

# Espousal Newsletters

By Jim Golden — Article Three — Kidnapped!

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*For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. (Rom 8:29)*

Many years ago I was attending a Christian festival called "**JESUS-78**". As I listened to speaker after speaker, over a 3 day period, a deep concern was birthed in my heart. Turning to a dear friend of mine I said, "This event is called **JESUS-78** but no one is talking about Jesus." His reply came almost rehearsed and too quickly, "Yes Jim, but if Jesus were here he wouldn't be talking about himself." I thought to myself, "Yes, but if Jesus were here in the flesh, he would be demonstrating a quality of life so rich in love and power he wouldn't need to speak about himself, everyone else would!" Since that time I have seen a **tsunami** of practical teaching overwhelm the Body of Christ. The eventual outcome of causing anyone to be preoccupied with anything but Jesus is a sterile form of godliness. We slowly wean them from the pure milk of God's life, and stick the lifeless pacifier of "religion" in their mouth.

Through our deep and personal relationship with Jesus, each individual believer is taught and empowered by his Holy Spirit, to deny ungodliness and worldly lust. It is through that deep and intimate association alone that we can live a sober, righteous and godly life that is **acceptable** to God in this present world. I use the word acceptable because Paul, before his conversion, lived a *sober, righteous and godly life*. Yet, he persecuted the Church, imprisoned Christians, and consented to the stoning deaths of many others.

Much of what is going on in Christianity today isn't much more than a pacifier. This is written out of a deep Godly jealousy for the preeminence of Jesus and the salvation his blood and suffering purchased us. When I first came to Jesus as a repentant sinner it was because I had already tried everything the world had to offer. I was still empty and dead inside. Money, drugs, sex, power, violence, yes, and even **Harley-Davidson** motorcycles couldn't fit into the empty space in my heart. God created the needs within mankind to be nourished by one thing only, **JESUS CHRIST!** Out of this relationship we would be able to give instead of take. The manifested life of God would fill one side of our new heart and steadily pump out his life from the other side of this new heart. This is what the natural and spiritual organ was designed to do. What a glorious and great salvation. If we actually possessed and imparted this kind of salvation, our children couldn't be fooled by the imitations the devil is constantly offering them.

The old saying that **variety is the spice of life** is at best only a half truth. The Devil dwells in the realm of half truths and deception, offering mankind everything but the bread from heaven. His "**truth**" teaches us to be users and abusers of mankind. We must heal all Satan oppresses if we are truly people who have Christ living in us.

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When some "enter" the Kingdom of God they feel such initial satisfaction. It's as if they have feasted for the first time. Then slowly over the months and years the enemy enacts his plan to drive a wedge (pacifier) between us and our pure and simple devotion to Jesus. He tries to offer us the "meat of variety". While we think we are moving from milk to meat he slowly starves us to death. Diabetes is a disease that creates an inability to use the food we eat. Most of what is eaten is stored as fat, and all along the body starves for the true nutrition it needs. Untreated, the disease usually becomes fatal.

Much of the body of Christ is suffering from a similar disease. We are experts in the things that accompany salvation, feasting until we can hold no more and all the while we are starving from the lack of salvation **Himself**. Salvation isn't the way we act, think, or speak. Salvation is returning to the original purpose for our creation. Salvation means to be made whole. We must remember that God has always intended for us to be his dwelling place. It was the cry of Moses, it was the psalmist's declaration and it is my plea. We must begin to declare our true reason for becoming part of God's salvation. We were chosen by God to carry with us, everywhere we go, the manifested presence of God.

At this point you might begin to feel confused or angry, maybe even ripped off by your church's *diet* and its leaders. I know I have. After many years of a thematic teaching diet designed to use the scripture to mold God's people into man's interpretation of the "kingdom", I lost my hunger for the Word. I grew tired of unanointed, impassioned men trying to "spoon-feed" me into my *kingdom responsibilities*.

I say unanointed because the anointing breaks the yoke and sets people free. The anointing engenders pure simple devotion to Christ and espouses its recipients into an undying passionate love affair with their Savior and heavenly Father. The anointing isn't some mystical, cosmic cloud. It isn't some unique ability granted to only a select few giving them special giftings not available to all of God's children. The Anointing is the blessed third person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit has come to reveal Jesus and the Father to His children, not turn their focus in another direction.

