

**April 15, 2013**

**A year older and very saddened**

***"Even when I am old and gray, do not forsake me,  
O God, till I declare Your power to the next generation,  
Your might to all who are to come"*** (Psalms 71:18).

Mike: I turned 67 a few days ago. While it's not a particularly significant age, I have to admit I don't look forward to ever turning 68. Over the course of my life thus far I've witnessed the destruction of this nation, family by family. I've especially observed so many botched opportunities for Christian men to have kept this rapid downward spiral from ever happening, never mind escalating. I've grieved that the majority of men I've met who claim they're Christian have been dominated by **cowardice, fear** and their **widespread toleration for sin**. Because of their own choice to shrink back, they have remained collectively impotent as demonic principalities have infiltrated and overcome this nation.

During the several past decades various movements have purposed to alter the path of immorality and irresponsibility in this land, especially among husbands and fathers. Sadly, most of these organized attempts abandoned their emphasis on humanity's need for a right relationship with God the Father through the saving work of His Son Jesus. They neglected the vital truth that *without* the power of the indwelling Spirit of Christ, a person's own life will ultimately be torpedoed by sin. Yet organizations such as the Moral Majority and Focus on the Family altered their initial course by focusing instead on waging political battles with the unredeemed who are enslaved to sin resisted with all the indignation their sin nature could muster.

Husbands and fathers segmented their spiritual lives into a tidy little compartment of Sunday services, erroneously believing that the organized system would teach their wives and children all they needed to know about God. Yet the all-too-painful reality publicized by research polls has been a level of worldliness and wrongdoing among churching young people that parallels that of individuals who make no claim to be "Christian." Husbands and fathers forsook their biblical responsibility to use their home as the training ground for their children to learn to stand strong in the Lordship of Jesus.

Wives and children were disappointed time and again as the men who should have been leading the way in righteousness and obedient trust in their Lord instead turned to self-gratification and spiritual sloth. The rah-rah rallies of Promise Keepers exposed the nature of men who all too often expected and received entertainment rather than strong and convicting messages that brought forth lasting repentance and Spirit-empowered determination to train a Godly generation. Jesus was relegated to "out there" as a concept instead of the ever-present core of their being to use His power and purpose so they would lay down their lives for their wives and children.

When our Father commanded us years ago to **"contend for My Son Jesus,"** we didn't appreciate that the most difficult arena to affirm His preeminence would be among self-identified Christians, especially men. How small has been the number we've met who intentionally respond with grateful love to Jesus as their **Lord** and live with the humility and devotion of blood-bought, responsive **servant/slaves who eagerly do His Father's will**. While a larger percentage may **study the Bible to enhance their knowledge of facts and history**, so few meditate on it to internalize our God's commands and **put His Word into practice day by day**. The result has been a contrast between men puffed up by what they can expound and others who obviously ignore their need to explore His essential truths.

As the years have passed, the heaviness of spirit within my soul has only gotten worse as irresponsibility and self-idolatry among men has burgeoned. There's a description of the prophet Ezekiel that rings true in the sorrow of my own heart regarding the hardened and obstinate hearts of the men of this nation: ***"The Spirit then lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness and in the anger of my spirit, with the strong hand of the LORD upon me"*** (Ezekiel 3:14; see also 2Peter 2:8). Ezekiel was living among a people God had chosen to represent Him to all the nations of the world by their holy lives and glorious

message of hope. Yet they resisted their God-given responsibility and gave way to the sinful practices of the nations around them — much like today as the "churched" compromise with evil and then wonder why the next generation does even worse without conscience.

When I first became a follower of Jesus, the two chaplains on our Navy ship anointed me with a ministry which they told me would be lifelong. They cited Ezekiel 33 and stated that this "watchman assignment" was God's call on my life. I've been a watchman for a long time, voicing by the Spirit the warnings I was given to convey, only to watch the recipients nonchalantly continue in their sin. You could compare the life of serving as a watchman of our Father in these past decades to an obstetrician who has delivered only stillborn babies.

