

Kingdom News

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

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Motto for the year of 2012

You are worthy, Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for You have created all things, and for Your pleasure they are and were created. (Revelation 4:11 *KJV adapted*)

The Chief Cornerstone



The 5 W's of Life (*Where?*)

Over the past few editions, we received grace from God as we meddled with the ultimate questions of ... What? ... Who? ... and When?

This month, it seems to please the Lord to "ruffle our feathers" a bit, as we hear Him on the answer to the ultimate question "Where?"

So, I asked the Lord, "Father, where ...?" His response to me was "... in *you*; in *Me*." Can I tell you that the answer literally shook me ... it scared me ... and interestingly enough it comforted me. *That* the answer somehow comforted me is still a mystery to me.

I would have thought that the answer to the ultimate "*Where*" question would have been "... in *God*;" or "... in *Him*;" or even "... in *Christ*!" right.

Chief Cornerstone

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The Leadership Corner *Leadership Living, Inc.*

Our Obedience Precedes His Providence

All scripture is KJV paraphrased.

It's Time to Come into a New Reality -

Disclaimer: While I don't usually include a disclaimer in this column, I need to do it this time. The information in this article is for mature believers who sincerely want the will of God to be done in their lives. It is for people who live their lives purposely seeking God. Anyone can read it, however, mature believers will be able to easily comprehend and identify with the message. Now we can proceed.

October marks the beginning of the fourth quarter of the year. It is usually at this time businesses and people review the activities of the year and start planning for the upcoming year. As believers, we can do the same thing. We can review with God what has happened during the year (from His perspective) and find out what we are to do to prepare for the upcoming year.

In preparation for this month's column God spoke a definite word to me that I believe I am to share with everyone. I've been reading the book of Ruth. Some people are familiar with the story of Ruth and how she was the great grandmother of King David. It is an interesting story to follow because we can see God's providence in many ways. We will use a portion of this

The Leadership Corner

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A Journey to Intimacy

Marriage: What is It?!?

May I share something with you that is, frankly, much larger and grander than I am?

I want to tell it to you the way it happened to me. Actually, I don't know how else to tell it. About 6-8 months ago, the Lord gave me a vision that I was talking to an audience of husbands and wives. Now I thought that was peculiar, because I'd often heard parents say, that they don't take advice from someone who has never had a child before. Likewise, I'd heard much the same from married couples; that they don't take counsel from someone who is not themselves, presently, married.

I always chuckled, because the scriptures that we most reference when we want to hear God on marriage, was written (as much as we can tell) by a single man, named Paul. And further, when the heat is really up in our marital relationships we run to a Man named Jesus, whom (if memory serves) was Himself also unwed. Very specifically, He has (in one sense) yet to receive His Bride; and I know that, because I am of that blessed event.

And so there I am standing before a sea of the faces of husbands and wives who have taken up the covenant of marriage.

You'll appreciate this: when I saw this vision, I asked the Father, could He be serious by showing me this. I said, "Father they won't want to hear from me, I'm sure." Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." ⁽¹⁾ Having thus been chastened, I listened as He gave me more.

I'll tell you in my words, what He said in His unique way.

The Lord said, "You quite misunderstand, the relationship of husband and wife. It is one of many relationships (i.e., instruments) that I use to fit the soul for an intimate relationship with Me. The marital covenant between a man and his wife, is particularly

precious to Me. Because, it has the most potential to mimic My relationship with Myself.

There are many types of relationship between two people. And I use all of them to discover and/or transform the soul of both parties in the relationship.

These are a few types of relationships (this list is by no means all inclusive):

- Enemies, Adversaries
- Neighbors
- Business Partners
- Colleagues, Associates
- Brotherhoods, Sisterhoods
- Friends
- Siblings
- Parent-Child
- Husband-Wife
- The Godhead

The relationships near the top of the list may be entered into casually, situationally (new word) or circumstantially. Or they may just come to be as a matter of course. Any two persons can sustain multiple types of relationships, simultaneously. Example: They can be both Colleagues and Adversaries. Or they can be both Spouses and Business Partners, etc.

