

Discussing How To Restore The Early Church

Returning Intimacy and Power to the Father's Children

*"I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for,
it will be done for you by My Father in heaven.
For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them."
(Matthew 18:19,20)*



LESSON 2

***Why Have We Written?
Intimate Relationship, Not Religion
It Takes Two To Relate
Religion Is Man-made
What Did You Embrace: Relationship or Religion?
Allow Time For Incubation***



Restoration Ministries International

Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz

www.Restorationministries.org

Lesson 2

Why Have We Written? Intimate Relationship, Not Religion It Takes Two To Relate Religion Is Man-made What Did You Embrace: Relationship or Religion? Allow Time For Incubation

God has permitted Sue and me to observe “Christianity” in ways few people have opportunity to. From 1983 to 1993 Sue and I administrated a retreat ministry that touched the lives of over five thousand people from just about every Christian denomination. For over 10 years I counseled pastors and church leaders, primarily in Connecticut but also in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and New York. Before that I was Controller at a highly regarded Christian college. I am a graduate of a respected seminary.

Why Have We Written?

***“I will rouse your sons,
O Zion, against your sons, O Greece,
and make you like a warrior’s sword”***
(Zechariah 9:13).

We first heard an explanation of the above verse at a prayer conference in Jerusalem in 1994:

**Throughout the world our Father
is sending forth a Hebraic understanding
of the Scriptures to undo the heathen
influence of the converted Greek philosophers
of the second and third centuries
in the Church.**

In the months following the conference our Father took us aside and led us to the resources and information that are the basis for the lessons in ***How To Restore The Early Church***.

In a sense we are writing with concern for those to whom we ministered at the retreat center. We wish that we had known earlier the Hebraic principles God opened up to us in Israel. Many people came to mind as we absorbed these truths. We often thought, “If only they could hear this, they could more readily *trust God* in their difficult circumstances.”

Although the written word and the videos we have produced lack the informal and interactive dynamics of a retreat, our goal is to furnish something practical, something that you can apply in your daily life. Thus this series of lessons to help you understand the the Hebraic truths the earliest followers of Jesus lived by.

Through ***Restoring The Early Church*** we want to help you carefully scrutinize the *type* of Christianity you currently embrace.

- Is your spiritual life based on a personal, viable *trust* in God?
- Or, are you dependent on religious forms and ritual practices to flesh Him out?

The Hebraic Restoration is built on *relational priorities*. That is, certain relationships should be more vital to you than others. We want to reiterate what we shared in Lesson 1, Introduction to the Hebraic Restoration, when we presented the Restoration Diagram: Everything in your relationships with others begins with how you relate to our Father and His Son, Jesus, in the way the Bible calls for. In priority, your walk of love-grounded obedient trust is the most crucial of all your relationships.

Out of the depth of your relationship with the Father and Son all your other relationships exist. As you move outward from the center in the diagram past your home and home fellowship, the relationships diminish in intimacy and priority.

You have only so much time and opportunity to expend your life, and the first three relational rings need to take precedence. Keep in mind that the quality of each subsequent relationship as you go outward in the diagram depends on the quality of the relationships nearer the center.



Intimate Relationship, *Not* Religion

NO WHERE does the Bible indicate that our God established a *religion*. On the contrary, our loving Father’s ongoing desire is to *relate* to His children as chosen ones called-out by Him. In the beginning, He formed Adam in His own image to be able to relate to Him in a way uniquely different from the rest of His creatures. Eve was then created *from* Adam and *for* Adam, to share that same relational privilege.

Abraham, whose intimate walk with God is a model for the Hebraic Restoration, related to God in *trust-filled obedience*. So profound was his trust in the one true God that he abandoned all that he knew in Mesopotamia to journey to a land he had never seen. Such trust in God underwent the most severe testing: his willingness to offer in sacrifice his only son of the promise, Isaac.

Now that’s trust! And that trust-based life that looked to God to bring forth life from a dead womb and to restore it to life if need be was credited to Abraham by God as righteousness (Genesis 15:6). This man’s obedient trust moved God to enter into an eternal Covenant to call out Abraham’s descendants to live in the land He promised to them.

Abraham is known as “*God’s friend*” in James 2:23. No wonder the apostle Paul reminds us Gentiles of the relational connection with Abraham for all who trust in Jesus!

