



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of  
the Southern United States

The Monthly Message  
to the Priests' Wives  
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## The War of Control

One of the American pastors, *Rick Joyner*, saw a vision about heaven and documented what he saw in a famous book titled *The Final Quest*. One of the most amazing things he saw in his vision was meeting a well known deceased pastor and his wife. Both of them had a conversation with him in which they revealed a lot about how was their relationship on earth as a pastor and a pastor's wife.

Then a woman stepped forward who I did not know. Her beauty and grace was breathtaking, but it was not sensual, or seductive in any way. She was the definition of dignity and nobility.

- "I was his wife on earth," she began. **"Much of what you know of him actually came from me,** therefore what I am about to say is not just about him, but about us. You can reform the church without reforming your own soul. You can dictate the course of history, and yet not do the Father's will, or glorify His Son. If you commit yourself to making

human history, you may do it, but it is a fleeting accomplishment that will evaporate like a wisp of smoke."

- "But your husband's work, or your work, greatly impacted every generation after him for good. It is hard to imagine how dark the world would have been without him," I protested.

- "True. But you can gain the whole world and still lose your own soul. Only if you keep your own soul pure can you impact the world for the truly lasting eternal purpose of God. **My husband lost his soul to me, and he only gained it at the end of his life because I was taken from the earth so that he could. Much of what he did he did more for me than for the Lord. I pressured him, and even gave him much of the knowledge that he taught. I used him as an extension of my own ego, because as a woman at the time I could not be recognized as a spiritual leader myself. I took over his life so that I could live my life through Him. Soon I had him doing everything just to prove himself to me."**

- "You must have loved her very much." I said looking at him.

- "No. I did not love her at all. Neither did she love me. In fact, after just a few years of marriage we did not even like each other. **But we both needed each other, so we found a way to work together.** The more successful we became in this way, the more unhappy we became, and the more

deception we used to fool those who followed us. We were empty wretches by the end of our lives. The more influence that you gain by your own self-promotion, the more striving you must do to keep your influence, and the more dark and cruel your life will become. Kings feared us, but we feared everyone from the kings to the peasants. We could trust no one because we were living in such deception ourselves we did not even trust each other. We preached love and trust, because we wanted everyone to love and trust us, but we feared and secretly despised everyone ourselves. If you preach the greatest truths but do not live them, you are only the greatest hypocrite."

Their words began to pound me like a hammer. I could see that already my life was heading in the same direction. How much was I doing to promote myself rather than Christ. I began to see how much I did just to prove myself to others, especially those who disliked me, or who I felt in competition with in some way. I began to see how much of my own life was built on the facades of a projected image that belied who I really was. But here I could not hide. This great cloud of witnesses all knew who I was beyond the veil of my projected motives.

I looked again at this couple. They were now so guileless and so truly noble that it was impossible to question their motives. They were gladly exposing their most devious sins for my sake, and were genuinely glad to be able to do it.

- "I may have had a wrong concept of you by your history and your writings, but I have even more esteem for you now. I pray that I can carry from this place the integrity and freedom that you have now. I am tired of trying to live up to projected images of myself. How I long for that freedom." I lamented, wanting desperately to remember every detail of this encounter. Then the famous Reformer offered a final exhortation:

- "Do not try to teach others to do what you are doing yourself. Reformation is not just a doctrine. True reformation only comes from union with the Savior. When you are yoked with Christ, carrying the burdens that He gives you, He will be with you and carry them for you. You can only do His work when you are doing it with Him, not just for Him. Only the Spirit can beget that which is Spirit. If you are yoked with Him you will do nothing for the sake of politics or history. Anything that you do because of political pressures, or opportunities, will only lead you to the end of your true ministry. The things that are done for the sake of trying to make history will at best doom your accomplishments to history, and you will fail to impact eternity. If you do not live what you preach to others you disqualify yourself from the high calling of God, just as we did. I will tell you what will keep you on the path of life: love the Savior and seek His glory alone. Everything that you do to exalt yourself will one day bring you the most terrible humiliation. Everything that you do out of true love for the Savior, to glorify His name, will extend the limits of His eternal kingdom, and ultimately result in a much higher

place for yourself. Live for what is recorded here. Care nothing for what is recorded on earth."