The relationship between enemies or adversaries can often result from a "breach of trust." Here, we're not necessarily talking about an intentional "trust relationship." We're more so referencing that basic, human, "I-don't-look-out-of-the-window-every-time-my-neighbor-walks-out-of-his-front-door" kind of trust. This type of basic, human trust is lost between enemies, or adversaries.

The relationship between neighbors is more of a situational one. Few people get to pick any of their neighbors; and fewer still get to select all of their neighbors (smiling).

The relationship between business partners comes to be often by way of some verbal or contractual agreement. These involve stipulations regarding performance and its resulting remuneration.

As you can by now appreciate, I was mistaken, yet AGAIN. Boy, I'm glad this was not a real test. It seems that I'm failing on the right hand and on the left. It seems that I will be obliged to take this grade, again. This is wrecking my GPA.

When the Lord gave the answer "*in you; in Me*" admittedly the lights began to come on for me, in so many ways. It is still a daunting reality; but certainly one that brings more light. You'll notice that the Lord didn't simply say that "The answer to the ultimate *Where* question is ... *in us* only." Whew, *that* I appreciated. But He also didn't say that "The answer to the ultimate *Where* question is ... *in Him* only." Now, *that* gave me pause. If you would have asked *me* the ultimate "*Where*" question, I would probably have said "*in Him, we live and move and have our being.*"⁽¹⁾ That's just the point that the Lord is making, right: "*in Him ...we....*" **We** live and move and have our being, **in Him**.

Now, if we look a little further down that same road, we see that if *we are in Him*; then (of necessity) *He is in us*. Our Lord winked that to us, when He said, "*... as You, Father, are in Me, and I AM in You; that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that You have sent Me.*"⁽²⁾

There are many versions of the "*where*" question:

Question: Where can one find the answer to the impossible questions in life?

Answer: In us, who are in Him.

Or

Question: Where does one go for hope, in a world so dark?

Answer: Christ, in us, the hope of glory.⁽³⁾

There are countless many more, but let's look closely at this one.

Question: Where can one find the answer to the impossible questions in life?

Answer: In us: who are in Him. I dare say that the world will never be able to find the answer to the impossible questions in life, *in Him*; unless they can find the answer in *us*, who are *in Him*. Have you

ever looked at life and wanted to say, "This is impossible?" And as you looked around for answers, everything else around you was saying the same thing, "this is impossible?" See the disciples in a boat, on the sea.⁽⁴⁾ See the winds and the waves (*of life*) tossing tempestuously to and fro. See a Man, who lives and moves and has His being in God. Now, here a word: "*Peace, be still.*"

Here we find ourselves at a proverbial fork in the road (admittedly I'll presume a bit here). You don't mind, do you? On the one hand, we so desperately want to believe that the answer to the *Where* question is "*in Him*." Isn't it what we've been taught to believe? On the other hand, the Lord has given quite a different answer: "*in us, in Him*." Just here we have a choice. We may choose to return to our traditional way of thinking (i.e., that the answer to the ultimate *where* question is *in Him* alone). Or we may elect to hear God out on this matter. If you choose the former, then it is not necessary that you read any further (*smiling*); for you have your answer. But keep in mind, that if you do what you've always done; then you have what you've always had.

If you choose the latter, then follow me please (and do so, only to the extent that I follow Christ).

If we care about the answer to this question; then we MUST of necessity ask "why is the answer to the ultimate *Where* question "*in us; in Him*" versus simply "*in Him*." Well if the "*Him*" that comes to mind, in this consideration is "Our Father, Who art in Heaven;" then I share your dilemma [for it is a great one]. BUT if the "*Him*" that comes to mind, in this consideration is "*the Man, Jesus Christ*;" then that changes the whole game, doesn't it.

"Why?!" you ask.

