

Chapter 14

BREAKING CAMP TO BROKEN HEARTS

A precept that had long been taught was the issue of speaking intelligently. “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth; and light and truth forsaketh that evil one” (D&C 90:6a). For some reason, the revelation in D&C 90 seems to focus a bit more narrowly than merely as instruction to the church. It singles out just one man with a stern command that he get things straightened out within his house.

“But verily I say unto you, my servant Frederick G. Williams, you have continued under this condemnation; you have not taught your children light and truth, according to the commandments, and that wicked one hath power, as yet, over you, and this is the cause of your affliction. And now a commandment I give unto you, if you will be delivered; you shall set in order your own house, for there are many things that are not right in your house.” (D&C 90:6e–f)

As I go through these doctrines with a new awareness about control and subjugation, I see an intention within passages such as these that I had never before noticed. Joseph Smith, as a prophet of God was acting as a mouthpiece for the presentation of God’s holy commands to his people of the one true church. He was the only one able to function in this capacity. Is it possible that this man, Frederick G. Williams, at some point had a conflict with young Joe Smith and that it was not God, but rather Joseph who was calling him on the carpet? For me, the answer to that question is as clear as the multitude of memories that I now have to live with.

My “house” was condemned as needing to be set in order, as was everyone else’s in the group. Almighty God was to have scrutinized each of our individual households and instructed Jeff as to which areas needed attention and repentance. Such revelations and instructions concerning the problems in my household were constant. Jeff knew that the best way to control me was by the threat of danger to others, and this control intensified as the target of these dangers focused upon my own wife and children.

The committed relationship that my wife and I once had has since been dashed to pieces as a result of the long-term ramifications of our actions. I will

always cherish the memory of the time we had together. Susie was truly a precious lady. She was sometimes teased because her qualities of innocence were confirmed through her vibrantly talkative personality. As sunshine personified, her Pollyanna attributes could brighten the cloudiest day. Unfortunately, I also recall the abuse and deterioration of these qualities. They were considered contrary to “speaking intelligently.” Similarities between our chastisement sessions and later passages of that verse cannot go unmentioned.

The precept of speaking intelligently had long been a part of our mindset. One episode came about as the result of a conversation some of the women were having about childbearing. Susie had said something to the effect of how a pair of stretch pants had slimmed her hips after giving birth. Debbie, a registered nurse, said that Susie’s claim on the issue was incorrect, therefore the matter was placed before Jeff. To Jeff, the stretch pants issue was a serious matter. As I recall, all that was claimed by Susie was that the pants seemed to have helped tighten her hips after childbirth. But now, Jeff had made it an issue of sin; she had not spoken intelligently and her “chatter-box” personality had allowed her tongue to cause her to sin. Being the precious and innocent person she was, this type of threat and coercion created a strong sense of fear within her, and also within me. As our lives spiraled downward into a figurative pit, similar to the literal one prepared for the Averys, I began losing all perception of self-value, to myself or even to my family. No matter what I did, sin seemed to remain not only within the camp in general, but even within my own household. Feelings of inadequacy set in, because the self-image I had was based upon the measurements given to me by Jeff. I no longer saw myself through a loving, gracious God’s eyes, nor even my own, but only through Jeff’s. And all that he or his god seemed to see was a lacking—and sin. Jeff would state from time to time that he had no fault with me, but always my family was held over my head as being either under threat or the cause for others to be threatened or to die.

This frame of mind had been slowly constructed even from our first encounters with Jeff. As seer, he was a godly authority, and he increasingly used this perception to his advantage. Recall an earlier statement in which Jeff identified me with the church of Pergamos in the book of Revelation. He identified himself with Philadelphia, which mentions the “key of David” (Revelation 3:7). Through his interpretation of chiasmus, Jeff had laid extensive claim upon them. When Tonya and Molly were taken from Dennis’ tent, the manner in which Jeff would handle the issue would be an interpretation of what those keys were. In other words, how he dealt with the issue would define those keys. As I would later find out, the stealing of other men’s wives was all it amounted to.

As I lost sight of my own worth by my weakened relationship with the True and Living God, the abusive efforts of Jeff to drive Susie and I apart became all the stronger. He would later link his wife-stealing passions with teachings about David and Bathsheba. I was unable to provide to my family the way in which they needed most. Yet this too, I now see as a lie; we lived

throughout the entire venture on what had been amassed by the efforts of all except Jeff. By believing that everything actually belonged to Jeff, each day's survival became a blessed token of Jeff's compassion towards us in seeing to our needs, both spiritual and physical. Later, he taught that even the eternal salvation of my wife and children would come through him. This is clearly a concept against all Christian teaching, yet by the time it was taught, we not only embraced it, but felt guilty for not being personally capable of seeing and providing for the salvation needs of our families.

The entire local area was a gathering point for a number of activities; endurance trail bicycle racing, motorcycle and ATV races, all of which seemed to draw large crowds and lots of campers. Local media sources would sometimes cover a particular event, all of which were things we needed to avoid. Jeff had taken the ATV deeper into the woods quite regularly by this time and had found a new campsite where we would soon move.

But before we could move to the second camp, we would need to build a bridge for getting across the river from one camp to the other. Though the water level in that area of the Yellow river was usually pretty low, with the heavy current from that very rainy spring the little bridge remained quite sturdy. Once it was completed, we made the move to our second camp—and deeper into the “wilderness.”