

**T
O
P
I
C
A
L

S
T
U
D
Y**

New Life in the Family of Christ

by
Duane L. Anderson



Serve and Equip
sveq.org

New Life in the Family of Christ

Copyright © 1995, Duane L. Anderson, American Indian Bible Institute; 2022, DLA, Serve and Equip
Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
This resource is available from and distributed free of charge by Serve and Equip - <https://sveq.org>
ANY REPRODUCTION OF MATERIAL FOR RESALE OR PROFIT IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED
Updated July 2023

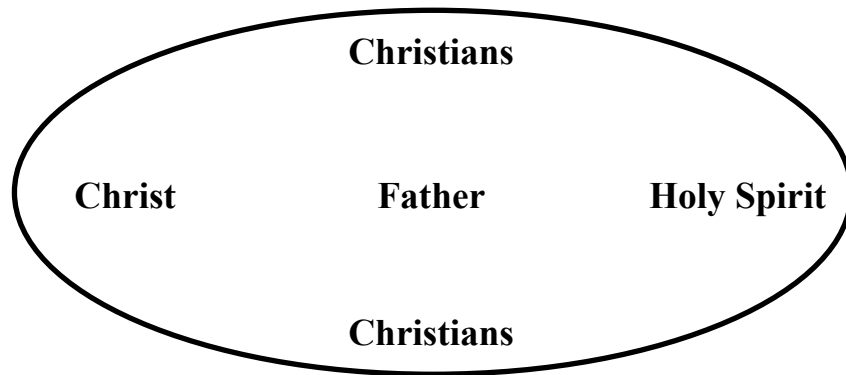
New Life in the Family of Christ

In the New Testament, Christ often compares physical life and spiritual life to help us understand truth about both our physical family and our spiritual family much more clearly. In this manual, we will be looking at many of these comparisons to better understand our new life in the family of Christ. One of the many passages that pictures this family relationship is:

Romans 8:14-17

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs -- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him*, that we may also be glorified together.”

Family of Christ

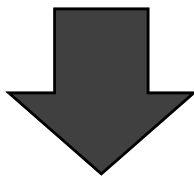


We enter the family of Christ by spiritual birth

John 3:6-7

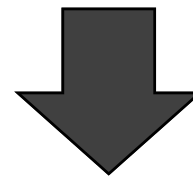
“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ‘Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.”””

enter by
physical birth



Physical Family

enter by
spiritual birth



Spiritual Family

Growth in the Family of Christ

The New Testament compares physical growth to spiritual growth

| physical growth | spiritual growth | scriptures on spiritual growth |
|--------------------|---------------------|---|
| newborn baby | spiritual newborn | 1 Peter 2:2 |
| physical toddler | spiritual toddler | 1 Corinthians 3:1-3, 13:11; Ephesians 4:14; Hebrews 5:14 |
| physical child | spiritual child | Luke 2:40; 1 John 2:13 |
| physical young man | spiritual young man | 1 John 2:13-14 |
| physical parent | spiritual parent | 1 Corinthians 4:14-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12; 1 John 2:13-14 |

Physical and Spiritual growth both happen best within a loving family

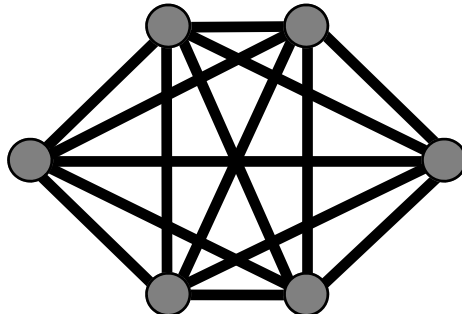
Colossians 3:18-21

“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”

John 13:34-35

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Families with healthy relationships focus on loving one another



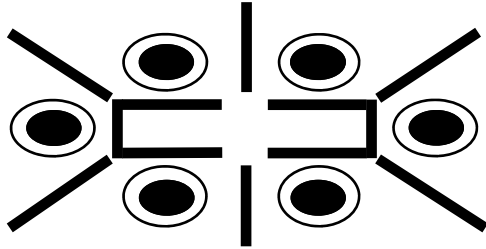
Understanding Healthy Relationships

Two Types of Relationships

1 John 4:18

“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.”

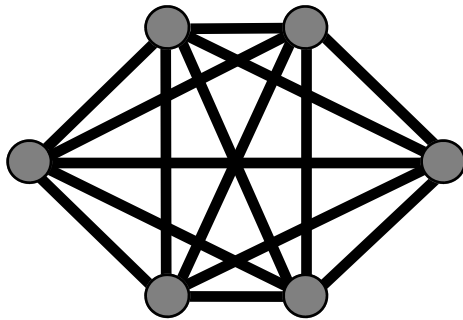
Fear - Based Relationships



Fear Relationships

- ◆ relationships controlled by fear
- ◆ everyone erects barriers with others
- ◆ everyone creates a shell to protect their feelings
- ◆ no trust
- ◆ no communication

Love - Based Relationships



Healthy Relationships

- ◆ relationships are controlled by love
- ◆ barriers have been replaced by acceptance
- ◆ shells have been replaced by openness
- ◆ trust is a characteristic of relationships
- ◆ communication is direct