Before we go there, may I take a brief detour? This was preciously fascinating to me; I wanted to share it with you. (A bit of trivia) The first "*who, what, why and where*" questions were asked by God; in the first 4 chapters of Genesis.

WHO: "Adam, *who* told you that you were

naked?⁽⁵⁾

WHAT: "Adam, *what* have you done?"⁽⁶⁾

WHY: "Cain, *why* are you so upset?"⁽⁷⁾

WHERE: "Adam, *where* are you?"⁽⁸⁾

Wait a minute ... why did God ask Adam *where* was he?

Well, prior to creation, of any sort (angels, men, etc.) there was no need for a "where" question, right.

There was God the Father, God the Word and God the Holy Spirit.⁽⁹⁾ We know where they were. They were *with* each other and they were *in* each other.

How do I know this? I overheard Jesus talking with the Father.⁽¹⁰⁾ Jesus said, "O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine Own Self: with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was...that they may be one, even as We are One."

There was a Garden. There was a man. There was a Tree. There was a Fall; and ever since that day, the one *Where* question that we've desperately needed answered is "Where are we?" Where do we stand with God? There were altars. There was a tabernacle. There were priests. There were sacrifices. Just a few of the many ways, by which we sought to know the answer to the "*where*" question.

By the wisdom of God, the plan of salvation from before the foundations of the earth involved "a man." One, like unto ourselves...a kinsman...a Man. It started with a man named Adam; it will end with a Man named Jesus. And all along the way, in this life, we will find ourselves ... *Where?* ... in either one of these men; or the other.

So the Lord tells us that the answer to the ultimate "Where" question is "*in us; in Him.*" In this world (which is where the question is being asked) every real "*where*" question will find its expression in *us; in Him*; the divine partnership.

If your "*where*" question is "where is my life going?" You may very likely find the answer to correlate with "*where* you are, in Him." I promise that *wherever your life is going*, will be directly related to *where you are in Him*. These two won't be far apart. How we relate to our world (*and vice versa*), will be the result of *where we are, in Him*.

The Lord is teaching us an extremely valuable lesson, one that may be very difficult to digest. It's easy to believe that our disposition in life is the result of the decisions and actions of others: the government, our bosses, our parents, our children, our spouses, etc. It is uncomfortable (*at best*) and terrifying (*at worst*) to confront the reality that *wherever* we are in our lives, is a direct result of where we are "*in Him.*"

One of the disheveling characteristics of the "*in you; in Him*" response to the "*Where*" question is that it places upon us a grave and weighty responsibility. Now we can seek to disavow this reality and go on with our lives. But let it be known that *ignoring the rain, doesn't keep you from getting wet*. You'd do well to take an umbrella. You can take up our responsibility and reposition yourself *in Him*. If you do, you'll find that EVERYTHING else in your life will submit to that reality; as it must.

Next month ... *Why?* or *How?* <CC>

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, SMHG

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

⁽¹⁾ Acts 17:28

⁽²⁾ John 17:21

⁽³⁾ Colossians 1:27

⁽⁴⁾ Mark 4:36-39

⁽⁵⁾ Genesis 3:11, slightly adapted

⁽⁶⁾ Genesis 3:13, slightly adapted

⁽⁷⁾ Genesis 4:6, slightly adapted

⁽⁸⁾ Genesis 3:9, slightly adapted

⁽⁹⁾ 1 John 5:7

⁽¹⁰⁾ John 17:5, 22

Wherein We Stand...

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 5:1-2

story to illustrate what God is saying to us as we enter into the fourth quarter of 2012. But, first I want to share the direction God gave me.

The Father told me that fourth quarter 2012 will begin a new reality for the people of God everywhere. On His calendar, October marks one of those times the scripture refers to as “the appointed time.” There are some major things going on in the kingdom of God, some of which we are not fully aware of. That’s ok because we would do well to focus on how we can continue to align our lives with what God places on our hearts to do.

