

Kingdom News

The Kingdom is Yours; the power is Yours and the glory is Yours, forever... (Matt. 6:13)

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The Chief Cornerstone



The Will of God

What Does God Really Want?

What is the WILL of God? Where does it come from?

It seems reasonable to ask these two questions in this order. But we'll address them in the reverse order, for reasons that may be apparent along the way. **Where does the WILL of God come from?** The WILL of God comes from the very nature of God. The WILL of God is an expression of His nature. God's WILL is consistent with "Who" God is. The question follows then, "*Who is God?*" Of the many "names" we have for God, the sum of them is that He is "the Only True and Living God;" and beside Him there is no other. He said so, Himself.⁽¹⁾ **What is the WILL of God?** If it is true that the WILL of God issues from His very nature. And if it is true that God is the only true and living God. Then it follows that His WILL is "that He be known or acknowledged as the only true and living God." Let's let that marinade; while we have a look at the will of man.

What is the will of man? Where does it come from?

Let's continue in the same vein and address these questions in the reverse order. But before we get to those specific questions; will you come take a stroll

Chief Cornerstone

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The Leadership Corner *Leadership Living, Inc.*

Refresh Your Kids!!!

It's that time again! You know what I'm talking about...**Summer Time!!!** The regular school year is over (for many people) and families now have to determine how they will handle the extra time their children have on their hands. It's interesting. As I talk with parents of school-aged children, many of them get stressed out just thinking of how to manage summer activities. It is no secret that summer program costs have sky-rocketed over the years. A parent could easily spend a small fortune just trying to keep two kids busy from June through August.

You may wonder what this topic has to do with leadership... **EVERYTHING!** We, as parents, will want to embrace the fact that we are the managers of our children's education, career paths, and their destinies (to a large extent). Before creation, God put in place principles that position parents as the priestly overseers of our children, until the children become adults. Sound like a heavy load to carry? It is, but we don't have to do it alone. We simply need to understand that this is a principle, and allow God to show us how to align ourselves with it in a practical sense. Let's start with what God has said about the relationship between parents, children, and their livelihoods.

In **Exodus 21:12** God gave the commandment to Moses that children are to honor (respect and obey) their parents. Their reward would be a long (and prosperous) life (KJV paraphrased). It sounds simple enough, but what part do the parents play in this "long & prosperous life" for their children? We understand that each person is to obey God for himself or herself. This obedience translates into God's protection,

The Leadership Corner

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Son of My Wisdom



The Difference Maker – Regeneration

All scriptures paraphrased from the KJV

I believe that the Lord is bringing me to deal with a subject that, though, I hadn't noticed, is not taught very much these days. Looking back more intently, I saw that this subject hadn't even been a big part of my own conversation. You may notice that some of my previous articles acknowledge it, but hardly have I dealt with it, or seen it dealt with directly. Despite the lack of attention to this topic, it answers so many issues that we need answered. It makes the difference between wheat and tares; sheep and goats; and New Testament (NT) vs Old Testament (OT) vineyard parables. It also makes the difference between legalism, "carnalism," (you don't mind if a coin a new phrase, do you?) and true Christianity. I will not deal with all of these individually, but I will deal with two, and we will see how the topic at hand answers each of them.

Recently, I was reading the parable of the husbandmen and the vineyard (Matthew 21:33-44). The Holy Spirit stopped me from just reading, and prompted me to get out and survey the land concerning this parable. Now, though there is an entire article on what He said about the vineyard specifically, what He showed me generally was that this parable had an Old Testament counterpart. You can find it in Isaiah 5:1-7. After reading these two parables and hearing all that the Lord was revealing about them I had one question really setting in. What is the fundamental difference between the vineyard in Isaiah, and the one in Matthew? I hadn't actually asked the Holy Spirit yet, but as soon as I got my head around what the question was, He answered it: **REGENERATION**. You see, though the Owner of either vineyard is God, the keepers of the vineyard differ between Matthew and Isaiah. There is a sense in which God does work in both vineyards. However, one of the main reasons for speaking of different keepers is to show the **necessity** and **power** of "regeneration."

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A Journey to Intimacy

It's Not Your Job To ...

As the Journey Unfolds

"It's not my job to...."

You've heard the phrase before, haven't you?

Colloquially, it can have something of a negative connotation associated with it. As it is often used when persons intend to shunt responsibility; or forego taking on any additional tasks or burdens. Negative connotation notwithstanding, there is something to be said for knowing the place of our jurisdiction. Admittedly we are obliged to know the things and responsibilities that fall within the span of our dominion. We have an obligation to discern between what we must do and what we cannot do. To try to do what we "cannot" (on top of being foolish) it is an improper use of our resources and our dominion. We owe to God a solemn duty to discharge our responsibilities in the things assigned to us. And an equal duty accords, that we are to refrain from engaging in activities and transactions that have not been assigned to us by God (no matter how "good and noble" they seem). It is not our job to "do good things," just because they are "good things." For then we would never know the boundaries of our duty to God or to man. For when you have done all the "good" you can; there is yet much, much more "good" to be done. Where is one to draw the line?

There is prudence in knowing when to say, "It's not my job...." And by that you understand that you have not been assigned a portion in a particular transaction or activity. We've been there; giving until our cup is empty. We've tried "tooth and claw" to MAKE something happen that we believe that God has ordained for us (when He has not). You don't mind if I share my scars, do you? Learning to say "it's not my job;" was one of the hardest lessons for me to learn. There were many incidents, but the following was certainly a front runner for me.

One time, I recall breathing a sigh of frustration (before the Lord) at an investment of time and energy that I had been making in a particular effort. It was like the barren fig

Journey to Intimacy

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Precepts in Practice



A Healthy & Tasty Ministry

There are many ways that God deals with people. He speaks to us through His word and by His Holy Spirit. We may hear him when the preacher gives a sermon at church and when the choir sings. We see Him in nature when we look at the trees, mountains, and the ocean. God's glory indeed fills the entire earth.

Additionally, God uses His people to minister to others. Many of us can attest to times when God used us to give a word of encouragement to someone; take part in an informal bible study; or bless someone in a tangible way. It is truly amazing how God touches the lives of people by using people.

As I was preparing to write this month's column, God told me to share what he'd given me related to "**fruit ministry**." We know that God can and does offer salvation to anyone who sincerely calls upon him. We also want to understand that salvation (forgiveness of sin & coming into the kingdom of God) is not the same as conversion (changing behavior from being led by the flesh to being led by the Spirit).

Salvation is immediate. When a person accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, he or she is instantly welcomed into the Kingdom of God. This is when the real work begins. Conversion, on the other hand, is a lifelong process. Daily (as we seek God and yield to the work of the Holy Spirit), He teaches us Kingdom principles, points out to us any unacceptable behavior, forgives & corrects us, washes us with His word, and conforms us into the image of Christ. This process produces Christ-like attitudes and behavior that we previously did not have.

