



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

Matthew 15:9

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Oh, the Joys of Potty Training!

When I went to bed earlier tonight a thought occurred to me as I was trying to go to sleep. I was too tired to get up and write it down so I said a little prayer and asked the Holy Spirit to remind me of my idea when I woke up. My prayer was granted and I'm sitting here ready to share my thoughts.

During the night last night I was awakened by a phone call that came at the precise moment that was needed to wake me up in time to remember a dream that to me was a valuable object lesson. While I was writing it my daughter-in-law sent me a message over Facebook which I found after I was through writing. I answered her then later, after she woke up, we had a short conversation. Let me share that conversation.

Her: Did you teach your son not to play with matches?

Me: Course not! I taught him to play with fire. Playing with fire causes you to wet the bed and I wanted to torture him by causing him to wet the bed at night. HeHe I was such an evil mother!

Her: Good to know that! I will buy rubber sheets. Also Ethan and I had a discussion concerning flammable liquid.

There had been an incident where Ethan poured essential oil on a candle then lit the candle. He was wanting to have the aroma in their apartment. By doing that he started a small fire.

Samuel was never a problem for me when it came to potty training. I wasn't in a hurry to rush him through it. Actually, the thought of potty training hadn't even crossed my mind. But it did occur to his grandmother that it needed to be done.

Samuel was old enough to understand what he was expected to do and he was so eager to please. All his grandmother had to do was tell him what he was supposed to be doing, put training pants on him, and that was all there was to the potty training. When I went to pick him up from his visit I found that was one chore that had been accomplished.

That was before the days of pull-ups. Training pants were cloth panties without a rubber or plastic backing. When the kid had an accident those spills had to be cleaned up. Since I hadn't yet considered potty training I didn't have any training pants for him. His grandmother gave me some along with a little potty chair and I went home with a child who was no longer my baby. He was now a big boy.

Now I'll tell something on him though it's actually telling on me and admitting my poor parenting skills. I was in the kitchen one day and probably busy washing the dishes. Samuel was behind me in the area where the washer and dryer were, busying himself with whatever toddlers do to busy themselves. And he was completely absorbed with whatever it was he was doing.

I turned around to check on him and he wasn't doing anything he shouldn't be doing so I didn't drop everything and run to stop him. But I did notice that his pants were wet and that was a surprise. That wasn't like him at all.

A memory flashed into my mind of a time when one of my cousins was a toddler and he wet his pants. Our grandmother had a conversation with him that went something like this:

Gran: Did you wet your pants?

Him: No

Gran: Are you sure you didn't wet your pants?

Him: No

Gran: Well your pants are wet. Who was it that wet them?

Him: Papa

Granny laughed so hard over that one she failed to spank him which was the routine at that house. But the next time he tried that it didn't work.

Now here I was many years later with my own toddler who was so busy he forgot to go to the bathroom. I didn't go all parental on him at that moment, instead I decided to have a little conversation with him much in the same way my grandmother had with my cousin.

Me: Samuel, did you wet your pants?

Him: No

Me: Are you sure you didn't wet your pants?

Him: Yes

Me: But your pants are wet. If you didn't wet them, who did?

Him: Daddy did

His dad was standing there listening to the conversation and silently was chuckling at the accusation. I should have just reminded him that he was now a big boy and big boys don't wet their pants. Instead I did something not realizing how traumatic it would be on him.

Me: Well, peeing your pants is a bad thing to do. I'm just going to have to spank your dad.

And with that I began to spank his dad.

A look of horror came over Samuel's face and he began to scream at the top of his lungs. He knew that his dad was innocent because he was the guilty party and had wet his own pants. He was such a tenderhearted child that seeing his dad take the punishment for him was more than he could handle. He cried and cried and cried, begging me to stop spanking his dad.

I only swatted his dad a few times then stopped. This reaction from Samuel was something I hadn't expected. He and I went to the bedroom where we changed his clothes then he needed some cuddle time for reassurance. I had no clue how traumatized he would be over that action. His dad had to assure him that I hadn't hurt him and that it was only play. Eventually the tears stopped and he never had another accident.

So much for my trials in the realms of potty training. For us it simply wasn't an issue. But as I was trying to fall asleep I realized there was a lesson in this story.

Samuel's dad was innocent of the crime that Samuel had committed, yet his dad took Samuel's punishment for him. Samuel was a tenderhearted child and seeing this happen broke his heart. He cried and cried and cried and begged that his dad not be punished.

What about us? We are born with a terminal disease called self. It isn't our choice to be born with this defect, it is inherent in our genetics. We all have it and without taking the remedy we will all die.

Our Heavenly Father loves us so much that he gave us His Son to die the most horrendous death that humans could imagine. God knew that His beloved Son would be shunned, humiliated, tortured, spat upon, abused, and hung on a cross to die if he took on humanity and came to this planet. Yet he gave us his son anyway. And Jesus also came knowing this would happen to him.

Did Jesus have to die? Yes, he did. By killing Jesus the devil exposed to the entire universe the evil creature he had become. Jesus's death also provided proof to his creation that God was not the evil entity satan claimed, instead he was so full of love that he was willing to go through that experience knowing in advance what he would have to endure.