This “New Reality” has to do with God’s providence. It is based (in part) on the faithfulness and obedience we have demonstrated in response to what He has been instructing us to do earlier this year. In the first three quarters of this year there were specific things we, as the people of God, were supposed to be engaged in. These would have been things God placed on our hearts.

Some assignments God gave us were mainly *spiritual* in nature like spending more time in His presence, practicing patience with other people, and learning to use our words wisely, etc. Other assignments would have been more *practical* in nature (still with a spiritual foundation – because everything we do has a spiritual foundation). These tasks could have been things like making a commitment to organize our home or work life, taking a class, moving from one area to another, or starting a business.

Regardless of what the tasks were specifically, the point is that God gave each of us directives that we were to follow. We may not have understood that He was doing it, but we knew there were things on our hearts we were feeling needed to be addressed. Can anyone identify with this? If not, just keep reading.

Now, as we felt these nudging’s (sometimes soft and sometimes quite forceful) to do certain things we had to make decisions about whether or not we would follow through. In the situations where we generally and prayerfully did what was on our hearts (based on our believing we were to do these things), it was accounted as obedience.

Let’s pause for a moment to reflect on some of the key directives God gave us earlier this year. Some of the directives I received from God included moving our agency from one location to another. In the midst of

this process, our staff had to work from home for two months until the new place was ready. This was very uncomfortable and quite a challenge. Another directive was for me to discontinue certain programs our agency was providing to narrow the focus of the agency. We really had to seek God on this one, but we came to terms with it and followed through.

As you reflect on your own experiences it may seem that some of God’s instructions didn’t make sense at the time. Some things may have seemed impossible to do, or you were put in an awkward position. We know, as mature believers, that God does not hesitate to direct us to do things that take us almost completely out of our element. He will say things that might make the common person’s eyes glaze over. But, because we have a history with Him, we know we have to do what He has instructed, and that He will guide us through each hurdle (as uncomfortable as they may be).

So, this is how the first three quarters of 2012 rolled out. We did a variety of things based on what we believe God guided us to do. In some cases (dare I say all cases), we may have felt there was no connection, or even a contradiction, between the various tasks He gave us. I’ll offer a personal example. One of the things God told me to do was to apply for five specific grant opportunities back in the first and second quarter of this year. I believed I had heard Him, so I followed through.

Low and behold, we were denied four of the grants (we are still waiting to hear back on one of them). When I received the denials it hurt. Naturally I thought we would be approved for at least one of the grants. I also want to add that we had to have an external audit performed in order to submit one of the grants that we were not awarded. Further, during this time God “forced” me to make some critical decisions in my personal life.

Shortly after these events happened is when God directed us to suspend three of the programs our agency was running. This left us focused primarily on our job skills training program (which we had started in January 2012 – because God told us last year to implement it). Now, these events seemed to be contradictory to me because although we didn’t get the funding, we need to run programs in order to apply for future funding. And the job skills training program was the newest one we had, but it was the one He told us to focus on.

This is a great place for us to turn our attention to the scripture to understand what God has been up to earlier this year, and what He has planned for fourth quarter. In the first chapter of the book of Ruth we get a background on Naomi's family composition and the events that led to her leaving Bethlehem and moving to Moab with her family (famine in her homeland). We learn that Naomi had a husband and two adult sons. In Moab both sons got married to Moabite women. Interestingly enough, while in Moab all the men in the family died (Naomi's husband and her two sons).

Once this happens, Naomi decides she will return to Bethlehem and her people. She had heard that the famine was over and things were getting back to normal. Naomi urged her two daughter's-in-law (Orpah & Ruth) to go back to their families in Moab and find new husbands for themselves. Orpah went back to her family, but Ruth was insistent on staying with Naomi. For some reason, she felt this is what she was supposed to do. As a result, Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

Once they returned to Naomi's house, Ruth said she needed to get to work so they could have food. She told Naomi she would glean in the fields behind the reapers. Her plan was basically to go to whatever field she could find where she would be allowed to glean. Because she was a foreigner, she didn't know anyone or which areas to go to.

