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Set Apart Ministries Inc. Newsletter

An Equipping Ministry

September 2005

Greetings!

Today we speak about how to respond to fears of legalism and continue our presentation of the maturity factors that affect our ability to handle relationships well. These factors are important for both leadership and members to address, and often far too complex to be able to comprehend in formal training sessions or just by reading about them. People tend to remember more when they can receive some specific input and then have an opportunity to put it to use. This is our hope in providing these brief articles on an ongoing basis. This past week we have been saddened by [the Barna report on the high percentage of those calling themselves "Christian" but whose own answers to questions pertaining to a Biblical worldview show them to hold views contrary to the Bible](#). It appears the apostate church system is falling ever more quickly. And our state of Wisconsin is high on the list. People who do not truly cling to Messiah may continue in membership for years without anyone ever realizing that they lack the personal faith and relationship in Yahshua to honor His Word and His commands. True covenantal relationships, however small, do provide the opportunity to know one another more intimately; to work through conflicts and misunderstandings, all the while knowing that one's heart attitude and that of your "opponent" is for each other's good in Messiah. How much more can we see the need to address our relationships and ability to come together in Messiah without leaving openings, spiritually, psychologically, emotionally and **relationally** for discord, and rebellion to take root?

All too often previous experiences of betrayal or inappropriate use of position or authority cause current problems while trying to reconcile concerns, even in small fellowships such as are common to our Messianic Believers. Sometimes, these difficulties are even MORE pronounced because of the limited size.

Maturing in Messiah



As believers in Messiah Y'shua and following Torah, we are being tested, tried and refined in these latter days. We encourage you to read the links to [C.R. Oliver's study on Judges](#) and last week's [Messianic Israel Alliance Torah Commentaries](#) by Carl and Julie Parker and Natan Lawrence. These articles spoke to our hearts and understanding as we continue developing relationships and considering maturity factors in relationships. By being involved in prayer, Torah study and continuing in perseverance, we know it is only through the power of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) that true maturity will be accomplished.

Today, we will conclude our study on *Reactivity*. As we have come into Torah understanding, many

When this happens, it can usually be discerned that people are responding in fear of the person or what they may do, rather than **confidence in Messiah IN THAT PERSON**. Dr. James Wilder calls these **FEAR BONDS**, which operate to cause division unlike **LOVE BONDS** that pull people together in confidence, even when differences occur! (From: [The Life Model: Living from the Heart Jesus Gave You](#)) We will address these matters in greater depth in the coming months.

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Refuting Fears of Legalism



In our First Year Torah Observance Survey, the initial results show that people experienced a high degree of difficulty dealing with fears of falling into legalism; either their own fears or the fears of those closest to them. For oneself, that fear will dissipate over time as one becomes more comfortable with the lifestyle changes. At first, to step out of line with what most of those around us are doing is daunting, to say the least. The plaguing fear is, "Is it really necessary for me to make these changes or have I been somehow tricked?" For me, Barb, it required both awareness of what the Torah actually teaches and Yahshua's declaration that He did not come to abolish it, taken in context, but also the blunt realization that many of the traditions I had grown up with and loved, actually were based in pagan practices rather than what YHWH described. Taken together, reviewed many times by me at least, these two lines of understanding came together and allowed me to break free of traditions that do not line up with YHWH's Righteous Teachings. One or the other did not seem to be enough to develop the momentum and understanding that finally led to the realization of the need to abandon my anti-nomian stance. Understanding that there was a name for our **traditional Christian stance, anti-nomianism**, (which means against the Law or without Law) helped to differentiate and diffuse the power of such a *terrible sounding label*. How does being accused of being "legalistic" compare to being accused of being "anti-nomian"?

- Labels rarely settle differences but may be useful to describe them.

Understanding that **legalism involves an unrealistic and at**

of us have been questioned by friends and family, finding ourselves not always acting in the God-honoring way we would desire.

"That's legalism (see today's article on Legalism issues), you're being deceived, you're twisting the scriptures, etc." It was/is difficult to have an open discussion about the new understanding being revealed to us. More than one person reacted to me trying to convince me I was wrong and I would be in the position of defending my beliefs. In the beginning, it wasn't always a pretty picture!

As we said last time, the more intense the reactivity becomes, the more damage that is done in relationships. Recovery takes a lot longer, battles can increase in frequency and intensity. How do we stop the cycle or prevent it to begin with?

The answer is simple: learn how to stay in the responsive part of your brain. Simple, but not easy. Try working on the following steps:

1. Recognize the feelings in your body when you begin to react--tensing in the muscles, clenched jaw, quickening of the heart, you suddenly feel warmer, some people get an actual feeling rising up within them or a feeling in their head.

2. Recognize how other people trigger you. Is there a certain look--squinting, rolling eyes? The sound of their voice--is the

times, unreasoning application of law that is not the same thing as being obedient to what the law actually states also helped. How many parents do you know that would consider their children's obedience to their directions for them to be legalistic? Quite the contrary, their obedience to their parents is expected and a sign of respect and love.

- o Consistent Daily Prayer and Relationship with Yahshua

There is simply no substitute for the personal relationship with our Messiah that will strengthen our faith and our ability to act in faith. A basic preparation for responding to concerns is a willingness to present ourselves before Him in humility and ask that His mind, will and emotions be formed inside so that it is His viewpoint that guides our reactions to such challenges. In very practical ways it is true that we must decrease while He increases.

