

# Kingdom Living Today

*Illustrating the WAY of God's Kingdom for a Modern World*

## 40. Eagerly Find Out What Pleases Our Lord Jesus

“MY ENTIRE LAW IS SUMMED UP IN A SINGLE COMMAND: ‘LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ SO NEVER PUT YOUR NEEDS ABOVE THOSE AROUND YOU. IN HUMILITY AND LOVE, CONSIDER THEIR NEEDS AS YOUR OWN AND TAKE ACTION TO BLESS THEM.”

The fellowship family relaxed in the snug coziness of Nate and Jessica’s small living room enjoying the peace of their home. The young couple was delighted that in spite of the folding chairs and floor cushions everyone could enjoy their hospitality.

“I want to thank you all for your prayers for my Dad and his desire to reconcile with his kids,” Jessica began warmly. “I wish we had a video of what took place! My family experienced such joy as Dad so sincerely asked for forgiveness and it was genuinely given by each of my brothers and sisters.(Colossians 3:13) And, he found wonderful healing in his heart too.”

Nate turned to Jack with grateful appreciation in his eyes. “The wisdom of God you shared with Howie and me made it possible for the Holy Spirit to convict everyone there, and I mean EVERYONE. Each person let go of all their ill feelings.”(Luke 6:37)

“Even the oldest brother, Craig?” Jack asked with a smile.

“He wasn’t the first and he wasn’t the last,” the young man grinned. “But when his heart melted, he held his Dad the longest. He used more tissue than anyone else!”

“Jack, you would have been proud of Nate,” Jess enthused, squeezing her husband’s arm. “He led the whole family through what at first seemed like ‘the valley of the shadow of death’ as he made sure everyone got their feelings on the table.”

“There were times I thought Craig would just get up and leave,” Nate added shaking his head. “But each time he was agitated and started fidgeting, I just softly said, ‘Craig,’ and got his attention.

“After Craig asked my Dad for forgiveness, he kept hugging Nate,” Jessica interjected with tearful joy. Spontaneous praise transformed into songs of worship that went on for some time.

As quiet penetrated the gathering Juan said, “This morning in prayer I heard the Holy Spirit tell me, ‘Ask Jack and Dee to describe what a *Value-based relationship with Jesus* is like.’” The young soldier looked around the room for their response. Everyone agreed that their spirit bore witness that what he’d related was from the Lord.

Jack and Dee looked at each other, then with loving affection at their family in Christ. Jack spoke first. “For the past several days God has been impressing on Dee and me something to share with you all. And, we can see that this is the morning to do it.” Jack paused as his eyes began to brim with thanks to his Lord. “I want you each to realize that this fellowship family exists because each of you has a heart’s desire to please our Lord.(Romans 12:1,2) Dee and I have come alongside you to encourage and help you, but it’s been your *own loving determination* to grow more like Him in character and obedient trust that has made our fellowship what it is today—a family in Jesus that lives to glorify our Father.”

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*Sharing the Hebraic Foundations of the Earliest Followers of Jesus  
Preparing Today's Followers of Jesus to Fulfill Their Part in His Kingdom*

“As you all know,” Dee added wholeheartedly, “it’s never been our goal to get together just for social reasons. We’ve never purposed for warm bodies to show up just so they can focus on their own self-interests.”

Scanning the packed room, Harry affirmed, “We all bear witness to this.”

“Look at how you’ve embraced the sanctification only the Spirit of Christ can do in your lives,” Jack gestured to them all. (2Corinthians 3:16-18) “Being set apart for His purposes to be fulfilled in your lives and loving Jesus as your Lord has worked such wonderful changes in each of you!” He paused as his face sobered. “And we’ve recognized the heartache in each of you when you’ve broken fellowship with our Lord through sin. Without hesitation you’ve repented when you’re convicted of those wrongs.” (2Corinthians 7:10,11)

Dee broke in with warmth, “You’ve each given your whole heart and soul in loving our God and other people, (Luke 10:27) and have earnestly sought out His commands in His Word so you could apply them to your lives. (2John 1:6) And, each of you readily uses the gifts the Spirit has given you to edify and bless others.” (1Corinthians 12:4-27) She had to stop, as her heart was overflowing with such delight to be part of such noble and unwavering purpose to walk together in the steps of Jesus. (1Peter 2:9,21)