Knowledge, passion and ability can never equal **the Anointing**. These things are of much less importance than our devotion to Jesus and our unconditional **availability**. The Word of God is alive and life-changing if ingested with a sincere desire to know and love Jesus more intimately. No matter what we teach or how "unique" a lifestyle we try to exhibit, it's time we admit it's not producing 1st century results. Our utter dependency on God, not our formulas, will work.

The hard part is getting through what I call the **denial** stage. I had looked up to the leaders. I didn't want to believe they could have **lost** their anointing. I had even been one of the leaders responsible, in a small way, for the formation of a movement. I had invested many years of my life. Yet the passionate love, peace, joy and super-natural presence of God I once knew was hard to be found.

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It took me many years to admit that we were building beautiful houses, but the manifested presence of God wasn't moving in. Most Church growth in America comes from transfer growth, not new birth. People become unhappy where they're worshipping and try to find the missing "peace" somewhere else. Jesus is what's missing. He said, ". . . if I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me."

I know a man who has an absolutely beautiful home, everything I could want! Yet he sits alone almost every evening, separated from his wife and child. The home he built to house a warm and loving family means little to him. In many ways this is a perfect picture of much of the Church in America today.

No matter what kind of war wounds you may have it is absolutely imperative that you walk in forgiveness. Don't allow unforgiveness to hinder your return to Jesus alone. It is also important to release this anger and frustration to the Lord. I want to encourage you to yell, scream and cry, whatever it takes to get you through the initial stages of denial that the healing may come. Please don't worry about being disloyal. As long as you are seeking to make Jesus your everything, how can you be disloyal? The number of churches in America that are the direct result of a church division is phenomenal.

After I left the movement I had been part of, I felt guilty, almost unclean, as if I could never find God's best again. Subconsciously I was afraid to look God in the eye. Then one day I sat musing about the night I met my Savior, when his love suddenly broke through the doorway of my self-made prison with the key of liberty. It came in the form of a word- **KIDNAPPED!** While I was still a very young Christian my desire to be and do something great "for God" opened the door for the thief. I was kidnapped by the **things** that accompany salvation. I was held captive by the "kingdom of God".

My **jailers** were shrewd, ruthless, very impersonal and unforgiving. My life of pure love and simple devotion with Jesus had been unknowingly severed. Somehow, after almost 18 years I stumbled out of their clutches. I was hobbling dazed, on the road home. Suddenly I saw my world through God's eyes. As I heard his voice say to me, "you were not disobedient, bad, rebellious, defiled, or disloyal but **kidnapped**"-the cleansing tears began to flow.

I thought of a movie I saw once about a boy who had been kidnapped. Not much of what went on with the boy was revealed, but the torment of the mother and father was clearly seen. Their tireless searching finally yielded the joyful fruit of reunion. As I wept I sensed I was but one of an endless stream of kidnapped casualties the Father's tireless efforts were recovering.

Our God is a father, not like any father earth has ever known. His capacity for love and affection go so deep, no one could even begin to plumb their depths. Don't make the same mistake Jonathan made. When God removed his assistance from Saul and gave it to David, Jonathan's

removed his anointing from Saul and gave it to David, Jonathan's misplaced loyalty resulted in his death. The **anointing** is everything. It is what our salvation is all about. **THE ANOINTING IS THE VERY LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST!** This life is imparted to us through our union and devotion to Him via the Holy Spirit.

I am not selling division from a church, but a reunion with Christ. My concern is the resulting bitterness that we don't leave at the cross, when the truth of what I am declaring becomes real to you. All God asks in return is pure and simple devotion to him and his Son. What this article seeks to do is lift the burden of responsibility that has been placed on the shoulders of God's children by *well-meaning* leaders and/or movements, and encourage us to respond to Jesus Christ's ability again. His ability infuses every fiber of our being with life and sustenance. Our God is a jealous God and the time is coming when he will no longer tolerate a substitute for his salvation. The price he paid for the real thing was too dear. Jesus did it all while he was dying and when it was done he said, "It is finished!"

All that remains is for us to remove the pacifier the devil has so skillfully placed in our mouths and open them wide that our God may fill them to overflowing.

*"We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a Great Salvation?"*