

Disciple of Christ



Lesson Objective:

In this lesson we will look at the roles of spiritual fathers in the life of a revivalist and their importance in equipping, training, and empowering the disciple of Christ to become all that God has called them to do.

Key Scripture:

1 Corinthians 11:1 *Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.*

Fathering Future Generations

Malachi 4:6 *And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the earth with a curse." (NKJ)*

Key Point: ***A failure in revival is when the generation who received it fails to pass it to the next generation.***

The prophet Malachi prophesied that one of the greatest distinguishing attributes of revival in these last days will have to do with the hearts of the fathers embracing the sons, and the hearts of the sons embracing the fathers. One of the greatest failures in revival is that the generation who received the outpouring of God's Spirit failed to pass it to the next generation. For the purpose of clarification, when we talk about fatherhood and sonship we are not being gender distinctive. We are talking about men and women parenting and also being parented. The whole issue of fatherhood and motherhood in the kingdom of God is really a crucial subject on the heart of Father God. The Spirit of God was placing an emphasis and a priority that needs to become the focus of leadership in the church. We have entered into a time or era that requires us to receive a 100-year vision for the church. 100 years signifies that what we are setting out to accomplish is bigger than our generation.

Key Point: ***Parenting future generations is a big part of establishing God's kingdom on earth.***

Kingdom Identity

God gave Adam and Eve a mission greater than themselves. Thus, they were to father and mother future generations to become fathers and mothers, who would all be in right relationship with God. Eventually, through their obedience, loyalty, and partnership with the Lord, they would be able to subdue everything that Satan had possessed and destroy the powers of darkness in all the earth. God could have easily done it by Himself, but He chose to do it through those made in His image and likeness, and who have chosen to love Him and draw close to Him. God's plan to drive out evil from this planet began with fathers and mothers raising sons and daughters who would take hold of this great partnership with God. Adam and Eve began as a son and a daughter to the most perfect parent. They were to take what they learned from Papa God and become good parents, like Him, to their children.

Embracing the Responsibility to Parent

Key Point: *The bigger the Church grows, the less responsibility the people take for it.*

There is a statistic that says, If one person sees a crime, there is a 97% chance he or she will call the police. If two people witness it, it drops to 87% who will report it. But, if ten people see it, the rate goes down to only 14%. There have been occasions when a violent crime has happened in a public street, with witnesses observing it, that no one called the authorities. The more people there are that witness a crime, the less personal responsibility people take for what is happening. This shows us something we need to take note of; the more the church grows, the easier it is for people to hide from responsibility. It should be the opposite in the church.

Every believer has some capacity to parent someone else spiritually. The problem is that the average believer in the church today believes that there is someone more capable than himself or herself for doing the job. We have so many leaders in the church that it's easy for people to think, "Well, when I know as much as they do, or when I receive as strong anointing as they have, then I can do something." The tragedy with this mentality is that any "average" believer could be taken on a ministry trip to any foreign field and excel doing ministry. Should they be placed in a ministry that was over their head they would discover the storehouse that God has placed in them. They would begin to draw from spiritual things they never knew were there. They would find themselves ministering in an anointing they did not know existed.

As long as we compare ourselves to those we admire in the church, then we are less likely to take risks of faith and reach beyond our capabilities to discover God's supernatural abilities at our disposal. We each possess the Spirit of God within us. We have at our disposal access to an inexhaustible kingdom. Our access to the resources of heaven is obtained by grace through faith. Jesus promised us that, "...the Holy Spirit will teach you in that hour what you ought to say."¹ When we find ourselves in over our head with an opportunity to share the good news of the kingdom of God, we can step out in confidence that the Holy Spirit will partner with us. The uniqueness of your personality, your gifts and talents, along with the testimonies of your personal encounters with God in life situations, are the treasures the Holy Spirit will draw upon in giving yourself away to others. The challenge that He has given to each of us is to give ourselves away along with everything we receive. The way we stay current in the things of the Lord is that we pour ourselves out for someone else's sake.

