

TODAY!

What Would Jesus Be Doing If He Were You?

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).

Insight 11. With Jesus As Your Lord Your Relationships Must Change

*“[Jesus] is the Head of the body, the church [literally, the ones He has called-out of the world system]; He is the Beginning and the Firstborn from among the dead, so that in **EVERY-THING** He might have the supremacy”*
(Colossians 1:18).

“From [Jesus] the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work”
(Ephesians 4:16).

Being called out of the world system into the living organism of the Body of Christ brings about big changes in your life! **IF** you are born again and have been baptized with water and His Spirit, certain changes in your relationships **must** go hand in hand with you belonging to Him as Lord of your life. It’s essential that you understand how the first followers of Jesus understood their way of life in Him and with one another **BEFORE** the two Clements and other Hellenist/Roman



“Church Fathers” created a Nicolaitan-dominated religious system of obligatory practices and clergy rule—conditions which perhaps describe your own spiritual experience.

Beginning with this Insight and those to follow we’ll discuss two vital elements:

- The spiritual dimension of belonging to our Lord Jesus. This we call the **“vertical”** dimension of your life in Christ.
- The **“horizontal”** dimension of living in and for Jesus—the relationships you have on

Some Vertical and Horizontal Responsibilities

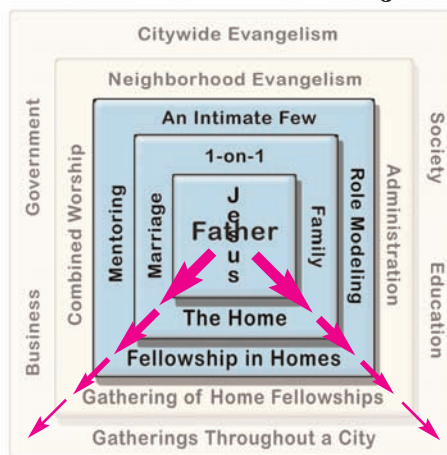
- love God
- obey God
- trust in God
- live repentantly
- be used by the Spirit
- extend His Kingdom

- love others as Jesus would
- be Jesus-in-the-flesh as His own
- consider others more than yourself lovingly confront sin in faith family
- bear the burdens of others
- suffer with those who suffer
- use spiritual gifts to bless others

earth. An old adage describes both facets: *“To fellowship above with the saints we love, that’s real glory. To fellowship below with saints we know, that’s another story.”*

Both our human frailty as well as our struggles with sin are sizable hindrances to walking in the Spirit’s power *collectively* as we follow Jesus together. By His grace and love we need to overcome these limitations so we can mutually wage war against Satan for the souls of mankind, operating as one body under Christ our only Head.

Relational Priorities of the First Followers of our Lord Jesus



In this Insight and those to follow we will be focusing on the central three relational priorities.

The Foundation of the Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions

On the diagram on the preceding page you can see that the Hebraic Restoration is built both vertically and horizontally on you *prioritizing your relationships*. That means certain relationships are dearer and more important to you than others are.

Everything in your relational sphere begins and emanates from your love-grounded, steadfast obedience to the Father and His Son, Jesus — your determination by His grace to live as Jesus would through you.

“*[Agape] 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” (Matthew 22:37,38; Deut. 6:5).

You may have to strive to keep your conscience clear (Acts 24:16) and strive even to keep pressing onward in Jesus (Philippians 3:13,14). But you *don’t* have try to strive to have *agape* love for God! As you yield willingly to the Holy Spirit, He fills your soul with *agape* love. Your part is to continue to take captive your old toxic memories and motivations and bring them into obedience to Jesus. This means you evaluate your thoughts, values, attitudes, and actions and cast off those that aren’t what Christ would say, do, or act like. Where once unChrist-like negative responses influenced you, now His love reigns supreme in and through you. And it’s *your love for your Lord* that produces obedient action!

Out of the depth of your “*vertical*” love for your heavenly Father and Lord Jesus, all your other “*horizontal*” relationships flow—your love for your spouse and children (if God has blessed you with these), and love for your extended spiritual family of Fellowship in Homes.

When we use the term “**relational priority**” we’re referring to the greater heartfelt devotion, time commitment, and precedence you give *first to God* (vertical), then to *those in your home* (horizontal), and then to your *home fellowship family* (horizontal). Keep in mind that with this priority framework you’re *not* rejecting people who are further out in the diagram. Rather you’re affirming the ones who have a greater right to your sacrificial love and time.

