

# Paradise Lost and Restored: What is Discipleship? (Part 1)

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## I. Introduction

What kind of family did you have? Was it a loving and caring family or was it dysfunctional? What if God had a family and what if you could be part of it? How different would your life be if you finally got the love, care, and guidance you needed? And what if God asked us to help others join His family so they could experience true family?

## II. What does Making Disciples Have to do With Family?

**God is Family**, the God we worship is a family: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, John 15:26. They have lived in this family for all eternity, John 17:5. And in this family there is love, care, and guidance, i.e., the Father and the Holy Spirit guide the Son, Matthew 3:13-4:11.

**God created us to live and function within a family, which is supposed to mirror His family**, every child is supposed to be born into a family with a mother, father, and siblings. But it's not just blood relatives that make up a family. The extended family includes friends, co-workers, or any other personal associations. And our families are supposed to work just like God's family. Thus, in a properly functioning family,

1. The mother and father love, care for, and guide the children.
2. The children love, respect, and follow their parents' guidance.
3. The older children take what they learned from their parents and those in the extended family and teach their younger siblings.
4. And the examples and lessons the children learned from their parents, siblings, and extended family are not kept to themselves. They share them with others like the kid next door who doesn't have a loving and supportive family, or with the kid at school who's picked on because he's different, or with anyone else whose family is broken and therefore they lack love, care and guidance. Finally, they share all these things with their own families when they move on and form families of their own.

**But we're not just to be a mirror of God's family, He made us to be part of His family**, Adam and Eve were made to live in community with God and each other and so was the rest of the human race. We were all meant to be part of God's family—He wanted all of us as His children, John 1:12; 1 Timothy 2:4—and part of each other's family. As Father, God expresses each one of the three characteristics present in any good father, love care, and guidance: (1) He loves us so profoundly that He sacrificed His only Son in order to make us part of His family, John 3:16. (2) He knew we needed constant care so He permanently gave us a part of Himself to carry with us wherever we go, Romans 8:11. And (3) He knew how difficult life would be so He gave us detailed instructions and personal examples that would guide us into a successful life, Genesis 3; Proverbs; Ephesians 5-6, etc. Thus, as a Father, God would forever be with us in Spirit and truth.

**But then Satan disrupted God's family/Our family**, he got the first of us to turn on our Father, Genesis 3, and ever since then he's been working hard to do the same to us, Colossians 2. This world suffers from war, poverty, abuse, corruption, violence, divorce, murder, indifference, and every other family-crushing force. Satan loves it when society has a 50% divorce rate. He loves it when the children who suffered under these divorces turn their backs on marriage and commitment. He especially loves it when these children perpetuate the cycle by having children of their own who turn out just like them...and on, and on it goes. How do we find our way back to God's family and the love, care, and guidance that will heal our own shattered families?

**Jesus came to show us how to get back into God's family**, at an appointed time, God sent His Son to call us back into His family. And when He got here, He confronted every family-crushing force that Satan convinced us to follow. Satan wants us to hate and murder, Jesus tells us to love and reconcile, Matthew 5:21-24. Satan wants us to fulfill every sexual desire; Jesus tells us not to even satisfy the sexual thoughts in our minds, Matthew 5:27-28. Satan wants us to panic when we're running out of money to pay the bills; Jesus tells us to follow the Father who will provide everything we need, Matthew 6:25-34. Satan wants us to get a new spouse when we're tired of the old one; Jesus tells us that marriage was not designed to be a throw-away institution, instead, God can make it last forever, Matthew 19:1-10. Satan convinces us that our sins have paralyzed us, but Jesus says, "I can take your sins away and set you free," Mark 2:1-12. Satan tells us to shun those we deem losers, but Jesus says, "God's family was made for such as these," Mark 2:13-17. Satan wants us to live for ourselves, Jesus tells us to go back to the Father and live life in His Kingdom of family, love and forgiveness, Matthew 6:1-18.

It's interesting that when someone asked Jesus about the greatest commandment, He gave two: "Love God with everything you've got" and "Love your neighbor as yourself," Mark 12:28-34. The first commandment has to do with living within God's family. The second commandment has to do with living within the family of mankind. This is what Jesus came to bring us: family with God and family with each other.

**What does all this have to do with making disciples?** Making disciples is the way to both family with God and family with each other. First, what's a disciple? It's someone who follows the footsteps of another. Jesus came to show us the way back to God and each other. He did this by showing His followers how to get back into God's family and how to treat each other as family. When He left, He said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." Matthew 28:19-20. Jesus is telling us to show people how to follow His footsteps so that they will go out and teach others how to follow His footsteps...we are a family with a Father who wants to teach us how to live life with Him and each other and what we learn from Him, He wants us to teach others, especially those who are not yet part of His family.

### III. Conclusion

*And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, "How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?" When Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*