

## **Respect for the things of God #1; Angels and marriage**

Hi all,

When I was very young my parents moved their growing family 4 miles (6.4km) outside of town to a small neighborhood in the country. We had about 2.5 acres (1 hectare), a large ranch-style home (1 level), a creek running through the property out back, fruit trees....and a party line for phone service.

What is a party line? A party line was when several homes shared a single land line. Each home had its own phone, but it was on the same line as the neighbor. You could pick up your phone in your house, and if one of your neighbors was using the phone in their house, you could listen in on what they were saying.

Back in the day I think many small towns or country neighborhoods like ours had that one neighbor lady who had nothing better to do than sit at home and from time to time, pick up her phone to listen in on the conversations of her neighbors. From what she heard she either spread rumors and gossip, or later express strong opinions to others about what she heard. Now they call that social media, lol.

I have memories of my mother picking up the phone to make a call, but first pausing and listening to see if anyone else was on the line before she proceeded. When I was about 6 or 7 my parents remodeled the house and that was when technology improved so that each home could have their own dedicated land line - no more listening in on the neighbors!

### **R. E. S. P. E. C. T.**

The temptation to listen in on the neighbors was weighed against the need to respect the privacy of others, and too often the temptation won. The freedom to pick up a phone to listen in on a neighbor's private phone conversation was too much freedom for some to handle - they just couldn't discipline themselves by remembering to love and respect their neighbor.

Similarly, a Christian can love the Lord and their neighbor, but in one area violate that respect because they have the freedom to do so, and lack the discipline or understanding to restrain themselves. Also, Christians are infamous in some churches and 'revival centers' for treating the gifts of the Spirit like toys for a 4 year old on Christmas morning - play things.

They oooh and ahhh if someone sees an angel, acting like 'I want one too!'. As if seeing an angel or the Lord or moving in the gifts is a spiritual badge of honor. If they knew what and better, Who they were dealing with, they wouldn't be such spiritual babies.

### **The city of Corinth was one such case.**

The city motto was 'Liberty and knowledge', and they lived that to the utmost. Paul had to write them in chapters 12-14 about the gifts of the Spirit handled properly, and with love and respect for God and others. In Paul's first letter to them he cited at least 10 situations that had to be corrected. Liberty and knowledge - whatever you do is fine!

In his first letter, chapter 11: 1-16 the situation is that some of the wives were removing their veils when they came to (house) church. We are told in Acts 18: 7-8 they initially met in the home of a Roman named Justus, being joined by believing Jews, and 'many of the Corinthians (Greeks) also believed.'

All three cultures were together in one house. Women in Greek culture were practically worshipped and experienced great freedoms, Roman women not as much, and Jewish women had freedoms that varied by region and even city.

But one thing they had in common in that region of Greece was that a thin, almost see-through veil over the face indicated a woman was married. Her unveiled face was for her husband to see. It was the ancient version of the wedding ring. But these wives were free in Christ, and so felt justified in removing their veils once inside for a house church meeting.

Can you imagine a house church meeting today where upon entering the home, the host or hostess has placed a small bowl by the door that each wife may remove her wedding band, to be picked up when leaving? That is what these wives were doing by removing their veils upon entering. They were

relaxed, in a private home meeting with brothers and sisters in the Lord, among friends - they were free in Christ, everything was morally upright in the meetings - what is the harm?

Paul asks them in v13 to judge for themselves if it was right they do so and in v16 calls the practice of veils for the wives a custom. It isn't a doctrinal issue but cultural as he states, and they needed to judge in themselves what was right. To this day in some parts of the world, a veil for wives is the norm, but not the case elsewhere in the region. Same for Corinth.

The larger issue was respect for order in the marriage which takes up the bulk of his comments. He even says in v10 the wives should be wearing veils out of respect 'for the angels'. In the Greek this is in fact 'angelous' (angels) so if your version says 'ministers' it is incorrect, the version purposely ignoring the Greek to make it easier to understand for those who don't know their history nor culture - but it changes everything to introduce such error.

Paul simply says they should wear veils to honor their husbands, and 'because of the angels'. He says this because they would understand what 'because of the angels' means. He was pulling them back to honor and respect for marriage, angels, and the fear of God. Do we have that same honor and respect for God and the things of God?

