

Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations

**Training Succeeding Generations To Follow Jesus
Is An Inter-Generational Responsibility**



***“So that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life”
(Deuteronomy 6:2).***

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Introduction

**Why are 77% of the children raised
in “churched” families abandoning Christianity?**

**Why is youth work considered less
than 3% effective in helping young people
follow Jesus as Lord of their life?**

**Why is the divorce rate among “church-goers”
higher than that of people who don’t attend services?**

Our heart’s desire in this material is twofold: to help you find some life-changing answers for your family and fellowship family; and, to help you restore to your own faith walk the way of Spirit-empowered life that the earliest followers of Jesus experienced!

Many of the issues we discuss and propose emanate from our research on the earliest Church in 1993-94 in Jerusalem. Out of our continuing investigation have come a variety of books, articles, and video and audio materials to help people who would serve their King in loving obedience in His Kingdom.

Throughout **“Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations”** we’ll refer you to these different references. We encourage you to explore these materials to help you decide for yourself if the information we propose is biblically and historically verifiable. Or, we invite you to download for free these materials plus numerous articles and newsletters from our website: <Restorationministries.org>.

Now, please press on, because...

This is a Call to Take Action!

A vital pair of ingredients is missing in most expressions of western Christianity today: First, intimacy with God and with fellow followers of Jesus — the kind of righteous, load-bearing fellowship which characterized the earliest church. Second, Holy Spirit power that propelled this family in Jesus into action. Today’s followers of Jesus need these to be restored in their own lives and in the lives of their families and fellowship family! Through the Hebraic Restoration our Father is

revealing those facets of faith practice which the earliest followers of Jesus so eagerly embraced in their daily lives.

The information you're about to read in "Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations" expands on the material we present in our video series, Jesus In Your Home, particularly as it applies to God's purpose for fellowshiping in homes. This article is intended to equip you to discuss with others the truths you're reading. What we propose isn't a gimmick or fad but a way of life that was normal for our Father's children!

You'll need to seek for yourself the conviction from the Holy Spirit to discern if what we're presenting is truth from our Lord. In order to restore collectively the purposes for fellowship that were first revealed to the Apostles, your discussion and participation with others is essential. You can't do this alone and hope that your good intentions will bring about transformation in your life!

We're writing specifically to individuals and families who yearn to walk with the same foundational considerations of our earliest forefathers in the faith — men and women who stood their ground in Jesus in the face of the despotic Roman Empire.

But, there's a cost to this kind of foundational walk:

To experience relational intimacy and spiritual power requires courage to question each and all faith practices in which you and your family are involved. Our Lord is calling you to personally establish biblical applications

that align with His goals and objectives.

[For more on developing your own biblical applications, see our book, Christian Halakhahs.]

So much stands in the way of followers of Jesus restoring what our Father has ordained for His children. But God's timing is critical! What He is restoring coincides with the fulfillment of Jesus' prophetic promise to the Israelites: "Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled" (Luke 21:24).

Jerusalem was given back to the Israelites in 1967, and at that time a wonderful outpouring of the Hebraic foundations of the earliest Church began.

[Further discussion of the Hebraic foundations is found in Chapters 1 through 4 of Restoring the Early Church, a free download on our website. Also, click on

Hebraic Articles: “A Comparison of the Hebraic Restoration and the Jewish Roots Movement.”]

The more you examine our research on the early Church, the more you’ll be dismayed how far modern Christianity has drifted from its foundational moorings.

Hellenism: The Language of Satan’s Kingdom

The earliest followers of Jesus resisted the pagan Hellenist influence that in time came to dominate organized Christianity. By the late second and third centuries, however, numerous Greek philosophers (commonly referred to as “Church Fathers”) converted to Christianity.

For the most part virulently anti-Semitic, these men of influence adamantly hurled down the Hebraic foundations that had been embraced by the earliest Church. Their substitute? Pagan Hellenist practices which they mandated for the Church. (We’ll discuss this more in Part 1, “The KINGDOM of God vs. The Kingdoms of Satan.”)

Rather than endeavoring to understand the Hebraic roots of trust-grounded obedience in one’s relationship with a very personal Lord or why followers of Jesus fellowshiped in homes, Hellenists tried to reconcile neo-Platonism with the Bible. Plato’s doctrine divided creation into the holy and pure spiritual realm and the loathsome and detestable physical arena. Through this mindset, church leadership mandated that only those who had been separated out from the rest of common society were worthy enough to approach an unreachable God. Thus was initiated and perpetuated a clergy system of individuals who were far removed from the life and concerns of the “layman”.

Tragically disregarded and even denounced were the Hebrew Scriptures, which flow with images of a God Who interacted openly and freely with ALL His people. In contrast the Hellenist would ask, how could a holy God Who separated Himself from the earthly affairs of life lower Himself to reach out to sinful mankind? A “holy intermediary” — a priest — was therefore necessary.

The writings of the Hellenist Church Fathers convinced many that Christianity had emerged out of a spiritual vacuum rather than as a continuum riding on the crest of fulfilled Hebrew Scripture prophecies. Through nullifying the Older Testament, Hellenist/ Platonic thought birthed the myriad of pagan-origin religious and liturgical practices still exercised today by most segments of Christianity.

The vast majority of religious practices found in western Christendom today have no biblical foundation! Rather, they spring from pagan Hellenism. Tragically, people have grown lethargic and complacent in their communal repression yet have no idea that God didn't intend this situation!

[For more on the insidious influence of Hellenism, see Restoring the Early Church, Chapter 5. "The Loss of Our Hebraic Roots: Christianity's Response to the Jews", and Chapter 6. "Greek Philosophy in the Church: How Did Plato Displace God?"; see also Pastoring by Elders, Chapter 2. "Nicolaitanism, Repression of God's People."; and our Hebraic Article, "I Hate Nicolaitanism."]

The timing of the restoration of our Father's purposes for His people is all the more crucial because of the ever-increasing decadence and ungodliness blanketing Christendom in the United States. Many with prophetic gifting have warned that this nation has already been judged. God's chastisement will come so that people will turn from lawless rebellion and humbly cry out in the name of Jesus. But no matter how dark it gets, those who have placed their loving-trust in Jesus can prepare now to be light in the darkness.

A Word For Grandparents And Parents

We'll be examining the impact of humanism on public schools in Part 2, "Whose Kids Are They?" Humanism, the daughter of Hellenism, is a government-sponsored religion purposely designed to create controlled conformity to godless values.

[For more on the influence of humanism. see Part 2 of this article, [Appendix A, "The Humanist Manifesto."](#)]

Why is this topic so urgently pertinent to this time in history? Government-sponsored godless education has brought about the needless loss of so many children who were raised in Christian homes but have chosen not to follow the faith of their parents. As we shared earlier: 77% of children raised by American Christian parents depart the faith when they leave home. Studies have shown that Christian parents, even with the help of Sunday schools and youth groups, are losing the battle against the humanist influence that permeates public schools through humanist-trained teachers and godless textbooks.

[For insights on family responsibility, see Restoring the Early Church: Chapter 9. “One-on-One: Marriage” and Chapter 10. “One-on-One: Parenting.”]

It's important that you understand the demonically-subjugated culture in which we now live. Civilizations from the past which have fallen to this country's current level of decadence have never recovered.

[See Part 2 of this article, [Appendix B](#).]

If you take your faith seriously, it's time to consider the vital steps you need to pursue now for both yourself, your children, and your grandchildren. Know this:

Humanism is the religion that's taught in government-sponsored schools. Human-ism, the daughter of Hellenism, places man, not God, at the center of all things. The reality of the Almighty is denied.

You can't undo the indoctrination that's accomplished by public education to infect your child with Humanist values.

Are you aware of this?

Hellenism has fostered the rampant lawless apostasy in Christendom in the US. God and His Word are no longer authoritative. Few acknowledge that God has any viable impact on their daily lives or decision-making or lifestyle.

Rather than loving, obedient service to God, man and his desire for happiness, self-fulfillment and personal achievement are the focus of most religious programs throughout western Christendom.

Now is the time for fathers of all ages to cooperate together to fulfill their responsibility to God in preparing the generations to follow:

“So that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged” (Deuteronomy 6:2)

For too long, men have operated outside the Word of God, outsourcing their wives and children for others to spiritually train. Today over 2/3 of divorces in this country are initiated by wives. Christian men, this is the true fruit of failing to fulfill all your Scriptural responsibilities.

Men can no longer excuse themselves and hope to be welcomed with a “well done” at the Judgment Throne. Together, without a lot of fanfare, brothers in

Jesus can cooperate in Hebraic-style home fellowships to be the men our Father desires and can use to raise up godly generations.

It's especially important that you understand the critical need to restore fellowship in homes as extended spiritual family — a fundamental pattern of the earliest church.

[We'll discuss this more fully in Part 3, "The Relational Connectedness of the Early Church—Spiritual Tribalism"; in Part 4, "Our Father's Goals and Objectives"; and Part 5, "Preparing Succeeding Generations to Follow Jesus."]

A Word For Seniors

Older men and women, you may be retired from your vocation, but you can't retire from your family responsibilities! This is especially true of your spiritual family:

[Jesus] replied to him, "Who is My mother, and who are My brothers?" Pointing to His disciples, He said, "Here are My mother and My brothers. For **whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother**" (Matthew 12:48-50).

Your role to mentor succeeding generations was indispensable in the earliest Church. God holds you responsible to leave behind you a legacy of godly generations.

You older men of wisdom were the **pastors** of the early Church! You were once our Father's instruments in helping to produce successors in the faith. The third and fourth century Hellenists introduced young, educated-but-inexperienced professional clergy. This wasn't God's doing! He is now restoring older men back to their rightful role as shepherds/pastors of His faith communities.

[See our book, **Pastoring by Elders**, for more on this.]

Older women, today's young wives need you to teach them how to love their husbands and families through the wisdom you've learned over years of experience:

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children (Titus 2:3,4).

Divorce that's initiated by women is rampant in Christianity today. And, a number of Christian ministries are actually encouraging wives to leave their husbands so that they can be "happy" and fulfill their "spiritual potential". If you don't help younger women to truly worship their Lord by faithfully loving and serving their husbands and children, who will?

Today's snare of retirement offers seniors ease and purposeless relaxation. But it's allowed the grandchildren of today to be drawn into levels of depravity unseen since the civilizations of the Greeks, Romans, and the Dark Ages. But our Father has wonderful plans for you if you'll embrace your responsibilities and discover what He can do with and through you! In His restoration, you older people are pivotal in restoring the Church He called out two millennia ago for His Kingdom.

Encouragement For All

Everyone has a part to play in the restoration of family-style home fellowships that depend on personal involvement as community. No one is a spectator! The fruit of embracing the Covenant Gospel that was received and lived out by the earliest Church is a desire to empty yourself of yearning for personal, soulish gratification. Then, through obedient trust in His power at work in you, you can love and serve both God and mankind for His praise and purposes.

[For more on this topic, see our Hebraic Article, "[The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to Salvation](#)".]

Are you fearful or unsure that you can follow this narrow path? Cast those fears aside! None of this is going to happen without your prayerful dependence on our Father. We're not establishing a new program or a denomination. Our Father requires your dependence on Him in order to use you! As you call out to Him and lay your own inclinations aside, the indwelling Holy Spirit will produce in you the loving sacrifice that epitomized our spiritual forefathers — the men and women who first chose to wholeheartedly follow Jesus.

Now let's move on to search out how you can walk in the fellowship of love-grounded obedient trust in His Kingdom.

Part 1

Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations

The KINGDOM OF GOD vs The Kingdoms of Satan



Introduction to Part 1

A vast battle of kingdoms rages all around you. Because of our limited human horizon, though, you aren't always aware of it. Yet, the Bible urges you to choose the KINGDOM of God over the kingdoms of Satan. Too many think that because they call themselves “Christian” or attend church services, they’ve already made their choice. This false assumption often traps well-meaning people into thinking they are citizens of God’s KINGDOM, when, in fact, they’re serving Satan.

The KINGDOM of God is evidenced first in the rule that Christ has in your heart as your Lord and King. In a sense, where God rules, He sets up His government. Who He is, how He thinks, and His purposes become a part of you as He dwells in you through His Holy Spirit.

Your life in His KINGDOM has little conformity to this world. When you trust wholly in God and in His rule as His beloved child, you become a vessel of His power for His love to grow and manifest itself.

Satan’s kingdoms are his influence over all the governments of this world. God cast him down to this earth and, for the time being, the dominions of this world are his. This is why, if you truly love our Lord and want to be found faithful in Him, you must be careful where you place your trust and dependence.

This issue is far more important than what creed you embrace or what congregation you attend. Where, or in whom, you place your trust is where all your other motivations will emanate from.

Trust in God allows Him to establish His KINGDOM in your heart. Your ongoing trust in Jesus and your growth in the character of Jesus are your assurance of your welcome on the “day of salvation” at the Judgement Throne.

Placing your trust in any of the kingdoms of Satan is like a married man who keeps a lover on the side. His adultery is a pathway to death.
Judge for yourself: Is your trust only in the KING of KINGS?

Part 1

The KINGDOM of God vs. The Kingdoms of Satan

Can people really be governed in their hearts by God and His Word? One of the strongest tenets of Scripture holds that our Lord intended that government on earth be Theocratic; in other words, that God be our ruler and King.

The Older Testament lays the foundation for God to individually and collectively rule His people, the nation of Israel. However, as history has demonstrated, yielding to the Kingship of God was as difficult for them as for the rest of mankind!

Throughout Scripture only a few, a remnant, have ever been able to relate to God as He has revealed Himself: our Lord as well as our Father in heaven. He has shown Himself through His Creation and His Word to be omniscient, omnipresent, all-powerful, eternal, full of love and compassion, just and yet merciful. He rewards those who earnestly seek Him, and punishes those who reject Him. In all of this He is King.

Let's personalize this idea. Theocracy is first and foremost the rule of God in your heart. God's rulership begins in your inner person, where the Spirit of God begins to change your nature to conform to His character:

The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love Him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live (Deuteronomy 30:6; see also Colossians 2:11).

God's Theocracy in your heart increases as your sin nature is circumcised and replaced by the nature of Jesus. His Theocracy calls for the simple trust of our father Abraham: "What does the Scripture say? 'Abraham trusted God, and it was credited to him as righteousness'" (Romans 4:3). This is the backbone of the Hebraic Restoration — your complete trust in our heavenly Father, and evidencing that loving-trust in a life that glorifies Him.

The Rebellious Attempt To Define God

Rather than yielding to God's Theocracy, generations of men have tried to define Him under the guise of "theology". Defining God according to human reasoning keeps Him from being recognized as Who He really is!

God warns those who would diminish Him with a man-reasoned definition, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isaiah 55:8,9).

He is beyond human comprehension, yet many rebellious people try to confine Him within a theological box. If man can reduce God to someone who can be understood, then He can be manipulated and controlled.

This is the method of empirical science — to study, understand, and finally, control. And, it is the undeniable method of many deceived theologians. This approach, however, will never work with God!

Let's remember with humility the real nature of man:

The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. . .The Lord smelled the pleasing [sacrificial] aroma and said in His heart: 'Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood' (Genesis 6:5; 8:21a).

The merciful ways of the God of the Bible are wondrous and incomprehensible. He enables His people to be "with Christ, and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). At the same time He tells us that "you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you" (1 Corinthians 3:16). How can anyone get a grip on God, and how He can make these things happen?

Unlike the kingdoms and governments of man, the KINGDOM of God is not easily seen, for "the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21b).

His KINGDOM is spiritual —
ruling the **heart** of man and enabling you
to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus.

The Israelites of old were as willfully blind as many Christians are today in their lusting after idols. They manufactured images to suit their concept of a god. For example, while Moses was seeking the true God on the mountain, the people were carousing around a golden calf. Be warned! Worshiping a god that pleases you but isn't the God of the Bible is dangerous. Three thousand idolatrous Israelites were struck down by the Levites, while others perished by plague. (See Exodus 32:27-35.)

Can the rebellious worshipers of today who have made God into their own image expect any less consequence?

- Before you read further, would you describe yourself as “Kingdom person”, or a “churched person”? Why?
- Is your own faith walk defined by your creed, your denomination, the congregation you attend, or on your daily service in representing King Jesus to the world? Explain.
- How intense is your desire to be more like Jesus in love and motivation? Describe yourself. Have those who know you well describe you.

Our Father Loves Because It's Within His Character, Not Because We Deserve It

Picture the faithless foolishness of the Israelites. Dissatisfied with the protection and provision of their Heavenly King, the elders approached the prophet Samuel to demand that God appoint for them a monarch like those of other nations (1 Samuel 8). Once again manifesting stiff-necked rebellion and stubbornness, Israel turned their back on the One Who had so mightily demonstrated His love for them.

Count how many times expressions of God's love for His people show up in this passage, and His mercy for those who love Him:

The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face (Deuteronomy 7:7-10).

God not only kept His promise to the Patriarchs to bring the Israelites out of Egypt; He then revealed Himself as their uniquely personal God: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery” (Exodus 20:2).

Our Covenant-giving and Covenant-keeping God promised Israel His personal leadership and protection in exchange for their love and obedience to His

commands. Covenant, that is, to live in union with, is God's way for people to experience Him in their lives. The Israelites vowed to keep His commandments, and He would keep His promises to them. Quite a simple relationship if His people submitted to Him!

Yet, ongoing human rebellion has made this covenant of love difficult to keep, even for followers of Jesus today.

[See our Hebraic article, The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to Salvation, for more on how you can live in covenant union with our Father through Jesus.]

Elders Lead Faith Families Who Represent Father's Loving Concern For His Children

Up until the crisis point of rebellion outlined in 1 Samuel 8, God ruled every Israelite individual, family, clan and tribe. His rule was coordinated through the elders. Elders, or *zaknim* (zahk-NEEM, singular zaken), were highly regarded, gray-bearded family leaders who had acquired wisdom over the years and applied it to family situations.

[Our book, Pastoring by Elders, details the biblical role of elder, and his role in leading and guiding home fellowships in wisdom today.]

The collective leadership of the elders — their council — was based on family ties. Older, wiser men represented their families, clans and tribes at each level. Under God's watchful eye, authority in Israel rested within families led by elders who were esteemed for their age and wisdom. Note, however, that not all older men became elders. As an ancient sage wrote, some men remain "as advanced in their folly as in years."

All throughout the Older Testament you see the role of elders as they guided the people, applied God's commands, and enforced obedience. For example, when God sent Moses back to Egypt to free His people, He told him, "Go, assemble the elders of Israel" (Exodus 3:16).

The elders of the people made themselves accessible by sitting at the city gate, where commerce was conducted in the marketplace and travelers entered and exited. Not much escaped their notice in the community! As they represented

God and His Word, they applied His commands to particular situations. The elders had authority to make sure that for the good of the people, God's commands were carried out.

Both then and now: It is God's intent that elders represent Him and His standards directly in the affairs of His people. Prized as respected men of value to the community, these older men were probably unable to earn a living through labor, and were most likely supported by their families. In this manner they were available to serve the people with their wisdom.

Applying sCriptural truth to everyday decisions was key to maintaining peace in the community. For example, in Chapter 4 of the Book of Ruth, Boaz approached the elders to determine who had the right to be the "kinsman-redeemer" for Naomi's property. After hearing the case the elder council passed judgment that Boaz could marry Ruth and acquire the property. Their decision was known as a halakhah, a biblical application to a specific situation.

[For more about biblical applications, see our book, [Christian Halakhahs](#).]

Ever mindful of the good of the community as a whole, the elders served as the "court of last resort" to deal with hardened disobedience. They recognized that unconforted sin could infect others as surely as would a plague. This is the lesson behind the seemingly harsh command given in Deuteronomy 21:18-21, one which has never been recorded as being carried out:

- If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him [not a one-time act of defiance but a pattern of refusal to obey or to respond to discipline],
- his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. [This is a public affair because other young people will be affected by the rebellion if left unchecked.]
- They shall say to the elders, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a profligate and a drunkard.' [The parents realize they are ineffectual in correcting this son. Note that the young man is not a child but someone who is habitually drunk and shamelessly immoral.]
- Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid. [Decisions made at a local level can impact the whole nation with holy fear!]

Obedience to our loving Lord is crucial, even at the cost of family relationship or friendship. All too often sin is tolerated under the guise of “not wanting to be judgmental.” But God is a judge, and His commands are the standard by which He judges if our relationship with Him is authentic or mere lip service. Instead of ignoring sin, far better to turn an unrepentant person over to Satan to be chewed on so that his sin nature can be torn apart and his heart changed! (See 1 Corinthians 5:5.)

An important point worth repeating: A plurality of elders determined biblical applications for each situation. No single individual was expected to hear from God on behalf of everyone else. Boaz was able to address ten elders together to decide his case.

We get another glimpse of elder availability and esteem among the people in Proverbs: “Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land” (31:23).

Recognition of the weighty respect accorded to the decisions of elders was the foundation of leadership in the early Church. As we shall see, their pattern of council decision-making reflected tribalism as the relational connectedness of the early Church. Grievously, during the second and third centuries’ influence of Hellenism, the wise service of elders was replaced by a class of young, educated clergy who were devoid of the wisdom that’s gleaned from years of life experience.

**“God, the blessed and only Ruler,
the King of kings and Lord of lords”
(1 Timothy 6:15)**

If ancient Israel had NOT demanded an earthly king,
what role would the Nation of Israel today
have under the Kingship of God?

What if the Israelites had chosen to trust and obey their Maker and Husband, God? How would the mighty acts of God’s blessing and provision that were promised to Israel for its obedience have influenced other nations over these centuries? The living, evidential proof of God’s love and power would have been staggering!

Now consider what has happened to Israel since they rejected the Lordship of God. It hasn't gone well. As a follower of Jesus today, ask yourself:

Have *I*, like Israel of old, placed greater trust in anything or anyone (including myself or my government) than I have in God? If so, be warned. This is *idolatry*!

The consequences suffered by Israel are the same today for all who refuse God's rule in their life. To be Lord means that HE RULES. His right to rule your life is the underlying meaning of this oft-quoted verse:

“...the word about trust which we proclaim, namely, that if you acknowledge publicly with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and trust in your heart that God delivered Him from the dead, you will be delivered. For with the heart one goes on trusting and thus continues toward righteousness, while with the mouth one keeps on making public acknowledgement and thus continues toward deliverance” (Romans 10:8b-10, JNT).

Your pilgrimage with King Jesus is ongoing. Confessing His LORDSHIP in your life testifies to others that you have chosen to live in Covenant union with Him as His beloved bondservant. Your ongoing heart-trust declares to our Father that you are assured of His forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus as your sin-bearer.

Those who attempt to define God today have minimized the Lordship of Jesus by de-emphasizing His right to rule in favor of magnifying what they want, namely, getting “saved”. Separating the Lordship of Jesus from His role as wonderful Savior gives the rebellious an opening for disobedience and compromise with the world — spiritual adultery.

Haven't you met people who are knee-deep in sin but who nonchalantly believe they'll be accepted into Jesus' presence because they “went forward” when they were ten years old? What a tragic deception! Reread that Romans 10 passage above!

The Lordship of Jesus entails an ongoing awe of His holiness as well as a grateful heart for His mercy. If you are Kingdom-minded, what is truly in your heart will be evidenced by your life. If you really believe in your heart that He is Who He says He is, then His indwelling Spirit will stir you to serve Him as King and Lord, and bring praise to Him. On the other hand, if you look at getting “saved” as “fire insurance” that's been added to willful choices of disobedience, you'd be wise to turn NOW!