Having gained enough confidence in one's own decision to make a lifestyle change to becoming Torah pursuant, those changes begin to show and other people begin to take notice. Sometimes we have the luxury of being able to Spiritually, mentally, emotionally and physically prepare for such a challenge but all too often, these challenges arise just when we least expect them, and feel least able to respond well. A key to responding well is to listen well before entering into any discussion.

- o A RESPONSE rather than a REACTION is the goal.

Assess how the speaker is presenting themselves, verbally, emotionally and perhaps body posture as well.

- o Genuine humble concern for you?
- o Fearful themselves and on your behalf?
- o Argumentative, contentious?
- o Proudful certainty of their "correct" position?
- o A Willing heart with eyes and ears open?

It seems inevitable that someone will raise the question of whether or not you are being legalistic, going back under the law, or losing your freedom in Messiah. As difficult as this may be to respond to when the conviction is present but the apologetic skills haven't caught up yet, it is a blessing to have people BE concerned enough to actually ask and challenge you. After all, what kind of "feet" would THEIR faith have if they didn't speak to you when they fear you could be sliding off the path they know! In their understanding, you appear to be making a terrible mistake and they may appear very agitated and

volume going down or up, a sarcastic, condescending, arrogant tone? What is their body language telling you, their facial expressions or just an attitude, "Who are you to think you know so much?" and/or certain words.

3. Make a cognitive shift within yourself-- "I'm responsible for my anger and actions." No one can "make me mad." Resolve to learn self control and keep perspective by allowing the practical responsible part of the brain do the solving.

4. How does the past tie in with the current situation? Perhaps the present situation reminds me of someone in my background and old fears come up and I immediately react.

James 3:5, 6 says *Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. Galatians 6:1 tells us to restore him gently. Verse 4 reminds us to test our own actions.*

If you are tired of reacting, tired of the high cost it creates in your relationships, begin looking at yourself and where communication broke down. Learn your traps, anticipate what will happen--be prepared! Be responsible. Fill in the blanks:

even hostile, as they challenge. One common tactic is to use fear and threats of the losses you will sustain if you keep on this path. It is usually hoped that if enough fear can be generated in you, fueled by their own fear, you will come back into the flock. There are also those who present themselves as argumentative, wanting to argue on an intellectual level as to the correct interpretations of Scripture. While there may be fear operating there as well, often there is a kind of personal pride at having the answers and the desire to firmly convince another of their error. Getting caught up in this kind of ongoing discussion can be very frustrating and fruitless since this person is often more fixed on getting their point across than they are on considering what may be said.

- Hear them out.

Respectfully listening to their concerns can often go a long way toward decreasing strong emotion, whatever kind it is. They may then be more open to your response.

- Provide no factual information as long as they are in an aggressive state.

If someone is still "bristling" or "spoiling for a fight", in our terms REACTING rather than RESPONDING, it is seldom productive to respond with information. It is perfectly acceptable to say something like, "I can appreciate your concern because I once felt the same way." You are not being unfaithful to YHWH if you do not respond at a time when the likelihood of being heard is nil.

- Hebraic Understanding can rarely be understood in one sitting.

A suggestion for another time to meet and perhaps something to read before then might be in order if the aggression is passing. First Fruits of Zion has a series called "[It Is Often Said](#)" which might be fruitful to suggest. A conversation on the differences between legalism and obedience, anti-nomian and Torah observant is not the sort of thing that can be done well on the fly.

- A fearful person will not be helped by a fearful or fear inducing response.

Perhaps it is best to assure such a person of the basic truths of our faith that have not changed as we have incorporated our Hebraic understanding in to the expression of our faith in Messiah. This is also not the time to present a great deal of facts that a person in a fear state cannot comprehend anyway.

Another suggestion would be to prepare a simple handout page of the Scriptures you find most helpful and keep it

The next time I get in this situation _____, normally I _____. Next time I will _____.

Most importantly, continue in prayer and study of YHWH's Word. Y'shua is transforming us through His Ruach. We can learn *to take captive every thought to the obedience of Messiah*. In Ephesians 4:29, we read *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

If you have any questions on reactivity, please feel free to email us at info@setapartmingb.org. We'd be happy to have further discussion with you. Next time, we'll begin looking deeper into maturity issues and how those gaps have come about.

Quick Links...

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handy for such an occasion. Yes, this requires preparation, but are we not to be ready "in season and out" to give a reason for our Hope? It also shows us as someone who is willing to study the Word to show himself approved. Having made some preparations for these inevitable conversations, will go a long way toward enabling one to stop short of fruitless conversations and set the stage for thoughtful **RESPONSE**.

Who We Are

Founder of Set Apart Ministries and Personal Life Coach: Barbara L. Klika, BS, MSW Barb has been a clinical social worker 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. Dealing with members and leaders--link to MIA commentaries by Parker and Lawrence. Include articles on topics of interest to your readers, relevant news and events. If you find an interesting article on the Web, you can easily ask the author's permission to summarize the article and link to it from your newsletter.

Board Member and Personal Life Coach: Marilyn Guffey. 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 co leader in the provision of group and individual teaching and relationship development through the Life Model 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 it's 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.

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