*The reason the **promise is based on trusting** is so that it may come as **God’s free gift**, a promise that can be relied on by all the seed, not only those who live within the framework of the Torah, but also those with the **kind of trust Avraham had** — **Avraham our***

father for all of us.

This accords with the Hebrew Scriptures, where it says, “I have appointed you to be a **father to many nations.**” Abraham is **our father in God’s sight** because he **trusted God** as the one who gives life to the dead and calls nonexistent things into existence. (Romans 4:16,17,CJB).

Jesus, who was delivered over to death because of our offenses and raised to life, makes *those who trust* righteous. Have you ever asked yourself *why* Abraham would be called the father of all who put their trust in Jesus?

Paul clues us in:

*But the words, “it was **credited to his account . . .**,” were not written for him only. They were **written also for us**, who will certainly have our account credited too, because we have **trusted in him** who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead (Romans 4:23,24,CJB).*

Think about this trust level in regard to your own relational connection to Abraham in the spirit. Other key figures mentioned in the Older Testament related deeply and personally to God.

- “**Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth**” (Numbers 12:3); “**The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend**” (Exodus 33:11a).
- “**I [the LORD] have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do**” (Acts 13:22).
- “**Enoch walked with God, and then he wasn’t there, because God took him.**”

(Genesis 5:24). “**By trusting, Enoch was taken away from this life without seeing death — ‘He was not to be found, because God took him away’ — for he has been attested as having been, prior to being taken away, well pleasing to God**” (Hebrews 11:5)

Each of these examples is but a shadow of the relational intimacy our Lord shares with those inhabited by His Spirit through loving, obedient trust! This is the union our Lord has always sought. If you relate to Him in the way He desires, you’ll live far differently than someone who just “practices religion”. In fact, you’ll have nothing in common with them!

Stop for a moment and consider this:

How would your Father describe *your* relationship with Him? A church attendee? A busy committee/activity participant? A schedule-keeper for prescribed “Christian duties”? His trust-filled, eager-to-please child? Go ahead, describe yourself.

It Takes Two To Relate

Often overlooked when people discuss relationships is an obvious fact: You can’t have a relationship by yourself. As you relate, someone is relating back to you. This is crucial when you consider your relationship with the One True God: **There really is a loving Someone relating to you as well!** Don’t lose sight of this reality.

Relationships are person-to-person. They don’t demand a certain form or ritual to bind them together. Relational

interaction is an issue of your heart because you connect to others through your emotions. Someone to whom you are emotionally attached, including God, is someone you value in your heart. And, heart connectedness defies logical analysis.

Ponder for a moment:

Bring to mind the people for whom you care the most. Did your thoughts of them inspire heart feelings?

When you think of our Father and His Son, Jesus, do you also experience intimate emotion, such as gratefulness, security, devotion, longing?

What expressive feelings fill your heart when you consider God? How do your feelings differ from those you have for people here on earth? (Remember, feelings aren't the same as opinions. If you can substitute the words "I think..." for "I feel...", you're emanating from your mind, not your heart!)

Please describe your feelings for God.

So many who call themselves "Christian" are enmeshed in religious forms and ritual, not unlike those who follow pagan religions. A god who is boxed in by prescribed rituals and forms is a creation of your mind or someone else's! That kind of god is a "foreign deity" who has little or no involvement in your life apart from ritual gatherings. Such a deist concept is a far cry from the reality of intimate relationship with the Father and His Son, Jesus.

Consider God's relational command

in the Older Testament to *love Him*. The Hebrew word for the love He commands is **ahav** (*ah-HAHV*). This word means you have a passionate devotion for Him, a deep yearning to be in His presence. Isn't this the intensity of love that Jesus calls for when He relates the greatest commandment?

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the **first and greatest commandment**. And the second is like it: *'Love your neighbor as yourself.'* **All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments** (Matthew 22:37-40).

This is the kind of love that *takes action* — a very vivid example of Hebraic response!

The Hebrew letters for *ahav* mean "a window into the Father's heart." When you choose to lovingly relate to Him as He requires, our Father reveals Himself to you in a *dynamic and intensely personal manner*.

Has this been your ongoing experience? Please stop and answer this question, using an example to illustrate your response:

Religion Is Man-made

The concept of religion is so familiar to people that it evokes quite an array of emotional responses when they think about their own religious experience. But religion is a man-made system.

