



June 2009



Blessings in the Beloved,

June: Marriage Month

Marriage is on God's heart this month. Most of you are well aware that the biblical institution of marriage is eroding before our eyes as God's definition of marriage is being challenged on every level of society from local to national. But this is a definite "no-compromise" issue with the God of the Bible who chose to speak the following words through Moses (Genesis 2:24), Yeshua (Matthew 19:5) and Paul (Ephesians 5:31):

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

The "one flesh" that the Bible is talking about is much more than physical. It is also emotional and spiritual. The ultimate purpose of the one flesh marriage relationship is to portray a divine reality: the relationship of the Messiah Yeshua and His Bride (the Body of believers). Each time we have conducted a Marriage Retreat, we have mentioned that the "great mystery" referred to in Ephesians 5:32 means that when people see a believing husband and wife they should be able to say: "Oh, now I see how Yeshua and His Bride relate." A high standard. A lofty goal. How many marriages meet this criteria?

Wedding in Jerusalem

God is still in covenant with Israel, His wife of old. On June 8, 2009, our Mercy Mission group will host **on your behalf** an ultra-Orthodox wedding in Jerusalem. Jeremiah 33:10-11 will come to life! *"...Again there shall be heard in this place—...in the cities of Judah, in the streets of Jerusalem...the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride..."*

The Lord works in strange and marvelous ways. We have been waiting on Him to choose a bride for this wedding for a year now. She was finally chosen in May, but even as you read this letter, we are certain to need prayer for this very delicate mission! (A detailed report will be given next month.)

The rebbitzen (rabbi's wife) who spoke with Jamie about the details of an Israeli Orthodox wedding served as confirmation to us that God is indeed working behind the scenes. Those of you who know Jamie's background will be amazed at the similarities between the two. Rebbitzen Hannah grew up in Madrid, Spain, writes books and gives lectures on the relationship between God and His Bride, teaches about the Kabbalistic view of the Divine courtship, and is also an expert on medieval Spanish literature (Jamie's major in college). Isn't God AWESOME! Rebbitzen Hannah wants to have lunch with Jamie in Israel. We covet your prayers for this divinely appointed meeting and, of course, for the wedding!

An Orthodox Teaching on Marriage

In an unusual juxtaposition of circumstances, a CD was recently given to us about marriage by Rabbi Shimon Kessin, an Orthodox rabbi who is an internationally known speaker, author, and marriage counselor. We decided to listen to the CD on the five hour trip to Gainesville to visit our sons in college. We were both very impressed with the teaching, and in spite of Rabbi Kessin's heavy

Brooklyn accent and occasional Yiddish expressions, we listened to the CD a second time. This may be the only time that Neil has listened to a CD twice! In addition, we have begun to use the material with troubled marriages in our congregation here in Ft. Lauderdale. Rabbi Kessin is not a believer in Yeshua. He is a traditional Orthodox rabbi, but he bases his teachings on the Torah, which, of course, is the Word of God. We would like to share what we have gleaned from his teachings with you this month, while adding our "New Covenant" connections as well.

According to Rabbi Kessin, an ideal marriage is characterized by two features: *SHALOM* and *SIMCHA*, (PEACE and JOY). In a marriage where there is shalom, there is peaceful coexistence, basic compatibility, and no great amount of conflict. That's good, but when there is *simcha* also, there is joy, fulfillment, and a husband and wife who really enjoy being with each other.

The State of Marriages Today

According to Rabbi Kessin, the majority of marriages today are in a state of marital **stagnation**. There is no joy, there is much conflict, and couples are resigned to staying together for the sake of the children, extended family, finances, or other issues. A marriage in this state does not contribute to personal, emotional and spiritual growth, which Judaism emphasizes as a primary goal of marriage. (In New Covenant terms, we would call this growing in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Yeshua HaMashiach. See 2 Peter 3:18.)

Many marriages today are in a state of marital **erosion** or **disintegration** where two people are miserable with each other and experience constant conflict. These marriages eventually end in divorce. (The divorce rate of approximately 50% is the same among believers as in the world, but **less** among traditional Jews). Rabbi Kessin points out that the suffering inflicted by one spouse on another is a **flagrant** violation of the Torah injunction to love one's neighbor as oneself. Many people would never treat their neighbor in the harsh way they treat their marriage partner! (Of course, the standard of love was raised even higher in the New Covenant where husbands are admonished to love their wives as Yeshua loved us and gave His life for us. Both husbands and wives are exhorted to submit to one another in the fear of God. See Ephesians 5:21, 25.)

