



Restoring my Soul

HE RESTORES MY SOUL, HE LEADS ME IN PATHS

PSA 23:3

JUNE 2020

Restoring my Soul

A FIVE DAY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

JUNE 2020

RESTORING MY SOUL

A Five Day Devotional Guide

June 2020

Contributing Authors

Victor Hall

Peter Hay

David Baker

Compiled by

David Baker

Contents

Monday	1 June	The blessing in each house	2
Tuesday	2 June	The seventh world kingdom	3
Wednesday	3 June	Laziness bringing forth thorns	4
Thursday	4 June	The example of Israel.....	5
Friday	5 June	The spirit and power of Elijah.....	6
Monday	8 June	The culture of a family	7
Tuesday	9 June	Three generations	8
Wednesday	10 June	A breach on our family culture	9
Thursday	11 June	The spirit of Jezebel.....	10
Friday	12 June	A false prophetic influence	11
Monday	15 June	The example of Ahab and Jezebel.....	12
Tuesday	16 June	Arise and eat food	13
Wednesday	17 June	The call to turn	14
Thursday	18 June	Eating from the wrong tree.....	15
Friday	19 June	The corruption of shared headship.....	16
Monday	22 June	The wrong mirror	17
Tuesday	23 June	Falling short of the grace	18
Wednesday	24 June	The pathway of restoration	19
Thursday	25 June	Returning to first love	20
Friday	26 June	That we may know Him	21

The blessing in each house

The Lord promised to Abraham, the father of all who believe, that all the families of the earth would be blessed in him. **Gen 12:3**. This promised blessing is the divine nature. **Gal 3:13-14**. **2Pe 1:3-4**. It is the life of Christ that becomes the life of a son of God when they are born from above and are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings.

Although each individual person receives this blessing, it is cultivated and has its first expression in the context of a family or household. **Psa 68:6**. The life of Christ is further cultivated within us as we meet for communion and fellowship from house to house. In the context of our families, and as we fellowship from house to house, we receive the word of God and minister His life to one another as members of the body of Christ.

The Scriptures teach us that the Lord jealously watches over and guards His Spirit whom He has placed within us. **Jas 4:5**. Christ is among us with eyes as a flame of fire, searching our minds and hearts in relation to our familiar ways, giving us opportunity to turn from fallen family cultures and to be established in the culture that belongs to His household. **Rev 2:18,23**. This can be a confronting experience. However, we must not draw back from the Lord when He comes to address our marriages and families with His word. His word is bringing salvation to us, and is a protection for us as the time of the end fast approaches.

The hour is late in the immutable plan of God for mankind, and the urgency of the Spirit in relation to these matters is acute. We must give heed to what the Lord is saying to all the churches regarding our families and our marriages, so that we are included among those who have been made ready for the coming of our Lord. **Luk 1:17**.

The seventh world kingdom

The seventh world kingdom, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, is taking shape and beginning to exercise its rulership over the nations of the earth. **Dan 2:41-43.** The 'little horn', which is one of the two ruling principles of this kingdom, is the manifestation of the spirit of antichrist in the world. The little horn advocates for minority and special interest groups at the expense of the rights and expression of the majority. This ruling principle is hostile towards God and persecutes all those who are part of His church and live by His word. **Dan 7:25. 2Th 2:3-4.**

Through the writings of Daniel, we understand that the seventh world kingdom is a divided kingdom. This is because the little horn undermines and usurps the authority of those who are elected by the people to govern the people. Providing insight into how the little horn achieves this, Daniel wrote, 'In this horn, were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking pompous words'. **Dan 7:8.** The little horn exerts its influence on society by making strong representation in the policy making processes of government and non government agencies. It communicates more broadly and directly to society through the media, which serves as its mouthpiece so that it can speak its 'great boasts'.

In this present season, the culture and constitution of the Christian family is being assailed by the little horn as it pursues the secularisation of society, and wars against 'all that is called God' and is worshipped. **2Th 2:4.** This is readily apparent in popular media, through the content of television programs, films and music. However, it is also becoming increasingly pronounced in the curricula and policies of education systems, particularly in Western society.

It is troubling that many Christian families have remained ignorant of the little horn's assault on their faith and culture. They do not sufficiently consider, nor question, what their children are learning in school. Often, this apathy is accompanied by irregular, and even non-existent, family devotions.

