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Dear Friends:

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Then and now, Life Wins!"



THE FOOL POOL

The pictures were sickening. The beautiful singer's face was cut, battered and bruised. The sparkling eyes were now puffy and discolored and the deed had not been done by a robber but by her "boyfriend". Apparently, Mr. Cool had lost his and found it necessary to use her face as a punching bag.

Since most lost temper actions are permissible exercises, depending on the size and ability of the recipient to respond, her macho friend considered it an okay thing to do. He would've likely reconsidered that first punch if she had been a linebacker for the Pittsburgh Steelers. No outburst then, just a picture perfect embodiment of self control.

I was taken back by some of his goofy buddies who covered for him and who could not bring it to themselves to call it what it was, cowardly abuse. "We can't judge" or "We don't know the facts" was the gist of the fool babbles.

However, most people, even a few entertainers to their credit, were screaming, "Run and don't go back!" I heard one say, "Don't be fooled by his words".

Guess what? Within days, they were back together and "In love"!

In Act 1, he was the fool. In Act 2, she was.

Crazy? You bet. Does this really happen? All the time.

Some psychologists have written about the mindset of those who get battered and, in a blind, twisted school of thought, they actually think they deserve the punishment and they return to the punisher.

The "Stockholm Syndrome" term was coined after studies of POWs, kidnap victims and other abused people. In a nut shell (no pun intended), it is a psychological response where the hostage remains loyal to the captor while ignoring the past hurt, pain and fear that had been inflicted. Battered wives have done it for years and, many times, the foolish reunions have brought disastrous results.

This messed up mindset, when the damaged one keeps going back to the abuse, is not right or smart. In fact, the Word calls it foolish.

In Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Psalms, the word fool connects with words like, thickness, sluggishness, contention, bad judgment, the disregard for instruction and the repetitive making of the same mistakes. God knows, we can't afford to be thickheaded at a time like this.

One commentary said, "A fool is one who is not prudent, without counsel. Who carelessly commits everything to an uncertain issue; opposed to one who walks uprightly".

So, willfully denying God, rejecting his edicts, ignoring His natural and spiritual laws, and even building on the sand will put us onto the road to full fledged "foolishness". I'm not talking about a mistake, dumb choice or failing followed by earnest, heartfelt repentance and a change of ways. I'm talking about the word, repetitive, going back to it. In God's eyes, it is folly.

Proverbs 26:11 is clear, "As a dog returns to his own vomit, so a fool repeats his own folly." It is foolish folly. 2 Peter 2:22 broadens the Proverb with, "...as a sow, after having been washed, heads for the mud".

And all the people said, "Snort, snort".

It is the technique of the original "Battering Agent" who steals, kills and destroys. He torments, slanders and impairs. He has only produced heartache yet we keep coming back and lining up for more. Our memories of pain and hurtful experiences dim and we go back to the abuse. . .that's what a fool does. Like Father Lucifer, a fool works feverishly to increase the ranks. Misery is not the only thing that loves company.

I've had a front row seat watching some of the "Holy Ones" skillfully use this Modus Operandi. Shamefully, there are those, who, while floating in their pious religious orbit, still practice life squelching, death nurturing, controlling techniques masked as love, submission and authority. Bullies in Jesus' Name.

On the other hand, I've seen those who think they are serving God by repeatedly getting in the "beat up" line. It is not right, it is not Godly. Besides, after constant exposure and fellowship with a fool, it rubs off. Good gets crowded out, bad becomes a mirage of comfort and camaraderie.

God loves His kids, He will expose such clowning around in a big time way and you really don't want to be anywhere near the "Fool Parade" when He disbands it. (Think Philadelphia on the Fourth of July).

To those in a battering, controlling, overbearing, abusive circumstance, whether from a boyfriend, girlfriend, spouse, co-worker, condescending neighbor, Maternal/Paternal guilt manipulator, "spiritual one", teacher or preacher, the natural advice to the young beat up singer easily connects to the warnings of Solomon, David and others in Holy Scripture...God didn't design you for the role of a victim. Run, Forrest, Run!

To those who have been trapped in a cycle of being the tool of mistreatment and who really don't want to be that way, bust out now and start brand new. Your sermon antics demanding submission and compliance are "Null and Void" when accompanied by the clenched fist or hammer of abusive words. Stop it now! The Word is clear; adherence to wise instruction will equip us to remain in position to receive God's Hand of blessing, not abuse.

Regarding fools, the Word chides us to mark them, avoid them and to not even consider filling one of the scornful seats at their miserable table. You'll eat better, sleep better and enjoy life more. But, you will still have to duck and dodge the feeble last ditch flailings in the process. Fools just hate no.

For your life, your joy and your deliverance, stay out of the Fool Pool.

Michael