

ONE OF A CITY

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Jeremiah 3:14, “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.”

Recently, my phone has been busy with young mothers calling me to tell me of their plight. The Lord has drawn them into a relationship where they desire to be one with Him, to be married unto the Lord. This surely is a high and holy calling, but it is fraught with difficulties: the husbands do not understand what is happening to their wives and they are resisting them in every way they can.

If the wives react carnally, or take carnal advice from others, they could feel they have just cause to separate from their spouses. This is *not* the answer! They need to know how the Lord trains His sons. This is the reason for this booklet—that I might shed some light on situations such as these, so that the new ones coming into their calling will understand what God is doing in their lives.

It would be wonderful if the Lord would call each party of a marriage at the same time, but He seldom does. To our way of looking at things, that would be *ideal*, for one could encourage the other in his spiritual growth, and they would truly “live happily ever after.” I have seldom seen this situation among sons-in-preparation. It is, rather, that He chooses “one of a city and two of a family” to bring them to Zion—to a higher realm of the Spirit.

Perhaps II Timothy 2:21 can help us to understand why God does this. **“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour.”** Romans 9:21 confirms this: **“Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?”**

I feel this “great house” is the kingdom of God. In it are vessels of gold—those who have come into the nature of God. The vessels of silver have received salvation and the Lord is, by his Spirit, inworking His divine nature in them until they also become golden vessels. But, there are also some who still walk in their human nature, which is likened to wood. And then, there are those vessels of earth who are “earthly, sensual and devilish.” Now, if you join a vessel of silver with a vessel of earth, you’re going to have problems because their very natures are opposed to one another; their desires and goals in life are quite different. One is called a vessel of honour and one, a vessel of dishonour.

Now, why would God allow something like that? Doesn’t He want us to be happy? Of course He does, but He knows that we never will be satisfied until we come into His likeness. And, how could He remove all our “rough edges” and break our heart so that He could heal it and be all-in-all to us? It is so simple: by joining a vessel of honour and a vessel of dishonour together!

The first time I saw this was in the life of Jeanne Guyon, that great saint who shook ecclesiastical kingdoms until, in desperation, they had to hide her away in a dungeon. When I read her life story I saw that she had married a man considerably older than herself and his mother was part of the package and came to live with them. The mother-in-law (an earthen vessel, no doubt!) didn’t care much for Jeanne and was constantly

complaining about her to her son. Of course, he always took his mother's part (because he was a vessel of wood). So, Jeanne lived with **two** vessels of dishonour! (The Lord planned to do a very special work in her life!)

My reaction to her life story was, "How could the Lord allow such a sweet lady to be treated in that manner?" I didn't understand at that time that it takes *fire* to burn out the dross in our natures. And, Jeanne learned how to live with these adversaries without seeking a way of escape. She drew ever closer to the Lord until she became a mighty overcomer and brought spiritual enlightenment to many in high places in the Catholic Church. Hundreds of years later, believers are still being blessed by the rich spiritual heritage she has left behind for others who are called to the marriage of the Lamb.

You might ask at this point, "What happens to the vessels of dishonour that God uses in the processing of the vessels of honor? Are they always going to be like that?" In my lifetime I have witnessed the answer to that question. The answer is "No." Let me tell you how I learned this.

A dear friend of mine married her childhood sweetheart when she was in her thirties. She had been in the ministry for some years and hadn't seen this man for quite a long while. But, in the Lord's plan, He brought them together again and they were married. "Childhood sweethearts." That should be a wonderful foundation for any marriage! What she didn't know was that her husband had become a secret drinker. When his family discovered this, he told them that his wife's religion had driven him to it!

That was a hurtful blow to his lovely wife, but there were others. During one rough time, Stella was lying across her bed, crying and praying, when the Lord spoke to her: "I want you to go and apologize to your husband for being angry at him"

She protested, "But, Lord.....he did....."

He reminded her, "*You are the believer!* You are the one who knows Me." It took her 15 minutes to get off her bed and go and apologize for her anger but when she did, her husband broke down and confessed that *he* was the one who should apologize to her! Things went more smoothly after that episode!

But I want to tell you about the time Stella had been away for a week and had phoned her husband letting him know when she would be back. She came home and he was not there. She waited for hours and he still didn't come. In the meantime, she worked up quite a lot of anger and purposed: "I'm going to tell him what I think of him. Just this once, I'm going to do it!"

Midnight came and the Lord spoke to her aching heart, "**And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled**" **II Cor. 10:6**. She barely had time to take this in when she heard the door knob turn and her husband came in. She said, "Hi!" and he returned her greeting and she quietly followed him upstairs. Gone was the accusing speech she had prepared for him. Now that she realized the Lord was using him to do a work *in her*, she couldn't attack him! In fact, she felt sorry for him that he didn't know the comfort of the Lord and was being used as a vessel of dishonour for her benefit! As the years passed, he became more mellow because of her love and he came into a measure of faith. They lived in peace.