The Gospel of Jesus commands you to repent — to purpose to turn away from sin and to come to our Father for forgiveness and reconciliation. This is a love relationship that calls you through His Spirit to apply His commands to your life. Love that's accompanied by a holy and awesome fear of God as both Savior and Lord is a good and necessary starting point for your life in His Kingdom!

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding” (Proverbs 9:10).

“Appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have” (1 Samuel 8:5).

The Israelites issued to the prophet Samuel a demand for a government like that of the nations that hadn't been called out by God as His chosen people. The repercussions for that defiant act stretch far beyond the immediate effect on ancient Israel. Rejection of God's Kingship and His right to rule delayed until the fullness of time His Kingdom being extended to all the world through the people of Israel.

While Samuel felt holy anger, our Father was grieved: “Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected Me as their king” (1 Samuel 8:7).

Can you imagine the sorrow of God? He had chosen Israel out of love, calling her His wife, His cherished possession. Time and again God had intervened to deliver and sustain them. Their response? They rejected Him as King. In place of His lavish love and protection, they wanted a human being. That willful insult to our Lord brought them generations of dispersion, captivity and slavery.

Many years later, through the prophet Hosea, God revealed His anger at their choice of a human king: “Where is your king, that he may save you? Where are your rulers in all your towns, of whom you said, 'Give me a king and princes'? So in My anger I gave you a king, and in My wrath I took him away” (Hosea 13:10,11).

While God did in anger yield to their desire, His response clearly depicted the consequences of rejecting His Kingship. A cursed string of self-indulgent, evil-bent rulers plagued Israel. All of the sorrowful consequences prophesied by Samuel had come to bear upon the people “who wanted a human king.” And as history has proved, any nation that puts their trust in earthly governments rather than in God will reap a whirlwind of affliction. This is what has been going on in the United States since its founding.

Centuries later Jesus came to manifest for Israel once again the nature of His King-dom. Again focused on earthly government, the Israelites ignored their need for the rule of God in each heart. Rejecting the KINGDOM, they killed the holy Messenger King.

Human Kings and Presidents Are Satan's Pawns of Power

Mankind in power not only embodies the rejection of God's Kingdom but also thrusts a nation straight into the dominion of Satan. Do you question who claims ownership of earth's kingdoms? Recall the encounter between the devil and Jesus during His forty days in the wilderness. At the close of that testing time, "[Satan] took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 'All this I will give You,' he said, 'if You will bow down and worship me'" (Matthew 4:8,9).

Jesus didn't question the devil's right to the governments of this world. Instead, He reminded Satan that God alone is to be worshiped as Lord, whether in heaven or on earth. "Jesus said to him, 'Away from Me, Satan! For it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only'" (Matthew 4:10).

True worship of God comes from a loving, obedient, Theocratic heart that yearns to live in His Kingdom and lovingly serve your King's purposes. And, His Word assures us that the Holy Spirit is able to work powerfully in your yielded heart so that the rule of God can reign in your innermost being.

As you apply His Word to your life in grateful obedience, a character transformation takes place. You become more and more conformed to the image of Jesus.

[Learn more about this transformation in our 2002/12 Newsletter, "[Acquiring the Character of Jesus](#)."]]

When God rules your heart, you are safe in His keeping no matter what trials you face. If you're dwelling in the palm of His hand, you can see God in every life encounter.

Your will becomes entwined with His will, and your life choices reflect that union. He meets the desires of your heart because His will has become your will!

The Nature of Satan's Kingdom

Satan's dominion is always at war against God's Kingdom. At one time Satan enjoyed the heavenly presence of our Lord as His servant. But arrogance and

rebellion overtook his devotion to God. Isaiah describes Satan's expulsion to earth:

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart [the motivation that leads to actions], 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, [the very place from which King Jesus will reign] on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High (Isaiah 14:12-14).

Some scholars feel this passage deals solely with the king of Babylon. However, the pride and presumption that brought about that ruler's downfall mirrored the arrogance that had taken place in the heavenlies long before.

The Revelation to John confirms both Satan's positioning on earth and the target of his wrath: "The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels [known as demons] with him" (12:9). His particular target? "Those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (12:17).

Through Satan's dominions on earth, deceit and subterfuge ensnare God's people who are not watchful. In particular the devil uses earthly governments in his battle against "those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus."

A follower of Jesus must be cautious and spiritually discerning in placing his trust in any government programs and institutions.

By enticing you to place your confidence in earthly governments, Satan will try to undermine your trusting obedience to God's commands. One devious battleground in which the devil is hard at work is through compulsory public education. On this battlefield of the war he has created generations of rebellious people who are totally ignorant of and unconcerned with God's laws.

[We will discuss this more fully in Part 2, "Whose Kids Are They?"]

Paul foretold this present time to the Hellenist-enveloped believers in Thessalonika:

“Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness [one who disregards the worth of God's teachings in His commands] is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. He will oppose [through all those town and school ordinances that forbid any reference to Jesus through display or artwork] and will exalt himself [humanism] over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, [lies that even churchgoers believe!] proclaiming himself to be God” (2 Thessalonians 2:3,4).

Remember Isaiah's description of Satan's motives? “I will make myself like the Most High.” Paul apperceives that same arrogant plan of the law-less: “He sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.” The motivation of god-lessness in the schools is clear:

If Satan can gain control over the minds of the young, he can influence the generations to come to ignore God as irrelevant. In that void, he himself will be exalted in their lives.

Have no doubt about Satan's goals. The governments of the earth belong to his kingdom. Through these governments he competes for the glory that only God deserves. The very curse that God placed on the Israelites of old has landed on all other governments in which trust in man is greater than trust in God.

This concept becomes clearer as you examine 1 Samuel 8:5-20. The Israelite demand for a human king was a boast to God that “we can take care of ourselves.” They evaluated God by the standards of the nations and their idols, and found Him wanting. By rejecting His position as Lord over them, the Israelites believed that they could confine God to their religious forms and observances — and compromise with the world around them.

Many in Christendom today are similarly deceived. They put on their Sunday-best faces for religious services, then shelf God until the next time they sit in the pew under the steeple. Generation after generation has tried to stuff God into man-made “theological boxes”. Then our Almighty just as diligently explodes the parameters of each system of religious thought!

Because our Creator has endowed humanity with free will, mankind is bombarded with two opposing absolutes:

- (1) the vast unfathomable characteristics of God that are on display throughout nature to testify to His greatness.**
- (2) the rebellious hearts of descendants of Adam and Eve who refuse to see.**

If it weren't for the presence of the Holy Spirit, how many more of us would construct our own golden calf to worship? Are you among those who quench and grieve the Holy Spirit by placing your confidence in earthly governments rather than God? Beware! These are Satan's domain.

Don't Forget!

God Knows Everything

A large segment of Christianity denies God's omniscience, presupposing that all throughout history God has somehow been caught by surprise. Man's actions have somehow thwarted God's will; therefore, God must react to man's disobedience through an alternate plan.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Even when Israel demanded a king, for instance, God knew beforehand. His command years in advance to Moses detailed His plan for the people:

- When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, 'Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,' be sure to appoint over you the king the Lord your God chooses. [As a king goes in his relationship to God, so go the people.]
- He must be from among your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner [one who has followed other gods] over you, one who is not a brother Israelite. [It's important to maintain our spiritual identity as belonging to God!]
- The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt [the "good old days" mindset will only lead to disobedience] to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, 'You are not to go back that way again.'
- He must not take many wives [marriage is supposed to reflect the spiritual union of covenant you have with our Father], or his heart will be led astray [the flesh always wars against the spirit].
- He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold [independence and lust for material goods blinds you to your need for Jesus. For a leader, such hunger leads to higher taxes and plunder of the people].

- When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself [make sure you yourself are in the Word and hearing from the Spirit! Don't chew on predigested or stale, lifeless teaching] on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites.
- It is to be with him, [don't hide your Bible on a shelf] and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere [a lifelong process] the Lord his God and follow carefully [deeds must accompany the reading or you relegate the Word to the status of a history book] all the words of this law and these decrees
- and not consider himself better than his brothers [servant leadership puts you at the bottom to come alongside with others rather than lord power over them] and turn from the law to the right or to the left [rationalizing away God's Word with a "that was then, this is now" excuse does not justify your sins].
- Then he and his descendants [Are you concerned for the spiritual well-being of your descendants?] will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel" [Because of disobedience, this didn't happen! Are you willing to have the buck of responsibility stop here with you?] (Deuteronomy 17:14-20).

In this passage, God emphasized the appointed king's responsibility to keep His commands. He wasn't surprised by their failures, because as the God of eternity He saw their rejection coming! The commands He gave the kings could only be kept if they came to Him with humble hearts and cried out for help. Even the first three kings of Israel — ones to whom God showed great favor — stumbled into glaring unrighteousness:

- King Saul lost his kingdom through outright disobedience and rebellious pride (see 1 Samuel 15).
- King David was a murderer and adulterer. Then, "Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel" (1 Chronicles 21:1). Satan enticed him to put his confidence in the size of his army. Pride again reared its face! God's response: "This command was also evil in the sight of God; so He punished Israel" (21:7). God's plague of punishment cost 70,000 individuals their lives. Despite these shortcomings, however, David kept his kingdom because he was repentant when God convicted him.

- King Solomon violated God's commands by explicitly returning to Egypt for both goods and a wife: "Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt" (2 Chronicles 1:16a). "King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter" (1 Kings 11:1a). And as God had warned, the king's lust for women turned him away from devotion to the one true Lord: "They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, 'You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.' Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love . . . and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been" (1 Kings 11:1b-4).

Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived, yet something went desperately wrong in his decision making. Through his son Rehoboam he left a terrible legacy of the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel because of his choice to forsake God to serve other deities. After a period of God's long-suffering patience, both kingdoms were destroyed. First the people of Israel, then those of Judah, were conquered and hauled off into subjugation.

Think about their captivity for a moment. Was that the foreshadowing of churchgoers today who are in bondage to demonic strongholds because they have forsaken (or never even appropriated!) devotion to Jesus as the LORD of their lives?

Or, is this self-imposed bondage of disobedience and disbelief why God intends to chastise this nation — because so many blindly place their trust in the government rather than Him?

[See Lifebyte 34, The Abrahamic Covenant— Groundwork For The Hebraic Restoration, and Lifebyte 40, Do You Confront For Jesus? Or, Placate For Satan? for more on tolerated iniquity and sin within Christendom today.]

Beware of Those Who Say, "Give Us A King!"

In a sense, when the Israelites demanded a king, they were erecting their own Tower of Babel. Observing the way the pagan nations around them approached and appeased their gods, the Israelites wanted the same structure. And just as the Babel builders were scattered to all points of the world, in time, so were the Israelites. Their idolatry separated them from God's presence and from His land.

God's people today need to learn from these errors. As Paul warned, "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come" (1 Corinthians 10:11). Don't ignore the lessons of the past!

When those Israelites demanded a king that day, the consequences were felt all throughout history to the present. Except in countries where followers of Jesus are experiencing persecution, people are continuing to put their trust in government rather than in God. But realize this: Governments, for the sake of their own survival, put their trust in armies.

Today, to their own detriment, both the United States and Israel depend on their military might and technology to save them. Refusing to repent and fall upon Jesus for mercy, these nations have chosen military might for their protection and deliverance. The lessons of the past have fallen on deaf ears.

We haven't learned. Prophetically this era represents another period of showdown between God and Israel as well as God and the United States. In whom will the people trust, God or guns? Satan's domain, that is, his governments on earth, compete with God for the loyalty and trust of the people. Whom will the remnant choose?

Where we place our trust is mirrored in the response of the kings of Israel, who indeed needed ears to hear. The humility of heart called for in II Chronicles 7:14 is a keen example of God's faithful intervention:

If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Some indeed responded in humble trust. King Jehoshaphat chose to focus on the power of God rather than the might of his army. We're told, "The fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of the lands surrounding Judah, so that they did not make war with Jehoshaphat" (2 Chronicles 17:10).

King Hezekiah, another ruler of Judah, had been faithful to the ways of God. Without hesitation he and the prophet Isaiah cried out to Heaven to confront their enemy invader (2 Chronicles 32:20). That plea brought forth both immediate victory and future intervention! Because they humbled themselves and sought the Lord, He "sent an angel, who annihilated all the fighting men and the leaders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king. So he withdrew to his own land in disgrace. And when he went into the temple of his god, some of his sons cut him down with the sword" (v.21).

The rulers who put their trust in themselves faced judgment. And as the leader goes, so go the people. In the case of wicked King Joash, God chose to chastise him through a minor enemy: “Although the Aramean army had come with only a few men, the Lord delivered into their hands a much larger army. Because Judah had forsaken the Lord, the God of their fathers, judgment was executed on Joash” (2 Chronicles 24:24).

Humble and loving obedient trust in God — the path He has ordained for His people — brings His protection, provision and blessing. Trust in man, on the other hand, births consequences no one can bear.

Consequences of Disobedience

Choosing a man to be king brings a multitude of painful consequences. Govern-ments cost money to maintain, and manpower to serve kingdom interests is expensive. Here, the prophet Samuel speaks for God:

This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons [they’re no longer available for family endeavors] and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots [as mouthpieces for the king’s glory]. Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties [positions of responsibility demanding long-term commitment], and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest [while their own harvest is diminished for lack of workers], and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots [manufacture of materials that don’t put food on the table] (1 Samuel 8:11,12).

In order to keep himself in power, a king needs a standing army. As we shall see in Part 2, governments with standing armies must compete with parents for the loyalty of their children. The children are the target of government indoctrination through public education to serve the State’s purposes. The State can’t allow parents to carry out the full biblical responsibility to their children that the Word calls for. Why not?

To be mighty in military power the government must enforce compulsory public education. Through this means they can gain domination over the thought and value systems of each generation, a direct assault on biblical parenting.

To ensure its ongoing survival, governments must develop weapons ever more deadly and destructive. And when the nation is not at war, weapon makers can export them for profit to kill countless people in other nation's wars.

A frightening fact: The godless military power of the US stands unchallenged in the world arena — though many nations are trying to change that dubious distinction. This reality is turning this land into an arrogant rogue nation. In today's "New World Order", individuals and families lose many personal rights. The government is gaining control through fear tactics just as the Nazis did. Fear tactics are well-entrenched in the US already. Fear is behind the readiness of many to give up personal freedom and put their trust in the government.

The exercise of government rights over you and your family doesn't stop with buttressing the military establishment.

He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers [and who knows what else...]. He will take the best of your fields [confiscation of the best land for "government need"] and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants [political favors and payback]. He will take a tenth of your grain [your taxes] and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. [Government officials line their own pockets with hefty pensions.] He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves [The truth: You exchange your freedom of biblical responsibility in Jesus for the bondage of state security.] (1 Samuel 8:13-17).

Government of the people, by the people, for the people serves an insatiably hungry machine! The incredible increase in taxes sustains a standing military force. Ever many more people are required in government administration to keep the system running. Government service employees don't contribute to the production sector of the economy. Therefore, their needs in the market place drive up prices for everyone else.

In order for the system to exist, the government must ensure that the majority of its employees attend government-sponsored schools. Although not put in these terms, children are taught that their first loyalty is to their country to maintain their way of life. By that indoctrination the government system can be sustained.

Our Father warned that there would be a time when the people who put their trust in government would eventually cry out to Him, but in vain:

When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day (1 Samuel 8:18).

Keep in mind, the human rule that the people have asked for has placed them under Satan's domain on earth. Oppression is the hallmark of the devil's government. Even if the people come to their senses and see the depravity of their demand, they are bogged down in the quagmire of self-focus and hunger for instant gratification.

Rebellion always pushes too far.

“But the people refused to listen to Samuel. ‘No!’ they said. ‘We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles [because we don’t want to trust in the mighty God of power who has so miraculously intervened time and again. What if He doesn’t go ahead of us?]’” (1 Samuel 8: 19,20).

As it always is: When the “king” declares war, your sons and daughters die. Trust in self-dependence rather than God-dependence makes a glaring statement: Man doubts the ability of the Creator of the universe to take care of all that He created. This is an attack on God's character. The Bible as well as history reveal that sins against God's character bring the most dire consequences. God takes the idolatry of man's rebellion as a personal issue.

Now contrast the Godless man-centered kingdoms of the earth with the KINGDOM saints esteemed by our Lord: “And without trust it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6).

No government organization has motivated the men and women over the centuries who have eagerly forsaken compromise in order to lovingly serve their King.

These individuals have been so sold out to Jesus that whatever our Lord desired they did obediently. Their Kingdom was not of this world, for they were seeking the City and the reward that God was preparing for them.

This is the way of those who serve in God's Kingdom on earth. His loving followers fulfill His purposes here, not trusting earthly governments in areas which impede their ability to obey our Lord and His Word.

“When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider:
God has made the one as well as the other” (Ecclesiastes 7:14a).

Alarms have sounded since the inception of this nation. When the thirteen colonies were still part of England, Professor Alexander Tyler warned:

A democracy cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves money from the public treasure. From that moment on the majority always vote for the candidates promising the most money from the public treasury, with the results that a democracy always collapses over loose fiscal policy followed by a dictatorship. The average age of the world’s great civilizations is two hundred years. [emphasis added]

We’ve mentioned in other writings that the United States is in the Atomistic Stage of societal meltdown. Everyone is out for themselves. No culture has ever come out of this stage. Bondage and dictatorship are our future.

[See [Appendix B](#) at the end of Part 2 for more on the Atomistic, Trustee, and Domestic families in civilizations.]

To warn His children, our Father often uses difficult times to get us to stop and consider. Often throughout the Bible our Lord orchestrated famine, plagues and wars to deal with His people.

For instance, “During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the Lord. The Lord said, ‘It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeon-ites to death’” (2 Samuel 21:1). King David sought God for His reason for the famine. And true to His character, God revealed His purpose.

God spoke through the prophet Amos that it is He who sends, drought, mildew, plagues and war. But God’s solemn appraisal of man’s response? “‘Yet you have not returned to Me,’ declares the LORD” (see Amos 4:8-11).

We do have a longsuffering God, but He does chastise so that people will humbly repent and return to Him. As Scripture so repeatedly demonstrates, He is capable of becoming angry when people become exceedingly depraved in their sin and ignore His warnings.

A Lesson From the “Great Depression”

Early in this nation’s history, government officials called for repentance and fasting when difficult times occurred. But in the past hundred years such calls have all but disappeared at the government level. (Although the past decade has found officials publicly urging prayer to the god of their choice...)

During the 1930’s, a time of famine and financial desperation seized this land. In response President Roosevelt enlarged dependence on the government by passing Social Security and other socialist-style programs. Rather than leading this nation in repentance, he established the bondage of government debt.

The trend has continued unabated. The government borrows to support programs in one generation which will be paid for by succeeding generations. If you talk with any retiree or welfare recipient, you’ll discover just how dependent on government provision people have become. But who pays for it? Their children and their children’s children.

Let’s look at an alternate perception of the Great Depression. God was chastising this nation because it pursued extreme decadence and greed during the 1920’s. Previous economic recessions in this nation had followed periods of widespread unrighteousness. But through bold exhortation by those dedicated to God, and even through presidential pleas, repentance and fasting were called for, and God relented from His chastisement.

People who understood the times, as did men from the ancient tribe of Issachar, recognized the Lord’s hand and issued the call to turn from sin:

- When I [GOD sends catastrophe to get people’s attention] shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among My people [even Christians face catastrophe],
- if My people, who are called by My name [not outsiders or the worldly but those who claim to know Him!],
- will humble themselves [we have to choose to change our hearts and put our independence on His altar]
- and pray and seek My face [seeking His FACE means calling upon Him as LORD, not just looking for solutions to immediate problems]

- and turn from their wicked ways [God won't answer the pleas of those who continue to hold onto their sins and iniquities],
- then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin [the key issue here]
- and will heal their land [the land had suffered because of the people's choice to sin]" (2 Chronicles 7: 13,14).

[For more on understanding the current times, see our prophetic article, "[A Time for the Men of Issachar](#)", under Hebraic Articles on our website.]

Back to the 1930's. Repentance, not government programs, would have brought about a different outcome for all of us today. At that critical point in time, people faced a choice: to turn to God or to submit to Satan. The devil, under the guise of a benevolent government, won their allegiance. Again, consider the last century and the explosive growth in dependence on government programs.

Since there was no repentance, the Great Depression of the 30's was followed by World War II in the 40's, the Korean Conflict in the 50's, the Vietnam War (and strident, divisive protest on many fronts at home) in the 60's and 70's, and hostilities in Kuwait, Afghan-istan and Iraq for the past two decades.

These conditions of strife have sprung one upon another in quick succession. This land is not hearing God's call to repent. The sad testimony of the twentieth century is this:

Not a single generation in the US could proclaim that they hadn't lost their sons and daughters in battle.

On the other hand, our Lord tells us:

"When a man's [or a nation's] ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies live at peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7). This certainly doesn't reflect the history of the United States over the last hundred years. A nation that pleases Him is assured, "For the Lord your God will bless you as He has promised, and you will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you" (Deuteronomy 15:6).

Do you know? The United States is the now the largest borrowing nation in the world. We rob other nations of available funds that could be used to help their own desperately needy. The combined personal debt of US citizens is greater

than the gross national product of many nations of the world. Americans, many in Christendom included, borrow to maintain the pleasure-bent lifestyle we have presumptuously assumed is our due from God. That debt will collapse on us all before too long! When it does, will we then learn to repent?

With the sting of the Great Depression and the carrot of a pleasure-bent retirement that's been dangled before so many over the decades since the 1930's, generations have been seduced away from their family and social responsibilities. Older men and women could have achieved the pinnacle of loving service in the Kingdom of God. By making themselves available to guide their families and faith communities, they would have role-modeled for the younger generations the Kingdom of God at work.

Today, like Gideon's ephod (Judges 8: 27) which became an idolatrous snare to Israel, government programs such as those begun in the 1930's have become social viruses. A virus comes alongside a cell and says, "I am just like you." Then the virus takes on the responsibility of the cell, ultimately overwhelming the cell and leading to its death.

Government social programs operate like viruses. Through seeming benevolence, government programs assume responsibilities for the people, ultimately removing Christians from their biblical mandate of exercising care for others.

As we shall see shortly, this was especially true in the move to make compulsory public education the law of the land. Sadly, so many Christian families have fallen for Satan's ploy.

Shall the throne of iniquity [corrupt government], which devises evil by law, have fellowship with You?

They gather together against the life of the righteous, and condemn innocent blood. (Psalms 94:20,21)

Summary of Part 1

A battle rages all around you between God's KINGDOM vs. Satan's dominions. One represents the loving service of a devoted heart. The other relies on man's rebellion.

If you choose to put your trust in earthly government, you must give up your personal freedom to gain a shaky, worldly security. Governments purchase favor

in order to stay in power. There is always a “ruling elite,” even in a democratic society.

After David was anointed as God’s choice for king, Saul felt threatened. Enlisting the support of his inner court, King Saul re-minded them how he had shown them favor: “Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds?” (1 Samuel 22:7).

Appealing to their self-centered framework, Saul dangled property and power before them in exchange for loyalty. It’s no different today in the political arena. Positions of prestige and power are the currency in Satan’s domains.

