



## Life Group Study Notes

### “We Are Family, Part 4”

Ps. Joseph Bonifacio - August 28, 2016

#### **Warm Up (10-15 minutes)**

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What is one unusual fact about your family?
- What is one thing that you are especially proud of about your family?
- What is one thing that you hope to someday do for your family?

#### **Word (10-15 minutes)**

Sermons can be heard online at [www.bethelworld.org](http://www.bethelworld.org)

Today's message is the conclusion of our 2016 series on Spiritual Family.

#### **Life is simpler alone.**

This may be true, but it is also less rich and fulfilling. Life alone leads to a place that is empty and lonely.

#### **Our faith was designed for community.**

God himself is a communal being: one God eternally existing in three persons. God created us in his image with a social design. We fundamentally need to be in community.

#### **Ephesians 2:19-22 ESV**

*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.*

We are members of God's household; or another way to say it, we are members of God's spiritual family.

#### **What does spiritual family mean?**

##### **#1 - A New Allegiance**

Believing in Jesus Christ includes acknowledging him as Lord. He becomes our greatest treasure and speaks with ultimate authority into our lives. We embrace and prioritize his mission above our own.

- **Our citizenship is in God's kingdom.**

Our loyalty to Jesus and his kingdom must be higher than our national or ethnic loyalties. God's kingdom is an eternal kingdom that will never pass away. Jesus is the King of all kings who will never be dethroned.

- **Our allegiance to God will keep us from fighting one another over other inferior agendas.**

Whenever we fight one another, it is because we have lost sight of our greater common loyalties and priorities that are rooted in Christ. The more we understand and embrace God, his mission, his vision, his values, his truth, his holiness, and his love, then the more we will celebrate our diversity and be able to overcome our differences.

## **#2 - A New Family**

Although Jesus loved his natural family, he also placed extraordinary value on spiritual family. God does the same in our lives. He connects us with people who are actually our spiritual brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers, and sons and daughters. Together we all know God as our Father, the Son as our elder brother, and the Holy Spirit as our helper.

- **Christian brotherhood is not an ideal which we must realize; it is rather a reality created by God in Christ in which we may participate.** (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*)

The choice and the work is ours, but God has already established the reality of spiritual family. We must choose to value and embrace what God has created in Christ. We must work to know, understand, and value one another even when there are significant differences between us in terms of nationalities, ethnicities, education levels, professions, preferences, et cetera.

- **Act in love**

Just as we want our natural families to be safe places where we experience love, so also we are called and commanded by God to love one another, forgive another, serve one another, be kind and hospitable to one another, et cetera.

## **#3 - A New Center**

Jesus and God's mission become central to our lives. Whatever else had been the driving or consuming passion or focus of our lives must be replaced by Jesus and his mission.

- **A cornerstone is the stone by which all other stones find their place.**
- **We all find our place when we find Jesus.**

Jesus reorients our lives, giving us meaning and direction. God places us in his church and in his mission in this world. Nothing is more fulfilling than doing God's will and being in the middle of God's purpose. The more we come to know Jesus and his Word and walk with him, the more we will discover his plan for our lives.

Spiritual family is invaluable. Making it a priority frames and fulfills our lives.

### **Discussion (10-15 minutes)**

**Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related point for discussion.**

- What is most meaningful to you about spiritual family?
- What has strengthened your bonds to spiritual family?
- Has anything ever threatened your commitment to spiritual family?

### **Prayer (10-15 minutes)**

**Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.**

- Ask God to deepen our understanding of the reality, importance, and value of his spiritual family.
- Ask God to show us where we have not valued spiritual family the way that he wants us to.
- Thank God for sending his Son to make us part of his spiritual family, and ask God to send him again soon for the second time, so that all of God's family might be brought together to inherit and enjoy all that God has planned for us.