



Life Group Study Notes

“We Are Family, Part 3”

Ps. James Lowe - August 21, 2016

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

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

- How many brothers and sisters do you have? Who were you closest to when you grew up?
- Who were you closest to in your extended family besides your parents or siblings?
- Who are you close to in spiritual friendship besides anyone in your family?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Matthew 12:46-50 NIV *While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.” He 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.”*

- Spiritual Family. Jesus values not only his own family, but also his spiritual family. He considers everyone who obeys his Heavenly Father to be his family. He doesn't diminish the importance and value of his normal family, but elevates the importance and value of his spiritual family. He treated his disciples as genuine family. He loved them, served them, poured into them, revealed his Father's business to them, and more. His commitment to them ran so deep that he gave his life for them.

Acts 2:36-41 NIV *“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.*

- Heart. Spiritual family has its origin in our hearts. Just because someone joins a church doesn't mean that they have entered into spiritual family. A person must be regenerated by God's Spirit. God's truth enters the heart and God challenges us to repent and believe the Gospel concerning the Lord Jesus. It is when we truly repent and believe that God adopts us into his family.
- Help. We all need help to grow spiritually. These early disciples needed help and guidance in how to follow and obey God. They needed to be water baptized. They needed to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. We all need help in taking steps to secure our place in God's spiritual family.

Acts 2:42-47 NIV They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. 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.

- Health. The early church was spiritually healthy because they were dedicated to four important activities. These same activities are just as necessary today if we are to enjoy healthy spiritual family.
 - They were dedicated to listening and putting into practice the teaching of the apostles.
 - They were dedicated to fellowship with one another and with their leaders, the apostles.
 - They were dedicated to having meals together and celebrating the Lord's Supper.
 - They were dedicated to praying together.
- The early church was deeply devoted to God and to one another. God moved mightily in their midst and through their leaders. The consequence was large numbers of people came to believe in their testimony concerning Jesus.

Spiritual family is a work done in our hearts by God. We enter God's spiritual family when we repent and believe the Gospel. With the help of other believers we take steps to follow and obey Jesus. By joining ourselves in relationship to other believers we grow in the depth of our relationship with God and our relationships with others. When we do all of this we experience the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit.

If you haven't yet entered God's family, now is the time to begin. If you have but aren't currently enjoying spiritual family, now is the time to make spiritual family a priority. If you are enjoying spiritual family, now is the time to reach out to others and bring them into spiritual family.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

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

- What (if anything) would need to change in your life in order to be dedicated to learning and obeying the apostles' teaching?
- What (if anything) would need to change in your life in order to be dedicated to fellowshiping with one another and our spiritual leaders?
- What (if anything) would need to change in your life in order to be dedicated to praying together with one another?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

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

- Ask God to work in our hearts to give us a greater revelation of spiritual family.
- Ask God to make us aware of opportunities to help others take steps to follow Jesus and obey God.
- Ask God to convict us and inspire us to regularly take those actions that foster health in our spiritual family.