Through religion, man establishes institutionalism with its accompanying organization and management. (Today's church can "thank" the ancient Romans

for their pattern of organized religion that chokes out relational connectedness. We'll discuss this more in a later lesson) *Direction and control* rather than the relational intimacy of extended spiritual family are the currency of religion.

At the top of the control paradigm is one individual, or a few, who manage many others. The few establish and enforce the rules (through creed or tradition) that govern the participation of others. Allegiance to a particular creed of belief or behavior binds each religious system together.

Keep this in mind: Religion in itself would not exist if people weren't misled into believing that their distinct religious ritual and specific creed made them acceptable to God. And note: Religion can exist without *any* relationship with God.

Jesus criticized the religious hierarchy of His day for establishing a religion with man-made rules that left God out:

- ***"They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."*** (Mark 7:7).
- ***"You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that **by them** you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life"*** (John 5:39,40).
- ***"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are"*** (Matthew 23:15).

How do you know you are in a religious system? When "rule keeping" is more highly valued than personal, inti-

mate relationship with God.

Sadly, with the over 23,000 competing denominations and sects in Christendom today, man is still establishing *religions*. And each group earnestly believes they are more correct than the others.

The abundance of non-Christian religions in the world can exist *without* God. As zealously as practitioners of any false religion insist they worship a "god" or "gods", there is NO other God except the ONE TRUE GOD of the Bible.

We once had a conversation over dinner with a dozen Japanese Buddhists. These men openly acknowledged that Buddha was not "from the beginning" (as the true God is). They readily admitted that they pray to Buddha, but "Buddha doesn't answer prayer." Sounds silly, doesn't it?

Not to them! Because their *focus* was on the form and practice of their religion. They had no relationship with the one true God. But this is no different for many who call themselves "Christian" but are more committed to their creedal identity than to a relationship with our Father in union with Jesus.

Jude offers fair warning against godless systems that divide people over man-made creedal practices:

*In the last times there will be scoffers who will **follow their own ungodly desires**. These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and **do not have the Spirit**"* (Jude 1:18,19).

What a contrast with the fiery heart of Moses as he urged the Israelites, ***"Therefore, choose life, so that you will live, you and your descendants, loving ADONAI your God, paying attention to***

what he says and **clinging to him** — for that is the **purpose of your life!**” (Deuteronomy 30:19b,20a).

What Did *You* Embrace: Relationship or Religion?

You may be wondering, “What does the issue of *false religions* have to do with Christians?” Simply this. First, there is no biblical foundation for “practicing religion” as a way of approaching the God of the Bible. He relates to people based on the condition of their heart and spirit:

- “*The sacrifices of God are a **broken spirit**; a **broken and contrite heart**, O God, you will not despise*” (Psalm 51:17).
- “*For this is what the high and lofty One says — he who lives forever, whose name is holy: ‘I live in a high and holy place, but also with **him who is contrite and lowly in spirit**, to revive the **spirit of the lowly** and to revive the **heart of the contrite**’” (Isaiah 57:15).*
- “*Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?’ declares the LORD. ‘**This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word**’” (Isaiah 66:2).*

The humble, repentant heart that seeks to relate to God will always find Him. That kind of person responds to the wooing of the Holy Spirit. The humble of heart who trusts in Jesus as His Covenant requires will experience Him *in relationship*. This is what the Bible affirms.

[Again, we encourage you to please read

The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to Salvation, under **Hebraic Articles**, for more on the scriptural basis for a relationship with our Lord.]

From our Father’s standpoint the clear dividing line in all of Christianity is between:

- **Those who live repentantly.** They have fellowship with God and He answers their prayers, resulting in testimonies to the Father’s glory.
- **Those who live with unconfessed sin.** They have no fellowship with God, and He does not answer their prayers.

To re-cap:

Religion is a man-made creation, appealing to mankind because in it man can define his own “gods”. In contrast, *relationship with God* is the pattern of the repentant, who are in union with the God depicted in the Bible and indwelling within them through His Spirit.

The unrepentant are at home in religion. Religion relies on acceptance of concepts, not on a love relationship of obedient trust in the One True God of the universe. Were there such a relationship, there would not exist such a fragmented system of diverse denominations. The proud intellect of man is behind religion and all of its various forms and practices.

God’s commands were given to the Israelites in the Older Testament to describe how to *relate* to Him and to each other. His laws depicted for them the **freedom** and **boundaries** entailed in their relationships.

