

The Living God Ministries, Inc.

"A Ministry of Reconciliation"

revealing THE UNKNOWN GOD – Acts 17:22-31

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HOW TO FACE HURT

I have been giving a lot of thought and consideration to the hurt people have brought to me. There are things that I feel need to be considered [expressed and then considered] as this subject is approached and evaluated. I am choosing to address these issues in written form privately so that you can evaluate them alone before God without my presence or your feeling you might need to give me some response personally and directly. Any response must be between you and God ALONE!

This is being said advisedly as I have definitely been where you are at this very moment. I am very much aware of your mental and emotional quandary. I truly am aware of the pain you have felt and continue to feel. I am trusting that as we go through this subject all the pieces you need will begin to fall into place and that you will emerge out the other side with a deep and more profound grasp of what is involved here and WHY God **ALLOWS** these events in our lives.

It is most important that we remember the point just made in the previous paragraph. It is God who is working here TO ULTIMATELY ACCOMPLISH HIS WILL IN OUR LIVES PERSONALLY, INDIVIDUALLY AND SPIRITUALLY.

We all know “academically” that God is using the circumstance of our lives to develop HIS CHARACTER in us. I say “academically” for a specific purpose. We can and often do grasp the “essence” of what God is doing but we all too often fail to grasp WHY He is doing it **THE WAY HE CHOOSES TO DO IT**. Grasping and truly understanding this is literally where the “tire rubber hits the road.” When a literal rubber tire suddenly hits the road it either allows the wheel to run its course and do its job or it can “blow out” and potentially do harm. Sadly, too many of us allow the conduct, behavior or attitude of others cause emotional [and even spiritual] “blow outs” in our trek in life.

I am fully aware of the pain and agony humans suffer. I have been there. I too was mortally wounded by those I loved and trusted. These people hurt me tremendously. And SEEMINGLY (from my point of view) they never recognized nor acknowledged the hurt done to me and others or the pain and agony we suffered. I wanted **THEM** to **KNOW** this pain! I convinced myself that I needed [HAD TO HAVE] this.

My whole innermost being cried out for a CONFRONTATION with those who had hurt me and others so badly. I even convinced myself that I would feel better if only I could FORCE this confrontation. That just facing these people and expressing all the hurt I had felt would make me whole again and allow me to get on with my life and FORCE them to ACKNOWLEDGE their wrong. Wouldn't this make us feel SO GOOD? SO RIGHTEOUS? SO VINDICATED? Confronting others who hurt us in this manner teaches us vindictiveness, self-righteousness, human pride and arrogance. WE SHOWED THEM THAT THEY COULD NOT "GET AWAY WITH" HURTING US! Yet God does not approve such actions from us.

Our human reasoning convinces us that GOD WOULD BE SO PROUD OF US FOR OUR DETERMINATION TO NOT LET OTHERS "GET AWAY WITH" WHAT THEY SAID OR DID to us!" But, is God really going to be pleased with us for this? We must each ASK AND ANSWER THAT QUESTION FOR OURSELVES BEFORE GOD! Is this what Christ did in setting us the example? Is this what Stephen (the first Christian martyr) did? Is this what Paul did when he was mistreated? Is self justification what we want to establish before God?

There are many flaws in the above reasoning. The first flaw is the fact that without realizing it (or at least acknowledging it) we want to place back on this person the pain we have suffered. That is a mild way of saying we want vengeance for our suffering. Yet, in our own peculiar form of self-righteousness we probably cannot truly admit to ourselves that we actually want "revenge." We argue with ourselves that this would HELP US OVER THE HUMP and we actually have convinced ourselves that it will also help the person who hurt us. And since we are trying to "HELP" this other person acknowledge his flaws then OBVIOUSLY we are serving God in the way He requires! Such thoughts are PURE FALACIES that are sanctioned no where in the Bible!

In the overwhelming majority of the cases WE CAN NEVER CONVINCe THOSE WHO HURT US THAT THEY WERE ACTUALLY WRONG - - OR AT LEAST "THAT wrong." We are fighting a losing battle even before we begin to fight since such is not our job. **ONLY GOD CAN ENABLE OTHERS TO SEE THE ERROR OF THEIR WAYS OR WHERE AND HOW MUCH THEY HAVE HURT ANOTHER!** For us to try and do this ourselves would be totally counterproductive and trying to do God's job for Him. When do we ever have the right to tr5y and do God's job for Him?

