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ON MALE/FEMALE RECONCILIATION

RESTORATION

Acts 3:21

whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. NKJV

- Many things are being restored in our day. Perhaps the most significant is the restoration of relationships in the body of Christ. God is moving by His Spirit today to reconcile races, cultures, and denominations. But the foundational relationship – that between male and female – must be restored, not only in individual couples, but between the genders in the corporate Church as well. This relationship, above all others, is the foundational place from which God intended to work to accomplish His ultimate intention.
- From Genesis to Revelation, it is clear that God is a God of eternal purpose (Isaiah 46:9-10). We tend to interpret human history from the point of the Fall. Redemption then becomes the overshadowing truth. God had a plan in mind even before the fall of man. Redemption was incorporated into His plan to bring us back to the purpose He established before the foundation of the earth.
- The man and woman were the beginning place, the foundation of the House of the Lord. This was the structure God chose to reveal Himself on earth and make Himself known.
- The restoration of the relationship between the man and woman is part of God's plan and purpose. He fashioned this union to display His image, His heart, His character, and nature.
- God's plan was not a secret. The enemy knew that the plan's success depended on the unity and trust of these first two people on earth, for together they bore God's image. It is for that reason the enemy will fight the hardest against this relationship being restored. The strength of man and woman was in their union. Without unity, without oneness, God's plan would fail.
- If the enemy could disrupt that unity and trust, bringing separation, distrust, fear, and suspicion, then he could mar and hinder what God wanted to do through the two of them. If this relationship is not restored, then the body of Christ, the Church, will not function in the strength and victory God purposed.
- The human race continues to suffer the fallout from Satan's malignant coup, but the truth is that the Church itself has not fully recovered from this catastrophic event.
- Through the man and woman together, God is fully revealed, which returns us to the original purpose of God, as revealed at the beginning of time.

UNPRECEDENTED MOVE

- Restoration has begun! Since the late 1960s, we have witnessed an unprecedented move of God. The end of that decade signaled a sweeping move of God's Spirit that touched both men and women, but what has taken place in the lives of women in this time has been especially unique and unusual.
- God has always used women. Many times God's ongoing plan seemed to hinge on the response of a woman. In Scripture, it appears that when God worked through women, He worked primarily through individual women – a Jochebed here, a Deborah or an Esther there. Never in all of history has there been the kind of corporate calling forth or worldwide awakening of women such as we have seen beginning in the 1960s. Aglow and other women's ministries were birthed during this time in response to the massive heart cry of women to know more of God.

- Aglow began in 1967 with no thoughts of becoming a worldwide organization. Yet, Aglow women are impacting the lives of over 15 million people each year in 165 of the 222 nations of the world.
- This unprecedented move is evidence that God is about something!

MADE IN HIS IMAGE – Genesis 1:26-28

- As God opens the door of time in Genesis, we hear Him speaking His purpose for humanity.
- Man was created in the image of God. The word, “image,” means, “representative figure.” Male and female together would represent something of heaven on earth.
- God blessed them and told them to be fruitful, multiply, subdue the earth, and take dominion over it (Gen 1:28). From the beginning, He told us what dominion would look like in the earth. It was male and female. He called them together, not separately.
- God’s purpose is to bring forth a reconciled Church – male and female walking together – one that is restored to His original design. For the Church to fulfill the destiny God has planned in the full expression of power and authority, this foundational truth must be understood and embraced by His people.

THE TREE OF LIFE – Genesis 2:15-17

- Adam was placed in the Garden to “tend” and “keep” it. These two words are significant. Tend means, “to tend or tell,” literally, “to work.” The word, “keep,” means, “to hedge about, to guard, protect, beware, be circumspect, observe, preserve, watch.” Adam was to guard the Garden, actually to be a watchman over it against any hostile intrusion. This work was far too much for mere humans. God did not intend that Adam should do this work of guarding and protecting the Garden in his own strength: He had made provision.
- Adam was commanded to freely eat of every tree in the Garden except the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The provision was the Tree of Life – representative of the life of God. If, as God intended, Adam was to rule and reign and have authority over God’s enemy, Satan, he would need to partake of God’s own life.
- But Adam never did partake (see Genesis 3:22).

