

Sisters for Yah

Living a Life of Integrity

There is freedom and peace that comes with living a life of integrity. Having nothing to hide is something to strive for. We read the following in 1 Samuel 12:3-4:

“Here I am. Witness against me before Yahweh and before His anointed: Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I received any bribe with which to blind my eyes? I will restore it to you.” And they said, “You have not cheated us oppressed us, nor have you taken anything from man’s hand.”

Truthfully, our integrity is not measured by what we say about ourselves, but by what Yahweh and people say about us. Samuel lived all his life among the people of Yahweh. Leaders who preceded him were dishonest and corrupt. Certainly it would have been easy for Samuel to compromise in his dealings as well. But, near the end of his life, Samuel could boldly stand before his nation and ask

them to reveal any offense he had committed against any of them. They could not think of one. What a great testimony! Can any of us say the same for our lives? What would people say about us? Sadly, we hear many bad testimonies from others about Yahweh’s people doing things that Yahweh does not allow.

In Samuel’s position of leadership, he could have taken advantage of people. Yet because he carefully guarded his motives and kept his relationships blameless, Samuel could fearlessly report he had not mistreated them in any way. It takes courage to open your life up to the scrutiny of others, but Samuel had nothing to fear. He did not have to avoid anyone he may have offended. He had confidence that comes from living a blameless life.

If any of us have mistreated others, we may not be able to change the past, but we can choose to live with integrity from this day forward. Living righteously frees us to face any person unashamedly, knowing we have behaved properly. Even if our reputations are currently stained, we can move forward.



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Be a Yahweh-pleaser, not a people-pleaser

I read with deep interest the following Scripture: *For do I now persuade men, or Yahweh? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Messiah,* Galatians 1:10.

At times we all have to make a choice between pleasing Yahweh and pleasing those around us. Yahweh's ways are not man's ways (Isa. 55:8-9). As important as it is to strive for good relations with others, it is even more important to maintain a steadfast and obedient relationship with Yahweh. Disobeying Yahweh to keep peace with other people is never wise. Peace with Yahweh is always paramount.

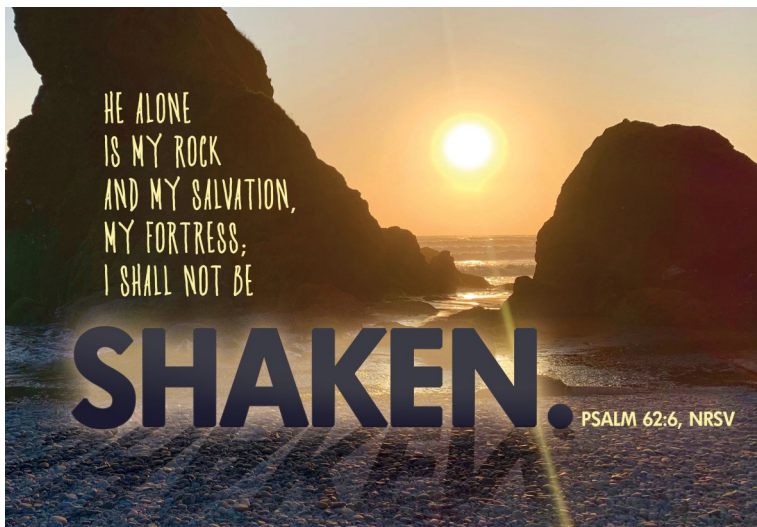
We all know that Yahshua warned that obeying Him might cause division in our relationships. Read Matthew 10:35-36. If Paul's primary goal had been to please others, he would never have become an apostle of Yahshua Messiah! I'm positive he knew persecution awaited him as he converted. In fact, he completely went against the wishes of his colleagues in order to obey Messiah. And at times, all of us may see problems with our unbelieving friends, co-workers, and family members. Indeed, when we follow Yahshua, our family members may misunderstand and even oppose us. Yet our obedience to Yahweh reflects our identity as His children. Yahshua said in Luke 8:21, that if we obey His will, we are his brothers and sisters.

Yahweh, of course, does not intend for families to fall apart. He desires strong, healthy families. But He desires obedience before domestic harmony. It's really important to get alone in quietness with Yahweh, so that you understand what pleases Him. The world's thinking will mislead us more easily when we are not clear about what Yahweh desires.