The commandments of God that point to *freedom* are designed to help people affirm and grow in their relation-

ship with God and with each other. Jesus summed up the essence of all the freedom commands with the greatest commandment: **to love**. All the law and the prophets are summed up in LOVE.

The commandments that establish *boundaries* reveal areas that will harm relationships. These are the “prohibition” commands, such as “Do not steal, do not covet”, designed to deter you from impinging on others and disrupting your relationship with them.

Remember, true love can't blossom where apprehension exists. God's boundaries reveal where we'll produce apprehension in others, thereby quenching love. Keeping God's boundaries is the first step to a life of love.

“For in Christ Jesus...the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love” (Galatians 5:6)

The apostle Paul plainly proclaims to the Galatian believers that the only thing that counts is your faith — your trust relationship with God — expressing itself in love. And, the love to which Paul is referring is evidenced by ***righteous response*** and ***change into Christ's character*** as He works in and through His people.

The apostle isn't saying that the fruit of faith-based love is “one of the *many* things that counts.” Think about that. Love is the outflow of your obedient trust relationship with our Lord.

The August 29, 2004, *Parade* magazine featured an article about a noteworthy high school football coach. The article, ***He Turns Boys Into Men***, by Jeffrey Marx, commends Joe Ehrmann, a former NFL star in the mid-1970's. Not only are Ehrmann's goals for developing boys into men impressive; the article also

reminded us of how destructive the Hellenist influence we've written against so many times is on men in the US.

As we were leaving Israel after completing our research, a follower of Jesus warned us, ***“You're going to the hardest place on earth for anyone to embrace the Hebraic foundations. Hellenism owns the church in the United States.”*** Those words have come back to haunt us many times as we've done seminars over the years. The all-too-frequent phone calls from unloved, unappreciated wives and from men who are all cranial with no evidence of loving gratefulness in Jesus have corroborated that statement.

When Bible knowledge consumes the head and nothing flows from the heart, people have missed the intimacy of relationship that our Father stresses throughout both testaments.

Sue and I don't know Joe Ehrmann's spiritual bent, but we were intrigued by his comment, *“Masculinity ought to be defined in terms of relationships, and taught in terms of capacity to love and be loved.”*

We'd like to quote Ehrmann's five goals for developing men of character and integrity. (We've included applicable Scriptures next to each goal):

1. Recognize the “three lies of false masculinity.” Athletic ability, sexual conquest, and economic success are *not* the best measurements of manhood. (Matthew 11:29).
2. Allow yourself to love and be loved. Build and value relationships. (John 15:13).
3. Accept responsibility, lead courageously and enact justice on behalf of others. Practice concepts of empathy, inclusion, and integrity. (Isaiah 58:6-23; Amos 5:24).

4. Learn the importance of serving others. Base your thoughts and actions on "What can I do for you?" (Philippians 2:3,4; Matthew 20:26-28).
5. Develop a cause beyond yourself. Try to leave the world a better place because you were here." (Psalm 15).

taught? Is it founded on the godliness and piety of your church authorities?

If you're a man, evaluate yourself in light of the five points above. After you've done this, ask those close to you in the faith to review your comments, and to add their own.

Or, is your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of His Church? Is it *really*? If so, then affirm that reliance on our Lord in your heart.

"If we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment"

(1 Corinthians 11:31)

It's vital that you examine and judge your own faith practices. In the next few pages we contrast different aspects of the *Hebraic, relational* way of interacting with God and each other, and *Hellenistic, religious forms*. Prayerfully go through the comparison to discern if you have been told the whole truth during your faith pilgrimage.

One of the main difficulties in any discussion about "faith" is to admit that you might be wrong.

If you relate to our Lord with wholehearted trust as He calls for, then you are indwelled by His Spirit! Believe the promise of Jesus Himself:

If you love me, you will keep my commands; and I will ask the Father, and he will give you another comforting Counselor like me, the Spirit of Truth, to be with you forever...

The world cannot receive him, because it neither sees nor knows him. You know him, because he is staying with you and will be united with you...

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything; that is, he will remind you of everything I have said to you (John 14:15-17,26).

To get started, ask yourself:

In what or in whom have you put your trust?