The second fallacy in this is the fact that WE ARE THE ONE THAT GOT HURT AND IS SUFFERING. SINCE WE ARE THE ONE WHO GOT HURT IN THIS SITUATION THEN WE ARE THE ONE WHO NEEDS HELP IN OVERCOMING IT. The fact that we allowed this to hurt us so badly should prove to us that we need to grow in this dimension. That in true reality **IT DOES NOT [OR SHOULD NOT] MATTER WHETHER OR IF OTHERS EVER LEARN ANYTHING FROM THIS SITUATION.** *We like to convince ourselves that we would not have our problem if "the other people" had not done what they did.* Please read that last statement over and over again and again until its complete meaning settles into your mind and emotions. **YOUR SALVATION DEPENDS SOLELY ON WHAT YOU AND YOU ALONE LEARN AND PRACTICE PERSONALLY AND INDIVIDUALLY IN THIS LIFE.** You AND YOU ALONE answer to God for not only what you do in this life **BUT ALSO FOR ALLOWING THE CONDUCT OF OTHERS TO THWART GOD'S PLAN FOR YOU PERSONALLY.**

If the Almighty God has called you (John 6:44) then you are right now being judged by HOW YOU ACT AND REACT TO ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF YOUR LIFE. Keep in mind that God may not even be working WITH “these other people” at this time other than merely to USE them in teaching you the valuable spiritual lessons. Look at where this places us before God. We are in reality trying to TELL GOD how to do His purpose for us as well as “the other persons.” We are in reality telling God: “LOOK GOD, I HEREBY RECOGNIZE THAT YOU ARE **FAILING** IN YOUR JOB OF WORKING WITH OTHERS SO I NEED TO JUMP IN AND DO YOUR JOB FOR YOU!” Shall any person CONTEND WITH HIS MAKER? Should the one being molded into God’s image QUESTION the means used by the master molder? Can we truly challenge God for ALLOWING OUR OWN HUMAN NATURE TO TRIP US UP?

But it is so easy for us humans to claim “But I did not deserve this!” By making this claim we totally fail to realize or acknowledge the life of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Did He deserve or warrant what other humans did to Him? Did He cry out on the cross, “Father, look at what these ungrateful humans are doing to me even though I came to die for them?” Or, “Father, why don’t you FORCE THEM TO ACKNOWLEDGE how they are hurting me?”

Or, is it not a fact that He displayed the very character of God under extreme circumstances and pled for God’s mercy for them SINCE THEY REALLY DID NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY WERE DOING? He suffered UNJUSTLY! Does not the Bible make it crystal clear that we are commended by God **ONLY** when WE SUFFER WRONG UNJUSTLY AND **STILL ENDURE IT IN PATIENT FAITH?** (see 1 Peter :19 – 20). *But now notice verse 21-23 which read: “To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, LEAVING YOU AN EXAMPLE THAT YOU SHOULD FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS. When they hurled their insults at Him, He did not retaliate; when He suffered, He made no threats. INSTEAD, HE ENTRUSTED HIMSELF TO HIM WHO JUDGES JUSTLY.”*

Then as Paul explains further in Romans 8:16-17, we are heirs of God, sons of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ “IF INDEED WE SHARE IN HIS SUFFERINGS IN ORDER THAT WE MAY ALSO SHARE IN HIS GLORY!”

We can allow our “hurt” human nature to crowd out the very fundamentals of true Christianity - THE VERY REASON WE WERE PLACED ON THIS EARTH IN HUMAN FORM. The whole creation is patiently waiting and groaning in agony for those few selected human beings to GET THEIR CALLING TOGETHER AND MASTER THEIR OWN FLESHLY HUMAN NATURE SO AS TO BECOME THE LITERAL SONS OF GOD SO GOD CAN USE US TO TEACH ALL WHO HAVE LIVED THROUGHOUT THE AGES THE WAYS OF GOD (Romans 8:19-23).

