

Personal Conviction and Proper Ethics

Cast

Reader: Gader Peretz
Narrator: Yahannah bat Ehud
Kepha: Obadiah
Wife: Almah
Nogah and Yohannah are their daughters
Boy 1: Pi'shenayim
Boy 2: Yedidiah
Boy 3: Bekor
Boy 4: Shaltiel
Boy 5: Hannan
Boy 6: Mattan
Boy 7: Chodesh

Introduction

Our only hope as a people is to put into our children an understanding of why our convictions led us to this wonderful new life our Master has given us. We are personally convicted about the corruption of the world, because we have personally felt the pain of divorce, murder, sickness, orphanages, theft, rape, war, etc. But our children only feel the sunshine of a sunny Shabbat day in the Community.... How will they progress without feeling the pain personally? Somehow there must be a transfer from us to them of the understanding we have... It must transfer from our personal convictions to their own personal convictions! This will give them the proper ethics to stand in every situation. Their lives must reflect the ethics and conviction of our Master Yahshua.

Narrator: In 1 Cor 9:5, it says: "Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and Kepha?"

So, the great apostle of the first church, Kepha (called *Peter* in Greek), had a wife who went down in history as a "believing wife." She must have been a woman with obvious personal conviction to have been called a "believing" person. That was certainly a great honor for her. A

“believing” woman can be a great asset to our Father and to her husband. But without conviction of her own, she can be a great hindrance. Women tend to have more sensitive emotions, which can attribute to their being very intuitive, but only if those emotions are under the control of our Father. Her fallen emotions are destructive to the building up of the Edah and to her husband.

In order to have been called “a believing wife” she must have faithfully supported within their children the same convictions as Kepha had. If his wife supported him, then Kepha would have children who would carry on what he started... but if not, it would be lost.

So, tonight in honor of our new *bat mitzvah*, let’s learn a lesson from a woman’s point of view, as we look into daily life in the very beginning of the first community....

Reader: (Acts 5) ... more and more men and women believed in YHWH and were added to their number. As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats, so that at least Kepha’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits in the hope that they would be healed.

Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested Kepha and the other apostles and put them in the public jail. But during the night an angel of the YHWH opened the doors of the jail and brought them out.

Then the angel spoke to them saying, “Go, stand in the temple courts, and tell the people the whole message of this new life you have been given.”

At daybreak they entered the temple courts, as they had been told, and began to teach the people. When the high priest and his associates arrived, they called together the ruling Jewish court — the full assembly of the elders of Israel — and sent to the jail for the apostles. But on arriving at the jail, the officers did not find them there. So they went back and reported, “We found the jail securely locked, with the guards standing at the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside.”

On hearing this report, the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests were puzzled, wondering what would come of this. Then someone came and said, “Look! The men you put in jail are standing in the temple courts teaching the people.”

At that, the captain went with his officers and brought the apostles. They did not use force, because they feared that the people would stone

them. Having brought the apostles, they made them appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said, “yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.”

Narrator: How will Kepha and the other apostles respond to this stern reprimand by these powerful leaders of their nation? Will they apologize for their disobedience?

Reader: (Acts 5:29) Kepha and the other apostles replied: “*We must obey God rather than men!* The God of our fathers raised Yahshua from the dead — whom you had killed by hanging Him on a tree. God exalted Him to His own right hand as Prince and Savior that He might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

Narrator: Personal conviction is unstoppable...

Reader: (Acts 5:33) When the men of the council heard this, they were furious and wanted to put Kepha and the others to death.

But one very wise member of the council named Gamaliel spoke up and said: “Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. For many false Messiahs have arisen in the past. But after their false leader was done away with, all his followers were scattered and the movement faded away.

Therefore, I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God.”

His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Yahshua, and let them go.

Narrator: After a harsh beating would Kepha and the other apostles go home quietly and learn their lesson to never speak the Name of our Master again?

Reader: (Acts 5:41) The apostles left the council, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. And day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Yahshua is the Messiah.

Narrator: The personal conviction of the fisherman from Galilee was unstoppable. But it must be “personal” conviction. It is conviction within yourself that makes you approve or disapprove when presented with a

choice. It is not just a set of laws written on the wall, but something deep within the heart of each man and WOMAN.

Curtain opens.

