



*But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. -*

**Matthew 15:9**

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## **The Evils of Popcorn Fighting (another amazing story as told by Hannah)**

Elkanah and I are working on a project together. He is in charge of the main part and I am doing what I do best which is to create the fun. I do so enjoy being able to do silly things.

When Samuel was a kid he was gifted to have a mother who was willing to do things that other parents wouldn't allow their kids to do. If Samuel came up with an idea that he thought would be fun but he knew he would get into trouble at school if he tried it, he would come and tell me about it. If I thought there wasn't any way that anyone would get hurt in the process, then Samuel and I would do that "wicked" task together. If I, his mother, was in on it, then the teachers would have to take their wrath out on me, not Samuel. And those teachers were my closest friends so I wasn't too afraid of them.

That silliness carried over to the other kids at the school as well. One year the school had a fundraiser and the theme was a fair. Someone had brought a popcorn machine and I was asked to sell the popcorn which was going for \$.10 a bag. At that price my booth wasn't going to make much money but in the end it sold more than people had expected. Why? Because I sold some popcorn to a couple girls and while they were standing there innocently talking to each other, I started throwing popcorn at them. They were surprised because they knew they would get into trouble for intentionally throwing popcorn, but here was a parent doing that very thing. They started throwing popcorn too. They began throwing it back at me then turned and started throwing it at each other. Others got involved and so much popcorn was sold that my huge supply began to

dwindle.

One of the teachers noticed there was a brouhaha going on in the corner at my booth and there was popcorn all over the floor. Thinking things were out-of-control, she came prepared to lay down the law. She demanded to know who started the fight. The kids kept telling her they weren't fighting, they were having fun. And that was true. They were having a blast. What harm was it to have popcorn on the floor? But the teacher wouldn't listen to them. Again she demanded to know who started it. Fingers began pointing and in the end they pointed directly at me. I wasn't about to let those kids get blamed so I was standing there with my hand in the air showing my admission that I was the one who started the fight.

This teacher showed her dismay by the disdain in her voice, "Hannah! Why would you do such a thing?"

My response was to point out that nobody was hurt, they were having fun, popcorn is easily cleaned up and I had sold a lot of popcorn. She spoiled the fun. She made the kids go get brooms and sweep the stuff up then told them "No more tossing popcorn!"

The kids had fun doing something that was supposed to be a forbidden activity and they didn't get punished because there was an adult involved in the fun. This adult took full responsibility. Those were fun days.

Kids have such a hard time growing up. There are so many things they aren't allowed to do. Why can't they be allowed to be kids once in a while? Why don't more parents take time to have fun and be silly with their kids and their kid's friends? If parents don't want the responsibility, a.k.a. joy, of being with their kids, then why do they bother to bring those children into the world?

Sigh.... When writing I come up with so many memories that get me off track. My age is clearly showing. :) And I've told that story so many times by now those of you who read what I write have probably heard it so much you can tell it better than I can.

Getting back to the subject, Elkanah and I are working on a project and my job is to provide the fun. In doing so I was looking for passages in the Bible to make the point we are trying to make, and I accidentally ran across a passage that I had to stop and say something about.

Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does

what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister. – 1 John 3:7-10 NIV

Can the Bible get any plainer than this? What do the “good people” do with this text? Do they ignore it? Or do they twist it to make it mean something it doesn't say? It clearly states that if you are born of God then you will not sin because God is in you. In other words, you have a Christlike character. Those sinful deeds are no longer a part of who we are. We will want nothing to do with them.

The text also states that those who do things that are sinful are of the devil. Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love others.

According to the Bible, if you are focusing on following a list of rules then God is not in you. Morally you are operating at the level of a toddler. And if you are one of those “good people” and are angered at what I have written, don't be. I'm not the one who wrote the Bible.

Consider the toddler. A young child will mature as he grows. He will begin to act in different ways as he matures. The ultimate goal is for him to act in ways that are acceptable without having to follow a list of rules because those rules have become a part of his nature. He will have developed a love for God and for others more than for himself. When he reaches that point then he will be fit to be in heaven.

A person who is bent on following the rules is focused on himself. When you are focused on yourself you are intent on taking care of yourself first at the expense of others.

Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. – Romans 12:10

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not

murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” – Romans 13:8,9

Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. – 1 Peter 3:8,9

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. – 1 John 4:7,8

A person who does not love others more than himself would be miserable living in a place where everyone loves and looks out for each other. It might be a heady experience to have everyone be so amazingly in love with you, but knowing that you would be expected to return that love to everyone else without any exceptions at all would be a miserable existence. You would be finding fault with others and that would cause a disturbance. Those you didn't like wouldn't understand why you didn't love them the way they love you and it would cause them and others to experience emotional pain to see that you don't return their love. This is not a healthy or happy situation for anyone. Being in heaven when you aren't healed to the point that you love others more than you love yourself would be misery for everyone.

There is a cure. You need to play it safe and take that cure now while it is still available to you. We don't know when Jesus will return. And as you grow in character development you'll find life to be a much different experience than what you've been used to. Go on, give it a try.

Ummm.... I'm supposed to be working on a project with Elkanah and here I sit doing something else. Pardon me, my ADD is showing.

Have a wonderful afternoon!

Love to all,

Hannah