How we developed fear - based relationships

When Adam and Eve sinned, they immediately experienced five things:

shame - Genesis 3:7

separation from God (and each other) - Genesis 3:8

fear - Genesis 3:10

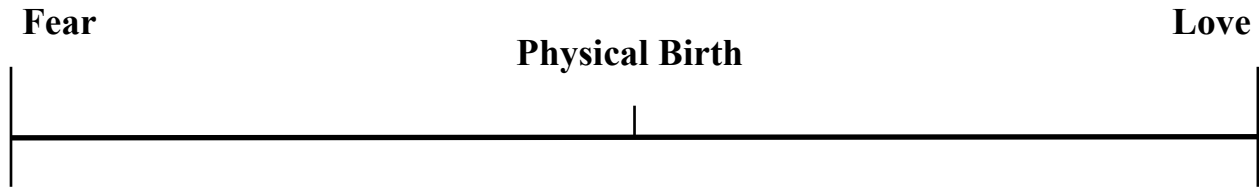
guilt - Genesis 3:11

blame - Genesis 3:12-13

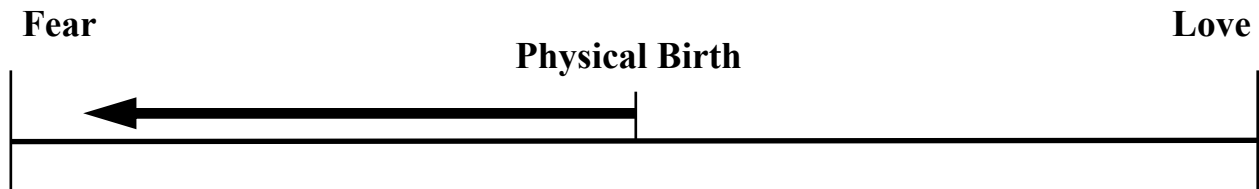
This page taken from Healthy Relationships (page 1 of 5) - Updated: April 2023
Copyright © 1995, Duane L. Anderson, AIBI; 2022 DLA, Serve and Equip
Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
This resource is available from and distributed free of charge by Serve and Equip - <https://sveq.org>
ANY REPRODUCTION OF MATERIAL FOR RESALE OR PROFIT IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED

Why We Also Develop Fear - Based Relationships

At physical birth, we know neither fear or love



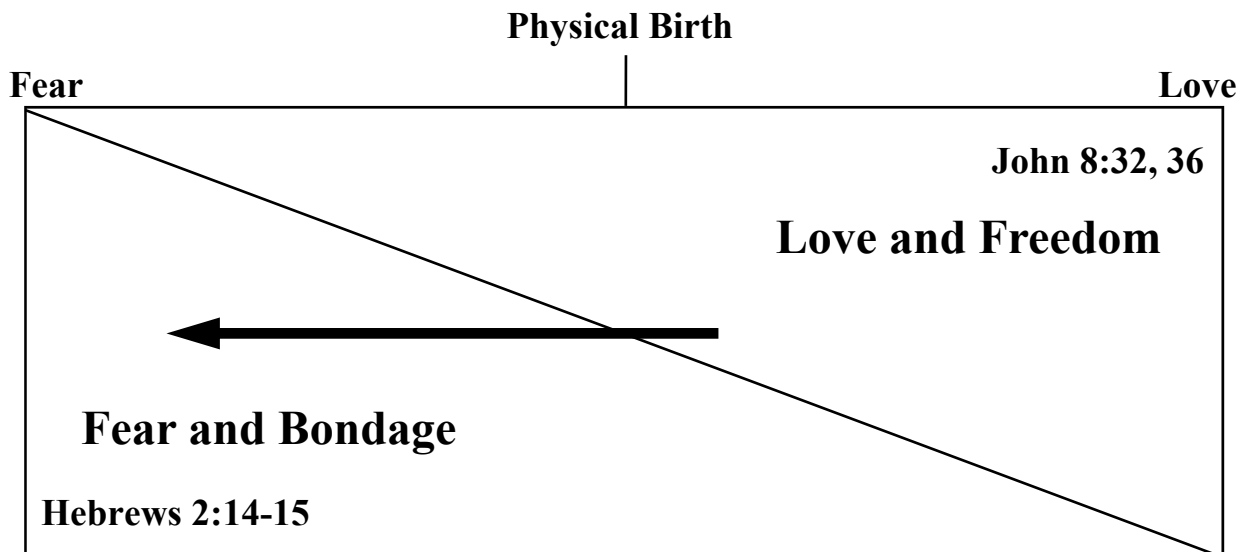
However, two things caused us to begin moving toward fear.
Our own sin - Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:23
The sins of others - Romans 1:18-32



As a result, our lives became controlled by fear

Hebrews 2:14-15

“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

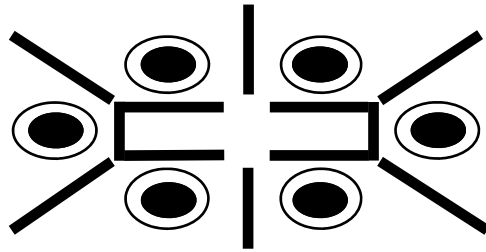


Developing Healthy Relationships in the Family of Christ

Unhealthy relationships can continue among Christians

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able *to receive it*, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?”