A Short Skit on Personal Conviction and Proper Ethics

Scene I — Kepha's house

Kepha: I am home, my dear wife... *(going to the table and bending over in pain, holding bloody back... two daughters rush to him)*

Believing Wife: *(getting up from knees by the bed)* Oh, Kepha, my eyes behold your face again. I feared you would be the next to be killed... I feared that they would kill you just like they killed our Master... *(looking toward heaven)* Oh, thank you, Father, for the deliverance of my husband... *(looking at his wounds while talking)* My dear... they want to kill us all. They will kill every disciple of our Master...

Kepha: Well... if I were worthy to be killed like Him, it would be an honor for me. He is my example... But it appears our Father has use of me here on earth a little while longer... *(hugging his wife)*

Wife: *(sitting husband down)* Tell me now what happened. Oh, I was so worried.

Kepha: Well, they told me not to even mention the Name of our Master. I did not obey them. I spoke the Name of our Master... again and again. I taught in His Name. I had to obey God rather than man... They jailed me... but an angel set me free... then they found me again in the temple, talking about our Master, and they captured me again and beat me for it.

Wife: Oh, this is terrible... why did you disobey them?

Kepha: *(looking intently at her)* Shall I deny our Master?

Wife: Oh, no, no... I did not mean that. Just I wonder *(manipulating voice)* if you could somehow get around the order, with more wisdom... Sometimes you can just not mention His name, just say it in another way... be more discreet...

Kepha: And deny Him? Woman, do you hear what you are saying?

Wife: *(cut to the heart)* Forgive me, Kepha... *(crying, starting to run off)*

Kepha: Ask our Father to forgive you *(calling to her at the door)*, for it is against Him that you sinned. I could see your womanly wiles at work, your emotional plea. *(turning to girls)* You girls must learn a lesson here. If you think your imma is right to console me in this way, she is not. She is tempting me to deny our Master. It is subtle. You, too, will be women one

day. You must know right from wrong, make choices that are not based on your emotions... have personal conviction and proper ethics... Your imma does, she was just temporarily swayed by the sight of my blood... She is a good woman...

(His wife returns quietly and crying to his side...)

Kepha: An excellent wife would be a more accurate appraisal of her... *(he hugs her, and taking on his coat again...)*

Wife: Where are you going?

Kepha: I am meeting the other brothers down at the temple courts. There is a gathering of the people there today, and we must go tell them the good news of this wonderful life our Master Yahshua has given us... just like the angel told us in prison... Oh, what an amazing story of our deliverance... He delivered us... for a purpose... There is no time to spare...

Wife: *(judging herself)* Yes, go, go in the power of His Name... and may His grace be with you.

(Kepha leaves)

Wife: *(to daughters)* Look well at your abba. It may be the last time you see him. He could be killed today for his convictions...

Girls look sadly as he departs...

Nogah: Yes, it is for his convictions he is willing to die. We must be the same. Our own personal convictions and proper ethics... that is what he said, isn't it?

Yohannah: Yes, I do not understand much, but perhaps I will later.

Wife: Now you must be busy... go to the well and bring home water quickly. We must prepare for the Shabbat.

Scene II — On the Way to the Well

Later, as the girls were on the way to the well...

Nogah: Personal conviction and proper ethics, right?

Yohannah: That is right! I think that means what you believe, deep in your heart... and you stand by that, no matter what people might do to try to change your mind.

Nogah: Like they did to Abba?

Yohannah: Yes. We have to stand by what we know is right, even when no one else but our Father is watching. *(pointing to the sky)*

Nogah: And He is always watching, isn't He?

Yohannah: Yes, He is... always watching. And now... He will have to watch you while I go get the jars for the water... *(exits)*

Nogah: *(alone, assuring herself)* He is always watching...

Enter boy, carrying bag...

Boy 1: Shalom. What are you doing here alone?

Nogah: Waiting for my sister!

Boy 1: Good, you are alone... *(looking around)* I've got something to show you. Look... *(showing a lot of pretty clothes)*

Nogah: Where did you get that?

Boy 1: At the open market. I was there and I saw the one vendor just leave his booth... Maybe he was chasing a goat that ran away. Anyway, so everything was just there for the taking... I will trade you this one for that handy rope you have... This would look so pretty on you...

Nogah: Really? Oh, it is so pretty...

Conscience: It looks pretty, but is it right? You feel like no one will know, but really our Father knows. What about the poor man who had his things stolen, he must be suffering... You cannot take that.

Commandment: You shall not steal.

Nogah: No, I would not touch that stolen property... and you had best return those things right away... It is the law of our God...

Boy 1: Well, if that is the way you interpret it... but I consider it just a good deal...