Why Marriages Go Bad

What happens to the two glowing faces that radiated so much love beneath the *huppah*? Why do marriages go bad? Sometimes two people are incompatible with personalities, values, and sensitivities that clash from the outset. (That's why we insist on pre-marital counseling, pre-marriage inventories, and marriage mentoring in our congregation.) But even with incompatibilities (and we have found that MEN and WOMEN are fundamentally incompatible), God's goal is to change each of us as individuals, to help us become better people. Living with incompatibilities forces us to either die to self (our New Covenant expression), or stay miserable.

Rabbi Kessin states that most marriages are compatible, but lack the knowledge of how to be successful in a relationship. In other words, a **SKILL** is needed to effectively stay married. He calls this *HOCHMAH*, wisdom in English. When we see two people standing under the *huppah*, we fail to realize that both the *hatan* (groom) and the *kallah* (bride) are actually **TWO PEOPLE**—the person they are now and the child within that comes with unresolved baggage from the past. This emotional baggage has become a part of their personality and will greatly affect how they relate to their marriage partner. So, while **two** people enter the *huppah*, in a sense **four** leave it! A skill is needed to recognize when each is acting in an immature way, and how to control these immature actions.

The Skill of Communication

There is a lot of "double talk" in most marriages since most people do not reveal their emotions, nor express when they are hurt, but instead cover up their feelings and show secondary actions instead. For example: A man forgets an important day in his wife's life, and instead of telling her how he hurt her, she distances herself emotionally from him for weeks. (He has no idea what he

did wrong.) The wife is probably thinking that her husband will "figure it out." He probably never will. He is wired differently. Rabbi Kessin teaches that a major part of marriage must be to **BREAK THE CODE**—to learn to read between the lines, to find out what one's spouse is really saying, whether through words or actions. Our son, Jesse, actually figured this out when he was sixteen years old. He would say to Jamie, "Mom, stop using 'girl speak'! What are you really saying?" Some woman is going to be blessed to have Jesse as her husband! When there is no "code-breaking," anger, hurt and a chronic level of resentment slowly take the place of love and attraction, and marital discord escalates.

The Vicious Cycle of Hurts and Resentment

Many relationships fall into a cycle of hurts and resentments that covers over the love that is there beneath the pile of unloving words and actions. According to Rabbi Kessin, the way to break the cycle and prevent it from taking hold, is to become a marital **RESEARCH SCIENTIST** and to create a **SPOUSE PROFILE**—to find out **who** you are married to. Rabbi Kessin suggests that a person studies his or her spouse to find out what makes them happy and what hurts them. This takes a conscious effort, lots of observation and **communication**. In other words, it is necessary to **ASK** one's marriage partner what makes them happy and what makes them sad. Then each is responsible to communicate on an ongoing basis. (In the *B'rit Hadasha* we are exhorted to esteem others better than ourselves, and to look out for the interests of others. See Philippians 2:3-4.)

In addition to this, each marriage partner must learn what their spouse's hurt response is. How do they respond when hurt? Do they get critical, hostile, angry or remote and cold? This is crucial since **HURT WILL HAPPEN IN A MARRIAGE**. (The New Covenant certainly backs this up in Romans 7:19 where Paul says, *"For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice."*)

Couples must learn the skill of **HURT MANAGEMENT** since **HURT IS PART OF RELATIONSHIPS**. Rabbi Kessin interprets Leviticus 19:17, *"You shall not hate your brother in your heart..."* to mean that marriage partners should not carry anger in their hearts, but instead communicate hurt when it happens. Hurt is either communicated, resolved and let go, or collected. Many people become **HURT COLLECTORS**. As Neil puts it, they carry a little red wagon behind them loaded with hurts because they do not want to be vulnerable to another person, to appear weak, or to let anyone know that they are needy. Embarrassed. Ashamed. Pridful. When hurt collecting is the norm, marriages stagnate. When hurts are nursed, allowing them to fester, resentment builds.

How should hurt be handled? Constructive criticism is one way to handle hurt. Being diplomatic, i.e., "I know you didn't mean it, but I was hurt." Or, "If you had said it this way, I would have felt better," instead of attacking one's spouse and putting him/her on the defensive with, "You just hurt me!" We all know that criticism is dangerous territory, and there is a way to do it without attacking a person's self-esteem. When someone uses themselves as a reference, they are not attacking or accusing, but criticizing constructively. Tone of voice and sincerity play an important role here as well. (Yeshua made a similar point in Matthew 7:3-5 when he told us to bring the focus back on ourselves first before criticizing another.)