Laziness bringing forth thorns

Instead of resisting the spirit of the world, many families have opened the doors and windows of their houses to the principles of the seventh world kingdom, through their inordinate use of social media, and through their excessive consumption of television, movies, and online material.

The parents of these families are unaware that their cultural orientations, and those of their children, have become more like those of the world than those of the household of God. Interestingly, these families often appear to be the most socially aware and engaged. However, their malaise in relation to the mixture in their homes reveals that they are *deceived*. In effect, they do not believe that their culture is sinful when, in fact, the divine nature within their houses is being choked by the deceitfulness of riches. **1Jn 1:8-10. Mat 13:22.**

Reiterating this point, we note the observations of King Solomon, who said that the lazy man is 'devoid of understanding'. **Pro 24:30.** Consequently, the walls protecting his field, which is the inheritance of blessing that belongs to him and his family, were broken down. There was nothing preventing the entry of other philosophies and cultures into the ground of his family. The outcome was that his field was overgrown with thorns and covered with nettles. **Pro 24:31.** As the principle of 'thorny ground' teaches us, it was unfruitful. **Mar 4:18-19.**

Some parents fail to maintain the sanctification and Christian culture of their houses because they are *afraid* that their recalcitrant children will leave the home if they contradict them or if they try to establish clear lines regarding the behaviours and attitudes that are acceptable within the household. These compromises, which are based in fear, are a form of laziness. We note, in this regard, that Jesus called the servant who hid his talent because of fear, 'wicked and lazy'. **Mat 25:24-26.**

The example of Israel

The culture of compromise in a household, motivated by a fallen understanding of love, and the pursuit of short-term peace, does not produce good fruit. **Mat 10:37. Pro 19:18.** In fact, it produces only thorny, painful and *fruitless* relationships in the house. Relational disharmony, and continual conflict in the house, are sufferings that result from the mixed culture. These sufferings are the judgement of God on the house because of disobedience.

This principle is helpfully illustrated by the failure of the children of Israel to drive out the inhabitants of the land that God promised to their fathers. These inhabitants represent the cultures of the world that we are to drive from our homes as we hear and obey the word of God that is ministered at the communion table.

As the nation of Israel prepared to enter the promised land, Jesus made a promise to them through the words of Moses. **Num 33:50-51.** He said that if they would *diligently* drive out all of the inhabitants of the land, and would destroy all of their idols and places of worship, He would dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and the Israelites would obtain their inheritance as part of the firstborn nation. **Num 33:52-54.** Later, Joshua reaffirmed the word of the Lord to Israel, saying that if they loved the Lord their God, *He* would fight for them. They would receive supernatural capacity from the Lord to overcome their enemies, so that just *one* of God's covenant people would be able to chase a thousand men from the land! **Jos 23:10-11.**

The Lord warned, however, that if they did not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those who remained would become irritants in their eyes, and thorns in their eyes, and would harass them in the places where they dwelt. **Num 33:55-56.** Significantly, Joshua said to the people that, if they were disobedient, Yahweh *Elohim* would no longer drive the nations out before them. **Jos 23:12-13.**

The spirit and power of Elijah

Through the prophet Malachi, the Lord declared, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.' **Mal 4:6.**

'The great day of the Lord' refers to His judgement upon the seventh world kingdom in the time of the end. The book of Revelation reveals that this judgement will commence at the opening of the sixth seal. **Rev 6:12-17.** The point for us to recognise is that the ministry of Elijah *precedes* this judgement. It is a prophetic mandate that is given to the presbyteries in the right hand of Christ to be proclaimed to God's covenant people during the establishment and commencement of the seventh world kingdom. By receiving and responding to this prophetic ministry, the church will be sustained in the day of trial, and will be prepared for the coming of Christ. This time is upon us, and the Lord, by His Spirit, is addressing the church concerning the cultures of our families. **1Pe 4:17.**

Speaking of John the Baptist, the Angel of the Lord said, 'He will also go before [the Lord] in the *spirit and power of Elijah*, "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children," and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' **Luk 1:17.** John the Baptist's ministry was an expression of the spirit and power of Elijah, but it was not the complete fulfilment of Malachi's prophecy. As we have just noted, this prophecy will have its final fulfilment as we approach the time of the end.