David’s adultery with Bathsheba warranted the death penalty. Secretly, Joab was assigned by the king to see that Uriah, her husband and the king’s faithful warrior, was killed. David’s nasty little secret was not hidden from God, however. It’s within His righteous character to faithfully make sure that sin’s consequences stand as a warning to others. Earthly governments, on the other hand, do whatever is necessary to survive in power, regardless of morality and ethics.

If you reject the Theocracy that’s offered by our Father, you are proclaiming to the heavenlies and to the world this rebellious message:

“We will serve the domains of Satan rather than the Kingdom of God. In this way we will be like God. We will look to the government as our provider and as the teacher of our children.

We will box God into religious services of our own choosing and design to please ourselves. We will not permit His Kingdom to rule us.”

In God’s KINGDOM you receive personal security through the freedom Jesus offers by His Spirit and in His commands. His Kingdom is the rule He extends into your heart. He sanctifies you from your old sinful nature by putting you into situations and encounters that stir you to make decisions to obey Him — to be more Christ-like.

The more your character resembles Jesus, the more freedom you have. Our Father yearns for the older generations to train up their children and grandchildren by word and deed to walk in His life. His Kingdom beckons grandparents, parents and supportive faith communities to raise successors in the faith who will live to trust and glorify Him.

The primary issue of accepting the Kingdom our Father offers is relational trust in Him. You need to know Him in the way He has revealed Himself in the Bible. If you make the decision to follow Jesus as LORD, you must forsake the idolatry of

bringing Him down to the constructions of your own vain imagination. Make sure that Who He is and who you want Him to be match up!

- What is your opinion of the form and integrity of the government of the United States?
- Describe in whom or what you place your trust. List the various ones in order of importance to you.
- What is your view of retirement? How does the concept of retirement align with God's Word?
- How are you using (or how would you use) your post-employment years for Kingdom purposes?
- Are you willing to ask our Lord to make known to you whatever changes He would have you make in your current lifestyle or time use?

Part 2

Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations

Whose Kids Are They?



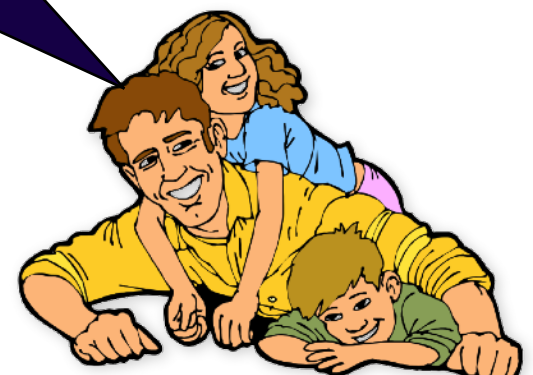
How do public schools cause the children from Christian homes to fail to follow their parents in the faith?



How did the government usurp parental responsibility



**Is there a way for Christian parents to overcome the godless pursuit that public schools are teaching our children?
YES!**



Introduction to Part 2

One of the most significant battlefields of the KINGDOM of God vs. Satan's domain has been the education of this nation's children. Satan's domination over public education has been overwhelming.

Christian parents never anticipated the insidious strategy that Satan has been slyly implementing behind the scenes. For over two hundred years the adversary of humanity's soul has slowly been making changes in the goals and motivation of public education. His ultimate purpose? A godless society in which his tool, the State, would be the provider of mankind's needs and the lord of their lives.

As you read "Whose Kids Are They?" you'll gain insight into the history of compulsory public education and how the influence of parents, especially fathers, has been diminished in children's lives. Be assured that the information we uncovered exacted an emotional toll from us.

As we researched, the goals and plots of people who portrayed the government as "benevolent" were beyond our comprehension. This was systematic evil that lay unchallenged by most Christians, since they were oblivious to its impact. You could parallel the insidious goal of compulsory public education with the Nazi takeover of Germany.

"Whose Kids Are They?" is pivotal for you. We hope you'll be convinced that as a follower of Jesus you need to do something to rescue succeeding generations of children being raised in Christian homes from the snares of compulsory public education. If you're unsure after reading this, please do your own research. You may need to grieve as we did when the truth becomes real to you.

Biblical Parental Responsibility Has Been Usurped by the State

"So what's wrong with public schools?" you ask. That's what we're going to expose in depth in "Whose Kids Are They?".

If you're the product of compulsory public education, you probably believe that a good service was done on your behalf. From the standpoint of helping people achieve a measure of worldly success, that may be true. But from a biblical standpoint, compulsory public education has been a chief tool in creating a godless society.

This hasn't happened overnight, or even in the past generation. The goals and motives of public education have not changed dramatically from the late 1700's to today, even if the moral values and textbooks have.

Over the last two hundred years the goals of public education and the motives of those who pushed for it in this country have undermined the responsibility of God-fearing parents to raise their children to love and to serve Him. The true goals of compulsory public education have been hidden from the population under the guise of benevolence — “we're teaching your kids to be good citizens.”

Government-sponsored education has proved to be the most effective means to enable the “dark king” to continue to rule. Through government-sponsored education the kingdom of Satan continues its domination over the minds of the people — therefore their world view and perception of themselves.

This point is critical if you're to understand why this nation has not become “one nation under God”: No one can serve both God and Satan! And this is the key choice for any who want to raise up successors in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Satanic goals and motives over the last 200 years have undergirded the creation of a powerful, godless society in which the State is god — the supreme provider of all things — and its citizens are imprisoned in the bond-age of perceived “rights”.

Compulsory Public Education: Extending Satan's Domain

Before exploring how compulsory public education became the tool of government, you need to understand the mindset of those who underhandedly made it the law of this land. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, was an early proponent of state-controlled education. He captured the prevailing attitude of the educators of his time:

Let our pupil be taught that he does not belong to himself, but that he is public property. Let him be taught to love his family, but let him be taught at the same time that he must forsake and even forget them when the welfare of his country requires it. . .

He must be taught to amass wealth, but it must be only to increase his power of contribution to the wants and needs of the state (excerpted from Sheldon

Richman's book, *Separating School & State: How To Liberate American Families*, emphasis added).

When it was first conceived, compulsory public education was resisted in many parts of the colonies. Studies have shown that the literacy rate was higher in many colonies preceding the American Revolution than it is today.

What are the goals of public education? We don't mean the public relations statements that so many Christian families have been deceived into believing, but the real goals articulated by the elite who made education both public and compulsory.

Sheldon Richmond's exposé on the history of compulsory public education reveals two major thrusts:

- The aim of compulsory public education was the creation of a homogeneous, national, Protestant culture. Actually, the main focus was to destroy Catholicism. Over the years, even the Protestant ethic became undermined by secular government indoctrination. Remember, the State must survive at all cost, and uniformity of thinking is vital for survival. It's ironic that the Humanist Manifesto signed in 1933 [and reaffirmed in 1973] propagated religious Humanism and destroyed Protestantism in the public schools.

- The State requires "Good Citizens" to perpetuate its control. A good citizen is someone who unquestioningly trusts and defers to government in all areas. These two goals are inseparable, because State dominance can't be brought about without controlling the thinking of the individuals who comprise it. Beginning with the New Deal of the 1930's, Social Programs have cooperated with compulsory public education to accelerate government dominance. (From *Separating School & State: How To Liberate American Families*, emphasis added.)

Throughout history, rulers of Satan's domains have aspired to use the educational system to shape their nations. One of the earliest, if not the first, full-blown state educational systems was hewn in Sparta, an area now known as Greece. The Spartan state was organized as one vast military camp. The children were seized by the state and educated in barracks to be indoctrinated into the ideal of state obedience. Sparta early realized the logical and inevitable end result of a compulsory education system — military power!

The Spartan model was studied by the Greek philosopher Plato, who was to have massive influence on both church and government systems. Passive obedience to the State was Plato's ideal. His work entitled "Utopia" was the first

model for State-supported compulsory education that promoted blind obedience to the State.

Mandatory public education represents the perfect opportunity to propagandize future citizens early in their lives. Beginning in their earliest years, children can be taught to have proper reverence for the ruling elite, and to become willing taxpayers and soldiers for the “king’s” army no matter which political party they choose. They can also be influenced to value their self-esteem focus as their right to separate themselves from the protective authority of their parents.

The “compulsory” part of public education is the vital link to make all of this happen. If children were free to attend private schools or to avoid public, tax-sponsored schools, the State's effort would be in vain.

A certain level of toleration for private schools and home education exists in this country. However, general opinion of either of these models varies from “elitist” to off-the-wall. Parents who submit their children to private or home schooling are either wealthy, religious fanatics, or bigoted isolationists, according to conventional wisdom.

The State's sinister goals are always disguised in benevolence. Universal public education has actually been an insidious effort to legally kidnap children to subvert loyalty to their parents. Remember, the State is Satan’s domain. He is always out to destroy the children just as he did the infant boys in ancient Egypt and Bethlehem.

The patriarch Abraham was chosen by God because He knew that Abraham wouldn’t “outsource” his children: “For I have chosen him, so that he will direct 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).

Abraham took personal responsibility for the outcome of the faith and vocation of his family. The Scriptures hammer home the responsibility of fathers and mothers to train up their children. Weigh our Lord’s commands to parents as you understand the goals of the State to separate your children from you: “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, [you] bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

From Sparta to the United States

Scholar Murray N. Rothbard has written extensively about liberty, economics and education. Many of the facts we present here come from his book, *Education: Free and Compulsory*.

We can thank the Protestant Reformation for introducing compulsory public education into the modern era. Theirs was a well-intentioned, simple goal. The Reformers advocated compulsory education for all as a means of inculcating the entire population with their particular religious views.

Martin Luther proposed compulsory public education in his 1524 letter to the German authorities, the very year the first modern public schools were founded in that nation. Luther repeatedly called for other communities to establish public schools and to make attendance in them compulsory.

A century later, John Calvin set up mandatory schools in Geneva. He used these schools to eradicate dissent to his brand of theology.

The purpose of compulsory public education was to indoctrinate citizens into the official religious outlook.

The Calvinist theological backdrop introduced compulsory schooling to this continent. The English Puritans who settled New England were strong Calvinists, and it was their influence that brought about public schools and compulsory education. From there, a sinister collusion among the educated movers and shakers made it mandatory in the whole United States.

As you study the Humanist Manifesto of 1933 and its 1973 revision (included in Appendix A at the end of Part 2), remember the motive of “religious indoctrination”.

Humanism as embraced by the public education system in the US is a religion that negates the one true God. Ignoring His very existence in a system that holds your child’s mind captive for six hours a day over the course of 13 to 17 or more years sends an undeniable message that He really doesn’t matter in daily life.

In 1717 King Frederick William I of Prussia introduced Europe's first national system of compulsory public education. Through public education his son, Frederick the Great, brought about the greatest military society since the Romans. His clear motto: “The prince is to the nation he governs what the head is to the man; it is his duty to see, think and act for the whole community.” The most despotic State in Europe — Prussia — was the first to have a national system of compulsory education.

Step for step beside the compulsory school system came the creation of powerful standing armies. With the armies came universal compulsory military service. Remember the curse of 1 Samuel 8?

A battle cry of compulsory public education is this:

- “Loyalty to the State,
- service for the State,
- education by the State.
- The State is the supreme end.”

How Public Education Overcame Free Thinking

American advocates of compulsory state schooling observed the Prussian system and adopted it as their model for public education in the United States. Former teacher John Taylor Gatto has researched the history of Prussian influence on public education in this country.

1. The purpose of public education was not intellectual training, but indoctrinating the children to obedience and subordination to the State, and dependence on their peer group.

2. Memorization was esteemed over individual thought and reason. These educators feared free thinking. They couldn't permit a young person to pursue courses of study that permitted his/her individual investigation. Entire ideas were therefore fragmented into school subjects. School days were divided into fixed time periods so that self-motivation to learn would be quelled by frequent time interruptions.

3. The State was exalted as the true parent of children. The school represented that which was considered good for the nation. Therefore, anything that would represent conflicting ideas needed to be squelched — even if those ideas were planted by concerned and involved fathers and mothers. (emphasis added)

All of this was done under the guise of “government benevolence”.

Government Benevolence: A Trojan Horse

During the early to mid-1800's a closely aligned group of educators tirelessly pushed compulsory public schools to the forefront. This same group, under a variety of names, continues to dominate primary and secondary education to this day. To achieve their aims they cooperated to influence and dominate state and local boards of education.

Today this powerful affiliation is known as the NEA, the National Education Association. Through various means of lobbying and pressure they have managed to impose their standards on state certification requirements for teachers. No one can teach in a public school who doesn't undergo a course of teacher-training instruction that propagandizes their philosophy of education. And as we mentioned earlier, humanism is the foundation for teacher training in secular colleges and universities.

Teachers and administrators who advance the agenda and goals of the NEA are retained and accelerated. These individuals are rewarded with tenure to entrench the influence of godless domination and the government-backed intimidation of parents.

Throughout the years the main premise of educators to make compulsory public education the law of the land was this:

Parents could not be trusted to raise children of high character. The government knows better than parents in matters of morality for the good of the nation.

Of course, morality and ethics are well within the grasp of a biblically-based family to instill in their children. In every respect the public school has worked to remove parental influence over their children. Cries from teachers for parental participation notwithstanding, the involvement that is being sought is inculcation of government-ordered subjects and relativistic values.

Sociologists at the end of the 1800's argued that with the supposed decline of religion's influence on community and family, the state needed to exercise control over its citizens, especially the young. One sociologist, Edward Ross, summarized the thinking of the time.

“As the state shakes itself loose from the church, it reaches out for the school. . . Copy, the child will, and the advantage of giving him his teacher instead of his father to imitate, is that the former is a [government] picked person, while the latter is not” (from Sheldon

Richman, “Separating School & State: How To Liberate American Families”, emphasis added).

Throughout the 1900’s public educators gained such influence that they could intimidate anyone who objected. Their boldness and confidence was demonstrated as they signed the Humanist Manifesto in 1933. This widely accepted document asserted that man rather than God is the center of all things. [As noted earlier, see Appendix A at the end of Part 2 for discussion of the influence of the Humanist Manifesto on ethics and morality.]

John Dewey, chief designer of the Manifesto, stressed that no fixed principles exist. Personal ethics are dictated by the situation rather than by any absolute principles given by God. Man decides the rules he’ll live by, not God. Over time, Dewey’s position led to dependence on the peer group rather than the parent. After all, according to Dewey’s premise, the “absolute values” of the parents were irrelevant and even harmful to their children!

None of this, of course, represented the society that was distinctive to America's revolutionary heritage. The original American idea of society entailed a group of people who as individuals freely chose and pursued their own ends within a rule of Bible and common law. Biblical absolutes were essential if people were to serve God within a moral and ethical framework. The Founding Fathers of this nation presupposed that such would always be the underlying basis of American society.

Modern educators operate far from the assumption of our nation’s founders. William H. Seawell, professor of education at the University of Virginia, announced in 1981, “Each child belongs to the state.” Amazingly, reports Sheldon Richman, there was no public outcry. The past two hundred years had already seduced people into acknowledging the State as “god”. With the power of government behind compulsory public education, who would dare speak up?

Public educators today share one overriding principle, whether consciously or not. Their participation in the system evidences their assent:

The school should be the mechanism through which the state, run by the intellectual elite, would shape the youth of the nation. In a word, the schools' business is

indoctrination. (Sheldon Richman, Separating School & State: How To Liberate American Families, emphasis added)

A Wakeup Call For Christian Families

From Sparta to Prussia to the United States, proponents of compulsory public education believed they knew better than parents how to raise children.

In light of the godlessness of that pursuit, the central concern for the followers of Jesus should be to biblically define the role of individuals, families, and faith communities in their relation to the State.

This calls for a more stringent look at how the earliest followers of Jesus raised their children to succeed them. Once you're certain of your biblical stand, you can confront today's dramatic imbalance between family responsibilities and State seizure of those responsibilities. At this time State control seems to overwhelmingly prevail. But armed with the conviction of biblical foundations you can confront the State, and encourage those who've been previously intimidated out of educating their own children and the children of their faith community!

As they live out their biblical responsibilities, God's people can work out for themselves what is in the best interests of their children. Through His Spirit they can together seek ways to make their interests consistent with the common good.

Besides the historic and biblical basis to educate your own children, it becomes especially pertinent in this time of rising violence and declining values in our public educational institutions.

One of the falsehoods in particular cited by proponents of compulsory public education has proved to be false: that education would eliminate crime. This premise has certainly been refuted by the growing juvenile delinquency rate in compulsory-educated America, as well as in the types of crime that have been so violently committed by youth. (From Herbert Spencer, Social Statics, as quoted in Rothbard's Education: Free and Compulsory.)

Who Will Establish the Foundations for Your Children?

The key issue for you in this entire discussion is simply this:

Shall the parent or the State oversee the training up of the child?

Every child who enters the world faces a particular environment of his world around him and the people he encounters. Within this environment he experiences life through his developing abilities and the input of his family and others.

As he grows, your child works with and responds to his environment by forming goals and moral values. How his life turns out will be based on many factors:

- his own personality and abilities,
- the moral principles you instilled in him,
- his own particular preferences and tastes.

In other words, all of the knowledge and experience that has become part of your child helps to define him as an individual. Since each child has been created as a unique individual, the best type of education is that which is suited to his own particular individuality.

You're probably familiar with this verse, "Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it" (Proverbs 22:6). From ancient times this passage meant that parents should get to know the particular bent of their child. Then they can guide each one into a life goal and vocation that would glorify our Father.

Each of your children has different intelligence, aptitudes and interests that you as his parent can readily recognize. The best choice of when, what, and how to present what he needs to learn varies from one child to another.

Therefore, individual instruction by those who know your child best — you and your extended spiritual family — will be the most effective and the most likely to instill godly values.

Parental instruction that's supported by others who have a personal concern for your child(ren)'s welfare and growth is a biblical pattern. Individualized instruction as you deal directly with your child can adapt to his particular abilities and interests.

Who knows the bent of your child and his personality and the call of God on his life better than his own parents and others who are close spiritual family? Your familiarity with and love for your children render you uniquely qualified to give your child the formal instruction he needs. Your child can receive individual attention and training that suits the way God created him.

No one is as qualified as YOU to know what, how much or at what pace you should teach your child. And our Father has called on YOU to create the boundaries each child needs, and to determine what kind of freedom he should have to make decisions within your boundary framework.

Today's Fruit of Compulsory Public Education

Under the seeming benevolence of the State, the rights of children of Christian parents have been violated. The child has been entrusted into the unloving, humanist hands of the State, with little regard for his individual personality and your biblical values. The true intent is to instill godless foundations and make your child a passive, obedient citizen of the State and of Satan's kingdom.

While a number of dedicated Christian teachers do work in public school classrooms, their spiritual hands are tied by the stringent "godless" policies they're forced to follow. Even their desire to show the loving kindness of Jesus is hamstrung by policies that forbid physical contact or sharing of the Gospel that could bring forgiveness, comfort and healing to needy lives.

One of the saddest points of American history is the government's dealing with Native Americans. Stopping short of total an-nihilation, the government under the guise of "benevolence" used the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to indoctrinate the Native American and strip him of his unique heritage.

On many reservations government buses were sent to kidnap children from their parents so that they could be assimilated and mainstreamed into "American" society. Sadly, the BIA was accomplishing by blatant action what compulsory public education in this nation had been subtly doing under the guise of "benevolence" for generations.

Remember, for the State to continue its control, it must impose uniformity in its teaching approach. Unquestioning loyalty must replace spontaneity, diversity, and independent thinking if passive, sheep-like followers of liberal godless propaganda are to be raised.

This goal has been accomplished to a great degree in public schools by emphasizing a strong peer group consciousness versus the godly influence of

parents and the Spirit-given desire and will to stand decidedly for Jesus. Second, emphasis on sports and competition (even academic) elevates a few for acclaim while the rest are left in the pack of anonymity.

The indoctrination of self-pursuit, self-esteem and sexual experimentation are foisted upon the young by public school authorities. Each of these arenas nullifies any ideas about absolute values, even those which are strongly held by parents. An obvious example: Schools have instituted compulsory sex education, passing out condoms to inculcate self-gratification and “freedom” to pursue inclinations of the child’s sin nature. Even homosexuality has intentionally been presented at the earliest grade levels as an acceptable lifestyle. Any objections are dealt with as “intolerance” and “religious bigotry”.

Compulsory public education must destroy independent thinking and questioning. Therefore children are taught through memorization. Because teachers are forced to “teach to the test” and stress facts that will be required on standardized examinations, children have little opportunity to ask questions or develop systematic reasoning powers. Any extra class time is filled with discussion of self-esteem and peer consciousness and concerns of the “global village.”

As Rothbard has noted in *Education: Free and Compulsory*, in many cases grades have been abolished, particularly in the elementary years. However, grades help determine to what extent children have been able to learn. The result of teaching children of wide abilities as though they were equal has geared instruction to the lowest common denominator. There is little incentive to try to learn more than a classmate, even if the interest and desire are there.

Individuality is suppressed when children are taught that they must hold themselves back to accommodate the slowest child in the class. No longer is the question of right or wrong considered in any issue; the will of the majority rules. It doesn’t matter if your child has been taught moral absolutes and values at home. In the classroom, the opinion of the majority counts even if that opinion represents the lowest common moral denominator of the group.

Educators have relentlessly pushed to educate the child in all phases of life. This goal has passed onto the State all the functions that biblically belong in your home. Even if your children can’t be seized from you, they can be molded to government objectives: dependence on the peer group and obedience to the

State. In order for the State to remain beyond question, ethical, moral and biblical considerations must be abolished from the classroom.

Summary of Part 2

Compulsory public education has succeeded in removing God as the foremost consideration in the lives of most children.

Youth work in congregations has shown itself to be ineffective in countering the effects of government-sponsored education. Studies reveal that church youth groups are 3% effective nationally in training up children to have a personal relationship with God. Christian college ministries are only 5% effective in producing young people who actively follow Jesus even five years after graduation. Nationally, 77% of the children raised in Christian homes choose not to follow their parents in the faith.

The record of the development of compulsory public education is a history of State usurpation of parental responsibility for their children. It didn't have to be this way.

The Bible teaches God's people to respect their governments within the constraints of obeying God's Word. "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God" (Romans 13: 1). God doesn't intend for His children to be rebellious against authority, but obedient to Him.

The domain of Satan can't tolerate the KINGDOM of God in its midst. Paul warned that we must separate ourselves from the unholiness among us:

What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be My people. Therefore come out from them and be separate', says the Lord. 'Touch no unclean thing and I will receive you' (2 Corinthians 6: 15-17, apperceiving Leviticus 26:12, Isaiah 52:11, Ezekiel 20: 41,34).

Consider yourself warned: Don't put your trust, or your children, in any human system that denies or ignores God as the Lord of the universe, the One to whom all allegiance is due.

Our God encourages questioning and pursuit of truth. Questions are your steps that lead you to truth. Through questioning we develop the rules of life we will value as we go on. None of us put our trust in Jesus without questioning His reality and then responding to the grace extended to us by His Spirit. He promised, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 8:32). It's in our response to His Spirit that we can then have the heart and mind of Christ: "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 14:6).

In order to exercise control over the minds of generations, Satan infiltrated the educational process. Teaching techniques that hinder questioning and independent thought among children envelop their minds with a godless perspective.

