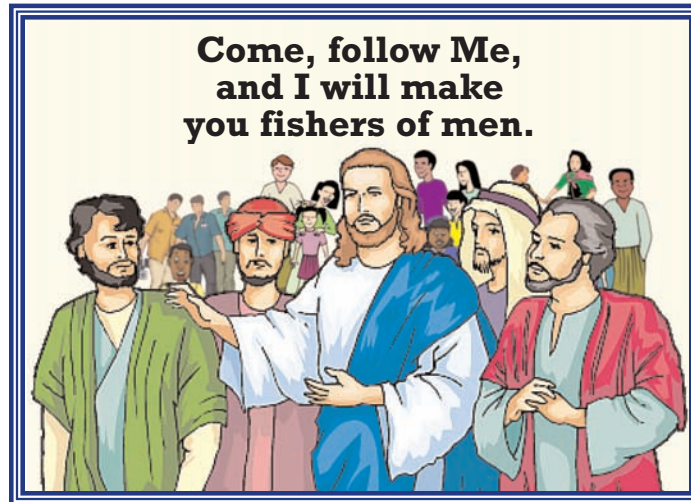


Abraham, the Father of Discipleship



- **In the pattern of His ancestor Abraham, Jesus trained His disciples by first role modeling the way of God for them.**
- **As He demonstrated His Father’s way of life, Jesus instructed others to do likewise.**
- **Jesus purposed that He and His disciples reveal the power and love of His Father.**
- **Through the working of His indwelling Spirit, Jesus empowers ordinary people to do extraordinary things — all to the praise of the Father.**
- **Both His purpose and His method of making disciples are the same today.**
- **When Jesus sent out His disciples to represent His Person and His message, there were no clergy, no “church buildings”, nor any mission agencies. And, none of these are needed today!**



Restoration Ministries International

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Abraham, the Father of Discipleship

*“If you belong to Christ,
then you are Abraham’s seed,
and heirs according to the promise”*
(Galatians 3:29)

Our heavenly Father is in the midst of a Hebraic Restoration. He is restoring the **trust-based obedient lifestyle** of Abraham, the first man called a *Hebrew* (Genesis 14:13) and the *father* of all followers of Jesus (Romans 4:16). To be someone’s *seed* implies that the child has many of the same characteristics as the parent—they share similar DNA.

In the spiritual realm, all who belong to Jesus share “spiritual DNA” through His indwelling Spirit. That means we also share the same life purpose as commanded by Him: to **make disciples**. And to fulfill this discipleship call, we need certain traits patterned by our spiritual father, Abraham.

The Patriarch Abraham is unique because God chose to make an *eternal covenant* first with him (Genesis 17:4-7) and then with his son Isaac (Genesis 17:19), and with his grandson Jacob (1 Chronicles 16:15-17). It is a covenant that finds true fulfillment in Jesus, and subsequently in those who follow Him as their Lord.

You might say that the “church” began with Abraham. The Greek word *ekklesia* [*ek-leh-SEE-ah*], commonly translated “church”, actually means “called-out ones.” Followers of Jesus are a collective, extended spiritual family united by His Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13). We have been *called out of the world* by Jesus to be His family of ambassadors on earth (see 2 Corinthians 5:20). We are the ones He has commanded to be intentional in our “going” to make disciples of every kind of person (*ethnos*) we meet (Matthew 28:19,20).

This is where the Patriarch Abraham is so valuable in our understanding of discip-

ship. He was the first “called-out one” as God called him out of Chaldea to the land of Canaan. By trusting and obeying God’s will, Abraham set the pattern of obedient trust for today’s “called-out ones” in Christ.

In order to understand the meaning of discipleship as the way Jesus trained His first followers, you need to apprehend and appreciate the spiritual heritage of Jesus extending back to Abraham. Jesus was the promised Seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16)—His lineal ancestor—even as His followers would comprise the Patriarch’s spiritual seed. This is not just a minor biblical point. Grasping this *relational connection* helps us appreciate why Jesus trained disciples the way He did.

As was understood in the Hebraic framework, disciples were expected to *put into practice* what they had seen in their discipler and learned from him (Philippians 4:9). Realizing both this relational connectedness as well as responsive obedience, we need to restore the discipleship goals and motives of Jesus—the ones which were first modeled by Abraham.

***“For I have chosen [Abraham],
so that he will command his children
and his household after him to keep
the way of the LORD by doing what is
right and just, so that the LORD will
bring about for Abraham what
He has promised him”*** (Genesis 18:19;
see also God’s commands in
Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Ephesians 6:4).

By examining Abraham’s life as well as his relationship with God, we can gain insight into our Lord Jesus’s goals and methods of discipleship. As the verse above indicates, God chose Abraham in particular because He knew that the

Patriarch would disciple his own family to follow *the way of the Lord*.

The *way of the Lord* is a lifestyle in which an intimate, trust-based relationship with God is readily apparent to others and pleasing to Him (James 2:21-23). Through discipleship this way of life can be passed along to other Jesus followers. And, a readiness to *obey His commands* testifies to the authenticity of that relationship and releases God's blessing for that obedience (Genesis 26:4,5).

Underlying this truth is an essential element: you can't train others into a God-pleasing way of life if your own life doesn't demonstrate it. That's hypocrisy!

The way of the Lord encompasses far more than just teaching biblical facts to people. The one who is discipling must be *living that way* first! As we know from the biblical account of Abraham's life, his trust in God and his willingness to obey was apparent by the *way he lived*. Leaving his homeland for an unknown destination, waiting on God for decades for the promised son, Isaac, and being willing to sacrifice the boy when God commanded him to: this was an ongoing, obedient trust which embodied righteousness in God's sight (Romans 4:3).

Was Abraham perfect in his choices and decisions? No. Just like the rest of us, he forged ahead in willful deception (for example, regarding Sarah and Abimelech in Genesis 20) and unwise alliances (as with Hagar in Genesis 16:4,15). Yet he was quick to repent when God confronted him, and to humbly receive the consequences of his poor planning.

