

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

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By Their Own Authority

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Introduction

The older I get the more I realize that longer life gives you a different perspective on the past. You begin to see how things, especially deceptions, seem to cycle through the people of God. The Preacher of Ecclesiastes got it right when he said:

Ecclesiastes 1:9 NASB That which has been is that which will be, And that which has been done is that which will be done. So there is nothing new under the sun.

This is especially true of our enemy and his schemes. Nothing has changed since the Garden. The Devil's promise is that we would be "as gods knowing good and evil". He has continued that theme ever since. Just look at the New Age teachings or any of the false religions that promote human godhood. The enemy's tactics are based on what is in the heart of man and continues to be successful because the heart of man hasn't changed. Man still desires that which he has always desired.

When God made Adam, He gave him a mandate to rule, to have dominion, which he was to learn how to do while in the Garden. [Remember that God *planted* a Garden. The whole world wasn't a garden.] The Garden was Adam's training ground. He was to learn to rule righteously under the direction of God.

However, when Adam sinned and was put out of the Garden, his relationship with God was changed because sin made a separation between man and God. Adam was now cut off from the fellowship, the headship and the fatherhood of God, which are three eternal principles of the Godhead. However, Adam still had within him the *desire* to rule, to have dominion; but, he no longer had the *ability* to rule righteously.

This is the area of the heart of man that the enemy continues to tempt even in believers. He continues to play off of the Garden temptation. After all, what better way to rule than to be "as gods". This is what I would like to examine in this Present Truth Teaching Letter because a new cycle of deception is coming to the Body of Christ.

The Fatherhood Movement

This new cycle of deception has been dubbed 'the fatherhood movement' because the emphasis is on one having a 'spiritual father'. It appears to me that this whole movement is but a re-hash of 'the shepherding movement' with which I am intimately familiar. The new version has substituted 'spiritual father' for 'shepherd' but the core doctrines remain the same. As the Preacher has said there is "nothing new under the sun".

One of the key thoughts of the fatherhood teaching is that we are all orphans and that we live in a culture of orphans. We don't know how to relate to a father and the validation and love that we should have received from a father hasn't been received because we are orphans. As a consequence we don't know how to be a son and can't mature as a son because we live as an orphan. This idea is founded on the issue of Adam, who was a son of God, being put out of the Garden thereby becoming an orphan. The teaching then is developed through reasoned logic to explain the condition of our society and the need for everyone to have a 'spiritual father'.

This is a very subtle deception that is very believable because, given the premise, the reasoning is sound and appears to explain many of our problems. But, is the premise correct? I don't think so.

By definition an orphan is one whose father has died or who has abandoned him. Neither scenario fits the case with Adam. The Scriptures say that Adam was a son of God. God did not die leaving Adam alone. Neither did God abandon Adam nor forsake him in any way. God even promised a way of restoration that would come. Adam was not an *orphan*; he was a *prodigal*.

Adam's disobedience created the problem making Adam a prodigal. The problem had nothing to do with the actions of God, his Father, but rather with the actions of Adam, the son. The son failed not the father. God acted to redeem the situation produced by Adam's disobedience, which, by the way, are the actions of a loving Father. If you will consider it, the Parable of the Prodigal Son has more application to Adam (and his descendants) than any idea of Adam as an orphan.

Even if the reasoning is correct, if you reason from a wrong premise you will always reach a wrong conclusion. This is the exact case with men as 'spiritual orphans' who need a 'spiritual father' to validate them. [*Further explanation is available in Present Truth Teaching Letter Volume 6 Issue 2 "Who's Your Daddy?"*]

Two Fathers

The orphan idea implies that there is only one 'father' in the earth besides our natural father. However, this contradicts the words of Jesus when He was talking with the Pharisees.

John 8:41-44 NASB "You are doing the deeds of your father." They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God." (42) Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. (43) "Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is because you cannot hear My word.* (44) "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

So, we have in Jesus' answer to the Pharisees that there is another 'father', the devil, and that he has sons in the earth. It would appear then that one can have as a 'spiritual father' either the devil or Father God. The question is does everyone fall into one category or the other? It would appear that that is the case.

In one sense of the word the devil “fathered” the sin nature in Adam when Adam was disobedient. The descendants of Adam have inherited that sin nature making the person who is not born again a “son of the devil”. Only by a new birth do we become a “son of God”.

Is there then no such thing as an “orphan”? Not exactly. Those who are not born again are of no concern to the enemy. They are his children already. Those who are born again become threats to him if they ever understand that they are sons of God. So, the enemy sends forth “the spirit of the orphan” to them. This is a demonic spirit whose goal is to prevent a son of God from functioning as a son of God. The purpose of the “orphan spirit” is to prevent a believer from maturing in the Family of God, to keep him isolated, vulnerable and open to deception.