The culture of a family

The ministry of the spirit and power of Elijah will be given to the presbyteries who are being restored to the right hand of Christ. When this ministry is received, the hearts of the fathers can be turned to their children, and the hearts of the children can be turned to their fathers. Significantly, the disobedient are turned to 'the wisdom of the just'. The wisdom of the just is the word of the cross that Christ has committed to presbyteries who have been restored to first love. **1Co 2:7. 1Jn 1:1. Jas 3:17.**

Through obedience to the word of the cross, we are joined to the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. In this fellowship, we are delivered from living according to the principles of the flesh that cause us to be deceived and vulnerable to the destructive influences of the spirit of the world. **Rom 7:6.** We are able to live, instead, by the supernatural capacity of *exanastasis* life.

Practically, as we walk in the light of the word in our houses, we have fellowship together, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from sin. **1Jn 1:7.** That is, as we devotionally discuss the word of present truth in our houses, we are able to see the cultures that need to be put off. Furthermore, we are made adequate, by grace, to walk in the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings. **2Co 3:5-6. 2Ti 3:16-17.** The dying and the living of the Lord Jesus Christ becomes the culture of the house, and is the means by which each person within the household obtains the inheritance of their sonship.

When participation in Christ's offering and sufferings is the culture of a family, each person within the family can know the assurance of God's grace in every circumstance of life. They do not need to be afraid of the repercussions or persecutions arising from their obedient commitment to the culture of godliness, which is sanctification. This is because they are joined to the offering through which Christ overcame the world. **Joh 16:32-33.**

Three generations

The Lord promised to send the ministry of the spirit and power of Elijah before the 'great and dreadful day of the Lord', which He described as 'burning like an oven'. **Mal 4:1,5**. Significantly, Jesus referred to the outcome of His baptism as 'sending fire on the earth'. Specifically, He said, 'I came to *send fire on the earth*, and how I wish it were already kindled! *But I have a baptism to be baptised with*, and how distressed I am till it is accomplished!' **Luk 12:49-50**. Evidently, the great day of the Lord is a fruit of the finished offering of Christ, which He identified as His baptism.

Jesus then said, 'Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.' **Luk 12:51-53**.

In this statement, Christ identified one house as comprising three generations – grandparents, parents, and children. This is the first and most fundamental reality of house to house fellowship. It is within this context that the spirit and power of Elijah is ministered to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers.

Notably, Jesus said that His offering would bring *division* in a house. At first glance, this appears to be at odds with the ministry of Elijah. However, 'turning' does not simply mean that people in a household come to agreement on matters or commit to interacting with one another more regularly, although this may be an *outcome* of turning. First and foremost, turning is the implication of the cross being established between every relationship in a house.

A breach on our family culture

Through the ministry of the gospel, the cross of Christ makes a breach on a family's culture, requiring each individual to respond to His word. This is the word that is ministered at the communion, which Paul described as partaking of the *altar*. **Heb 13:10**. We note that the recovery of the nation of Israel from their idolatry under the influence of Jezebel, commenced when Elijah had called them to *come near to him*. He built an altar, which he saturated with water, symbolising the word, and placed the sin offering upon it. In response to his prayer, the Lord answered by fire. The people responded saying, 'The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!' **1Ki 18:30-39**.

Those who receive illumination through repentance and faith in response to the word of God, die with Christ, by grace, in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings. They are delivered from their fallen and familiar relational propensities. Consequently, they are able to present themselves to meet the other members of their house in the Spirit, and in the truth of their name as a son of God. That is, they are able to *present themselves* to meet in a fellowship of offering.

God desires that every member of a household meets in this manner. However, if a person continues to walk according to the sight of their own eyes, they will remain in darkness and under the judgement of God. **Ecc 12:14**. In this instance, the word of the cross makes a division between those who are dying in a body of death under the judgement of God, and those who are dying with Christ, by grace, as a member of His body.

We see that the word of the cross brings healing and life in a family if it is received. However, if it is not received, the cross makes a clear division between a family's familiar culture, which is under judgement with Christ, and the culture of His house. Life and peace are the fruit of God's culture. **Rom 8:6**.