True discipleship, beginning with Abraham, continuing with Jesus, and carried on by all His followers, is based on this standard: a discipler (including parents) first **role models a way of life** BEFORE he

or she instructs others. This process authenticates the lessons and keeps the walk from being just talk. Jesus and His disciples after Him exercised the loving care of a faithful parent toward the ones whose lives were being changed through their time together (see Luke 12:32; 1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-10).

In his obedient trust and discipling his family Abraham is the father pattern for all fathers. In purposing to pass along the ways of God to his family and his entire household, he is the model for all fathers who love God and seek to fulfill His commands for themselves and for their families.

As we'll discuss later, the role of shepherd/teacher in a home fellowship family is akin to Abraham. The biblical elder is a shepherd who fathers those in his care through the wisdom and compassion he has acquired over the years. Through spiritually fathering all the fathers in the fellowship family, he role models and instructs them in the way of the Lord. They then shepherd and disciple their own families.

A discipler first role models a way of life BEFORE he instructs others.

"Train [dedicate, consecrate, teach early on] a child in the way he should go [i.e., in the way his bent, talents and motivations are steering him], and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

Like their ancestor Abraham, the Israelites understood that to train each child in the way he should go calls for a parent to spend meaningful, ongoing time with their child(ren). Only through that loving interaction can a parent appreciate the individual personality and

motivations of each one. And through observation over the course of time, fathers and mothers are better able to discern God's plan for each child in the vocation most suitable for him or her.

There's a profound link between someone's occupation and their expression of devotion to their Lord through word and deed. The Hebrew word *avodah* (ah-voh-DAH) means both work and worship. A young person who has been guided into the calling God has prepared for him or her will work with thankfulness and diligence. And someone who is grateful in his workplace is better able to fulfill his King's purpose in being there and to bring God glory as he labors.

As we'll see, this same principle of *knowing the bent of an individual* applies as well to elder/shepherds. When they know the spiritual gift(s) and maturity of each person in their faith family, they can guide the home fellowship to cooperate as a body, fulfilling their purpose in extending the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus.

“Remember the ones leading you, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:7,8; see also 1 Corinthians 11:1; 2 Timothy 3:10).

We're told to evaluate the outcome of our leaders' way of life. Has their life evidenced the aroma of Jesus (2 Corinthians 2:14-16)? If so, then we can imitate their faith.

Like a parent, a discipler isn't just a teacher of information but rather a demonstrator of a way of life. A discipler is in fact a **leader**—leading others into living the *way of our Lord*. Followers of

Jesus who would disciple others (even as parents) must first live it themselves.

Since the nature of Jesus and the ways He modeled for His disciples never change, then His requirements for leading others (parenting included) hasn't been altered either. **A trust-based way of life** that emanates from obedient faith is the prime example for disciples to imitate as their way of life. This loving trust that purposes to obey our Lord is the thread that connects a discipler today to Abraham and our Lord Jesus. When a disciple can closely observe a person who lives out this trust in God, then he can imitate the same trust-grounded obedience (2 Timothy 3:10).

A discipler's trust-based way of life emanates from a faith his or her disciples can imitate as a way of life.

“At that time Abimelech and Phicol the commander of his forces said to Abraham, ‘God is with you in everything you do’” (Genesis 21:22).

Let's further examine Abraham to understand the goals and methods of Jesus in making disciples. Not only did the Patriarch role model a trust-based lifestyle and instruct his family in the way of the Lord; **he made God known to others.**

There was no doubt that Abraham's life was guided and encompassed by God (Genesis 18:1-33; 20:17). A potent example of his intimate dependence and God's responsive intervention is the victory He gave Abraham in rescuing Lot with only 318 men against the armies of four kings. What a testimony to the king of Sodom and to all who witnessed God's power on the Patriarch's behalf! And Abraham's

declaration rightly made known the Sole Source of that victory:

“I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, and have taken an oath that I will accept nothing belonging to [Sodom’s king], not even a thread or the thong of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, ‘I made Abram rich’” (Genesis 14:22,23).

Centuries later **Jesus came to reveal His Father** so that humanity might be reconciled to Him through the cross (Colossians 1:19,10). This revelation of Father’s gracious plan in Christ was an essential life purpose anchored by Jesus for His disciples and for all who would become His followers. When people encounter a Jesus follower, they should easily recognize someone who reveals the Father through their life:

“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).

Our Father seeks children whose lives bring Him praise as **He reveals His power and love through them**. Again, this is the primary goal of discipleship—to make the Father known and see His will be done (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). Consequently, through that reconciliation, lives miraculously being transformed by the Spirit will bring more praise to our Father by more people!

Through His chosen Older Testament people, the Israelites, God purposed to make His Name known even as He calls

His own today to do. He made this purpose known through Moses: *“I will gain glory for Myself through Pharaoh and all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I am the LORD” (Exodus 14:4; see also Joshua 4:23,24; 2 Chronicles 17:10).*

The Book of Acts is a revelation of our Father’s intervention and deliverance among those whom Jesus discipled. By walking in His footsteps of obedient trust, they imitated His way of life and instructed others to do likewise—and our Father revealed His mighty power on their behalf.

Our Father has in mind far more than people who merely *talk about* Him or teach His Word as an *academic topic*. He purposes to *reveal His power and love* through His own. He is praised and glorified when He has the opportunity to “part the Red Sea” in the lives of His trusting children. Remember this axiom:

- The condition for a miracle is: ***extreme difficulty***
- The condition for a *great* miracle is: ***impossibility!***

If you belong to Jesus, then the extreme *difficulties* and *impossibilities* in your life are our Father’s opportunities to reveal Himself through you to others. Think about it. . .

Our Father seeks children whose lives bring Him praise as He reveals His power and love through them.

“Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about’” (Genesis 22:2).

God brings about (or allows) difficulties and impossibilities in your life not only to reveal His power and love, but also to *test the genuineness* of your trust in Him. Let's explore Abraham's trust-grounded obedience in light of facing extreme difficulty. By the time the Patriarch had neared the century mark and his wife Sarah was well beyond child-bearing years, their promised son had yet to arrive. But this was no obstacle for their mighty God! And when long-awaited Isaac had become a teenager, God tested Abraham in a way that would have pierced the heart of any of us.

