

# Apples of Gold

Zvi Kalisher's life-changing spiritual conversations

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## THE PEACEMAKER

Last week I had an extraordinary experience. As I was walking with my children in the Old City of Jerusalem, on the way to buy groceries, we passed an ice cream parlor. Little David asked me to buy him an ice cream cone, and naturally Ruth, Meno, and Victor wanted the same. And so, we went inside and bought the treats!

As the children were eating their ice cream, I noticed a man sitting at a table reading aloud the Psalms. I knew this man and realized that he was not the Psalm-reading type, so I asked him if someone in his family was sick (it is customary among Jewish people to read the Psalms when a family member is sick). "No," he replied, "no one in my family is sick."

He then led me into a back room, where I saw four men sitting at a table playing cards. Intrigued, I asked, "What does reading the Psalms have to do with playing cards?" He told me a sad and sordid story.

He was an habitual card player and had lost all his money. In desperation, he went to a so-called "wise man" for advice. This "wise man" counseled him to borrow more money and hire an expert card player to win back what he had lost. He therefore borrowed a considerable amount of money and even pawned his wife's gold watch, which he had given to her before their marriage. Then he started to recite the Psalms, thinking that would help him win back his money and his wife's gold watch. Soon, however, he had lost the borrowed money and the money received from the watch. Now he was ashamed and even afraid to go home. "What shall I do?" he asked in despair.

"First," I replied, "you must immediately stop playing cards or participating in any other form of gambling. Otherwise, you will suffer an even greater calamity. Then you must pray to God to give you a new heart and a new spirit." In his anxiety and embarrassment, he promised to do all that I had

told him, but he begged me to go home with him, as he was ashamed and afraid of his wife and children.

After completing my shopping, I took my children home and then accompanied this man to his home. There I found his wife, distraught and very angry. The children looked hungry and dirty and lacked proper clothing and shoes. I spoke quietly to his wife and told her she should try and forgive him; otherwise, the situation would become even more desperate. Little by little, I managed to quiet her. Her husband wept and promised never to play cards again. But I told him, "Unless you accept the Messiah into your heart, you will never be able to keep that promise."

His wife then asked, "How can a decent man like you befriend such a wretch as my husband, whose sins weigh more than he himself?" I told her that our Savior came to heal those who were sick—people just like her husband.

"It is possible," I said, "that the Lord allowed him to get into this predicament so that he would realize his own helplessness. Perhaps God used me as His messenger to help him." After I left, the husband and wife were reconciled. A few days later he found a job. Now he works at my side.

Last Sabbath, I went to this family's home and took them with me to our place of worship. After the service, I invited them to my home for dinner. Let us pray for the salvation of this family. The Lord is able.