Through the years the Lord led her to be careful not to overrule her husband in their natural affairs and she was faithful in this. One time we were praying together and I "saw" my friend on a cross and heard the words, "Come down from your cross." The Lord told her that from that time on, she was free to do anything that her heavenly

Husband approved, and it would be alright with her natural husband. And, so it was! It was marvelous to behold. Surely “her obedience had been fulfilled!”

Any of the husbands of which I speak, are “good men.” Yet, the Lord has put them in a role where they do not have spiritual understanding, and this, in itself, creates pain in the one who is walking in the light. I learned a lesson from Arleen who is a “spiritual giant.” Her husband was a Baptist and wanted her to always go to church with him. She had no desire to have a steady diet of milk, but the Lord put it on her heart that she should please him in this matter, as it was important to him.

This she did for years, but when her obedience had been fulfilled, the Lord gave her liberty to tell her husband she didn’t care to attend church any more, and he didn’t mind. By the loving attitude she displayed to this man, you would think he was someone very special, certainly one who was *spiritual*. I have never heard her speak one negative word about her husband! Because she kept a loving attitude, she had peace in her home. That’s the secret. But, if God is doing a work in the vessel of honour, He may raise up someone outside the home to be a vessel of dishonour to them. In this case it was a daughter-in-law who didn’t like her and tried to turn her son against her. But, much love and prayer later, the girl’s heart changed and now Arleen is teaching her the ways of the kingdom. Of course, this happened *after* Arleen’s “obedience was fulfilled.” Are not the Lord’s ways wonderful?

Now, I don’t want anyone to think that only the wives have this problem. I know of some godly men of this calling who are married to “good” wives who don’t understand where their husbands are walking. It is hard on the men because they can only have fellowship with their spouses in natural things (in the wood, hay and stubble of this world). They share their situations with me from time to time and I try to encourage them. That is not hard, for we also have had our “ups-and-downs” in our marriage. We are not “special” just because we are in ministry. The Lord has to administer to us the measure of purifying fire that is needed to bring us to be a golden vessel, one in whom the divine nature dwells in fullness.

One thing I’ve learned through the years: it is better to laugh over something than to cry! Now, when a situation arises that is troublesome, I *choose to laugh*, rather than to cry and get depressed over it. We have a much happier home as a result.

When the going gets rough, all our instincts say, “Run away!” Self-preservation is very strong. I know one sister who felt like this and the Spirit spoke to her, “**What God hath joined together let no man put asunder—not even you!**” She remained in the fire, committed fully to her marriage, and has profited greatly from it. Now she has *understanding* of what is happening in her life and can see it through the Lord’s eyes, and cooperate with Him in what He is doing in both of them!

I learned a good lesson from a native Indian and his wife. They both testified at a summer camp meeting. He told how they each had their own religion, and each thought that he was right and they would fight over it. Then, the husband found the Lord and He took all the “fight” out of him! No longer could he fight with his wife about religion, even though she tried to goad him into it. She began to realize that something had happened to her husband and she liked it so much that she asked him about it. You’ve guessed it! She also gave her heart to the Lord!

Now, the question was: which church should they go to now? Which one was the True church? Was it Catholic or Anglican (Episcopalian)? The Lord showed them by a vision or a dream that neither church was the true one for them, for **He alone was the Truth!**

One brother shared with us, “There have been times in my life when I’ve been *right*, but it was in *unrighteousness*. Then, I’ve been *wrong*, but in *righteousness*. As an example of this, my wife had left and had entered into a wicked lifestyle. Our only daughter lived with me and my wife was doing everything in her power to get her back.

“I had to spend a weekend with my wife to attend to some matters and I knew it would be hard and she would try to provoke me to anger. I prayed and asked the Lord to keep me from fighting with her. The Lord answered my prayer, and no matter how she attacked me, I was able to keep my peace

“Finally, I decided to take her to law. When I tried so hard to protect my daughter from her mother’s lifestyle, I was *unrighteous* in going to the *law* to make things right. I didn’t employ a lawyer, but felt I’d speak whatever the Lord put into my mouth. When called upon to defend myself, I addressed the judge: “Your honor, I am ashamed and sorry to be here to defend myself.”

“The judge’s face turned red and he said; “Why is this man being accused? This man has done nothing wrong!’ Then he dismissed the case and my daughter remained in my care.” (unquote)

Oh, we fancy ourselves as great saviours who shall set all creation free! We don’t realize that we must first be set free from self. We think we can love all the unlovely “out there” with the love of God. The desire may be there, but the Lord knows we must first learn to love “the unlovely” in our own homes! And, many times, *we* are the “unlovely” and are part of the problem!

This is why the Lord chooses “one of a city, and two of a family, (to bring them) to Zion,” a higher place in the spirit. From these real-life examples, I pray that you will begin to understand the purposes of a union where there is a vessel of honour and a vessel of dishonour, and what manner of life you should walk as you “learn obedience by the things that you suffer” just as our Lord did. And, can the servant be above his Master, that *He* should suffer “the contradiction of sinners against Himself” and we get off scot-free?

Call upon the Lord, my brothers and sisters in this high calling, and ask Him to give you *His Love* when *your love* fails, for only His Love can enable you to walk this way to the high realm of Zion!

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