Now, as we are growing, God also uses us to minister to others. Not only are we instruments of salvation; we are also instruments of conversion. This is where the "**fruit ministry**" comes into play. Let's think about the concept of fruit. We pretty much understand that fruit has seeds inside of it. Oranges, apples, grapes, watermelon, pineapples; these all have reproductive seeds in them. What would happen if you took the watermelon seeds out of the fruit and planted them in

Precepts in Practice

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Love and The Truth



Proclamation

Scriptures paraphrased from the KJV

This is my proclamation for us, the people of God; this year. I'm hoping and expecting that you will read this, agree with it, meditate on it, and pray for strength, and love, and direction concerning it. We've been blessed by many great revelations from the Spirit of God since this newsletter was first published. The Lord has herein spoken many wonderful things to us. But this is my hope and prayer for us going forward. I want us to give energy to living everything that the Lord has said to us, all of the truth that He has expressed. We are the body of Christ and we will not stand for portions of the flesh left untouched.

I have notice in my own life places of stagnation and complacency. I've noticed fears and selfishness. I've noticed places where I've not been so loving to people. I've notice places where I've not exercised true faith. I will not stand for it, any longer.

No longer, is it acceptable or alright for us just to take in what we've read, and maybe memorize some scriptures. We ought to be looking to bear more fruit. We must have fruit, abundant fruit, fruit that remains. The flesh would have us say, "Well...I'm doing good in areas 1, 2, 3, and 4. I haven't been doing some of the things I used to do. I've been improving in areas *e, f, g, and h.*" This is deception. Oh, what the flesh will not do to maintain a "foothold," in our hearts and in our lives.

Jesus, our Shepherd was not satisfied with just the 99 sheep that were in order and accounted for. He has come to find His 1 missing sheep. He went into the mountains to find that 1 sheep. I doubt that any of us can say that we only have one little issue untouched in our selves. I'm sure there are more. We must, in the spirit of Jesus our Shepherd, seek out those untouched issues with the Leadership and Light of the Holy Spirit. This is a time of serious change. We MUST see upward mobility.

I recently heard a sermon from one of my favorite speakers. He said, "We must declare war on our flesh, war on our sin. We must declare war on our

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with me?

When we talk about the “will of man;” we often use the term “freewill.” I’ve done it too. The term “freewill” has become colloquial. By its use we tend to come to a common understand of what is being addressed. I can respect that. The challenge here is that when something becomes so common to us; it can often cause us to lose our bearings; especially if we don’t retain the criticality of our thinking. Once the dye is cast in our minds; it almost takes a stick of dynamite to dislodge one’s thinking on that matter. That being said, I’m going to challenge your thinking (and mine) a bit. You don’t mind, do you?

One dictionary defines *freewill* (you’ll love this) as “*the power attributed especially to human beings, of making free choices that are unconstrained by external circumstances or by necessity.*” Now I won’t try to persuade you with this, because it could wreck your whole worldview. But will you humor me though; and allow me to think aloud?

When I read this, I thought to myself, “I am not presently aware of any choices that we make that are not constrained by either external circumstances or by necessity.” Said otherwise, “every single choice we make has the constraint of external circumstance or necessity.” Some of the most prominent external circumstances that affect our choices are the laws of God, and even man-made laws (be they spiritual, moral, legislative, physical, natural, etc.).⁽²⁾ You’ll want to bookmark this, because it will surface again, downstream. Now, remember, this is me sharing my “thoughts” with you.

So we see that the dictionary has a definition for “freewill.” However this term in the (KJV) scriptures only seems to reference a type of “freewill offering” that Israel was permitted to bring before the Lord; in addition to their prescribed offerings.⁽³⁾ The (KJV) scriptures do not seem to use the term “freewill” interchangeably with “man’s will.”

Is it possible that when we talk of our “freewill” we’re actually intending to reference man’s dominion? The scriptures do speak to us of our dominion. However, the use of the terms “freewill and dominion” interchangeably might be likened to “comparing **apples** to **oranges.**”

- Dominion – a territory or sphere of influence or control; realm. (Authority that is circumscribed -- **Apple**)

- Freewill – volition that is unconstrained by external circumstances or necessity. (Authority that is not circumscribed -- **Orange**)

Can you see how this might be a bit of a challenge to reconcile? If “dominion” and “freewill” were two people, this is what could be said of them.

- “Dominion” is the “ox that knows its Master’s crib.”⁽⁴⁾ “Freewill” not only doesn’t know its Master’s crib; it doesn’t even believe it has a Master. “Freewill” admits of no governance, apart from self. It sings of its independence.
- “Dominion” admits that its jurisdiction is circumscribed or given to it by a Sovereign. “Freewill” acknowledges none of this.
- If these two were servants, “dominion” would be the faithful servant in Matthew 24:45-47. “Freewill” would be the husbandmen over the vineyard in Matthew 21:33-40.
- “Dominion” knows that it is a servant; “freewill” does not know that it is a servant. “Freewill” believes that it is the “master of its own destiny.” “Dominion” knows that it is part of (and responsible to) a larger seat of Authority.⁽⁵⁾

Now, now ... now let’s just consider that I’m still thinking out loud. Since the scriptures don’t speak to us of “freewill” per se; let’s use the term “dominion.” And we’ll go back to our original questions: **Where does man’s “dominion” come from?** This is an easy question. It was given to us by God⁽⁶⁾ where He said “Let us make man ... and let them have “freewill” I mean dominion ...” **What is the will of man?** In short, it is the vehicle or faculty by which we exercise dominion.

What is the relationship between the two wills? When these wills are not in agreement; when they are in discord; when they are incongruent, which one reigns supreme?

Now you’re asking the difficult questions. Wisdom dictates that difficult and complex discussions and discourses be accompanied by caveats, qualifiers or disclaimers to mitigate confusion, misunderstanding and misinterpretation. That being the case, allow me to disclaim the following:

Disclaimer: I am certain that you know that I am not the final authority on this. I am simply a courier, delivering a package. What I share with you is what I have received.

May the Lord God judge in righteousness; and may He (and His truth) ever be indemnified from the error of my humanity.

Now to the questions at hand: *What is the relationship between the two wills?* God's WILL is Sovereign; it is only bound by the law of His nature. God cannot "do or be" anything that He *is not*. And vice versa, He cannot deny Himself.⁽⁷⁾ Even our reasoning faculty affirms this of God; as well as of ourselves. In the Sovereignty of God, He has elected to apportion to man a measure of "dominion." He has ascribed to us a jurisdiction of influence and control. That notwithstanding God still retains sovereign governance over all authorities and dominions. That is the relationship between the two.

Sidebar: Also in the Sovereign Wisdom of God, He has assigned a portion of dominion to Satan, too. Although the full breadth and width of that dominion is as yet unknown to us; we get a wink of a judicial prohibition of the enemy's dominion (or scope of operation) on the earth in Genesis 3:14. We also get a glimpse of a temporal, executive broadening of the enemy's power in the earth from Revelation 13:7-8. And although we are not permitted to operate in the enemy's realm of authority; we may certainly allow him to operate in ours. And, trust, that he is working very intently to do just that.⁽⁸⁾ Again, in a larger sense, it is the Sovereignty of God that assigns dominion; and this very same sovereignty retains jurisdiction over all assigned dominions.⁽⁹⁾

Although God originally gave, to man, dominion over the earth; this license was given in a realm already subject to the laws of God. Example: We have dominion. But there is a sense in which we are not "free" to exercise authority over the will of another man. Legislatively it is prohibited. But, judicially, it can be done; it is "doable." But we are not permitted to engage at that level. Transactions in that sphere of governance are "occult," and are categorically forbidden. You may read that again, if you like.

Are we free to choose, then? Absolutely!!! Not only are we free to choose, but we have a godly responsibility to do so.