As they walked away I was again being overwhelmed by my own sin. The times that I had used people for my own purposes, or even used the glorious name of Jesus, to further my own ambitions, or to make myself look better, began to cascade down upon me. Here, where I could behold the power and glory of the One I had so used, it became more repulsive than I thought I could stand. I fell on my face in the worst despair I had ever known. After what seemed like an eternity of seeing these people and events pass before me, I felt the woman lifting me to my feet again. I was overcome by her purity, especially as I now felt so evil and corrupt. I had the strongest desire to worship her because she was so pure.

- "Turn to the Son," she said emphatically. "Your desire to worship me, or anyone else at this time, is only an attempt to turn the attention away from yourself, and justify yourself by serving what you are not. I am pure now because I turned to Him. You need to see the corruption that is in your own soul, but then you must not dwell on yourself, or seek to justify yourself with dead works, but turn to Him."

This was said in such genuine love and concern that it was impossible to be hurt or offended by it. When she saw that I understood, she continued:

- "The purity that you saw in me was what my husband first saw in me when we were young. **I was relatively pure in my motives then, but I corrupted his love and my own purity by letting him worship me wrongly.** You can never become pure just by worshiping one who is more pure than you, but only by going beyond them to find for yourself the One who has made them pure, and in Whom alone is no sin. **The more people praised us, and the more we accepted their praises, the further we departed from the path of life.** Then we started living for the praises of men, and to gain power over those who would not praise us. That was our demise, and was the same for many who are here in the lowest place, but were called to be in the highest."

Wanting to simply prolong our conversation, I asked the next thing that came to my mind, "Is it difficult for you and your husband to be here together?"

- "Not at all. All of the relationships that you have on earth are continued here, and they are all purified by the judgment. The more that you are forgiven the more that you love. Of course, the Lord forgave us more than anyone, and here we all love Him much more than anyone else. After we forgave each other we loved each other more. Now our relationship is continuing in much greater depth and richness because we are joint heirs of this salvation. As deep as the wounds went, that is how deep the love was able to go once we were healed. **We could have**

**experienced this on earth, but we did not learn forgiveness in time. If we had learned forgiveness the competition that entered our relationship, and sidetracked our life, would not have been able to take root in us.** If you truly love, you will easily forgive. The harder it is for you to forgive, the further you are from true love. Forgiveness is essential if you are to stay on the path of life. Without it many things can knock you off the course chosen for you."

At the same time I realized that this woman, who had brought me into this confrontation with such pain at my depravity, was also the most attractive person I could ever remember meeting. It was not romantic attraction, but I just did not want to leave her.

Perceiving my thoughts, she withdrew a step, indicating that she was about to go, but offered me one last insight.

- "The pure truth, spoken in pure love, will always attract. You will remember the pain you feel here, and it will help you through the rest of your life. Pain is good; it shows you where there is a problem. Do not try to reduce the pain until you find and address the problem. God's truth often brings pain as it highlights a problem that we have, but His truth will always show us the way to freedom, and true life. When you know this you will even begin to rejoice in your trials, which are all allowed to help keep you on the path of life."

"Also, your attraction to me is not out of order. It is the attraction between male and female that was given in the beginning, which is always pure in its true form. **When pure truth is combined with pure love, men can be the men they were created to be without having to dominate out of insecurity. Women can be the women they were created to be because their love has replaced their fear. Love will never manipulate or try to control out of insecurity, because love casts out all fear.** The very place where relationships can be the most corrupted is also where they can be the most fulfilling. As your mind is renewed by the Spirit of Truth, you will not see relationships as an opportunity to get from others, but to give. Giving is the greatest fulfillment that we can ever know. It is a taste of heaven where we give to the Lord in pure worship, which has an ecstasy that even the most wonderful relationships on earth are but a fleeting glimpse of. What we experience in worship here your frail little unglorified body could not endure. **The true worship of God will purify the soul for the glories of true relationships. Therefore, you must not seek relationships, but pure worship. Only then can relationships start to be what they are supposed to be. True love never seeks the upper hand, but the lowest place of service. If my husband and I had kept this in our marriage, we would be sitting next to the King now, and this great hall would be filled with many more souls.**"

With that she disappeared back into the ranks of the glorified saints.