NOT GOOD FOR MAN TO BE ALONE – Genesis 2:18

- Following His command to Adam to partake, God observes Adam’s aloneness and states it is not good. Everything up to this point had been good. Now something was not good. What was not good? Adam’s being “alone” seems to be the key thought in what God is expressing here. The word “alone” speaks of an inner aloneness.
- Literally, in the Hebrew, alone means “separation.”
- Adam had not yet been joined to God in His “divine life,” so it appears that this statement by God was not a mere observation of Adam’s *loneliness*. Rather, his aloneness, or separation, had to do with his relationship with God Himself. It was about his separation from God. It was a leaning toward isolation and independence.
- This aloneness is expressed relationally with the woman when he withdraws and protects his heart. The heart is the deepest, innermost part of our being; it is the place where the real person dwells. Pulling back in isolation from the woman hinders the intimacy God intended between the two. Without that kind of oneness, the purpose of the union would be impeded. Man’s aloneness was not good.

THE HELP GOD SENT – Genesis 2:18, 21-23

- Eve was created from Adam’s side. Something of Adam’s self was removed from him, and returned to him in a different package. Yet Adam recognized something of himself in her: “bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh.”
- When God created Adam, he was created fully in the image of God. When the woman was taken out of him, the image of God was not added to or subtracted from. It was *divided*. Man was no longer in his original

form. Now the image of God was *male and female*. Yet, they were one. They were open, naked, and transparent before one another. They were made for each other and their destiny would be fulfilled together.

- The word translated, “help,” or “ezer,” in the Hebrew, is a very strong word, used 21 times in Scripture. It means. “to surround, to protect, to aid, succor.”
- The word translated, “helpmeet” or “helpmate” in Genesis 2:18, is a Hebrew word derived from “neged” and means, “to the front, to the face, or actually, face-to-face.” So the help God sent was in the form of a “face-to-face” relationship between the man and the woman.
- The woman was uniquely and specifically designed to stand before the man in an intimate, face-to-face relationship. She was designed to talk with him: to comfort, encourage, confront, and challenge him in love, using life-giving words. God intended her to surround and protect something of His creation that was very precious in His sight: the heart of man – his thoughts, his feelings, his inner self. It is the part the man keeps hidden in his aloneness.
- If marriage, and ultimately the Church is to be strengthened, the man and woman must be restored so that this relationship can function in the way God intended.

THE STRIKE OF THE ENEMY – Genesis 3:1-6

- It wasn’t happenstance that the serpent came to woman first. He knew she had been called to be a help for the man, and that by approaching the woman first, he would attack the very help God had sent. The enemy hoped to undermine or weaken the plan of God by silencing the woman and rendering her useless and powerless in the man’s life.
- By asking, “Has God indeed said?” Satan implied to Eve that she didn’t really have all she needed, to do what God told her to do. He implied God was withholding something from her and therefore, He wasn’t trustworthy.
- Eve, aware that she was to “help” Adam, heeded the lie of the serpent and ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. She then gave to her husband to eat. Adam partook, knowing God had commanded him not to eat of that tree. This is the reason sin is accounted to him: in Adam, all sinned (Rom. 5:12).
- In one stroke, Satan turned them from God to their own wisdom, their own way, the way of the flesh, and as a result, fear, separation, mistrust, blame, and myriad other emotions and attitudes were now a part of Adam and Eve’s world. The immediate result of their action was broken relationship – with God and with each other.

THE ENMITY OF THE WOMAN – Genesis 3:13-15

- Eve was the first on earth to be ensnared by Satan’s cunning deceitfulness. She was also the first to expose him for what he was – a deceiver.
- Speaking specifically of the woman and not of humanity as a whole, God said that there would be hostility, animosity between Satan and the woman. In essence, it was a declaration that, forever and ever, she would be used again and again to expose him and call him what he really is – the deceiver.
- We often refer to Satan as our enemy, but the opposite is actually true. We are *his* enemy. He has known it since the Garden. That is why, for centuries, we have seen such hatred and violence against women. Current statistics of abuse against women around the world are staggering and sobering. Genesis 3:15 explains this hatred against women and Satan’s ongoing purpose to destroy her influence.
- It is why this ministry is about restoring women, healing the brokenness in their lives so they can know their value and identity in God. When restored, women are free to fulfill the destiny God has for them, and ultimately for the man and woman together in the Church.

