

Espousal Newsletters

By Jim Golden — Article Five — Our Daily Cross!

January 1st has come and gone along with many of the well-intentioned resolutions that usually accompany such an historical event as the passing of an old year into a new one. My wife and I recently had a little spat that left us not talking for several hours. I had stayed late ministering to the needs of some of the people at the church I was attending while ignoring her and the needs of our family. The thoughts and language of accusation coursed through us toward each other and opened the door to that uncomfortable silence that follows. Ironically I had been praying with a couple whose marriage needed some immediate attention. The crux of my counsel and prayer was designed to reveal to them the accusational language the enemy uses to ensnare us and undermine our relationships in marriage. Actually, I explained to them that anytime we hear thoughts of an accusational nature we count on one thing-it doesn't come from God. Accusational thoughts and language come from the Accuser of the Brethren.

As we discussed our accusational bout we both began to realize just how often we allow this type of thought and speech to flow through us. As we began to talk things over we realized how important it is to agree with what God says is true about us and declare those truths instead of the language and thought of our enemy. Suddenly God spoke to me, "That is what I meant when I said you must take up your cross daily." We had just finished talking about the work of the cross, and what Jesus accomplished on our behalf at Calvary. We had just proclaimed that he had crucified our old man with him on the cross. He had put a new spirit within us and had removed the old heart of stone. We declared that God's laws were written on our hearts and minds and that we truly loved him with all our beings. We were feeling our relationship being strengthened by the words of God's truth. We were obeying Jesus by taking up our daily cross. Taking up your cross daily means proclaiming all the glorious things Jesus accomplished for us on his cross. The our cross part of it is personalizing his work on our behalf. It has nothing to do with morbid self-denial. To deny self was to deny the old man's existence by truly reckoning him dead and these old or accusational ways as Satan's ways.

Many years ago I did a seminar with an old friend and mentor called, "The Battle For The Mind." The Scriptural basis for our study was Romans, Chapter 12. We are truly transformed by renewing our minds with God's word. What was once a Scriptural and spiritual principal has now become a way of life. It isn't easy to stop an evil desire if we believe it is our own. Yet, if we realize that these old ways are really spiritual influence coming from the camp of our enemy it becomes easy to resist him and watch him flee. It is when we forget this and embrace his desires and make them our own by accepting them as our own thoughts and desires that it becomes harder to resist him.

Christians don't need a demon oppressing them when the demon's lie is just as powerful. The power of the enemy grows stronger the longer we allow this scenario to continue. One Scriptural definition of maturity is having your senses trained to discern between good and evil. Sometimes it can be a real challenge

to believe the incredible claims of the Gospel. It isn't easy to overcome the accusations of the enemy and agree with Paul, "If anyone is in Christ they are a new creature, (Greek: species of being) the old has passed away, behold the new has come." Yet it is imperative to our survival and maturity as Christians .

By recognizing the enemy's activity and rejecting it with the truth of God's word, as well as asking for and giving forgiveness, we saw the release of the power of God to deliver us from the power of the enemy's lies. Jesus wasn't kidding when he declared that by continuing in his word we would become his learners, and that would result in us knowing the truth and the truth setting us free. As we begin to walk out this New Year let us daily stop at the cross of Christ's accomplishments, and there appropriate the marvelous blessings of all that he has done for us. Let us daily deny the existence of the old man. Reckon him truly dead according to God's word and work and revel in the power of the blessed new heart and spirit which God has placed in us. Together let us welcome in the era God has destined for us to live in. An era where all God's children walk in the glory of his salvation, truly revived by his abiding presence. Allow the light of God's word and the Holy Spirit to search you and reveal the flow of the accusational thoughts and language of our enemy in your life so that Jesus can raise up the standard of His Word and set you free in his love. Satan's job is to breed mistrust and division among God's children. He knows that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. One New Year's resolution worth making is to walk in love, believing the best of our region's churches and all our brothers and sisters in Christ, while rejecting the thoughts and language of accusation. For there the Lord has commanded the blessing...Psalm 133