The spirit of Jezebel

The ministry of Elijah brings to our attention another key theme in Scripture – the spirit of Jezebel. Jesus addressed the presbyteries of the churches in Asia on this issue. The presbytery are supposed to be the spiritual fathers of the church. They serve God the Father under Christ, who is the Head of the church, ministering from His hand as He walks among His lampstand churches. **Rev 1:20.**

Christ addressed the presbytery in Thyatira, rebuking them because they had allowed a woman, whom He named as Jezebel, to minister among them as a spiritual mother, and to exercise authority over the church as a prophetess. **Rev 2:20.** The source of her ministry was Satan. Jesus likened her children – those who ministered with her – to the prophets of Baal, whom Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab, had appointed to replace the ministry of the true prophets of the Lord in Israel. **1Ki 18:4. 1Ki 18:19.**

Jesus called this whole situation ‘the deep things of Satan’. **Rev 2:24.** The deep things of Satan refers to the devices that he employs to deceive and destroy mankind. The most cunning device that Satan used against mankind was demonstrated in the garden of Eden. He deceived Eve with his lies and caused her to transgress God’s word by eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **Gen 3:1-5.** Satan then provoked Eve to speak to Adam the word that she had received from Satan. As a prophetess, Eve ministered the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to Adam as an alternative to the fellowship that they had with God when they ate from the tree of life. **Gen 3:6.** The result of this fallen mode of relating in their marriage was that death spread to all mankind. **Rom 5:12.**

FURTHER STUDY 1 KINGS 18

A false prophetic influence

Jesus addressed the presbytery of Thyatira as ‘the Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass’. **Rev 2:18**. He acknowledged their works, love, service, faith and patience. Yet, Jesus had come to them in judgement, because the overseers of the church had allowed the spirit of Jezebel, a false prophetic influence, to teach and seduce His servants to commit sexual immorality and to eat things sacrificed to idols. **Rev 2:19-20**.

In His earlier letter to the angel of the church in Pergamos, Jesus identified eating things sacrificed to idols, and sexual immorality, as being stumbling blocks arising from the doctrine of Balaam. **Rev 2:14**. He also rebuked this presbytery for holding to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans. **Rev 2:15**. His letter to Thyatira revealed that these doctrines flourish, and cause death and destruction in the church, when those who are part of a presbytery receive direction from the spirit of Jezebel and allow it to be an instructive influence in the church. Because of the teaching of Jezebel, the presbytery of Thyatira was bound by the projections and collegial practices of the Nicolaitans and faltered as a result of the stumbling blocks of those who held the doctrine of Balaam.

The principle of a false prophetic influence was first seen when Adam and Eve fell. Eve was deceived by Satan’s word. When Adam gave heed to her instruction and direction, his headship was destroyed. Consequently, his children – the whole of humanity – were subjected to the curse of tribulation and death.

The Lord addressed the church of Thyatira with eyes as a flame of fire, because the spirit of Jezebel had gained ascendancy in the presbytery and in the church as a result of the corruption of marriages among them. Significantly, Jesus said that He came to them in this way so that *all the churches* would know that He searches the hearts and the minds, and gives to each person according to their works. **Rev 2:23**.

The example of Ahab and Jezebel

By identifying the ministry of Jezebel within the midst of the presbytery and the church of Thyatira, Jesus was associating them with the mode of rulership exhibited by Ahab and Jezebel in the nation of Israel. **1Ki 16:29-33**. He used the account of Ahab and Jezebel's marriage and rulership to admonish and instruct the fathers of the church in Thyatira. **Rev 2:20**. His intention was to give them understanding regarding how ministry and marriage relationships *should* and *should not* function in the church.

Through idolatry, Jezebel presumed to take over the culture of Israel and to give spiritual direction to the nation. Her spiritual children were the prophets of Baal. Ahab, who represented the face of the lion in the administration of Israel, had vacated his position as the spiritual head of the nation. He gave room for, and supported, his wife's idolatrous ministry endeavours, and deferred to her advice and direction. Consequently, the prophet Elijah said of Ahab, 'There was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the Lord, because Jezebel his wife stirred him up.' **1Ki 21:25**.

The fallen nature of their marriage, and its destructive effect on the people of the Lord, was exemplified in the death of Naboth. The vineyard that belonged to Naboth was the heritage and provision of God for his life and for his household. Naboth described it as 'the inheritance of his fathers'. **1Ki 21:3**. In this regard, we can liken the field to his *sonship*. Ahab coveted what belonged to Naboth. He wanted to have Naboth's land for the purpose of cultivating a vegetable garden. **1Ki 21:2**. We note the resemblance of Ahab's desire, to the self-defined works of Cain, who was a tiller of the ground. **Gen 4:2**.

