

The Way of the Lord

8. Jesus Frees Me To Love Others

In our last segment we noted how important it is that you begin to instill a BIBLICAL FOUNDATION in your children as early as you can. The character your children develop as they make the Bible their way of life will help them avoid demonic temptation and keep toxic memories from forming. And, a biblical foundation EQUIPS them to capture their thoughts and align them with Jesus.

In our workbook *Demolishing Strongholds* we discuss the SEVEN NEEDS all of us are born with. A major source of strongholds in our lives comes from seeking to meet one or more of these needs APART from God's will for us.

God created you with a need for:

Dignity, Authority, Blessing & Provision, Security, Purpose & Meaning, Freedom & Boundary, Intimate Love & Companionship

God's commands found throughout the Bible are righteous and for our GOOD. His commands guide us into the ways HE would have us meet these seven needs. The earlier your children see God's Word as His guide for their way of life, the greater the likelihood that EACH of these needs will be met in ways that please our Lord.

We're going to follow up on last segment's baby boy, who's now become a man. Beginning through his parents and grandparents, the Bible has been instilled in him to guide his way of life. Let's see how his motivations as a spiritually mature adult have developed.

As the baby grew, he formed relationships. Initially he perceived these in terms of his own benefit. Then he learned he had biblical responsibility to others in how he treated them. Time passed. In order to keep from blaming others, he resisted holding on to any ill feelings. God's Word was becoming a way of life for him, especially in difficult situations.

The indwelling Holy Spirit empowered him to take action:

"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13).

Whenever Satan tempted him to hold ill feelings against someone, he learned to overcome by praying for other people, especially the person who hurt him. He called his proactive response a "prayer target." Christ's words resonated in him when people hurt his feelings: "Bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" (Luke 6:28).

As he matured, LOVE for others began to dominate his motivations. He began to LOOK for ways to meet the needs of other people. He responded with ACTIONS because he realized that, "The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (Galatians 5:14).

Love motivated him to humble his heart, because he wanted to become more like his Lord Jesus: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but IN HUMILITY consider others BETTER than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3).

Over time, as his own relational spoke continued to grow, he became involved with the relationships people had with OTHERS. He made their interests part of his responsibility, guided by this verse: “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Philippians 2:4).

Out of LOVE, he wanted to help them nurture healthy relationships with people they cared about. This relational connectedness is similar to the rim of the wheel. For example, he took a deeper interest in the tension his wife had with her mother. He began to help a co-worker resolve bitterness against a fellow employee. He began to spend more meaningful time with his children and their friends. He began to bring together other families in his neighborhood.

Strengthening the relational connectedness of others is one of the most authentic ways we reflect the humility and love Jesus desires in His own. It’s a sacrificial way of life that indicates healthy memories and Christ-like motivations.

There’s one last point we’d like to make about your relationships. After your strongholds are demolished and you’ve been replacing toxic memories with healthy ones, you’ll be able, through the Holy Spirit’s power, to forgive others from your heart. In fact, you’ll nip in the bud any thought of bitter resentment. As with our spiritually motivated man, GOD’S WORD will guide you: “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins” (1 Peter 4:8).

As your new heart motive grows, you’ll need to renovate the relationships you now have and establish them on new, Spirit-guided ground. Your relationships need to reflect the freedom of soul JESUS has given you.

Your mind, will and emotions have been changed! So your relationships need to be reborn, reflecting the Spirit of Jesus Who is now in control of your soul. Let HIM guide you in how He wants you to love and serve others. He can do IN and THROUGH you what you’d never be able to do yourself: To LIVE the way of our Lord that Jesus would live if He were you.

For Further Study

Growing Relationships Through Confrontation

<<http://www.restorationministries.org/pdf/books/grtc/GrowingRelationships.pdf>>

Lifebyte 37. Extending The Kingdom:

The People Movement Approach (Part 1)

<<http://www.restorationministries.org/pdf/KingdomLiving/37.KingdomLivingToday.pdf>>

Lifebyte 38. Extending The Kingdom:

The People Movement Approach (Part 2)

<<http://www.restorationministries.org/pdf/KingdomLiving/38.KingdomLivingToday.pdf>>

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