Ultimately, to get rid of hurt, one must forgive. (This, of course, was not only modeled for us by Yeshua, but made possible by His sacrifice. We are **COMMANDED TO FORGIVE**. FOR DISCIPLES OF YESHUA, FORGIVENESS IS NOT AN OPTION.) Forgiveness is a choice, a decision. One can stay hurt, or decide to let it go. The questions that must be answered are, "Do I want a marriage, or do I want revenge?" "Do I want to be right, or do I want to have relationship?" Rabbi Kessin summarizes the four steps in dealing with hurt in marriage as follows:

Step 1 is communicating the hurt. Step 2 is apologizing. Rabbi Kessin draws a parallel with

t'shuvah here. "I sinned" (I hurt you), "I didn't mean to" (I'm sorry), "I'll try to never do it again." Step 3 is criticizing constructively, and Step 4 is forgiving.

If, as the rabbi believes, HURT is responsible for the failure of most marriages, we must all become masters at dealing with hurts, and refuse to be collectors of hurts!

From "I" to "WE"

The two "I"s that stand under a *huppah* should ideally leave as a "We." Most people never make that transition. (Of course, the "I" is supposed to die when we yield our lives to Messiah. See Galatians 2:20.) The art of COMPROMISE must be learned in marriage. "You give a little; I give a little." "I defer to you; you defer to me." When people live alone, they don't have to compromise. (It is easier to be selfish and self-centered when you live alone. We believe that it is always better for singles to have roommates for this reason!)

From Shalom to *Simcha*

Rabbi Kessin concludes his teaching by extolling the virtues of PRAISE. He suggests that when a spouse does **anything** good, he should be told. Most people, he says, are cheap on praise. Praise is powerful since it lets a person know that they are valuable and worthwhile. Praise must be sincere and we should initiate it rather than waiting for our spouse to praise us. Husbands and wives should also be shown appreciation. Some married people thank strangers, but never say "thank you" to their spouse, since they assume that everything should be coming to them. This is being self-centered, like an infant who doesn't say thank you because he is still in the crib.

If there is one thing that has the most potential to help a marriage, Rabbi Kessin says that it is SPENDING TIME ALONE WITH YOUR SPOUSE. Couples get involved with life, with children, in-laws, jobs, hobbies, spiritual activities, and lose contact with their first love relationship with one another. It gets buried. Husbands neglect wives, and wives nag. Husbands and wives transform into fathers and mothers. Only when the husband/wife relationship is restored will there truly be *simcha* (joy) in a couple's life. Prime time together will result in becoming a couple again.

[You probably know someone who needs to read this letter. Please make sure they get it. Thanks!]

Married with shalom & *simcha*,

Neil & Jamie

Jewish Jewels Television Airtime Schedule - June 2009

LOCAL TV STATIONS

STATE:	CITY:	STATIONS:	AIRTIME:
AK	North Pole	KJNP TV 4	TUE 6:00 PM
FL	Tampa/St. Pete.	WCLF TV 22	SUN 2:30 PM
FL	Orlando/Cocoa	WTGL TV 45	SUN 1:30 PM
FL	Miami/Ft. Laud.	WHFT TV 45	THU 11:30 AM
FL	Tallahassee	WVUP TV 45	SUN 1:30 PM
FL	West Palm Beach	WFGC TV 61	SAT 10:30 PM
GA	Columbus	WYBU TV 16	SUN 2:30 PM
IA	Dubuque	KFXB TV 40	SUN 1:30 PM
IL	Chicago	WJYS TV 62	MON 1:00 PM
IL	Peoria	FAITH ALIVE CH 20	FRI 6:00 PM
MO	New Bloomfield	KNLJ TV 25	SUN 1:30 PM
NJ/NY	NJ/New York	WMBC TV 63	SUN 4:00 PM
OH	Columbus	GTN TV 23	SUN 2:30 PM
OR	Portland	K26GJ TV 26	SUN 12:00 PM
OR	Salem	K21GX TV 21	SUN 12:00 PM
SC	Greenville	WGGS TV 16	FRI 10:30 AM

SATELLITE NETWORKS

DirecTV

World Harvest TV (WHT) - SUN 3:00 PM (EST) [Ch. 367]

WMBC - SUN 4:00 PM (EST) [Ch. 63 or 900]

Christian Television Network (CTN) - SUN 2:30 PM (EST) [Ch. 376]

Dish Network

Christian Television Network (CTN) - SUN 2:30 PM (EST)
[Ch. 267 & 9399]

God TV - The GOD Channel

WED 4:30 AM (GMT) & 6:30 AM (Jerusalem)

Insight Digital Cable: GTN

SUN 2:30 PM (EST) [Ch. 283]

Digital Satellite Receiver

World Harvest TV (WHT) - C-Band - Galaxy 16 -
Transponder 15 - 99° W - SUN 3:00 PM (EST)

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