What would *you* have done if you were asked to offer up your only child as a sacrifice? Both Testaments reveal that besides revealing His power and love through us, our God tests those who are His so the authenticity of our trust may be manifested. He wants to determine both the fidelity of our relationship with Him and our readiness to follow His ways no matter what.

God *tested* the Israelites as an example for us today (see Deuteronomy 8:2; Judges 2:22; 2 Chronicles 32:31). And in the Newer Testament, Jesus forewarned Peter about a forthcoming *test* on his faith (Luke 22:31-32). Jesus didn't pray that the test wouldn't come, but that *Peter's trust wouldn't fail*. Afterward, he would use his experience to strengthen others.

Persevering under the trial of testing evidences love for our Father (James 1:12). Having endured his own test of trust, Peter sums up our Father's goal for all of us as we endure trials in which we face difficulties and impossibilities:

"These [trials] have come so that your trust—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may be proved genuine and may result in

praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1 Peter 1:7).

When trials beset you or those close to you in the faith, our Lord wants you to turn to His indwelling Spirit for comfort and strength. In the God of all comfort you find the grace you need to press on: *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort"* (2 Corinthians 1:3).

No trial is easy; otherwise it wouldn't be a "trial"! But that trial earmarked by Father especially for your character growth and spiritual maturity is an opportunity to acquire a testimony to His glory. And He won't waste your experience. When you get through that painful situation, you'll be given a chance to help someone else experience our Lord's grace and to encourage others to turn to Him:

"[God] comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Corinthians 1:4).

Revealing our Lord through your testimony of how He brought you through trials and difficulties is what a hurting and hopeless world needs to hear. Your experience is now your testimony to the grace Jesus gives people whenever they turn to Him in trust. And, He has called you to testify about it!

After your trial is over, remember the apostles' declaration about their Lord and His mighty power: *"For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard"* (Acts 4:20). More than teaching *about* the Bible, the world needs to hear living testimonies which testify about Jesus, the Source of all truth and spiritual power. They will then have "ears to hear" the reality of their need to turn from their sin and be reconciled to God through His Son as their Lord and Savior.

Revealing our Lord through your testimony of how He brought you through trials and difficulties is what a hurting and hopeless world needs to hear.

“Observe [these commands] carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people’”
(see Deuteronomy 4:1-9; also 6:4-9).

God worked among Abraham’s descendants, the Israelites, by integrating two components of His eternal plan. He combined revealing *His power and gracious love* with teaching them *His way of living righteously*. In the pattern of the Patriarch with his own family, the Israelites were commanded by God to *disciple their own families* so He could reveal His righteous ways to the world (Psalms 98:2,3). Today those who obey the commands of God are instruments through whom He demonstrates His power by His Spirit in them.

God also reveals Himself through answered prayers. But in order for our Father to hear and respond to our prayers, the Bible repeatedly affirms that we’re responsible to love Him and keep His commands. We’re called to live righteously in ways that please our Father according to His Word so He will hear our prayers and bless us with God-sized answers, as Scripture abundantly confirms (Psalms 34:15-17, 66:18; Proverbs 15:8, 29, 28:9; John 9:31; James 5:16-18; 1 Peter 3:12).

Paul tells Jesus followers to take seriously the model of trust lived by our father in faith: *“Consider Abraham: ‘He trusted God, and it was credited to him as righteousness’”* (Galatians 3:6). In effect,

Abraham trusted God enough to *obey Him* — an obedient trust which in God’s sight was righteous. Yes, we who follow Jesus as our Lord have an *imputed righteousness* because of His shed blood for our sin. This means that obeying God’s commands does *not* justify us in His sight. But we must also recognize that His commands reveal to us a way of *living righteously*.

Again Abraham helps us understand the relationship between our faith, our righteousness from our Father’s perspective, and obeying His commands:

“You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar [obeyed God’s command]? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, ‘Abraham trusted God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,’ and he was called God’s friend” (James 2:20-23; see also 2:24-26).

God intends that we manifest our trust in Him by turning away from the world’s ways and abiding by His ways. The 1,050 commands in the Newer Testament reveal *the way* of living a righteous life in His Spirit. By dying to our fleshly self-serving inclinations, we become “living sacrifices” that are holy and acceptable to our God — children wholly grateful for the amazing grace He has extended to us in Christ (Romans 12:1).

As with Abraham, we *aren’t* justifying ourselves through obeying God’s good and righteous commands. Rather, as we obey His commands out of our grateful love for Him, we reflect our trust in Him. Why else would Jesus and the Newer Testament writers repeatedly affirm the connection

of loving God and keeping His commands (John 14:15; 1 John 2:3, 3:24, 5:3)?

In order for our Father to hear and answer our prayers, the Bible repeatedly affirms that we're responsible to love Him and keep His commands.

“Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness...” (Matthew 6:33)

Have you ever considered *why* Jesus intended for you to live within the righteous parameters of His Kingdom? We can learn much from our Father's interaction with the Israelites. While they were still journeying to the Promised Land (Deuteronomy 11:8-15), God told them ahead of time about the connection between their obedience to His commands and His blessing them with spring and autumn rains. He wanted His people to know that His blessings in the Land were dependent on them living righteously according to His expressed standards.

All throughout the Older Testament God showed Himself miraculous whenever collective Israel was wholehearted toward Him and His righteous ways. He had called them to love Him with all their being, and their obedience “heart and soul” was righteous in His sight. As a gracious Father He also knew that the sin nature often overrode good intentions. So *by grace* He provided a means by which they could atone for their sins with a sacrificed animal.

In light of the gracious gift of life in the Spirit we today can access through Christ in us, the unchanging primary command of Jesus certainly applies to us today:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and

with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27; see also John 14:23, 15:10; 1 John 5:3).

The interconnection of obeying the commands of the God you love and seeing Him display His mighty power at work around you mirrors the life of Jesus and those He disciplined. Jesus, and every disciple after Him, are committed to this purpose: to see our Father praised when people behold His power and love.

