

Rules of Engagement - Part II



Last month we looked at one principle among many of how God engages mankind. We looked at the principle of shepherding nations, those nations who, at their core, want the best for themselves and their people. I never have believed this to be a principle that humans want to understand. Someone needs to model this for us. Our greatest example of this was Jesus Christ. While Abraham, Moses and David are excellent Old Testament heroes, none of them died to save their people (John 10:10; 15:13). Jesus embodied this in a way that few others in history have done, and no one has ever done on a spiritual level. In other words, as a result of His death others would be able to live for eternity (John 3:15, 36; 10:28). Other rules of engagement God employs apply also and we have precious few lines of print to go over all of them. If we needed a table of contents all one would

have to do is look at the example of Christ. Because of our celebration of Resurrection Sunday two of them would be important to look at over these next few months. One is love and the other is the Word of God---both of them as a force, a person and a way of life.

Unlike other forces on this planet Christianity holds a unique place because of its stress on love. Quite a few times over the centuries Christians have forgotten to live this way. The fortunate news for all of us is that this way of life holds power long after a person is dead because love is God, or as the Bible says it, "God is Love." Unlike other religious leaders Christ embodied this love in a way that mortals have always had a hard time understanding. The only true way to understand this way of life, and be able to live it, is to allow what the Bible calls the 'indwelling' to take place. In John 14 Jesus tells us that the Father and the Son are one and when He is taken up to heaven He will send the Holy Spirit to reside on earth, indwelling the hearts of the human beings that accept Christ as Savior. It has been a sad reality and a matter of proof of the Divine that Christians, those who profess to accept Christ in this manner, have not always been able to allow the Love of God to reign in their hearts and show it in a tangible manner to the rest of humanity. While there are awesome examples of Christians who excelled at it: St. Patrick, the Apostle Paul, Mother Theresa and millions more that will go nameless until God reveals them, we have also had our shameful moments as well: The Spanish Inquisition,

the Catholic and Protestant wars, as well as others that might also remain hidden until God judges humanity.

Without the indwelling Holy Spirit, no matter how much we profess Christ, we just don't cut it. Jesus told us plainly that the Holy Spirit would reveal all things concerning Christ to us. The other New Testament writers constantly stressed our inability to remain Christian without living through the Spirit and not through the Law or through the unchecked ravages of human emotion. The Law was for a certain period of time, and that primarily for the Jewish nation, so it wasn't ALL bad, it had its place, and it helped us to understand the God that claimed to create all that we see. Without the Law we would never have been able to understand His requirements and character and personality. By doing so, those who have spent any amount of time reading the Bible and having a relationship with the Holy Spirit have been able to know the Divine in such an undeniable way, that humility and Love can reign in what would otherwise be very stone-cold hearts. Human emotion was created by God and cannot, nor should it be denied. But unchecked with no input from the Holy Spirit, it spouts nonsense, demanding its own way, regardless of the effects on other human beings or society as a whole. This is what creates war and this is what maintains war. People think addictive personalities are limited to drugs, sex and alcohol. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is this little secret that for some reason we deny constantly: WE WERE CREATED TO

LIVE FOREVER. Because we did not act in love with a loving God, God had to shorten our life-span. (See Genesis 3:8-10) If you look at the evidence of human beings who lived closer to the Genesis 1:1 timetable, you will see that their life spans extended 600 to over 900 years in some cases. Most scientists believe that the atmosphere on the planet at that time sustained us in ways that our environment cannot help us now. Deep down in the very heart of the soul and spirit of man, we know that we are supposed to live forever. This conundrum creates a vacuum for the psyche. Add the ravages of everyday life and you reproduce addictive personalities: always striving for the unknown, yet never able to achieve---with the unquenchable need to dull the pain. People use all sorts of methods to silent the ache. Drugs, sex and alcohol tend to be the cheaper, quicker and easier methods. But we have workaholics, foodies, shop-aholics, power-holics, political junkies, warmongers, techie slaves (and gamers alike) along with every other compulsion in between. In some cases people seek help by connecting with professional relationships, family, friends or children that can enable them to be victorious in their struggle.

