



Places In The Father's Heart

That reach out and touch, to bring times of refreshing...

WHEN LOVE BECOMES AN IDOL

By Gerri Taylor

For many years, I walked in huge co-dependency mostly with my kids, but also in other relationships as well. I have discovered in my healing journey that this is not uncommon when there is an angry spouse in the household. We co-dependents often over compensate with our love to try and make up to our children for the lack of expressed love that fails to come when one mate is angry and disengaged. We should not, however, use that as an excuse for our own failures and sin.

Co-dependency is loving people, places or things too much for the wrong reason. For me, I loved my kids too much and my motive was that I lived by the lie that somehow if I could love them enough, I could make up for Roger's anger and disengagement with them, and if I loved them enough somehow I could reduce the pain in their lives and thereby reduce the pain in my life when I saw them suffer! How wrong I was! The lies that I lived by only created pockets of irresponsibility in my children; the very thing that I was working so hard to fight against!

I remember well the day when Al Ells, long time friend and mentor, called my cards regarding the co-dependency with my kids. "Gerri," he said, "for goodness sakes. Your children are adults. Let them grow up. You are their biggest problem! Don't do for them anything they can do for themselves."

I hated him at that moment, but I knew deep down that he was speaking the truth to me. This is what true friends and mentors do in our lives. They speak the truth without apology! I began my long and hard journey out of co-dependency with his comments to me that day. It hasn't been an easy journey, but it has been rewarding to see the results of the journey; my children walking as responsible adults. You see, my loyalty and faithfulness to my children had become an idol. I cared more for my children and my relationship with them than I did about my relationship with God. I spent far more time in worry and concern over my kids, than I did in relationship with Father. I served them more than I served my Father. It led down a pathway to destruction and burn out more than once!

It works the same way in the Body of Christ today. We often see those with the gift of service or the servant falling into the same kind of trap. The servant's positive qualities can include:

They are diligent; they have few enemies; they are helpful; they are alert; they are hospitable; they have high spiritual authority; they often have a low self image; they are impeccably honest; they are team players, they are prone to the victim spirit.

One of the greatest downfalls of the servant is that they often let their loyalty to those they serve become idolatry. You ask how does this happen. It happens when we become imbalanced in our loyalty or our faithfulness to the point we no longer see the truth and we become unwilling to allow others to speak the truth into our lives concerning our faithfulness to others. Rather we become



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defensive and turn inside away from truth no matter how many times it knocks at the door. Let me give an example.

We see this concept at work in organizations such as the KKK, Freemasonry, the Mafia, or other secret organizations. Oaths are taken even unto death to protect those in leadership. A code of silence infiltrates those organizations and fear motivates the code. If anyone dares to disagree with leadership in any way, or if they break the code they are under a penalty. In organizations such as those named above, death can be the result. In the church, while death physically may not be the result, death emotionally and/or spiritually can come to those who break the silence and speak the truth. We have seen this work within denominations and ministerial associations where codes of silence will not be broken even when sin in the camp resounds. Emotional and/or spiritual death comes because the words that are spoken against anyone who would dare break the code of silence to speak the truth become a curse. They often become a scapegoat and truth is used against them. The Body of Christ is the only army that kills its walking wounded!

We need to recognize that it is not dishonor to discuss a problem in the proper setting. Any skilled counselor or prayer minister must realize that they must listen long enough about a situation to gain insight into the problem. If it is believed that you can never speak about a problem and a code of silence is issued out of fear in a situation, then we must honestly ask ourselves why did the Lord tell us in Proverbs that "there is wisdom in the multitude of counselors" I do not believe that it becomes dishonoring in a situation when you speak in order to discuss and bring healing to a circumstance. I do believe that if you take the circumstances and your words and use them for your own gain that you may cross the lines of honor and your words then become the curse. It takes a wise prayer minister or counselor to guide the person receiving ministry in keeping the boundaries safe and honoring, but one should never be led into silence in the name of honor.

In many ministry organizations today we find leadership that is either immature or carnal or unskilled in administrative skills and they tend to find individuals who are servants and surround themselves with those people. Under the guise of calling for loyalty and good character, they expect the servants to continually pick up their messes for them; to salvage their inefficiency for them; to make them look good so they don't have to grow up and develop Godly character. Bill Johnson aptly says in his book *When Heaven Invades Earth*, "Sometimes our anointing and our gifting are ready for increase of responsibility, but our character is not. When promotion comes too soon the impact of our gifting brings a notoriety that becomes the catalyst of our downfall."

Unfortunately, this is a very common scenario in many ministries today.

A wise servant will learn how to empower NOT enable. Enabling is just another word for co-dependency! A servant tends in meeting needs to be an enabler and therefore others tend to use and exploit them which bring dishonor and disrespect to the servant.

Are you a servant out of performance or out of compassion? A servant has difficulty saying 'no' in their desire to meet needs and therefore will often have trouble in scheduling. This becomes a problem within the servant's family because the family takes the brunt of the servant's wrong



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motives and performance orientation. When a servant is challenged regarding loyalty issues, they may become angry and defensive and show immaturity. Again, if a servant does not learn how to serve righteously, they will become classic co-dependents or enablers!

God says clearly that He will have no god's before Himself. When we cross the mark of balanced service, faithfulness and loyalty to others, we miss the mark. When our service to others, our loyalty and our faithfulness become an idol and we become more absorbed in that service, faithfulness and loyalty than we are to God, we have missed the mark. When we surround leadership in any church or ministry to the point that we no longer allow them to be responsible to mature and grow in their own personal relationship with Father, we have missed the mark. When we cover for their mistakes, when we keep the code of silence and maintain that others should do the same, we have missed the mark. When we accuse others who have attempted to speak the truth in love in a righteous, honoring way as being 'outsiders' to the cause of the ministry, we have missed the mark.

It is time to leave behind all of our idols, including the ones mentioned here. We need to remember what the Lord said in the New Testament, "that even the elect would be deceived." I believe every leader in the church needs to examine their hearts with respect to honor, loyalty, and faithfulness. It goes without question that we desperately need these virtues more than ever in the church today, but as much as they are needed they can become imbalanced. We must give honor where honor is due. Just as in the case of a co-dependent who gives mercy and only mercy, it becomes unsanctified mercy if Jesus is calling for justice in the situation.

Jesus was never co-dependent. He was never imbalanced in his relationships with others. At the same time He had no problem exposing sin where it was necessary. He had no difficulty in calling the religious leaders a 'brood of vipers.' This is pretty strong stuff! He was all love and He was all justice and righteousness. He was never co-dependent and He was always a faithful servant. May we be balanced in every way just like Him and may we repent where we have missed the mark.