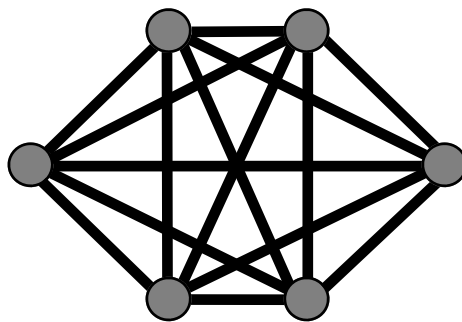


Sin will always create barriers between people

The desire of God is for Christians to learn to develop healthy relationships

Philippians 2:3-4

“*Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”



Acceptance and forgiveness will always break down barriers between people

Romans 15:7

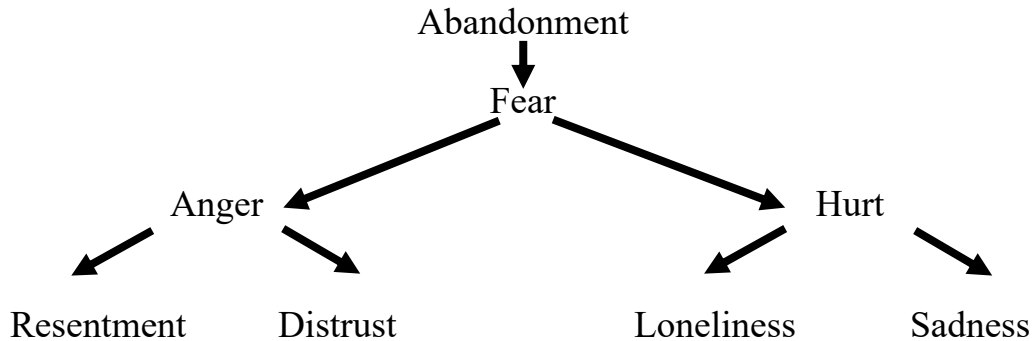
“Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.” (NASB 1995)

Healthy Relationships in the Family of Christ Begin With Spiritual Parents

Because of sin, we may have experienced abandonment

Psalm 27:10

“When my father and my mother forsake me, Then the LORD will take care of me.”



Common forms of abandonment:

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| physical abandonment | no one was there to be with me because of: absence abuse addictions |
| mental abandonment | no one was there to answer my questions |
| social abandonment | no one was there to show me how to develop healthy relationships with others |
| emotional abandonment | no one was there to listen and to understand me |
| spiritual abandonment | no one was there to lead me back to God |

Spiritual parents provide Christians some one to imitate

1 Corinthians 4:15-17

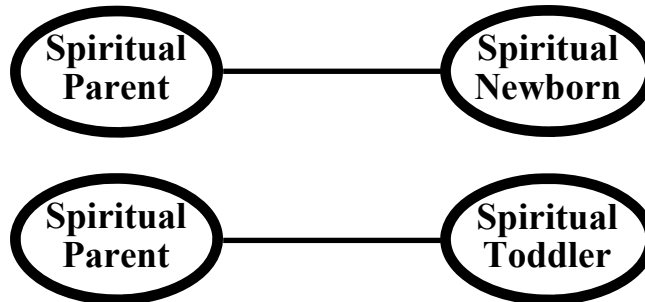
“For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me. For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.”

Spiritual parents provide the care of a nursing mother

1 Thessalonians 2:7-9

“But we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children. So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God, but also our own lives, because you had become dear to us. For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.”

