

Yeshua MISHPACHAH

A NEWSLETTER TO THE FAMILY OF JESUS FROM RESTORATION MINISTRIES

The Hebraic family is not simply an individual or private matter. Rather, it is an institution in which the whole community has a stake. Thus, the Hebrew word "mishpachah," meaning family, not only refers to parents and children, but to the whole extended family worldwide in the body of "Yeshua"— our Jesus.

Dear Friends,

We have seen one thing above all others that keeps love from growing in relationships. It is unconflicted apprehension.

Apprehension Hinders Love

Do you know just how vital your prayer is on our behalf? Last month as Sue and I were leaving a town at which we'd shared at a workshop, we looked at each other with gloom and heaviness. Our minds were filled with the strongest sense of failure, that none of those who had attended the seminar had been affected by it. We had been warned prior to our visit there that a spirit borne on greed in the community oppressed the residents with despair and heaviness. For the three days that we were there we didn't sense it, but as we left town, anguish fell on us. We began to pray and praise our Father, *"taking our thoughts captive and bringing them into obedience to Jesus."* Soon the spirit ended its railing at us and delight filled our hearts.

When we arrived back in Colorado Springs a few days later, we received several phone calls of wonderful testimonies by people whose lives had been dramatically changed by the truths of the Restoration. We

even have two invitations to come back!!! We wanted you to know that when you lift us in prayer, you help us to persevere during these times of assailing.

Family-wide Spiritual Freedom

One of the things that pained us the most this past year was the overwhelming number of older couples with children or grandchildren who were divorced. The older folks' sadness and seeming inability to have helped prevent the split or offer help touched us deeply. In conjunction with this was the enormous number of people over 30 who have never been married but deeply long to be. On the surface this may look like two different problems. We see them as having the same root cause.

We would like to provide some suggestions. For those of you who have gone through *Demolishing Strongholds* we encourage and beseech you: Make a copy of page 9 and pages 36 through 54, and mail them to your relatives. (You have our publisher's permission and our heartfelt encouragement to do this!) Send them to your children, parents, siblings. Ask them to review the pages and to point out anything you have missed about *yourself*. Don't be

ashamed!!! By sending these pages you are most likely sending them a family snapshot of spiritual forces hurting them. Satan uses strongholds to inhibit or destroy relationships, be it with God or with each other.

Give your family a present this year: Expose your and their strongholds, and through loving-trust in the authority of the Lord Jesus, renounce them and their influence in your life. Then prayerfully help one another to identify and meet the areas of need in which you can then walk in the freedom and obedience that God intended for you. Our heart's desire is that each family on our mailing list would be free from the agitation of these gremlins!

Using page 9, show your loved ones which of the seven needs [dignity, authority, blessing & provision, security, purpose & meaning, freedom & boundary, and intimate love & companionship] are the one(s) *you* most need met in *your* life. You won't be fully healed until you have these needs met in the way God intended for you, and He most often meets these through the loving help of others.

Confronting Apprehension

Sadly, so many people exist

in continuous apprehension in² their significant relationships. They fear that if they bring up certain topics or issues with certain individuals, the ramifications will be too painful. Stop for a moment! Is there anyone in *your* life who rouses apprehension in you?

Apprehension operates like a force field to prevent or hinder the character changes your heavenly Father wants to produce in you. It is impossible to grow in loving relationship with individuals with whom you are trapped by habitual anxiety or uneasiness. In Atlanta last month we asked the spouses of a particular congregation to face each other knee to knee for an hour and deal with two issues:

1. Is there anything about me that *produces apprehension* in you?

2. With which of the *seven needs* do I most need you to help me?

How Sue and I were blessed by the many tear-filled testimonies! Husbands and wives held each other and shared how much they had been helped. (One husband began by stating, "When Mike first asked us to do this I felt like I was going to my proctologist.") Some of the apprehensions that people faced had been present for decades.

"Satan's People Trap"

The above diagram is in our workbook *Growing Relationships Through Confrontation*. Satan realizes how impossible it is for love to grow where apprehension exists. He tries to trap us in what some call "co-dependent relationships." People who have an

underlying apprehension or fear when they know they have to interact with a dominant person are the co-dependents. They don't want anything said or done that may set off the dominant individual. They convince others who may be involved to stifle their input too. These "significant others" who could help thus fail to step in and speak up. The co-dependent person is so desperate to avoid confrontation with the dominant individual that he or she actively discourages admonishment. The longer that discomfort and avoidance are practiced, the more deeply entrenched fear and non-confrontation become. In families and close faith community relationships, two possible responses are likely: Others will be entrapped in the co-dependent relationship, or they will be forced to flee the relationship in order to maintain their own identity, respect, and values.

In order for love to grow in our relationships, we need to not only *break out* of the traps through *redemptive confrontation*, but also learn how to *stay out* of the trap through *redemptive confrontation*.

Forgetting What Is Behind and Pressing On

Many people with whom we spoke need to see God's power at work. They need *answered prayer!!!* We've written before how unrighteousness hinders prayer. There is another hindrance as well: grumbling. The "therapeutic culture" that has become the mainstay of many Christian communities looks for techniques rather than intimate obedience to God. Many believ-

ers have become overly sensitized to the issues of dysfunctional families and past traumatic events. The scramble by seminaries for Federal funds has introduced psychology as the surrogate "god" of Christian counseling.