Arise and eat food

When Ahab was unable to have his own way, he became irritated and upset, and behaved in an immature manner. He perceived Naboth's refusal to trade with him as being a rejection of his role as the leader of 'the church of Israel'. He went to his house sullenly and displeased with this congregant. He lay on his bed, turned away his face, and refused to eat any food. Jezebel said to Ahab, 'You now exercise authority over Israel! Arise, eat food [that I am giving to you], and let your heart be cheerful; *I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.*' **1Ki 21:7.** Not only did Jezebel speak into a situation that was outside of her accountability, but she also misappropriated his authority and took action on his behalf.

Jezebel wrote letters in Ahab's name, misappropriating the authority of his seal. She called the men, the elders and the nobles of the city in which Naboth lived, to participate in a fast. Then, with flattering deceit, she seated Naboth in a place of honour among the people. She called two worthless men to bear witness against Naboth, saying that he had blasphemed God and the king. He was condemned by their false message, resulting in his death by stoning, outside the gate. **1Ki 21:8-13.**

God's judgement burned against Ahab, Jezebel, and all of her children, because of the corruption and death that their fallen marriage had brought on the household of Naboth and, indeed, upon the whole nation of Israel, through the prophets of Baal whom Jezebel had appointed and supported in their midst. Concerning Jezebel, the Lord said, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel. The dogs shall eat whoever belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field.' **1Ki 21:23-24.**

The call to turn

By identifying Jezebel in the midst of the church in Thyatira, Jesus was revealing that this corrupt mode of relating was evident in the marriages of some of the presbyters and was having an impact within the church. The judgement that befell Ahab and Jezebel was proclaimed upon those who operate by this same principle. **Rev 2:21-23**.

Although Christ wrote specifically to the presbytery and church of Thyatira, we are all called to hear what the Spirit is saying to the *churches* in relation to this matter. **Rev 2:29**. He is first calling all presbyters to consider their marriages, and to turn from the fallen ways of relating that allow the spirit of Jezebel to have influence in the church. The heads of every family are, likewise, being called to turn from these fallen ways of relating so that the life of God can be effectively cultivated in their households.

The Lord is speaking to each of us concerning this matter. With His word, He is pouring out a spirit of grace and supplication upon us so that we are able to see the true condition of our marriages, and can mourn for the sin of our disobedience to Christ. **Zec 12:10**. As we receive this word, and begin to mourn, the Holy Spirit turns our mourning into travail. This travail is the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings through which our marriages are able to be restored and made new in Christ.

The headship of a man can only be recovered when he looks into the face of his Head, Christ. **1Co 11:3**. **Eph 5:23**. The primary point of reflection from the face of Christ happens through body ministry at the communion gathering. Moreover, for those whom the Lord has called to care for the church as part of a presbytery, there is a particular expression of Christ's headship that they must receive in the fellowship of presbytery.

FURTHER STUDY ISAIAH 1

Eating from the wrong tree

In the garden of Eden, God provided food for the purpose of nourishing and sustaining the two orders of His administration. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was food for the angelic order, while the fruit of the tree of life was the provision of life for mankind. **Psa 78:22-25. Gen 2:9.**

Adam and Eve gave heed to the lie that Satan advanced through the use of illusion. Consequently, the desire to obtain what Satan was proposing, by eating the food that belonged to angels, was aroused within them. Eve ate this fruit because she saw herself as the one who, like God, had the capacity to multiply the identities of mankind. She further believed that she could nurture them with the wisdom that she had received from the knowledge of good and evil. **Gen 3:5.**

In contrast, Adam desired dominance and rulership over creation through the exercise of his own wisdom and power. He ate the food that belonged to the angels because he wanted to be *like the angels* – mighty in power. **2Pe 2:11.** No doubt, he believed that, through the exercise of this wisdom and power, he would be able to fulfil the will of God, which was to subdue the earth and to have dominion over every living thing. **Gen 1:28.**

The result of eating the food that belonged to angels was that Adam and Eve were separated from the order of seed life that Yahweh *Elohim* had ordained for them. **Gen 3:24.** Having separated themselves from the light and life that they knew in fellowship with Yahweh at the tree of life, they were in darkness, and were dead to God. **Pro 2:11-13.** Moreover, the desire that motivated them to take and eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil became another law within their hearts. **Rom 7:23.** This law, which was now part of their identity, was passed on, through procreation, to all their children.