Here is where the intrigue heightens. In the book of Ruth, chapter two and verses one through three, we learn of what happened when Ruth followed the tasks she felt she was to do. Verse three is very telling. It says, "And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and it happened that she ended up in a field that belonged to Boaz, who was a close relative to Elimelech (Naomi's deceased husband)."

The book of Ruth lets us know that Boaz was a very wealthy man. He had many servants and property. To make a long story shorter I'll let you know that Ruth and Boaz ended up getting married and the very field Ruth gleaned in, she later owned (along with a host of other properties).

Armed with this information, let's return to a seemingly insignificant caption in verse three. "She went and she came..." When Ruth planned to follow her heart and begin the task of gleaning (obedience),

the scripture says "she went." Then we find that she unknowingly "happened" to go to a field that she would later own. In reference to this piece, the scripture says "she came." This is the providence of God.

We understand that Ruth's going to glean in the field was one of many tasks of obedience that she did. Remember, she left her home country and her birth family to follow Naomi. She even accepted Naomi's God as her own. She stayed with Naomi tending to her needs because she felt compelled to do so. These were acts of faith and obedience.

As we read the remainder of the book of Ruth we can easily see how the providence of God was at work. We must also realize that God's providence was directly tied to Ruth's obedience. Again, the scripture says "she went" (Ruth's obedience) and "she came" (God's providence).

Let's apply this principle to the situations we are in right now. For the first three quarters of 2012 God had given a variety of directives for us to follow. At times it may have felt unnerving. When we did what God told us to do earlier this year, in essence, "*we went*" (our obedience). Now, we have come to the fourth quarter of 2012 and it's time that "*we came*" (God's providence).

Now it's time for us to see how God has determined to bring us into His new reality. *Hear the word of the Lord.* We are about to experience God in ways we have never heard of before (in our individual lives). Yes, we may have read how God did extraordinary things in biblical times, but now we are about to experience these same types of encounters. Why? It's time.

On God's calendar we have come to the "appointed time" for Him to reveal Himself in ways we have not previously known Him. He will completely transform our environments. So, buckle your seat belts. We are about to enter into a new phase of our journey. It will look and feel very different than what we were used to. And know this; we are right now entering into God's "barley harvest."

This means He will do in us, with us, and through us things He has longed to do. He will utilize us as instruments in our families, churches, and communities in ways that may make our minds stagger. Now is the time for us to experience God's providence in a new

way.

Ok, all of this sounds great. But, how do we prepare ourselves for what is about to happen? Here we go. Because we have not experienced God in this new way, we will need His guidance (as usual) to effectively maneuver in this phase. We will set aside time to chat with Him about this truth. We will ask Him what He wants us to do and how we are to align our thoughts, behaviors, schedules, and resources to agree with what He is about to implement.

As we do these things, God will reveal to us how the activities of the first three quarters of this year have laid the foundation for what He is going to do next. He will clarify and redefine our perspectives and our expectations. And, He will do things that we have never seen Him do.

Are you ready? If you are not ready, you have just a brief time to get ready because God is moving according to His calendar. Therefore, we must get in synch with what He is doing.

It's going to be awesome! ^[LL]

Joyce M. White, LMSW

Whose Watching You!?!?

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

Hebrews 12:1-2

The relationship between colleagues or associates develops often through shared projects, activities, school-, military- or work-centric tasks or duties.

The relationship within a brotherhood and a sisterhood is wrapped around a common creed, an oath, a philosophical worldview, a set of shared beliefs, etc.