THE DESIRE OF THE WOMAN – Genesis 3:16

- This is key in understanding the root of dysfunction in the relationship of women to men, and where her heart is most vulnerable to deception. It is the place that needs healing and restoration so she can be the help God designed. It is a heart issue.

- The word, “desire,” means “turning away.” In essence, God was saying to Eve, “The desire of your heart is turning away from Me to the man and he will rule over you in a way I did not intend.” Whatever we set our desire on will rule over us, whether it is riches, power, reputation, or the approval of others. Since the fall, women tend to seek their life, identity, value, significance, and security from the man.
- The desire of the woman is a heart-held belief. It is the belief that her husband can be her source of life, that he can meet her need for unfailing love, worth, security, and purpose. She will be hindered from functioning as the help God sent because she is ruled emotionally by her need, and will not risk speaking those things necessary to draw the man out of his aloneness.
- Genesis 3:16 is an observation on God’s part. It is not a part of the curse. Women have a choice in the “desire” of their hearts. They can choose to turn to God as the source of their life, value, identity, and purpose instead of the man. Once a woman’s heart is turned back to God to meet her needs, she is then free to be the help God intended her to be: to draw the man out of his aloneness by relating on a level that moves past the surface and touches the deep places of his heart. She is then able to stand in a healthy, face-to-face relationship with him.

THE DESTINY OF THE CHURCH

Without this relational connection of woman to man and man to woman, the Church will be merely an organization which functions through government and rules rather than transparent relationship. The restoration of women, and the subsequent reconciliation of men and women, is not about positions on church boards, or whether women can be pastors or leaders and still be “doctrinally” correct. Today we have women serving as pastors, deacons, apostles, and leaders, but we are still unsure it is appropriate, because the issue goes deeper than that.

It is not about whether women can teach or hold offices in the Church. It is about the image of God, the likeness and glory of God being manifested in the Church, male and female. It is about coming together as He designed it from the beginning. It is about respect that comes from a heart revelation of the vital contribution of both male and female, and the devastation that results when either is missing or not functioning.

God is coming to release us in a greater way to all that He purposed for us as women, and for men as well, in this final hour. No longer can we allow the enemy to continue his plan to strike at the core of our maleness and femaleness. No longer can we allow the enemy and the world to define who we are as women and men. No longer will we be fashioned by the world. We will allow God to bring us back to His original design: male and female together expressing His image in the earth. This is God’s purpose for the church, His plan from the beginning; it is the foundational structure God chose for His church. Because of that, the enemy will fight hardest against reconciliation between the genders.

The church is beginning to walk in this kind of reconciliation, but we are not yet to the place He is leading us. We will see a merging of anointings between men and women that will lead us into our destiny together. This unprecedented move of God among women, and in the last number of years, among men, through ministries like Promise Keepers, is about bringing the genders into wholeness and health so that we can begin to move into the fullness of what God planned for us together from the beginning.

We have yet to see the church display the strength, anointing, and authority that God intended. However, a shift has occurred. We are in a different season nationally, politically, and spiritually. The pace is accelerating and I believe that God is uniting us in a way that scares the enemy. We are casting off intimidation and fear. The things that have kept us apart are being healed and restored so that we will be one, even as Jesus prayed, male and female, Jew and Gentile. God’s glory will be seen in His people such as we have not yet known.

After God spoke His plan into being in the first three chapters of Genesis, He sat down and rested. He rested because He knew He had set in place His perfect plan. Nothing could abort, hinder, or stop that plan from coming to fruition – not sin, not time, not flesh, not the devil. He is inviting us to that same posture of rest. To know and trust that what He has set in place, He *will* accomplish!