Next week I'll pick it up from there - in your church are the things of God, angels, the gifts of the Spirit, treated with awe and respect and honor, or like play things given that we can share this new vision or that new experience that others may ooohhh and ahhhh? What is your church culture, the culture of your Christian friends?

Until then...blessings,

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## **Respect for the things of God #2; Why some will never see an angel this side of heaven**

Hi all,

I ended last week talking about how Paul told the Corinthians wives to put their veils back on so they don't disrespect their husbands and the angels in charge of their home.

They were free in Christ to remove their veils - the sign they were married - but he asked them not to in the name of a higher respect for divine order.

The way Paul writes, it seems common knowledge that once they were reminded of the divine order of their marriages, including oversight by angels, it would change their behavior. Think about that. Respect for the divine. Respect for God's order. Respect for angels in charge of your family. Paul expected that reminder to change them and apparent it did, for he does not revisit the subject in his second letter.

### **Consider Acts 12: 10-15**

Peter has been supernaturally released from prison by an angel, and we are told when he came to himself and realized it wasn't a dream but real, he walked to the home of Mary, mother of John Mark the author of the gospel that bears his name. It was late or perhaps very early in the morning, but the house was filled with people praying for Peter.

When the girl named Rhoda answered Peter's knock at the door, she was so startled to see it was Peter that she left him there to run inside and tell everyone. Human nature never changes: They were all praying for his release, but when it happened they were in disbelief. That gives us encouragement to pray whether we fully know the Lord's will or not.

When Rhoda insisted it was Peter, their response was: "It is his angel."

I remember reading that as a teenager and telling the Father I wanted to renew my mind to the point that when there is a knock at my door I automatically think that it could be an angel. I'm still not quite

there yet - but consider the fact they thought an angel might be at the door knocking, evidently to give a heavenly update on Peter's situation.(?)

In I Corinthians 4: 9 Paul says he supposes apostles are the lowest in the Lord, their lives being made a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to common society.

In I Timothy 3: 16 Paul said the mystery of godliness is great in that Christ was made human, declared to be righteous by the Holy Spirit, seen by angels, and preached around the world.

In I Corinthians 6: 2 he says in the age to come we will judge (rule over, administrate) the world and angels.

Side note: I remember one of the early visitations I had with the Lord and who I call 'my angel', and I was able to ask the angel, "How do you feel about me being in charge of you in the age to come?" The look on his face immediately became one of anguish that I could ask such a question. With great zeal and urgency he replied.

"It is right! It is proper! ("Why?" I asked) "Remember: We know Him as Creator. But you know Him as Savior."

### **Compare first century respect for the angelic versus common Christian culture today**

In the larger church culture today talk of angels is either treated as something to 'ooh' and 'ahh' people with, or a goal in life to see one, or brought down to a mix of new age spirit-guide status in the practice of some.

But where do we see the respect, awe, even fear of angels and divine order in life that we see in the pages of the NT? It is fine to be interested in, fascinated by even, but it should not be forgotten that in this age they are more powerful than us. One thing I've learned from my many encounters with the Lord and angels, is that they are merely servant-messengers of the Father God.

They have no emotional attachment to us - they like who they guard for they walk in love - but if the Lord said to take our life in judgment, they would do so without hesitation. It's like what I told our boys when we got them horses: "You may love them and you think they love you, but never forget their power." The same with the Father, the Lord, and the angels.

I've shared before how in a visitation when the Lord taught me about angels and demons I asked if we had the right to command angels. His response was: "You don't even know how to pray as you should. What makes you think you know how to tell an angel what to do?"

The reference to not even knowing how to pray I immediately recognized from Romans 8:26 which says exactly that: "Likewise, the Spirit helps our infirmities, for we don't know how to pray as we should. The Spirit makes intercession with us with groanings which cannot be uttered in articulate speech."

I told the Lord many people were commanding angels and teaching we could do so, based on Psalm 103: 20 that says they hearken to the voice of the Word. The idea being quote a verse and command them to do it. His reply was this:

"Read that passage and you'll see the context is not about man quoting verse, but rather comparing the mortality of man (v15) with the Lord who loves them so, giving commands to angels on their behalf and for their good. I AM the Word in that passage. I am the word of the Father's power."

