

Freedom's Gate

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the witness of the Spirit

By Jolyn Hermiller

This story has caused me to think quite a bit about myself; I'm hoping it will do the same for you. It comes from some very godly actions displayed by a dear friend of mine, Julie Przeszlo.

Julie graduated a year behind me from Ohio Northern and then set off for missions training in Colorado. After going through a year of training at the YWAM (Youth With A Mission) base in Denver, she stayed on the base as a staff member. She served there for four years discipling numerous believers, traveling to places all over the world, and ministering the love of Jesus wherever she could. But the story I'm going to tell isn't about world missions or even winning unbelievers to Christ. It's about a woman who *knows* her God and rejoices in everything that He is, and it's such a subtle story, you could miss it if you're not tuned in. So tune in!

Julie has just finished up her time at the YWAM base and has returned to live with her parents in Cleveland. She's been in Colorado for years now and has not had much of a chance to see good friends from college. But a great opportunity awaited her to visit many of these old friends: a wedding. Now, Julie *loves* weddings and loves seeing old friends, but the wedding was in Indianapolis—too far for her to drive in the car a friend was letting her borrow. So she could not go, but a few days before the wedding it just sort of hit me, "Hey, she could drive to our house and we could take her the rest of the way." I called and made the offer.

Needless to say, Julie was excited about this new possibility! Put yourself in her shoes for just a minute. You haven't seen some dear, dear friends of yours in years and had truly hoped to see them, but nothing worked out. Now a new proposition was standing that might make this dream a reality! Not only that, but you'd get to hang out with me and my wonderful family for a whole weekend plus two three hour car rides! (Okay, that last part might not be what your dreams are made of, but it was very enticing for Julie). What would your reaction have been? This was hers, "Jolyn, that offer is such a blessing to me. I really, really want to come, but here's what I'll do. I'm going to pray and see what God wants me to do, and I'm going to check with my parents because they're still my covering."

She sees herself as being protected by an unseen spiritual law—a law that says when she honors her parents she has a spiritual covering over her life that ensures blessing and protection.

Now that last part there is what really got me. Julie is 26 years old. She has been living independently for the last seven or eight years of her life, first in college and then in Denver. What in the world does she care about what her parents think? Why was she willingly putting herself under their authority? Quite simply, Julie must understand something about "honoring" her father and mother. She must understand that it's really for her blessing and benefit to do so. Notice she used the word "covering". She sees herself as being protected by an unseen spiritual law—a law that says when she honors her parents she has a spiritual covering over her life that ensures blessing and protection. I think she really believes God when He describes this principle in the Bible. She believes it enough to live it. That's cool. Now let's finish the story.

Julie called me back at the end of the day. She said, "Jolyn, I was able to rearrange some appointments and meetings so I could come, and I have my parents' blessing. My dad is even willing to let me drive his car because he doesn't trust the car I'm borrowing. But, I feel the Lord leading me to stay. And I really, really want to see you and your family, but the Father has assured me that I will get my time with the Hermillers."

Okay, now this is where I had to check myself. All physical circumstances have worked out, everything is clear except for that one still, small feeling that feels an awful lot like a "no". How would I respond? How would you respond? Would you obey the still, small voice of your Heavenly Father who loves you and knows what is best for you? Or would you quite easily ignore His leading and go with your own desires? I mean, Julie *really* wanted for this whole thing to work out. But she joyfully obeyed her Father and eagerly looked forward to the day God would provide exactly what she was desiring. She trusted her God. She knew His character, His goodness, His faithfulness. She was not about to pout over the "no" as she could only rejoice in the good things that she *knew* the "no" would bring. I think she really believes God when he describes this principle in the Bible. She believes it enough to live it. That's cool.

Oh God, what a sweet Father You are. Lead us into such a relationship where we can know Your character enough to believe Your words and live them out. Help us live out the principles You've outlined in Your Word, like honoring our parents. And help us joyfully follow all of Your leadings, be they "yes's" or "no's". Thank You for loving us and being so into our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Honor All People

Honor seems to be a favorite word of God's, because He speaks much about it in His word. John 8:54 says that God honors the Son, so much so that 1 John 5:12 says, "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

Another place the Lord tells us to honor is in the area of our parents. Ephesians 6:1-3 instructs us to obey and honor our parents so that it may be well with us and we will live long lives. Obedience may look different at various stages of our lives, but honor is an on-going way of life. We don't stop honoring our parents just because we turned 18. There is a story in Jeremiah chapter 35 of a man and his sons, whom when they were grown and married, they still honored their father. The result was great blessing in their lives.

1 Timothy 2:1-4 exhorts us to pray for those in authority. Even though the word honor is not used, it is implied. We are not called to criticize our government authorities; we are called to pray for them. That also holds true for the authorities in the Body of Christ. Look at verse 1 of that chapter: we are told to pray **and** give thanks! Whew! That can be a tall order at times, but notice in verse 2 that God gives a promise with that instruction. He tells us as a result of praying and giving thanks, we will lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

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God is pretty serious about this honor thing because He addresses it in every area of life. He tells wives to submit to and reverence their husbands; He tells husbands to love and cherish their wives. In Ephesians 6:5-8, the word speaks to those who have someone over them in authority. We are told to submit as unto the Lord **knowing** (verse 8) that “Whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord...”

Sometimes we are asked to submit just to honor God, our Father. Ephesians 5:21 says “Submitting to one another in the fear of God.” Romans 12:10 tells us “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, **in honor** giving preference to one another.”