Ultimately it isn't until the Holy Spirit resides in that vacuum to unravel the web that the controversy creates, that addiction, with all of the ravages of time held in a space void of the love and indwelling of the God that created the universe, that something deeper than healing takes place. His Love answers the age old questions of life and love, but it goes deeper still. It goes

to a place where you and I were first formed in love for a purpose and with a word spoken from the lips of the Ancient of Days. It's this connection that compelled St. Patrick back to Ireland, this word that kept the Apostle Paul going and this Love that kept Mother Theresa working in India, as well as countless other souls who received freedom and resurrection. Love is a person; 1 John 4:8 says, "God is Love." This portion of Scripture is in a tense of the Greek language that means Love is not just God but that because God Is, Love Is. He created it and sustains it by His existence. Without Him, there is no such thing. That is why love is a force that lives even after humans die. Humans have to choose to operate within the framework of love as a way of life.

You might wonder how on earth we can talk about God's love when we talk about war and rules of engagement. Because even when humans decide to engage in battle, God still allows the outcome to be governed by His rules of engagement and His purposes toward His desired end. It's because of love that He cannot allow anyone who "practices the magic arts, is sexually immoral, a murderer, idolater or loves and practices falsehood" to enter into the kingdom (See Revelation 22:15). It's by His rules and purposes that He tells mankind how to get out of its own struggles with these lifestyles and how to step into a freedom that goes beyond wars, addictions and other degradations. While it is our choice, God will always have the outcome work toward an end that fulfills His purpose

and plan for the earth, even before the earth was formed and created. One of the ways we know this is by His word. His word carries such force and strength that by it as Christians we wage war against an unseen enemy in our own souls. Some call these demons in a conceptual sense, and sometimes inner healing and other mental or emotional problems can be classified that way. But in other cases these unseen forces are very real entities that have waged war against the Adamic-seed line since God formed him and Eve.

Maybe more people would get free from their own particular addiction if we were more honest about our own and how we got set free. I didn't get set free because I had such a great will power. I had to give up alcohol, but cigarettes, drugs and sex were not something I was convinced was that bad for me. I actually had to be challenged by Love and Word. I had to believe that God loved me enough to set me free. Once I did, I received His word that actually did loose me from chains I knew were there, but could not see. Frankly this is why witches, warlocks and other spiritists function the way in which they do. God modeled the behavior to us initially by speaking the world into existence, giving us a record of that spoken word, as well as all the other creatures that came after (no matter how long that took). He then gave Adam the ability to name and proclaim the word spoken to the animal kingdom. God gave man spiritual power to create through love by His word. Once man left the way of love, he would have become the unwitting errand

boy of the devil by using his God-ordained gift. God took responsibility by blocking the way to the tree that would have sustained man in his sin-stained state for eternity. There are many 'faiths' and religions that want to capture and use these gifts without the covering of God. That covering comes with His rule, purpose and plan. Why are they able to function at all if they refuse the covering of Yahweh? Because God gave mankind gifts and He will not take them back. It says so in His word. Romans 11:29 says that "God's gifts and His call are irrevocable." But here's the rub, like all things involved in spells, witchcraft, fetishes and idolism, there is the law of unintended consequences. Without functioning the way God wants us to with His gifts, according to His rulebook, it is sin. This works against our bodies and our souls even though everything looks okay on the surface. The Scripture tells us that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus (Romans 6:23). So when we function in God's prescribed way with His word, with Christ in our hearts through the Holy Spirit in love, things change around us for the better because we've come in line with how the universe is supposed to work the way it was originally created to. When we don't, just like that unseen atmosphere that keeps getting pounded by our sin, it works against our bodies and we age, or don't live out the fullness of our years like we should---or worse, as I've seen with many involved in witchcraft, priest-craft and every sin in between, the law of unintended consequences wrecks havoc on mankind—

and Christians are not above getting into this mess if we are not careful with God's word and His love.