No human being can maintain the same depth of relational commitment to all people. That’s why you need to *prioritize* how you use your time and energy according to the significance that God gives each relationship according to His Word.

So many marriages and families spiritually and emotionally suffer because the adults fail to purposefully reflect on *who* comprises their most important relational priorities and *why* they prioritize them as they do. Nor do they weigh the cost and personal sacrifice that represents their loving commitment to God or to the people they should cherish most. As a result, too many children within Christian families are continuing to be sacrificed to the unChrist-like relational priorities of their parents.

“They are restored now, and not long ago; you have not heard of them before today. So you cannot say, ‘Yes, I knew of them!’” (Isaiah 48:7).

Since these relational priorities are only now being restored to His people by our heavenly Father, you most likely weren’t raised with these being role modeled for you by your own parents. So please consider these questions and the impact that previous generations have had on your spiritual understanding:

- While you were growing up were there frequent discussions in your home which

reflected your parents' desire to become more like Jesus and fulfill His purposes for their lives and yours?

- Did you sense that raising you and your siblings to be a "Godly generation" was high on their list of parental priorities?
- Are you prepared to purposefully and intentionally put our Father and Lord Jesus at the center of all *your* priorities?

With Jesus As Your Lord, Your Relationships Must Change

1. *Leaving the Nicolaitan religious system*

In the early 1990s four thousand ex-clergy who over the years had tried to develop *fellowship in homes* as part of their respective congregational practice met for a conference. Each one had labored and struggled with the people within their local body to make the change to develop extended spiritual families who "one-anothered" in relational connect-edness. Yet not one clergy person was successful at this. In hindsight each person present concluded, "**It would have been far easier and more productive to have left the congregation system and begin from scratch to form fellowship families!**"

We cite this because it's impossible for religious leaders to lead their churchgoers away from the *congregation-dependent priority of Hellenist/Roman influence* and its revised "Levitical priesthood."

Realize that it's an individual and family decision for you to live in the New Covenant of the Melchizedek Priesthood of Jesus as your Lord and your Head (Hebrews 6:19,20).

Don't squander your time looking for someone else to lead the way. As your

Head, Lord Jesus will guide you by His Spirit. And when you think of fellowship with others, it's important that you recognize those whom our Lord calls "family":

"Who are My mother and My brothers?" Jesus asked. Then He looked at those seated in a circle around Him and said, 'Here are My mother and My brothers! **Whoever does God's will is My brother and sister and mother**'" (Mark 3:33-35).

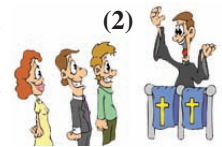
First begin in *your own home* to become the family of our Lord, those who purpose individually and together to put God's will first out of love for Him and for each other. His Spirit will guide and empower you to live intentionally as that kind of family. But if you find yourself in a season of loneliness as our Lord tests your commitment to Him as your

Leaving The Hellenist/Roman System That's Ruled By The "Revised" Levitical Priesthood

(1). You once lived an "acceptable Christian lifestyle" doing whatever you wanted in your own home. Your "Christian" conviction decided, "My family and I aren't as bad as others." You didn't care about the eternal destiny of your neighbors or co-workers.



(2). Away from your home, you and your family attended a congregation with a clergy person leading or in charge.



(3). From within the larger congregation you attended Sunday School or any of a myriad of smaller groups that met your interests. But you had minimal or no contact with the vast majority of these people during the rest of the week.



Head and the only object of your heartfelt devotion, don't look back with longing for the unbiblical system you left behind. Heed His warning:

*"No one who puts his hand to the plow **and looks back** is fit for service in the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).*

- If you have doubts about the evil of the Nicolaitan clergy system, please read our book, *Pastoring By Elders*, or our Hebraic Articles: *I Hate Nicolaitanism*, and *God's Clergy-less Kingdom* (free downloads).

2. Leaving close relationships who intend to remain dominated by strongholds

If you've received the baptism of the Holy Spirit it's because you're free of demonic strongholds and their agitating influence. That's great! But those in your close relational arena (including your biological relatives and people in your congregation) who refuse to be free through being born again and baptized by His Spirit have chosen for themselves to remain enslaved by Satan.