The ultimate fruit of this sinister mind control is seen in the government-sponsored "Goals 2000" program in public schools, as well as the "No Child Left Behind" policy. They sound noble, don't they? Yet children are taught not to reason, but to remember specific facts for testing.

Often, history is altered to reflect political correctness and liberal agendas. English language studies are reduced to forums to express feelings through journaling. Multiple choice questions rather than thought-provoking essays comprise most testing. Ease of correction is the stated reason for these formats. But beware. Control of minds and obedience to Satan's domain is the real goal.

Before answering the questions below, first read Appendix A: Protect Your Children From Government-Sponsored Religion, and Appendix B: Cultural Characteristics Affecting the Restoration of Home Fellowships, on the following pages.

- Were you a product of public education? If yes, how has it helped or hindered your ability to live for King Jesus?

- If you are an older adult, how has public education changed since you were in school?
 - Were you aware of the goals of public education which we've highlighted in "Whose Children Are They"? How do they impact your heart regarding today's children?
 - Why do you think the government sees children's loyalty to their parents as a threat, even if it's not spoken of that way?
 - From Appendix B, in what family stage is this nation: Trustee, Domestic, or Atomistic? For a follower of Jesus, what family style is foundational to strong faith communities?
 - Are you willing to do whatever God commands you in order to see His faith communities restored? Are you willing to do whatever is needed to help raise Godly generations? What changes might He be calling you to make?
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Appendix A

Protect Your Children From GovernmentSponsored Religion

**"Education is thus a most powerful ally of Humanism,
and every American public school is a school of Humanism."**

Did you know that humanism is the religion of public education? In the lawsuit of *Torcaso v. Watkins*, 367 US 488 (1961), the US Supreme Court ruled that the "religion of Secular Humanism" should be granted the same First Amendment protection as other religions.

How does this impact your children/ grandchildren/faith family's children? The majority of public school educators graduate from secular universities steeped in humanism, feminism, and paganism. This indoctrination has become the foundation of their classroom instruction. Too many Christian parents have unwittingly entrusted their children to years of antiGod indoctrination. They've

deceived themselves into believing that Sunday school and youth groups would counter this influence. It hasn't! Fewer than 23% of children raised in Christian homes follow their parents in the Christian faith.

Read the tenets of the Humanist Manifesto, the guiding philosophy of government sponsored education. Judge for yourself whether your children, or for that matter, any children of Christian homes, should be entrusted to such a system. Prayerfully bring this matter before our Lord so you'll clearly know His will for your household.

Just like the Jews in the concentration camps during WWII who thought they were going into showers, many of us thought we were sending our kids to 'the showers' when we sent them off to governmentsponsored schools. In fact we were actually sending them to the gas chambers.

Just as lethal, Humanism is destroying the souls of our children and devastating our ability to raise up a Godly generation to succeed us.

HUMANIST MANIFESTO

John Dewey, recognized as the "father of progressive education", was the chief designer of the 1933 Humanist Manifesto. In 1932 he was elected honorary president of the National Education Association. Another honorary president of the NEA and signer of the Manifesto, Charles F. Potter, wrote in his book *Humanism: A New Religion*, "Education is thus a most powerful ally of Humanism, and every American public school is a school of Humanism."

In 1973, the American Humanist Association updated their declaration, producing the Humanist Manifesto II (HM II). Not much has changed in their intent:

"As in 1933, humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in the praye rhearing God, assumed to live and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded faith. Salvationism, based on mere affirmation, still appears as harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. Reasonable minds look to other means for survival."

The following will familiarize you with some of the basic tenets of the Humanist Manifesto and their updated corollaries (HM II):

- Religious humanists regard the universe as selfexisting and not created. HM II adds, Rather, science affirms that the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces.

- There is no credible evidence that life
• survives the death of the body. We continue to exist in our progeny and in the way that our lives have influenced others in our culture. (HM II)

- Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values.

- We find insufficient evidence for belief
• in the existence of a supernatural; it is either meaningless or irrelevant to the question of survival and

- fulfillment of the human race. As nontheists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity.

- Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful. They distract humans from present concerns, from selfactualization, and from rectifying social injustices. As HM II continues, We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.

- We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest.

- (HM II)

- Religious humanism maintains that all associations and institutions exist for the fulfillment of human life. The intelligent evaluation, transformation, control, and direction of such associations and institutions with a view to the enhancement of human life is the purpose and program of humanism. Certainly, religious... and communal activities must be

- reconstituted as rapidly as experience allows, in order to function effectively in the modern world.

- [Note that the purpose and program of humanism is to transform and control any expressions of religion other than their own viewpoint. The “reconstitution” they mention translates into removal of anything that would glorify God.]

- In the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. The right to birth control, abortion, and divorce should be recognized. [Under the guise of “toleration”, children are taught to disregard the biblical concept of family, and to pursue whatever “seems right in their own eyes.”]

- We have reached a turning point in human history where the best option is to transcend the limits of national sovereignty and to move toward the building of a world community in which all sectors of the human family can participate. Thus we look to the development of a system of world law and a world order based upon transnational federal government.

(HM II) [The world community touted here sounds suspiciously like the one world government/New World Order warned about by John the Revelator.]

Our Lord ordained for His people as extended Christian family to take communal responsibility for raising the next generation to follow Jesus. The time is coming rapidly when followers of Jesus can no longer afford to be twofaced about this. Just ask the 77% of Christian parents whose grown children who have not succeeded them in the faith. What we have written is a call to awareness and a call to action!

- From Appendix A, describe in your own words how you see religious Humanism undermining the tenets of the Christian faith.

Appendix B

Cultural Characteristics Affecting the Restoration of Home Fellowships

In our book, Restoring the Early Church, we cite Carle Zimmerman's text, Family and Civilization. The author provides unique insight into the disintegration of the modern family and church as he traces the typical development and eventual disintegration of the family in a variety of cultures. In most great civilizations, including Greece, Rome, and now the United States, the shifts in family relationships and in societal

attitudes toward the family follow a similar course. The shift to the atomistic family ultimately destroys the culture.

Zimmerman identifies three types of families, each of which predominates at various times in the life cycle of a civilization: the trustee family, the domestic family, and the atomistic family. The effects of Hellenistic humanism and its tenets have produced an atomistic culture in the US. On the other hand, biblical faith communities are analogous to the trustee family. This is an important consideration in the establishment of family style communities that collectively carry the burden for training succeeding generations to follow the ways of our Lord. To restore the family type faith communities of the earliest church, we who follow Jesus must be countercultural.

Trustee Family

- Great value is placed on the resources and truths that ancestors pass along from generation to generation.
- The governing authority is normally a patriarchal structure ruled by the oldest males.
- The input of all the relatives is sought when typical problems arise in each family unit.
- Family loyalty is held in such high regard, senior members function as the recognized disciplinary agents. They can demand obedience in a way that those outside the family or clan might not respond to.
- Divorce is rarely practiced in this type of family structure. Individuals are expected to subordinate their own interests to the greater interest of the family as a whole.
- The solidarity of this family type can be seen throughout the Bible and in the era of the Pilgrims and Puritans of early America.

Domestic Family

- This type occupies a middle ground between individualism on the one hand and absolute authority of the family on the other.
- Divorce is infrequent but does occur. A husband and wife assume major responsibility for raising their children according to the values that they believe are right.
- Parents undergo the pain of childbirth and trials of childrearing because they view their children as an extension of themselves.
- This type of family structure epitomized Greece and Rome at their height of trade and commerce. The subsequent decline of these civilizations occurred when the state took over the responsibilities that up until then had been assumed by the families and religious institutions. Up until the 1950's, this structure characterized the majority of American households.

Atomistic Family

- Ties within the family unit disintegrate, and obsession with individualism develops.
- Individual rights are emphasized rather than family responsibilities.
- Unabashed selfishness is normative.
- Cultures of this type experiment with childless liaisons and suffer increased divorce rates.
- Religious and moral mores have little effect on protecting the sanctity of the family.
- The individual, having no guiding morals, changes the meaning of freedom to license to do evil.
- Atomistic people resemble a swarm of antagonistic insects engaged in mortal combat.
- Commitments and responsibilities are looked on as infringements on personal freedom, disregarding the needs or suffering of others.
- Marriage loses its sanctity as a stable, committed institution. Adultery is accepted and even promoted.
- Feminist movements abound. Women lose their inclination for childbearing and nurturing. Daycare facilities replace intimate parenting.
- Public disrespect for parents, parenthood, and authority in general rises.

- Sexual perversion (homosexuality, rape, incest, pedophilia) moves from toleration to proliferation.

The home fellowship of the early Church is based upon developing a trustee-style family community, a point which we will continue to develop. Tragically, many people who desire to follow Jesus have been raised in Atomistic Families. Adept leadership is needed to help one another embrace a biblical lifestyle so that a godly heritage may be passed along to succeeding generations. But be warned! At some point those held captive by the atomistic culture will persecute those in the trustee family. Rebellion is the enemy of obedience.

Part 3

Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations

Spiritual Tribalism Is The Relational Connectedness of the Early Church



Introduction to Part 3

Sometimes you might think it's easier to just ignore the events going on in the world because your own life is so overwhelming. But our Father has called some of us to sound the alarm to awaken His people! Be sure of this: Alert watchmen aren't welcomed by those who want to retain power or status quo in their system, be it government or religious.

Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister of England two generations ago, warned his government time and again about the insidious power of Adolf Hitler. Did they gratefully receive his insight? No! He was ostracized by his countrymen.

Even when witnesses escaped from the concentration camps and traveled at great risk throughout Europe to reveal the reality of the gas chambers and death camps, few among either the citizenry or the governing authorities were willing to believe or intervene.

In each generation there is a handful who discern the nature of the evil around them and have the courage to voice the warning. Initially, only a few, a remnant, heed the warning and choose to take appropriate action.

Who are the ones today whose love for God and His Word arm them to take a stand against Satan's ploys? Please heed seriously the warning of God's Word: "Like a muddied spring or a polluted well is a righteous man who gives way to the wicked" (Proverbs 25:26).

Pragmatism, the concept that whatever works is justifiable, infuses both the government and western Christendom today. As in the corporate world, any means is acceptable as long as it sells. Neither the Hellenist/Roman church institution nor the State is concerned with whether their motives or actions are right before God. Government as well as institutional religious leadership are single-minded: maintain power by keeping the system running smoothly.

Masquerading as "benevolence", the government provides compulsory public education to divert the loyalty of children away from their parents. Sadly, many parents are satisfied to be relieved of their responsibility to raise up Godly children.

Paralleling government control, congregational leaders assume a husband/father's responsibility. They teach not only your children but also your wife! Far too many men compare themselves to the "educated" clergy or youth workers and find they fall short of their biblical knowledge. Therefore they're misguidedly glad to give over their families to be taught by the "professionals".

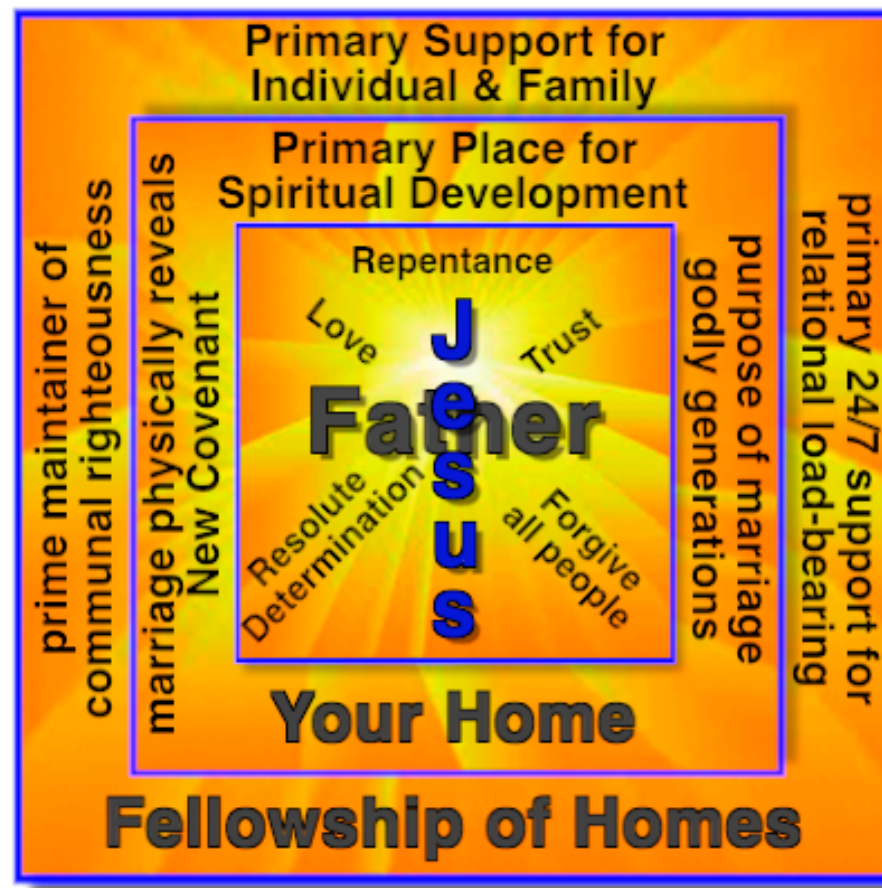
Most men have no idea of how heinous this forfeiture of responsibility is to God. Nowhere in the Bible is outsourcing our families supported. As you'll see in Part 3, the home, supported by the extended spiritual family of the home fellowship, is our Father's means of raising up godly generations.

Our Father is prepared to help His people regain what has been stolen. All you need is the conviction of David when he faced Goliath: "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied" (1 Samuel 17:45). With God as your focus, it just takes a precise pebble launched and empowered by His Spirit in you.

Don't despise those who enjoy religious entertainment that's emptied of conviction and repentance. Keep your eyes on the "Author and Finisher of your faith." To Him alone do you owe your allegiance! He's been waiting for some time for you to take your stand and begin to live as the Church He is building!

Part 3

Spiritual Tribalism Is The Relational Connectedness of the Early Church



Please examine closely the above diagram. It embodies the relational priorities of the early Church that illustrate the KINGDOM to which you belong. Look at it in the form of a tiered wedding cake. The top and most essential layer represents your trust-filled, ongoing Covenant relationship with our Father and Jesus through His indwelling Holy Spirit. Your ongoing Covenant relationship is critical to every other layer in the diagram.

Living in Covenant union with our Father under the Lordship of Jesus must always be the primary consideration in your motivations and in your actions. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3: 5,6).

When you trust in our Lord Jesus and receive His guidance, you accomplish far more than man's reasoning ever could. As the prophet Isaiah makes clear, our Lord's ways and His very thoughts are far beyond our finite ability to reason them out through mental effort (see Isaiah 55:8,9).

The Hebraic foundations need to be experienced as your response to His Spirit and His Word, especially your trust-filled relationship with Jesus our King. As you

live out His commands in an obedient trust that's grounded in love, you demonstrate a lifestyle of ongoing experience that evidences you belong to Him.

[For further detail see our Hebraic Article: The Gospel Of The Covenant Is The Pilgrimage To Salvation. Also, see Discussing How to Restore the Early Church, Lessons 24 thru 29.]

Note from the diagram that next in relational priority is your home, then your home fellowship of load-bearing, extended spiritual family.

[These two relational priorities are explored in Lessons 30 thru 50 of Discussing How to Restore the Early Church; and in The Home and The Home Fellowship portions of our video series, Jesus In Your Home.]

Congregations of home fellowships who gather periodically and congregations throughout your city are the fruit of the inner three priorities. Every faith community is linked by the Spirit to every other faith community of Jesus-followers in the world. The health of each fellowship is directly dependent on:

- Individual and communal abiding in union with Jesus.
- Spiritually healthy marriages and families.
- The determination of the fellowship family to fulfill our Father's goals and objectives.

When these three inner tiers of foundational relationships are healthy and fulfill their respective purposes as God would have them, much fruit can be born to the glory of our Father as His Kingdom expands through them.

Our Founding Fathers Sought Tribal Wisdom. Why Didn't the Church?

Were you aware that the men who were responsible for forming the foundations of the colonial government sought the wisdom of the Native people around them? Benjamin Franklin invited leaders of the Iroquois Nation to explain their system of tribal government and leadership to a gathering of Anglo leaders in Albany, New York. The Iroquois model helped the special delegation write "The Albany Plan of

Union”, which served as a pattern later for the Articles of Confederation and, ultimately, the Constitution of the United States.

The drafters of our Constitution embraced the Native form of elder leadership, which formed the basis to this nation being established as a republic.

Delve with us back into United States history. The Founding Fathers had warned repeatedly that the government of the republic should never become a democracy. As a republic:

- The best leaders at the local or regional level were elected as state legislators.
- The best leaders at the state level were selected to represent them at the federal level.

Leadership concern revolved around what benefited each representative’s section of the country as well as what was best for the nation as a whole.

A century later, with the advent of the popular vote — the cornerstone of democracy — politicians who appealed to the self-interest of the individual found themselves elected. The sense of connectedness with the rest of the nation’s needs and greater good was diminished as each man looked instead to how he might achieve his own special interest.

As this nation was formed, various expressions of Christianity battled among themselves about governing practices. Having only an organizational concept of itself and little or no relational foundation, European Christendom was divided by creed into many competing denominations. Hellenist thought and Roman organization had removed it far from its relational beginnings as extended spiritual family. Over the centuries Hellenist/ Roman leadership models have produced all manner of church government forms, such as:

- autocratic congregations in which clergy rule;
- virtual monarchies such as the papacy;
- democracies in the Congregationalist tradition.

The organizational, non-relational mindset of colonial Christendom was also non-tribal. Unable to see beyond Hellenist/ Roman forms of church government, leadership missed the relational beauty that God had revealed through the Native people. God brought Europeans to Native peoples who were already living out the Hebraic relational pattern of the earliest Church. Perhaps together the colonists and the Natives could have experienced more of God’s KINGDOM if the Gospel and a biblical practice of government had merged.

The sad testament to the failure of western religion is readily apparent. For over four hundred years Christian missionaries have tried to evangelize Native Americans. In most tribes the Christian conversion rate has been only 3-6% effective.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has not lost its power! Rather, the form of church organization that the Hellenist-influenced missionaries and clergy brought with them alienated the Native people.

- Hellenism's influence throughout Christendom introduced the Native American to the young, educated clergyman who lacked the wisdom of life experience. If they were to accept the Gospel on his terms, the Native people would have to submit to his immaturity. The absence of wise older men in authority to share with the Native elders made Christianity as a whole suspect.
- The Roman organizational format introduced the Native American to impersonal, non-interactive forms of government. Denominational leadership headquartered many miles distant put control of creed and doctrine in the hands of men with whom the Native could not sit in council. As a result, the Native people were not permitted to apply biblical truth to their own culture. Others from afar commanded them what their beliefs must be.

The missionaries and clergy, influenced as they were by Hellenist thought and Roman organization, failed to realize that Native American society was an exact duplicate of the biblical-tribal form — extended family.

[For more on republics and Christendom, see: [The Unsteeped Church](#); and [Discussing How To Restore the Early Church, Lesson 21.](#)]

The Chain of Authority: Tribal Cohesion

Most cooperative endeavors which require large numbers of people are organized into smaller, readily overseen units. Smaller units of people make it easier to maintain personal relationships and to succeed in meeting specified goals and objectives because there is a direct line of responsibility. That direct line of responsibility is called a chain of authority, or a chain of command, as it's referred to in the military. The chain of authority is simply the means by which one person is responsible to someone else up the chain.

Consider the modern Army. The chain of authority begins with an individual, who belongs to a squad, which belongs to a platoon, which is part of a company,

which is contained in a battalion. Battalions make up brigades, and brigades make up the Army Corps. The army's success, in part, is made possible by its recognized chain of authority throughout the entire organization.

In Luke 7, the Roman officer whose servant was healed by Jesus in absentia referred to this sequence of authority. Since he himself was under authority, he clearly perceived Jesus as a Man under authority (His Father's). Both recognized in each other the humble deference needed for a chain of authority to operate. Jesus could say of the centurion, "I tell you, I have not found such great trust even in Israel" (Luke 7: 9). The chain of authority and the humility to serve in leadership within that chain is what makes it successful.

The nation of Israel represented a particular chain of authority as an integral part of its relational connectedness.

Israel

- An individual belonged to a family
- A family belonged to a clan
- The clan belonged to a tribe
- The tribe belonged to a nation

At each level, appropriate elders led the people and passed along wisdom to the next generation. Each level would select the best of their elders to represent them at the next level up the chain. This is the norm of leadership in most tribal societies today. This is a republic form of government.

The relational connectedness of the earliest Church paralleled that of Israel:

Earliest Church

- An individual belonged to a family
- A family belonged to committed, extended spiritual family — a home fellowship
- The Home fellowship belonged to others—
A Congregation of Home Fellowships
- The Congregation of Home Fellowships belonged to all — citywide, nationally, internationally.

Whether it's the army, Israel, or the early Church, you'll always find promotion and succession to perpetuate leaders who serve as they lead with wisdom.

- A promotion of leadership. Men of maturity and wisdom were recognized and given greater responsibility.
- A succession of current leadership. Younger men were trained to succeed the current leaders as the latter were promoted or died.

Relational connectedness was the hallmark of Israel and the earliest Church. Those in authority knew personally the men for whom they were immediately responsible, and prepared them to succeed them in leading.

The Influence of Hellenism Destroyed God's Chain of Authority

During the second and third centuries Christianity became increasingly more Hellenist and anti-Semitic. Meeting in homes to share fellowship in Jesus was forfeited as Hellenists introduced meeting in pagan temples — later called “churches”. As a result Christendom relinquished the relational intimacy of its origins as people began to gather for religious performances in impersonal pagan-style edifices.

Steeple, pews, podiums and clergy were part of the pagan religious performance that isolated the sacred from the secular. The Hebraic spiritual responsibility of elders who knew the people personally shifted to Hellenist young professional clergy who separated themselves from the people. Lost was the understanding of why the home gatherings that had existed among the Christians of the earliest Church had been such a way of life.

[For more on the Hellenist influence see Chapter 6 of Restoring the Early Church, “Greek Philosophy in the Church: How Did Plato Displace God?”]

- List what you believe the duties of clergy are.
- What is the biblical support for what you've written?

Early Christians Were A Spiritual Tribe

During the time of Jesus, the earliest believers were Israelites, descendants of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Engrained in their heritage was a tribal understanding of extended family. The first Hebrew, Abraham, was a tribal leader chosen by the God Who had entered into covenant with him. From the descendants of Abraham came the entire Hebrew nation of Israel. As we've

shown, the nation was made up of extended-family relationships. At each level appropriate elders collectively led their people.

The typical Jewish farming village at the time of Jesus consisted of 10 or 15 close-knit families who depended on each other. They were like one large family, and what affected one affected the other. Their relational dependence was vital for their survival.

Emanating from their Hebraic roots, the earliest church could be most accurately depicted as a spiritual tribe. It was within the small, clan-sized groups of home fellowships that individuals and families received the mutual support and accountability that was needed for successful Kingdom living.

Authority among the Hebrews was entrusted to elders who operated within a council. The council form of decision making is Scriptural, as exemplified in the consensus of town elders to give Naomi's property to Boaz. The collective aspect of council is also seen in Proverbs 31:23: "Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land."

