

The Marks Of A Disciple Of Jesus Christ Part Four

- A disciple of Jesus Christ loves to have fellowship with God. He loves to be alone with God and talk with God.
- A disciple of Jesus Christ loves to learn the will of God for His life. He loves to study the scriptures to discover the will of God for His life.
- A disciple of Jesus Christ loves his brothers and sisters in Christ.

Matt 12:47-50

47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

KJV

Jesus considered His disciples to be His family. He loved them like you should love your family.

If you are one of His disciples, he considers you to be a member of His family.

Jesus commanded His disciples to love one another as He had loved them.

John 13:34-35

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

KJV

After Pentecost, those first disciples considered their new brothers and sisters in Christ to be their family.

Acts 2:41-47

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common;

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.

46 And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

KJV

In the Old Testament the family is mentioned about 240 times. In the Gospels and the Epistles it is not mentioned once to refer to a man, wife, and their children. In this one instance the word family is used to refer to the Household of Faith or the body of Christ.

Eph 3:14-15

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

KJV

Now the command to love one another as family does not mean we should neglect our specific biblical responsibility to our natural family; our parents, our spouse, our children, and our siblings. At the cross Jesus gave specific direction for the care of his mother.

But Jesus commands us to consider all of His disciples to be our family. He wants us to love them like family. He wants us to consider our Kingdom Family as dear to us as we do our natural family. He wants us to be like Stephanas.

1 Cor 16:14-16

14 Let all your things be done with charity.

15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

16 That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.

KJV

Having this kind of love for your Kingdom Family is a work of grace through the Holy Spirit. It is natural to love your natural family and to be concerned about their success. It is supernatural to love your Kingdom Family the way you love your natural family. It is natural to love your own children. It is supernatural to love your Kingdom Family the way you love your own children. The same could be said for your siblings. It is natural to love your own siblings. It is supernatural to love your Kingdom Family the way you love your own siblings.

When we receive Jesus as our savior, He gives us this love for our Kingdom Family. It is one of the fruits of the Spirit.

- This love needs to be nurtured to be maintained.
Just like parents who remind their children to love one another, we need to be reminded. We can lose our love for one another through neglect or hurt or disobedience.
- This love needs opportunity.

Gal 6:10

10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

KJV

The formation of the local church was to provide a place and a people for the Kingdom Family to live and love like a family.

Heb 10:24-25

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

KJV

- This love needs leadership.

1 Cor 16:15-16

15 I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)

16 **That ye submit yourselves unto such,** and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.

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There are those who would say that the leadership and organization of the local church is not that important because what is important is that we have the right heart.

But let me ask you this. Would you say the same thing about a school? Would you say the same thing about a business? Have you ever heard it said...?

If a business ran its organization the way the local church runs its business, the business would go broke.

How important was leadership and organization to the early church? The first disciples of Jesus were the first elders of the church. Those first elders certainly had the right heart. They were leading the church to love their kingdom family. But because of a problem in organization, that love was neglected.

Acts 6:1

6:1 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

KJV

Love without wisdom is a waist!

Love without wisdom also makes us appear to be hypocritical.

It is important that we have the heart that Jesus had toward His disciples and consider our brothers and sisters in Christ to be our Kingdom Family.

But it is just as important that we have the right leadership and organization. Otherwise, we will not fulfill the command of the Lord to love one another as He has loved us.

After the church at Jerusalem was dispersed due to persecution, what do we know about the leaderships and organization of the early church?

- Each assembly was small when compared to most modern congregations. They met in homes. It is believed that the first building built to house a church was not built until 230AD. It was small. There were no great cathedrals built for large congregations during the first 400 years of the church age.
- Each small local church had an elder. The elder was the Pastor.
- Each elder of a local church worked with other elders.
- Each local assembly multiplied as new converts were won and a new elder was trained by an existing elder.

2 Tim 2:1-2

2:1 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2 And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

KJV

Does our leadership and organization look like what the Lord Jesus and the apostles first formed?

In today's organization, small assemblies have been replaced by large ones. The really large ones are called mega churches. As an assembly grows it is lead by a small group of full time Pastors with a senior Pastor.

Is it possible to love one another the way Jesus has loved us with this kind of leadership and organization?

If you had an orphanage with 500 children and only 10 adults to shepherd those children, could you fulfill the command of Christ for each child?

How many adults do you think you would need to make each child feel loved like family?

In 2004 I resigned. My family was really hurting. For 15 months I got to sit where you sit. I want you to know that it was not very pleasant. Being one individual in a mass of 500 people with no Pastor assigned to personally care for you did not make us feel very loved.

Last year I read a book called, "So You Don't Want To Go To Church Anymore." There were many times during those 15 months that I felt that way so the title rung a bell.

I don't personally blame any one for this but myself. I had led the church to have the wrong leadership and organization and I had no one to blame but myself. I knew that changing the titles of a few men from A/C to elders was not going to make a difference. I knew that doing away with the role of a senior Pastor and replacing that role with a committee of men was not going make a difference.

What is needed is a people who have the heart of Jesus toward His disciples and an organization like the early church that will enable the body of Christ to live and love one another the way Jesus lived and loved His disciples.

It happened in the early church for 400 years. Could it happen again?

If it doesn't happen, our nation is going to be completely lost to hedonism. Our mega church organization is not going to change our culture. As fast as some of these churches are growing, they are not going to keep up with the population growth of unbelievers. The current emphasis by some on having a Godly family and Godly children is not going to change our culture. Pagans are being reproduced at much faster rate than parents are able to reproduce Godly children and Godly generations.

We need a plan that is faster than reproduction every twenty years.

The only way we are going to change our culture and the world is for God's people to have the heart of Jesus for His disciples and an organization like the early church that will enable the body of Christ to grow and reproduce at a faster rate than the world's population.

It happened once. Can it happen again?

I have repented and dedicated the rest of my life to this end. Will you join me?