Jack went on with one more thought. “Each of you is so given to Jesus, so in love with Him, so open to the reproof of His Spirit, so separated from the wickedness of this world, that you’re intent on knowing and living by the ways and workings of the Spirit of Jesus in you. (Hebrews 13:20,21) These are the foundations to authentic fellowship, both with God and one another.” As each person took in the faces of the others around the room he added, “Think of the times the Spirit of Jesus has been manifested in our gatherings... the times we’ve all been filled with joy and peace and awe!” (Psalms 65:5)

While everyone was pondering what Jack and Dee had shared, Juan asked, “Can you describe how all this that you’ve mentioned came into being among us? We want to help other people the way you and Dee helped us.” (Philippians 3:17)

“From the time you were freed from demonic strongholds and embraced our Father’s Covenant in Christ, you began your pilgrimage to your salvation,” (Acts 28:18) Jack replied earnestly. “And during the ongoing process of being molded into the character of Jesus by the Spirit, your relationship with our Lord has grown ever deeper—much the way it does in Value-based relationships.” (1Peter 1:22)

Dee joined in, “When you take the first steps toward a Value-based relationship, you can’t help but see each other through how the relationship makes you feel. Even as you talk with each other, you filter the information through your own motives and values.” She looked around to make sure they were tracking. “Then, as a desire for a deeper relationship with someone grows, you begin to naturally find out what pleases the other person. You try not to unnecessarily hurt each other’s feelings, and you try to meet each other’s needs and desires.” (1Peter 4:8)

“I remember,” teenage Josh cut in, “that Value-based relationships are built on the choices we make on behalf of someone else.” He gestured to the three boys sitting next to him who’d once beaten him up and broken his arm. (KLT 26. Stand Firm In Your Trust; Be Courageous And Strong) “Putting each other before ourselves is what Nick, Dan, Adam and I have done to become the best of friends.” The boys nudged each other with chuckles.

“Isn’t this the same process we’ve each gone through with our Lord Jesus?” Jack

asked encouragingly. “We first took notice of Him for what He did for us. Then we made choices to grow in a deeper love relationship and please Him.” He concluded with a smile, “Our Value-based relationship with our Lord makes pleasing Him far more important than seeking to be blessed by Him.”

Brett added, “I can see that in Value-based relationships there’s an easy, mutual flow of information. That’s not only helpful to the other person, but as we trust the input from each other, our relationship is strengthened.”

“I’m glad you mentioned that, Brett,” Jack responded. “The easy flow of information between people is what the military often calls “gouge.” Gouge is the wisdom which experienced, senior military personnel pass along to younger troops to help them do their job well and avoid deadly mistakes.” That made sense. He went on, “This interchange of wisdom as well as seeing it through the motives of the person giving it is necessary for the cooperative body life of a fellowship family whose sole Head is Jesus Christ.”(Ephesians 4:11-16)

“Isn’t this what you and Dee have been doing for us,” queried Jerome, “giving us spiritual gouge?”(Luke 6:40) Everyone laughed approvingly.

Jan spoke up, “You’ve also encouraged us to make it easy for people to share what’s on their hearts. Out of love we need to ensure that no one has any apprehension in speaking up, even things that may hurt our feelings.”(Proverbs 15:31)

Brett asked pointedly, “Jack, none of this would have happened if you weren’t serving us as an elder shepherd. What’s your own heart’s motivation for doing this?”

“I’m glad you asked,” Jack replied heartily. “As I said earlier, the progression of our relationship with Jesus parallels what our Lord desires for us with each other. There comes a time in our character development in Christ when we men, out of love, look first to the interests of others.”(Philippians 2:4) This is the foundation of a shepherd who’s intent in wanting the character of Jesus.”(Mark 10:45)

“As we’ve discussed before,” Dee added, “our Father’s shepherds are older men of wisdom and Christ-like character. They don’t just know *about* Jesus, they *know* Him and *walk* with Him.”(2Timothy 1:12) Actually, I’m convinced that no man can serve as a shepherd until after his frontal lobe shrinks around age 50.”