When we become obsessed with what others have done to cause us so much pain and anguish we are actually COMPLAINING TO GOD. We are telling God we resent the fact that He is using these other circumstances to reveal to us our flaws and weaknesses

We need to ask ourselves candidly HOW IMPORTANT OUR PARTICULAR PROBLEM REALLY IS WHEN COMPARED WITH THE ALMIGHTY GOD, JESUS CHRIST AND THE PLAN HE IS WORKING OUT ON THIS EARTH. Is our hurt and our human suffering really that important? How do we suppose Christ will answer us when we appear before Him for judgment and we DRAG UP THE HUMAN HURT WE EXPERIENCED IN THIS LIFE? Do we think He will hear us when we protest ? “BUT, CHRIST, DON’T YOU KNOW HOW

MUCH I SUFFERED BECAUSE OF THIS PERSON?" We may not have done what this other person did to us. BUT OUR MISTAKES WE MAKE IS AS BAD BEFORE GOD AS THE OTHER PERSON WE JUST CANNOT BRING OURSELVES TO FORGIVE.

I can tell you what Christ will say. He will remind us that we were given human nature [INCLUDING THE HUMAN TENDENCY TO GET OUR FEELINGS HURT] as training points. He will tell us in no uncertain words that HE INTENDED AND EXPECTED US TO COME TO HIM THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR THE HELP TO OVERCOME AND CONQUER THESE HUMAN TRAITS. He will ask us point blank WHY WE ALLOWD SELF PITY TO ENGULF US RATHER THAN USING HIS SPIRIT TO OVERCOME THE HURT. He will not accept our excuses then and we had better make certain we stop giving these excuses today. We are in this flesh to overcome all these human tendencies. He has given to us His word to show us what our attitude and approach should be. He has pledged to us ALL THE HELP WE NEED TO OVERCOME - - but we must be willing to acknowledge these human flaws and to ask His forgiveness when we stumble and fall. ***GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FORCING ANOTHER PERSON TO ACKNOWLEDGE HIS/HER WRONG OR TO LEARN HIS OR HER LESSON!***

Each human being that has ever lived on this earth will eventually have to face these same problems and will be expected to submit to God and overcome. That is that NARROW GATE that leads to life and sadly, it seems, FEW WILL BE WILLING TO FIND IT (AT LEAST IN THIS LIFE). There is a price we must pay individually for salvation!

God has given me unique training so others can be helped through this type problem. But, God does not allow me to try and force this help on any. My commission from God is to make it available. I cannot cause anyone to understand these points - - ONLY GOD CAN DO THAT. I encounter situations where I suffer pain for those who come to me BECAUSE I KNOW THEIR PAIN SINCE I HAVE LIVED IT. Some have been able to respond to the guidance given and have been able to FACE THEMSELVES AND THEIR ATTITUDE IN THAT MIRROR OF GOD'S WORD. Others have not reached the point of being able to really look into that mirror or be truly honest with themselves. When I encounter these I merely have to wait on God to enlighten them as I suffer along with them. Many have been the times when I agonized over those who had not yet reached this point. They still want to blame others for their problems. It is true that the mistakes of others CAUSED THESE POINTS TO SURFACE IN EACH ONE OF US but the real culprit is our own human nature and character that is not yet willing or able to suffer wrongfully AS CHRIST SAID WE MUST BE WILLING TO DO IF WE ARE TO TRULY FOLLOW Him.

HOW I SURVIVED

May I share with you how I was able to survive and how I am stronger in GOD'S FAITH TODAY THAN EVER BEFORE? There was a point in my life that I had hit rock bottom. I was little more than a living breathing vegetable. I had not been able to pray or study the Bible for over ten years. I wanted to die but was afraid to commit suicide since I knew such was a sin. Even the psychologists and psychiatrists recognized this in me.