I realize that our Lord has made known to Sue and me that what we have been given to share by our Father will not bear fruit until after the **dark days of chastisement** come on this nation. I wish I could have seen the truths of what He is restoring become reality in my lifetime, but I also recognize from Hebrews 11:13 that I can't expect to see fruit. By the grace of my Lord and His mighty power I can only press on in trust, knowing that His will is going to be accomplished because He IS Sovereign: *"All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth"* (Hebrews 11:13).

***"The wicked freely strut about when what is vile is honored among men"*** (Psalms 12:8).

Let me paraphrase the above verse to introduce my deepest hurt: the failure of Christian men to stand tall for Jesus as soldiers bearing a shield to protect the vulnerable: ***"Half-naked daughters freely strut about when sexual impurity is honored among men."*** Last week while Sue and I were shopping at our local pharmacy I talked with Martina, a cashier who is about our age, while Sue went to pick up something. I noticed that all the sexually explicit magazines had been moved near the checkout counter and lamented to Martina, "What if we Christian men had joined together and stood up for the dignity of women when Hugh Hefner first published *Playboy* decades ago?" With a sad expression she responded, "Christian men wouldn't have done it. They are just as bad as everyone else!"

I knew from my years of counseling clergy and conducting numerous men's retreats that her appraisal was accurate. Now we men are seeing the tragic fruit of our own toleration for sin (and participation in it). By refusing to be the spiritual leaders our Father demands of us in His Word, the curse of our collective failure is being manifested all around us. Every half-clad female in an advertisement is our doing! Every daughter who has fornicated is our doing, and every son who took advantage of them is our doing. Every mother who is raising her child(ren) alone is a result of our sin! It's a shame to be a man in this nation. And even worse, to be a white man after what we've done to diminish and demean men from different races and minority groups. ***The wickedness which dominates this nation has come about through the silence and negligence of white "Christian" men!***

I look forward to the day when the Kingdom of God will arise out of the ashes of the building-bound "Christianity" which has fostered such hypocritical self-righteousness among so many "churched" in this nation. Only when men become truly desperate and appalled by their personal depravity will those who are serving themselves realize that they're thirsting for an authentic relationship with Jesus as their Lord and King. For now they're able to feel good about their weekly exercises in repeating creeds and participating in denominational rituals. It's a socially acceptable thing to do and appeases their conscience that their families are learning something "spiritual" inside a "sacred building" designed for spectators to enjoy performances.

Even these men's *conversations* allay any sense of guilt their disobedience ought to have kindled—yet it's nothing more than religious **trash talk**: "I went to so-and-so's website and found it really interesting reading." "Did you hear the latest worship song by....?" "Are you going on the ski trip with the singles' group?" "I'm helping the youth group do a car wash so they can go to Six Flags." "Which restaurant are we going to after church?" Where is the heart burden for the lost who have yet to encounter the Good

News of the cross and the resurrection—the reason Jesus came? Is anyone shedding tears over the rampant self-focused, misguided misrepresentation of our Father's plan to call a holy and set-apart people to Himself? Yet slothful "Christian" men who are enslaved by the corruption of the goals, ways and values of this world have led the way in this hell-inspired, pleasure-bent focus. (See Jude 1:4.)

In Lesson 36 of our series *Discussing How To Restore The Early Church* we wrote about the responsibilities God places on us men in these topics: • *What Is Authority?* • *Authority Given To Men*. Yet it appears that now it's too late for change, because **women will rule this nation at all levels, from family to government, until the Dark Days of Chastisement**. If you do read this lesson, read it for what you need to know when our Father does restore by His Spirit an authentic walk of love-grounded obedient trust to His people and manifests once again faith practices which pour out into every day life. The prophets of the Older Testament are still warning us today *if we have ears to hear!* "*Youths oppress My people, women rule over them. O My people! Those who guide you lead you astray and confuse the direction of your paths*" (Isaiah 3:12). In this country the vast majority of professional clergy and people who prophecy for pay have deceived the unrepentant that their sins are okay with God (Jeremiah 5:31). But He isn't sitting back and letting this lie go on much longer. When a woman becomes President, that will be the sign that the Dark Days are almost upon us. Men have abdicated their role as leaders and vessels of honor through whom the righteousness of God is made known. It just breaks my heart to see what Christian men have relinquished for several generations now. That's why I really don't want to see my 68th birthday.