God intended for the Spirit to be given to every person who embraces the true Gospel. Peter's words were sweet music to his listeners at Pentecost:

Turn from sin, return to God, and each of you be immersed on the authority of Jesus the Messiah into forgiveness

Is your faith based on the creed you were

*of your sins, and you will receive the **gift of the Holy Spirit!** For the promise is for you, for your children, and for those far away — as many as ADONAI our God may call!* (Acts 2:38,39,CJB).

The apostle John further defines the distinction between those who have the Spirit of Christ and those who don't: "*We are **from God**, and whoever **knows God** listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the **Spirit of truth** and the **spirit of falsehood**" (1 John 4:6).*

So it comes down to this. Do you really have the Holy Spirit dwelling within you? How else can you determine the truths of God if you haven't the Spirit of truth? His indwelling presence will guide you into the reality of relating to our Lord as He wants you to — in truth that translates into righteous living:

- "*Jesus answered, **I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me**" (John 14:6).*
- "*Whoever **lives by the truth** comes **into the light**, so that it may be **seen plainly** that what he has done has been **done through God**" (John 3:21).*
- "*Then you will **know the truth**, and the **truth will set you free.**" (John 8:32).*

As you go through the comparisons below, take the time to re-affirm in your heart your trust in Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you into the truth God wants you to live by. And be confident in our Lord's promise to you!

Insert your name as you receive His promise:

"If I, _____, lack wisdom, I, _____, should ask God, who gives gener-

ously to me, without finding fault, and it will be given to me" (James 1:5).

Even asking him to give you wisdom in *this* matter is a sign of your trust in Him! And He won't fail you.

If you are already transitioning from religion to relationship, it's a move *away from* your mind's analysis and *toward responsiveness* to the Holy Spirit. The tentacles of your mind's systematic rationale and attempts to box God into your intellect must be removed one at a time — and they don't let go easily!

As you grow in *reliance* on the Holy Spirit and in your *commitment* to experience His love and to share it with others, your relational connectedness with our Lord and with others will blossom and bear much lasting fruit.

Allow Time For Incubation

Through this material we trust that you'll be able to take appropriate steps of action in your faith journey. We hope that you'll be strengthened in your walk with our Lord Jesus and be revitalized in your relationships of marriage, family, and intimate friends.

You won't be able to just read these truths in order for them become part of your life. You need to:

1. **Discuss these truths with others** who will press on in the faith with you. Discussion is the Hebraic methodology of pursuing truth and *applying* it. In fact, the rabbis of the Hebraic Stream taught that whenever two or three discussed God's Word, the Holy Spirit was with them to give understanding and application.

Jesus affirms this same truth when He says, "*For where two or three come*

together in my name, **there am I with them**" (Matthew 18:20). The presence of Jesus in your midst as you pursue truth makes all the difference in the world. He stirs you to put it into practice!

2. **Be patient with yourself.** Remember, you are on a pilgrimage to your salvation when your name will be proclaimed to the hosts of heaven. Your **conversion** is really the beginning of your pilgrimage OUT of the world's values and goals, and INTO the Kingdom's values and purposes.

In your discussion, emphasize "what's right before God", not "who's right". Don't be too hasty to come to a resolution. God wants each member of your family or group to develop spiritual maturity by learning to think for himself and take responsibility for his own convictions. That won't happen if people lean on the input of some perceived authority figure.

Remember, the pilgrimage to salvation as you work it out together is *transformational*. It's best seen in the increased Christ-likeness manifested in each of you. As you apply the different Hebraic foundations within your family, business, or faith community, you *will* face:

- a season for **separation** from your past relationships and lifestyle patterns.
- a time of **initiation** into living by the new truths you are applying.
- a period of **transition** for you and your household, faith community, or business as you grow in your conviction to live by the new truths.

- the possibility for **confusion** as the adjustments are taking place.

Be prayerfully patient with yourself and with each other! Establishing a *Hebraic lifestyle* is a process, a peaceful process because you love God and desire to uphold Him in every area of your life. The Holy Spirit participates through His *rhema*, that is, His specific guidance for you through the Word.

Whether within your family, business, or faith community, establishing the biblical basis for your actions and decisions is critical for spiritual growth and maturity. Ignorance of God's ways is not bliss, but heartache and frustration.

The first draft of our book, **Restoring The Early Church** was sent to a diverse group of Christians who were respected in their various fields and ministries. Two frequent comments surfaced in their feedback.

The first comments went something like, "I know that what you've written is true, but I'd be frightened to implement the changes needed to help get my congregation back to the foundations of the early Church. We'd have to admit we were wrong."