We also get an insight into the role of an elder from the Book of Job:

When I went out to the gate by the city, When I took my seat in the open square...

I delivered the poor who cried out, The fatherless and the one who had no helper. The blessing of a perishing man came upon me, And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; My justice was like a robe and a turban. I was eyes to the blind, And I was feet to the lame. I was a father to the poor,

And I searched out the case that I did not know. I broke the fangs of the wicked, And plucked the victim from his teeth (Job 29:7,12-17).

These older men of proven wisdom and experience realized that close-knit relationships, especially with each other, were conducive to community and accountability. Close camaraderie was important not only among themselves but also with those for whom they were responsible. Shepherds were directed to "understand the condition of their flocks" in the spiritual realm as well as the physical (see Proverbs 27:23).

To truly lead as a biblical elder, you must know personally the ones in your direct care. Consider this comparison:

- Hellenist philosophy/Roman organization is impersonal. It defines people as “functionaries”, that is, warm bodies needed to keep the religious system operating and paid for. Leadership controls and directs, “lording it over the people.”
- The Hebraic extended spiritual family dignifies people as made in their Creator’s image. People are cared for personally as if they were caring for the Lord Himself. Leaders are “servants of those they lead.”

People of western European ancestry often have a difficult time understanding tribal relationships. The concepts of extended family and family heritage are beyond the experience of many westerners whose immigrant ancestors left these concepts behind when they came to America.

For many of western European descent, individualism and fragmented family relationships predominate. However, the early Church and its relational fabric can only be fathomed by understanding the tribal family foundations upon which it was built. Today, through the Hebraic Restoration, the biblical sense of our forefathers’ relational priorities is being restored to the Church.

The “Church” Is God’s People, Not A Place

In the absence of tribal understanding, Hellenism and its partner, Roman organization, have warped the biblical definition of “church.” Most today who hear that word think in terms of a place, an organization, religious programs, or allegiance to a denominational creed.

The Greek word “*ekklesia*” which is often translated “church” really means “called-out ones”. The “church” is extended spiritual family who have been called out by Jesus to be His family of ambassadors (see 2 Corinthians 5:20) on earth and in heaven.

The church are those whom our Lord called out from the world as His own. “Church” refers not to a place — “Let’s go to church” — but to God’s people — “We are the church!” Paul penned a number of his letters to the “called-out ones” whose primary spiritual support was the load-bearing fellowship they shared in their homes as a “clan” of extended spiritual family.

In a sense, the tribal leader Abraham was the first “called-out one,” since God had called him out of Chaldea to the land of Canaan. Abraham trusted and obeyed God as the “called-out ones” today are called to do. In Jesus, His followers are a “spiritual tribe”. Unlike the biological tribal identification that comes passively at birth, your identification as “follower of Jesus” comes only as

a result of deep heart conviction in response to the Holy Spirit. You live out that walk in obedient trust by serving God in His KINGDOM.

Remember the words of Jesus as He describes Kingdom living in terms of family:

“Whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother” (Matthew 12:50).

Spiritual Tribalism: Succession of Leadership

Tribal understanding with its emphasis on family-style relationships is exactly what is needed in order for you to recapture the biblical, relational vitality of your Christian-Hebraic forefathers.

Intergenerational thinking:

- Who will succeed me in my responsibilities?
- Who will care for the generations to come?

While Hellenism brings in educated strangers from afar to lead faith communities, Hebraic leadership is “home grown.” The people personally know and can commit themselves to the men whom they saw mature and grow in spiritual wisdom in their midst.

According to the pattern of tribal thinking, the wiser and more courageous the person, the more concerned he is for the well-being of his people. This the essence of Jesus’ teaching on leadership: “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20: 26-28).

Home grown leaders understand that they are representing their own spiritual kinfolk. Therefore, unlike the positional rule of Hellenist/Roman religious systems, men lead by personal example and personal knowledge of those for whom they’re responsible.

A continuity of responsibility unites current leadership with those who preceded them in the personal sacrifice of caring for the people of their spiritual clan.

Think about the lists of genealogies that are repeated in the Bible. Those very sections that most of us are tempted to skip over in fact broadcast an area of importance to our Father. They reveal the intergenerational connectedness of family that is basic to tribal thinking. One generation prepares succeeding generations to carry on responsibilities on behalf of the people as a whole.

Our God is deeply concerned with the spiritual heritage that's passed along by one generation to the next. Isn't this connectedness affirmed by the prophet Malachi as he extols God's design for marriage?

Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are His. And why one? Because He was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth (Malachi 2:15).

Paul, too, had an eye on future generations that they would walk steadfastly in commitment to their beloved God: "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6: 4).

Tribal Strength Relies on the Clan

The clan was the primary support system for the Hebraic individual and family, coming alongside those who abided under the eldership of the clan leaders.

Under the authority of the clan elders, the male heads of each household exercised collective responsibility for preparing the next generation to walk as righteous men and women.

Widows and orphans came under the care of the clan elders when they had no other family to care for them.

Paul reinforced this concept of family interconnectedness that would uphold the dignity of the needy members:

Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God (1 Timothy 5:3,4).

The elders made sure that families took care of their own widows. Widows who had no families came under the care of the spiritual clan.

Everyone in the clan shared responsibility for all the children within the clan. The entire extended spiritual family of a home fellowship were involved in training succeeding godly generations. We'll discuss this further in Part 5.

Keep in mind that the clan also provides the vital link between family and tribe. Families which are in the Domestic Stage of semi-autonomy place great stress on the individual family unit. Tribal individuals and families, however, are more like the Trustee family. They're linked by strong allegiance to their clan, for they find much-needed support within it (see Part 2, Appendix B).

In Nigeria, for example, the young men call all of their uncles "father." Each older man exercises paternal responsibility to train and confront his nephews. This relational mentoring helps a younger man form the character qualities that help him to be fully responsible not only for his personal well-being but also to succeed the elders in caring for the people. The same relational responsibility applies in the interaction between older women and younger ones.

If you ask many Native Americans about themselves, they'll tell you which clan they belong to in their tribe. The clan is the critical relational mechanism for tribes as the home fellowship is to that which our Father is restoring to us today.

Today's spiritual clan equivalent, the home fellowship, carries the same function as the clan. Sadly for Christianity, this much-needed relational tier was eliminated when the Hellenist philosophers entered the church. Spurred on by the prevailing Roman organizational hierarchy of government, Christendom lost the relational connectedness that individuals and families had so enjoyed as extended spiritual family.

As we mentioned earlier: In place of the intimacy of bearing one another's load, Christianity adopted the pagan temple worship format of their conquerors. They "boxed" God into the framework of religious services and programs which were far removed from the inter-relational pattern of daily life.

Home Fellowships: The Vital "Spiritual Clan"

Several of Paul's epistles mention faith communities within the personal, interactive framework of the home setting.

"Greet also the church that meets at their house" (Romans 16:5).

“The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house” (1 Corinthians 16:19).

“To Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home” (Philemon 2).

“Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house” (Colossians 4:15).

Note that the practice of meeting in homes as a fellowship of Jesus-followers was widespread, stretching from Rome to Greece to Asia Minor. Content to be known as His “called-out” ones, they were identified by their fellowship locale: at whose house did they meet as brothers and sisters in Jesus?

24/7 Commitment to One Another

The home fellowship of the early church was a seven-day-a-week relational commitment to fulfill our Father’s goals and objectives as His beloved called-out people.

[In Part 4 we’ll continue discussion of God’s goals and objectives for His people in home fellowships.]

What a contrast to congregational “home groups” that have contact only through weekly or even monthly scheduled meetings. Compare this with the tribal-based understanding of the Hebraic home fellowship: a caring commitment for one another shown through many unscheduled contacts with each other all during the week, as well as corporate times of sharing, worship and prayer. Followers of Jesus who gather together in each other’s homes are “extended family”, spiritual relatives who are deeply committed to:

- Jesus as the Lord of their lives
- caring for each other as family in Him
- fulfilling our Lord’s Kingdom goals and objectives individually and collectively as His instruments of righteousness.

Many Christians today don't realize that long before the coming of Jesus, God had been nurturing relational commitment as the Hebraic Stream of Judaism used their homes to encourage one another to serve and obey God. In fact, all of the church practices seen in the Newer Testament were already part of the faith enactment of the Hebraic Stream of Judaism before the coming of Jesus.

God had been preparing the faith practices of His Church for centuries before Jesus was incarnate. All that was needed to fulfill their faith walk was the long-anticipated Messiah and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

[For more on the differences between the Hebraic Stream of Judaism and the Judaizing Stream, see [Discussing How to Restore the Early Church, Lesson 8.](#)]

A few verses after Peter's Pentecost message we're given a glimpse of some practices of the earliest Church that had carried over from their walk as Hebrew followers of the one true God of Scripture:

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).

The earliest followers of Jesus were so accustomed to sharing their lives as family because that was the pattern of the God-loving, commandment-keeping descendants of Abraham from before the time of Christ.

The early Hebraic home gatherings were characterized by personal participation. These men and women came prepared to share the bounty of that which the Spirit had been doing in their lives throughout the week. These were times of exuberant worship and testimony — a time for family to be edified by one another.

When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church (1 Corinthians 14:26).

A home fellowship was also a wellspring of support for married couples, families, singles, and widows. The earliest followers of Jesus understood that marriages could not make it on their own. (Tragically, so many couples today quit their covenant because they have no one to come alongside them with the loving

wisdom of experience.) It was within the spiritual clan that older people could help couples while their problems were still bite-size.

Personal dignity was upheld as people genuinely cared for each other as brothers and sisters. This sense of intimacy is why Paul could so freely address fellow followers of Jesus in such endearing terms. John patterns these close-knit relationships in his epistle references to his beloved children and dear friends.

Another intergenerational facet is evident from Scripture. Hebraic people treasured children as gifts from God. The home signified the spiritual training base for the Jewish family, the place where parents shouldered the responsibility for training up their children in the wisdom and will of the Lord. In this endeavor they were supported by their home fellowship family.

The extended spiritual family with its intergenerational communal responsibility supported the home as the primary building block for training the next generation. Paul reinforces this frame of reference repeatedly for Gentile believers who may not have been familiar with the Hebraic sense of belonging to one another relationally through their trust in the one true God.

How Can We Regain What Our Spiritual Ancestors Had?

Your Home Must Be The Basic Building Block For Spiritual Development

Preparing the next generation to be our spiritual successors is critical if you yearn to follow our Father's commands. As you read the passage below, note the strong emphasis by our God that each generation ensure that succeeding ones follow in His way.

These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all His decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.

Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, promised you. Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord

is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:1-9).

These oft-quoted verses call for consistent, intentional interaction between parents and their children each and every day. A few “quality-time” moments before bedtime are insufficient in God’s sight. Even if you must drastically alter your current time commitments to parent your children, the benefits will astonish you!

Testify daily among your family in what ways you’ve seen Him at work in your character, your relationships, your decisions, your Scripture study and your prayer life. Then your children will learn that our Lord is part of every aspect of their lives — every decision, every relationship, every opportunity — not just “church activities”. God doesn’t live under the steeple!

One of our Hebraic ancestors reinforced the importance of a spiritual heritage that continues for a thousand generations of those who fear the Lord and love Him:

We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which He commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget His deeds but would keep His commands” (Psalm 78: 4-7).

Are not the above passages, along with a host of others, the basis for Paul to exhort fathers to fulfill their responsibility to the next generation? “Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

Even if you haven’t been diligent thus far, go to each of your children (adult ones included!) and ask their forgiveness for not having been the parent that God wanted you to be. Then ask them to let you into their lives to start walking in righteous parenting!

Intergenerational awareness and responsibility are threaded throughout the Bible. Examples abound in Proverbs. Why are grandchildren the “crown” of their grandparents? “Children's children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children” (Proverbs 17:6). What changes must you make in your life to be a crown for your grandchildren, or the pride of your children, even if they’re grown?

Other than the few in the United States who are obsessed with their genealogy, most westerners are unable to trace their ancestral heritage back more than three or four generations. This lack of heritage awareness is a blind spot for many of us. God’s commands are for all generations, and each generation must be diligent in training the next.

The generation of Americans born in the mid-1900’s for the most part experienced frequent contact among grandparents, grandchildren, aunts, uncles and cousins as they were growing up. Such a reality today seems as remote as black-and-white TV. To our culture’s detriment we have lost access to the wisdom and solidity and reliability of people who really cared that we succeed and uphold the family name and traditions. Our culture has lost both the respect and the need for the wisdom of elders.

Important Thoughts to Consider:

1. The virtues of Christ-like character are learned in the crucible of your home. How you as parents live in service to your King is more important than what you say. You are the first picture of living for Jesus that your child observes. That first impression will ultimately affect your children’s concept of themselves as adult followers of Jesus.
2. Unlike religious systems in which children are outsourced to others for spiritual development, and government systems of compulsory education for academic and/or vocational training, our Father established home fellowships to support your home in raising your children. Coming alongside to undergird parents, the extended spiritual family of a home fellowship helps your child spiritually and vocationally become a responsible adult in service to their King.

The Hebrew word *avodah* means both work and worship. A young person who has been guided into the calling God has prepared for him will work with thankfulness. A person who is grateful in his workplace is better able to fulfill his King’s purpose in his being there, and to bring God glory as he works.

- Detail how spiritual development takes place in your home. How is it supported by others outside your home?
- Would Jesus commend you for the earnestness of spiritual training in your home? Why or why not? Would you be embarrassed if He arrived unannounced?
- If you have children, list the key character qualities and motivations of each.
- If you have children, how is your fellowship family helping you raise your child(ren) spiritually and vocationally to serve our Lord? How is it falling short in this “clan” responsibility?
- If you’re an adult without children in your home, how are you helping the families with children in your fellowship family to raise theirs in loving service to our Father?

How Can We Regain What Our Spiritual Ancestors Had?

We Must Intergenerationally and Communally Train Successors

If you listen closely, you can almost hear the urgency in the prophet Joel’s proclamation: Loving God and serving Him in obedient trust is the communal responsibility of all the people! The entire faith community is responsible to listen and to act.

Follow Joel in Chapter One: “Hear this, you elders, listen all who live in the land” (v.2a). The elders addressed here are the zakens, the older respected men of wisdom who corporately rendered account to God on behalf of the entire community. Elders also represent the shepherds who “pastored” the faith communities of the early Church.

“Has anything like this ever happened in your days or in the days of your forefathers?” (v.2b) Without the collective memory of earlier generations who have experienced the consequences of sin and the blessings of obedient trust, the young will blindly plunge into self-gratification and lawlessness. “Tell it to your children, and let them tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation” (v.3).

The curses and consequences for disobedience that afflicted Israel came upon the whole people. Therefore, the responsibility to train up the succeeding generations also fell on the people as a whole community. This is a common thread among tribal societies, and this responsibility is borne by the clan as a whole.

The spiritual body of Christ as a family is as interconnected as was the whole of the Israelite people called to love God and to serve His purposes.

The responsibility for training up succeeding generations was primarily contained within the family and extended spiritual family of home fellowship.

In biblical times, the purpose of learning was to train up individuals to love and to serve the Lord their whole lives. Learning was not confined to childhood; rather, pursuit of God's truths in order to apply them to every situation in life was an endeavor for every person in the community, young and old. "Wisdom begins with the ability to see and evaluate all of life from God's point of view" (Proverbs 1: 7). People who have journeyed longer in faithful trust have much to share with those just behind them or barely starting out on their life pilgrimage.

Dr. Ron Moseley, founder of the Arkansas Institute of Holy Land Studies, writes about the educational life stages each male passed through in biblical times. At age five, the youngster was ready to begin actual study of the Hebrew Scriptures with other young boys. By age ten he was ready to explore the Oral Law, which interpreted the written law into life application.

By thirteen, armed with knowledge of God's Word and the means to apply it, he was ready for his bar mitzvah and the inherent responsibility of following God's commands. In other words, at that point the young man needed to approach God himself to discern His will and apply it.

At the age of fifteen he was ready to study the writings of the wise sages who had passed along wisdom in times past, and at age eighteen he was ready for marriage. (Given the self-focused, individualist mentality of today and the disconnectedness from relationships that would commit to helping a marriage covenant succeed, few eighteen-year-olds whom we know are ready for this step!)

At the age of twenty, the well-trained young man was prepared to seek a vocation. At age thirty he was mature enough to pursue spiritual responsibilities that benefited others, even while engaged in his occupation. At least by then, people felt he had something worthwhile to say! At age forty, the maturing man

was considered to have adequate understanding of God and righteousness and justice.

However, it wasn't until age fifty that both men and women were regarded as having the wisdom and experience to counsel others.

[See Chapter 3, A Hebraic Perspective: The Foundational Thinking of the Early Church in our book Restoring the Early Church for more on the stages of manhood.]

Access to intergenerational contact, load-bearing and personal connectedness are so vital to families today. Each person is at a different stage of decision and of progress in his pilgrimage with Jesus. Role models who come alongside those in their spiritual family bring fresh insight, encouragement, and course redirection if need be.

Our Father intended that His people be those who understand, who are able to discern His commands and obey them wisely. One of our Father's purposes for His children to know and apply His Word is that others would take notice.

Observe them 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' (Deute-ronomy 4:6).

This is what the world needs to see from the followers of Jesus today! Those who have sought their Lord's counsel and applied it throughout their lives are a repository of encouragement to the next generation. As Job declared, "Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding? To God belong wisdom and power; counsel and understanding are His" (12:12,13).

While an old axiom states that there's no fool like an old fool, those in the faith community who have learned from their mistakes are invaluable resources because they've experienced the compassion of our Father's forgiveness and His power to press on, as did Paul, without mourning the past.

Creativity in bringing joy to children as they learn God's Word is an effective means of instilling a reverence and a delight in God's Word. Having a number of people involved in this responsibility enhances the probability that little ones will stay interested and retain what you've taught.

Why should it matter to you if someone is prepared to replace you in the faith when you're gone? One reality affects all families: Everyone dies at some point. As our society has moved off the farm, succession, or who will serve in place of

another, has been forgotten. Except for those in some family-owned businesses, few of us think about succession. But God wants His people to be diligent about the spiritual inheritance we leave to succeeding generations!

[See the August 2002 Newsletter, “Covenant Communities”.]

Again, a tribal view of spiritual heritage emphasizes that each family and faith community face two crucial questions:

- Who will succeed them in the faith?
- How well are potential successors being trained to lead?

Moses understood the importance of succession. For many years he personally trained Joshua to succeed him. At last, the succession was complete when Moses passed on the mantle of leadership to the younger man in front of the whole nation. When the elderly prophet died, his successor had already been prepared to be the new leader:

Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, ‘Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the Lord swore to their forefathers to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance’ (Deuteronomy 31:7).

Elders: Older Men Responsible to Our Father for Ensuring Godly Successors

When you think about preparing the next generation, you probably focus on the children. But our Father focuses on the ones He ultimately holds responsible for ensuring that successors are biblically trained: the elders.

[See Chapter 4. Shepherding by Elders, in our book Pastoring by Elders, and Segments 7 thru 10 of the Home Fellowship portion of our Jesus In Your Home video series for more on succession.]

If you recall, an Israelite belonged to a family which was part of a clan which was part of a tribe which was part of the nation of Israel. Responsible leadership at each level was provided by the appropriate elders. Men who showed exceptional leadership qualities as elders of their families were recognized and promoted for the good of the people. They became elders over clans, then tribes, and ultimately the nation.

This same leadership progression was true for the earliest Church. As an extension of the home, the home fellowship of Jesus followers were committed to one another’s growth in Christ’s likeness as extended spiritual family. Qualified

older men served with authority and leadership in the lives of others. This is why Peter could command young believers to submit to those who are older (see 1 Peter 5:5).

In the fellowship family that gathered together in homes, elders personally cared for each individual even as they had cared for members of their immediate family. [This is analogous to the Trustee Family in Appendix B of Part 2.]

An elder or shepherd was a gray-haired man of compassion and leadership who imparted wisdom and counsel to a specific group of people. As we noted, the Hebrew word for elder, *zaken* (zah-ken'), connoted men who had proved themselves worth following and emulating. The role of elder was a life's goal to which men who sought wisdom aspired.

Zaken, by definition, means "gray-bearded," and suggests wisdom gained by many years of life experience. Over the course of their lives these men exhibited servant-like character qualities that took into consideration the welfare of others within their family, clan, and tribe.

Because the nation of Israel saw itself as a singular "extended family," each body of elders possessed an inherent interest in the directions and decisions that were made. Their own kin would be affected.

The Lord ensured that this role would be an integral part of preparing His children to walk in spiritual maturity: "It was He 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" (Ephesians 4:11,12). All of these anointings were already in place among the Jewish people before the new covenant was initiated.

The Greek word *poimen* (poy-mane), translated as "shepherd", is a far cry from the modern concept of pastor. Today's hired clergy administrates, counsels, visits, and generally fills in for every need that is supposed to be fulfilled by the body instead.

However, *poimen* was understood to be the equivalent of the Hebrew role of elder. Older men of wisdom represented the Father's loving concern for His children.

[See Chapter 2. Nicolaitanism, Repression of God's People, in our book *Pastoring by Elders* for more on this subject.]

Walking in the role of an elder within a home gathering setting allowed these older men to edify the body through accessibility and wise counsel. It was within the context of committed loadbearing that the relational responsibility of Hebrews 13:17 was worked out:

Obey [literally, let yourself be persuaded by] the ones leading you and submit. They keep watch on behalf of your souls as men who must [in the future] render an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Elders will render account to our Father for each person for whom they are spiritually responsible. That's why the size of a fellowship family that's gathered in a home must be limited to the elder(s)' ability to render account to our Father.

Biblical elders pastored (instructed, nurtured, confronted, trained) the men of the faith community, who then "pastored" their own families. An elder must lead through personal example in the way he walks his own relationship with Jesus. He also needs personal knowledge of the believers he's leading, including awareness of the spiritual gifting of each person to help each one fulfill God's particular purposes for the fellowship as a whole.

[See God's Instruments For War for discussion on spiritual giftings.]

When you're in committed relationship with brothers and sisters in Jesus, you need to consider how you can make the work of those elders a joy, or else your presence in a home fellowship is "of no advantage" to them.

- Ask yourself: "Am I a burden or a burden-lifter in my faith community?" How is the Spirit prompting you to help fulfill our Father's purposes among your extended spiritual family?

Elders of Home Fellowships Lead Through Example

God has created men and women to process information in very different ways. Anyone can be taught data that will add to his knowledge but do little to alter his character, his life choices or world view. Numerous studies have revealed that males are changed not by what they hear or read but by two interpersonal means:

- 1) Personal interaction with role models
- 2) Personal confrontation by older, wiser men.

Education only adds to a man's knowledge. He's not changed by what he knows, Rather, knowledge only tends to puff up his ego.

Women, on the other hand, are changed by role modeling, education (such as what they read or hear), and, to a lesser extent, by confrontation.

Within the Christian community at large today, education is the most commonly used form of passing along information. Think about all those sermons and Sunday school classes you've sat through! The education format has made it difficult to nurture and develop mature men who will be capable of succeeding the older men in the body.

How did education rather than role modeling and confrontation become the pre-eminent method of discipleship in the church? The converted Hellenist philosophers who entered the church after the first century introduced an emphasis on academic pursuit and knowledge acquisition. Since character development and the character and life experience of the teacher himself were considered unimportant, imparting character qualities was minimized.