"Have you not read in the days of my flesh, in the garden\*, I said I could have asked the Father and He would have given me 12 legions of angels? The angels belong to the Father. Have you not read what I told the church at Sardis\*, that if they repented they would stand with Me and I would acknowledge them before the Father and His angels? The angels still belong to the Father. But to answer your question, no, you do not have that right." (\*Matthew 26: 53; \*Revelation 3: 5)

I replied: "But Lord, there are times when I'm in the Spirit and praying about something, and I sense the angels going out or being used in that subject area, though I don't command them I can sense

their assignments and have an awareness they are at work." He said, "Those are times as you said, you are in the Spirit and can sense such things, and you have done well not to fall to the doctrine of error but have weighed these things out. Many who practice such error have good hearts, so I do what I can for them, though the Spirit of Truth stays within the bounds of truth and can't cooperate with such foolishness."

That's the most detail I've ever shared about that visitation, and my point isn't to tackle the subject of that visitation other than from the perspective that we need to have high respect, honor, awe, and godly fear concerning the things of God. Too many have lost respect for angels and the gifts of God and think themselves something when they are not. Sad.

Next week I'll talk about how familiarity with Jesus as a mere carpenter's son prevented his hometown from respecting the larger truth about Him, and how today, many Christians are far too 'familiar' with the Father and Lord and have also lost sight of true revelation about the majesty and power of God. Lack of true revelation in church culture has led to much error. Until then, blessings,

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### **Respect for things of God: #3 Sex**

Hi all,

I'm rearranging the order of this series and next week will close with 'Familiarity breeds contempt', how Jesus had no credibility nor respect in the eyes of those in His hometown.

#### **Sex has fallen from the place of honor and holiness it once held**

Many Christians have never heard a sermon on the subject, nor a small group Bible study about it - and in the absence of proper teaching sin has entered, so that the body of Christ and even leaders, look pretty much like the world in terms of affairs and secret sins.

But how important and holy is sex in the eyes of God? Rabbi Michael Strassfeld makes this observation in his book, 'A Book of Life':

"Be fertile and increase (pru urvu) and fill the world\*" are the first words addressed by God to human beings. Not 'keep the Sabbath'; not 'don't steal' or even 'you should have two dish drainers, one for dairy and one for meat.' \*Genesis 1: 28

In other words, "Have sex" is the first command God gave to mankind via Adam and Eve - that command came before the Mosaic law, demonstrating it is for all people Jewish or not. In giving them instructions about how to run the world, He must have had 'the talk' with Adam and Eve which would have set the proper context and understanding of the act of marriage. That this instruction happened is proven in their understanding of the cycle of family:

"(The Lord God)...brought her to man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she will be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore a man will leave his father and mother and will cling to his wife; and they shall be one flesh." From the start they understood the cycle of separation and the search for wholeness. Genesis 2: 22-24

That sex is for procreation is understood and it is just built in us to want to have babies with our spouse. That it is also enjoyable was God's doing, and within that we find holiness.

But like all of God's gifts to mankind, like all grace, it can be abused. As the gifts of the Spirit can be abused and removed from their high place of awe and respect that God moves in our midst, so too is sex often removed from the place of holiness it was intended.

#### **Sex maintains holiness or provides wholeness**

Our bodies came from the earth like all animals, which the Bible teaches - the Lord sculpted the body of Adam out of clay and then breathed into the sculpture, which was transformed into a living, breathing, human body. Therefore faith teaches us that we take those things we have in common with the animal kingdom and make them holy.

All animals eat food, but we elevate food as a type of consuming every word that comes from the mouth of God for our nourishment. Animals have fur or hair, and we elevate our covering to realize when God made coats of skins for Adam and Eve, it was the first sacrifice for sin - so clothing has been (or should be) seen as holy and a type and picture of God's covering of righteousness over our nakedness.

Sex is the same way; to keep sex at the basic animal level is to defile ourselves who are made in the image of God. Sex is intended to be part of a holy and whole relationship with our spouse, including affection, tenderness, intimacy and more. It should involve our whole spirit and soul and body which is holy, not just our body which is merely animal.