The other often repeated comment was, "You don't have to prove your case; show people how to bring it about." In light of these responses, we have written the lessons of **How To Restore the Early Church** which you are now using.

The comprehensive breadth of our research is divided into three broad categories:

1: The Hebraic Facets of the Early Church

This section of lessons presents the historic backdrop and influences of the

God-trusting Hebraic community that accepted the Messiah during the first century. Their relational practices and teachings were foundational for the Newer Testament writers.

2: The Loss of the Hebraic Roots

This brief overview highlights the events that brought about the exchange of Hebraic roots for an alien, pagan culture and worldly, organizational structure. Because of the extensive research and writings of others in this area, we've compressed our discussion of the incursion of Greek philosophy and Roman government into the church.

3: The Father and Jesus, the Home, and Fellowship in Homes

The last section focuses on the primary arenas for your Christlike development and growth — your relationship

with our Father and His Son, Jesus; your home as the primary building block; and the support of righteousness and load-bearing in the fellowship of homes. All other dimensions of your life, including a viable congregation that worships the Lord and serves the interests of His Kingdom, are spawned from these central areas.

Restoration Ministries provides specific training materials in support of this book. For further information, please visit our website:

Restorationministries.org.

*Mike & Sue Dowgiewicz,
December, 2005*

A Comparison Of the Hebraic Foundations and the Greek and Roman Influence

Followers of Jesus **Hebraic Foundations** *Relationship-based Trust*

Relating to God from your heart is based on understanding the Covenant relationships He establishes with man. His covenants delineate *how to relate* to Him.

The Hebraic Restoration now underway throughout the world is founded on a living, trust-grounded relationship with our Lord. This walk is dependent on two important heart issues: Your ongoing repentance and your growth in love.

Foundational Premise:

- Begins with fear of God (Proverbs 1:7; Luke 1:50)
- Seeks growing intimacy with God (Ephesians 1:17-19)
- Lives by the Spirit to glorify God (Philippians 1:9-11; John 15:4-8)
- Relies on the prophetic voice of God. Synagogues began in the homes of prophets during the Babylonian captivity. Through prophetic messages, God speaks through man to proclaim His ways (Amos 3:7). The Hebraic Stream of Judaism was prophetic. For instance, 200 years before the Incarnation they taught that *“you must be born from above.”*
- Leads by godly example (Luke 6:40; John 13:14; James 3:13). Leaders first role-modeled as a *way of life* the truths

Western Christianity **Hellenist/Roman Influence** *Religious-based Systems*

The myriad of today’s Christian religious systems have their origin in Hellenism that entered Church in the second and third centuries. Roman organizational hierarchy then took over the structure in the fourth century.

These two influences — Hellenist philosophical thought and Roman structural organization — have produced an emphasis on religious forms and ritual as well as ecclesiastical control.

Foundational Premise:

- NO fear of God (Romans 3:10-18)
- Seeks religious forms and practices (Mark 7:6,7)
- Appeals to the soul, that is, your mind, will, and emotions (Colossians 2:8).
- Relies on educated lecturer who appeals to knowledge acquisition without life application. This method, acquired from Hellenist philosophers in second and third century, allows a professional “religious” person to represent God before those who have no relationship with Him. (James 1:22-24)
- Teacher’s character and way of life incidental rather than vital (Hebrews 13:7). Rousing oratory and entertain-

they shared. Leaders were recognized by their servant heart and righteous character (1 Timothy 3:2-7). Disciples were trained to be like their teacher in character as well as content (Matthew 23:11; Luke 6:40).

- Group discussion the key method to confirm truth for life application. (Acts 28:22,24,30,31; 2 Corinthians 13:1).
- Individual is highly valued. Discipleship is based on personal familiarity with the disciple and permission to guide his life to glorify God (Proverbs 27:23; Romans 12:2,3).

Analogy:

Hebraic leaders are like *astronauts*. They take the risk to go out and experience that which they later share with others. Their *experience* of wisdom gained from applied truth sets them apart.

- The Hebraic leader first lives out that which he will share with others. The ***discussions*** of a Hebraic teacher with his disciple are conducive to equipping them to put into action their trust in Messiah and obey His commands (Matthew 7:24). Their motivation emanates from personal experience with a heart devotion that encourages obedient trust in God.

ing anecdotes attract attention but fail to confront sin or promote righteous living. Since the teacher is disconnected relationally from the people, his character can't be proven worthy to emulate (2 Timothy 3:2-5).