¹ Luke 12:12

Key Point: ***Our goal is not to raise up sons and daughters of the kingdom, but rather, fathers and mothers.***

We have been given an assignment to reproduce. Reproduction is one of the most natural things in the world. If married couples don't have children, it's either because there is no intimacy, there is some sort of a physical obstruction, or they have no vision for it. Spiritually speaking, there are a lot of believers on birth control. They have lost the vision of reproduction. To raise up a generation of revivalists, we simply need to be one step ahead of them to lead them. This idea of trying to obtain a status before we give of ourselves to others is based upon a lie that believes we are not significant or valuable. As soon as we receive the Spirit of God in us at salvation we became qualified. The whole point is this, we must think in terms of pouring our lives into other people so they can become parents themselves and reproduce the grace of God that's on their life. Our goal is not to raise up sons and daughters for God, our goal is to raise up fathers and mothers.

Imitate Me

1 Corinthians 11:1 *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. (NKJ)*

1 Corinthians 4:16-17 ¹⁶ *Therefore I urge you, imitate me.* ¹⁷ *For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church. (NKJ)*

Paul had a remarkable relationship with those whom he fathered in the spiritual. In his role as a spiritual father, he placed the image of Christ at his foresight. In other words he was saying, "I going after Christ, if you choose to follow me you'll find him too."

Board Cutting Illustration:

A minister and teacher by the name of Judson Cornwall gave an illustration that was very insightful. The church he was pasturing at the time was involved in a building project of adding onto the facilities. He had a number of skilled volunteers and carpenters to do the work. He himself was not skilled, but felt he needed to show his support by working alongside of those working. The carpenters kept his tasks simple enough that he could easily accomplish them without much difficulty or pricey mistakes. His first assignment was to cut a stack of lumber into six-foot lengths. They gave him a tape measure and made sure that he understood how to use a skill saw before he went off to cut the boards. The pastor, knowing he must be careful not to mess up this assignment, carefully measured the first board to exactly six feet in length. He carefully made his cut sure and straight. He then re-measured it just to make sure that it was exact. "I did it right," he thought to himself. "Now that I have a model, the rest of the boards should be simple." He then used the board he so precisely cut to measure the next board. Simple enough. It did not take him long to cut every board exactly like the model. When the time came to use the boards it was soon discovered that there was a big problem. The boards he cut were too long. "How could this be?" he thought. I measure the model board to the exact length and then re-checked it. He was so careful. After the carpenters began to investigate the mess, they soon discovered that the pastor was using each and every board as the model for the next. Each time he used the former board as the model he added a couple of millimeters to its length. By the time the pastor finished sawing the whole stack of boards, the last board several centimeters longer.

Key Point: ***It is the likeness of Christ we seek to pass on to the following generations, not the limitations of opinions and traditions of men.***

The problem that we are experiencing in the church is that our model has been the lives of men who were modeling themselves after the shortcomings and religious opinions of other men. We have been doing this for two thousand years. Paul set the standard when he said he was imitating Christ. The role of fathering is to bring each disciple into an encounter with Christ where they too can say, "follow me as I follow Christ." So if Paul accurately imitates Christ, and Timothy accurately mimics Paul, then Timothy should become a copy of Christ. It is the model of Christ that should be passed down to the next generation.

2 Timothy 2:1-2 ¹ You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (NKJ)

There is a cycle here that we can learn from with the illustration of the pastor's attempt at carpentry. If we use the same measurement for precision on every board all the way through the project, then the finished product will also become precise. The house of God must be precisely according to the representation of Christ. In order to re-present Jesus we must become like Him with precision. It is necessary then for the Holy Spirit to trim us back from those things that do not measure up to Christ likeness. He is removing the excess of the philosophies and opinions of men until we fully represent the Gospel of the kingdom.

Passion is one of the most absolutely necessary elements of walking with Christ. Out of an intense love for God comes devotion, commitment, and a quest for knowing Him more. If our living the "Christian life" is known for its discipline, at the most we will be looked up to and admired. If that becomes our driving force, then other's admiration will be our only reward.² But if we are known for our passion for God, we will create a dynamic that will be contagious. Fathers and mothers need this one element to make them continuously successful at reproducing themselves in others.

Key Point: ***Discipline is basically training or managing oneself in developing skill, efficiency and excellence.***

It is tragic when kingdom living is reduced to discipline. Discipline is basically training or managing one's self to develop obedience, self-control or orderliness, skill, and efficiency. Discipline is good, but it can become obscured when set on standards or rules, which become laws of conduct if we are not careful.