The physical act of sex is the ongoing confirmation of being in covenant with that person. In the best case scenario, a couple has made vows in their hearts to one another and to God, and the act of marriage follows as the physical consummation and confirmation of those vows. Each time a couple comes together they reaffirm the covenant they made in their hearts - whether it be romantic in nature, or a fun spur-of-the-moment romp in the hay. It is holy.

In the same way the kingdom of heaven is compared to a seed, we can say that seed is larger on the inside than it is on the outside. For how many plants and fruit and seeds are within that one tiny seed? In the same way limiting sex to being with just one's spouse is in fact larger on the inside than it is on the outside - the marriage bed is undefiled as Hebrews 13: 4 says, meaning that couple has great freedoms to mutually enjoy God's gift of sex - bound by love and consideration for each other. Within those boundaries, the act of marriage is much larger than it would appear on the outside.

### **Sex is a gateway not just to holiness in relationships, but the holiness of God**

The act of marriage is a type and shadow of the spiritual union of Christ and the church. In the same way on earth we experience wholeness in the moment of sexual union with our spouse, that is a type of being in heaven with the Lord and the whole body of Christ united together with Him. It is mystical, mysterious, and something we will only realize in fullness once it happens.

In Mark 12: 20-25 Jesus was asked about a woman who had been married 7 times, and in heaven whose wife would she be? Jesus said they were in error because they understood neither the scripture (Word) nor the 'power of God' (Spirit).

Human nature hasn't changed and the question they asked is still being asked today. I've been to heaven and can offer some insight. What I noticed in talking to people while there was that they had a personal depth of intimacy with every other person they knew in heaven that was far beyond the intimacy that even my wife and I share with each other.

We retain our memories therefore the memories we have with spouse #1 will still be common between us, as will the memories and times share when we were with spouse #2 - but the level of intimacy elevates all relationships equally to a level beyond the intimacy possible on this fallen earth.

In other words, imagine the most intimate, private, holy moment of one-ness with your spouse in sexual union, and know that level of intimacy is nothing compared to the level of intimacy between people in heaven. In heaven there is no devil, and with power of the Holy Spirit in each of us, there is no misunderstanding - when we share a point of view with someone in heaven it is perfectly communicated via the Spirit so that person knows exactly what we are saying.

There is no devil, there is perfect understanding, there is no risk of being misunderstood - only oneness that comes through complete transparency and perfect understanding - all are one. Imagine the most close and perfect marriage on earth, and that level of unity and understanding can hardly begin to touch the intimacy and love in heaven's relationships.

That's why the act of marriage on earth is a type and shadow of Christ and the church. A level of intimacy awaits us with our friends and relatives in heaven that is closer than any friendship or marriage on earth. True oneness in Christ.

When our children see a healthy mom and dad growing up, when they come of age they will know the context and holy use for sexual union in marriage. Unfortunately good teaching on the subject has largely been ignored by the church, with the sad results we see around us.

God made sex and the drive for sex. His first command to Adam and Eve was for them to have sex. We are created in the image and likeness of God, therefore we should treat one another with the respect and honor due. To treat a person as an object of sex is to fall from that esteem and respect that person is due. If a person holds sex in its proper place of holiness in their heart, they won't have issues with porn or movies that incite one's passions, for they will reject any improper uses of this, God's gift.

Closing out the series next week, until then, blessings,  
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#### **Respect for the things of God #4; Personal attacks**

Hi all,  
The core reason for a lack of respect of God is a lack of revelation of God.

##### **Jesus the local boy**

Mark 6: 1-6 tells us Jesus traveled back to His hometown with His disciples, and taught in the synagogue. When they heard Him they were 'astonished' the text says, asking what kind wisdom is this from the local boy.

"Isn't this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and Jude? Aren't his sisters here with us? And they were offended at Him."

The lower, natural truth was that He was in fact the local carpenter. The higher truth is that He was God's Son being raised in the home of Joseph and Mary in preparation for His ultimate mission. All the people could see was the natural truth.

The phrase 'they were offended' is the Greek word 'eskandalizonto' which means 'to put a snare in the way', hence to stumble and become trapped in offense. The root word is 'skandalon' which is the trigger of a trap, so that we have a word picture that Jesus' claims to be something more than the local carpenter served as a trigger for the local people, which trapped them in offense.