- Conveys content to appeal to the mind rather than wisdom acquired from applied knowledge (Matthew 23:3; 1 Timothy 1:4-7).
- Attendance at religious performances the key factor. You can be taught *or* entertained without being personally known (John 10:25-27; James 2:14-18).

Analogy:

Hellenist teachers are like *astronomers*. They study and analyze from afar, but never undergo first-hand experience of that which they speak about. Their *fact acquisition* never translates into applied wisdom.

- The ***lecture*** mode of the Hellenist teacher appeals to the intellect and promotes theoretical debate. Much talk masks over the reality of complacent inaction. Paul lamented this deplorable situation: "***All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas***" (Acts 17:21; James 2:14-26).

Hebraic Influence on Christian Maturity

Active — *Appeals to the affective, demonstrative, right side of brain*

[Place an 'X' next to the item that identifies your experience. Total them below.]

Motive

- Love of God and others
- Life viewed as a pilgrimage leading to ultimate culmination
- Suffering seen as necessary for development of Christ-like character

Process Oriented

- Stresses direct participation
- Emphasizes age and wisdom
- Role modeling, mentoring, and discipleship indispensable
- Leadership by personal example
- Character of leader essential
- Personal relationships imperative

Biblical Application

- Doers of the Word
- Bible: reality that must be confronted
- Goal: to develop Christlikeness

Ministry Activity

- Small intimate groups
- Leader as facilitator
- Cooperative, participatory planning
- Spiritual gifts shared
- Frequent scheduled and unscheduled gatherings

Fruit

- Love, acceptance, forgiveness
- Transparency encouraged
- Active participation
- "How you serve" vital
- Each believer trained to serve
- Produces mature believers

Total _____

Greek Influence on Christian Religion

Cognitive — *appeals to the intellectual, logical, left side of brain*

[Place an 'X' next to each item that identifies your experience. Total them below.]

Motive

- Pursuit of self-interest and knowledge
- Life viewed in circular terms, to some day achieve a higher state of existence
- Suffering to be avoided; people and activities weighed for self-gratification: "How does this person/event benefit *me*?"

Program Oriented

- Heavy program prominence
- Emphasizes education
- Relies on speaking skills, oratory, programmed materials, information conveyance
- Leader's personal life immaterial
- Personal relationships optional

Biblical Application

- Belief without personal cost
- Bible: data that must be taught
- Focus on rules—do's and don'ts
- Emphasizes distinct denominations

Ministry Activity

- Large impersonal groups
- Leader-directed and controlled
- Organizational roles important
- Acquisition of knowledge emphasized
- Reliance on scheduled gatherings

Fruit

- Mutual toleration
- Transparency discouraged
- Passivity and lethargy
- "What you know" vital
- Trained professionals utilized
- Produces spectators

Total _____

Go back over the comparison chart. What is your reaction to the column you had the most X's in?

Describe in a few sentences where you think your spiritual future is going.

Discuss the different characteristics that stood out the most to you.

Hebraic: Key Foundations to Your Faith Practice

- Righteousness is a vital component for fellowship. Biblical fellowship is based on what is pleasing to God rather than to yourself. Righteousness through loving, obedient trust assures that your prayers will be answered in God's timing. Answered prayers produces testimonies that glorify God.
- Your home is the key arena for spiritual development for yourself and your family. Next to your relationship with God, your spouse and your family hold a priority that no other worldly involvements compete with.
- God is experienced as testimonies to His intervention and response to prayer are shared both within your family and in the extended spiritual family of your home fellowship.

Hellenism: Key Considerations in Your Faith Practice

- Commitment to a particular creed is a highlight of your faith practice. You participate with others who hold to the same creedal positions and expressions.
- You seek those who enjoy the same religious experiences as you do, such as lively worship, entertaining teaching, fun youth program.
- Religious gatherings are the primary means of your spiritual involvement. You focus on scheduled gatherings with other like-minded people. Little or no spiritual development takes place in your home. Wives and children are outsourced for others to train in spiritual matters. Husbands and fathers have little spiritual input other than grace before meals.
- Rarely do you experience the loving concern of a wonderful Father. Nor do testimonies that glorify Him for answered prayer occur.