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Encouragement from S.A.M.

Shalom, Barbara,

As I write, it is snowing here: enough to be pretty but not yet a burden. We are giving thought to our Chanukah celebrations and the blessings they will bring. Comments from our community and our readers have been coming in about the stress people feel about facing the upcoming holidays and the people who do not yet understand why they have decided to forego the celebration of Christmas. It is a challenge for every family, yet perhaps more difficult for those single parents who must deal with an estranged spouse and their children's reactions going between two households.

We are so thankful to our gracious Messiah that He understands our imperfections, even when families break up. The question arises, for both leaders of fellowships and the members: how do we accommodate the needs of these families who have suffered such estrangement, as well as encouraging *all* families toward keeping the *moedim* in the midst of a culture that does not yet see? While Chanukah is not one of the commanded *moedim* from Leviticus, we have indications that Yahshua, THE Light of the world, kept it. We also understand that there are implications in this feast for all of us as we accept the challenge to remain faithful to YHWH and His righteous teachings through Yahshua, our Living Torah.

In Wisconsin, there has recently been much ado about a school that declared a Christmas celebration cancelled due to "religious content." This decision further stated that other songs for holidays such as Chanukah were acceptable, because they were more cultural than religious. This seems to have led to polarization and frustration as people are encouraged to limit their holiday greetings to "Happy Holidays!" so as not to offend anyone. But Christians ARE offended and are now challenging merchants to be bold and declare "Merry Christmas!" to "keep Christ in Christmas." (Barb wrote an article about this in 1999, when just getting serious about studying our Hebraic Heritage. It was published in the newsletter of the church she attended then. [Click here to read it.](#)) For those who understand the pagan activities associated with what we **had cherished** as the celebration of Yahshua's birth, we ask, "Where does this call to "boldly stand for Jesus' Birthday celebration" leave us? How does one model our Messiah's love and grace in the midst of this division and confusion? A discussion begins here today.

An Equipping Ministry

December 14, 2005

Overcoming Through Joy

Joy gives us the capacity to overcome trials in our lives. The right orbital prefrontal cortex is the command hierarchy. It may suffer damage through trauma and abuse, but it can also continue to grow throughout our lives as we are restored. The joy center knows and remembers through images and pictures--mainly faces. How we see ourselves is based upon the experiences we've seen.

The joy center is also the part of the brain that is the attachment center. Healthy attachments result in a secure sense of who we are. Attachment is a necessity. Unhealthy attachments will result in people who are insecure and imbalanced.

When a child has been ignored by the adults in

We will be concluding our series on Joy Bonds in this edition as well. Today, there is a listing of the most common kind of bonding that occurs when parenting is inadequate in various different ways. These effects can be life long if the individual does not intentionally address them. When people who have poor bonding/attachment skills can come into a community that is life giving and affirming, these effects can be minimized over time. While Yahshua is our ultimate Joy, we are often privileged to see glimpses of Him in the people He has placed around us as part of our encouragement to hold fast to that which is good until the perfect comes!

A QUICK NOTE: Have you tried to forward these emails or join the subscriber list and been unable to do it? We would appreciate hearing from you about any such problems so we can get them corrected. Thank you!

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Divided Families and Set Apart People



The call to come back to the ancient paths is being heard throughout the world today. As Lenny and Varda Harris's song, "Call to Ephraim" so eloquently says "heeding the call that You have been whispering in our ears" after watching over us during all

these years. Blessed is the family in which both parents are together and come into understanding of the call to obey our Living Torah Messiah and His Righteous Teachings, the Written Torah. When their children are small as this happens, the transition may be accomplished quite smoothly. Many joyful family times can be established in the release of old patterns of celebration to welcome in of the "new." In this situation, the stress seems to come from extended family members and friends. Husband and wife may experience a new closeness as they stand together in Messiah, withstanding the pressure placed on them. Being in a community of like-minded Torah observant couples and families is then a haven for them!

What about those families where one spouse is attentive and drawn into our Hebraic Heritage and the other isn't? We've addressed this in past issues but cannot fail to note the trials and difficulties of this kind of dividedness as well. If there is a lack of interest but no interference, this person may be able to spend time in a fellowship if there is one nearby and may even be able to include their children.