Nogah: Your ethics are not proper. The scriptures are the standard...

Boy stuffs things in his bag, irritated at her, and leaves.

Enter boy with ball...

Boy 2: Hello! What are you doing?

Nogah: Waiting for my sister to come with the water jars.

Boy 2: Oh... well, since you are here alone, I wonder if you could come over there and play for a while? Look at this nice ball I've got...

Conscience: You were told by your imma to go get water, not to play. She would not be pleased... Even though you want to do it, just obey your imma. Don't let her words fall to the ground... Remember the story of Eli and Samuel... then you will be safe.

Commandment: Honor your father and mother...

Nogah: No, go along. I shall do what I was told to do...

Boy 2: Man, you are no fun... Work, work, work... *(walking off)*

Nogah: You had better remember the proverbs about the sluggard...

Nogah: *(sits down)* Well, I wonder why my sister is taking so long to return. Maybe something happened. But I will wait right here just like she said... I remember what happened to King Shaul when he gave up waiting...

(lights out)

Scene III — Lost Water Jars

Yohannah: *(on stage looking around for her pots)* Where could they be?

(Enter boy 3 and boy 4)

Boy 3: What is a young girl like you doing here all alone?

Yohannah: Looking for our water jars. I stored them here the other day... I just cannot find them. And I am not really alone. God is here with me, watching over me...

Boy 3: I cannot see Him... Are you sure He is really here?

Yohannah: How do I know for sure? Well... I... *(stepping aside and thinking)*

Conscience: The lies of doubt come to take away your faith. Do not listen to a false witness against our Father...

Commandment: Do not bear false witness...

Yohannah: That is foolish. Only a fool says in his heart, "There is no God." He is there all the time, and He sees everything. Do you not know the scripture?

Boy 3: Of course I know the Scripture. I am a bar mitzvah in Israel.

Yohannah: Bar Mitzvah does not mean anything unless you live by the commandments. You must love YHWH with all your heart... That is a commandment. Then you would know that He is there watching over us all the time... and watching to see the choices we make... and, might I add, we will be judged on those choices...

Boy 3: Well, you are starting to sound just like that man I heard downtown just now near the temple...

Yohannah: That was my abba, I am sure... and I want you to know that I have the same convictions as he does.

Boy 3: Well, he is going to jail if he does not watch what he is saying!

Yohannah: And I will go to jail, too, if a person goes to jail because he speaks the Name of Yahshua... He is the Messiah.

Boy 3: You'd better watch it young lady, you know the law. No talking about that false messiah...

Yohannah fearful... steps aside...

Conscience: Our Master must be honored. He is the one who died for you, remember... Do not let fear cause you to be silent...

Commandment: His Name shall be honored...

Yohannah: *(turning and standing up to the boy)* He is not false... that is what I believe... My personal conviction... I take my stand there.

Boy 3: Well, it looks like I cannot shake your convictions...

Boy exits shaking his head... walks off...

Yohannah: Now, where are those water jars? I always keep them right here... Oh, I am tired of looking for those things... Someone moved our water jars... Someone must have been trying to play a trick on us... *(getting frustrated)*... If I could get my hands on the one who hid my jars I would wring his neck...

Conscience: Remember how Abba said that our Master taught if a person is angry with someone, it is like having murder in your heart...

Commandment: You shall not murder.

Yohannah: *(speaking to herself)* Father, I am sorry for that thought! *(continuing to look)* Oh, I must just leave. I can look no longer... no water today! I must hurry.

Boy 4: Here, where are you going in such a hurry?

Yohannah: I left my sister... she is waiting for me.

Boy 4: Hey, we are friends aren't we? Sit with me for a while and talk...

Yohannah: The Shabbat is coming soon and we must be done with all our work...

Boy 4: Oh, now you do not have to be so legalistic about the Shabbat... Relax. Your family is so busy all the time... no time for fun.

Yohannah: Fun? Well, it is not that we don't have fun... I have a good family. *(sitting down to talk)* And we really do have fun... well, not exactly like you.

Boy 4: Hah, I could show you what real fun is!

Conscience: You are being distracted by his foolish accusations. You know what your parents taught you about people who waste time with dissipation. Do not be ashamed of their righteous standards... The Shabbat is coming and you must honor it.

Commandment: Remember the Shabbat to keep it holy.

Yohannah: (*jumping up*) It is fun for me to get my work done before the Shabbat. I will be on my way...