This provides the first bonding relationship of a Christian

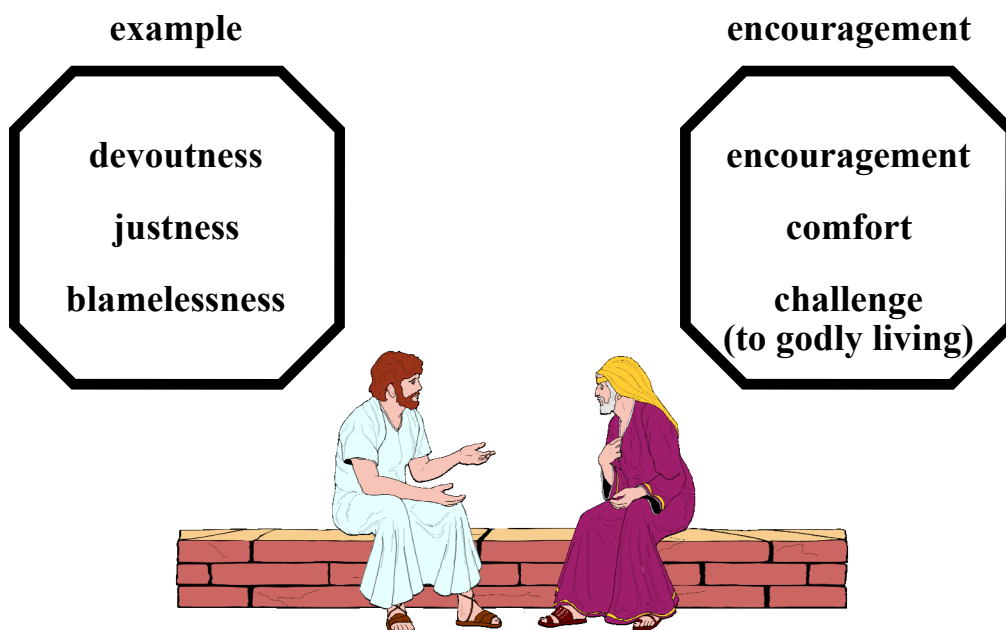


Spiritual parents provide the encouragement of a father

1 Thessalonians 2:10-12

“You *are* witnesses, and God *also*, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father *does* his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”

This provides both example and encouragement to a Christian



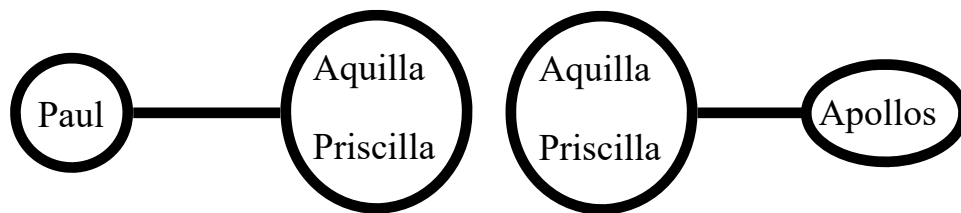
Spiritual parents carry out much of their ministry in one-to-one relationships

Acts 18:1-3

“After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.”

Acts 18:24-26

“Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”



Spiritual parents spend much time with their spiritual children

Christ spent time daily with the twelve

Mark 3:13-14

“And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach.”

The early church leaders spent time with people in their homes

Acts 2:46

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.”



Acts 20:20

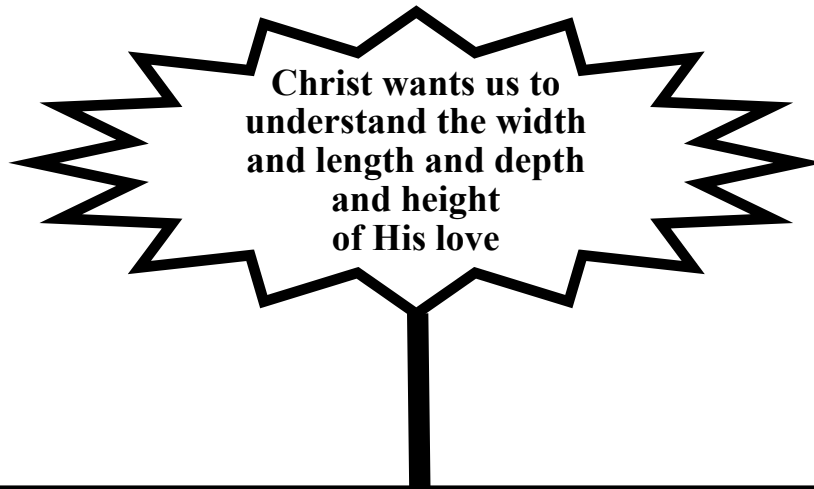
“How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house.”

Spiritual parents help us learn to take root in the love of Christ

Christ loves us and wants us to take root in His love

Ephesians 3:17-19

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”



Christ's Love For Us

Christ loves us and wants us to walk in His love

Ephesians 5:1-2

“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.”



Spiritual parents show us how to walk in the Spirit and be led by the Spirit

Galatians 5:16-18

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.”



Ways the Holy Spirit leads us

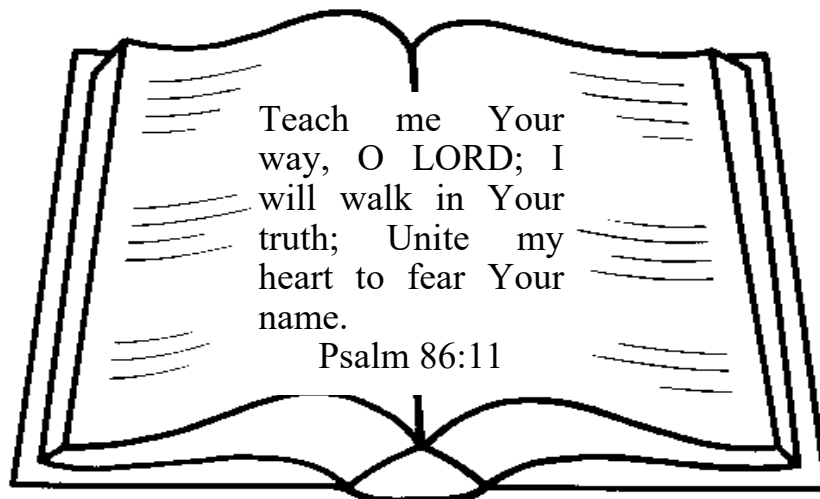
1. The Holy Spirit leads us through the Word of God

John 14:26

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.”