Luke chapter 4 goes into detail of His visit in Nazareth; His message in the synagogue included the revelation He was the anointed One sent to set the captives free. They rejected this revelation, choosing offense and holding to their natural knowledge of Him as carpenter. Their offense was so intense they tried to throw Jesus off a cliff.

##### **The choice is always before us**

In Isaiah 55: 7-9 the Lord invites a person to repent of, and leave his ways and thoughts and come up to God's ways and thoughts which are much higher. It is an invitation.

Revelation always comes before such a change in thinking from high to low. Revelation, a personal revelation of God, leads to respect and honor for God and the things of God. A lack of revelation of God leads to offense. That is what happened with Jesus in Nazareth. He spoke of the things of God but He lacked credibility in their eyes because they rejected the revelation He was more than just the local boy. They rejected the invitation to come up to higher ways and thoughts. That rejection led to contempt for Him.

Jesus said in John 6: 40: "He who sees the Son, and believes on Him, will have everlasting life..." Notice first we see the Son, then we believe. That initial 'seeing the son' is revelation or enlightenment, the point where we understand Jesus is more than just a man.

The Lord continued in v44 saying a person can't come to Him unless the Father first draws them, then in v45 explains how this drawing happens: "It is written 'they will be taught of God'. Therefore everyone who has heard and learned of the Father, comes to me." Before you and I believed on the Lord, it was the Father giving us revelation about His Son.

Elsewhere this initial revelation is called 'enlightenment', and is a life-long process for the believer. Paul's prayer for the Ephesian believers and the prayer I personally pray for others and myself the most, is found in 1: 17-19: "...the the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ will give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, that the eyes of your understanding may be enlightened so that you may know the hope of your call..." Revelation from the Father, enlightenment, is life-long.

### **Do we walk in this?**

I'm going to suggest one reason we see many so called believers who have raised their hands to 'accept' the Lord into their lives during a church service have no significant change to their lives, is because they raised their hand before receiving deep and personal revelation from the Father about Jesus.

Many a 'believer' who raised their hand does so out of mental agreement they need to 'accept' Jesus, or change their life, or find an answer to life - before they ever experience personal enlightenment/revelation from the Father, drawing them to Him. Thus they continue to live as they did before - though of course some do respond from revelation. But many, not.

Studies have shown that only 6% of those who come forward at an evangelistic crusade to 'accept the Lord' are still following Him 1 year later. Is this in part because they make the decision for Christ more on head knowledge than on personal revelation and enlightenment from the Father?

Do we push for a decision from them before the Father has drawn them and taught them, preparing their heart to come to the Lord? I think so. Church culture is so eager to record 'a decision for Christ' they neglect the very first step of the process - being taught of the Father.

Peter did not proclaim 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God' until after, Jesus told him, the Father had first revealed that to him. First comes the revelation, then comes the proclamation.

It is that revelation from the Father, being taught of Him, that causes us to leave our natural thinking of Jesus as the carpenter from Nazareth, to entertain the possibility His claims of being God's Son might be true. But people will fight you for their right to stay in the lower truths of the earth. They will vehemently reject higher truth.

### **You can see the downward spiral...**

In Romans 1: 20-28 Paul outlines the most basic form of revelation from God is to see Him in creation as Creator. He says even the invisible attributes of the godhead can be seen in nature, but some when 'they knew about God, chose not to acknowledge Him as God nor were thankful, so their foolish heart became darkened...'

Turning away from revelation leads to a downward spiral in one's thought processes. When a person rejects God they reject man who was created in His image. Therefore they lose the ability to discuss ideas and concepts without attacking the person offering a differing view. Having no respect for God, they have no respect for their fellow man.

As Christians we have revelation of the Father. We should be the most respectful of people therefore, no matter if another person is a fellow Christian or not - they were given life by the Father and deserve respect from that alone. Choose the higher ways and thoughts of the Father, seek Him and to have Him open the eyes of our understanding - but He only does that for those who know to walk in love with that revelation....respect for God leads automatically to respect for people and His creation...thoughts...

New subject next week, until then, blessings,  
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