

Know Your Covenant

(continued)

knows if you give him an inch in your thinking, he'll take more than a mile with his lies.

Establishing boundaries in these situations is a healthy tool for us, and helpful for our well-being. Jesus wants us to be well, and equipped to help others, at the right time and at His direction. Jesus Himself set boundaries. In the Gospel of John, Chapter 11, He was told by Mary and Martha that their brother, Lazarus was sick. Although the bible says Jesus loved Lazarus, Mary and Martha, He waited two days to go to Bethany. When He arrived, Martha told Jesus that had He been there, Lazarus wouldn't have died. But Jesus didn't feel guilty, He felt compassion. He wept.

Jesus always did what the Father told Him to do. He had a personal relationship with the Father, as we do now under the New Covenant. Jesus set the boundary that if Father didn't direct Him, He didn't do it. Jesus didn't have a knee-jerk reaction to the news of Lazarus when He first heard of his sickness, and didn't run off right away to Judea, even though Lazarus, Mary and Martha were very close friends of His. And because of Jesus setting boundaries with His emotions, people, etc., and following the direction of Father God, the miracle happened at the right time, with the right result: Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead and glorifying God.

As Jesus did, we listen to Father God and follow our instruction from the Holy Spirit. Sometimes, perhaps most times, it may not make sense to us, or may not seem logical as in Jesus waiting two days to go to Lazarus when Lazarus could have been healed by Him. The

bible says God's ways are not our ways (Isaiah 59: 8-9). I remember when I was a new believer, I needed confirmation on something I thought God was telling me and called a more mature sister. I remember her saying "go to the throne, not the phone." That was good advice. We want to get counsel, and wise counsel is good, but first and foremost, the Holy Spirit will bring us into all truth (John 16:13). One of the Holy Spirit's names is Counselor.

Through Jesus's sacrifice on the cross, when He took our sins upon Himself and satisfied the law for us, the New Covenant was born. No longer would there be a separation from God because of sin. Hebrews 4:16 tells us to come boldly to the throne of grace, which indicates we are to come directly to God, with confidence and trust, knowing that we now have a personal, direct relationship with Him. God demonstrated this by supernaturally tearing the veil of the temple from top to bottom when Jesus breathed His last (Matthew 27:51). The veil was the heavy veil that separated the first room, the Holy Place, from the Holy of Holies - the place of the Ark of the Covenant, with the mercy seat on top. Under the Old Covenant, this represented the throne of God, the special place for God to dwell in the middle of His people. Only the High Priest could enter this chamber on the Day of Atonement, with a blood sacrifice. Upon Christ's death, the sin that separated man from God was permanently removed and God tore that veil with His own hands, beckoning us, saying "come in, children—My plan of salvation is now finished. I love you so very much. We'll never be separated again."



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Out of the Darkness

Is there any good news?

Yes. John 1: 5 says, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it." Jesus, the Light of the World, came into the world to dispel darkness—all darkness. When we spend time with the Light of the World, darkness loses its grip. When we read the Word of God, it becomes a light for our path (Psalm 119: 105).

After Paul described the dark days ahead, he told Timothy how to protect himself and his congregation:

But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. (2 Timothy 3:13-15)

Now more than ever we need to hold fast to the Word of God. More than ever, we need to use it as the ruler for what's right. We cannot be "thoroughly equipped for every good work" in the world and for God's glory if we are not adhering to what the Bible teaches. We cannot be trained in righteousness without measuring our mind-sets and actions by God's standards (see 2 Timothy 3: 16-17).

Only God's truth penetrates the darkness of Satan's lies and deceit. Only the Light of the World can lead people out of a life controlled by lies into the freedom of life with God. And that's exactly what I share with those who come to me for counseling. Jesus is the Light in your darkness. Jesus wants to free you from the shame you feel. Jesus wants you to embrace the identity given to you as a beloved child of God.

Yes, darkness is heavy. But Jesus is strong enough to lift it and remove it. And no darkness can remain in his presence. Ever.

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