***"Be self-controlled and alert.  
Your enemy the devil prowls around like  
a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.  
Resist him, standing firm in the faith,  
because you know that your brothers throughout  
the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings"***  
(1Peter 5:8,9)

The **tolerated unrighteousness** among so many Christian men has incapacitated them from resisting the demonic forces that seduced them into pursuing **the things of this world** (James 4:4; 1John 2:15-17). Rather than loving Jesus as His grateful servant/brother and instilling the Kingdom of God into the hearts of their families, Christian men have made themselves and their families enemies of God. Just about every Christian couple we've met who has grown children describes their kids by their level of success in this world. Anchor this in your innermost being: **Success in the Kingdom of God is measured by being in your Father's will**. This is true holiness. Holiness is not found through a particular religious occupation, but by being in the center of your Father's will. You don't hear many Christian parents role modeling or instilling *His* measure for success in their children. It's grievously shameful that Christian men relegated their spiritual lives to a mere veneer and led the way in pursuing the pleasures and perceived security that worldly success provides. Titus 1:15,16 serves as a sharp rebuke to those who live under the sway of compromise.

I've just about given up warning men about the spiritual warfare that we're up against. Since most men throughout Christendom are not a threat to the demons, these men face no opposition because of the spiritual stupor and lethargy they enjoy. I began 30 years ago in Connecticut trying to rally Christians to stand up against the thousands of satanists who moved into that prosperous state. Only a few men, those who were determined to respond righteously in the Spirit and who had experienced demonic opposition because of their obedient trust in Jesus, joined us in prayerful resistance to this scheme of Satan. But we were too few and ultimately ineffective. In case you doubt that spiritual warfare is real, I can bear witness to personal encounters with demons, two of which almost cost me my life. One skirmish ended up with me in the hospital. And there were situations involving other individuals through which our Father wanted me to see how demons operated openly inside congregations:

• As part of our ten-year teaching retreat ministry I counseled church leaders. On one occasion a clergyman (I'll call him Tom) came for some advice. He was battling sexual temptation as he counseled a woman who had recently

begun attending his congregation. We talked for a while and he left. Several weeks later our family happened to attend worship at this church. At the end of the service there was a time of prayer ministry. The elders took up positions in the front. Because so many people desired prayer that morning, the elders asked me to help. As I stood next to Tom, a woman came up for prayer. As she walked toward me the Holy Spirit said, "This is the woman Tom mentioned to you. She was sent here by Satan to seduce him. Pray for what she asks but do nothing more." After she walked away I turned to Tom and said, "That's the woman you mentioned to me a few weeks ago." Amazed, he asked, "How did you know?" I revealed what the Holy Spirit had told me regarding her satanic mission of seduction. Her cover blown, she was never seen at that church again.

- On another occasion we were visiting a congregation and were surprised by the complete lack of male testimonies during a time of open sharing. On previous visits we had always observed a balance among the men and women as they spoke. Sitting there that morning I bowed and inquired of the Lord, "Why are there no men sharing?" The Spirit replied, "To your left are two women with a Jezebel spirit, sent here to inspire fear in the men to keep them from speaking." As I looked in that direction I could see the two women the Spirit was indicating. In prayer I asked if there was anything I should do. The Spirit prompted, "You can pray to bind their influence here this morning." As I was praying I glanced over to see both women glaring at me; then they got up and left. At the end of the service I mentioned the situation to the church leaders. They recalled that the women had begun attending several weeks earlier, and that the testimonies of the men had dwindled from that point. The two women never returned.