The corruption of shared headship

Unless we are joined to the fellowship of Christ's circumcision, we will continue to live by the 'other law'. It will be the fundamental motivating influence of our life, and the basis of our perception of what is 'true'. The circumcision of Christ is the only means by which the other law is removed from our heart. **Col 2:11**. Furthermore, in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, His redeeming blood is effective in our life to cleanse our conscience from dead works so that we can serve God in the fellowship of His offering. **Heb 9:13-14**. This is true for every person, including those who are called to be messengers of the gospel of God.

This point has not been well understood by many church leaders who, in practice, reject the fellowship of Christ's offering and sufferings as being the necessary condition for their ministry. This has also been a mindset of some leaders in our stream of churches.

Although the desire for dominance and rulership is a fundamental drive within fallen men, we are unable to attain the ideals of this desire. In response to this failure, many ministry men seek to strengthen their failed ministry projections by *inviting their wives into the ministry with them*. When a leader does this, he 'shares' his headship with his wife. **1Ti 2:12. Tit 2:4-5**.

Practically, the man invites his wife to reason with him regarding the expression of his mandate as a husband, a father and a leader. She progressively 'coaches' him in relation to his ministry by reflecting on his performance, identifying his faults, absolving him of sin, compensating for his immaturities and insecurities, making suggestions to improve his ministry expression, etc. **1Ki 21:7**. In some extreme cases, the wife will script her husband's function in the church and in the home. Often, either at the behest of her husband, or simply because of her association with him, she may assume a ministry or pastoral profile within the church to complement the ministry of her husband.

FURTHER STUDY 1 TIMOTHY 2

The wrong mirror

If a man continually looks to his wife for direction and guidance, his wife has become the face of God to him. Because of his failure to achieve the cherub-like expression to which he aspires, the man's confidence is diminished. He increasingly depends upon his wife's support and affirmation. This dependency is often demonstrated when a man verbalises how much he relies on his wife. This sentiment is commonly accompanied by praise for her and by his seemingly light-hearted self-deprecations. **Col 2:18-19.**

Women who live in this kind of marriage relationship are unable to relate with other women as sisters. **Mat 12:50.** Instead, they tend to associate with like-minded and similarly empowered women within the church. In the absence of such connections, they tend to be disconnected from other women. They are unable to easily and genuinely meet others because they engage with them from the basis of a projection.

The potential symptoms of a failed marriage are numerous and diverse. Typically, however, a wife will manifest some form of neurosis, such as anxiety or depression. The husband will either be angry and reactive, or he will be compliant with, yet relationally disengaged from, his wife. Intimacy between the husband and the wife is often lacking in marriages that follow this profile. Under these conditions, many have succumbed to corruption as they indulge, or compensate, themselves in various ways, attempting to escape the pressure to present well, when their marriage is actually dysfunctional.

When a man chooses to include his wife in this headship discussion, *she becomes his mirror*. This is a great corruption, because it subverts the headship of Christ. Paul was clear; Christ is the Head of a man. **1Co 11:3.** The face of Christ is the only mirror into which a person is to look in order to receive the knowledge of God's will for their life as His son. **2Co 3:18.**

Falling short of the grace

A leader who looks into the face of his wife, rather than into the face of Christ, in the fellowship of the presbytery and as Christ's word is ministered at the communion table, *is being disobedient*. He is not deceived but, rather, has accountably chosen this fallen mode of marriage over and against the order of marriage that was established by God in the beginning. **1Ti 2:14. Gen 2:23-24.** His wife, however, falls into transgression because *she is deceived*. **1Ti 2:14.** She responds to his entreaty in the deluded belief that her 'God-like' observations, suggestions and directions are part of her role as his 'helper' in the marriage.

A wife who does this is not a helper comparable to her husband and head. She now has a share of his headship. Consequently, the man's head is covered, and his ministry activities dishonour Christ. The woman's head is uncovered. Her ministry endeavours bring dishonour to her husband. Shame is the fundamental mode of their marriage and of their ministry. **1Co 11:3-15.**

A husband and wife whose marriage is not being recovered to the order of headship, which is the culture of offering, will fall short of the grace of God. **1Pe 3:7. Rom 3:23.** Not only will they be unable to stand in grace themselves but, also, they will be unable to minister the grace of life to others. **Heb 12:14-15.** Bereft of grace, the couple will seek a common and mutually beneficial ground upon which to relate with one another, in order to remain viable as a ministering couple in the church. They will view the work of ministry as a point of compatibility, and will relate with one another as fellow workers or ministers. Leadership couples may spend a lifetime presenting a unified and successful front, yet, in reality, their marriage has failed.