Don't get me wrong, discipline is an important aspect of our walk with Christ. It is like the tracks that the train of our passion rides upon. It gives it direction and focus. Yet, discipline by itself is a tragic picture of kingdom living when it becomes the motivating factor that drives us. Believers who are more disciplined than they are passionate have a hard time reproducing themselves. They instead try to create in others through control or coercion the rules by which they attempt to live by. When we try to reproduce through discipline, we try to get others as disciplined as we are. However, people with passion discipline themselves. Passion is to become the motivating force that brings about discipline. It is so much more fun to be driven with fire than it is to be driven by self-will and good intentions.

² Matthew 6:1

Key Point: ***People with passion will discipline themselves.***

Timothy was a faithful spiritual son to Paul. Paul basically said, "Now you do to others what I did to you. Find the faithful, represent Jesus to them, and then pour yourself into them. They will thus find the faithful, represent Christ to them, and duplicate the process." What are we supposed to be doing? We are to cut the board to the same length every time, so that over the next hundred years, we give an accurate representation of who Jesus is. Parenthood is giving a clear picture of the passion that burns in our hearts for God's presence and the manifestation of His kingdom on earth.

Making Disciples

Key Point: ***Discipleship requires sons who are hungry for what father's carry.***

As foretold by the prophet Malachi, another important aspect of revival in these last days is that the hearts of the sons would also turn to the fathers. It is one thing for the fathers to represent with passion the fire of God burning within their hearts. It is another thing for the sons to embrace the fathers with hunger for what they carry. Each of us is in desperate need to be fathered. We each should be looking for someone that has the fire we want. What are the things they do to keep their fire burning? What things do they see in me that quench the fire and keep it from growing? And, am I willing to allow them to touch those things in me that need to change so that the fire grows stronger and brighter?

Jesus had an interesting way of calling out sons. He would prophetically call out their true identities, prophesy into their call and destiny and then simply say, "Follow me." He did not manipulate nor coerce them to become His disciples. He did not control those who did follow Him. He let them decide by their free will to follow Him with every opportunity to leave when they wanted. He even at times made it difficult for His disciples to stay with Him.

Key Point: ***Fathers give sons assignments that are over their head to bring out the best in them.***

Paul had a way of challenging Timothy to grow beyond his present into the greatness God had destined for him. Paul would bring into Timothy's remembrance those things prophesied over him and the gifts imparted to him. He would then charge him to go forward in his pursuit of them and to recognize the obstacles he needed to overcome. Paul would give Timothy assignments he knew were over his head in order to bring out the best in him. These assignments required Timothy to reach beyond his comfort and ability into a supernatural dimension of grace. He learned total reliance upon the Holy Spirit, which is how he then learned to be a father to those who were older than him.

Throughout the history of the church we have seen many discipleship programs designed to train and equip believers. Many of the universities we have today started as schools of discipleship. The problems with these training courses is that the emphasis was placed upon knowledge gained through self-discipline, which has its origin in fulfilling standards of conduct, along with grasping information intellectually without a lot of emphasis on the practical application of it.

Key Point: ***When passion is removed from discipleship, control through fear becomes the tool for the driving force.***

“Discipleship” has left a bad taste in the mouths of many. We see the need to disciple and yet we have a pattern for discipleship that’s disappointing. Because we don’t know how to do it without control, we follow the same paradigm our forefathers established. For those who desire to be a disciple, they have become fearful of being controlled and manipulated because of past experiences or from the horror stories of others. Many have discovered, should they resist control, that they are quickly labeled as “rebellious” and ostracized from the organization or church. When passion is removed from discipleship, control through fear then steps in as the driving force.

Key Point: ***The major tool of discipleship is not control but rather empowering.***

We thus need to redefine discipleship by taking it back to the original measuring tool. It is only then that we can begin reproducing true disciples who know how to parent and rise up other parents. The major key to discipleship is not in control through discipline, but rather in empowering self-management.

Two Elements Necessary to Transcend Revival

A revival that transcends the generations and grows in intensity and glory with each generation will contain these two important elements:

- 1) **Those who are willing to father revivalists;**
- 2) **Those who are willing to be sons of revivalists** and yield their wills to fathers who want to empower them to become great revivalists and history makers.