The relationship between friends can develop from "transactions in things common" to the parties. These relationships are (*or they ought to be*) very intentional. In the scriptures, friendship is akin to two people sharing a bit of their soul; think David and Jonathan. ⁽²⁾ True friendship; according to the scriptures, involves sacrifice. (*More to come on that at another time, and in another place.*)

The relationship between siblings is a gift. It is an endowment, of sorts; it is a sacred trust. The Lord chooses our siblings for us. Not even our parents choose them, although they do influence the particulars. Allow me to trespass a bit, will you. The fact that some don't have a particularly savory relationship with their siblings does not, in any way affect, mitigate or otherwise repeal this endowment or its resultant responsibilities. We will still be accountable for this trust. I know, I know... we so loathe the idea of being responsible for something that we didn't get to choose. Sorry, the Will or Wisdom of God is not democratic. And if we're honest with ourselves, much of life is like that. We have to obey laws, we didn't legislate. We must (for all intents and purposes) pay taxes we didn't levy; and the list goes on. Along the way, we find ourselves responsible for people, places and things; where we had no influence over their coming into being. Some of these responsibilities are clearly defined, some are up-close and personal, some are imposing; others are not so much so. When the scriptures tell us that the strong are obliged to bear the infirmities of the weak; this was included. The "I can't's" have a responsibility to the "I cannot's." (Not to be confused with the "I

Journey to Intimacy

continued on page 8

don't want to's.")⁽³⁾

The relationship between parent and child is another gift, another sacred trust; imposed upon us by the Sovereignty of God. I know you thought because you laid down, and got up pregnant, that the child was the result of your "sovereignty." That's why you say things, to your child, like "I brought you into this world, and I will take you out." Agreed you may have picked the time, the place and the partner (*even that's questionable*). And granted that's a small set of accomplishments. But Who decided which seed would germinate and which egg would fertilize? Who appoints each man his soul? Starting to see the pendulum swing the other way? That's right, the Lord chooses. Lest we become confused: *God made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth ... He gives to all life, and breath, and all things. He has made, of one blood, all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth. He has determined their times (a time to live, and a time to die); and appointed them beforehand; even the boundaries of their habitation. He did this so that man should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though He really is not very far from every one of us. For truly, in (and by) Him we live, and move, and have our being.*⁽⁴⁾

When we look at the relationship between a husband and a wife, rarely do we use words like "imposed." It is generally the case that both parties choose. It is nevertheless a sacred trust, even a covenantal trust.

Now all, and each, of these types of relationships have a transcendent purpose (in the eyes of God). All relationships (including that of enemy or adversary) are strategically ordained or allowed for the primary purpose of discovering the soul of man. They each serve (some very painfully so) to try (*test or provoke*) the soul; so that we may by these relationships "find ourselves."

A few examples (*again, not every situation is represented here*): The relationship between us and our adversaries (among other things) discovers for us whether or not we're willing to die for another; or suffer being wronged. And you thought the other person was just being hateful, to

you. While you may, yourself, have caused (or contributed) to the rift; the Lord nevertheless allowed it. He wanted to see if you would be willing to die.⁽⁵⁾ No He's not being particularly masochistic or dis-favorable, to you. God taught us this way through Jesus, and His predecessors, did He not. Of course, He did. The son-ship of Jesus Christ was vetted in his suffering offense; through His being wronged and taking it quietly.⁽⁶⁾ What do you mean where did I get that from? It's in *your Bible*, isn't it? (smiling) Oh, it's there, along with dozens, or more, other similar situations. What's that you say, Psalm 105?

He [God] sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant. Whose feet they hurt with fetters (suffering wrongfully): he was laid in iron. Until the time that His word came: the word of the LORD tried him.⁽⁷⁾

Why is it this way? Why all the talk of pain and discomfort? Well, one reason is because "*men are born; but sons are resurrected.*" If all you want to be is a "*man*;" then have that. But if you want to be a "*son*" you must die.