We have, what amounts to, two choices. We are free

to choose "life" or "death." Each time we make a choice between these two options, the laws that govern these options come into force.⁽¹⁰⁾ And all of the subsequent transactions are governed by the laws of either of these two.

Here are a few examples on a remedial scale: When the Lord gave Israel the commandments, He said, "Okay choose."⁽¹¹⁾ And once Israel made their choice, then everything followed from there.⁽¹²⁾ They did not get to choose an option and forego the inherent consequences; nor do we. Let's say a young man decides to get married. He may be young and may still think that life operates in a vacuum. And he may mistakenly think that he's made a solitary choice of "marriage." But soon enough he will experience a rude awakening that not only do the "rights" of marriage accrue to him. But so, too, do the "responsibilities" of marriage.

If we choose "life;" then all of the laws of life begin to hold sway over us. And if we choose "death" then all of the laws that govern death, reign. So it is the case in every area of our lives. All of these transactions are circumscribed and governed by the Sovereign WILL of God. Nothing is outside of the sovereignty of God's WILL ... nothing! Not even our dominion.

What is to be said for the situations when our will does not accord with God's WILL?

Let's see ... if God's will is "that He be known to be the only true and living God." And if it is true that His laws govern all of existence; then His WILL shall always be manifestly operational and governing. We'll explore that after we deal with a potential myth, regarding the WILL of God.

Myth (dispelled): Is it possible that we misunderstand God's WILL to be that we "obey" Him; that we obey His Commandments or His Law? This is what I used to think; that it is the WILL of God that I hear Him and obey Him. That being my frame of reference, it made sense then that I also believed that man's disobedience to God, somehow translated into the WILL of God not being done in the life of the disobedient one. (That disobedient one was usually me. Thank God for His loooong-suffering grace.) From that you can see how I thought that the WILL of God could be preempted by our "freewill;" but this not the

case at all. Now please don't misunderstand me to be saying that our "obedience to God" is not valuable and important. It is imperative. But there is a sense in which ... (Fasten your seatbelts) ... our obedience to God is more important to *our own* well-being than it is to the well-being of God. I know, I know ... that hurts, doesn't it? We want our obedience to be important to God. And in one sense "it is." But it is exceeding abundantly (smiling) more important to the success of our *own lives*; than it is to the success of God's WILL. If we obey God, we reap the fruits of righteousness. If we elect to disobey God, we reap the consequences. If we sow to the wind, we reap the whirlwind.⁽¹³⁾ The WILL of God, gets along just fine, in either case. How is that, actually?

How is it that His WILL is always manifestly operational and governing? Well, if we obey Him, the benefits of that obedience tend to prove that the Lord is God and beside Him there is no other. One of the laws that follow obedience is that "no weapon formed against us shall prosper." And we see the truth of that law, very evidently, when we walk in obedience. And if we elect to disobey Him, the repercussions of that breach (as painful as they are), prove that the Lord is God and beside Him there is no other. That's one reason that the pain of our disobedience is so potentially valuable. When we disobey and (based on the laws that are in place) we experience the painful consequences of that disobedience; we are supposed to there acknowledge that the Lord is right and just when He says things like "thou shall not commit adultery" or "thou shall not kill." So we see that the WILL of God is much, much more than regards our obedience. The WILL of God is that we may know that He alone is the only true and living God. And every law that He has invoked within the realm of our dominion, will prove this to us; whether or not we elect to obey.

Lastly, if the will of man can trump (or abort) the WILL of God then there follows a most terrifying reality. Allow me to use one of God's own laws (true both in logic and in mathematics) to magnify this point. Let's identify "A, B and C" as follows:

A = the will of the enemy
B = the will of man
C = the WILL of God

This is the hypothesis, using the *Transitive Law of Mathematics and Logic*:⁽¹⁴⁾

- If the will of the enemy can usurp authority over the will of man ($A > B$);⁽¹⁵⁾ and
- If the will of man can somehow annul the will of God ($B > C$);⁽¹⁶⁾ then
- The will of the enemy can trump God's WILL ($A > C$)

Can you see how subversive and devastating is the outworking of the assumption that our "freewill" or dominion can supersede the will of God; in any sense?

Encapsulated: If our dominion somehow trumps (or aborts) the WILL of God in any sense; then how can we expect that God's WILL can protect us from the enemy's will? *IF* our fragile, human will can trump God's WILL; then the enemy's substantially stronger will can also trump (or abort) God's WILL. Don't like the sound of that, do we? The operative word here is "*IF*." And if our fragile, human will trumps God's WILL in any sense, when the enemy usurps authority over man's will; then the enemy will have accomplished his original task of exalting his throne above the stars of God.⁽¹⁷⁾

B-r-e-a-t-h-e (sigh)

So we took the scenic route. It is my humble petition that we have not done a disservice to this very broad, very lofty and very deep truth of God. As men, we can talk about simply things like "whether we should read our Bibles with the lights on or with the light off; without a great deal of trepidation." But when we approach the very Person of God and His attributes; we NEED Him to be very present and very transparent and very interpretive, lest we do a grave injustice to the beauty and eternity of His truth.

May the Lord be glorified in the work of His hands? And may every knee bow and every tongue confess that "Jesus Christ is the only true and living God" to the glory of God the Father ... beginning with me.
<cc>

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV)

⁽¹⁾ Isaiah 43:11; 44:6; 44:8; 45:5-6, 21; 47:8,10; 1 Chronicles 17:20; Deuteronomy 4:35; 1 Samuel 2:2

⁽²⁾ Romans 7:1

⁽³⁾ Leviticus 22:18, 21, 23; Numbers 15:3;

Deuteronomy 12:6,17; 2 Chronicles 31:14, in the

book of Ezra, etc.

(4) Isaiah 1:3

(5) Romans 13:1-2

(6) Genesis 1:26; Romans 13:1-2

(7) John 8:55

(8) Revelation 17:13

(9) Romans 13:1

(10) Colossians 1:13

(11) Deuteronomy 30:19

(12) Deuteronomy 28:1-2, 15

(13) Hosea 8:7

(14) *The Transitive Law of Mathematics and Logic*: If $a > b$, and $b > c$, then $a > c$. Stated definitively: In mathematics and logic, if A bears some relation to B and B bears the same relation to C , then A bears that same relationship to C . Retrieved 5/29/10 from <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/602836/transitive-law>

(15) Genesis 3

(16) Under the assumption that if man's will disagrees with God's WILL then by an act of our "freewill" we can disallow or abort God's WILL

(17) Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:2, 6

provision, guidance, health and a host of other goodies. What we don't always grasp is how the parents are responsible in some way for the relationships our children do (or do not) develop with God.

I'm sure we can all agree that parents are not able to guarantee that our children will develop intimate relationships with God (no matter what we do). Are we in agreement on this point? Good. However, I believe we can also agree that parents **do** play a key role in creating an environment for our children that is conducive to their ability to grasp godly principles, attitudes, and behaviors. Agreed? Good. Let's go back to the scriptures to see exactly what our parental role involves.