In desperation I was finally able to utter a three word prayer - - "I need help!" Getting through that three word prayer gave me courage to attempt a five word prayer - - "I've got to have help!" Obviously God was waiting for me to reach this point of desperation. Suddenly, as clear as a bell

[yet to this very day I cannot claim I audibly heard a thing or saw anything] there was a calm and clear “voice” that said: “Tell me about it - - unload!” So I unloaded the anguish, the frustration, the hurt, the disillusionment and despair I had experience for almost three decades. I have no ideas how long I spent vomiting out all this hurt and despair. Finally I stopped talking. This calm clear “voice” then asked “Is that all?” So I proceeded to unload some more for quite some time. Again I stopped talking and again this calm clear voice said “Well, is that all?” This time I said “That is all I think of for the moment.” The words of this calm clear “voice” still ring in my very consciousness today. The words from this calm clear “voice” that made all the difference in my life here and now and will affect me for all eternity in the Kingdom of God are: “WHAT DIFFERENCE ARE YOU GOING TO LET IT MAKE IN YOUR LIFE?” That is the question I am bluntly asking each of you at this very moment. Are you going to allow the hurt you suffered to totally disrupt your quest for salvation? Don’t you think it wise to pick up that mirror in one hand and the Bible in the other and go to that private place and do some serious soul searching - - YOUR SOUL, THAT IS! Confront your innermost being. Your salvation is at stake. **This is serious!**

God enabled me to see that those who knowingly hurt me were clearly jeopardizing their salvation by the decisions they were making. Then God’s spirit led me to ask myself [AS I LOOKED INTO THAT MIRROR OF MY SOUL INTERNALIZING THE VERY WORDS OF CHRIST] whether I was going to **ALLOW THE MISTAKES OF ANYONE** to prevent me from entering the Kingdom. With the help of God I had to get rid of all the hurt, bitterness, anger and resentment caused by what I had experienced and witnessed. I was able to ask myself candidly “Are you going to allow the mistakes of another take your crown and keep you out of the kingdom?” That is the key question that many of you reading this article **MUST ASK YOURSELF AND THEN ANSWER TO GOD’S SATISFACTION!**

TIME FOR A REALITY CHECK

Did you grasp what was just said in the last paragraph? What have you suffered at the hands of others? Even at the hands of men whom you considered ministers of God? This is where I found myself at the very crossroads of my spiritual quest for salvation. And this is where many of you reading this stand *at this very moment*. I personally know of people who committed suicide because of what they encountered in the Church. I personally know people who died of liver diseases due to alcoholism because they could not cope with what they suffered at the hands of men claiming to be ministers of God. Do we think all this escaped the attention of God? Do we think these things are not written down in the Lamb’s Book of Life and that those who did such things will merely escape in the hereafter as they seemed to escape in this life? What we must keep in mind and never forget is that **GOD SAYS THAT VENGEANCE BELONGS TO HIM ALONE - - THAT HE WILL RECOMPENSE.**

Finally I came to fully understand all those clear statements in the Bible. That Jesus Christ **MEANT** every statement He made about forgiving others so that God can and will forgive us. God **CANNOT FORGIVE US UNLESS AND UNTIL WE HAVE FORGIVEN OTHERS.** That *is the way God has set it* and God does not go back on His word. Burn that principle deeply into your mind and conscience. God cannot and will not forgive you personally **UNLESS AND UNTIL YOU ARE ABLE TO FORGIVE OTHERS** (Matthew 6:14).

After the lessons learned from the calm clear “voice” I was able for the first time to see that those who hurt me reacted humanly - - **AS DID DAVID!** God’s Spirit enabled me to see clearly what

is involved here. God nowhere in the entire Bible promised that our trials and tests would always come from OUTSIDE the church. In fact there are several New Testament warnings about men who would rise up from our midst and do untold damage to us IF WE ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN! God specifically commands us to WORK OUT OUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING (Phil 2:12). Too many of us began looking to human beings for the way of salvation. Jesus is our savior. Ironically many have more faith in their memory of certain ministers than they have in God or Christ.

Time and space in this article do not allow me to tell every detail of that experience regarding the trials shared in the article. But, in my analysis I ask myself “What difference will these trials make fifty, one hundred or a thousand years from now?” The simple answer to that question is that ***I WOULD EITHER BE A SPIRIT BEING IN THE VERY FAMILY OF GOD OR I WILL HAVE JUST DIED AND WILL CEASE TO EXIST FOR ALL ETERNITY!***

That is just how serious these matters are. We can allow our hurt feelings and human emotions to blow these things totally out of proportion and intensify that pain or we can go to God and ask Him to teach us what we need to learn from these events. If we truly humble ourselves before God and stop giving ourselves human excuses such as self pity then God will give us the willingness to face these human emotions squarely and seek God’s help in mastering them. This can be done but it is truly PAINFUL TO CONFRONT YOURSELF IN THESE MATTERS!