1 Corinthians 2:12-14

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.”



2. The Holy Spirit leads us through prayer

Ephesians 6:18

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”

Acts 16:6-7

“Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.”



“Pray without ceasing.”

1 Thessalonians 5:17



3. The Holy Spirit leads us through inner peace

Isaiah 26:3

“You will keep *him* in perfect peace, *Whose mind is stayed on You*, Because he trusts in You.”

Galatians 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”



4. The Holy Spirit leads us through other people or circumstances

Acts 16:9

“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us.’”



Spiritual parents help reverse the effects of abandonment

Common forms of abandonment:

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| physical abandonment | no one was there to be with me because of: absence abuse addictions |
| mental abandonment | no one was there to answer my questions |
| social abandonment | no one was there to show me how to develop healthy relationships with others |
| emotional abandonment | no one was there to listen and to understand me |
| spiritual abandonment | no one was there to lead me back to God |

Spiritual parents spend time with us

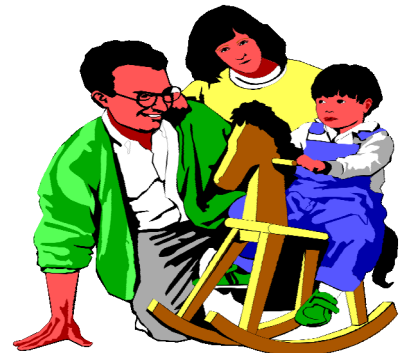
1 Thessalonians 2:9

“For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.”

Acts 18:1-3

“After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.”

**Just as physical children need physical parents,
spiritual children need spiritual parents.**



Spiritual parents answer our questions

Acts 19:9

“But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.”

Acts 20:20

“How I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house.”



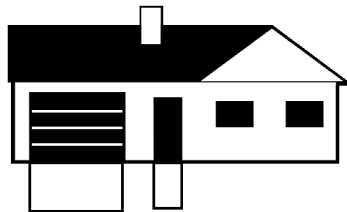
Spiritual parents show us how to develop healthy relationships with others

Acts 2:42

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Acts 2:46

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart.”



They were continually breaking bread from house to house.

He reasoned in the marketplace daily with those who met him. (Acts 17:17)

Spiritual parents listen to us so that they can understand us

James 1:19-20

“So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.”

Three characteristics of healthy listening and understanding

| | |
|---------------|---|
| quick to hear | to listen carefully so that there is full understanding of what is being said |
| slow to speak | to be slow to answer so that we can think through what the person has said |
| slow to wrath | anger which causes us to become agitated or seek to punish |

Spiritual parents lead us back to God

1 Thessalonians 2:13

“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”

We are led back to God by godly examples

| | |
|--|---|
| spiritual parents listen to us | the concern of a spiritual parent causes careful listening - 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12 |
| spiritual parents thank God when we are with them | God tells us to be thankful at all times for all things - Ephesians 5:20 |
| spiritual parents share the Word of God as we talk | the thoughts and ways of God are better than our thoughts and ways - Isaiah 55:8-9 |
| spiritual parents teach us the instructions of God | we learn we are free to use Christian liberty to show love - Galatians 5:13-14 |
| we see God work in and through our lives | God can do more through us than we can ever imagine - Ephesians 3:20-21 |

Healthy Relationships in the Family of Christ Expand to Include Brothers and Sisters

Just as the physical family provides opportunities for us to develop relationships with brothers and sisters, the spiritual family should provide opportunities for us to develop close relationships with a spiritual family or small group.

The early church focused on spiritual families that cared

Acts 2:41-47

“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

The early church met in spiritual families or small groups so that they:

- ♥ **Could study the Word of God together**
- ♥ **Fellowship together**
- ♥ **Break bread together (share in communion)**
- ♥ **Pray together**
- ♥ **Be together in one accord**
- ♥ **Share to meet needs of one another**
- ♥ **Eat meals together**
- ♥ **Praise God together**
- ♥ **Share the Gospel with others as they were together**

Christ demonstrated how relationships should grow closer

John 15:15

“No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.”

John 20:17

“Jesus said to her, ‘Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, “I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and *to My God and your God.*”’”

| | |
|----------|---|
| servants | do not know the plans of their master |
| friends | know the plans, ideas and goals of one another |
| brethren | Christian brethren develop the kind of love that Christ showed to us - John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:14 |

Christ tells us what develops love between Christians

Hebrews 10:24-25

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Stirring up love and good works requires two things:

| |
|--|
| we must get together |
| we must exhort one another (to comfort, encourage and strengthen one another) |

What is Christian Love?

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

“Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”

Love has two characteristics:

love is patient (suffers long)

love is kind

Love has eight things it does not do:

love does not envy (to desire what another person has)

love does not parade itself (to boast about self)

love does not puff itself up (to be proud)

love does not behave rudely

love does not seek its own (to demand one's own way)

love is not provoked (to burn with anger)

love thinks no evil (to think about the wrong deeds of others)

love does not rejoice in iniquity (to break the law)

Love has four things it does:

love bears all things (to cover with silence)

love believes all things (to entrust all things to Christ)

love hopes all things (to wait for the future with all confidence)

How do we develop close, loving relationships in the family of Christ?