By their selfless actions the love the Father and Son displayed for all to see is unfathomable! Their only desire is to spread their love to humanity and all the rest of creation. They love. It's what they are. It's what they do. And as Love they are incapable of acting in any way to harm any of us. Their mission is to heal and restore us back to our original design so that we may have life eternal in an atmosphere of everlasting bliss.

The Holy Spirit is dwelling within us, attempting to reach us, and guide us into a knowledge of the true God rather than the impostor. When we come to know the true God, those sinful acts we tend to commit begin dropping off. We become like the One we are watching.

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. – 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 NIV

Looking unto Jesus we obtain brighter and more distinct views of God, and by beholding we become changed. Goodness, love for our fellow men, becomes our natural instinct. We develop a character which is the counterpart of the divine character. Growing into His likeness, we enlarge our capacity for knowing God. More and more we enter into fellowship with the heavenly world, and we have continually increasing power to receive the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of eternity. – *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 355

How do we who are infected with self respond to God's actions? Are we crying, begging for mercy and asking that Jesus who is totally innocent not be made to suffer on our behalf? Or are we complacently accepting that he took our punishment as though it was no big deal?

Shouldn't we be more grateful? Shouldn't we stop and contemplate what they did for us and the risk they took? Yet we go about our lives giving little heed to them and what they did and are still willing to do for us. We are not the tenderhearted children we need to be. We are stone cold and only a miracle will warm us. God is more than willing to provide that miracle we just need to be willing to accept it.

And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. – Matthew 18:3"

May God be with you as you go about your day, bringing many and varied blessings.

Hannah

When I originally wrote the above I had all kinds of problems with it but wasn't sure how to fix it. One of the things I didn't like is that I kept using the "P" word which is "punishment". Most of that was changed but a few times that nasty "P" word did slip through. According to Mrs. White the concept of inflicting punishment comes from satan.

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with

mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner.

But even as a sinner, man was in a different position from that of Satan. Lucifer in heaven had sinned in the light of God's glory. To him as to no other created being was given a revelation of God's love. Understanding the character of God, knowing His goodness, Satan chose to follow his own selfish, independent will. This choice was final. There was no more that God could do to save him. But man was deceived; his mind was darkened by Satan's sophistry. The height and depth of the love of God he did not know. For him there was hope in a knowledge of God's love. By beholding His character he might be drawn back to God. – *Desire of Ages*, p. 761

Recently there was a death in the family. Elkanah's youngest brother died last week so Elkanah wasn't home for me to be able to run this by him. When I was finally able to ask him about it he also was hesitant but was able to explain what my hesitancy was and suggested a way to help you understand.

We are so infected, so deeply ingrained with the concept of penal substitution that the idea of inflicting punishment for misbehavior is what we tend to believe is necessary.

The natural result of having wet pants is to suffer from having wet pants which leads to diaper rash. I had hinted at that in my offhanded remark to my daughter-in-law. The message I was relaying to her was that I was an evil mother who intentionally allowed her child to play in fire. The old wives' tale says that if you play with fire then you'll wet the bed. So I said that I taught Samuel to play with fire so he would wet the bed then he would have to suffer by having to try to sleep with wet pajamas and bedding. That would be misery. And just so you'll know, my comment was a joke. I did not do that to my son.

With a young child, having wet pants may not be enough of a natural consequence and the parents believe they have to reinforce the natural

consequence by other means. Personally I don't agree with inflicting those other means. When a child is old enough to understand what is expected then the potty training shouldn't be a problem. When the child is too young to understand then forcing the potty training by stern methods is not a happy experience for the child. It causes them to experience fear. Why would you teach your child to fear you? They may, in their young minds, come to believe that they are loved only if they don't wet their pants because wetting their pants causes Mommy or Daddy or whomever to act in ways to inflict pain upon them. By learning this they have experienced conditional love.

It's my personal belief that using those disposable pull-ups hinders the child's ability to understand that wetting their pants causes the natural consequence of having wet pants. Those things will absorb the water, keeping it from the child's skin which hides from the child the impropriety of wetting his pants. If the child were to be put in regular undies and allowed to endure the not-so-joyful natural consequence of having wet pants then potty training would be easier and less traumatic for the child. But that is my opinion.

Samuel was allowed to wait until he was old enough to understand that wetting his pants was inappropriate behavior. When he had that accident he suffered the consequence by having wet pants. But he was young enough that this didn't bother him and he needed a little more encouragement to help him remember that big boys don't wet their pants. Seeing his innocent dad suffer the Mommy-inflicted punishment instead of him was enough of a deterrent that wet pants were never again a problem. And even though it stopped any further accidents, I would never have spanked his dad had I known the trauma Samuel would suffer because of my actions.

I've been told that we subconsciously remember everything that has ever happened to us. Samuel may not outwardly remember this incident, but deep inside that action is buried in there somewhere and he may have been scarred for life because of it.