Again, the relational thread from Abraham to Jesus and to all His disciples who have become spiritual children of Abraham is to reveal our Father so that others may bring Him praise (John 8:50; Ephesians 1:4-6; 1 Peter 2:9). If being conduits of His love and power is the way our Lord Jesus brought Him praise, then we who follow Him must do likewise:

When He came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen” (Luke 19:37; see also Luke 5:24-26).

We've discussed in other writings the *Hebraic Stream* in Judaism, those who loved and obeyed God the way Abraham did. These were most likely among the first followers of Jesus and had a firm understanding of **individual and communal righteousness****. They were well aware of how those who lived righteously according to God's ways out of love for Him released His spiritual power through “*signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His will*” (Hebrews 2:4).

[**Later we'll discuss communal righteousness and its importance for God to reveal His power and love.]

***“The promises were spoken
to Abraham and to his Seed...
meaning one person, Who is Christ”
(Galatians 3:16)***

Abraham chose to trust God and live according to His ways. As the promised Seed of Abraham, Jesus too lived a way of life that was pleasing to God (but also uniquely perfect). And like His forefather Abraham, Jesus taught God’s commands as a way of life, often citing the Older Testament as His foundation of truth.

God didn’t hesitate to reveal Himself to Abraham as His friend as well as his Lord in the sight of other people. And the Father revealed Himself to others through His Son Jesus with even greater power and clarity. Jesus knew He must leave His disciples behind as His witnesses, and ensured that they would be empowered to continue that pattern of revealing the Father: *“I tell you the truth, anyone who has trust in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father”* (John 14:12).

Encompassed within this promise to His followers is their *responsive obedience* to live His way:

- **Role modeling a righteous way of life;**
- **Instructing others to live righteously;**
- **Revealing the divine power and love of His heavenly Father.**
- **Living by His Spirit with a heart motive of love for others.**

This is the fabric of true discipleship.

The crux of maturity in a discipler-disciple relationship is this: *“Everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher”* (Luke 6:40b). The discipler is the role model for the disciple. When Jesus commanded His disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 to go and make disciples themselves, He was enact-

ing a process from the Older Testament that was modeled by Abraham. God had chosen the Patriarch because He knew the man would train his son Isaac in the way of the Lord. In turn, Isaac would train Jacob. While each of these men was indeed beset by human frailties as we all are, God revealed Himself in each man’s life through mighty acts because they sought Him and obeyed Him.

Jesus knew His Father was pleased to show Himself powerful through His people. The life of Jesus modeled perfect obedience, reproducing Himself in others and displaying God’s power. This is the call and purpose for each person who follows Him as Lord: to become *like Him* as an obedient, reproductive, empowered disciple who is discipling others to be like Jesus. This is how our God has chosen to reveal Himself to an unbelieving world.

Our Father uses the righteous in Christ who obey His commands out of love so He may display His power through them to His glory and praise.

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore as you go, disciple all nations [all kinds of people], baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’”
(Matthew 28:18-20).

For too long Christendom has relied on an ecclesiastical system of professional, seminary-trained missionaries to go forth and disciple others into the way of life in Jesus. This “Great Commission”—

given to ALL who would ever follow Him—has been relegated to an educated few who too often have presented biblical truth but have also perpetuated an arrangement in which hearers are dependent *on their teachers* rather than on the Holy Spirit. Because this pattern lacks the life-changing power of the Spirit, “Christianity” has become “a mile wide and an inch deep” in many lands. Vast numbers, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, have heard the message of Good News but have no idea what it means to rely on the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit (see John 3:8; 1 Corinthians 2:4).

Ongoing dependence on *people* was not our Lord’s intent when He gave the command to make disciples. He purposes for Spirit-empowered disciplers to raise up Spirit-empowered disciples who will reproduce others to become empowered fishers of men.

Let’s review a few points that are foundational to our Lord’s command in Matthew 28:18-20:

First, in order to become a member of the family of Jesus, a person must be **born again**. Having initially been born into this world dominated by a sin nature, *rebirth from above* means your spirit is regenerated by His Spirit through faith. This “inner transaction” is the means by which you can hear from God and employ His power to carry out His plans and purposes. Jesus uses the analogy of the wind for life in the Spirit:

“The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit”
(John 3:8).

The “wind” of the Spirit has an unmistakable result in the life of the per-

son He fills! As you go—as you respond with obedience to the Spirit’s urging and direction—you are to come alongside those He earmarks for you, introduce them to the authentic Gospel of the covenant in Christ, and disciple them. *His Spirit* guides the born again to those whom our Lord would have them disciple—to role model and instruct in a good and pleasing way of life in which they gratefully put into practice God’s commands (Hebrews 13:20,21).

Second, when Jesus sent out His disciples to practice what He had *shown them, taught them* and *discussed with them* (Mark 6:7-13; Luke 10:3-9), He gave them pre-conditions so they could experience *His spiritual power* rather than rely on their own resources:

“He sent them out two by two and gave them authority over evil spirits. These were His instructions: ‘Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts...’” (Mark 6:7,8; see also Mark 16:17,18; Luke 10:1-17).

With obedient trust comes His guidance, empowerment, and provision. Because our Lord Jesus has promised to be with His disciples to the end of the age as we go about making disciples (Matthew 28:20), we who follow Him today need the same confidence as His first disciples when He sent them forth.

The life of a born again person dedicated to making disciples is clearly illustrated in the account of Philip in Acts 8:

When persecution against Christians broke out in Jerusalem, Philip went where he could make disciples among the people the Jews despised, the “half-breed” Samaritans (8:3-5). Jesus had told His disciples they would be His witnesses to these folks, and Philip was fulfilling that word! (See Acts 1:8.)

Philip began his discipling career by relying on the same spiritual power that Jesus gave the first disciples He sent out: to deliver people from demons and heal them so they would then heed the message (8:7). Having received the Holy Spirit themselves, Philip and the apostles knew that those who were born again needed the empowerment of the Spirit (8:15-17).

In the obedient trust of a born again person whose life is “like the wind”, Philip could immediately heed the angelic command to leave Samaria even if he didn’t yet know the purpose. *As he was going* he was attuned to the Spirit’s precise directive: to catch up with the Ethiopian official (8:26-40). What fruit that encounter bore! Today Ethiopian Christians credit the eunuch for how they’ve become our Father’s children, all because an obedient witness served His Lord faithfully and sent another to disciple a nation. Philip’s story of availability and Spirit-orchestration must become the life story of all who follow Jesus as their Lord.