Spiritual love relationships develop most effectively in a spiritual family or small group where we can:

Acts 2:42-47

- **study the Word of God together**
- **fellowship together**
- **break bread together (share in communion)**
- **pray together**
- **be together in one accord**
- **share to meet the needs of one another**
- **eat meals together**
- **praise God together**
- **share the Gospel with others who visit**

Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships

We ask Christ to give us new inner attitudes toward one another

Ephesians 4:30-32

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.”

As we yield to the Holy Spirit, He gives us the power to put away:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| bitterness | a bitter root that produces a bitter fruit |
| wrath | anger that boils up |
| anger | inner anger that causes us to want to get even |
| clamor | a crying or shouting at each other |
| evil speaking | speech that slanders another’s good name |
| malice | evil that causes us to desire to injure |

As we yield to the Holy Spirit, He gives us the power to:

be kind to one another - to be useful and good toward another

be tenderhearted toward one another - to show compassion

forgive one another - to no longer hold the past against a person

Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We accept one another

Romans 15:7

“Therefore receive (accept) one another, just as Christ also received (accepted) us, to the glory of God.”

We accept the opinions of one another

Romans 14:1-3

“Receive (accept) one who is weak in the faith, *but* not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats *only* vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received (accepted) him.”

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| to accept | to grant access to our heart and take into our fellowship |
| to accept one’s opinions | to give a person the freedom to express his feelings and beliefs |

We admonish one another

Romans 15:14

“Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.”

Colossians 3:16

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

To admonish is to give instruction that is primarily a warning against things that are wrong

Two characteristics in our lives for effective admonishing:

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| full of goodness | goodness and kindness of heart and life (proper inner attitudes) |
| full of all knowledge | filled with the knowledge of Christianity because of knowing the Word of God |

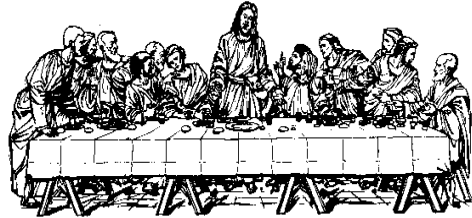
Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We bear the burdens of one another

Galatians 6:2

“Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

Bearing burdens - to bear the weights that are pressing down on another



**Christ showed us how to bear the burdens of one another
when He encouraged the disciples in John 14:27:**

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”

We bear with one another

Ephesians 4:1-2

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.”

Colossians 3:12-13

“Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do.*”

Bear with one another - to be patient with and endure one another

we are to stand firm when others fail and sin

**we are to forgive others when they fail and sin
in the same way that Christ forgave us and our sin**

Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

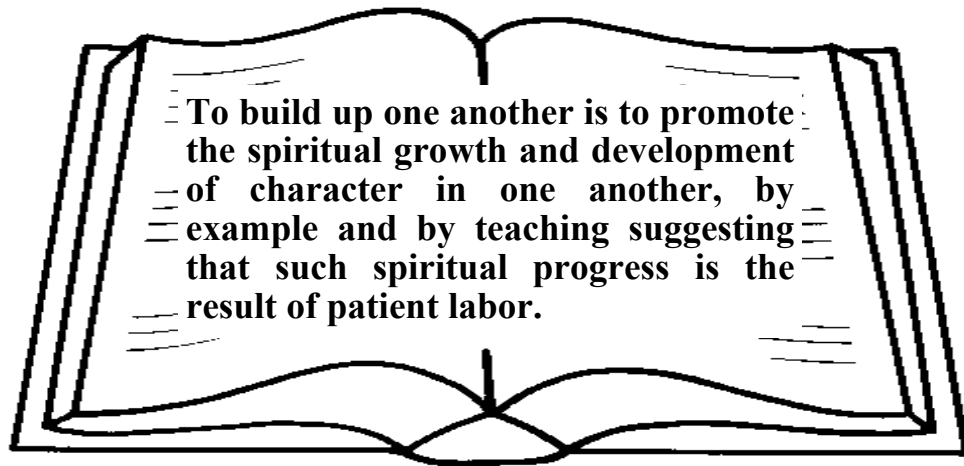
We build up (edify) one another

Romans 14:19

“Therefore let us pursue the things *which make* for peace and the things by which one may edify another.”

1 Thessalonians 5:11

“Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”



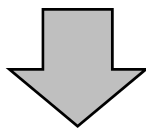
We care for one another

1 Corinthians 12:24-26

“But our presentable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it*; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with *it*.”

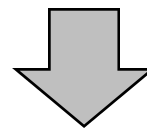
**To care for one another is to have a great concern for one another
which causes us to share ourselves with one another**

when other Christians
suffer



to accept one's opinions

when other Christians
are honored



we are honored

Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We comfort one another

1 Thessalonians 4:18

“Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

1 Thessalonians 5:11

“Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.”