I'm sure it broke Peter's heart after denying Yahshua, when he realized that the opinion of a servant girl mattered more to him than the approval of Yahshua. If you are ever tempted to compromise what you know that Yahweh wants you to do, consider Peter's mistake. Determine that you will please Yahweh regardless of the opinions of others.

Establishing the homes of His People

- ⇒ **Psalm 127:1:** Unless Yahweh builds the house, the work of the builders is useless.
- ⇒ **Proverbs 24:3-4:** A house is built by wisdom and becomes strong through good sense. Through knowledge its rooms are filled with all sorts of precious riches and valuables,



⇒ **Proverbs 3:33:** The curse of Yahweh is on the house of the wicked, but His blessing is on the home of the upright.

⇒ **Psalm 101:2:** I will be careful to live a blameless life—when will you come to my aid? I will lead a life of integrity in my own home.

⇒ **Proverbs 31:27:** She carefully watches all that goes on in her household, and does not have to bear the consequences of laziness.

BUILT ON A ROCK

Living Yahweh's way can be hard work. It involves systematically striving to implement the truths of Yahweh's Word into your life. Spiritual depth and maturity do not come without consistent effort. Every part of your life will be affected: what you eat, how you live, what holidays you keep, and the list goes on and on. Starting a new life in Yahweh can be challenging, but well worth it. Yahshua had set forth some of the most profound truths ever spoken. He had explained the kind of life that is pleasing to the Father. Yet, Yahshua knew even as He was concluding His sermon, that some of His followers would leave and never apply a word they heard.

According to Yahshua, a man who takes the Words of Yahweh and builds them into his life is like a wise man who builds his house on a rock. Rocks are really hard to build on! It takes tremendous effort to attach a foundation to a rock. A house built on sand provides instant comfort, but leaves the builder in a vulnerable position. However, though building on a rock is laborious and tedious, it is secure.

How can you tell what kind of foundation a life is built on? Just watch to see what happens when a storm comes. A life built upon the Word of Yahweh will withstand the very storm that sweeps away the life that did not heed Yahweh's Word. There are no shortcuts to spiritual maturity. Maturity only comes through hard work and obedience to what Yahweh says. Firmly build this truth into your life, so that no storm can unsettle you.



Yahweh does answer Prayer!

I've heard people say, "I pray in my mind, but doubt in my heart." My first thought is, 'At least they are being honest!' Faith doesn't come instantly overnight, of course. Faith is built on many years of following Yahweh. Often new believers will have life-changing conversion experiences, then quickly fall into lack of faith when things get tough. Faith has always been an eternal struggle for all mankind. From the Garden of Eden onward, people have wrestled with unbelief. We all remember the situation of when Peter was in prison, scheduled for execution. The believers in Jerusalem were powerless to free him, so they prayed. But when Yahweh answered their prayers and Peter was released, their reaction revealed doubt in their hearts. (Read Acts 12:14-15.) They argued that Peter could not possibly be free, even as he stood outside knocking on the door! The servant girl kept insisting that it was indeed Peter.

Is it possible to be a "person of prayer" and yet lack faith? Of course. Many are surprised when Yahweh even answers their prayers. Ask Yahweh to increase your faith! Then make an effort to begin living a life that reflects trust in Him. But always remember, we must ask according to His will because our requests that are outside of the will of Yahweh may not be answered.

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Crockpot sweet and sour chicken

4 boneless chicken breasts, cut in cubes
Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup orange marmalade
1/2 cup chili sauce
1/2 cup drained crushed pineapple
Rice to serve



Cook on low for 5 hours. Ladle over rice. Can also thicken the sauce in a separate pan with a little flour.



Lemon Garlic Spaghetti

2 T. olive oil
2 T. butter
4 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 t. red pepper flakes (or more, if you like it really spicy)
1 pound spaghetti noodles, cooked and drained (feel free to use gluten free noodles)
2 t. kosher salt
1/2 cup shredded parmesan cheese, plus more for serving
2 T. lemon zest (the outermost yellow skin)
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 t. dried basil
Black pepper, to taste
More salt, if desired, optional

Saute the garlic in oil until fragrant. Mix all ingredients together and heat through. Great as a side dish for meat, poultry, or fish. Also great as a vegetarian main dish.