In **Deuteronomy 6:4-8** (KJV) God commanded Moses to tell the parents what their roles were in relationship to their children understanding and keeping God's commandments. I encourage you to take a moment to read this passage as soon as you can. Let me give you an excerpt:

"You are to love the Lord your God with all your heart. And, you are to carefully teach my commandments to your children. You are to talk of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you go walking. You are to teach them to your children when you all lay down at night to sleep and when you rise in the morning." (Paraphrased)

This is some heavy stuff!!! God wants parents to share His word, His will, His plan, and His law with our children. We understand then that it is not the responsibility of the school, church, or anyone else to teach godly principles to our children. It is **our** responsibility to ensure that they understand these things. The good news is that we have lots of resources to tap into to fulfill our role.

Now, let me toss in one last scripture before we get back to handling summer activities. In **Proverbs 6:20-23** King Solomon shares with us what will happen when we teach our children godly principles and they obey them. Scripture says that the commandments of the Lord will "lead" our children as they walk through life (preparing their way before them). God's law will "keep" them safe. And, godly principles will "talk" with our sons and daughters when they need counsel (KJV paraphrased).

FIGS



Many times we are tempted to do things our own way; as opposed to seeking or relying on God.

Here's one piece of sound advice.

"Don't."

(Anonymous -Adapted)



In summary, God made promises to our children if they respect and obey their parents. He then told parents that it would be our responsibility to share with our children the commandments of the Lord. Finally, he gives greater detail as to how the law of the Lord will interact with our children on a daily basis as they progress through life's journey. If this isn't a recipe for success, I don't know what is!

So, what does all of this have to do with summer activities? I'm glad you didn't let me forget to bring us back to this very important point. Spending quality time with our children and creating positive environments for them is **HOW** we fulfill our role as their priests. We understand that parents must share the principles of God with our children all year. However, when school is out, this affords us a great opportunity to structure quality family time with them that we may not have been able to do well, while school was in session.

With this column, I am encouraging each parent to seek God's guidance on how to create a summer schedule of activities that allows us to share and model the principles of God with our children. Modeling and engaging in things like patience, listening, singing, playing, reading, praying, correcting negative behaviors, and any number of other fun activities is actually a way we can minister to our children. It can "fill their tanks." The school environment, as we know, is not always positive. It can be stressful, de-motivating, distracting, and in some cases hurtful to our children. It is our job to provide avenues for them to be refreshed, renewed, and revived so they can focus on godly principles and positive concepts.

What time is it again? It's **Summer Time!!!** And this is our opportunity to seek out resources, as well as adjust our schedules to give our children what they need. You may want to chat with family and friends to see what is available in your area. You can also check with your local library, neighborhood churches and nonprofit groups, the school district, and other parents in your community. You may decide to work with other parents to set up your own summer program instead of paying outrageous prices to some of these company sponsored activities. If we ask God to guide us, He will give us creative ideas that we may not have considered before.

Ok, let's get busy! Summer is upon us and our children need to be refreshed! ~LLI~

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Son of My Wisdom

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In Isaiah, the problem in the parable was with the vineyard *itself*. In Matthew, though, the problem is not with the vineyard itself, but the keepers of the vineyard. In Isaiah God says "what more could I have done in my vineyard that I have not done in it?" This is to show us the **necessity** of regeneration. He essentially shows us this. Not even God, given infinite time and infinite grace could get "good life" out of "bad nature," in any real sense. It doesn't matter how much time and work the Lord put into man; if man is unregenerate, then there will be no lasting fruit. The scriptures, everywhere, affirms this.

In Matthew's vineyard, the keepers are now men instead of God, and particularly evil men, at that. That notwithstanding, the Lord showed us the power of regeneration, in terms of the fruitfulness of the vineyard. He shows us that because of regeneration, it is inconsequential that the keepers were wicked. Because in Matthew, the nature of the vine is Divine, as Jesus says "I AM the vine." (John 15:5) Even if the vineyard keeper were Satan himself, the fruitfulness of the vineyard would yet be inevitable. On the other hand, because the nature of Isaiah's vineyard was fallen (unregenerate) the fruit was worthless, irrespective of what the husbandman did. As Jesus says "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. (Matthew 12:33)

On another note, "regeneration" is the missing piece that will clear up this mess we've made of "faith and works" these days. Let's look at the three groups: Legalists, Carnalists, and Christians.

- The Legalist strictly sees the works of the law as his salvation; he doesn't recognize the grace of God as giving him salvation. He is unregenerate.
- The Carnalist sees the grace of God as the foundation of his salvation; he thinks, therefore, that he can live however he wants. He does not manifest or recognize the works of faith. He may or may not be unregenerate.

- However the Christian, having been regenerated, will manifest the works of faith, which is the fruit of regeneration. The true Christian recognizes both, and neglects neither of the two, faith or works. He knows that faith will get him “there;” and works are the natural fruit of him being “there.”

So we see then, that the issue today that needs to be dealt with is “regeneration.” It is a work of God. But we who are spiritual can seek God concerning regeneration for those who are heretofore unregenerate. The following will be tough to swallow, because we have so conformed the gospel to the world, rather than the world to the gospel. However the truth is as follows. There are many who are labeled as Christians, but are yet unregenerate. The scripture points them out here in Matthew 7:20-23. I know it’s bitter, but if we are misunderstanding some things; wouldn’t we want to know now rather than later? Now is the time to address, later is not promised.

So long as we seek for men to be saved for their sake, rather than regenerated for God’s glory, (that they bear fruit unto God) we sow to the wind. We work in futility. Until we recognize heaven as a by-product rather than a goal, we have missed God. And the focus of our ministry may be askew. For if we make “heaven,” our primarily goal (this smacks of humanism); for we make God a secondary consideration. If there’s anything that God has made clear, it is that He will come second to nothing: not heaven (or anything in it); and not the earth (or anything in it).

I promise, many will miss God seeking heaven; but none will miss heaven seeking God.

So as we go forth to proclaim the gospel, remember, don’t labor to see souls saved, primarily that they may go to Heaven. Labor to see souls “regenerated,” that they might bear fruit unto our King. For that goal is as it should be, esteeming the Creator above the creation.
-SOMW-

David L. White

BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR



Revelation 22:16

tree, only worse. Not only was the tree not bearing fruit, it wouldn’t even grow leaves. Even a cactus, in the middle of the desert, will bloom every once in a while. This tree ... NOTHING. I remember very vividly the Lord’s response to my expression of frustration. He said, “I didn’t tell you to do that.” To say that I was dumbfounded; would have been the understatement of the year. I don’t know how much time expired, as I stood there frozen in my tracks; while His voice reverberated in my heart. I thought, but I was doing “good,” I was helping. Years later, the Lord helped me understand that all “good” is not ordained by God. Just because a thing seems “good” does not mean that it has been sanctioned by God for *you* to do. There are ways that seem right to us, but their end leads to death (in all of its manifold expressions). We must respect that God will only “watch over *His* word to perform it.” Unless the Lord builds a house, it’s a waste of time and money, to hire a construction company.

Necessity may indeed be the “mother” of invention. And desperate times may certainly call for desperate measures. But as children of the Kingdom, we must receive our direction from the Throne. We must!! Or we will find ourselves, carried about with every “wind of doctrine.”

This doesn’t mean that we cannot bear one another’s burdens; we have an obligation to our Lord to do just this. However, we must receive direction and discernment from God on which burdens to get up under; and which to cover in prayer. We must learn to accept that the Lord’s grace is sufficient, in some situations.