Understanding Discipleship

John 8:31-32³¹ *Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. ³² And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* (NKJ)

The English word *disciple* comes from a Latin word *discipulus*, meaning, “a pupil who grasps intellectually, and analyzes thoroughly.” The emphasis was on one’s ability to intellectually grasp knowledge. It refers to a student who learns from the teacher. *Discipulus* is closely related to another Latin word, *disciplina*, from which we get the English word *discipline*. Therefore, under a religious paradigm of discipleship, “discipline” became a major part of the instruction given to the disciple.” The Latin goes on further to define the word as, “sense of treatment that corrects or punishes as a from a notion of order necessary for instruction.”³

Formal education was much different in its early history. Historically, the teacher would give instruction to his students while walking around them and observing the students attentiveness to his words. When he felt that a student was mentally drifting away from their attention, he would do one of three things; he

³ Online Etymology Dictionary

would splash water in their face, switch the back of the legs with a long narrow stick, or poke them with a blunt arrow. Discipline became a form of punishment for not paying attention and became the mode of education in that day. Consequently, the students learned to fearfully concentrate on the words of the teacher or bear the consequences. The passion and hunger for knowledge was replaced with fear of failing to learn. Even though the splashing, switching, poking and swats have been replaced with bold red letters written on the top of a failed exam, the impact is the same. Discipline has become the punishing tools teachers use to keep their students on track and orderly. But should these principles be brought into the discipleship of the believer? Fear of failure will never be able to accomplish what learning through inspiration and passion can.

Key Point: *The original Greek language does not relate discipline with discipleship.*

The Latin words, *discipulus* and *disciplina* are closely related because their originators. The Latin speaking religious system of that day carried into the translation of the Scripture the mindset of teaching information by using control through fear of punishment when necessary. Because the gaining of knowledge was in their core value system, they read and understood the Scriptures from that perspective. However, the original Greek language does not promote this perspective. As a matter of fact, the Greek words translated as *disciple* and *discipline* are not related at all. In these two areas we can see how the length of the boards, so to speak, became skewed, which altered the way the church has implemented discipleship.

Key Point: *A disciple is a follower of the teacher until the teacher identifies that all their knowledge, character, and values have been duplicated in the disciple.*

The Greek words translated as *disciple* in the Scriptures are the words, *mathēteuō*, *mathētēs*, and *manthanō*. They all have their root meaning from the word “*math*,” indicating “thought accompanied by calculated endeavor of precepts being added to supporting precepts.”⁴ *Mathēteuō* means not only to learn, but to *become*. It includes attaching to one’s teacher and then to become his follower so as to know him, which resulted in conduct like him. The emphasis was placed upon learning from relationship until the same character and knowledge that the teacher possessed was totally embraced by the disciple, who’s behavior was then evidenced by their lifestyle. The disciples became mimics of, or imitations of the teacher. They were to continue imitating the teaching until the imitation actually became their lifestyle. It started out as self-discipline until it evolved into habitual conduct.

The word *mathētēs* means an adherer who accepts the instruction given to him and makes it his rule of conduct. He not only accepts the instruction intellectually but it becomes part of his value system, from which conduct derives. The related word *manthanō* means, to bring into experience. In this sense it means to cause oneself to know with a moral bearing and responsibility. The emphasis upon discipleship was in the student coming to know through relationship with their teacher. To become related to him is to know him and knowing him is to know his teaching and abide by it.⁵

⁴ Lexicon to the New Testament by Spiros Zodhiates, TH.D

⁵ Lexicon to the New Testament by Spiros Zodhiates, TH.D

Key Point: ***Those who learn from having relationship with Christ will do so until they become like Him.***

With this understanding we can more accurately see what Jesus was saying to His disciples in John 8:31-32. *"If you abide in my word, if you live by my teaching, if you dwell in and operate from the revelation I have brought you, then are you my disciples"*. In other words, those who learn from having relationship with Him will do so until they become like Him. Verse 32 is the promise connected to abiding in His word - you will know the truth, the reality of revelation gained through experience, and in that reality you become free. It is not until the truth of the kingdom becomes part of our core value system that we discover the freedom it contains.

Key Point: ***Instruction means to create an inner structure upon which other things can build upon.***

One of the key elements to discipleship is seen in the word *instruction*. Instruction was more than merely giving away information. It means to create an inner structure upon which all other truths can build. The structure within the human body would be the skeleton. What kind of life would you have if you did not have a skeleton? You would be just a blob of flesh on the floor unable to do anything. The skeleton provides protection for all the vital organs and stability for the muscular system to bring mobility. In the same way, instruction is to create in the disciple an inner structure of core values from which protection and the ability for right behavior would come.