Paul is another vivid example of one who, *as he was going*, made disciples. The same embodiment of *immediate obedience, guidance* and *spiritual power* is captured in the narratives of his life (1 Thessalonians 1:5-7). Later we’ll discuss how this clear understanding of a born again person’s role in making disciples was forsaken when Hellenism overtook Christianity.

[If you’d like a full picture of the influence of Hellenism and Romanism on Christendom, download *Restoring the Early Church*, Section 2: <Restorationministries.org/pdf/books/rtec/2.RTECSection2.pdf>]

From the first disciples all the way to whoever will be our Lord’s last disciples, we have in common His command to love Him and obey His commands. Since

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8), His disciples today are called to be about His affairs as were His first disciples. We realize in this self-saturated culture that serving our Lord’s purposes out of love for Him runs counter to the me-centered “gospel” so prevalent today. But to walk the way of Jesus as Lord of your life defines the precious relationship of being born again. Sadly, those who haven’t gratefully yielded themselves to that way of life *can’t see the Kingdom of God* (see John 3:3).

Being born again and making disciples are inseparable in our Lord’s sight. Why? Because those who are born again are indwelt by His Spirit, and the Spirit’s love compels them to be our Father’s ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:14-20). If your heart is available and willing to make disciples, you are evidencing His Spirit at work in you as one who is born again and belongs to Jesus.

With your obedient trust come His guidance, power, and provision.

“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:38,39)

At the time our Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to make disciples, baptize them and teach them to obey everything He commanded, He knew that soon they’d be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Encompassed with the Spirit’s guidance and power, the disciples went forward without money, mission agencies or ecclesiastical endorsement.

Jesus is still commanding ALL who are born from above to make disciples of all kinds of people. The working of His Spirit is still mighty within and around His people today. So reliance on His Spirit and His pattern for making disciples remains viable and effective for us today. We have no excuse for ignoring or neglecting the heart's desire of our Lord!

Having firsthand experience with Jesus role modeling discipleship and discussion and then sending them out to practice His words and His ways, the Twelve could train others using the methods by which they were trained (Mark 6:7-13; Luke 10:3-9). The disciples of Jesus received far more than they anticipated when they marked His words, "Come, follow Me." He turned them into obedient and empowered fishers of men (Matthew 4:19, Mark 1:17).

As He was about to ascend to heaven Jesus had no need to *explain* everything His disciples would need to know. Rather, He gave them His Spirit to continue to train, guide and empower them. And this promised Spirit is "for all whom the Lord our God will call" as His own.

"If you obey My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have obeyed My Father's commands and remain in His love" (John 15:10)

There's a major difference between the Hebraic method of discipleship which Jesus and His early followers used and the Hellenist-influenced, man-centered methods of today: Jesus trained people to ***love and obey Him.***

Those who followed Jesus as their Lord recognized the Hebrew Bible (today's Older Testament, the only Scripture they had) as God's handbook of a way of

life that pleased Him and revealed His unchanging character. Through His Spirit He reveals Himself and guides those who love and obey Jesus in an obedience-based, empowered way of life. How shortchanged are those who hear Bible teachers today present God's Word as a repository of facts like a history book!

Jesus was intimately aware of the eternal nature of His Father and the holy way of life made clear in His Word. It was from that Word that He drew His own messages of holy living! That's why He could emphasize so passionately to His disciples the priority of *loving God* and *loving others* as self (Deuteronomy 6:4,5; Luke 10:27). *Love* must be not only the basis for obeying God's commands but also the foundation for reaching out to disciple others into Christ (1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 2 Corinthians 5).

Within both Testaments is the interconnectedness between love and obedience. God commanded His people Israel "to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, to obey His commands, to hold fast to Him and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul" (Joshua 22:5). It's an intimate, *way of life* relationship! Jesus apperceived the intent of this verse when He declared to His disciples, "If you love Me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15).

This same loving obedience He commanded His disciples as *they* discipled others: "Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). Jesus is still with us today as we go about in loving obedience to role model His way of life while we teach others to obey His commands.

Having "ears to hear" what the Spirit says means obeying Him as soon as He speaks, not when it's convenient (and

rarely is obedience convenient!) or when we feel like it. As a wise person has written, “*Delayed obedience is disobedience.*” ***Immediate, love-based obedience*** and ***spiritual power*** differentiate the way Jesus disciplined from the optional *mañana* mentality of Hellenist-influenced “discipleship.”

“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work”
(1 John 3:8)

“I am sending you to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Me”
(Acts 26:17,18)

When Simon Peter proclaimed that Jesus was indeed the prophesied Messiah, the Son of the living God, the Lord proclaimed that “*on this rock [of trust] I will build My [collective called-out ones], and the gates of hell will not withstand it*” (Matthew 16:18). He fully realized the spiritual power His disciples would need in their warfare against Satan, the ruler of darkness.

Jesus had exercised this power Himself and modeled it for His disciples: “*Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons*” (Mark 1:34). He then sent out the twelve and then the seventy-two to do likewise and discover for themselves how powerful is the authority of His Name (Matthew 10:5-8; Luke 10:17).

Years later Paul related clearly the nature of the very real battle with Satan (Romans 16:20; 2 Corinthians 2:11, 11:14, 12:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:18). Because of this awareness the apostle emphasized the

need for spiritual power in warring against the devil in the unseen realm:

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).

Everything Paul understood about love-based obedience and the guidance and empowerment of the Spirit disappeared when Christianity was seduced by Hellenist pagan practices and its clergy-controlled religious system in the second and third centuries. The Biblical way of empowered disciples of Jesus leading others in His way was supplanted by young, educated and professionally trained men who piecemealed Scripture to accommodate manmade traditions and rituals.

Any “common” people who wholeheartedly relied on spiritual gifts and empowerment by the Spirit to fight effectively against Satan were considered apostate by the organized religious system. Intellectual pursuit and education in the Bible as well as manmade traditions replaced the relational modeling and enacted obedience through Spirit empowerment that Jesus instilled in His disciples.