- Is your community sensitive to the need for encouragement and

his life, he will grow up in **avoidance** (always off) mode. One of the most difficult things in life is to love and not be loved in return. A person will learn to cover up and not pay attention to other people.

An **ambivalent** (always on) person has most likely been raised by parents who were always distracted. The parent's or parents' needs were more important than the child's. These people will be clingy, always looking for love and needing reassurance.

In cases of extreme trauma and abuse, a person will be highly disorganized and have a lot of fear, which can result in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or Dissociative Identity (Multiple Personality) Disorder. These traumatized children have learned to bond with scary people.

Spiritual adoption is one important way through which YHWH works in restoration. For people who did not have functional families as children, they can learn what it means to have loving, life-giving relationships through other believers. The wonderful thing about it is that this usually brings

inclusion of absentee spouses?

This can be especially difficult if the absent spouse is in any way hostile or critical. This can happen quite easily as lifestyle changes are made to honor His *Shabbat* and *moedim*. It can be a challenge for members and leadership to find ways to connect with the absent spouse to warmly include them but it is so helpful for the spouse already present! Perhaps people with common interests can find ways to connect with the spouse throughout the week. As they develop friendships they may be less critical of their spouses involvement. It goes without saying that any such efforts are always undergirded with prayer for the *Ruach's* leading! It is also often wonderful for the children when other adults in the community take an interest in them, their daily lives and spiritual growth. This, too, will reinforce Torah commands to love one another. Honoring His Righteous Teachings can really only be done in community, just as our maturity really only develops as we continue in life-giving relationships.

What about those families where there remains a single parent (so often Mom) with several children and an absent spouse? Now the challenges are multiplied as we all deal with alternating visitation schedules and an already difficult and often uneasy alliance for the children's well being. There are often fears of what coming into a Torah lifestyle will look like to the other parent and whether or not this would become an issue in future custody battles. There are struggles around traditional holidays and the *moedim*, *Shabbat*, and dietary observances. There may often be severe financial challenges, as we find in our local community.

- Is your community sensitive to the needs of these estranged family situations?

Some single parent families have trouble with basic living needs such as groceries and transportation costs. They may want to obtain teaching materials but be unable to afford their purchase. A common desire to celebrate the Feasts of the Lord can become quite complicated as what might seem ordinary extra expenses for some families is experienced as "impossible" for others.

- Does your community plan events that accommodate the needs of those with limited incomes?

Because there are so few opportunities for Torah fellowship in our area, we have people driving in from an hour or more. As is true for many in our local community, this can represent a hardship, especially in the days of escalating gasoline prices.

- How much help does a Torah fellowship accord one another when the needs are long term?

We don't have any specific answers to offer here: just the questions for consideration. Has your community absorbed people with limitations and difficulties such as these? or as is too often the case, in our previous congregations and here again in some Messianic fellowships, are such people allowed to slip through the cracks if they can't afford a middle class, or higher, lifestyle? How do we decide if some people are more or less "worthy" of ongoing assistance? Can we still apply a Biblical model in our current culture? What would it look like? This may be the kind of situation in which we find our spiritually adopted family members!

- When it comes to the transition into a Torah observant lifestyle for we

joy to both parties.

Maturity is an extremely important factor in **spiritual adoption**. We wouldn't want infants adopting children. Think of the people who have been instrumental in your life. As a young believer, I had many spiritual "moms" and "dads" who taught me and accepted me. I, in turn, as I have grown, have spiritually adopted struggling people. Maybe it's the grey hair, but I have several people who think of me as "Mom." I also have spiritual sisters, especially since coming into Torah understanding: there is a connection that goes beyond friendship.

In community, it is important to have people both above us and below us (in terms of maturity levels) so that we are giving AND receiving. Next time, we'll begin discussing the different levels of maturity. Begin to think of the people in your life to whom you can give and then from whom you can receive, finding joy.

Quick Links...

[Biblical Holidays](#)

["Is Christmas Christian?" article by Michael Schneider](#)

of Ephraim, are we not all on equally UNEQUAL footing?