Hebrews 10:25

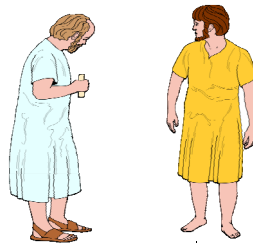
“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Hebrews 3:13

“But exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

To come to the side of another and provide comfort, encouragement or exhortation

I am able to comfort
and encourage you



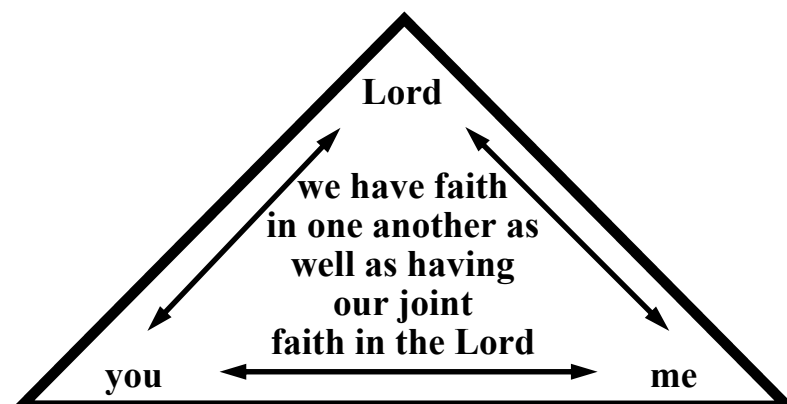
You are able to comfort
and encourage me

We are comforted together through faith in one another

Romans 1:12

“That is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.”

To be comforted together through faith in one another is to encourage one another by the mutual faith that we have in one another as well as our joint faith in the Lord.



Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We have compassion one for another

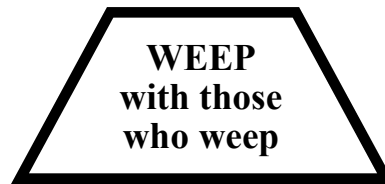
1 Peter 3:8

“Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be tenderhearted, be courteous.*”

To have compassion is to suffer with and feel with one another

When we are feeling strong emotions, that is when we need one another almost more than at any other time. Christ told the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, “Could you not watch with me one hour?”

Romans 12:15 tells us:



We confess our sins to one another

James 5:16

“Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

One of the greatest needs today is the healing of relationships between Christians

confess your sins to one another ➡ pray for one another ➡ you will be healed

Luke 17:3 tells us how to heal relationships:

“Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.”

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| a Christian sins against us | we have also sinned against others |
| rebuke him | to talk together and admonish |
| if he repents | to change one’s mind about past sins |
| forgive him | to let go of that sin and no longer hold that sin against the person |

Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We are devoted to one another

Romans 12:10

“Be kindly affectionate (devoted) to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.”

To be devoted to one another is to have a tender love for one another such as the love of parents for children and children for parents

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| we show brotherly love | we show tender love to each other as godly brothers and sisters |
| we honor one another | we consider each other as persons of great value |
| we give preference to one another | we take the lead in showing respect to one another |

We fellowship with one another

1 John 1:7

“But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

To fellowship means to share our lives together

**The early church showed us how to share our lives together
Acts 2:42-47**

**we can study the Word of God together
we can fellowship together by just being together
we can break bread together (share in communion)
we can pray together and for one another
we can be together in one accord and in unity
we can share to meet the needs of one another
we can eat meals together and share other activities
we can praise God together as we worship Him
we can go together to share the Gospel with others**

Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We forgive one another

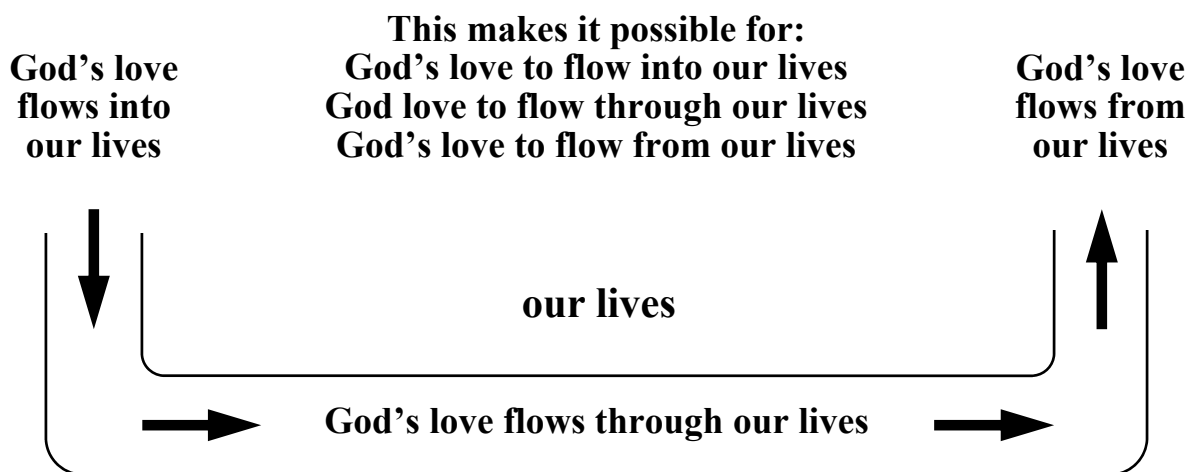
Ephesians 4:32

“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.”