1 Corinthians 9:26-27 ²⁶ *Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; ²⁷ but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.*

Key Point: ***Discipline results in self-will choosing to be self-governed.***

Discipline, in the New Testament, was never associated with punishment due to poor behavior or failing to act according to certain standards or expectations. Rather, discipline was a result of self-will choosing to be self-governed. Discipline was all about managing one's self. In 1 Corinthians 9:27-28, Paul is teaching his description of self-discipline. Why? Because he is using himself as an example for the disciples of Christ to imitate. He says of himself, *"... I discipline my body and bring it into subjection."* Using a runner and a boxer as an example of his personal self-discipline, Paul applies that same fervor to beat back the desires of his flesh, enslave its passions, and set his focus on the prize set before him.

1 Timothy 4:7-8 ⁷ *But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; ⁸ for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*

Paul is teaching Timothy the importance of self-discipline. Our obtaining godliness is conditioned on us personally taking responsibility to manage ourselves rather than relying on someone else to manage us. The word that Paul uses for discipline is a word that literally means, *"exercise naked."* He is referring to the removal of everything that hinders our movement towards Christ likeness. In Timothy's case, Paul is

admonishing him to remove the hindrances of 'old wives' tales, superstitions, or as one translation reads, "stay clear of silly stories that get dressed up as religion."⁶

Proverbs 3:11-12 ¹¹ My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, ¹² because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. (NIV)

Hebrews 12:7-13 ⁷ Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? ⁸ If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. ⁹ Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! ¹⁰ Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. ¹¹ No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. ¹² Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. ¹³ "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed. (NIV)

Key Point: *The Father disciplines us as a means of training in making right choices.*

This gives an excellent example of how God is a Father to us and how His discipline is not for the purpose of punishing us for wrong behaviors, but rather for the purpose of training, teaching, and equipping. The Greek and Hebrew word used for *discipline*, literally means, "the training of a child." A coach will train his athletes to run through obstacle courses, push their strength and endurance to their full potential. This is not as punishment, but to build them up. How does God disciple? He allows hardship, testings, and pressure to come into our lives so that we learn to draw upon His grace to overcome. He allows us to experience how our poor choices bring consequences. This is because He wants us to recognize those areas of our hearts that are not yet yielded to His likeness and His ways.

Like Moses and the people of Israel, God wanted more for His people than to know His deeds. He wanted them to know His ways. His ways impact the very core of our being. We are disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's goal is to create in us Christ likeness. He strikes at the heart of our being to transform our ways into His ways. He will take us through exercises that require us to strip down naked from everything that hinders the heart of the Father from being expressed.

We are called to be His representatives. It is during the hard times that our core values are best demonstrated to those around us. It is the hard times that become opportunities for Him to be seen through us. Does He create the hard times? Not necessarily. Most of the struggles we experience have more to do with consequences due to poor decisions in bad circumstances. These hardships happen to all people because we live in an imperfect world. That does not mean God is the originator. One thing we can be sure of, God is good! No matter what we are going through, He is with us and is able to deliver us. But even if He chooses to not rescue us, are we going to choose to represent Him well through it all?

⁶ "The Message, the Bible in Contemporary Language" by Eugene H. Peterson. Copyright ©2002 by Eugene H. Peterson. Published by Navpress

7 Keys for Discipleship

Looking at discipleship from the fathering examples of Jesus with His disciples, along with Paul with his followers, we can learn 7 keys for discipleship that they used to successfully empower their disciples.

- 1. To discovery one's true identity** - Jesus prophetically saw that Simon was living by a false identity and called out his true identity as "Peter" the rock.⁷ Father's need to look beyond the false identities many are living by to discover the identity placed in them by God. Call that identity out until they can see themselves as God sees them.
- 2. To recognize one's calling** - The identity that Jesus saw in Peter also revealed his call. The three and a half years Peter spent following Jesus were years of shaping his character so that he could walk in the shoes of his calling. During those years of following Jesus he was given assignments, which drew out his identity and exercised his call. Prophetically recognizing the calling, gifts, talents, and personalities of those we are fathering is crucial to their success.
- 3. To recognize our role in those we are leading** - Jesus asked his disciples a very pointed question, "Who am I to you?" The role that they saw Jesus in defined the influence he would have in their lives. Jesus taught a principle of the kingdom when He said, "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward."⁸ As a "teacher" the role would be for instruction and training. The reward will be instruction and understanding. As a "pastor" the role would be for care and provision. The reward will be care, health, and wholeness. As "Father" the role would be to direct, guide, and equip with assignments for a mission. The reward, discovering who we are and why God placed us on planet earth. The role that we see our leaders filling will define the influence and relationship they will have with us. It is good for the leader to establish his role with the disciple. Otherwise, the leader may be expecting to fill a role that the disciple has no intention of him filling.