Though we have the ideals pictured for us in what our lives and relationships "should" look like, have we not all come through much trouble? Having heard from family members of such divided families say that they have found some people treat them with disrespect for not being in a more "normal" family. Lest we forget, recent polls have now found the family with both parents and their children living together is no longer the majority. It seems to me that we are all coming out of the desert and all have less-than-desirable baggage. Yet we can be encouraged that our efforts to walk in set apartness will yield to the next generation who will have had much more of their own lifetimes steeped in Torah teachings. Thank You, Yahshua! There is hope!

- All of us are being called to "Come out of Babylon!" and all of us have the residue of our past choices clinging to our current life.

May we be found to stand together in ways that will fulfill our calling. That others may say, "See how they love one another." Whether it be divorce or a difference of expression of faith, may we be found faithful to uphold the arms of those who desire more of our Messiah, without isolating them in a second class status. May our support and obedience show itself in practical ways as well as in faith.

The person coping with divorce or difference of faith expression will often need repeated encouragement to stand firm in what they know to be His Truth.

- Although the issues are just the same as a couple would face, they often don't have that internal support of talking at home with an adult who "gets it."

They may be all too keenly aware of the consequences of past sins as they now see what a Torah observant family and community was designed to be! Some have told us that they feel a distinct emptiness as they now try to keep a *Shabbat* by themselves, knowing their children are grown and already on to their own lives, beyond our immediate influence. Oh how we yearn for our families to come along!

The transition process, as we have noted before, will probably be bumpy! No one of us will "get it all right" the first time. There are a multitude of decisions to make and obstacles to be hurdled, **especially that first year when every tradition and family expectation not kept seems to be highlighted as a betrayal**. Be watchful for the REACTIVITY and SENTIMENTALITY we have discussed before and stand calmly! Remember, we do NOT have to persuade anyone! The *Ruach*/Holy Spirit has that function.

Christmas or Chanukah? What kind of wrapping paper should I use? Do I display people's Christmas cards to me even if I no longer observe Christmas? Do I send Chanukah cards? Will my children be too confused if they celebrate the traditional holidays with their other parent and learn to walk in Torah with me? What do I say when people say, "Merry Christmas!" or "Happy Holidays!"? Take time to talk with one another about how your family handles these challenges and encourage one another, taking care not to fall into sarcasm or a critical spirit of those who do not yet know.

- Remember our Audience of One: Yahshua our Messiah! Look to Him when the confusions of life get overwhelming.

[First Year Torah
Observance Survey](#)

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This may seem like a trite conclusion to so much confusion yet the Truth is that He IS the Way, the Truth and the Life. He is not one bit surprised by our struggles with those around us and with our past traditions as we try to shed the things that we now know are not pleasing to Him. He has said that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. **BELIEVE IT!** When the confusion weighs you down, tell Him in prayer, alone or with a friend, just exactly what your struggle is. Confess fear, unbelief, self sufficiency and rebellion wherever you find it in yourself. He already knows anyway! This Messiah has seen firsthand how the shepherds have not always fed His flock as they should and He said He has compassion on His sheep. As you are coming along toward Him, and taking steps out of old lifestyles, be encouraged that HE is the One Who has promised that He will bring the sheep of the other folds and He will make them one in Him. He has said it and He will do it!

Keeping Your Joy Full!

Try setting aside one hour a week to nurture your joy. When the time comes, do something frivolous and spontaneous. If you play an instrument but haven't done so for a while, get it out! Blow bubbles or get out the coloring books and color with the children or grandchildren. For one hour, relax and be joyfull!

Proverbs 15:30 A cheerful look brings joy to the heart, and good news gives health to the bones.

Teleconference Announcements

HOLIDAY TELECONFERENCE: Our recent teleconference on Coping with the Holidays while coming into the *moedim* was a time of affirmation and support for the attendees. We have been asked to consider **hosting a regular teleconference specifically for women--widowed, divorced, single by choice--who are coming into the Torah lifestyle.** We are delighted to oblige, and intend to begin offering a monthly teleconference on a Sunday evening for this group specifically. Please let women know about this opportunity to share with other women across the country as they make all those decisions! Call the office to register, or email us!