- In another congregation the wife of one of the church leaders had trepidation about a woman who had been attending for about two years. This individual had become the head of the Sunday school program. One morning during worship the leader's wife recoiled in alarm at a demon she saw perched on the suspect woman's shoulder, and insisted that the leadership look into this situation. When they met with her the woman finally acknowledged that she had been sent by a satanist group to water down the curriculum of the Sunday school program.

I could go on with testimony after testimony, but it would be of no avail. If you aren't **regularly encountering demonic opposition because of your love and obedience in Jesus**, then you've given into demonic seduction in one form or another. Anything further I could share would be meaningless to you. But realize that if you intentionally continue to stray on this path, the Judgment Throne will find you grieving that you refused to stand up for our Lord Jesus and His Word no matter what the cost. At that point you will finally recognize the inroads the demons made into your own homes and families as you fed your fleshly desires and purposes.

The Bible commands husbands to seek *rhema*, the revealed will of our Father through His Spirit, for their wives (see Ephesians 5:23-30). Be aware that He only entrusts His *rhema* to those He knows will do His will. If you're not receiving any *rhema*, you really need to examine your heart motives and readiness to obey. We recommend you go to our website and put the word "*rhema*" in our search box. Study some of the materials you find there and make sure you fully understand what our Father is commanding you as His obedient and loving child and as your wife's loving and responsible husband.

Over the years of our ministry within Christendom we've met very few men who seriously sought *rhema* from God to actually put into practice. In fact, we've found that as wives have increasingly taken part in women's Bible studies, husbands have shrunk back in carrying out their responsibility to seek God's revealed will for their families. And when these women become puffed up with knowledge through year after year of Bible study attendance, they assume a deceived sense of inflated spiritual superiority over their husbands (1 Timothy 2:13-15). If anything, the Bible studies have also increased a judgmental, critical response in the women to spot what's wrong with everyone else.

Consider that the Bible calls for *older women* to train the younger ones to love their husbands and children (see Titus 2:2-5). By forming and nurturing an intergenerational relational accountability between an older and younger woman, change that will result in more Christlike motives, attitudes and actions can take place — change that women's Bible studies which cater to *adding more knowledge* can actually undermine. Think of it this way: participation in women's Bible studies without older women training the younger ones is a curse on *men* for failing to seek the will of God for their wives and families. Can it be that the failure of men to seek *rhema* and the rise of women's Bible studies has contributed to why women now initiate over 85% of divorces in this nation?

***"To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, He will give eternal life" (Romans 2:7)***

The United States of the 21st century has sorely diminished in persistence and perseverance even as its citizens have caved in to their perceived need for instant gratification in every aspect of their lives. We're not just referencing such well-known examples as fast food, sensual fulfillment without responsibility, or mortgage availability to all whether they can afford it or not. Rather, our enemies around the world are able to use this particular character deficiency against us: **Americans of the past recent generations have lost the essential collective need for long-lasting fortitude.** Other nations who were and are militarily weaker, whether Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam decades ago or the Taliban currently in Afghanistan, know they can outlast us. They aren't held captive to instant success and drive-by involvement. Whatever their ideology, the people groups engaged in these conflicts have a long-haul sense of perseverance and resistance that's not been built into the national character of contemporary Americans.

If the current lack of tenacity and resolve were just a description of this society as a secular entity it would be one thing. But dull complacency and quick choices to quit also apply to so many in this land who call themselves "Christians." Over years of ministry we've encountered so little stick-to-itiveness within Christendom at large. Especially in the past few decades almost the entire expression of people's Christian faith practice has been what goes on in their Sunday service. There's such a tragic disconnect between what goes on under the steeple and any thought of persistently turning to our Lord for guidance and power during the other six days of the week and following through in service to Him.