Paul repeatedly made clear that it’s not man’s persuasive abilities that open people’s hearts to respond to the Gospel. Rather, *spiritual power* enables those who know Jesus as their Lord to present Him as He truly is: “*But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us*” (2 Corinthians 4:7; see also 1 Corinthians

4:19,20; 2 Corinthians 6:7;13:4;12:9; Ephesians 1:19,3:7,16,20; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:7).

Spiritual power, not biblical knowledge, verified whether someone was born again and belonged to our Lord. Keep in mind that the Pharisees, experts in the Hebrew text, could quote Torah and the prophetic writings verbatim—but couldn't recognize the Messiah when He was right before their eyes!

The Hellenists idolized philosophy; to them, biblical truth was something to be debated and argued about, not put into practice. From the time Hellenism insinuated itself as the filter through which the Bible as well as the Person of Jesus was evaluated, the Hebraic lifestyle of love-grounded obedient trust was devalued and discredited. The religious entity of "Christianity" devolved into that which the Bible warns against, "*having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them*" (2 Timothy 3:5).

So many whom our Lord could use to extend His Kingdom today by exercising spiritual power against the devil have instead been seduced. They rely on what they *know about* the Bible, or are held captive to religious complacency by the spirit of Hellenism. Religion as a profession—teaching Bible knowledge *apart from* obedient trust in the Author—has pressured the majority into a self-satisfied system of form and ritual.

- **Sixty-six per cent of Christians don't believe in the existence of the devil.**
- **Why then would they seek spiritual power to combat someone they don't believe in?**

The ecclesiastical "church" recognizes no need to rely on spiritual power; but the Kingdom which our Lord is establishing depends on it! Kingdom sons and

daughters war against the gates of hell toward which throngs are heading for destruction (Matthew 7:13). This battle calls for more than words alone to wage war victoriously. As Paul proclaimed to a culture as dubious of spiritual power as ours, "*the Kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power*" (1 Corinthians 4:20).

Reliance on the Spirit's power is a key difference between the Hebraic and Hellenist worldview. Like our Hebrew father Abraham who depended on the power of God even to giving him a son when he and Sarah were aged, we Kingdom-minded children of Abraham need spiritual power to fulfill the works in Christ He has planned for us (Ephesians 2:10).

So many today have never witnessed the power of the Spirit at work in and around them. Nor do they believe God could use them to reveal His power through them and bring others to Himself. Intimidated by the clergy system that Hellenism spawned, they've been deceived that familiarity with the Bible has replaced spiritual power—as if the Spirit doesn't work in accord with the Word.

Gird up your loins of loving trust and obedience to our Lord and leave behind any religious system that keeps you from pressing into Him as His beloved warrior and child. Discover by His Spirit *your* part in the Kingdom Jesus is establishing.

"Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong"

(1 Corinthians 1:26,27).

Let's look at the nature of people our Lord recruits to be disciples. Jesus didn't go looking for those from the religious establishment. In fact, as one translation puts it, Jesus thanked His Father that He had "*concealed these things from the sophisticated and educated, yet revealed them to ordinary people*. Yes, Father, I thank You that it pleased You to do this" (Luke 10:21). Some of the prominent such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea did believe in Him. But Jesus didn't expect many among those of influence and worldly power to follow Him.

You might say our Lord recruits "clay pots" through whom He can reveal His all-surpassing glory (2 Corinthians 4:7). These are the humbly responsive who take their place in the Kingdom as they put into practice the Hebraic foundations, living as the heart and hands of Jesus by doing what He did while He was on earth. Despite human weaknesses, we who are indwelled by the Spirit of our Lord *are* able to reveal the Father *through us as His vessels*.

Let's summarize what we've discussed so far of the way Jesus discipled His own—a pattern He intended they replicate in the lives of all who would have the Spirit of Christ in them, including you:

1. Jesus was the *perfect example* of what complete obedience looked like (John 14:31).
2. Jesus instructed His disciples through *word and deed* into the reality of a Kingdom way of life (John 1:14).
3. Jesus discussed *collectively* with His disciples how they were to live as His representatives. His promise to be in their midst when *two or three together* sought to apply God's commands to their lives assured them they were hearing clearly from His Spirit (Matthew 18:19,20). The recognized *communal understanding* of God's Word

required the confirmation of two or three (2 Corinthians 13:1). And, *communal participation* as each "body member" functioned doing his or her part strengthened and encouraged the faith family as a whole (Ephesians 4:16). This *interconnectedness in Christ* is why almost all the commands in the Newer Testament are addressed in the *plural* rather than to an individual.

4. Jesus trained His disciples to rely on spiritual power by trusting His Spirit within them to be greater than the devil (1 John 4:4).
5. Jesus sent His disciples out to experience His Spirit's power at work through them in His Name (Luke 10:16-20). Having returned to Him with joyful awe, they followed this pattern in making disciples wherever they went.

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

The fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy is being carried out today in the Hebraic Restoration. Throughout the world our Father is sending forth a Hebraic understanding of the Scriptures to undo the Hellenistic distortions of God's Word by the converted Greek philosophers of the second and third centuries.

Through a philosophical approach to truth (Colossians 2:8), many of those referred to as "Church Fathers" tried to reconcile Plato and Christianity, introducing a myriad of pagan practices which are now embraced as "Christian." The most pervasive of these pagan policies—the clergy system that dominates Christendom—has reduced so many modern Christians to a state of perpetual infancy. Having undermined reliance on spiritual power, professional clergy have bound millions in religious passivity.

Before the coming of Jesus the Hebraic Stream of Judaism who embraced the trust-based way of life of Abraham had been teaching for over two hundred years that a person must experience spiritual rebirth. And, apostles, prophets, evangelists, and older men of wisdom who were shepherds and teachers were already components of faith communities. The shepherds of these spiritual extended families were leaders by example, well-known among those they served. Certainly they were *not* ecclesiastical professionals appointed from afar.