(*Runs off to see her sister; boy left on stage shocked by her convictions!*)

Scene IV — Nogah Still Waits

Nogah: (*waiting*) The sun is going down... this is strange... she never came...

Boy 5: Hey there... it is almost dark... I have been watching from down the road. I saw you there...

Nogah: Oh, one more... Our Father was also watching me... That is why I was not afraid.

Boy 5: Not afraid? God is certainly not concerned about focusing His attention on one little girl on the hillside.

Nogah: (*standing*) Not true... He is there.

Boy 5: Well, He'd better be, because I was also watching a band of thieves just over the hill, looking to rob the rich people on their way to Jerusalem.

Nogah: (*fearful*) Oh, no! Where? Oh, I'd better not stay here... I will just go. Oh dear... I am so scared.

Boy 5: And where did your big bold faith go, little girl?

Nogah ashamed...

Conscience: Remember that letter from Paul that Abba read to us? For YHWH did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a strong mind... Do not give in to fear...

Commandment: Fear not, for I am with you...

Nogah: (*regaining her composure*) No, I am fine... I will trust in our Father... I will sit right here.

Boy 5: (*laughs*) Hey, that was just a test. There are no robbers... And by the way, the way you talk about our God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob like your own father, is very interesting... I would like to hear more about it... You obviously have real conviction!

Nogah: Hey, my abba is downtown right now... He is speaking about our Master Yahshua in the temple... He can tell you the amazing things about the true Messiah who gave me convictions... Go...

Boy 5: (*running off*) Thank you so much... I will go see him. What is his name?

Nogah: Kepha.... Look for Kepha! He is my abba!

(enter Yohannah...)

Yohannah: There you are. Sorry I was gone so long... We have lost so much time. It will be dark soon. I don't know what to do about the water. Someone must have stolen our pots... *(sitting down)*

Nogah: Oh, no!

Yohannah: But, you know, as I was running here, I saw our neighbor... Rachel. Remember her? Well, she was talking to a man and she had obviously just bought the most beautiful scarf from him... Really, Nogah, it was so, so, so pretty. Well, I think it was not really good for her, but it would be perfect for me... if only I could have that scarf... It was my color and...

Conscience: Wait now, you must not look to someone else's things and desire them. That is breaking the command of your God. Remember the Ten Commandments? Coveting? But why is that one of the commandments? Why is it so important? Our Father would not have said it if it were not important. Change your attitude now...

Commandment: You shall not *covet* your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Yohannah: Oh, Nogah, sorry I said that... about that scarf.

Nogah: I think I know that man and that scarf! Was that man tall?

Yohannah: Why yes, he was?

Nogah: That was stolen property he had... He called it a good deal, but it was stolen... You should be glad he did not offer it to you!

Yohannah: Well, it was just a test to see if I would covet... I started to... but I changed... We must go home... But I learned a lot while I was gone.

Nogah: I learned a lot while you were gone, too.

(Both girls speak together in unison)... About personal conviction and proper ethics... (both laugh and begin to leave, when two brothers enter...)

Girls: What are you doing here?

Boy 6: Abba was gone and imma was suffering, so I took brother and left early this morning. We gathered all the wood for the Shabbat and got the water while we were at it.

Yohannah: There are our pots!

Boy 7: Yes, they are full of good water... and heavy!

Yohannah: If I had not listened to the commandments... I would have wrung the neck of my own sweet brothers! I am glad I have proper ethics... like Abba said!

Nogah: Good brothers! And just in time for the Shabbat.

Boy 6: We must support Abba during this difficult time. He may be put in jail, or even killed... We are his children and are taking his place, sharing his convictions, standing firm in the proper ethics he has put into us... Otherwise, the Edah will never survive. We must represent our abba... He represents our Master... His convictions...

Boy 7: And we show it by how we make our choices every day...

Nogah: Come, I'll help you. Let's get home.

Yohannah: Oh, I hope Abba came home from speaking at the temple.

Boy 6: Did you see him?

Yohannah: Yes, he got free from them this morning, but then went right back to the temple, his back aching from being beaten, and started speaking to the people again. Imma said it might be the last time we see him, because everyone wants to put him in jail and kill him for speaking about our Master.

Boy 6: No one could keep Abba from speaking his convictions... Let's go and see what has happened... Quick... let's go!

Scene V — Kepha and wife with all five boys who had tested the girls...

Boy 1: You are so kind to bring us to your home like this.