We must know which responsibilities have been assigned to us. And we must do them with all of our heart and all of our might. And those things that have **not** been so assigned, we must leave them to God. We must learn to distinguish what **is** and what “**is not** our job.” Sometimes it’s a very “fine line” that distinguishes between the two sets of responsibilities. This means that our sensitivity to the Lord must be sharpened. Can you imagine how stressed out Moses and Aaron would have been, before Pharaoh, if he couldn’t differentiate between what was their responsibility and what was God’s?

- It was *not* Moses’ job to make Pharaoh release the

children of Israel. However, it was Moses' job to show up and say "Thus says the Lord, let my people go..."⁽¹⁾

- It *was not* Aaron's job to make his rod become a serpent. It was Aaron's job to cast down the rod.⁽²⁾
- It *was not* Moses' job to turn the waters of Egypt into blood. It was Moses' job to say to Aaron, stretch out your hand (rod) upon the waters of Egypt.⁽³⁾
- It *was not* Moses' his job to make the frogs appear throughout the land of Egypt. It was Moses' job to say to Aaron, stretch out your hand (rod) over the streams, rivers and ponds.⁽⁴⁾
- It *was not* Moses' job to bring forth lice. It was Moses' job to say to Aaron, stretch out your rod, over the dust.⁽⁵⁾
- It *was not* Moses' job to cause flies to swarm. It was Moses' job to tell Pharaoh what the Lord said.⁽⁶⁾
- It *was not* Moses' job to bring boils upon the Egyptians. It was Moses' job to sprinkle the ashes toward the heaven, in the sight of Pharaoh.⁽⁷⁾
- It *was not* Moses' job to make it hail on Egypt. It was Moses' job to warn Pharaoh and stretch his hands toward heaven.⁽⁸⁾
- It *was not* Moses' or Aaron's job to cause the locust to come. It was their job to speak the word of the Lord and lift up their hands over Egypt.⁽⁹⁾
- It *was not* Moses' job to cause darkness to come over the land of Egypt. It was Moses' job to stretch out his hand toward heaven.⁽¹⁰⁾
- When Moses brought the Children of Israel out of the Red Sea, it was not his job to "part the sea." His job was to stretch out the rod.⁽¹¹⁾
- When Israel was thirsty in the wilderness, it was not Moses' job to make the bitter waters of Marah palatable. It was Moses' job, to seek God and obey His direction.⁽¹²⁾
- When Israel was hungry in the wilderness, it was not Moses' job to produce food for this massive multitude. It was Moses' job, to take their cry to the Lord and receive direction from Him; and obey His command.⁽¹³⁾
- When Joshua prepared to take the children of Israel into Canaan, his job was not to part the Jordan. Joshua's job was to direct the priest (bearing the Ark of the Covenant) to place their feet into the brink of the Jordan.⁽¹⁴⁾

Dare I say that often we find ourselves immobilized because we are overwhelmed by the impossibility of

our tasks or our calling? As a result, we do not do the "possible" for fear of our inability to do the "impossible." There's a sense in which, it is not our job to do the "impossible;" it is our job to do the "possible."⁽¹⁵⁾ It is our job to do what the Lord commands; the rest we leave to the Father. Can you see how easy it is to be yoked with the Lord; for there we may know what **is** and what **is not** our job.

Two things are very difficult to do: things that we do not want to do and things that we are not anointed to do.

When the Moabites and Ammonites (and others) came to wage war against Jehoshaphat, Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; they were very fearful (spelled t-e-r-r-i-f-i-e-d). They ran to seek the face of the Lord. And the Lord told them, that it **was not** their job, to fight against this army. It **was** their job "to set, to stand and to see."⁽¹⁶⁾ Jehoshaphat said, "Believe in the Lord your God." And the degree to which you believe Him, it is to that same degree that you shall be established. It is also to that same degree that your foot shall not be moved. He said, "Believe the words of the prophet of the Lord and so shall you prosper." What you know that the Lord has spoken over your life, "believe that!"

These signs shall follow them that believe; they shall ... It's not our job to make the signs follow; it's our job to: believe.⁽¹⁷⁾ -JTI-

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

- ⁽¹⁾ Exodus 5:1
- ⁽²⁾ Exodus 7:9-10
- ⁽³⁾ Exodus 7:19-20
- ⁽⁴⁾ Exodus 8:5-6
- ⁽⁵⁾ Exodus 8:16-17
- ⁽⁶⁾ Exodus 8:20-21, 24
- ⁽⁷⁾ Exodus 9:8-10
- ⁽⁸⁾ Exodus 9:13-26
- ⁽⁹⁾ Exodus 10:3-4, 12
- ⁽¹⁰⁾ Exodus 10:21-22
- ⁽¹¹⁾ Exodus 14:21
- ⁽¹²⁾ Exodus 15:25; 17:3-6
- ⁽¹³⁾ Exodus 16:4-15
- ⁽¹⁴⁾ Joshua 3:8, 13-17
- ⁽¹⁵⁾ Luke 18:27
- ⁽¹⁶⁾ 2 Chronicles 20:1-22
- ⁽¹⁷⁾ Mark 16:17-18

the ground? Is that a silly question? Why? Is it because we already know what would happen? Planting watermelon seeds produces more watermelons. Would the same thing happen if we planted apple seeds? Absolutely.

In this example, we can see God's reproductive principle at work. In *Genesis chapter one* we learn that fruit must reproduce "after its kind." This is a law. Nothing different will ever happen. If we plant orange seeds, we should expect to receive oranges in our harvest (not grapes, or tomatoes). So, what does this principle have to do with the ministry God has given us? I thought you'd never ask!

In *Galatians 5:22 & 23* (KJV paraphrased) we are taught that as we are being converted from fleshly attitudes and behaviors to godly attitudes and behaviors; these behaviors are referred to as "fruit." And Webster's New World Dictionary tells us that "fruit" is the result or product of any action. The fruit of the Spirit includes love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and self control, etc. These are the attitudes and behaviors God wants to grow in us. We know this because in *John 15:1, 5, & 8* (KJV paraphrased), Jesus taught us that He is the vine and we are the branches. He also said that it is the will of the Father that we "bear much fruit." This means, God wants our behaviors to transform from our old fleshly (selfish and self serving), destructive lusts to godly, life-giving behaviors. Why is this important to God?

Sure, it will benefit us, but there is another reason. As people, what do we do with natural fruit? You are correct. We eat it. The same is true in the spirit. We are branches of Jesus Christ. And, we should be bearing fruit (godly attitudes and behaviors). As a result, people we come in contact with should be able to "eat" our "fruit." This means that they interact with us and should experience our godly attitudes and behaviors (i.e., love, joy, godly wisdom, peace, patience, forgiveness, kindness, etc.). When they "eat" the fruit (including the seed – which is the word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit) are all taken into their hearts.

The human heart is soil (see *Matthew 13: 11-23* KJV). When people interact with godly believers who have spiritual fruit, these people eat their spiritual fruit. When this happens, the seeds are planted in their hearts. With these seeds in their hearts, the Holy Spirit

can begin the work of conversion on them (even if they are unaware of what is happening). Now, I know this raises all sorts of questions. Let's address a key question before we go further.

Does this mean that unbelievers (who eat our fruit) receive salvation at that moment? No. It means that the unbeliever has been positively impacted by the godly principles that are operating in our lives. And, what we begin to see is that the person's behavior will change accordingly (to differing degrees in different people). In addition, it opens the door for God to continue to draw this person such that he or she may choose to seek God for him or herself.