This is why many "teachers" in today's Hellenist-influenced religious system rely on prepared study guides in order to convey content. Scriptural search for answers to relevant problems of people in the faith community seems odd to most leaders. The impact of a Christlike lifestyle which is role modeled through personal relationship outside the classroom environment (even such as getting together for early breakfast and discussion) is practically nonexistent.

We visited a congregation of about forty who were meeting in a school classroom. As we entered the room we noticed that few people were sitting together. Most were scattered in their own small row around the room. Except for a small worship team and the pastor, little participation was evident.

Since we had just met the pastor, we got together with him and his wife to share some of the Hebraic concepts of applying the Word to life situations. In that way awareness of our Lord could be continued outside the meeting place walls. We also encouraged him to invite the congregation closer to the front so they could be near each other.

The next Sunday he took the leap. Encouraging the people to move up and to chat with each other briefly, he then read briefly from Scripture. Pausing, he scanned the congregation and started asking them questions about the passage and how it might apply to their own lives. Hesitant at first, the gathering quickly erupted into enthusiastic participation that extended for two hours! Even the teens and young people took part!

One couple we'd met briefly earlier had been visiting the congregation for the first time. As they came up to us the husband declared, "If this is the typical

Hebraic teaching style, let's have more of it! This is great!" People lingered long afterward to talk. Invitations to get together were extended. What a change!

During the week, however, the pastor must have been talking to other clergy in the community. Feeling that he'd lost control over the people, he was threatened. He sent us a letter stating in no uncertain terms that he didn't want his church turning into a synagogue! The next week we were told that the "old" format was once again in place. He preached and the people sat there uninvolved. Not too many weeks later the congregation dissolved and the pastor found himself selling insurance for a living.

Biblical Hebraic teaching can be summed up by this: "Do as I do." The Hebrews recognized that the only valid form of learning was that which could and would be applied to life. To see this concept become reality calls for wise, older role models: elders. Through role modeling, instruction and confrontation, elders help younger followers of Jesus walk with increasing wisdom as they apply what has been shared.

How important the criterion of intimate relational care was in determining leadership in the early Church! Even forthright Paul could remind the believers in Thessalonica that his conduct among them had been as intimate as that of a mother or father.

The way a man lived, not his head know-ledge, reflected his true measure. The writer to the Hebrews reaffirmed this critical link between "talk" and "walk". Elders lead by example. What they want to reproduce in others must be seen in their own lives:

Remember the ones leading you, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the result of their conduct and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:7,8).

Since elders are the undershepherds of Jesus (see 1 Peter 5:4), and Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever, the same qualities of caring and attentive leadership should be expected in any era or culture. Our Father loves you too much to allow you to remain unchallenged in your sin. So, too, are biblical elders compelled by the Spirit to confront those in the fold who are straying from the Lord.

Confrontation can run a gamut from mild chiding to strong rebuke. Appropriate confrontation by an older man who has intimate knowledge of a disciple is vital because it can incite a younger man to change his course:

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who are working hard among you, those who are guiding you in the Lord and confronting you in order to help you change. Treat them with the highest regard and love because of the work they are doing. Live at peace among yourselves (1 Thessalonians 5:12,13, Jewish New Testament).

Some might call confrontation “tough love”. Others recognize it as fatherly concern that clearly exposes foolishness and sin while pointing the way to wisdom and righteousness. Unconfronted irresponsibility only adds to the burden of others.

The Role of Older Women

While older men of wisdom served as elders within their faith communities, older women played an important role among early believers as well. The biblical precedent for a righteous woman of virtue to influence others is found in Proverbs 31:10-31. This passage was recited every Sabbath in the homes of both Jews and Jewish followers of Jesus to affirm a wife as a vital part of a man’s reason for existence. A husband’s admiring recitation also elevated her in their children’s eyes.

Just as every devout man aspired to the wisdom of an elder or sage, so every righteous woman looked to the Proverbs 31 matron as her role model of an older, virtuous woman. Younger women could receive counsel from her, and could be helped to grow in that Godly pattern.

A contemporary insidious scheme of Satan sets a snare of immorality in the path of vulnerable younger men who might want to come alongside women to counsel them in their distress. To forestall temptation, the apostle Paul wisely instructed women to guide other women. The widows and older women of each congregation whose husbands served as elders were perhaps the likeliest candidates to fulfill this assignment:

Teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands so that no one will malign the word of God (Titus 2:3-5).

The Greek word for “self-controlled” used in verse 5 means “to be sober-minded, or to voluntarily place limitations on their own freedom.” A woman herself makes a deliberate choice to submit to God’s order in her household. An older woman can reinforce and encourage a younger woman’s decision to follow this decidedly counter-cultural path.

If the biblical pattern that was designed to discourage sinful choices were followed today, how many adulterous affairs between clergy and vulnerable, discontented women could be avoided? Even within fellowships that are extended spiritual family, keep in mind that this culture, and the media in particular, exalt lifestyles and role models that are incompatible with righteousness.

Be aware of other demonic ploys within segments of “Christian” teaching. Ration-alizing destructive behavior that stomps on the Bible under the deception that “God wants me to be happy” crushes your children’s faith and disheartens your faith community family. How great is the need for older women in your home fellowship family to come alongside younger women to point out potential pitfalls and encourage them in righteous living!

Scripture often warns women against being idle busybodies and quarrelsome nags: “The wise woman builds her house, but with her own hands the foolish one tears hers down” (Proverbs 14:1). How needful it was in biblical times (and even more essential today!) for women to have access to mature, godly women who were willing to speak lovingly and forthrightly about righteousness and obedient trust as a lifestyle.

The home fellowship family, as an extension of the home, provides this type of support and access. Granted, some of that contact may have to be in the form of e-mail or phone calls from the workplace during breaks. But the accountability that comes from knowing someone will be impacted for good or for evil by your choices may just tip the balance toward walking as Jesus would!

Today’s pattern of discontented women who tear down their husbands and families through phone calls or bad reports disguised as prayer requests is a sad reflection of worldly infiltration into the church. If you are an older woman, you need to step forward as a responsible voice. Nip the self-destructive trend that isolates women from pressing on together to fulfill our Lord’s purposes.

This requires deliberate choices on both your part and that of the younger women to be accessible and willing to initiate contact, particularly with women who are fearful to commit to accountability or a deeper relationship of obedient

trust in Jesus. Are you willing to ask our Father to reveal the particular woman or women with whom He wants your life to be intertwined?

Summary of Part 3

Hebraic home fellowships were an integral part of extending the Kingdom of God. They came about as individuals and families intentionally lived in love and fear of God, and responded to His Word through their choices and actions. In this manner home fellowships multiplied throughout neighborhoods because the changes that God was making in believers' lives were so evident, and their love for one another was so obvious. Kingdom expansion resulted as the Gospel was proclaimed through Spirit-transformed family in Jesus.

The relationally intimate gatherings in homes branched out into a corporate sense of connection with other Jesus-followers within their town or city. Evangelists and merchants who were followers of Jesus journeyed to other towns and even nations. They carried with them their identificational connectedness with those back home as well as with new family members in Jesus they encountered along the way.

If you're ever going to experience the love, understanding, and acceptance that God is restoring to His people, you must, by His grace, leave behind the depersonalized Hellenist forms of associations to which you may have grown accustomed.

You can't expect God to work mightily in your life if you're complacent in your relationship with Him and content to sit in religious services and programs as your only (or chief) expression of that relationship.

You may need several months to purposefully press on before you're authentically walking in the increased personal responsibilities of a home fellowship family that's committed to extending the Kingdom.

- When you hear the word “church”, what goes through your mind?
- Since the true meaning of “church” is “the called-out ones”, how does that understanding change your view of yourself and your relational responsibilities to our Lord and to those you fellowship with?
- Describe in your own words your understanding of the tribal nature of Christianity.

- As you understand the relational nature of “tribal” Christianity, what do you need to change in your own life and faith practice?
- Have you ever been in a home fellowship which had a 24/7 commitment to each other? If not, do you feel you could be part of one? Are there changes in your faith practices and priorities you would have to make? Describe them.

Part 4

Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations

Our Father's Goals & Objectives For A Home Fellowship



Introduction to Part 4

In Part 3 you learned about the tribal understanding that undergirds the Bible's concept of "Church." The extended family relationships of the Church which Jesus is building serve a far greater purpose than for people to just experience relational closeness with one another. Through intimate fellowship with our Father and His Son, Jesus, as well as with each other, you're called to fulfill Kingdom purposes and goals.

Home fellowships are much like a military squad. The members do become close friends as they serve side by side, but they "enlisted" to fulfill a purpose far greater than their friendship. The extended spiritual family of a home fellowship serves their glorious and beloved King to advance His Kingdom.

As with soldiers, the extended family of a home fellowship realizes that their very lives may be at stake as they fulfill their mission in times of battle. Only by mutual interdependent cooperation can "soldiers for Jesus" accomplish their fellowship goals and purposes in the Kingdom and bring glory to their King.

It's the "death-to-one's-self" heart that enables a military unit to effectively fight their battles to victory. For example, military Special Forces units have this one element in common — they are dead to themselves. For followers of Jesus:

Completing the mission and caring for the well-being of those in our spiritual care are more important than focusing on preserving our own earthly lives in complacent comfort and acceptance by the world's standards. We who are in Christ need to be like-minded according to His Spirit and life-extending to others.

Think about Jesus' instruction to His disciples to be "salt of the earth" (see Matthew 5:13). Salt served many vital purposes among the Hebrew people. It was a flavoring agent, a medicinal element, a preservative, a required part of the grain offering, and a very necessary nutrient for life in that hot climate!

Much of the salt came from the Dead Sea, where it was harvested in clumps with the sandy dirt still attached. When the user reached the part where the salt mingled with the dirt, he threw it out. It was less than useless because when salt is ground into the earth, plants have a hard time growing. That's why enemies sowed with salt the fields of those they conquered so that the vanquished couldn't grow crops.

In the spiritual dimension, the salt of our righteous lives brings healing, zest, and preservation of the soul — as long as our "salt" doesn't lose its flavor! If by compromise with the world's ways some "dirt" pollutes our relationships and fruitfulness for our Lord in His Kingdom, then our so-called religious works are useless. Actually, they're LESS than useless because our sinful compromise brings down the name of Jesus among unbelievers and inoculates them against Him and His holy and gracious gift of salvation.

"Salty" righteousness is worked out in our lives as we stay repentant. The "clean hands and pure heart" of walking in obedient trust through the Spirit of Christ produces the holy boldness that's needed to extend our God's KINGDOM. As you'll see, the first of four objectives of a home fellowship, upholding communal righteousness, is the crucial foundation for all the other objectives to bear fruit that brings our Lord praise.

Hebraic home fellowships serve the interests of God. Note the key distinction between Hebraic and Hellenist gatherings.

- Hebraic home fellowships are extended spiritual family working together through the power of God's grace. Every activity and purpose is evaluated by whether it is pleasing to God, aligns with His Word, and fulfills His purposes. Staying "salty" is key!
- Hellenist small groups rely on manmade techniques and programs. Need for God's empowerment may be taught, but it isn't considered necessary. Success is evaluated by numbers and participant comfort levels, not by God's standards and purposes. Compromise with the world is tolerated.

Because the United States is an Atomistic, individualistic-oriented nation, communally preparing succeeding generations to follow Jesus is going to require dramatic change in people's attitudes and lifestyle in order to accomplish this objective.

Remember some of the symptoms of an Atomistic Society from Part 2:

- Ties within the family unit disintegrate, and obsession with individualism develops.
- Individual rights are emphasized rather than family responsibilities and the good of the whole.
- Unabashed selfishness is normative.
- Atomistic people resemble a swarm of antagonistic insects engaged in conscience-less combat to maintain their status quo.
- Commitments and responsibilities are regarded as infringements on personal freedom, disregarding the needs or suffering of others.

Most of the people in your home fellowship are the product of Atomistic influence as well as public education. Unless they've been "deprogrammed" from the insidious influence of Humanism which permeates this culture, they still see themselves as the center of their world rather than God.

Probably few of your extended spiritual family have experienced cooperative endeavors which involved collective accomplishment of a common goal unless they've served in the military or taken part in team sports or similar activities.

At the retreat center we administrated from 1983-93 we set up a confidence course with various elements involving ropes, pulleys, tires and barrels. The course was designed so that no one could complete an element without the help of other people. Our goal was to train guests to cooperate by discussing together how to complete an element until they came up with a plan and then executed it.



For instance, we hung a tire from a tree about five feet off the ground. We told the group that they were on a sinking ship and the tire was a port hole — the only way they could get off the ship.

We'd then encourage them as a team to discover a solution to get everyone off the ship. Then, they'd carry out their plan. For the vast majority, cooperative discussion and communal accomplishment were foreign practices. Often many would

grow frustrated, especially if it took a while to plan or execute the task.

After completing several elements on the confidence course, though, most of the retreaters would start to unite in their attitude and want to help one another achieve the goal. The exceptions were mostly people who were use to getting their own way working alone. They were uncomfortable in cooperative projects. Usually it was the oldest child in a family who was the least cooperative. The give-and-take that was necessary in these group situations irritated them.

You'll find in Our Father's Goals and Objectives for Home Fellowships that a Hebraic home fellowship is a communal endeavor of serving our Lord in His Kingdom. Built on the Trustee Family style, the extended spiritual family of a Home Fellowship calls for self-sacrifice and self-denial — elements which are foreign to those influenced by Humanism, and whose motivations align with the contemporary Atomistic culture.

Elders and others in the fellowship family who are determined to see the Kingdom advanced will need to earnestly solicit everyone to do their part in fulfilling our Father's goals and objectives. There are no spectators or "lone ranger" Christians in the Kingdom! The fellowships of God are like the human body, with all the parts fulfilling their responsibilities in mutual regard for each other.

[For more on mutual participation, see our book God's Instruments For War: Discovering and Coordinating Spiritual Gifts as Weapons of Warfare.]

Part 4

Our Father's Goals And Objectives For Home Fellowships

Your life is a pilgrimage that's intended by our loving God to fulfill great purposes by His grace at work in you! Our Father has outlined in His Word three very special goals for your relationship with Him:

- to increasingly trust the Lord you love,
- to bear much fruit for Him,
- to grow in the character of Jesus.

Don't feel overwhelmed by this privilege! Through His indwelling Spirit, our Father gives you both the will and the power to do His work. This is called grace. But His work is really a way of life, the same life Jesus would live if He were you:

In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

Any motivation or activity that settles for less than glorifying our Father makes that endeavor an idol.

When your life is joined together in unity with your extended spiritual family in a home fellowship, you are equipped collectively to bring our Lord praise! As Paul reassured the believers in Rome,

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 15:5,6).

- Authentic fellowship finds load-bearing believers throughout the week encouraging each other as you wholeheartedly trust God together, following our Lord Jesus and carrying each other's burdens. You're being built up to testify of the powerful love of Jesus through word and deed for a very specific purpose. Our Father wants sons and daughters who have tasted His power as they've walked in loving, obedient trust. They yearn to reach out to others to draw them to Lord Jesus, and to train successors in the faith!
- The authentic ministry that was embraced by our Hebraic forefathers takes place as a Christ-follower comes alongside someone to help him/her to lovingly trust their Lord in all circumstances. You may not have all the answers as you minister, but you know the One Who does, and He never fails! Point the way to Him and bear the burdens of the one you're ministering to through prayer and action.

And, as a wise person once said, "Always be prepared to BE the answer to prayer if the Spirit prompts you to!"

- Describe your pilgrimage with Jesus thus far in terms of how your trust has grown, your fruit has brought Him praise, and how your character has been transforming into Christ's likeness.

- How in the past have you experienced authentic fellowship and authentic ministry? Are these taking place now? In what ways?

Our Father's Goals For Home Fellowships

Numerous passages support the reasons our Father calls His people into true fellowship in Jesus as they grow in relationship with one another.

1. Your fellowship with others must spur you on to glorify our Father through praise, worship, and a lifestyle that yields glorifying testimony of praise to Him. [See Matthew 5:13-16.]
2. Your fellowship with one another should result in progressive growth in Christlike character in each person as you walk in the scriptural “one-anothers”. [See 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians. 2:5-11.]
3. Your fellowship must provide the corrective/confrontational means to assist each other to enter the narrow gate. [See 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 2 Timothy 4:2; also, our book, Growing Relationships Through Confrontation.]
4. Your fellowship must strive to extend the Kingdom of God on earth, pursuing the lost so that they too may enter Covenant with our Father in Jesus. [See Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8.]

Because of the pervasive influence of Hellenism within Christendom for centuries, many have lost sight of God’s goals for biblical fellowship in homes as extended spiritual family in Jesus. Please, indelibly blaze these loving objectives of our Lord into your heart:

- to spur you on to glorify our Father through love-grounded, obedient trust
- to encourage progressive growth in Christ-like character by one-anothering
- to help each other enter the narrow gate by walking in Jesus’ steps together
- to extend the Kingdom of God on earth that others might respond by grace.

These four goals call for cooperative interdependence among those in your home fellowship family — followers of Jesus together who are deeply committed

to each other and who collectively desire to glorify our Father. [For more on spiritual cooperative interdependence, see our book, *God's Instruments for War*.]

The human body is interconnected in a way that parallels our Lord's design for His Bride — spiritual body life. Each part of the body serves the other parts, and collectively the parts serve the whole. If you truly yearn to serve our Lord through these goals, make sure you've humbled yourself to need others and to serve others as extended spiritual family!

Now that we've addressed the goals and purposes of a home fellowship, let's touch on four specific objectives for individuals, families and home fellowships that enable you by His grace to meet our Father's goals:

1. Uphold communal righteousness.
2. Develop load-bearing relationships.
3. Multiply through actively sharing the Gospel.
4. Prepare succeeding generations to follow Jesus.

The first three objectives will be covered here in Part 4. Objective #4 is discussed in Part 5, "Home Fellowships: Communally Preparing Succeeding Generations To Follow Jesus".

Objectives may be viewed as specific indicators that help you discern obedience to God. Love-grounded, obedient trust as a way of life applies to both yourself, your family and your faith community. Are you on the path prescribed by God in His Word? You really don't want to wait until you stand before the Judgment Throne to find out that you've disregarded our Father's scriptural goals and lived in self-gratifying compromise with the world. Paul warns us, "If we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment" (1 Corinthians 11:3).

The four biblical objectives for true fellowship are not merely vague ideas to consider then stash away. They represent four foundational practices that fashion a home fellowship into the righteous, extended spiritual family that God ordained it to be:

- God-centered rather than man-centered,
- fulfilling His goals rather than meeting man's desires.

Are you eager to restore the goals and objectives that were so tenaciously embraced by the called-out ones who first followed Jesus? This calls for a love that is commensurate with their love for Him, regardless of personal cost. This kind of love comes only through yielded dependence on the Spirit of Christ.

The remainder of this article on home fellowships offers some considerations to help you collectively carry out the objectives that enabled fellowship in homes among the earliest followers of Jesus to be so interpersonally intimate and spiritually powerful. As you reflect on these objectives, evaluate your own faith practices, both individually and communally. Ask our Lord to help you see these restored in your faith experience as you lovingly serve your King!

The first objective, Uphold Communal Righteousness, is the underpinning for the rest. Take your time to completely understand why it's so important. If you're unconcerned about righteousness in your Christian walk, nothing else will go well for you.

Home Fellowship Objective #1: Uphold Communal Righteousness

“Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God” (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Can you describe the innate weakness of humanity? Our Father, the Creator of mankind, is all too aware of our primary frailty: Man is bent on sinning.

Because of their decision to rebel against God, not even Adam and Eve were able to raise their children in the Garden of Eden. Their deliberate choice to sin severed their intimate fellowship with God and brought uncompromising consequences: The couple was cast out of the home in which they'd enjoyed such loving intimacy with their Father. No childish laughter rang in Eden. Thorns made food-gathering difficult. Their first son, Cain, born in pain, murdered his godly brother.

The first family's sin was just the beginning of mankind's intentional violation of all that was good — and God grieved.

The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord

was grieved that He had made man on the earth, and His heart was filled with pain (Genesis 6:5,6; see also Genesis 8:21).

You might think that with the coming of Jesus, humanity could better discern good from evil. But human nature hasn't changed, "for all sin and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

A Warning. A heresy that's been creeping around western Christianity proposes that man is evolving into a holier, more ethical human being. Read Matthew 24 to see how this world comes to an end — certainly not through the goodness of man!

Communal Responsibility For One Another

Our Hebraic forefathers in the faith were impacted by a truth that's been lost to most people today: Sin and failure to repent don't affect just the individual guilty party. None of us lives in a spiritual vacuum. Know this: Unrepentance by one person within a home fellowship will hinder the prayers of everyone in that fellowship family from being answered.

Do you realize that most commands in the Newer Testament are written in the plural rather than the singular? Scriptural directives are proclaimed to the collective body of followers of Jesus.

True, each follower of Jesus owns his or her loving responsibility to God to obey His Word in His Spirit's power. But because of their communal awareness as extended spiritual family, the early followers of Jesus were deeply concerned with more than individual righteousness. As a pulsating spiritual body they understood the need for corporate righteousness. They knew themselves to be *mishpachah* [mish-puh-KAH], extended family who are responsible for one another as brothers and sisters in fellowship.

Those of us who are the product of Hellenized Christianity may think that we can hide our "secret sins" and hurt only ourselves in so doing. Not so! The Bible reiterates that unrepentance by one brings terrible consequences on the heads of others. In God's sight, we are our brother's keepers!

The Hebrew Scriptures recounted that God prevented the entire nation of Israel from conquering the tiny city of Ai because of the hidden sin of one man, Achan (see Joshua 7). King David's sin of counting his troops (see 2 Samuel 24) brought

three days of plague upon all the people. Jonah's insubordinate retreat from God's purposes wreaked havoc on all the ship's storm-tossed sailors (see Jonah 1).

God upheld His same standard of righteousness for the fledgling Church by taking the lives of Ananias and Sapphira (see Acts 5:1-11). The consequences of that deceptive couple's disobedience thrust holy fear on all who heard of their deaths, a reminder to not mistake God's love for toleration of sin.

And isn't winking at sin epidemic in western Christendom today because people fear being called judgmental or legalistic if they confront the unrepentant as God's Word calls for?

If you were among the earliest followers of Jesus, you'd grasp right away the importance of God's standard for relational accountability. His standard encompassed the responsibility to uphold "communal righteousness." It was on the basis of communal responsibility for righteousness that Jesus could command the church to confront sin:

- If your brother [a fellow follower of Jesus] sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you [without slandering him to anyone, even as a "prayer request"]. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.
- But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' [With the presence of witnesses the situation becomes a "legal" matter to be weighed according to God's law.]
- If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church [the "called-out ones" who know him well as his fellowship family in homes]; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector [Recognize that he indeed is not walking as a follower of Jesus and needs to turn from his sin and receive forgiveness from our Father.] I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.
- Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. [The ancient sages taught that where two or three were studying God's Word, the Holy Spirit was present to help them apply it according to God's will.]
- For where two or three come together in My name [the principle of two or three witnesses to confirm a matter as of God], there am I with them (Matthew 18:15-20; see also 2 Corinthians 13:1).

The above passage applies more specifically to the close relationships of families and home fellowships than to the larger congregation gathering. Why? Because it takes ongoing personal contact to recognize unrepentant sin in someone else. This is especially true in the case of attitudinal sins such as bitterness or unforgiveness.