God had long been preparing these equipping roles among the Hebraic Stream to lead the way in discipling people fit for service in His Kingdom. Jesus made sure this necessary niche was filled so that those who were fully discipled would be prepared to serve and grow mature in Him as they continued to build up His collective body:

“It was [Jesus] Who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be shepherds and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).

The *mutual cooperation* of these anointings is our Lord’s means to ensure that His way of making disciples continues in His ever-expanding Kingdom. Again, these equipping roles are not ecclesiastical positions but spiritual anointings based on close relationship and confidence in His common goal for all.

As with Abraham and the Israelite par-

ents who were commanded to know the bent of their children, in three years’ time Jesus fully equipped twelve men to serve as His apostles. How? By spending a considerable amount of personal time with each one as they lived together and traveled together, He got to *know the bent* of each one. He knew who was the cynical skeptic, the doubter, the one who too quickly opened his mouth, and the ones who thought they were the greatest. By understanding each person thoroughly Jesus was able to guide them as a group into becoming His sent ones as each did his part in extending His Kingdom.

The role of shepherd/teacher in a home fellowship family especially reminds us of Abraham. The words *shepherd*, *elder* and *overseer* are often interchangeable in the Newer Testament and mirror the purpose of an elder clan leader in the Older Testament. In both contexts the elder is an older man of wisdom who is prepared to represent his heavenly Father’s compassionate concern for the people in his care. Through personal ongoing relationship with each one, he is able to ascertain their spiritual gifting(s), spiritual maturity and even their particular personality traits. Thus he can guide the body into cooperating to achieve the Lord’s purpose for their faith community (1 Corinthians 12:11-27).

A father to all the fathers in the fellowship family, a biblical shepherd/elder is able to role model and instruct the *way of the Lord* (1 Timothy 3:2-7). Again, this role of servant leader is *not* an ecclesiastical position, but rather a family responsibility like a clan leader in a tribe caring for his extended kin-folk.

The apostles, prophets, evangelists and shepherd/teachers who are being raised up to serve in these roles today are not *speaking at* people from behind pulpits or in front of large audiences of strangers. You might say they are

unknown, faceless and nameless with only the character of Jesus shining through.

While those within ecclesiastical systems measure their success by nickels and noses as does a corporate structure, the Kingdom of God is not identified by its visible presence. Jesus can announce that *“the Kingdom of God is within you”* (Luke 17:21) because His Spirit is within all who are born again. The collective body of those filled with His Spirit are *His temple* (1 Corinthians 6:19; see also 2 Corinthians 6:16), not an edifice made by man. And, wherever one who is born of His Spirit is, Jesus is right there within seeking to save the lost through that person’s yielded obedience.

[For more on the Hebraic background role of the shepherd/teacher, download our Hebraic Article: *Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations* <Restorationministries.org/pdf/hebraicArticles/ProducingGodlyGenerations/ProdGodlyGen_EntireFile.pdf>; or our book, *Pastoring By Elders*: <Restorationministries.org/pdf/books/pbe/PBEntireBook.pdf>]

The apostles, prophets, evangelists and shepherd/teachers who are being raised up today are not speaking at people from behind pulpits or in front of large audiences of strangers.

“But just as He Who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy’”
(1 Peter 1:15,16, apperceived from Leviticus 11:45)

Have you ever wondered why the spiritual power so prominent among the first followers of Jesus is so rare today? Our Lord Jesus promised that His own

would be doing greater things than He (John 14:12). So consider this: There is so little spiritual power manifested today because of the widespread toleration for unconfessed sin among those who claim to be “Christian.”

Throughout the Bible, holiness and righteousness are the parameters for all who would fellowship with our Father. The *imputed righteousness* which all who are born of the Spirit have in Christ is our justification before our Father. But Scripture also makes clear the distinction between living *righteously* and *unrighteously*.

In order for our Father to answer our prayers and release His mighty power, we must live righteously, repenting and confessing our sins so that our fellowship with Him can be restored: *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9).

What does living as a “righteous person” mean in your relationship with your heavenly Father? He will *hear your prayers*.

“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and His ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil” (1 Peter 3:12).

“The LORD is far from the wicked but He hears the prayer of the righteous” (Proverbs 15:29).

“The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16).

Maintaining personal and communal righteousness in the lives of the first followers of Jesus got them noticed as the Father answered their prayers. This warning made perfect sense to them: *“Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us”* (Hebrews 12:1).

Sadly today, a false gospel that perverts God’s gift of grace into a license to sin shipwrecks the faith of many. Living in delusion that because they repeated a prayer in their youth and are therefore “saved”, many live no differently than those ruled by their sin nature—because they *are* still enslaved to sin (1 John 3:6-8). Intentionally going on sinning and refusing to turn from it keeps our Father from revealing His power and might in their life (1 John 3:9,10).

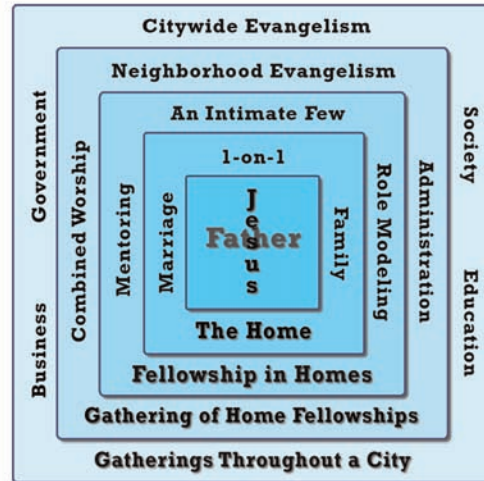
The “revivals” in past generations in which the Spirit of God manifested Himself mightily came as a result of widespread repentance. People responded to the Spirit’s conviction, turned in their heart from their sins and gratefully received forgiveness and cleansing from the Father through the atoning blood of Jesus (1 John 2:1-6).

How desperately today we need the righteousness which repentance produces in order to have spiritual power! Discipleship without spiritual power is pointless, an academic exercise involving a faraway historical Deity. Teaching the Bible without spiritual power being revealed through a Spirit-filled discipler discredits our Father Who loves to display Himself through answering the prayers of the righteous!