What this all boils down to is “CHOICES.” And we are the one who must make the choices. We choose to look at these things AS GOD DOES or we choose to look at them from a human perspective. To view these things as God views them and by responding to God’s way WE LEAVE THESE THINGS BEHIND WHILE RETAINING THE LESSONS LEARNED. But if we keep viewing them from a human perspective we will convince ourselves that we are justified for our misery and that SAME misery will eventually destroy us.

In conclusion then we must individually and personally learn how to ***CONFRONT THE PROBLEMS WE ALLOWED TO DEVELOP WITHIN OUR OWN NATURE. WE WILL ACCOMPLISH NOTHING AT ALL BY CONFRONTING THE PERSON WE FEEL INJURED US.***

REMEMBER THAT WE WILL BE REQUIRED TO ANSWER TO GOD FOR HOW WELL WE FACE “OUR HUMAN NATURE” AND NOT WHETHER OR NOT WE “CONFRONTED” THE PERSON WE FEEL HURT US.

Some may try to use Matthew 5:23–24 as a basis for CONFRONTING someone whom we feel wronged us. This passage is actually referring to someone WHO MAY HAVE BEEN WRONGED BY US OR WHO FEELS HE WAS WRONGED BY US. This is referring to a case where someone may feel he has a legitimate grievance against us (us being the Christian). This passage DOES NOT SAY that if we personally have a grievance against another that we must go and confront that person over our personal grievance no matter how legitimate that grievance may be. This passage is clearly showing that we must be willing to show that we are willing to even suffer wrong if need be (see I Cor. 6:7) in order to be reconciled with another and be right with God.

Paul summarizes this entire subject in Romans 12:9 – 21. Love has to be genuine and we are to love good and hate evil (vs. 9). We are to honor others above ourselves (vs. 10). We are to be

patient in affliction (vs. 12). We are to bless those who persecute us - - which is impossible for the natural mind to do (vs. 14). We are not to repay "evil for evil" (vs. 17). And, where it depends on us personally we are to LIVE AT PEACE WITH EVERYONE (vs. 18). God says clearly, "It is mine to avenge - - I will repay!" We are not to be OVERCOME BY EVIL BUT OVERCOME EVIL WITH GOOD (vs. 21).

Is it not possible that our NEED to confront those who hurt us WILL NET US NOTHING more than that shoeing the "BEAM IN OUR OWN EYE" THAT WE MUST CLEAR OUT BEFORE WE TRY AND REMOVE THE SPECK FROM ANOTHER'S EYE?" (see Matthew 7:1 - 5).

We may truly believe it is the other person who has the BEAM in his/her eye. But, what if God does not see it that way - - especially if He is not dealing with the other person at this time? By finding fault with others we are actually FAULTING GOD - - which is a dangerous thing to do.

I continually caution people that it is extremely painful to LOOK INTO THAT MIRROR OF GOD'S WORD AND SEE OURSELVES AS GOD SEES US - - which hurts greatly (see James 1). But when God enables us to do this we begin to find true joy in the Holy Spirit as we call on God's help in removing the beams from our own eyes and the flaws in our own character.

We do NOT answer for the other person. We must not strive for a confrontation which tries to force the other to admit to his/her faults. Forcing another to "ADMIT" his or her "wrong" (whether in hurting us or in any other situation) will NOT actually relieve our pain or give us peace. Without realizing it we are trying to create the circumstance whereby we can say to God: "See, God, I found it necessary to do your job for you since you were failing to do it. It became necessary for ME to force this person to acknowledge his/her wrong deeds." We all too often fail to remember that we answer ONLY for ourselves. We must learn to let God deal with the other person as He knows best how to do this and when. This is the only way that works!

It is my sincere hope and prayer that each of you facing these trials will be able to go to God and gain the help and insight you need to address the problems you face. May God help you.

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