Like love, the word is also a person. This is why the Bible is so enduring. John 1 tells us, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.....He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.....The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.....For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:1, 2, 10-14, 17). Since the Scriptures make it clear that Jesus is still very much alive, the word of God is alive. That word is found more specifically within the pages of the Old and New Testaments. So how is war connected to God's rules of engagement? Well, if we go to war for something other than self-defense, we have gone against God's word. If we don't repent and seek God's face on how to make things right, that wage of sin that we talked about before and that inconvenient truth of the law of unintended consequences takes over. Whether it is our environment, the waging of war or the desired lifestyle you want to

live, all become affected by this negligence. Is there no hope for our planet? There is a great hope and truth that will set every single man, woman and child free, along with the environment that has become so tarnished, tainted and held captive by our sin (See Romans 8:19-22). That hope is found in trusting God's love and believing in His word that He raised Jesus from the dead. Because He was raised, we will be also. That trust in love and word will carry its own ability to change our lifestyles and our environment. Addictions just don't hold the same power they did before. We won't want to pollute ourselves, whether on an individual level or corporately. Engaging in war would only happen in self defense against an enemy that refuses to communicate---in other words, where there is absolutely no other way. That reality gets us in touch with the purpose and plan for our individual assignment here on earth. It does more than give us purpose it gives us a game plan and a source of strength for the future.

The enemy of our souls---and not just the concept some talk about but the actual entity---does not want us to come in contact with that kind of purpose. He will do anything he can to deceive us; whether it is by tricking us into war, into addictions or false religion. His purpose and plan is to lie to us enough so that we find nothing but death. Have you ever wondered why the only book---(the Bible) which lays out life before creation, during creation's existence and after the earth is transformed (again)---is so misquoted, misunderstood and in some cases used to wound or hurt? If there is no

real devil, then I suppose we would all consider the Bible as just some sweet book with some good ideas in it. There would be no need for the controversy that some use to surround it. But if there is a real devil, and when properly read and followed the Bible held the keys to life and death within its pages as well as when we speak it forth (Proverbs 12:18; 18:21), and that book unveiled the lies the devil uses to trap people (John 8:44), then I think it would make sense that he would use every lying tool available to him to misquote, misread and misinterpret such a book. Unfortunately we humans become his favorite tool. Sometimes the proof really is in the pudding, as the old English saying goes.

For those of you fighting the good fight within the context of God's rules of engagement be encouraged. There are days, weeks and months where it looks like love and the word spoken will not manifest the results God says they will. Abraham waited ten years, Noah waited one hundred. In my own life I've seen results immediately and in other areas I've waited twenty years and in some areas I'm still waiting and speaking and loving. Only once since I left alcohol was I ever tempted to get a beer. I grew up in NYC. Being anywhere from 25% to 50% Irish (there's an argument on my mother's side as to exactly how much of the clan-blood we have), I grew up around pubs. One of my favorite poisons was Guinness Stout. About ten years into my freedom I walked past a thirty-foot tall stack of the dark brew in a supermarket, of all places. All of a sudden this sweet reasoning took over. It

went something like this: "Oh, it's just like water because it's only beer. One case won't affect you because you're strong enough to have only one bottle." In the day I had the ability to drink a small army under the table. Guys were always trying to 'buy me drinks' and that 'talent' in drinking alcohol came in quite handy for getting free hooch while never waking up sorry the next morning, if you know what I mean. When I passed that stack of Guinness I could taste it, smell it, see it and literally feel it going down my throat. But there was another feeling at work also. It was quieter, stiller and not quite as emotional. It was also much deeper. Had I not stopped the first train-wreck of emotional dialog to listen hard for that deeper, inner voice I might have missed the signature of love on the second voice. That second voice carried a clear warning. Had I only heard the warning and obeyed it, I would have been fine. But I stopped to listen hard because Love was quieter. It was sweeter, even while warning me. Just by listening and hearing it I realized that I wanted something better and that something far greater was waiting for me. I also realized that with each success over temptation I became stronger and far less tempted.

Maybe you're stuck in a place you don't want to be or with an addiction that's taken all the oxygen out of your 'atmosphere.' I can say with a certainty that the way of Love and Word is always there for you when everyone else fails you. If you can't get someone to pray for you, we're here for you in prayer and purpose. Email us and let us

know how we can stand and speak for your needs or those around you. For those of you that happened on this site by accident and find anything to do with spirituality to be hogwash, we're here for you as well. Email us and let us know how we can help. Log on next month for more.....

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