How few testimonies today proclaim the power of our Lord Jesus and how He worked through one of His own in a divine and miraculous way—the type of testimony that produces reverential awe toward Him when others hear it. Instead, the most common testimonies could be described by what we call **"God emptied my garbage pail again."** The same individuals make a big deal about how the Spirit made them aware of a particular sin or failing—but week after week the testimony is the same! They never report any lasting victory in that area; they just report the same "garbage", thinking they're sounding spiritual but never maturing. Sadly, no one loves them enough to come alongside and confront the underlying causes of their repeated defeat, so nothing in their life changes. Their testimony inspires no one to praise our Lord, and in fact tempts some to doubt God's faithfulness. Think of it like this: *"As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly"* (Proverbs 26:11). The words of the foolish dominate the gathering time and our Lord is portrayed as ineffectual and uncaring.

Another way to recognize those whose persistence consists of spiritually marching in place is that they *think* they're progressing in their Christian walk but in reality they're just going around the same mountain again and again. They attend another conference, read another book, get drawn to yet another religious website—but their attitudes and actions and responses to others stay the same. Their families, friends and coworkers now know better than to get their hopes up that these folks will be changed. Dashed hopes produce discouragement and even a sense of "martyrdom" to have to put up with the one who is self-absorbed and resistant to transformation in Christ.

E-mails and phone calls from people who talk big but persist little have become all the more common especially from men who claim to have walked with Jesus for many years. When you read 2Peter 1:3-11 you realize that in union with Jesus, ***"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness"*** (v. 3). Armed with that power, He calls us to *persist with all diligence* so that our faith grows into goodness, and our goodness into knowledge and so on.

But the hang-up among today's spiritually slothful Christians comes when those very necessary character qualities of **persistence** and **perseverance** are required to face the unexpected: accident, job loss, sudden illness, catastrophe. Our Father tests people's faith for genuineness (1Peter 1:6,7). Personal trials and tragedies will prove if your whole heart is trusting your Lord and Savior so you'll come out of your situation developing the humility needed to love Him and others in your life.

So few seem to find themselves victorious by His grace during the testing of their perseverance, particularly when it comes to evangelical men growing together in Christ with their wives. The *humility of heart* which our Father requires of husbands and fathers to depend on His Spirit at work in them seems to

elude them. They fail to see how our Father often uses difficult family situations to humble a man to love and sacrifice himself for his wife and family as Jesus does for the collective called-out ones of His body (see Ephesians 5:25-30). While many of these men have "golden retriever" wives who are loyal to the core, there's no joy in these women's faces. And the lack of Christ-like love in their marriage does nothing to represent the spiritual reality of Jesus and His bride; in fact that their lack of humility and love turns outsiders away from Him! (See Colossians 4:5,6.)

**"Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"** (John 12:38, apperceiving Isaiah 53:1)

We were recruited by our Father to share a **very unpopular message** that calls for far more relational responsibility to Him in Christ than contemporary, man-centered Christendom has taught churchgoers. Most today have perverted God's grace into **idolatry of self**: self-fulfillment, self-gratification, self-absorption — accompanied by a "free ride" to heaven. Yet how blind this Older Testament-illiterate church culture is to the painful history of ancient disobedient Israel! And how parallel so much of modern Christendom is to Israel's sorry disregard for His Kingship and commands for holy living.

Our Father is restoring the role of the *Lordship* of Jesus in those who respond to His grace and by trust are born anew into a relationship of blood-purchased ownership by Him. Through that covenant of obedient trust we are indwelt by His Spirit to live out our lives in grateful love—a love that is manifested by the responsive works of service He sets before us. (See Ephesians 2:8-10.) We were sent back from Israel to the painful reality of a westernized Christian religious system that • **doesn't need Him** • **and is unwilling to be discomforted in service to Him**.

How do we recognize that so few *really need God*? We've asked many about what prayers they desperately *need* our Father to answer. Most respond with a blank stare. When we ask what the Spirit of Christ has been accomplishing through them, their bigger stare evidences that the whole concept is foreign.

In the fifth chapter of Amos God tells the prophet what is about to befall the land of His people because of their many grievous sins. One passage in particular stands out for us as we've continued to share the Hebraic foundations while knowing that the dark days of chastisement are approaching: "*Woe to you who long for the day of the LORD! Why do you long for the day of the LORD? That day will be darkness, not light. It will be as though a man fled from a lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on the wall only to have a snake bite him. Will not the day of the LORD be darkness, not light — pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?*" (Amos 5:18-20.) Our hearts grieve as we think of how ancient Israel's proclivity to sin pushed **our loving and compassionate God** to not only have to warn them with such explicit words, but then ultimately execute His judgment.