First, you need the personal courage and commitment to care whether a brother or sister is walking in freedom or is burdened by bondage to sin. Second, a home fellowship of committed, extended spiritual family is small enough to recognize when everyone's prayers are going unanswered due to an individual's unrepentance.

[See Restoring the Early Church, Chapter 11 "Promoting Righteousness"; Discussing How To Restore The Early Church, Lesson 45; or our video, Jesus In Your Home: Fellowship In Homes: Segment 3.]

If you hold onto unconfessed sin, you have no fellowship with our Lord. You also have no true fellowship with anyone else who is walking uprightly in the Spirit of Jesus:

If we claim to have fellowship with Him while we are walking in the darkness, we are lying and not living out the truth. But if we are walking in the light, as He is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of His Son Jesus purifies us from all sin (1 John 1:6,7).

The precondition of our fellowship with each other is repentance and restoration of fellowship with our Father and His Son, Jesus.

Our merciful and gracious God provides the means to restore fellowship and righteousness when they've been sundered by sin: "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).

David, a man after God's own heart, was an adulterer and murderer. In order to restore fellowship the Lord sent the prophet Nathan to rebuke him. His heart broken and repentant before his God, David confessed his sin. Forgiven and cleansed, his intimacy with God was restored.

The Prayers of the Unrepentant Are Not Heard By God

The ceiling might just as well be brass for those who pray with unconfessed sin, presumptuously expecting that God will answer them anyway.

Peter affirms righteousness as God's prerequisite for answering 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).

Even the uneducated blind man whom Jesus healed reminded the haughty religious leaders of our Father's condition for answering prayer: "We know that God does not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly man who does His will" (John 9:31).

To reinforce righteousness as God's prerequisite for answered prayer, James refers back to Proverbs 15:29: "The Lord is far from the wicked but He hears the prayer of the righteous." The following passage identifies the vital link between confession and righteousness for today's followers of Jesus and their faith communities:

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit (James 5:16-18).

Since Elijah "was a man just like us," should we expect any less results from our prayers? Is your faith community collectively walking the path of righteousness and repentance so that you all are available as Elijah was to pray when called upon? Through your answered prayer our Father is glorified!

Confession and repentance within your home fellowship family are key to maintaining ongoing prayer that brings divine answers:

- Confession acknowledges that sin has indeed occurred.
- Repentance prompts you to turn away from that area of sin and turn toward our Father through Jesus to receive forgiveness and restoration of fellowship, and to live according to God's way.

The family-style commitment of early Church home gatherings bolstered communal responsibility for keeping God's commands. Jesus defined the nature of His spiritual family when He declared, "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother" (Matthew 12:50).

The earliest followers of Jesus were well-acquainted with the character and awesomeness of the God of the Hebrew Bible (the Older Testament). From His Word they understood God's critical conditions for answering the prayers of His people: the righteousness that comes by His grace, and the trust in His faithfulness that His Spirit gifts us with. Grateful awareness that their righteousness came only by the blood of Jesus impelled them to live by His Word.

Our Father's Blessing for the Righteous: He Answers Their Prayers

The earliest followers of Jesus drew near to God to worship Him as living sacrifices and to have their prayers answered. This may sound like a small point, but think about it:

It wasn't the act of praying, but answered prayer that brought miraculous responses and got the early called-out ones noticed.

The book of Acts begins with a small band of disciples who "all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers" (Acts 1:14). When Peter and John were released from the Sanhedrin's detention (see Acts 4), they went directly to their fellow believers to testify and to rejoice! "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly" (Acts 4:31).

When these people prayed, something happened! Miraculous answers to prayer abounded as they trusted wholeheartedly in the One to Whom they prayed. Peter, chained and imprisoned by Herod (see Acts 12), experienced miraculous release from prison as a result of people interceding together in a home: "When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying" (v.12).

Think about Paul and his numerous calls for prayer: "Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17); "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18); "With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of His calling, and that by His power He may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith" (2 Thessalonians 1:11).

Paul wasn't asking that mere words or rote repetition be lifted to God. He was earnestly seeking the response that God would give in answer to the prayers of the righteous.

You Must Pray Unceasingly Because Prayer Is Spiritual Warfare

When the Holy Spirit confirms a matter for you or your home fellowship family to pray about, you need to intercede until the answer comes. Prayer in the early Church entailed spiritual warfare. The example of the prophet Daniel from the Hebrew Bible demonstrated that persevering prayer and trust in a loving Father were key to God's response. When you pray, you're continuously entrusting your petition to our Father until His response is received.

Scripture reports that God answered Daniel the day he began to pray. A demonic delay hindered the response from reaching him, however. Satanic forces opposed the ministering angels who were bringing God's answer (see Daniel 10; Hebrews 1:14).

Urged on by unrelenting trust, righteous Daniel prayed for twenty-one days until the heavenly messenger, with the help of the archangel Michael, broke through with God's response. Don't give up crying out to our Father for that which accords with His will!

Centuries later, Jesus voiced the parable of the persistent widow (see Luke 18:1-8) to encourage His followers to pray without ceasing: "And will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night?" (Luke 18:7). Casual "one-shot petitions" are as fruitless as a basketball that bounces off the rim. That's more like wishful thinking than trusting reliance on the All-Powerful to intervene!

Satan realizes the power of communal righteousness combined with prayer that perseveres until the answer is received. If he can't hinder your prayer through unconfessed sin, he'll discourage prayer by instilling doubt and unbelief that your Lord will ever answer you.

This is why the relational righteousness of your fellowship family in Jesus who are in close-knit commitment to one another is critical: to encourage each person to persist in prayer.

A home fellowship that continues to experience God-sized answers to their prayers is strengthened and encouraged by each answer. Answered prayer that brings glory to our Father becomes communally addictive! Each testimony of answered prayer is a bullet to pierce the resistant armor of doubt and unbelief of someone you share the gospel of Jesus with!

Through communal courage, your extended spiritual family can fulfill Objective #3, Multiply Through Actively Sharing the Gospel. Answered prayer is like artillery that blazes the way for the Gospel to be received by those who hear your testimonies and marvel at our Father's intervention.

Separate From the Unrepentant

Jesus warns with greatest seriousness both the religious compromisers of His day as well as those today who exalt themselves with self-motivated spiritual activities but bring down His holy reputation:

Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? 'Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!' (Matthew 7:22,23).

Jesus can't allow into His sinless, heavenly presence an unrepentant person who embraces wickedness behind a veneer of spirituality.

Your responsibility to God out of love for Him as well as love for your faith family calls for you to confront evildoers in your fellowship with the reality of their sin. If unrepentance continues, then those in Jesus must separate from that person in order to uphold His righteous character and standards.

Do pray in earnest desire that the offender might indeed turn from darkness and be restored to fellowship. (Naturally, as Paul wrote, that doesn't mean you shun those who don't claim to follow Jesus. Otherwise you'd have to leave the world! And how could you share the Covenant good news with them if you don't cultivate relationship?)

When all human confrontation proves fruitless in stirring the heart of an unrepentant person in your home fellowship to repent, Paul's instruction is clear:

When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the

Lord. . .Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? (1 Corinthians 5:4-6).

If you remain unrepentant and cling to your sin, in time you'll influence others to tolerate unrighteousness or rationalize sin in their own lives. Handing a person over to Satan is part of God's mercy as an important last chance so that his "sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord."

Understanding this truth is crucial. If you don't confront the unrepentant in your fellowship family, others will be influenced to harden their hearts and choose lawlessness. Equally as bad, everyone will become victim to unanswered prayer. Can you now appreciate the significance of up-holding righteousness?

Home Fellowships Objective #2: Develop Load-bearing Relationships

The Influence of Relationships

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24,25)

Objective 2, developing and nurturing relationships in Jesus who are willing and able to bear the load for each other, is intimately connected to Objective 1, upholding communal righteousness within your fellowship family. Communal righteousness makes the second objective all the easier!

Within the context of fellowship, the Bible emphasizes that men and women are influenced either for righteousness or for evil by the close relationships they keep. Right relationships can spur you on to greater love, courage, and service for our Lord. Wrong relationships can deter you from the courage you need to accomplish His purposes in you and through you.

Wisdom literature of Jesus' time advised people to consider carefully whom they chose to spend time with — someone with whom you could mutually press on in pleasing God:

“Associate with a godly person whom you know to be a keeper of the commandments, who is like-minded with yourself, and who will grieve with you if you fail.”

If you want to grow in Christ’s likeness, you need to pray that our Lord will unite you with the very ones who will spur you on as devoted spiritual family!

The following verses depict the influence your relationships can have on you.

“He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm” (Proverbs 13:20).

“A violent man entices his neighbor and leads him down a path that is not good” (Proverbs 16: 29).

“Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn his ways and get yourself ensnared” (Proverbs 22:24).

“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted” (Galatians 6:1).

“Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him” (Titus 3:10).

“You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. ‘A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough’” (Galatians 5:7-9).

The Bible repeatedly contrasts the life of the righteous with that of the unrighteous. The comparison in Proverbs is particularly poignant: The wicked man flees though no one pursues; but the righteous are as bold as a lion (Proverbs 28:1). The difference is easy to spot! Weigh the impact of this verse on your own relationships:

- Do those with whom you share intimate fellowship stir you to fulfill our Father’s goals and objectives? If yes, how?

- Who in your fellowship draws you to compromise with the ways and activities of the world? In the time you've known these individuals, have they grown closer to hungering for the Lordship of Jesus, or have you become more lukewarm in your earnestness for Him? Explain.

Here's a thought to anchor: The extended spiritual family of a home fellowship is a spiritual warfare unit. Through the combined prayers of bold, righteous people, much can be accomplished in the Kingdom of God. With this in mind, many biblical examples warn against the negative influence of companions who entertain unrighteousness when courage is called for.

Interpersonal influence impacts for good or for evil those in a home fellowship family who are prayerfully trusting God as they engage in spiritual warfare. Heed this admonition to our spiritual forefathers.

When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army. . .He shall say: 'Hear, O Israel, today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not be terrified or give way to panic before them.' Then the officers shall add, 'Is any man afraid or fainthearted? Let him go home so that his brothers will not become disheartened too' (Deuteronomy 20: 2,3,8).

The Bold Attract The Bold

Choosing to walk in righteousness helps you to personally support one another so that you can courageously carry out the other kingdom objectives and purposes of our Father. Righteousness is the most potent of spiritual "glues." Next to love, boldly living as Jesus would in the power of His Spirit is one of the most important gifts we offer to both God and one another.

Biblical men of courage attracted one another. Jonathan's devoted trust in his Lord spurred his armor-bearer to accompany him on a valorous attack against their enemy. "Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, 'Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised fellows. Perhaps the Lord will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the Lord from saving, whether by many or by few'" (1 Samuel 14:6).

Marvel at what God does when He finds even one or two bold people: "Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords" (1 Samuel 14:20).

David, too, was consumed by courageous regard for his God's honor: "David said to the Philistine, 'You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied'" (1 Samuel 17:45).

From the time David and Jonathan met, these two valiant men were drawn to each other: "And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself" (1 Samuel 20:17). The courage these men shared produced an intense devotion that was eulogized by David: "I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women" (1 Samuel 1: 26).

People who are courageous for God attract other courageous people to themselves. The prophet Samuel describes the "men of valor" who joined David. Three mighty men in turn attracted thirty others who embodied courage beyond the average (2 Samuel 23:8-12).

Now consider God's perspective and purpose for your home fellowship family in light of earliest called-out ones:

- Righteousness produces holy boldness.
- People who are valiant for God attract others of courage.
- Together those who live righteously in Spirit-graced courage extend His Kingdom on earth.

The writer to the Hebrews unites courage with encouragement to keep Christ-followers from stumbling into sin's trap:

But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are His house if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast. See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first (Hebrews 3:6,12-14).

Who Are Your Spiritual Family?

“Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply from the heart” (1 Peter 1:22).

Relational fruit is produced when extended spiritual family members uphold righteousness in their daily lives in love-grounded, obedient trust. Your relationships deepen through heart-prompted service to each other. This supportive love in action is called “load-bearing”, and is demonstrated by the 54 “one another” passages found in the Newer Testament.

In the Hebraic pattern of gathering together in homes, believing households joined with other families and individuals to fulfill God’s goals and objectives as His beloved children. Each was strengthened in these gatherings as brothers and sisters, zealous to bear much fruit in His Name. As you explore the biblical understanding of “family”, you’ll better understand the quality of load-bearing that is developed and nurtured in a home fellowship family.

Two thousand years ago when Jesus walked the rocky paths of Israel, families functioned much differently than they do in the US today. Our Lord was building upon the truths, promises and commands of the Older Testament as a continuum of what He was revealing and expanding under the new covenant.

Because western society has become so fragmented, the idea of “family” has devolved into a very small unit, be it a husband and wife with or without children, to the worldly/pagan concepts of family that range from homosexual unions to various individuals choosing to live under the same roof.

[See Appendix B, “The Atomistic Family”, at the end of Part 2 for further description of the state of current western culture.]

However, when you look at “family” from the context of its meaning in the biblical languages, your perspective is defined according to the purposes of our Father. The *mishpachah* (mish-puh-KAH) we mentioned earlier refers to an ever-growing circle of relatives in Jesus who share the same blood tie through HIS shed blood.

Broader in scope than the traditional English meaning, Hebraic “family” reflected a subdivision of a clan, a tribe or of the nation itself. The Hebraic *mishpachah* was not simply an individual’s identity as a parent or a child; family represented kinfolk collectively responsible for producing Godly progeny. The whole community had a stake in this relationship!

It takes tribal thinking to fully appropriate this responsibility. Tribalism isn't a primitive step backward for God's people today, but a vital step forward if you yearn to recapture the relational intimacy that's been lost.

Now consider "family" as it pertains to the covenant in blood that followers of Jesus share through His atonement. From a spiritual sense, we share the same blood tie through the indwelling Spirit of Jesus with all who are in covenant with Him!

The responsibility to help one another walk uprightly rests in the communal context of spiritual family and clan. This relational responsibility is the primary means by which the fellowship family fulfills the 54 "one-another" directives given to followers of Jesus. In fact, almost all of 1050 commands in the Newer Testament are addressed to the plural "you" — to a faith community rather than to a specific individual.

Remember that others in your home fellowship are spiritual relatives—family you look forward to being with, family with whom you're developing an ever-deepening, load-bearing relationship as you serve our King.

If you don't see them as kinfolk you really care about, your home fellowship will be shallow and impersonal. Your times together will degenerate into religious form and ritual, or social entertainment. Without loving intimacy, you'll fail to multiply through bearing witness to the power of the Gospel to change lives.

No Spirit love = no transforming life.

Spiritual Family: Supports Personal Responsibility, Confronts Irresponsibility

Out of relational commitment to each other, the extended spiritual family in a home fellowship must always support the home of each person as the basic building block for spiritual development. Your home fellowship should never try to compensate for irresponsibility in individuals or families who have no desire to wholeheartedly to serve King Jesus.

A home fellowship is a faith community of individuals and families who are committed to Jesus and to one another. Collectively, you're as strong as the weakest home in your fellowship. If an individual or family are choosing to live irresponsibly, it's appropriate and biblical to come alongside to help those who are weaker to develop reliability. But never step in to take on responsibility that is rightly theirs.

Unconfronted irresponsibility will burgeon into an ever increasing burden on others, creating and increasing apprehension in your fellowship family. Appeasing irresponsibility perpetuates the sin that has fed it, thereby hindering your prayers from being answered. And dependence on our God to answer prayer as each of us walks in holiness brings about the kind of testimony that furthers His Kingdom.

[See [Growing Relationships Through Confrontation](#) for more on confronting issues that need to be addressed so that apprehension doesn't rule.]

Home Fellowship Objective #3: Multiply Through Actively Sharing The Gospel Of The Covenant

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore [as you’re going] make disciples of all nations, 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).

Our Father’s heart aches for the lost. He yearns for them to grieve over their separation from Him because of their sin and respond to His Spirit’s loving call to repent. He extends both the opportunity and the power to turn from their sin in humility, and to come to Him for forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus’ sacrifice.

YOU and those in your extended-family faith community are the representatives of Jesus in the flesh. YOU are the “Good News with skin on” to bear witness to what you’ve seen and heard in His loving power! Your local “arena of operations” is your community, workplace and neighborhood.

[To learn more about the extended spiritual family of home fellowship, see *Restoring the Early Church*, Chapters 11 and 12; *Pastoring By Elders*, Chapters 13-15; and Section 4: Home Fellowship, in our *Jesus In Your Home* video series.]

To get started in sharing the Good News — or to build upon what you’ve already been doing to reach others for Jesus — consider the proven suggestions below. As testified by evangelist Ed Silvano, this approach is Scriptural and has

worked wonders in neighborhoods throughout Argentina. Watch our Lord show Himself strong as He works in and through you and your fellowship family!

1. Create perimeters of holiness around each home in your faith community.

Remember that the first objective for fellowship in the face-to-face environment of a home is to uphold righteousness through His Spirit and walk in fellowship with our Father and His Son, Jesus. Again, the early Church understood that God answers the prayers of the righteous. Upholding righteousness is the responsibility of each home!

From our Father's vantage point, much of the Church today represents disjointed, self-serving POW camps which pose no threat to Satan's domain. When you create a perimeter of righteousness around the homes in your faith community, you put Satan on guard. The enemy all too clearly recognizes that through righteous, effective prayer, our Father's will can be accomplished and His Kingdom expanded through His Spirit-empowered children.

Why is it vital that you and your family erect perimeters of righteousness?

- Perimeters secure a sanctuary of spiritual refuge and nurture in your home. Righteousness produces peace among your family members, and peace is the necessary environment for love to grow.

- Those within the perimeters experience unity as they pay the price of forfeiting their own inclination to sin in order to please their Lord and grow in the character of Jesus.

- By upholding communal righteousness within the perimeters, prayers will be answered and testimony to His faithfulness will pour forth.

It's important for each person or family to establish *halakhahs* (HAH-luh-kuz) of righteousness for their home. Halakhahs are the specific applications of obedience you've established through prayer and Bible investigation.

[For more on applying God's Word to your everyday decisions, see our book [Christian Halakhahs](#).]

When you've determined the biblical parameters for yourself and your household, scrutinize your home for any unholy items or practices. Sinful reading or internet materials, offensive television programs, unholy music, even occult relics can hinder your intimacy with God and the effectiveness of your prayer. So will alcohol or drug abuse, rage, or excessive self-indulgence of any kind.

Prayerfully examine your attitudes and behavior toward each other in your family. Is your home a sanctuary and refuge of love and peace for each family member and visitor? If not, identify and confess your sins, and turn away from them to the choices our Lord Jesus would have you make so that righteousness is the hallmark of your home.

2. Guard your perimeter to protect it from infiltration.

Guarding the perimeter of your home calls for diligence, particularly on the part of fathers and elders. When holy perimeters have been established, Satan will try to infiltrate them by any scheme or temptation possible. Sin will seek you out like never before as an active demonic weapon. Satan has been watching the powerful effect of righteousness among Jesus' followers for generations. He won't sit back without trying to seduce you individually or collectively into sin or alienated relationships.

Satan's most common weapon of war against followers of Jesus is unforgiveness —bitterness. That's why Jesus warned, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you" (Matthew 6:14). That seed of unforgiveness can fester into a cancerous root of bitterness if you don't confront it right away. By not confronting unforgiveness, you're welcoming into your fellowship family someone whom our Father hasn't forgiven.

People who are plagued by ongoing bitterness may appear to be needy and ask for your help. But in time they'll defile others in your faith community through their refusal to renounce that unforgiveness and walk in holiness, without which they won't see the Lord (see Hebrews 12:14). That's why this command is so forcefully worded:

Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled (Hebrews 12:15).

God has offered the power of His grace for us to forgive in the manner through which He forgives. When a person chooses instead to arrogantly hold onto bitterness against another, he is nullifying the forgiveness our Father has extended to him. And if you step in to listen to one-sided slander shared by a bitter person against another, both you and the bitter individual become a source of defilement to others.

How can you recognize bitter people? They are generally so self-focused that they have little room for the needs and interests of others. Because of past experiences, they resent any form of correction, even if it's lovingly shared. Not having tasted restoration with the ones they blame or hate, bitter individuals agitate others who are in troubled relationships rather than encouraging them to seek forgiveness and reconciliation.

[For more, see the April 2001 Mishpachah Yeshua newsletter, "The Preeminence of Jesus"; also Lifebyte 40. Do You Confront For Jesus? Or, Placate For Satan?]

The world's way is to retaliate. But God urges His people to respond otherwise so that your response will align with His gracious purpose and will:

Do not be conformed to this world. Keep letting yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you will know what God wants and will agree that what He wants is good, satisfying and able to succeed. (Romans 12:2).

Notice that it's within your mind that you formulate the thoughts that will determine your actions. Be vigilant in your thought life! "We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5b). If you give Satan a foothold from which to operate, he can use you for his evil purposes and schemes.

When you're captive to Satan's will, you're not available to love and serve God. People who choose to cling to their bitterness, or any sin for that matter, need to "come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will" (2 Timothy 2:26).

[For more on dealing with captivity to spiritual forces, see our book Demolishing Strongholds.]

Don't underestimate how critical a secure perimeter is for effective spiritual warfare. If you are an elder leading a home fellowship family, encourage your flock by example as well as word to walk in holiness, forgiveness and repentance.

Continue to emphasize that each person make a habit of cleansing their homes of unholy items and practices.

Wherever you detect tension or apprehension in marriages and other relationships within your extended spiritual family, visit them in their home. Come alongside them with your spouse to help them restore intimacy before Satan can establish a foothold.

How essential to be ever mindful of personal righteousness and the power of prayer to release God's intervention! If an elder is diligent and vigilant, then the faith community he's gatekeeping will function from a position of strength. The perimeter will be secure.

3. Expand your perimeter.

In keeping with our Father's goal to reconcile the lost, expand your perimeter. Pray for your neighborhood, school, workplace. Establish personal relationships with unbelievers to reach their hearts. Those in your faith community should be using their homes as the primary place to represent Jesus to their world around them.

This is where outreach comes into play as you invite unbelieving acquaintances to your home to spend time socially with some of your home fellowship family. Together you're getting to know them and showing them the joy of relating to one another because you care.

Inviting a person into your home
is one of the most powerful actions
you can take to affirm him or her.

There is no biblical basis for bringing unbelievers into your home fellowship worship times in the hope that they might get saved. Your relationship with that individual is the key for his eyes to be opened to the holiness of God as he sees Jesus working in and through you by your testimonies.

As your relationship with him grows, you can keep praying that God will be working through encounters and circumstances in his life so that he'll see his need for forgiveness through Jesus and respond to the Spirit's beckoning. Those personal times of sharing with him outside the fellowship gatherings will prepare your curious friend to become a sincere seeker. During this time you can share the powerful truth of the Gospel of the Covenant with him.

When your unbelieving friend yields to Jesus as Lord of his life, the effort you've expended to befriend him will be even more appreciated when you can share true spiritual fellowship. People need to be connected to other individuals, not to a congregation per se. A home fellowship family is a series of inter-connected relationships, and your friend will be initially connected to the others through you.