*"This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but **men loved darkness instead of light** because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).*

Our Lord Jesus minced no words about faith in Him creating separation as life purposes, values and goals become totally different through relationship with Him:

*"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, **but a sword**. For I have **come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man's enemies will be the members of his own household**" (Matthew 10:34-36; see also Luke 12:52).*

We're talking here about fellowship in Christ. People who've become the family of our Lord Jesus in His Spirit,

actively doing Father's will, belong to Him and to each other on a level that's far different than with unbelievers. We who live with Jesus as Lord of our lives are *interconnected through His indwelling Spirit*, something which those who have chosen darkness don't have. It's His very presence in us that enables and empowers us to live entirely unlike unbelievers.

*"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. **Live as children of light**" (Ephesians 5:8).*

*"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or **what fellowship can light have with darkness?** What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? **What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?**" (2Corinthians 6:14,15).*

Paul clarifies a key distinction between a person who is indwelt by the Holy Spirit and those who aren't:

*"We have not received the spirit of the world but the **Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us**. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but **in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words**. **The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned**" (1Corinthians 2:12-14).*

- If you think you won't be seduced by the strongholds in others who are *close to you*, think again. You can't entertain the voice of demons in their mind which try to lure you into sin, and also be obedient to the Holy Spirit's voice or experience His power. You become like whomever you listen to. As you reach out to unbelievers with the love and truth of Christ, *be alert to Satan's schemes*.

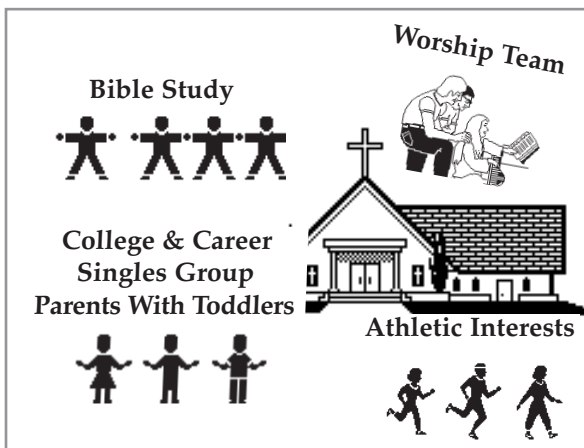
3. *Ridding yourself of innate prejudices.*

If you're not comfortable with people of different backgrounds and perspectives, you'll quench the Holy Spirit's ability to *collectively* use the people you fellowship with as extended spiritual family.

- How comfortable are you with people who differ from you in race, education, economic success? Do you carry any innate prejudice toward others you need to repent of?

Many years ago people influenced by Satan introduced **affinity groups** into Hellenist/Roman Christianity. These make people *feel comfortable* by attracting them to get together with other people who are *just like them*—people who enjoy the same activities, values or goals. Certain factors distinguish affinity groups:

- People are concerned more with *having their own needs met* than with doing God's will.
- *Activities* are paramount, while strong burden-bearing relationships are optional.
- They rely on *scheduled get-togethers* and have little or no other personal contact.



This approach is devoid of the holistic, *extended spiritual family connectedness* that Scripture reveals as God's relational plan. When you mutually serve our Lord alongside others with different spiritual gifts, you're going to interact with very different Spirit-inspired input. Paul uses

the human body as an analogy of Spirit-empowered gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:11-25. Hands, eyes, and hearts all operate differently and each are part of the body for different purposes. But *in their cooperation* they make up one body.

It's essential that you get *outside your comfort zone* concerning other people. Our Lord Jesus stressed the significance of interacting with people different than ourselves, especially those in need:

"Then Jesus said to His host, 'When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous'" (Luke 14:12-14).

"Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed by My Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited Me in, I needed clothes and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison and you came to visit Me'" (Matthew 25:34-36).

In succeeding Insights we'll discuss how to become the *family of Jesus* connected *vertically and horizontally*. But now:

We encourage you to ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you leave behind religious systems, and people who want to remain in darkness, and attitudes that are prejudicial toward others. If you press forward with Jesus as your Head, you're assuring others who follow Him that you'll be to them as He would be. And you're affirming to others their open access to the spiritual gifts the Spirit has apportioned you.