And yes, because the two of us see the *same unabashed inclination to sin* in self-identifying Christians as in unbelievers today, we recognize that the reputation of our Lord is being brought down as surely as it was among the pagan nations which surrounded Israel. When our Father chastises the people of this country, it will certainly be as well-deserved as it will be devastating. Yet He doesn't intend total ruin. As with the chastisement of Israel, He purposes for repentance among those who have ears to hear. We wonder, though, if the Israelites Amos warned were like so many "Christians" of today in believing that their religion would save them. Is our Lord warning those today who misrepresent Him by their sinful, compromised lives yet continue to blindly trust in their practices and rituals? God makes clear with indisputable, aggrieved passion His perspective on this: "*I hate, I despise your religious feasts; I cannot stand your assemblies*" (Amos 5:21).

Over the years I've served as a guest speaker in many congregations. Fulfilling my prophetic call I would often ask those seated, **"If you don't have any unconfessed sin that you know of, please stand up."** In every case people remained sitting, silently attesting to the fact that they were holding on to something unholy that they were unwilling to turn away from. Do you think *our Lord* is pleased with worship by the unrepentant? If He refuses to hear the prayers of those who walk in unrighteousness (1Peter 3:12), why would He receive their worship? I asked one congregation to get on their knees and repent so their hearts and hands indeed were clean before our Lord (see Psalm 24:3,4). It took 45 minutes before the last

person finished repenting and stood up with his spiritually renewed brothers and sisters!

Having been recruited by our Father to give His prophetic warnings to those who say they belong to His Son makes me seem highly negative compared to those who have positive, warm and fuzzy ministries that cater to the pleasure-bent center of people's minds. As I look back over the years of sharing prophetic words from the Spirit, I could divide the prophecies into two broad categories:

**1. Informative and encouraging messages.** People find it easy to receive these.

**2. Warnings which required repentance or a greater degree of personal responsibility.** When I expressed one of these, my goose was usually cooked if the recipient's heart and spirit weren't tender toward God. I don't know if it's human nature or just our sinful predisposition, but people tend to resist warnings. Maybe it's the deceitfulness of our hearts believing that "it can't happen to me!"

**Certainty in the face of opposition  
is the only way you know it's conviction  
and not simply opinion.**

We've been discussing the Hebraic foundations for 20 years now. Why would we do this for so long? Because we know Who gave these truths to us. You don't get much feedback or encouragement in a ministry like ours, nor are there crowds of hundreds or thousands every Sunday attesting to your success. Yet our Father has been graciously kind to the two of us as our constant and consistent source of encouragement (2Timothy 4:16,17). He keeps His own Word even when others withdraw, and keeps us focused as a couple on our purpose and glorious destiny. We know how important mutual encouragement is, for the enemy of our souls would love to deceive us into straying off our Lord's narrow path! *"Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness"* (Hebrews 3:13).

We so appreciate that our Father can use a movie or documentary to inspire us to persist in sharing what He has given us. We frequently check out DVDs from the library, and recognize certain ones we won't view without our ClearPlay filter. [We use a DVD player program called "ClearPlay" which allows us to filter out any objectionable language, immorality, or other elements which are unedifying.] Two themes, however, often attract our attention:

- 1. When people persist through suffering or rejection to see their goal or vision fulfilled.**
- 2. When others join the persistent ones to cooperatively fulfill the goal or vision.**

For example, two weeks ago we grabbed a DVD series off the library shelf entitled, *"The National Parks/ America's Best Idea."* The series traces the birth of the national park idea in the mid-1800s and follows its advancement for nearly 150 years. It chronicles the steady addition of new parks through the stories of individuals who suffered greatly at the hands of the greedy to preserve the land from destruction. Until we watched this series we had no appreciation of what men like John Muir, Stephen Mather, George Dorr and many others faced as they stood up against the avarice of so many powerful businessmen who wanted the land for selfish purposes.