Whew!! That was quite a detour. All of that to say that even our relationships with our adversaries have their place. They are assigned value, if properly so handled, as that God might be glorified, even in them. We have been taught to hate them, but I believe that may be incorrect. I believe that we may risk the loss of something quite precious in the transformation of the soul, when we hate the things that we should love and vice versa. Society says, "It's okay to hate your enemies." But God says "love your enemies."⁽⁸⁾ For in so doing, we glorify God. And we make the fact that we have enemies, also glorify God. It is then known, to the principalities and powers, that we are the children of our Father, which is in heaven.⁽⁹⁾

Sidebar: We ought to establish it as one of our life's missions to MAKE everything in our lives glorify God. I mean E-V-E-R-Y-T-H-I-N-G. The good, the bad and the ugly; don't waste one event. Make them all bow the knee to the Sovereign Lord God, and pay Him

homage. Time out, for licking our wounds and crying "woe is me!!!!" Make every event in your life proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father. ⁽¹⁰⁾

Oh my, I seemed to have gotten lost along the way. Where was I? Oh yes. The Lord said, above, that the relationship of marriage is one of many relationships (i.e., instruments) that He uses to fit the soul for an intimate relationship with Himself. So we see how we may have quite misunderstood His gift of marriage. We have been duped into thinking that the covenant of marriage is strictly for "this world." I challenge you otherwise. The covenant of marriage is preparation for the "world to come," much unlike any other relationship. Other relationships can be entered into "almost by accident." Not so for marriage. What is that? Is that your stomach that I hear? Does this reference to marriage, make your stomach churn; because you are finding it hard to believe? Or do you find it too deep a well to draw from? If so, perhaps it's because your definition of marriage is temporal (*translation: carnal*) versus eternal.

No ... no ... hear me out. Yes, I am aware of the scripture that says essentially, that what we presently know of the marriage relationship will not survive the death of the spouses. Here, when I contrast the *temporal* versus the *eternality* of marriage; I'm not talking about the "... until death do us *apart*" part. I'm talking about *what* the two persons in the marriage relationship are intended to "*become*," as a result of the marital union.

The relationship of marriage is the only relationship that God requires a Covenant of Holy Matrimony. I don't just mean ceremonially or as a statutory requirement; I mean transcendently.

Marriage is the (second) ultimate sacrifice that two people make. The first and most ultimate sacrifice is our relationship with our Lord. According to the Kingdom precepts of marriage; each spouse **MUST** give up his/her life. In a very real sense, they each die as an *individual*; and are "born into" one flesh. Unfortunately the reason that we don't see this walked out among the body of believers, is because we are still walking after

the counsel of the ungodly. We are still standing the way of sinners. We're still sitting in the seat of the scornful. Our delight is not in the law of the Lord, concerning marriage. ⁽¹¹⁾ If it were, our marriages would be like trees, planted by the rivers of water. Bringing forth its fruits in season, whose leave are not supposed to wither.

Unfortunately, we take our queues, on marriage, from the world, that's the *first* problem. The *second* problem is like unto it; it is that **NOBODY** wants to die; we just want to sleep in the same bed. And we want the one to cook and the other to take out the trash.

We have the same marriage counselors as the world; we have the same divorce attorneys as the world. ⁽¹²⁾ Basically, we want a king just like the other nations, don't we? ⁽¹³⁾

In the beginning it was not so. ⁽¹⁴⁾) God intends to use marriage to fit the soul of each spouse for its eternal destination; which is an intimate covenant with Himself.

May I get on your nervous for just a few minutes more? I'm sorry, are those your toes, I'm standing on? I'll be finished shortly.

An intimate relationship necessitates that each party gives up something of himself (*both parties are included here*). There is both a "giving up" and a "giving of" oneself to enter into intimacy. It's no different in our relationship with God. Both parties must give. And again, God has taken the first step. He has given Himself, unreservedly. Now we must "give up" and "give of" ourselves to enter into covenant with Him. Not so fast here, there is more. In order for the intimacy to be real, both parties must give "in kind." Here's the horizontal expression of that. For a marriage to succeed, it cannot be the case that one spouse is committed Monday through Sunday. But the other spouse is only committed "Monday, Wednesday, Friday and every other weekend." Sounds like a *custody battle*, huh ... because it is. The uncommitted spouse is confused about the custody rights of the marriage relationship. ⁽¹⁵⁾

Likewise in our relationship with God; He gave all. And if we intend to meet Him in that place of intimacy, we have to "cast in all our chips and fold." We must surrender, in kind. Marriage is the most perfect "horizontal" relationship that expresses this degree of interchange. It is a sacred trust.