The Bible testifies that our Father does mighty acts in response to the prayers of those who live righteously in their obedient trust. But keep in mind that it’s hypocrisy to *teach about* spiritual power if it isn’t being revealed through the discipler.

“They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number

daily those who were being saved”
(Acts 2:46,47; see also Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 1:2)



As our Father finished revealing to us the Hebraic foundations which He wanted restored, He gave us a vision of His *relational priorities* (see diagram above). These priorities begin with the center as foremost—*Jesus and our Father*—and grow less in importance toward the outside of the diagram.

Essentially, all other relationships you have in the Kingdom flow out of the righteous fellowship you have with our Father and His Son, Jesus (1 John 1:3). Then that righteous living flows into the relationships in your home. God had purposed for authentic fellowship to take place in people’s homes among the Hebraic Stream *before* the coming of Jesus. Through their interconnectedness with one another they were a support for individuals and families in maintaining righteousness. Fellowship in homes was already part of their faith practice; that’s why this personal interaction and one anothering occurs in Acts 2 and throughout the Newer Testament.

The primary goal of the extended spiritual family within a home fellowship was to maintain **communal righteousness** among individuals and families so that their lives might display the power of the Spirit at work in and through them. In other words, the home fellowship was a community of righteous people—people who lived repentantly and were conduits of the Good News of Jesus as a lifestyle of reconciliation with the Father and intimacy in Christ.

Our Hebraic forefathers who first put their trust in Jesus were well aware of the horrific cost of violating God's ways: the accounts of Korah's rebellion (Numbers 16:30-35), Achan stealing the devoted things (Joshua 7:1-26), and David numbering his troops (1 Chronicles 21:14) impacted more than just the guilty party. These Jesus followers clearly understood that God held the whole community accountable for one person's sin, whether a family, a clan or a nation.

Our God sees His family *communally* in their relational responsibility to each other in Christ. Again, that's why most of the commands in the Newer Testament are given in the plural. Communal responsibility is also why Paul uses the parts of the body as a metaphor to explain the *mutual* necessity for using spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12:11-27). And it's why the apostle uses the plural when he writes, "*continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling*" (Philippians 2:12).

This collective accountability hasn't changed in our Father's sight. The first followers of Jesus knew their Father wouldn't hear their prayers if one of their fellowship family held onto unconfessed sin. They met in homes in close relationship so they could help each other remain repentant as they confessed their sins one to another (James 5:16).

You may be a repentant person, eager to remain in close fellowship with our Father and His Son. But if you fellowship with those who hold onto unconfessed sin, your prayers will be hindered because you are ignoring the pattern Jesus set in Matthew 18:15-17 regarding unrepentant sinners. As a result, your Father will not reveal His power and might through you.

Father planned for fellowship in homes to involve small enough numbers so people can know each other well. That way, through mutual accountability His children can help one another remain repentant and see Father work mightily in their midst. How would they recognize if there was unconfessed sin among them? *Their prayers would go unanswered.*

Our Father's children enjoy testifying about Him as He reveals Himself in His loving power! The account of Peter's supernatural release from prison in Acts 12 is an example of what He can do when the communally righteous gather as family in Christ in one another's homes.

You may be wondering why the whole principle of upholding communal righteousness among faith families has largely disappeared. Again, the Hellenist "Church Fathers" pushed for ecclesiastical control through meetings in public buildings equipped with pulpits, pews and steeples. Professional clergy and religious ritual replaced relational intimacy, communal righteousness, and spiritual power.

Church history also discloses that the Hellenist "Church Fathers" introduced the concept that an individual's sin had no impact on anyone else who may have known about it but kept silent. Refusing to acknowledge the collective responsibility for righteousness that's found in a Hebraic understanding and is revealed in

the Newer Testament, the Reformers continued to emphasize the *individual* who sinned—separate from others who are in his life. Even today’s evangelism methods isolate the individual as an entity unto himself, focusing on the singular person instead of the whole of his family or relational sphere as Paul and his followers did.

[You can learn more about the relational priorities of the diagram by downloading a free copy of *Restoring the Early Church, Section 3: The Early Church-Born Again*—

- The Cornerstone: *Jesus*
- The Building Block: *Families*
- The Support System: *Neighborhood Home Fellowships*

<Restorationministries.org/pdf/books/rtec/3.RTECSection3.pdf>]

The primary goal of the home fellowship family was to maintain communal righteousness among individuals and families.

“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved” (Matthew 9:16,17)

If you consider yourself to be born again, then Jesus has called and empowered you to make disciples as He did. If you have no heart to do this, then consider that perhaps you haven’t been born again, or that demonic forces within strongholds in your soul may be hindering you (2 Corinthians 10:4). Remember,

the first authority Jesus gave when He sent out the twelve and then the seventy-two was to deliver people from demonic attack and agitation. Many in Christendom suffer under the influence of demonic strongholds in their soul which deter them from making disciples as they go through life and encounter others.

[You can learn more about freeing yourself and others from demonic influence and oppression by downloading a free copy of our workbook, *Demolishing Strongholds*:

<Restorationministries.org/pdf/books/dms/DemolishingRevision.pdf>]

People should encounter the embodiment of the character and power of Jesus in you wherever you go. In so doing, they will see your Father revealing His power and love through you in the pattern of those who make disciples as Jesus did.

If you’ve been churched for any length of time, then take the admonition of Jesus seriously: become a *new wineskin* filled with *new wine!* You can’t patch the Hebraic foundations and the way our Lord would extend His Kingdom through you onto any Hellenist practices or points of view you may have. They are mutually incompatible!

Our website, **Restorationministries.org** contains video, audio and written materials you can freely use in this transformation process. Turn to the Spirit of Jesus for guidance and power to make the changes. And think of the ultimate joyous welcome in His presence when you have been a vessel of spiritual power for Father’s might and love to be poured out through you during your life!

You have been called out of the world’s ways and goals to embrace the trust-filled, obedient way of life of Abraham, a way of life Jesus exemplified.

His purpose was to equip His followers through His Spirit to make disciples. And when He returns, shouldn't this be our epitaph?

"In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like Him" (1 John 4:17).