Some of the visionaries died before they saw the fulfillment of their dream. However an interesting revelation in the series emerged concerning the penetrating influence of these men who for decades stood unwaveringly on their convictions. A group of the very wealthy responded together to buy up land to set aside and create national parks for all citizens to enjoy. A comment was made about these men of means: **"They wanted to bless the people even if they themselves were never blessed."** What a remarkable statement! All we could think of is that the Spirit of Jesus had spurred them to do this.

A week or so later we checked out the movie *Lincoln* from the library. Here too we saw conviction in the face of intense opposition, ultimately leading to cooperation among the very diverse legislature and the passage of the 13th Amendment to abolish slavery. We were encouraged by watching both of these historical presentations because they stressed the heart motive of people who persist in their conviction to uphold a just but unpopular cause. That's what living as an authentic follower of Jesus is rapidly becoming in this nation. And, these are the ones we want to help prepare for the dark days of chastisement about to come upon this nation.

## How Do You Differentiate a Self-proclaimed "Christian" From a True Follower of Jesus? (You Need to Triage the Heart)

Many years ago while taking a course to be an Emergency Medical Technician, I learned the concept of triage. Medical triage sorts people into one of three categories:

**Stage 1.** Those who will live even if they receive no care;

**Stage 2.** Those who are terminal;

**Stage 3.** Those who will live if they receive prompt, appropriate intervention.

[You can read more about the spiritual application of triage in our March-April 2003 Newsletter, "*Men Standing In The Gap*", available for free at our website.]

In our ministry we've often found ourselves having to "spiritually triage" as we encounter new people. Over the 30 years of ministering together we've noticed how Satan sends to our Lord's servants people whom he has taken captive to do his will (2Timothy 2:26). As needy as they appear in their circumstances and stories, the devil purposes for these individuals to wear down the followers of Jesus. **Given the time and opportunity, these seemingly needy people induce despair and misgivings about oneself into those who try to help them.** They have no desire to repent or even to change their situation. This is why triage is so important: You can't revive a person who wants to be spiritually dead! In essence, at that point they are in Stage 2 of spiritual triage.

Satan's ultimate goal is to prevent followers of Jesus from ministering altogether *any way he can* using *any one he can*. The very person you *think* you can help may have been sent to destroy you (Galatians 6:1), discourage you, or drain you! An accurate indicator of someone in Stage 2 is when they refuse to rid themselves of demonic strongholds so that their toxic memories could be healed by the Holy Spirit and they could move on in victory to do our Father's will. Their love for the demons with which they're so familiar is greater than their desire to love and serve Jesus as their Lord and Savior. They have no desire to be spiritually resuscitated!

I'm very sensitive to triaging the men I meet. Having served in wartime, counseled many religious leaders, and conducted numerous men's retreats and seminars, I've been equipped by the Spirit to be accurate in evaluating the heart motive of men. From the core motives of a man springs everything else he does. *What* he does is not as important in God's sight as *why* he does it. If you can't find the Lord Jesus at the core of a man's motives, then he's showing you that Jesus isn't his Lord and that he really doesn't belong to Him (Romans 10:9,10; Colossians 2:6,7).

Triage has been especially important when I meet men who've spent years in **Hellenized Evangelicalism**. The vast majority of these exhibit far more Bible knowledge than any heart transformation of humility and love that would exemplify someone who belongs to our Lord Jesus. Like many of the pastoral candidates I met at seminary 35 years ago, the vocabulary of these evangelical men overflows with "**I**" and "**me**" rather than "**us**" and "**we**." We call this the "**look-at-me**" complex. Their habitual pursuit of Bible knowledge to add to their fact base lacks appropriate character transformation that the Spirit would prompt and effect. This vacuum of character leaves most of them heading for death *unless* they confess, repent, and press on in our Father's will and purpose for them (Stage 3).