Another "red flag" that screams our misunderstanding of the covenant of marriage is that we say we want to be intimate with God. But we won't be humbled by our spouse, or submit in a relationship that is far, far less demanding, than intimacy with God. You can't drink a cup of water, but you're running to the shore with a straw in your hand. Doesn't make sense does it. You may be able to "ride shotgun" with your spouse; who hasn't yet discovered that you're not yet "all in." Not so with God, intimacy with Him is a very narrow strait. If we're not "all in" He knows it before we do; and deals with us accordingly (or not).

Now before you have an "aahah" moment, (*and proceed to wag your finger in spouse's face*) this door swings both ways. One spouse's commitment is expressed in the word "submit;" the other spouse's commitment is expressed in the word "death."⁽¹⁶⁾ I'll let you work that out from here. But on the way out the door, I'll leave you with one question (*for both spouses*). "... For he that loves not his spouse whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"⁽¹⁷⁾

Absolutely, God will use *every* relationship to fit the soul, for Himself. But the one relationship that He has designed very specifically by which to do this was the marriage relationship. It was the *first horizontal* relationship He established. *And as I stretch to communicate this: Marriage will be the last "horizontal" relationship that He will consummate; as He presents to His Son, a Bride. In this final Word, He will have wrapped up every other legitimate relationship, unto Himself.*

Again, marriage most mimics the intercourse of the Godhead: Equals, deferring to each other. The Father, the Word and the Spirit are Equals. But the

expression of the Godhead (to us) is that of deference, the One to the Other.

When we talk about the "submissiveness" of the marriage relationship, the husband looks at the wife. And the wife looks at the husband. But both ought to be looking at the Godhead. Therein resides the sweetest, most sublime obsequiousness every revealed to man.

As we appreciate and submit to God's agenda for our marriages, this submission will change EVERY, SINGLE, OTHER area of our lives. As we see that the supreme objective of this temporal relationship called marriage is simply a "proving ground" for the making of Sons of God, we will be transformed by the renewing of our minds. -JH-

Sr. Editor, JoAnn C. White, sMHG

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

- (1) Jeremiah 1:6-7
- (2) 1 Samuel 18:1
- (3) 1 Corinthians 10:24; Romans 15: 1-3)
- (4) Acts 17:24-28
- (5) 1 Corinthians 6:7; Matthew 5:23-26
- (6) Hebrews 5:8
- (7) Psalm 105:17-19
- (8) Matthew 5:43-44
- (9) Matthew 5:45a; Ephesians 3:10, 13
- (10) 1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 2:11)
- (11) Psalm 1
- (12) 1 Corinthians 6:1
- (13) 1 Samuel 8:5
- (14) Matthew 19:8
- (15) 1 Corinthians 7:4)
- (16) Ephesians 5:22, 25
- (17) 1 John 4:20

Angels!!! What Angels?

Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Hebrews 13:1-2

✎ SUMMARY ✎

The Chief Cornerstone



By the wisdom of God, the plan of salvation from before the foundations of the earth involved "a man." One, like unto ourselves...a kinsman...a Man. It started with a man named Adam; it will end with a Man named Jesus. And all along the way, in this life, we will find ourselves ... *Where?* ...

The Leadership Corner

Now it's time for us to see how God has determined to bring us into His new reality. *Hear the word of the Lord.* We are about to experience God in ways we have never heard of before (in our individual lives). Yes, we may have read how God did extraordinary things in biblical times, but now we are about to experience these same types of encounters. Why? ...

Journey to Intimacy



Absolutely, God will use *every* relationship to fit the soul, for Himself. But the one relationship that He has designed very specifically by which to do this was the marriage relationship. It was the *first horizontal* relationship He established. *And as I stretch to communicate this...*

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