Jesus calls everyone who is known by His Name to bring sinners to repentance and reconciliation with His Father so they can live in covenant union with His Spirit. Relationships with unbelievers help you establish beachheads in enemy territory as you pierce the darkness with His light. To wage effective warfare:

- Make a prayer list of the unbelievers with whom each person in your faith community has contact and is burdened for their salvation and life in Jesus.
- As a faith community, intercede for each unsaved person on a regular basis. Weaken the power of the enemy through prayer for those people. Ask our Father to bring about the encounters and circumstances in their lives that will begin to incline their hearts toward Jesus and respond to His grace.
- As a follower of Jesus, you have authority over the unclean spirits that will try to interfere with the salvation of the ones for whom you are praying. As you pray, bind the spirits in the name of Jesus. You can experience the same faith-filled confidence as your forefathers in the Kingdom: "Lord, even the demons submit to us in Your name!" (Luke 10:17).
- If you have the courage, ask your faith family to put a sign in their homes to indicate that theirs is a house of prayer, and that you will pray for any of the needs in their neighborhood. Then be sure to follow through and PRAY!

Ask each fellowship family to keep a prayer notebook with four columns in it: date, petitioner, prayer request, date answered. Have each one ask the neighbors they encounter for specific prayer needs that they can note down and pray about. (They should urge those neighbors to let them know when and how the prayer was answered so they can write that in the notebook and give our Lord the praise!)

As your faith family walks through their neighborhood, they can intercede for these people and renounce in the authority of Jesus the spirits that interfere with our Father's purposes. Consider the same plan for your workplace and the community groups and activities in which you participate.

4. Destroy Satan's perimeter by multiplying your faith community.

Any goal that doesn't include provision for new faith communities to be formed is an exercise in selfishness and, ultimately, futility. Plan ahead for new faith families that could accommodate new followers of Jesus.

Our Father, in the name of His Son Jesus, has given His people the power and authority to plant new faith communities. Shep-herds of extended spiritual families need to be purposely training successors to protect, train, nurture and equip the new flocks that are birthed.

The size of a home fellowship is limited by the elders' ability to render account to God for the people. "Obey the ones leading you and submit. They keep watch over your souls as men who must give an account. Obey them so that they may do this with joy, not groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you" (Hebrews 13:17).

Home fellowship families which become too large foster impersonal forms of control. Rather than leading and nurturing brothers and sisters, the elders see themselves as managing a group.

As your faith communities multiply, they can remain affiliated and coordinated through the relationships of the shepherds and the friendships that exist among the believers in the multiplied groups.

Keep in mind that as your faith community expands, you are developing clans of extended spiritual family or kinfolk. The different home fellowships can gather corporately for any number of purposes, be they social and/or spiritual, just as extended families do.

Revisit these four steps:

- creating your perimeter,
- guarding it,
- expanding that perimeter,
- destroying Satan's perimeter

Then you can be confident that the roots will go deep and the believers will be nurtured in safety to become fruit-bearers themselves in the Kingdom of God and bring Him praise!

Summary of Part 4

The biblical goals and objectives unfolded in Part 4 can become part of your life only as you pray and discuss them with others. The objectives must extend beyond your intellect into your heart's motivation so that you'll yearn to live as Kingdom people and to glorify our Father.

When you're concerned that with loving-trust you're walking in obedience to our Father's will, you overflow with desire to uphold personal as well as communal righteousness. This is your vital link through the Spirit with both God and with one another. Habitual unrighteousness is like severing your own aorta. You can't go on living!

As many others have sadly discovered, don't just go out and try to find a group that's living out our Father's goals and objectives. You, and hopefully a few others, are going to have to prayerfully see these goals and objectives become part of your own lives.

Our Father isn't recruiting people into the Hebraic Restoration who are interested in just teaching these truths. The truths He's revealing have to be lived in your own life before you can share them with others!

While we've been writing our books, articles and newsletters, we've had to pray about and discuss how to apply the different things we present. It was during this process that we found ourselves being changed — first in heart, then in action. Doing the research in Israel on the early Church was one thing. Just uncovering historic information didn't change us. But as we wrote about these restoration truths, our much-needed prayer-based discussion caused us to apply the foundational principles of the earliest Church to our own lives.

Obedient trust in our beloved Lord Jesus that's walked in righteous relationships mirrors the lifestyle of our forefathers which brought such glory to our Father. You may not initially be able to give every goal or objective the level of commitment our Father desires. But don't overlook any of these objectives. They all work together. By His grace, over time you'll find, as we have, that they become as natural as breathing.

And remember, prayerfully discuss with your loadbearing relationships that which you read!

- Review the four goals and purposes for fellowshiping together:
 1. Your fellowship with others must spur you on to glorify our Father through praise, worship, and a lifestyle that yields testimony of praise to Him.

2. Your fellowship with one another should result in progressive growth in Christ-like character in each person.
3. Your fellowship family must provide the corrective/confrontational means to assist each other to enter the narrow gate.
4. Your fellowship family must strive to extend the Kingdom of God on earth — pursuing the lost so that they too may enter Covenant with our Father.

- Does your fellowship family meet these criteria that are dear to our Lord's heart? If no, in what ways does it fall short? Discuss which purposes the Spirit is stirring you now to walk in by His grace.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of your fellowship family in serving the Kingdom interests of our Lord through these objectives.

1. Uphold communal righteousness.
2. Develop load-bearing relationships.
3. Multiply through actively sharing the Gospel.
4. Prepare succeeding generations to follow Jesus. (See Part 5.)

- How are you personally, and your fellowship family collectively, living these objectives? In what ways are you and they falling short? Discuss how the Spirit of Christ in you would have you respond to each of these.

We encourage you and those you fellowship with as extended spiritual family to seriously discuss and pray about any resistance to carry out your Kingdom responsibilities in the grace He's given you. You don't want to show up at the Judgment Throne and give our gracious King excuses why His purposes and will weren't your responsibility.

Through your prayerful discussion you're bringing Jesus into your midst to guide you:

"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by My Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in My name, there am I with them" (Matthew 18:8-20).

Your prayerful discussion with the intent to apply and carry out the will of our Lord is what will enable you to fulfill your part of expanding His Kingdom in the power of His Spirit.

Part 5

Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations

Home Fellowships: Communally Preparing Succeeding Generations To Follow Jesus



“So that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged” (Deuteronomy 6:2)

Introduction to Part 5

“Outsourcing” — calling upon others to assume responsibility for that which God has called you — is the bane of Christian parenting. Because of the prevailing influence of compulsory public education, generations of people have grown accustomed to “outsourcing” their children for others to educate. The children are independent of their parents.

The adolescent is often left to him/herself and the school system to decide what to do upon graduation. Generally, the young person has been influenced to get ahead in life and enjoy the pursuit of self-gratification, the same motives the

world sets forth. Even in the realm of spiritual training, many Christian parents expect the Sunday School or youth programs in their congregation to fill in for their children where they as parents have defaulted.

None of these scenarios should happen with children who are raised by followers of Jesus! Now is the time that our Father wants His people to return to our biblical, communal responsibility to raise generations who will serve Him in His Kingdom and not compromise with the domains of Satan.

Today, many families who home school their children are doing it alone, without the support of the extended spiritual family of a home fellowship. A major misjudgment among many Christian home schooling families is that their efforts are viewed primarily as an academic endeavor. Completing the curriculum is their primary focus. The result? Many home schooled children are being raised without Kingdom motives and goals. They may not be getting infused with humanism (or feminism or other isms), but neither are their hearts being guided to learn so that their character is more like Jesus!

The term home schooling in itself is such a misnomer, emphasizing academic education rather than the more wholistic view of developing servants for the King. A few generations of those educated at home have now come of age. During this time one fact has emerged with serious consequences: the patriarchal foundations of the Trustee family in which fathers participate as leaders in training their children is negligible.

Educating the children has become almost exclusively the mom's domain, placing a heavy knapsack of responsibility on her weary shoulders. What both parents sorely need is the restoration of the biblical, cooperative input of a home fellowship family to train up the character of the next generation.

If you attend any home schooling conference today, the paucity of men present will be self-evident. One reason is that home schooling began as a counter-movement to public education. Increasingly leery of what was going on in the classroom, agitated parents chose to stand against public education rather than focus for the opportunity to infuse Kingdom living in their children.

Rather than beginning with the foundations of communal responsibility through home fellowships led by elders, several of the earliest leaders of the home schooling movement encouraged families to refrain from even fellowshiping together as those who are wholehearted in their loving obedience in Jesus. The leaders feared that clergy would perceive fellowship outside their congregation as a threat.

We home educated our son Mike while we were living on a retreat center/farm in Connecticut. In the 1980's the view of public education in general was anti-home schooling. There was a lot of negative press about home schooling. One father in Massachusetts was put in jail for home schooling his children. We met his wife and children hiding out with friends in a rural part of our state.

Because of the potential for negative press for home schooling our son, we made an agreement with the Board of Directors of the retreat center where we taught and administrated to leave the center if any adverse ramifications came from home schooling Mike. By God's grace, none occurred.

Sadly, through all our years of home schooling we lacked the fellowship support of other home schoolers, particularly those who were training up older children at home. It was often a very lonely endeavor for us as a family. Mike Jr. had grown up and left home before we went to Israel in 1993 and received insight into the Hebraic foundations and God's inter-generational purpose for home fellowships: to take communal responsibility to raise godly generations for His name's sake.

As you'll see in Part 5, a home fellowship is collectively responsible to help succeeding generations become faithful servants of King Jesus. Each generation must wholeheartedly desire to lovingly serve Him in obedient trust. This goal and life purpose is instilled through the collective efforts of the extended spiritual family of a home fellowship. What glues one generation to the next is the example and role model of living out the words of Jesus:

If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself [his earthly goals and appeasement of any facet of his sin nature] and take up his cross and follow Me [an ongoing life process of obedient trust] (Mark 8: 34).

- Do you take seriously the constraints put upon followers of Jesus by our Lord?
- What is your responsibility as a faith family to train up succeeding generations to deny their natural inclination to follow the goals and longings of Satan's domain, the world?

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever (1 John 2:15-17).

If we, as older followers of Jesus who love Him, haven't been raised with the goal of Kingdom service, then we need to unlearn the deceit we were taught, and to acquire through God's grace His goals and objectives. Because our heavenly Father is restoring these foundations, we can trust that He will give us all the help we need as we yield to His will and cry out in humble dependence.

As a home fellowship family, each of us needs a "tribal view" of our responsibilities to one other. Everyone has a part to play in helping raise godly generations! It isn't only a spiritual and academic framework. Character development comes about during the interaction of a variety of life experiences. For example, Mike likes to fish, play golf, hike and bike. He uses these times to spend with children and younger people who are interested. During these times he can affirm the child/ young person through meaningful and intentional times of discussion.

Sue enjoys outdoor activities, crafts and helping young people learn life skills. One afternoon she spent hours teaching some girls from our faith family to make artificial flowers that would bring smiles to older recipients. Lots of personal discussion took place to bless both Sue and the girls (and their mom)!

If you long for a home fellowship family based on the Hebraic model with each of you fulfilling your responsibilities in love for Jesus, discussion with each other is essential. This one activity, mutual discussion, enables Jesus to guide you both individually and collectively in His will and in character development:

Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them (Matthew 18: 18-20).

Part 5

Home Fellowships: Communally Preparing Succeeding Generations To Follow Jesus

Home Fellowship Objective 4:

Prepare Succeeding Generations to Follow Jesus

“For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him” (Genesis 18:19).

While we were in Israel our Father told us to call that which He is restoring today The Hebraic Restoration. The Bible proclaims that our spiritual father, the Hebrew, Abraham, had such trust in God that it was credited to him as righteousness (Romans 4:3). Under the new covenant, ongoing trust in the shed blood of Jesus as our Redeemer is credited to His followers as righteousness. Every one of us who trusts Jesus is declared to be a child of Abraham:

Therefore, the promise comes by trust, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all (Romans 4:16).

The reality of Abraham as the father of followers of Jesus is an important biblical declaration. Abraham, as a prototype tribal leader, was chosen because he could be trusted to fulfill a vital task: “He will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just.”

How tragic that this directive to Abraham has been so poorly kept by his spiritual “children” today. Such disregard has sorely contributed to the spiritual and moral downfall of many young people from Christian homes. Deceived by Humanism, too many parents have abdicated their biblical responsibility by relegating their children to Humanist instruction that denies God completely. Too many, too late, have found that the damage wrought by a godless education system can't be undone.

The Older Testament: The Origin Of Nurturing Succeeding Generations

The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him [a handpicked life partner whose strengths fill in for his weaknesses so that together they are complete]’ (Genesis 2:18).

These commandments which I give to you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children [as an image is pressed onto a coin]. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up (Deuteronomy 6:6,7).

The above verses were the key to Hebraic success in establishing the home as the primary site for parents and significant other individuals to instill God's truths in the next generation. Paul apperceived Deuteronomy 6, above, when he exhorts fathers, "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath [to a point of frustrated, seething anger], but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

That kind of biblical training is a repeated, ongoing process over an extended period of time. The admonition involved is both a verbal as well as disciplinary response depending on the particular child and the particular need. Whatever form of admonition is called for, it's intended that the parent administer it with the loving motivation of Jesus, and that the child receive it as though it were coming from our Lord Himself.

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).

Many Christians believe that God promises a particular outcome if they keep a specific rule, in this case, the training of children. This premise has caused heartbreak for so many parents. They've been taught that the above verse guaranteed that their children would grow up walking in Jesus if they as parents raised them with Christian values. Not so!

Hebraic parents did not view the Book of Proverbs as a compendium of "cause and effect" promises. The Proverbs contained the best wisdom the sages could offer but didn't carry any guarantees from God. While you can be wholeheartedly devoted and loving in raising your children, our Father has created them with free will. To walk as Kingdom people, each one must at some point recognize and recoil from his or her own sin nature and sinful actions/attitudes, and respond to the Spirit's call to repent and turn to our Father through Jesus our Redeemer.

Raising your children in the way each should go calls for you to spend such significant, ongoing time with your children that you can appreciate their individual

personalities and motivations. Then you can impress into your offspring as a signet ring into wax the character and behaviors that please God.

With the awareness that comes from your own abiding intimacy with Him, you're better able to discern God's plan for each child for the vocation and way of life most suitable for him or her. With that kind of awareness and preparation, they'll be far more likely to serve their Lord with peaceful heart and willing availability.

There's a profound connection between one's vocation and their expression of devotion to their Lord through word and deed. Remember, 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 will work with thankfulness. A person who is grateful in his workplace is better able to fulfill his King's purpose in his being there, and to bring God glory as he works.

The Humanist Manifesto [see Part 2, Appendix A] which so clearly impacts public education today is the antithesis of God-centered child-raising. Imparting knowledge apart from its purpose to bring glory to God selfishly feeds an individual's sense of personal accomplishment and pride. Knowledge without the power of the Spirit to direct it for God's purposes puffs up the ego and makes that person the center of his own universe.

Training the Succeeding Generation Is An "In-House" Responsibility

Our Father focuses on the responsibility of His older ones to train the younger generation. The "log-in-your-own-eye" mentality criticizes the young for their "mote" of immaturity and foolishness when the more mature have failed in their responsibility to actively and intentionally role model righteous living.

Our Lord won't entertain excuses. But be assured of this: By means of the committed relationships in the extended spiritual family of a home fellowship, each person can do his part to help the children be lovingly trained to seek after Jesus and to follow in His steps. This is the important role of the spiritual "clan."

In order of importance for raising up the next generation, consider these biblical priorities:

1. To both role model and train up the next generation to live in loving, obedient trust in Jesus.

2. To role model and nurture Christlike character in each child.
3. To train each child according to his or her bent for a vocation that brings glory to our Father.
4. To expand the children's spiritual horizon beyond themselves to serve the goals and purposes of our Father and reach the lost.

The training of the next generation encompasses far more than just academic education. Academics alone can make them successful in the world, but not necessarily useful in our Father's Kingdom—particularly if they're prideful about their knowledge. The Bible provides a wholistic approach of intergenerational community responsibility that promotes maturity in body, soul and spirit.

Your choices and methods for raising your children are both intentional and serious. Training up children for our Father's purposes requires separating them from the teachings of Humanism. No longer can you outsource your children to Sunday schools and youth groups in the hope that someone else who's not intimately committed as family will develop their impressionable spirits.

These are the children of the spiritual clan. In that light, each person in the clan is responsible to equip them with whatever is necessary for their succession in the faith.

If you desire to please our Father and fulfill your God-given responsibility to succeeding generations, you need to make sure that each adult in your fellowship family is assured in their spirit that this is our Lord's participatory call for them. To train the children to be loving and faithful servants for the King is nonoptional for any adult in your extended spiritual family!

A tribal view of your faith family is such an important perspective if everyone is going to participate in preparing the next generation to wholeheartedly live in and for Jesus as their Lord. A Hebraic home fellowship family is a far cry from a weekly meeting in a home! As extended spiritual family each adult needs an earnestness of spirit to do whatever is required of them to raise godly generations.

Having that kind of heart to fulfill His purposes does intrude on your free time. And if the children perceive they are a burden or an obligation, they'll recoil from the hypocrisy as they sense the "cold love" behind your actions.

Preparing your collective children for a vocation in which they fulfill their Kingdom responsibilities will require both meaningful interaction with each child

and productive discussion among the adults as to how to best train each child according to his ability and bent.

Some adults have different marketable skills; others like to teach different subjects; others have hobbies and talents. If you talk it over with each other, our Lord Jesus will guide each one in how they can participate.

Conclusion To Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations

The resources and empowerment of the Holy Spirit that enable His people to accomplish our Father's goals and objectives are available to all of us. What is needed is earnest and loving determination to be His instruments of restoration. This is a movement of God by His grace and power. No one can look for someone else to do that which He's calling each follower of Jesus.

If you've embraced the true Gospel, then you have been sealed with the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit Who gives you understanding and power to apply God's Word (see Isaiah 11:2.). It is the Spirit, through grace, Who gives you the desire and the power to obey God's commands in love-grounded, obedient trust.

Without the true Gospel and the indwelling Holy Spirit, all that we've written is meaningless. Without the Spirit, people who want to be part of your home fellowship family will have a dullness to the interests of God. And where sin is tolerated, a fellowship family will cower at God's commands, excusing their disobedience and law-lessness under a misuse of "grace".

Yet, people who yearn to walk in righteousness will share a communal boldness to do whatever God desires. The purposes for a home fellowship family ultimately come together to glorify our Father through His Son Jesus, not only in this generation, but also for the generations who succeed us to follow this path.

May the crown of any home fellowship family be the spiritual children and grandchildren who carry on to bring glory to God.

Resources You May Find Helpful

- Discussing How To Restore The Early Church — 50 lessons for discussion (a free download at our website, Restorationministries.org) that offer foundational truths for biblical life application with your family and extended spiritual family.

- Jesus In Your Home — This DVD series (also a free download) consists of short training segments for you to discuss so that your home can be the primary place for spiritual growth and relational intimacy for you, your family, and extended spiritual family.

- Amazon.com — Once you have an author or a title of material you're interested in, Google it. Amazon is a great resource for discounted books, especially if you don't mind used! (I recently got a book for one cent plus shipping!) The seller describes the condition of the material and often whether it's helpful.)

- usedhomeschoolbooks.com — Offers numerous discounted materials at all grade levels. However, I was unable to access the section designated Character Building, which may have had some good material.

- Christianbook.com — You may know this resource as CBD, which has a discount catalog specifically aimed for home schoolers. Helpful because the catalog gives a synopsis of material you may be considering.

- homeschool.com — While not aimed specifically at Christian home school families, this site does offer a wide variety of means to make contact with other home schooling families in your area — and having contact with others who can help answer your questions is a wonderful asset!

- Christianhomeschool.com — A very impressive site that not only offers recommended materials but also links for special interests such as the military, the persecuted around the world, and great resources for beginning home schooling families.

- wisgate.com — The website address stands for Wisdom's Gate and specializes in materials for "Homeschool, Betrothal, Courtship, and Biblical Worldview Resources for Homeschool or Christian Families". Their catalog of resources featured materials to remind you WHY you've chosen this path for your family, rather than a "how-to" focus. Chris Klicka was the only author with whom I'm familiar, but there may be some really helpful stuff here!

- heartofwisdom.com — This site is the first I've seen that differentiates between the "Greek vs Hebraic" methods and means for home educating your

children. It also references the State's God-less purpose and goal for public education. A number of the materials offered have a decidedly Messianic slant. Generous excerpts of the site's materials are offered for preview. (See also homeschool-books.com for other connected resources and helps.)

- homeschoolinformation.com — A delightful site with lots of great features such as area support groups, used books and resources, as well as such topics as frugal living and using various Internet resources. Offers materials from the above Heart of Wisdom organization as well.

- rainbowresource.com — This site offers numerous discounted materials under various academic categories. Also has a useful Search section if you know which resource you're looking for in advance!

- Teachinghome.com — A user-friendly home page that directs you to articles on getting started, support group links, and a resource directory for materials/publishers you specifically have in mind.

- store.iblp.org — The Institute in Basic Life Principles, originated by Bill Gothard, has produced some fine quality materials to develop character according to God's Word. Among our favorites are the three Character Sketches volumes which provide unique insights into various animals/plants that typify righteous character.

- kidsofcourage.com — This is the children's edition of the persecution.com website for Voice of the Martyrs. The site spotlights specific prisoners of faith and enables your children to receive regular updates. VOM offers a wonderful series of activity books for specific countries.

- bjupress.com — We haven't personally examined these Bob Jones University materials, but their Heritage Studies for all levels of history have been touted as excellent for their Christian perspective; also their English curriculum.

Some especially recommended materials by home schooling families. (You can get them discounted from Amazon.com and other websites.)

- The Mystery of History (Creation to the Resurrection, Volume 1)

While geared for grades 4-8, I'm told you can adapt it up or down. A Christian perspective to what was going on in OT/NT times during other civilization's history.

- Considering God's Creation by Sue Mortimer and Betty Smith (Eagle's Wings)
"A creative biblical approach to natural science". Highly recommended by reliable friends!

- Saxon Math program
Somewhat pricey even at Amazon, but an incremental approach that builds on previous steps to introduce new ones. We used this for algebra with our own son and it was very helpful!

- Total Language Plus — A series referenced as "Language Arts with a Christian Perspective for Middle and Upper Grades". Incorporates fiction (such as The Incredible Journey, Carry On Mr. Bowditch, The Scarlet Letter, Caddie Woodlawn) as a basis for reading, writing, grammar and spelling. Highly recommended by homeschooling friends!

PLUS, don't neglect your public library for all sorts of free materials! Training up your children doesn't have to be costly, just creative according to how our Lord directs you!

DO find other families with similar goals for their children, and intentionally plan at least weekly times together for their benefit as well as yours!

REMEMBER, you're not trying to create a public school classroom in your home! Be a parent as you're teaching, not a teacher who happens to be a parent!

With the help of your home fellowship discover the particular bent of each child and pray for opportunities that will meet that bent. For instance, our son was spiritually gifted in mercy and would have benefited greatly had we made the effort for him to spend regular time helping the elderly, some needy children, or volunteering at a hospital.

PURPOSELY SEEK ways in which you and your children can serve others. It's all too easy for children to think their interests supercede all others, and that they're the center of their family's world, if not the universe. Explore opportunities

to represent Jesus through loving service rather than from a misguided sense of religious obligation.