The role of a Father is not only to call out the disciple's true identities and calling. They are not only to encourage and empower them to pursue greatness. But they are also given permission to touch core areas of their being where Christ needs to rule. We give them permission to bring to our attention areas of our lives that are not measuring up to our identities, callings, and the ways of God. They confront our constraints so that our core values reflect the kingdom within us. Fathers need to have captured the Father heart of God in order to establish the image of Christ in their disciples. It is Christ in them that becomes their hope of glory.

- 4. To encourage commitment** - Understanding one's role as a disciple is also important. As a disciple, we are yielding to a Father's role to mold us and shape us from the inside out. This is going to require choices to follow their directives, even when we don't understand what's going on, or the assignments we have been given to do. It's going to require commitment to press through when everything in us wants to give up. It is going to require that we manage ourselves, take ownership of our own issues and shortcomings, and then step up to the task of self-discipline.
- 5. Setting a Standard to Imitate** - Take hold of the ways of God and imitate them. Understand that it is only truth experienced that becomes a reality expressed in the character of our hearts. It is not enough to intellectually grasp truths being taught to us. We must see how these truths can be practically exercised so that they bare the fruit of heart transformation.

⁷ John 1:42

⁸ Matthew 10:41 (NASB)

It always feels strange to imitate Christ when we can't feel anything happening in us. Even after all in our attempts to imitate Him we can become discouraged because nothing appears to be happening. The key is to keep imitating His ways until the reality of the truth being exercised becomes ignited by grace through faith, which results in experience. As we press past the need to rationalize it all and imitate, by faith, we will ultimately experience the reality of God's ways as they become our ways. Some may say, "Isn't this works?" No! Obedience to the ways of God begins with repentance from our ways, which begins with intentional change in our behavior. Our changed behavior must continue until repentance has its finished work in our hearts, bringing to inner change. When our obedience of faith does not lead to an experience with God's grace resulting in transformation, then we're falling short of the glory intended for us. Faith is the channel through which God's grace, His empowering ability for change, has its finished work.

- 6. To thrive in a culture of honor** - Honor is the demonstration of the value we see in each other. Recognizing each other's significance as having an identity in Christ and a call upon their lives is responded to with respect. Every person created in the image of God is worthy of honor. It is not an issue of having deserved it. It is an issue of honoring the man or woman God created them to be. We are further exhorted to give a double honor to those who lead us.⁹ Those who father us as revivalists are to be honored with special respect. Creating a culture of honor in our relationships is imperative in creating an environment in which revivalists thrive.

Honoring begins with fathers. Because the culture of the world does not teach honor, it must then be taught through demonstrated actions of honor and not mere demands for honor. By demonstrating honor to our peers through words of praise and admiration, we create a model of honor. We demonstrate honor to those we father by treating them as significant individuals with great potential. Honor cannot be taught through rules of conduct and obligations of performance. It must come through experiencing the values we demonstrate.

- 7. To function in an environment of unconditional love** - The Agape love of God is best expressed through its giving nature. God's type of love focuses upon the needs of others so that self-sacrifice becomes a natural attribute.

Conclusion

The time of parenting sons and daughters to become fathers and mothers is the principle of God's kingdom. It's time to rise to the call and the responsibility to pour ourselves out into the lives of those God brings to us. There's something significant about parenthood that empowers in the children's successes. Brothers compete, but fathers delight to see their children excel beyond where they themselves have come. Wouldn't it be great to speak into someone's life, to call out their true identity and calling and then watch that individual excel into greatness and become the next Billy Graham, or Smith Wigglesworth, Aimee Simple McPherson, or Kathryn Kuhlman? Many of our tomorrow's heroes, history makers, and revivalists simply need someone to see their value and significance, call it out, and empower them to reach for their inheritance from heaven.

End of Lesson 206

⁹ 1 Timothy 5:17

Recommended Resources:

1. Audio message, "Revivalists Becoming Fathers" by Bill Johnson.

Copies of this message can be obtained through:

Sound Wisdom
933 College View Drive
Redding, CA 96003
USA

Email: customerservice@ibethel.org
Customer Service Phone #: 1-530-246-6000