

UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEW FAMILY

SERIES: Living in the Presence of God #2

Sunday, April 18, 2021

The Westminster Shorter Catechism:

“What is the chief end of man?”

“Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever!”

Ephesians 3:14 (NASB) *For this reason I [continually] bow my knees [in worship] before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name [its character, works, reputation, significance], ¹⁶that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened [reinforced] with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷so that Christ may [actually] dwell [make His permanent home] in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.*

REVIEW: An Introduction into God's Family.

1. God's family is the **CONTEXT** for my growth and inner change.

2. God invites me to **PARTICIPATE** in this family.

God's family is characterized by:

ACCEPTANCE.

GENTLENESS.

FREEDOM.

A profound sense of WORTH.

God's family runs on TRUST (faith).

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S FAMILY

1. We ACCEPT God the Father's Acceptance.

Colossians 2:1 (NASB) *For I [continually desire you to know] want you to know how great a struggle [effort] I have [I am making] on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face [in person], ² that [in order that] their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance [fullness of feelings] of understanding [which come from understanding], resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself...*

2. We Respond With GRATITUDE.

The "Salad Bar" Test

THE PROCESS OF FAMILY GROWTH

Discipleship is not just about knowing. *It's a knowing that grips us EMOTIONALLY.*

Colossians 2:6 (NASB) *Therefore as [As then] you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him [be arraigning/ordering your life in relationship to Him], ⁷ having been firmly [deeply] rooted and now being built up in Him and established [legally confirmed] in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing [abounding] with gratitude.*

1. ROOTING: The Emotional Reality of God's Love.

Philippians 2:1 (NASB) *Therefore if [since] there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love [tender speaking that comes from agape love], if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection [deep compassion] and compassion [tender mercies],² make my joy complete by being of the same mind [as I have just described], maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.*

Discipleship occurs when what you know grips your emotions deeply enough that it CONTROLS the unconscious part of your life and IMPACTS your consciousness.

Feelings do not authenticate truth, but they do authenticate (give evidence of) our UNDERSTANDING of truth.

Romans 15:13 *“And may the God of the hope fill you with every variety of joy and peace in the process of believing, with the abundance of hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*

2 Peter 1:12 (NLT) *“I plan to keep on reminding you of these things - even though you already know them and are standing firm in the truth.”¹³ Yes, I believe I should keep on reminding you of these things as long as I live.”*

2. LAYING THE FOUNDATION: Truth Based in This Love.

3. BUILDING THE STRUCTURE: Growing into the Relationship We Have With Him.

Discipleship (being a follower of Jesus Christ) is a powerful process that affects our FEELINGS that comes as a RESPONSE to God's acceptance and our relationship to Him as our Father.

ACTION STEPS:

1. Consider your response to the “*Salad Bar*” illustration – God the Father entering your favorite restaurant. Imagine how you might react as you see the doorknob turning and the door swinging open. What do you do?
 - Do you run to the door to greet Him?*
 - Do you stand in place and wait for Him to come to you, to let you know where you stand?*
 - Do you jump behind the salad bar in quaking fear, guilt and shame?*
 - Or, do you ignore Him, sit down and eat your salad and read your Bible?*

Where would you be and what does this say about your emotional connection with the Father?

2. Tell the Father that you desire to be one who runs to see Him. Acknowledge that there may be some obstacles to this. Tell Him you need His help.
3. Ask Him to take you to the next step of being a “follower of Jesus” – a disciple. Ask Him to help you have:
 - A greater understanding of God’s love and delight for you.
 - A foundation of truth that will keep you from being swayed by the circumstances and people around you.
 - Growth in the relational aspects of your commitment to God.