“I agree with you there!” Harry, who’d just turned 51, exclaimed. “In part 2 of the Hebraic article, *I Hate Nicolaitanism*, they cite that after a man’s frontal lobe shrinks, like I think mine has, he’s more attuned to his emotional as well as his cognitive abilities.” He smiled lovingly at Jan. “I can feel inside myself how better able I am now to represent my Father’s compassion, mercy, and love for people. And, another change is that I see ‘doctrine’ more as a way of life to help instill in others.”(2Timothy 1:13,14) It’s out of *love* now that I want to help others grow in Christ.”(1Peter 1:22)

“Now that you mention it, Harry,” Nate observed, “you and Jack sort of respond the same.” He paused a moment. “We younger men may not understand the changes taking place in you because we didn’t see it all happening. But we sure can see the fruit! What can we do to make it easier for you to help us?”

Jack answered candidly, “What I’m about to say, you’ve all been doing, and I’m exceedingly grateful. An older shepherd is pregnant with wisdom to pass along—wisdom younger people need.” He glanced about the room. “There are two biblical commands for younger people to fully adhere to: “*We ask you to respect those who are work-*

*ing hard among you, those who are guiding you in the Lord and confronting you in order to help you change.*"(1Thessalonians 5:12,CJB) And, *"Let yourself be persuaded by the ones leading you and submit to them. They watch on behalf of your souls as those who will be rendering an account, in order that they may do this with joy, and not groaning, for this would be profitless to you.*"(Hebrews 13:17, literal translation)

"Speaking for all of us," Jerome offered, "we want to make it easy for you to pass along wisdom and to confront us when we need it—and especially that you'd find joy in serving as our shepherd." Everyone got up and hugged both Jack and Dee.

Dee then said. "I've watched the anguish Jack goes through as a shepherd— he willingly faces emotional hurt and personal inconvenience because he loves you all."

"Please tells us more," Keisha insisted. Dee continued, "Serving others as a shepherd is like a nursing mother. Her child dominates her life and personal plans. As an older man, Jack's leadership flows from the love in his heart. When he helps others, he may have to revisit painful experiences from his past through which God has shown him wisdom." She took his hand. "That pain gets compounded when he's learned God's wisdom through past mistakes. But the blessing is that he can use these experiences to help others not make the same error."(John 10:11) Jack eyed her with love.

"I think I understand why many older men who have wisdom don't want to be shepherds," Juan commented. "They lack the love and compassion that's needed to help those who are emotionally hurt."

Lita turned to Dee. "How about you? What's it like being a shepherd's wife?"

"Two words come to mind," Dee smiled, "love and deference. I can look back now and see how I was God's primary instrument for Jack to learn how to love as Jesus would. I can also see why a shepherd must be the husband of only one wife. (1Timothy 3:2) It takes years for a man to develop Christ's love."(Ephesians 5:33)

Jack jumped in animatedly, "I really got hold of this after the Hebraic seminar we attended years ago when I heard, 'If you want to know the extent of my relationship with Jesus, see it in the love He has given me for my wife.' That's when I started getting on my knees and crying out to Jesus to empower me to love Dee the way she needed, and the way He does."

Grateful for how God had used her in Jack's life, Dee continued, "You ladies know from our discussions of Proverbs 31 that it describes a elder/shepherd's wife. In our own marriage, God needed to teach me the deference that Jack would need in me when he began to shepherd our Father's children." With a sigh she added, "I can say that having been raised with an independent spirit, I cried a lot as I became God's helpmate fit for Jack. Over time I realized that my deference to Jack actually represented my trust in the sovereignty of my God. The day I came to understand that *nobody's* will overrules God's will, I had peace with Jack. And as a result of my deference, Jack has experienced the fullness of my respect for him."(Ephesians 5:33)

Jack then confronted the men. "If you're ever going to become a shepherd, you need to realize it's going to take you AND your wife cooperating together. A man's sanctification, his growth in Christ's likeness, begins to bear real fruit AFTER his frontal lobe shrinks. He sees God's truths and people from the love in his heart."

The fellowship gathering continued with joyful worship, personal testimony, and grateful hearts as they renewed their Covenant in Christ with their Father.