Let's make this practical by using an example (you all know I am the "example queen"). I once worked for an insurance company. I am a morning person, so when I would come into work in the mornings, I would automatically smile and say "Good Morning" (with a very high pitched sound) to everyone I passed in the office. One of my coworkers (who was not a morning person, and who was quite a pessimist) would make fun of me. She nicknamed me "happy butt."

This didn't stop me. I continued to behave this way. Now, I have to mention that I was not "faking" the happiness. It was real. I would spend time in the presence of the Lord each morning before work. So, once God had ministered to me, encouraged me, reminded me of how much He loves me, and confirmed that He would guide me throughout my day; I was ready for the office. So, this was real "joy fruit" of the Spirit that I was displaying.

Over time, this particular coworker stopped calling me names. She just didn't say anything. Then, little by little, she would make sure she was around when I came in so that she would hear my chipper announcement. After months of doing this, she began to respond in kind. She actually let me know that she began to feel that the day couldn't start until I had done my "good morning" thingy. It somehow "set the tone" for the day. Since then, I've had people say this to me countless times at the different companies I've worked for.

No doubt, many of you have had similar situations like this happen. People begin to respond favorably to you (over time) when you consistently display godly behavior or fruit. This is how "fruit ministry" works. With this kind of ministry, there is no need to "argue"

philosophical or theological beliefs. There is no political posturing or “turf protecting.” It simply involves believers cooperating with God to grow the fruit (godly behavior through the conversion process), and going out into our day. Then, throughout the day people will interact with us, accepting the kindnesses, patience, forgiveness, etc. that we give out. When this happens, they are (unknowingly) eating our fruit.

The fruit’s seeds become embedded in their hearts where the Holy Spirit begins to cause behavioral and attitudinal changes to occur. And, with prayer, some of these people will choose to have God lead their lives. An additional bonus is that even people who never choose to give their lives to God, their behavior also improves (if only when they interact with us). Why? Because God’s principle is true and affects everyone. I’ve had hateful people act civilly towards me because of the behavior I exhibit.

Caveat: We are also aware that some people will be convicted of their negative behavior when they are in our presence. This may not cause them to respond in kind. It may just cause them to be silent and/or avoid us. In addition, exhibiting spiritual fruit will not necessarily cause unbelievers to completely cease all negative behavior. Remember, they are governed by a different lord. Still, our fruit causes our environments to respond in kind overall. This is a law. All fruit must reproduce after its own kind.

In summary, God uses people to minister to other people. He uses us to extend salvation and He uses us in the conversion process, as well. If we want our environments to improve, we often just need to fill our fruit baskets before we interact with people. Sometimes our environments are negative because we have not been allowing people to eat from our fruit basket (in some cases our baskets are low on ripe fruit).

How awesome it would be for us, as Christian leaders, to make a commitment to allow God to develop the fruit of the Spirit in us so that we can be more effective in improving our environments using “fru4 ministry.” It’s a healthy and tasty way to change our worlds. ~PIP~

Joyce M. White, MSW – CEO Leadership Living, Inc.

selfishness, our self righteousness, our pride, our slothfulness. Declare war on our unfaithfulness, our envy, our fretfulness. Declare war on our callousness, our belligerence, our stubbornness. Declare war on our self-conceit, our self-exaltation, and our self-glory.

We will, if we take this directive seriously be spending more time in prayer, not that others would change, or that situations would change, but that *we* would change, that we would be sanctified. We will be seeking God for a change in our hearts, not a check mark on our wish-list. We will be seeking God for a pruning of our wayward branches. We will be seeking God for light to be shed on the things about ourselves that we've hidden from ourselves.

We will no longer accept a half-hearted Christianity. We are not supposing that our “seeking” alone gets the job done. But it is a necessary, first step. I believe that we’ll agree that if there's anybody half stepping (in our relationship with God) it is *us*, not God.

I take issue with the phrase “nobody's perfect,” when used in such a way as to comfort us in our ungodliness, in our unfaithfulness. God declares in His word that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. The same God commands us to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. Instead of asking God what manner of perfection is being afforded us in the sanctification and power of His Holy Spirit, and instead of asking God to bring us to that perfection. We've gone from declaring that “nobody's perfect,” to declaring “nobody can be perfect so don't even try.” This is no longer acceptable. We as Christians cannot disagree with scripture. We cannot overlook some of the simple directives given us in scripture. We cannot redefine words according to our liking. We will do this no more.

So I'm asking you to go with me on this. Seek the Father for this reality. Seek for sanctification beyond your wildest imagination. That's what I'll be doing. Everything that is not like God is to be brought subject to the authority of God, in the name of Jesus.

Also, we appreciate your questions and comments concerning any and everything we write in this newsletter, and also about anything pertinent to the issues that we raise, and address. The email address for those questions and comments is on the last page of each newsletter, along with the web address. -LATT-
David L. White

seems to have become the encapsulation of our expression of “*repentance*.” Unfortunately, being “sorry” does not cause a corresponding change in one’s behavior. What we call *repentance* today, is the same as a basic “apology.” But biblically, they are not the same.

True *repentance* is a Kingdom principle by which reconciliation is facilitated. *Repentance* facilitates reconciliation between man and man; as well as reconciliation between God and man.

In the Kingdom, it can be said this way: “*repentance* is to so agree with God on a particular truth as to align one’s self (in word and deed) with that truth.” In the Kingdom, there is only one type of *repentance*. That is a *repentance* that results in such a change in the posture of the heart so as to be reflected in one’s behavior.

WHO NEEDS TO REPENT?

If it is true that the Kingdom definition of *repentance* means that one so agrees with God as to align one’s self (in word and deed) with truth.” Then it follows that *whoever* is out of alignment with truth needs to *repent*; needs to change; needs to restore alignment.

Whichever areas of our lives are out of alignment with truth, we need to *repent* for them (change directions) and be reconciled to God and reconciled with truth.

See this example of repentance: A certain man had two sons. To one the father said, “Son, go and work in my vineyard, today. The son said, “I will not.” He later *repented* and went to work in the vineyard.⁽¹⁾

This is a very full parable:

- It says to us that repentance is not just for strangers and unbelievers; sons *repent*.
- It teaches that repentance is required when we fall out of line with the Father.
- It shows that the natural outworking of *repentance*, is a change of both heart and behavior.

WHY AND HOW FREQUENTLY?

Asking “why” a person needs to repent; is the same as asking “why” a fallen human being needs to change (and to be changed) in order to be reconciled with a Holy God. When you look at it that way, the question kind of answers itself, doesn’t it?

How frequently should we repent? There was a discussion between Jesus and Pete,⁽²⁾ where Peter asked, “How often shall my brother sin against me and I be obliged to forgive him?” When I hear Jesus’ response to Peter’s question; this is what it sounds like to me. “As often as your brother is genuinely repentant and desires to be reconciled to you; then forgive.” Why? “Because then I [God] am encouraged (pardon the expression) to be reconciled to you each time you approach Me in repentance;” *quid pro quo* (this for that).

Here is another beautiful “key of the Kingdom;” to repent is to “agree with God.” It is to say, “Lord, You are right ... about me; ... about You; ... about sin; ... about righteousness. You are right ... about everything; and I believe I *get it* now. I am now ready to change; I am now ready to “do it Your way.” There you have it; both the “words and the deeds” of reconciliation.

IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS?

In a word, “Yes.” Here are some of the most precious relationships between *repentance* and *forgiveness*.

In the secular stratum, it is our thinking that *repentance* ought to precede *forgiveness*. We believe that *whoever* needs to receive *forgiveness*, ought to offer *repentance* first. Right?

In the Kingdom (and in the dictionary), there is a sense in which, *forgiveness* precedes *repentance*. Although repentance is a necessary prerequisite to forgiveness, in the Kingdom; forgiveness was made available first. You’ll recall that the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world.⁽³⁾ Although we must appropriate it (through *repentance*); the Lord had already made *forgiveness* abundantly available in Christ Jesus. The operative word here is “available.” The Lord is willing to grant *forgiveness* if we are willing to *repent*. *Repentance* and *forgiveness* have a co-dependent relationship; a sort of “*sin quo non*” proximity. It is the case that where one does not exist, the other is necessarily nonexistent. Be certain, that where genuine *repentance* does not exist, then *forgiveness* is not granted; nor can it be. This is a fundamental Kingdom principle. (Oh, I’m sorry, was that your toe that I was stepping on; here I’ll move then.)

(Very Strong) Disclaimer: Repentance is one of the Kingdom principles that has a very

different “horizontal application” from its “vertical application.” Please listen very, very carefully here.

Horizontal Application

Horizontally (man-to-man), we ought to repent (cease and desist; and be reconciled) when we incur an infraction with our fellow human being. However, whether or not the offender *repents* we may horizontally extend *forgiveness*. Why? Because we NEED vertical *forgiveness*; and the Law of Sowing and Reaping governs *forgiveness*. This is another Kingdom principle.

Vertical Application

Vertically (God-to-man), we must repent (turn around; and be reconciled) when we are out of alignment with God; when we are misaligned with truth. However, there is a sense in which God is not at liberty to step over *repentance* and *forgive*. Why? It is because the delicate relationship between *repentance* and *forgiveness* is inherent in the very nature of God. For God to side-step *repentance* in order to *forgive* someone; would necessitate that He set Himself at odds with Himself. As we can appreciate, that will not happen.

That being said, let’s personalize this concept: You’re married and your spouse is cheating on you. When you bring it to their attention: they say “I’m sorry, can you ever *forgive* me?” And you say (very willing to *forgive*, because you love them), “So it’s over? You’re going to end the relationship with this other person? When are you going to break the news to them?” And much to your surprise, your spouse says, “Well, I don’t know about all of that; I just wanted you to forgive me. I didn’t want you to be angry with me; that’s why I apologized.” You think to yourself; “Let me see if I have this right: you have not intention of changing, you simply want me to indemnify you.” The temperature in the room gradually (but rapidly) begins to spike upward. You begin to count down backwards from one million (very slowly), so that you don’t do or say something that you will not be able to recover from.

Lest you misinterpret this example as relinquishing you from your responsibility to extend *forgive*; go back and reread the above Disclaimer very carefully.

You can see “up close and personal,” the discord in the heart when genuine *repentance* does not accompany a request for *forgiveness*. Now, our Lord has some things more to say about *repentance*.

When the Lord was talking to the angel of the church at Pergamos.⁽⁴⁾ He said, I know that you have been positioned in a very fierce location (they were in close proximity to Satan’s seat of authority). He said, I see that you have kept the faith, and you have kept My name. H-O-W-E-V-E-R, there are a few places where you [Pergamos] are out of alignment with truth. And our Lord’s response to that misalignment was “Repent, or else...” Flashback (to the prior question): Why did He command them to *repent*? Because He cannot grant *forgiveness* where there is no *repentance*.

When the Lord spoke to the angel of the church at Thyatira⁽⁵⁾ again He used the “sandwich” approach to constructive feedback. He said, “I see your works of faith and charity. N-E-V-E-R-T-H-E-L-E-S-S, I have a “bone to pick with you.” You tolerate the spirit of Jezebel to hold a place of influence over the body of believers. Now “where sin is abundant, grace is much more abundant;”⁽⁶⁾ therefore I gave her plenty of time to repent. But she wouldn’t repent.

Why does our Lord keep (*pardon the expression*) harping on *repentance*? It is because the Lord wants to *forgive*. But the law of the Lord is *perfect* (it won’t change); therefore it is the soul that must be converted; it is the soul that must change (repent).

There are many, many more instances. But I’m impressed that the Lord used these two scriptural examples in particular. Because what He is saying to the angels of the seven churches in Revelations; He is saying that same thing to us (individually and collectively).

Repent, or else ... I cannot forgive you.

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, SMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV)

- ⁽¹⁾ Matthew 21:28-31
- ⁽²⁾ Matthew 18:21-22
- ⁽³⁾ 1 Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8
- ⁽⁴⁾ Revelation 2:12-16
- ⁽⁵⁾ Revelation 2:18-22
- ⁽⁶⁾ Romans 5:20

different paradigm. The things that we would presently “sell our souls” to have (or to be); will be less than a memory. For many of us they will be even a loathsome memory, at that. For some of the things left undone in this life; we will bless God for His wisdom in closing those doors. There will be some things that we thought we could not live without. We’ll then appreciate the fact that we did not get them after all; although they seemed (at that time) to be the most important objective.

The people, the places and the things that the Lord used (or allowed) to humble us, or prove us and to show us what is really in our hearts;⁽²⁾ will be like treasured tokens and strokes of love upon the canvas of our recollection. Our pains and heartaches will be some of our most precious memories; for they will have been the instruments with which the Lord brought us to be conformed into the image of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We will, there, see the Master’s hand; as He weaved this beautiful tapestry that was our life on this earth.

The commandments and directives that the Lord had given, in this life, that we were reluctant to fulfill, will be hurtful omissions of obedience, as we see the weight of their intended reward. The character left undeveloped; the heads left uncrowned; the kingdoms and authorities given to others, because we buried our talent. Will any of those rewards have been intended for you?

My friends, I think we have this “world” on backwards. We are supposed to be wearing this “world” as a loose garment; ready at any time (and at all times) to cast it aside⁽³⁾ to honor God. There is a sense in which, the only use this “world” has for us, is to prepare us for the next. If this “world” does not prepare us for the next, then it will most certainly have been not only a “dream;” but a very bad one at that (spelled “eternal nightmare”): “la vida es sueño, mal (muy mal).”

Now don’t mistake me to be saying that we are not supposed to actually “live” this life; or “enjoy” it even. There are plenty of amazing opportunities for that. However, I believe that we’ll find (and very shortly here) that we’ve been “majoring on the minors; and minoring on the majors.” The things that the Lord holds dear, we lightly esteem (humility, love, obedience, etc.). The things that He abhors, we admit, and in many instances these are our primary focus

(i.e., the cares of this life). We have been so acculturated by this world that the idea of separating ourselves from it is almost blasphemous. Not good, not good at all. You’ll remember that when God first called Israel out as a chosen people, He inculcated their need to remain distinguishable from the other nations of the world.⁽⁴⁾ There is a sense in which historic Israel is prototypical of the present-day Church (no disrespect intended). That is one reason that it is important that we study their history. Their threads run through the fabric of our lives as well. You may not be able to see them all now, but they are present.

