



Light of Messiah Ministries

.....proclaiming Jesus, the Jewish Messiah!

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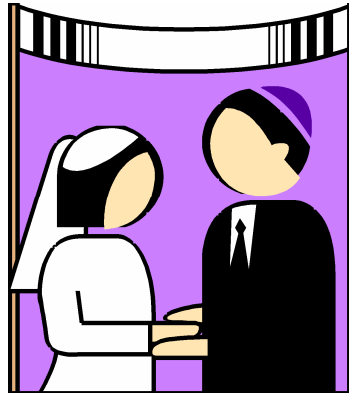
April 2005

The Tears of Parents

My children are only 9 and 12. As they get older I am beginning to understand that the older they get, the bigger the blessings, and the bigger the challenges. We raise our children, and try to help those we love, to understand the importance of faith, the truthfulness of God's Word, and the blessing of following Jesus. However, sometimes those who are the closest to us choose to turn in a different direction.

Recently I have unfortunately met more and more Christian parents whose children have married Jewish spouses. Their children were raised in Christian homes, but met Jewish people, fell in love, and are now living their lives in an interfaith marriage. Some of these interfaith couples have children. Most of them are raising their children in a home with little or no faith. *"We will let our children make their own decisions when they grow up,"* is the most common mantra.

At a recent church service I was approached by a lovely couple. Their brows were furrowed and their eyes were teary. Their faces expressed the grief and anxiety that they were about to share with me. Their son had fallen in love with a Jewish woman and was now married to her. *"Murray,"* they said, *"we love our daughter-in-law so much, but we do not know how to relate to her. We feel so uncomfortable. We want to embrace her, but we also know that she needs to know the Lord. We came tonight because we thought*



you might be able to help us." At that, the mother began to cry. I could only wait as she composed herself. *"I think I can help you,"* I said.

This couple is only one example of the many people we minister to who have Jewish family members. We are contacted on a regular basis by parents who have children dating or falling in love with Jewish people, husbands and wives who have unbelieving spouses, and individuals with Jewish friends in an interfaith marriage.

Interfaith marriages bring an unusual dynamic into a Christian family. When a son or daughter who has been raised in a Christian home decides to marry outside of the faith, parents oftentimes feel betrayed, confused, and a sense of loss and grief. Family members don't know how to handle religious holidays such as Christmas and Hanukkah, or Passover and Easter. Parents love their children and love their son or daughter-in-law. But the common question we get in our ministry is, *"What do we do?"*

Our ministry is here to help families who have been affected by interfaith relationships. Whether or not you have a situation like this in your own life, the principles which we share with families dealing with these kinds of circumstances may be applied to Jewish people with whom you might be involved.

- **Pray. It is very easy to forget that the most powerful tool the Lord has given you to deal with difficult circumstances is the power of prayer.** Pray for your Jewish family member or friend. Pray that God will help you to communicate with them in the most effective way possible. Ask the Lord to give you a heart of compassion. Ask Him to remove any bitterness, anger, or unforgiveness that might be in your heart. The only way for you to have compassion on others is to make sure that your heart is right before God. Pray for wisdom, healing, and restoration. Finally don't forget to **pray that the Lord would reveal Himself to those Jewish people in your life whether they are a son-in-law, daughter-in-law, or friend.**
- **Don't put up walls, and take down any walls that have been erected.** In most instances an incredible amount of pressure was put on your child or friend not to marry a Jewish person. **I have spoken to Christians who did not go to their friend's wedding because they were marrying a Jewish person.** I have known of

deep and long lasting friendships that became broken because well meaning Christians did not want to “validate a illegitimate wedding.”

Oftentimes parents put up such protests that they push their children away. By protesting for too long and pushing too hard it is possible to cause resentment and build walls between you and the people who you love the most. These walls have to be taken down. Ask for forgiveness for building walls. Confess sin. **Let your Jewish family member or friend know that you desire healing in the relationship.**

- **Move toward them, don't expect them to move toward you.** People who marry outside of the faith they were raised in have made a very difficult personal decision. I am a believer in Jesus and was raised in a Jewish home. **My faith and relationship with Jesus has been challenged by my family and many people very close to me.** Because of that, I have been made stronger in my relationship with the Messiah I have chosen.

The same is true for those who fall in love and marry outside of the faith in which they were raised. Usually, because of the opposition experienced, there is more resolve to hang onto what they have chosen. Once the relationship has been chosen there comes a time for you to accept that relationship.

- **Begin to build bridges.** Do not hesitate to embrace the Jewish family member or friend in a culturally relevant way. Recognize the Jewish holidays. Send holiday cards. Acknowledge Jewish family events such as Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. Wear a Star of David because of your love for the Jewish people and because



Jesus was Jewish. **Even if your Jewish family member or friend is not religious...that's ok. Reach out anyway.** They will notice and be positively influenced.

- Finally, be honest with yourself. **If a family member or friend who you thought was a Christian married someone who is not, there is the possibility that they never knew Jesus personally.** Or, they are surely living in disobedience to the Lord by marrying someone out of the faith. **Do not alienate them. Love them even more.** Show them how much you care by extending your love. Ask them what they think about Jesus. Encourage them in their faith. You will see results.

Please remember that our ministry is here to help you with any Jewish person who God has put into your life. We are here to counsel, encourage, and try to give answers to the best of our ability. Please let us know how we can help.

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Summer Outreach Plans

Summertime affords us the opportunity to get out and meet people in the “marketplace”.

We are planning several different summer outreaches which include distributing literature at the Gay Pride Parade, meeting with people at Stone Mountain Park, and distributing literature at Braves games. Our goals are twofold:

- 1) Meeting Jewish people who may be open to discussing spiritual issues more deeply.
- 2) Meeting Christians who have Jewish friends. We want to let them know we are here to help.

We are excited about our summer plans. Please pray for us!

Thank You!

I do realize that there are many of you reading this letter who do not have a Jewish friend, let alone a Jewish family member. **I share these stories with you because I want you to know the extent of the ministry we are doing.**

The impact that our ministry is having in the lives of Jewish people and the church is growing. We are being contacted by more Christians who have Jewish friends. We are meeting with more Jewish people. We are helping.

Your prayers and financial support make our ministry possible.

Finally, thank you for caring enough to send us back to the Jewish people with the love of Jesus.

With a grateful heart,


Murray Tilles...for the staff
Light of Messiah Ministries