My experience with both the majority of evangelical men and with many Christian men from other religious persuasions reveals that most live in fear of any form of correction or rebuke. For many this fear of correction has indicated unresolved issues with their own fathers. While these men often hide behind pleasant personalities, they get emotionally tense around anyone they sense might correct them. Especially within evangelicalism, a conspicuous display of Bible knowledge is used to ward off any and all forms of corrective input. They use their wealth of Bible facts as a fence to keep others from coming alongside with a timely rebuke or course correction for their lives.

Because these men feel **spiritually superior**, they're far more accustomed to spouting Bible knowledge



than sharing personal testimonies which would reveal humble service to our Lord. I've marveled at how easily deceived and intimidated other men are by the "spiritually superior". Over the years I've learned to easily recognize these men because every conversation starts with a 20-to 30-minute monologue about themselves. They never answer a direct question about their loving service to our Lord or their mutual relationship with others who follow Jesus. Rather, they sidestep direct questioning by going off on some issue (biblical or otherwise) that has nothing to do with what they were asked. Maybe you know men like this...

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to state that most of the evangelical married men I've encountered who have the "look-at-me" complex are so **singular** in their thinking that you'd have no idea he even had a wife. She doesn't come up in a conversation unless you ask. And if you know he does have a wife, he rarely talks about her. The Bible knowledge he enjoys blurring out seems far more important to him than the humility it would take for his wife to experience the love of Jesus through him. How sad that these men do more to defame Jesus by their ME-focus than they reveal Him through their love for their wives and for others!

***"We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands. The man who says, 'I know Him,' but does not do what He commands is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But if anyone obeys His word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in Him: Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did" (1John 2:3-6)***

If we truly know that we are IN Jesus, then He has made absolutely clear that we are to live as if He were us. This is Stage 1 of our triage metaphor and represents the spiritually mature who have traced His steps of obedience and purposefully walked in them out of love. These men have intentionally persisted until transformation into Christ-like character qualities *has* taken place and *continues* to take place (2Peter 1:5-10; Philippians 2:3-5; 1Peter 3:7). The love of our Lord Jesus and *for* our Lord Jesus is the hallmark of their heart and is readily seen in how they treat their wives and other people.

If you're a man reading this, please take a good look at yourself and at those you would consider to be close friends in the faith:

- **Are your conversations frequented with topics of how you can be Christ's blessing to others, without having to be blessed yourselves?**

- **Or, are your conversations more often filled with how you can bless yourselves?**

Take the time to find out how much of the heart motive of Jesus is in you and in your friends in the faith. The less there is of His heart motive, the more you go through life letting others down and defaming our Lord by representing yourself falsely as His sacrificial servant. You don't want to go on this way in self-centered ambition having to explain your wrongful motives at the Judgment Throne!

Just because the media portrays men as useless idiots, you don't have to be like them. Humble yourself and spend more time on your knees asking our Lord Jesus to help you live like Him. Neither the Bible in itself nor any other book will produce a change in you **if Jesus isn't your first love and motivation.** In 2 Corinthians 3 Paul refers to the veil that hangs over the hearts and minds of Jews to keep them from seeing the glory of God in Jesus. Their problem is the same that I see in most of the men who've been involved in Christendom for a long while: **more Bible knowledge alone will never solve their need for the relational intimacy with Jesus which brings transformation into His likeness!** Paul explains clearly the only path to becoming more like Jesus: **"But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit"**(2Corinthians 3:16,18).

The veil over your heart is taken away by the Spirit of Jesus! And only through Him can you become like Him. Get some callouses on your knees because you *are privileged* to in Christ, not because you *have* to as an obligation, and see what His Spirit can do in you! If you don't want to heed what we've written here, you'll definitely need these words when there's a woman President and God's judgment on this nation is forthcoming. **For you and your family's sake I encourage you to find out how tall you can stand when you're on your knees asking Jesus to conform you to be like Him!**

We strongly encourage you to pray about the warnings in this e-mail and take them seriously.

**Mike & Sue**  
(2Peter 3:1)