Barna that the moral values of those who call themselves Christian *are the same* as those who do not believe. In effect the darkness of soul of unbelievers is the same as those who profess to be Christians. Don't let this be so for you.

The Bible reveals again and again how our Lord used just one righteous person to rout evil. For followers of Jesus today, these words of James are just as valid as when they were written: *"The prayer of a*

*righteous man [one who is justified by faith and evidences that faith by his life] is powerful and effective” (James 5:16).*

If you’re truly a follower of Jesus, you need to humble yourself, rid yourself of the darkness of iniquity and, through prayer earnestly seek our Lord’s face. Turn from all facets of iniquitous behavior and attitude so that you can reflect Jesus to others in both character and motive.

We can’t emphasize enough how essential it is for you to cleanse yourself completely of all darkness and to “*walk in the light, as He is in the light, [so you can] have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies [you] from all sin*” (1 John 1:7).

**I am not judged by the light I have, but the light I have refused to accept.**

- **How dark do you think this nation is right now? Look at Diagrams 7-9 on the next column. Which one best describes your view of the spiritual/moral environment of the United States? Is it growing darker or lighter? Why do you think this is happening?**

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- **Describe what you believe to be the future of this nation. Can you see any parallels with past civilizations, or even ancient Israel?**

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- **As a follower of Jesus, list the actions our Lord would have you take to help bring light into the souls of others.**

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