We have met so many troubled people who claim to follow Christ yet are prisoners to their past. Before I went to Israel I was like this. I defined myself by my past, living in the realm of "*if only*." *If only* my father had been more loving...*If only* my spouse understood me more...*If only* I had been a better parent. I was hindered in my relationship with my heavenly Father because I kept believing that I'd always gotten the "short end of the stick."

In a conversation on New Years Eve 1993 at our friends' home just north of Jerusalem, my Father brought my years of living with this attitude to a climax. In response to some probing questions by our hosts, God permitted my resentment to surface. I was so angry with God that I actually saw red. My Father wanted me to face Him directly with my seething resentment. Our friends said, "Only you and He can deal with this."

I went up to my room and poured out my anger and hurt. I had the deepest sense that my gracious Father had been waiting years for this opportunity to heal me. I had been trapped by fear that God would be upset with me for even having these feelings. A wonderful healing took place—the prodigal son had come home to his Father.

Part of my healing revealed that the suffering that had

occurred in my life had been³ within God's will. Through the painful events I had endured He was developing in me the character of His Son. That refining fire has helped me come alongside others who are struggling and suffering through the same things I had gone through (just as promised in II Corinthians 1!). Now I'm more aware of my Father's use of painful events in people's lives. I'm recognizing that trying to quickly end the suffering may not be God's plan. Discernment is crucial. God may have a specific purpose for our suffering: "*We also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that **suffering produces perseverance**; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us*" (Rom. 5:3-5).

I'd like to share a portion of a prophecy given to me in July 1990: "Hearken to My voice, My little one. For I the Lord am here to refine by fire. For My servant Mike shall be broken. I have prepared the fires that I shall make him walk through and they shall be used to crush the flesh in him...the testing that is coming upon him shall scathe him and be painful as I flush out all that is not like Me."

What followed was four years of hurt and betrayal by those close to me. I camped on Psalm 41:9, "*Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted his heel against me.*" Words a brother had given me years before became my standard: "Mike, you can never walk in the fullness of

Jesus until you can wash the feet of Judas." In His loving concern for my development in Christ's likeness, my Father had planned all this.

The prophecy went on, "...And I promise you that the sweet and fragrant aroma of Jesus shall pour forth as he is tempered and tried by My Spirit. And My anointing shall rest upon him in purity and power.." Now I am glad that no one got in my Father's way.

Our Jewish forefathers in the faith understood what a trusting reliance in their Father entailed, even in the midst of devastating trial. The role of counseling in the church today, however, tends to use God as one more technique to ease suffering. Therapists have too often replaced the power of God with technique, and have perhaps interfered with His purposes. If Job had listened to the counselors who came to him in his time of distress, he would have missed God's ultimate blessings.

Larry Crabb, in his wonderful book *Connecting*, describes the importance of connecting with God properly so that *His purposes* may be fulfilled. Our connecting with other believers should be based on their cooperation with God to fulfill His purposes. Crabb points out four *escapes* that people attempt in order to avoid God's plan for them:

"1. **City building.** City builders depend on their own resources to make their lives work. Their commitment to personal *adequacy* gives rise to urges that block connections.

2. **Fire lighting.** Fire lighters reduce the mystery to manage-

able categories of understanding. These categories are useful to the degree they suggest strategies for handling life that have guaranteed outcomes. Their commitment to having *confidence* in their plans occupies them in ways that spoil connections.

3. **Wall whitewashing.** Wall whitewashers make it their priority to minimize risk, to protect themselves at all costs against whatever difficulties might frustrate their plans. Their commitment to *safety* restricts the freedom that connecting requires.

4. **Well digging.** Well diggers insist on feeling good, now and on their terms. They demand control over their internal experience of well-being. Their commitment to *satisfaction* on demand dulls their awareness of the impact they have on others as they seek their own pleasure. That lack of concern over their impact gets in the way of connecting."(p. 104)

Do you find that you have tendencies toward any of the above escapes? In times of trial, do you or those close to you gravitate toward any of the them?

We are not discounting that suffering hurts. Suffering is the antithesis of this pleasure-seeking society, and that includes a large portion of the church. If we want our Father to hear our prayers, we need to put aside our grumbling when life doesn't meet our expectations (see 1 Cor. 10:10). Connect with your Father and face Him with your hurts and anger. I wish someone had told me this a lot sooner. Don't be so eager to get out of your suffering. Find out God's

purpose for it! Nothing happens⁴ to you that He doesn't permit. How do you know that your Father isn't permitting Satan to sift you as he did Peter? (See Luke 22:31,32.) This same Peter could later write, "In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that **your faith**—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be **proved genuine** and may **result in praise, glory and honor** when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls" (1 Peter 1:6-9). Later, in the same letter, Peter concludes, "So then, those who **suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good**" (4:19).

Our Jewish forefathers who understood God's purpose for

opposition and suffering could confidently say, "Now Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus" (Acts 4:29,30). This focus and these words could come only from those who had a trusting relationship with their Father. Seeing their confidence in Him, God showed His pleasure: "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly" (4:31).

You will find your prayers answered as you press on to the future and stop dwelling on the past. Paul sums up this encouragement for you: "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the **fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take**

*hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: **Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus**" (Phil. 3:10-14).*

Make this a year in which you press on in the Lord's purposes and in His strength. Define yourself by where God is taking you. With the help of others, see events as God's plan to perfect the character of His Son in you. If you do this, the person you are now will not recognize the person into whom the Father will change you by the end of the year.

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