All of this about honor has to do with a higher life – the life of Jesus. “But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be **sons of your Father** in heaven.” (Matthew 5:44, 45a)

Honor is a principle of our new life in Christ. 1 Peter 2:17 says “Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.” When we honor what God honors, He honors us.

~ Anne Pranger

Parents. Believe it or not...they're here not to just correct us, but to guide us both physically and spiritually. Parents are God's design and the Bible commands us to honor them whether we think they are right or wrong. In Exodus 20:12 it says “Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.” (NLT) Did you catch what that said? It said that if we honor mom and dad we'll live a long life! It doesn't say honor mom and dad if you feel like it. It didn't say to honor them if you think they're right. This isn't an option, it was given to us as a command. We are to honor. PERIOD. If you want to get along with dad and mom and have them trust you 100% when you walk out the door there are 2 key things here- honor and obedience.

- Lynn Diehm

The Mind of Christ

By Chey Foran

This really is pride. “No, God, You're wrong. I'm not like that at all.” And you forge ahead on your own self destructive path of self pity.

Let's get one thing straight. You, in and of yourself, are not worthy. You didn't do anything to become worthy. You did not earn this position, no matter how hard you've been trying. That's why you and the murderer who gives his life to Christ in his dying breath are forever equal in God's eyes. See, there was never meant to be comparison. We were never meant to discern beauty and ugly. That came with the tree in the garden. Suddenly everything had a label of either good or evil, and various levels thereof. Today, society glorifies that process, and as a result, we compare everything. Example: the corporate ladder, sports teams, education and, of course, beauty.

We are all equal and not just equally mediocre. We are equally beautiful and radiant in His sight. So the moment we compare and place somebody on a ranking system in our minds, we have put them (or ourselves) back under a fallen system. This is a system where we humans have tried to assign worth; where we decided to be judges and push God out of the way. “We don't need you,” we say. “We have our own, logical system.” Ah! – logic being the operative word. As new creations, we were meant to take on the mind of Christ. Our minds are flesh and of this world, which basically means not of God. Anything discerned from human logic suspends Truth.

By the world's standards, I don't quite measure up. Quite literally, I'm just barely over 5 feet tall. But by God's standard, I'm absolutely PERFECT. My choice to not receive that truth as revelation plays directly into the deceitful lie of that enemy that tells me that God doesn't know what He's talking about. In sort of false humility, my confidence slowly wanes. That sneaky pride creeps in, and I hinder what God wants to do in and through me as I refuse to receive my identity from Him.

Due to our conditioning, we don't always understand how this could be. But radically enough, God does not even expect you to muster this faith to believe Him. Jesus is our faith, and as we rest in Him, He does the work in our hearts and minds, to suspend the logic of this world, and to bring us into all Truth...which is just Himself, anyway! So rest in Him, and know that you are not.

Dating? What is it anyway? What is the purpose? Out of curiosity, I looked it up in the *Webster's Concise Dictionary of the English Language*. It had seven different definitions (go figure), such as a point of time, to have social engagements with the person of the opposite sex and the oblong, sweet, fleshy fruit of the date palm...just to name a few.

Like most people, at age 16 I was “allowed” to date (middle definition – to have social engagements with the person of the opposite sex). It was the *American way* and it was all we knew. Since I've grown in the things of the Lord, my views on this particular subject have changed.

From the beginning of time men and women have been ‘hookin’ up, and the desire is only natural! The Bible says that when God made the animals He couldn't find a help meet for Adam. So He put him to sleep, took him apart and whipped up a woman (Genesis 2:18-25). I would have loved to have seen Adam's face when he saw her!

What is a help meet? It's an aid, which means to give assistance. So girls, you were created to give assistance, to be a “helper.” Guys, you were created to dominate. We are incomplete without each other. That explains why you become excited, nervous and your heart beats wild when you're around the opposite sex. You may find your thoughts on a significant other, experience crazy emotions and even the loss of appetite. Sound familiar? Don't despair, you're perfectly normal! The desire within you to be with the opposite sex is God-given which leads us to the purpose of dating.

Why date? Because you desire to be complete. You want a mate (Note: That's not *to* mate, it's *a* mate; don't misinterpret your desire). The true purpose of dating is to find your mate. Unfortunately, the

vast majority find trouble and heartbreak.

Wouldn't it be easier to do what Matthew 6:33 says? “Seek ye **first** the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Your position **in Christ** – the new and living way) and all these things shall be added unto you.” I don't think it says, “Seek first the cutest guy or hottest girl and then the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you.” I believe it says to seek God first. If you do, you will actually have something worthwhile to offer when the time comes.

The love of the Father is far more desirable than a wounded heart and left over baggage. Psalm 37:4 says, “Delight thyself also in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. He knows what you need and desire better than you do!

When is the best time to date?

Only God, you and your parents can determine that. The Bible says, “For everything there is a season” (Ecclesiastes 3:1). That includes love. In Indiana, we don't try to grow corn in the middle of January. It's not the right season, nor would it yield a productive crop. Love, out of season, is not very fruitful either. It can never grow to its full potential and produce the desired result of completion or fulfillment.

Do a heart check-up. Are you really seeking the kingdom of God (your position **in Christ**) and putting God first place or are you allowing your flesh to have its way? Do you really trust God through your parents and your own heart to help you make the right decision? Finding the perfect mate takes faith and determination, but in the end it yields a lifetime of happiness and stability. So until you have all your “dating” questions answered, the next time you think that you need a date, why not try the oblong, sweet and fleshy fruit kind?