In the wilderness temptations⁽⁵⁾ when the enemy offered Jesus the “kingdoms of the world and the glory of them;” a number of subliminal, but interesting, events were occurring simultaneously. We often humor ourselves with the concept that “the kingdoms of the world, didn’t belong to the enemy; so how could he give them to Jesus.” (That’s another story) But this one thing the Lord desires to illuminate. Jesus didn’t *want* the kingdoms of the world or the glory of them. Jesus knew their end, He knew how they would turn out.⁽⁶⁾ He said, *My kingdom is not of this world.*⁽⁷⁾ Jesus spoke very specifically about one Kingdom, in two expressions: The Kingdom of Heaven and the Kingdom of God.⁽⁸⁾ This is our Lord’s kingdom. When Jesus walked this earth, He wasn’t looking to find His place in this world; He came to show us our place in His. There’s a woeful sense in which we don’t really want that, we want Him to show us how to “get all we can,” and to “can all we get” of this world. Our Lord’s response to that was that we ought not lay up for ourselves treasures on earth ... but to instead lay up for ourselves heavenly treasures; which are eternal and incorruptible.

Reality Check: Even if we did scale the summit of the Mt. Everest of success in this world. When we leave we will have to “give it back.” Because naked we came into this world; and naked and empty handed we must leave it. Then whose things shall these be that we have traded our lives to amass?⁽⁹⁾

A child is taken to an amusement park to enjoy the rides and games. The child enjoys every ride and wins something at every game; and when the park closes, the child is made to leave all of his winnings in the park. The

child is crest-fallen and confused. He relinquishes his grip with a smirk. And as he arrives home, he looks very diligently for his backpack to find the one trinket he managed to smuggle out of the park. Much to his dismay, he finds not only the token missing but his prized backpack is also gone. He must then admit to his Mother what happen, asking her if she had seen his favorite backpack. With a disappointed, but knowing glance, she tells her son that both of them are irretrievably lost. He wanted to know why. The mother, in a somewhat scolding manner, said, "You were told that you could not take anything out of the park." The mother explains that the amusement park was created in a specific way and for a specific time and purpose. The son says, "But I had such a wonderful time there; and I won lots and lots of stuff." "I know dear, but the adventure was not about the "stuff" it was about the lessons you learned playing with the "stuff." "It was about the person you became by the lessons that you learned," says the Mother. She goes on, "All of the things in the park were made specifically for the park. They do not exist outside of the park. And anything that is attached or associated to the park or its contents ceases to exist upon leaving the park."

In a very real sense, such is the "stuff" of this life. To a degree, the things of this world are actually "tools" they are not "possessions." They are "instruments" not "objects" in themselves. They are a "means to an end;" they are not the "end itself."

Everything in this life is intended to facilitate transformation; a means by which we are "conformed into the image of Jesus Christ." They are not meant to be "had," they are meant to be "used."⁽¹⁰⁾ We cannot take with us the things of this world that we "have;" but we can (and will) take with us the person that we "become." I think that we may be reading the "story of our life" upside-down. (That may just be my opinion, but somehow I don't think that it is.) At some point, we will all have to leave "the park." Please let's not deceive ourselves; if we leave here "empty handed," then we'll be "empty" when we arrive on that distant shore.

A bride is supposed to meet her Bridegroom with a

dowry. It is the custom that once two are betrothed to each other, a whole new series of transactions follow. The Bridegroom goes away to prepare a place for the bride.⁽¹¹⁾ And the bride assembles her dowry.⁽¹²⁾ Where the bride is responsible for the dowry; it was customary that the Father of the bride help finance her dowry. In all of His Faithfulness, our Father has done just that. And in an expanded sense, He has done that for both the bride and the Bridegroom. He provided the means of our betrothal via the Plan of Salvation. He has provided the jewels of our adoring, via the sanctification and justification of the cross. He has procured our wedding attire via the glory of His resurrection. And He has secured our means of transportation to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb via our translation. For it is said that "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed."⁽¹³⁾ He has provided a copy of the marriage covenant (Bible) and He sent an Emissary (the Holy Spirit) to help prepare the bride for the coming wedding. Now, all the while that the Bridegroom is away; the bride remains in the place of her birth, and is prepared there for the returning Bridegroom. All of this the Lord does that "He might present to Himself a glorious bride, without spot or wrinkle..."⁽¹⁴⁾

La vida es sueño. Life is very much like a dream, and then we wake up. *LW*

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

Scripture References - King James Version (KJV), unless otherwise stated.

⁽¹⁾ 5/31/10 from

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_is_a_Dream

⁽²⁾ Deuteronomy 8:2

⁽³⁾ Genesis 39:12

⁽⁴⁾ Deuteronomy 7:1-7

⁽⁵⁾ Matthew 4:8-10

⁽⁶⁾ Revelation 17:17

⁽⁷⁾ John 18:36

⁽⁸⁾ Matthew 4:17 Luke 21:31

⁽⁹⁾ Luke 12:20-21

⁽¹⁰⁾ 1 Corinthians 7:31

⁽¹¹⁾ John 14:2-3

⁽¹²⁾ Definition and history of "dowry" from

<http://mw2.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/dowry>; on 5/31/10 and from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dowry> on 5/31/10

⁽¹³⁾ 1 Corinthians 15:50-54

⁽¹⁴⁾ Ephesians 5:27

❧ SUMMARY ❧

The Chief Cornerstone



“Dominion” is the “ox that knows its Master’s crib.”⁽⁴⁾ “Freewill” not only doesn’t know its Master’s crib; it doesn’t even believe it has a Master. “Freewill” admits of no governance, apart from self. It sings of its independence.

Son of My Wisdom



After reading these two parables and hearing all that the Lord was revealing about them I had one question really setting in. What is the fundamental difference between the vineyard in Isaiah, and the one in Matthew? I hadn’t actually asked the Holy Spirit yet, but as soon as I got my head around what the question was, He answered it: REGENERATION.

Precepts in Practice



We know that God can and does offer salvation to anyone who sincerely calls upon him. We also want to understand that salvation (forgiveness of sin & coming into the kingdom of God) is not the same as conversion (changing behavior from being led by the flesh to being led by the Spirit).

Boot Camp



Unfortunately, being “sorry” does not cause a corresponding change in one’s behavior. What we call *repentance* today, is the same as a basic “apology.” But biblically, they are not the same.

❧ SUMMARY ❧

The Leadership Corner

You may wonder what this topic has to do with leadership... EVERYTHING! We, as parents, will want to embrace the fact that we are the managers of our children’s education, career paths, and their destinies (to a large extent). Before creation, God put in place principles that position parents as the priestly overseers of our children.

Journey to Intimacy



Necessity may indeed be the “mother” of invention. And desperate times may certainly call for desperate measures. But as children of the Kingdom, we must receive our direction from the Throne. We must!! Or we will find ourselves, carried about with every “wind of doctrine.”

Love and the Truth



I recently heard a sermon from one of my favorite speakers. He said, “We must declare war on our flesh, war on our sin. We must declare war on our selfishness, our self righteousness, our pride, our slothfulness. Declare war on our unfaithfulness, our envy, our fretfulness. Declare war on our callousness, our belligerence, our stubbornness. Declare war on our self-conceit, our self-exaltation, and our self-glory.

Living Waters



In all of our three score and ten years, the brevity of this life will be reminiscent of a “mid-summer nights dream,” when this age is rolled up. And in the ages to come we’ll look back at this life with a completely different paradigm.

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