Wife: It is your home, too, all of you... You have heard the good news that set you free, and all those who believe share all things in common.

Boy 1: Oh yes, we heard all about that today...

Boy 2: Many people heard and believed...

Boy 3: We will have a very big community soon...

Wife: (*looking out window*) Oh, here come the children... good.

Kepha: (*jumps up, tells the boys to hide, and runs to the door*) Children, good! You are home, the sun is just going down... Oh, children... look at all the wood and water.

Boy 6: Abba, you are safe and home... our Father heard our cries!

Kepha: Yes, He did... and He heard more than that... and saw more than that... for He is always watching you, right, Nogah!

Nogah: Yes... always.

Kepha: Well, He saw a clear witness from you girls today...

Yohannah: He did? How did He tell you?

Kepha: Let me tell you... there were others who saw your witness... They told me... So, I have a big surprise for you! I mean BIG... Boys, come out.

(all the boys come out)

Nogah and Yohannah: It is you and you... what are you doing here at our community?

Kepha: You all have an important lesson to learn here. Sit down! All of you! You know when I spoke about personal conviction and proper ethics? Well, I want you to know how important that is. Because I can go out and speak many words about the good news and tell people all about our Master and His amazing commands, but if there are not genuine people living out their convictions in their day-to-day life, then my words are all in vain. In the living of the gospel is the power of the gospel! That is when they see the gospel...

Boy 1: You know, after I left you, somehow I felt so bad. I tried selling something to a woman and my convincing sales pitch would hardly come out. I ended up just giving the thing to her... I headed downtown just in time to hear the most wonderful words from your abba...

Boy 3: Hey, me, too. I wanted to be a true bar mitzvah... *(to Yohannah)* just like you said. When I heard the words of salvation... well, it was such good news to me. I have been saved from doubting.

Nogah: And you, it looks like you found my abba, too!

Boy 5: Yes, I looked for Kepha, and it really was not so hard to find him... And I am so glad I did. It was hard to get close enough to hear. I managed to squeeze up front, and I was so convicted by your abba's words. It was like he was saying those things just for me... as if he knew I was sitting there.

Kepha: That is always the way it is when our Father speaks to your heart... It was the same for me when our Master Himself spoke...

Boy 5: *(to Nogah)* And now it is not only you who can call our God, "Father." He is my Father, too! I was baptized along with lots of others...

Boy 4: Yes, and now we can all enter into the Shabbat together... honoring it like it should be honored... from the heart... just like you said.

Kepha: You see, the way you acted, the convictions you demonstrated and your proper ethics, were what spoke to their hearts and made their hearts open to hear the gospel...

Boy 7: Like I said, it is by how we make our choices every day that proves what we really believe...

Boy 6: It is such a wonderful day! Abba is home safe, we have new brothers here with us, and we have all learned so a great lesson... We must sing a song together to honor the One who is saving us all. *(to the boys)* It is not a hard song. You will pick it up if you try!

Boy 2: Hey, that sounds like fun! Real fun, better than just playing ball, right?

Nogah: Right! Good ethics!

Wife: Since you took on your abba's instruction this morning about personal conviction and proper ethics, a great harvest has resulted. Can you see? *(motioning to the other boys)* This conviction will pass on and on from generation to generation of those who love Him... passing the conviction of the father to his son... and the mother to her daughters, too... not her fallen emotions and iniquities, but her love for our Master... I know our Master will have a people who will not deny Him... I believe it, for I see it beginning with my eyes...

Boy 6: *(starts the song)* I know there's a God who loves all of mankind....

(As the song finishes, the reader enters...)

Reader: *(Acts 4)* And all of those who *believed* were together, and had all things in common. They were of one heart and of one soul: neither did they claim that anything they possessed was their own; but they had all things in common. With great power the apostles gave witness of the resurrection of the Master Yahshua: and great grace was upon them all. And they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and broke bread from house to house, taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And YHWH added to the community daily those who would be saved.

(Curtain closes)

Narrator: We must see how our personal choices will affect our character and our ability to stand when we are tested. What do we really think is right and wrong? Will the next generation deny our Master when they are put to the test? Is the strength of their parents' convictions passed into them in "full strength"? Or has it been watered down by their lack of having to personally experience the suffering of sin?

We must make sure our personal convictions are ones that will speak to those around us. The ethics we practice personally with those we come into contact with each day is what will validate the message we preach. That is the witness of the kingdom. May Nesheph and all of us go down in history as "a believing person"...