The pathway of restoration

It is important for every married couple to be honest with each other about their culture, and to prayerfully consider where their marriage requires restoration. A man must deal with the curse on his own ground first. He must not look to his wife, but, rather, must accept that his ground is cursed because he is disobedient. **Gen 3:17**. Each man must deal with the curse of his own ground by repentance, so that he can be connected by faith to the headship of Christ. **Act 3:19**.

Once he connects with Christ his Head, he must find his name, stand up, and speak by the faith that he receives by hearing the word of God as it is ministered from the face of Christ. He is then able to invite his wife to be the helper comparable to that expression. A wife, on the other hand, can find her own name as a sister and a mother only according to the word of her sanctification. **1Th 4:4**.

In this regard, it is most important for us to recognise that a woman cannot share her husband's ministry with him. Likewise, she does not have a ministry function because of the name and grace that belongs to her husband. A wife must find, and know, her own sanctified participation as a sister to her brethren in the body of Christ. **Gal 3:28**.

By hearing the word of the Lord, she can receive faith for participation in the body of Christ according to her own name and sanctification as a son of God. She is able to pray and prophesy because she has respect for God's order of headship, and has received faith for participation in the fellowship of the body of Christ by hearing the word ministered at the communion gathering. Even if her husband does not live in obedience to the word of God, she is able, as a son of God, to conduct herself as a sister, a wife, and a mother in the church. **1Pe 3:1**.

Returning to first love

There is only one gospel through which a person can be saved and can receive eternal life. This is the gospel of sonship. The apostle Paul said that he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, which is the gospel of sonship, because it contains the power of God for salvation. The power of the Father for salvation is the capacity in His word to birth a hearer as a son of God, and to join them to the fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Rom 1:16-17. 1Jn 1:3.** The righteousness of God that is in the gospel is revealed when we are born as sons of the Father, in Christ. **Rom 1:17. 2Co 5:21.**

Jesus Christ admonished the presbytery of the Ephesian church for leaving their 'first love'. **Rev 2:1,4.** First love is not an emotion; neither is it simply a committed connection with other believers. Rather, *first love is the divine nature.* More specifically, it is the gospel of God through which He births a person as His son. By receiving this message, a hearer is born of God and is joined, in Christ, to the offering fellowship of Yahweh. **1Jn 1:1-3.** This reveals God's love for us and is the means by which we become partakers of the divine nature. **1Jn 3:1. 2Pe 1:2-4.** We note, therefore, that the Ephesian presbytery had fallen from first love by turning from the gospel of sonship to other gospels.

Establishing this point further, the apostle John exhorted his readers to be illuminated by the word of sonship that ministered to them the love of God as the divine nature. He wrote, 'Behold [or be illuminated concerning] what *manner of love* the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be *called sons of God!*' **1Jn 3:1.** John also explained that 'everyone who loves is [a son who is] *born of God and knows God!*' **1Jn 4:7.**

That we may know Him

To know God is eternal life! This was the highpoint of John's letter. He said, 'And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are *in Him* who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and *eternal life*.' **1Jn 5:20**. The understanding that the Son came to give us is a participation in His offering, through which the culture of God's life can become the culture of our life. This culture is love, which we are able to express as we are delivered from our sin and self-centredness, and as Christ's life becomes our life in the fellowship of His offering and sufferings.

In order to return to first love, which means living according to the gospel of sonship, the Ephesian presbytery needed to *remember* from where they had fallen. Furthermore, they needed to repent and then to *do the first works*. **Rev 2:5**. To 'remember' their sonship in Christ, they needed to apply themselves to understanding the word and culture of sonship. Jesus gave us some instructions on how to do this. He said, 'Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.' **Mat 7:7-8**. This means that, through prayer, we must ask for the gospel of sonship from the Father. We knock on the door by coming to Christ, who is the Door. **Joh 10:9**. We do this by receiving the word that is proclaimed by His ascension gift messengers, and continuing in the fellowship of the word with them. **Eph 4:7-12. Joh 13:20. 1Jn 1:1-3**.



Restoring
my Soul