There are two ways to look at punishment. The first is to recognize that sin has it's own built-in consequence and that in itself is it's punishment. As I just stated the sin of wetting your pants will inflict it's own punishment by causing you to suffer by having to wear wet pants, and those wet pants will lead to diaper rash.

The second way to view punishment is to see it as a consequence that is inflicted by another person. This action is done in retaliation. Sometimes it's to teach a lesson and sometimes it's to exact vengeance.

We who are infected with this disease of self have also been infused with the human law construct. We incorrectly interpret the Bible and use it to claim we have a god-given right to inflict punishment. It's an eye for an eye type of mentality. Or if we believe we have been inappropriately wronged then we feel it is our god-given right to punish as an act of vengeance.

Many years ago when I went through a divorce, I suffered immensely. People tried to comfort me by telling me “god's gonna get him.” Someone told me that it wasn't my place to act in any way retaliatory. That was god's job. Then he quoted to me “vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.”

For years I clung to that, anxious for Samuel's dad to get what he had coming. And the passing of years showed that he did reap what he sowed and I didn't have to act in any way to try to punish him. The natural consequences of his own behavior did that for him. And I did end up getting my revenge on him. That happened when I was able to forgive him. He came for a brief visit a few months ago and I was able to be around him without experiencing any feelings of resentment. I recognize that he is one of God's children and God loves him just as much as he loves me.

We humans insist on interpreting the word “vengeance” through the terminology of our culture. But the Bible indicates that our view of vengeance is not what God's view of vengeance is.

	Natural Law		Human Law Construct a.k.a. Penal Substitution	
Vengeance	Healing the sinner from the damages sin has caused by destroying sin and its baggage	Isaiah 1:24-26)	Punishment of the wrongdoers.	Romans 12:19
<p>Teaching that God punishes the wrongdoers makes out God to be angry and retaliatory. That is not a characteristic of love and God is love therefore this teaching cannot be true.</p> <p>This text in Romans is taken out of context, you need to read the entire passage:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in</p>				

the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."
Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good –
Romans 12:17-21

To teach "vengeance is mine, saith the Lord" means that God is going to wreak havoc in the life of someone because said someone did something that shouldn't have been done is a misuse of this passage. The Bible states how to treat your enemy and that is to treat him with kindness. Taking revenge is not a heavenly action so it cannot be an action that God would take. And in the above passage the Bible states to not take revenge. Leave it to God to avenge. His vengeance is the act of healing. You can do your part to help the Holy Spirit facilitate this healing by treating your enemy with love and kindness. Treating people with dignity is the true message of this passage, not that God will harm someone.

If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat;
if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head,
and the Lord will reward you. – Psalms 25:21,22

The above chart was taken from the book, *If You Eat That Fruit, Why I'll, I'll... Blow a Fuse and Zap You! That's What I'll Do!*

Retaliating by forgiving is much more peaceful than retaliating by punishing. Had I acted to harm my x-husband then I would be forever looking over my shoulder wondering what he would do to me next. He will one day face his own actions and be forced to come to terms with them. My prayer for him is that he will do it now, while there is still time for character development rather than not admitting he has defects and never allowing the Holy Spirit to work with him to make needed changes.

Here I am nearing the end of page 9. All that talk about potty training was an attempt to point out that we are shamefully complacent about Jesus having taken upon himself the natural consequences of our sin. That action led to His separation from His Father. As he hung on that cross dying, He experienced the horrors of being separated from His Father and he cried out in his agony, "My

God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

If we can believe Mrs. White then we know that His Father never left His side. He was right there with Him, but God was shielding His presence in order that Jesus be allowed to suffer in our place. If you want the reference for that then read the last few chapters in the book *Desire of Ages*.

There is other evidence that God was with Him. Throughout the Bible notice what is happening when thunder is mentioned. Frequently you'll find that when God speaks people will hear it and think it is thunder. When Jesus died there was the sound of loud thunder. My belief is that it was God the Father crying out in agony over the death of his beloved and only Son. If He had truly forsaken Jesus then I don't believe there would have been the sound of thunder.

We need to wake up to the reality of what they suffered on our behalf. Yes, the Father suffered also. His Son died. My brother-in-law just died and I feel so much sorrow for his wife and parents and the rest of the family. I too will miss him. Why can't we recognize that God the Father also has emotional ties. He suffers when we reject Him. He is yearning for us to know and love Him. He is the Sovereign of all creation, known and unknown. He's where the buck stops. You can't get any greater than He is. And yet, in all his magnitude he cares for us lowly little earthlings. We are His heart's desire.

Can we not stop in our busyness and see how selfish we are? Can we not love God and give to Him the love He so longs for? Well, no, we can't. We're too sick to be able to love anyone other than ourselves. It's only by allowing the Holy Spirit into our lives that we are able to love others, even God.

And that comment just placed a thought into my head. If we are unable to love anyone other than ourselves unless we allow the Holy Spirit into our lives and give us the ability to love, what does that say about the narcissist or the psychopath? Is this an indication that they are unreachable? Is there any hope for them? I'm not even going to try to answer that for it is beyond my feeble mind.