MATURING IN MESSIAH TELECONFERENCE:

Marilyn Guffey will be offering a FREE Introductory Telephone Conference class on Monday, January 23 at 7:00 p.m. CST. This class is based on the principles of the *Life Model: Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You by The Shepherd's House.*

Because of struggles or abuse throughout life, people may have gaps in their maturing process that interfere with their productivity and relationships. This isn't their fault and the good news is--they're not stuck either!

Do you find yourself just "blowing up" for no reason, find it hard to confront people or to "fit in" groups? Do you have constant struggles in your relationships or have you ever heard "Awwww, just GROW UP!?" This group may have some answers for you.

Some of the topics covered are:

- How brain function plays a part in maturing and healing
- How Joy plays an important role in maturity
- The Stages of Maturity, the important tasks of each stage and the problems that result from uncompleted tasks
- Love Bonds vs. Fear Bonds
- What people can do to help one another to mature

This will be an introductory group. The only cost to you is a long-distance phone call. If you choose, you may go on to a 10-week class which will be offered at the cost of \$20 per hour class, two times per month or \$40 per month. This class is confidential. It will be conducted on a first-name basis.

[Read more about Maturity....](#)

About Us

Barbara L. Klika, MSW, LCSW, Personal Life Coach is a licensed mental health professional and founder of Set Apart Ministries, Inc., in practice since 1983 with an abiding interest in working with attachment/bonding and maturity issues for individuals, couples, and groups. She has been a congregational leader for over 20 years in several areas, including Bible Study and vocal and handbell choir direction. She is also a certified Bethel Bible Study teacher who has



participated in serious study of the Word since 1993 through such organizations as Precepts Ministries and First Fruits of Zion. She has completed basic coaching training through MentorCoach, Inc. and will be continuing work toward an additional Masters degree in coaching. Barb has provided the clinical leadership in pursuing the Life Model group and individual teaching and processing emotional and maturity issues for the past 3 years. She offers her gifts of exhortation, discernment, intercession and prophecy to the Body of Messiah, both locally and in our extended community via telephone and the Internet.

Marilyn T. Guffey, lay counselor, Personal Life Coach. Marilyn had been a congregational leader in her home church for over 20 years, providing Bible study, worship opportunities and lay counseling for women in transition for most

of that time. She has completed her basic coaching training through MentorCoach, Inc. Marilyn has been the coleader in the provision of group and individual teaching and processing emotional and maturity issues for the past 3 years. Marilyn is a serious student of the Word and has participated in and provided many Bible study opportunities, most recently with First Fruits of Zion and numerous additional Messianic Torah study materials. She thrives on offering her gifts of mercy, discernment, encouragement, intercession and helps and has a strong desire to support the Body of Messiah in growing in maturity and faith, both locally and in our extended community via telephone and the Internet.

Board Member (VP) and support person Janell Schroeder, BBA works professionally as a computer reports specialist for a very large transportation company. She has been instrumental in the founding of Set Apart Ministries, functioning as a support person for people going through trauma recovery. She has attended numerous training experiences in this area and has participated in the Life Model program since its beginning. Janell is a certified Bethel Bible study teacher as well as a certified Precepts Bible Study teacher. She has also been in leadership in her previous congregation as a member of church council and in Adult and Child Education She is currently working on her Bachelors Degree in Messianic Studies and plans to complete a Masters Degree through the Messianic Bible Institute Yeshiva. She brings her spiritual gifts of teaching and helps to our home Set Apart Ministries Community.

Board Member, Secretary Treasurer: Robert Klika, BS Bob currently works professionally as a supervisor in the area of milk sanitation for the Wisconsin Dept. of Agriculture. Bob has been a leader in previous congregations through service on church council as well as in men's ministries. He provides leadership in several areas of our home community, particularly in the areas of practical arrangements for gatherings, youth ministry and fun nights, and corporate prayer as well as keeping accounts and necessary organizational paper work. He completed his high school education in a Roman Catholic Seminary and has participated in Bible study since then through several studies, including the Bethel Bible Study series and Messianic Torah for the past 4 years through First Fruits of Zion and many additional supplemental materials. He offers his gifts of helps and administration in our home Set Apart Ministries community.

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