Premise Problems

The Shepherding Movement's basic premise was the we are all sheep who have gone astray because we didn't have a shepherd; therefore, everyone needed to find themselves a 'shepherd' because each one is a stray sheep. The first thing wrong with this idea is the fact that sheep don't search for shepherds; shepherds search for sheep. So, it was backwards to begin with. The second thing wrong with this is that every believer already has a Shepherd, the Lord Himself. While the Lord has given us under-shepherds, they in no way replace The Shepherd. Neither can they provide all of the functions of The Shepherd in one's life.

It is the same way with the Fatherhood Movement. If we are believers, we already have a Father, our Heavenly Father. He does not delegate His fatherly responsibilities to anyone. As a matter of fact, He jealously reserves them for Himself. Anyone who tries to usurp Father's responsibilities by placing themselves between a person and the Lord violates the Scriptures and dishonors the Lord and His place in our lives.

1 Corinthians 11:3 NASB (3) But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

There is a clear order in this verse: God—>Christ—>Man—>Woman. Paul makes it clear later in the chapter that he is referring to “authority”. The Father has all authority which He has given to Jesus including authority over all flesh, that is, people. Jesus delegated authority over all of the powers of the enemy to believers but He never delegated any authority over people—He maintained that for Himself. He does not allow anyone to stand between Him and His people. *[For more on this subject, see “[Spiritual Authority](#)” on the website.]*

Another wrong premise is the idea of the culture of the orphan, which arises as a logical conclusion of the premise that we are all orphans. The idea is that an orphan can depend upon no one but himself. He can't trust anybody. He must make his own provision and protect himself from others. Everything focuses on his own security, desires, and needs. He feels alienated and outcast, which are things he can't overcome because of his lack of trust.

While the 'culture of the orphan' sounds good as an explanation of why things are the way they

are, the Scriptures refer to these things as our old nature—the self that rules. Each one has established a “kingdom of self” as part of “being as gods”—captains of our fate. This is part of the unrighteous manifestation of the desire to rule, to have dominion. We want to extend our dominion to others so that we might control all things in our kingdom of self. This is re-inforced by the demonically assigned orphan spirit.

Believers who have not allowed the Lord to rule their lives but have maintained self rule are open to the enemy in this area. Christianized words are used to build a scenario where one would 'come under' another whether if be as a sheep to a shepherd or a spiritual son to a spiritual father. The 'benefits' given for doing this are the ideas of coming quickly to maturity, of being validated, of belonging, of being secure, of special understanding that is not available to others, of entering into ministry and of not being alone. Of course, the benefit to the 'shepherd' or the 'spiritual father' is the tithe that is required of those who have come under them.

Didn't Paul call himself a spiritual father?, you might ask. Yes, he did. However, if you will look at the context, you will find that he was talking about “birthing them in the gospel”. These were people that Paul, himself, had brought to the Lord. But, even in this, Paul was more like a mid-wife than a father for they had been “born of an incorruptible seed”. God was still their 'spiritual father' not Paul.

The sad thing about all of this is that it confuses the truth about developing a 'father's heart' as we come to maturity. It is my opinion that you cannot enter the five fold ministry until the Lord has worked into you the Father's heart—the perspective, viewpoint, and purpose of the Heavenly Father. As we mature we enter into the Father's business and He doesn't allow anyone into His business that does not understand and function according to His purposes and desires. We must have the mind-set of Jesus fulfilling the goals of the work that the Lord has given us. The 'fatherhood movement' is subtly moving the focus from our Heavenly Father to some human “spiritual father” thereby diverting us from coming to maturity in the Lord. [*For more on this aspect of the subject see “[Developing a Father's Heart](#)” and “[Father's Covenant](#)”.*]

Illusions

The end result of this type of cycle of deception is always disillusionment. The deception moves one from the reality of Christ Jesus to the fantasy of the kingdom of self. When the bubble bursts the dreams crumble and all that is not of the Kingdom of God is shaken out. [*For more on this see, “[When Dreams Crumble](#)”.*]

The enemy's desire is to see that you are ineffective in the Kingdom of God. His goal is achieved as long as he can keep you operating in “self” instead of the Holy Spirit. He destroys your future effectiveness by creating an illusion of maturity and understanding that will crumble when the Lord shakes it. Overcoming the disillusionment that follows is very difficult.

We need to remember the words of Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 5:30-31 NASB "An appalling and horrible thing Has happened in the land: (31) The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule on their *own* authority; And My people love it so! But what will you do at the end of it?"

We love to have people (priests) rule over us, even those who are ruling based on their own authority that they have wrangled by twisting the Scriptures to their benefit. But the real question

is “what will you do at the end of it?” For there will be an “end of it”. If we buy into prophets who prophesy falsely and priests who rule on their own authority, what will we do when our lives crumble? Because that is what is at the end of it. May the Lord open the eyes of our understanding.

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