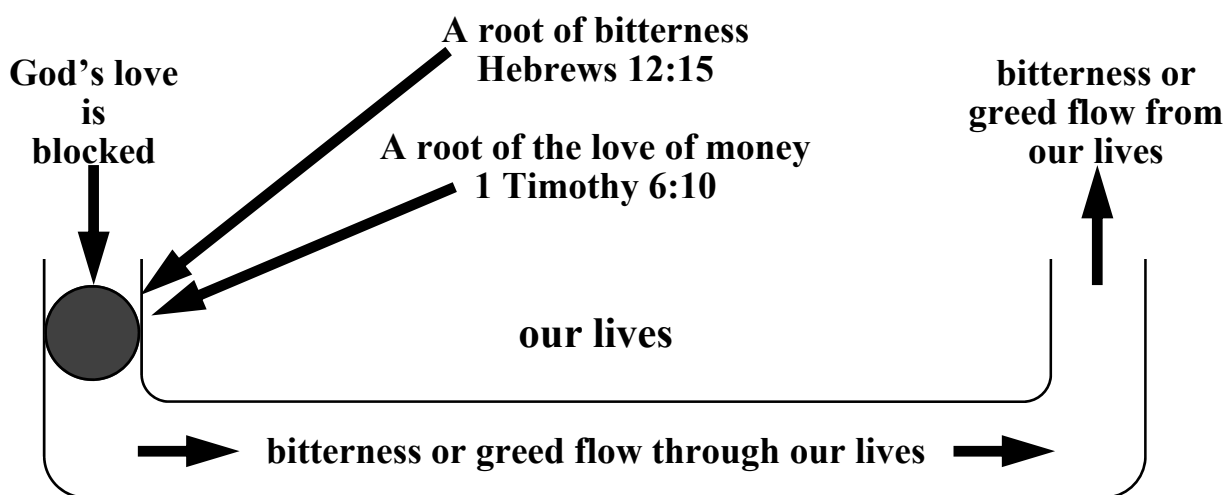
Colossians 3:13

“Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.”

To forgive means that we choose to give a favor unconditionally and let go of things from the past so they are not held against the other person any longer



Two roots that prevent God’s love from flowing through our lives



**We need to take root in the love of Christ and forgive others as He forgave us
Colossians 2:6-7; Ephesians 4:32**

Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We seek what is good for one another and for all

1 Thessalonians 5:15

“See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.”

We want what is good in its character and beneficial in its effects for one another

The world focuses on self

| |
|---|
| self-esteem (we value ourselves highly) |
| self-centered (we make ourself the center of our world) |
| selfish (we are concerned only with what benefits ourself) |

We are to be Christ-centered

| |
|---|
| Christ-esteem (we value Christ highly) |
| Christ-centered (we make Christ the center of our world) |
| body-centered (we are concerned with what benefits all) |

We greet one another

Romans 16:16

“Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.”

1 Corinthians 16:20

“All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.”

2 Corinthians 13:12

“Greet one another with a holy kiss.”

1 Peter 5:14

“Greet one another with a kiss of love. Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.”



To greet one another means to welcome the other person and make that person feel comfortable by a kiss, a hug, a handshake or some other form of greeting

Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We show hospitality to one another

1 Peter 4:9

“*Be hospitable to one another without grumbling.*”

To be hospitable means to show love to one another and make one another feel comfortable in our home, church or any other place

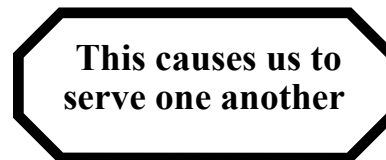
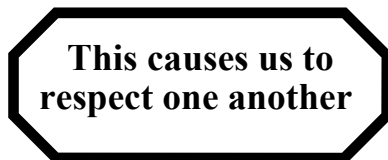


We show humility in our attitude toward one another

1 Peter 5:5

“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’”

To show humility is to have a humble opinion about yourself



We are kind to one another

Ephesians 4:32

“And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.”

To be kind is to be good, pleasant and gracious even to those who are ungrateful and evil



1 Corinthians 13:4

Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We function together like parts of a body

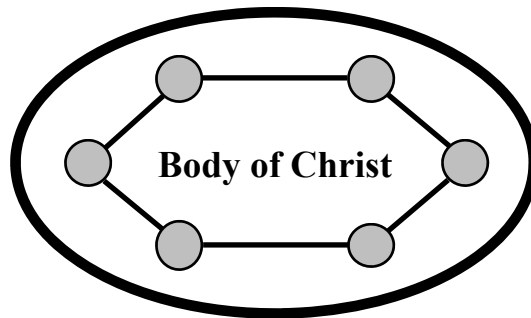
Romans 12:5

“So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.”

Ephesians 4:25

“Therefore, putting away lying, *Let each one of you* speak truth with his neighbor,’ for we are members of one another.”

Members are the parts of a body and we are called to have the same relationship to one other as the various parts of a human body



We make it our goal to be like-minded

Romans 12:16

“Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.”

Romans 15:5

“Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus.”

To be like-minded means to have the same concern and regard for one another that we have for ourselves, which causes us to reach agreement together

Being like-minded causes us to:

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Romans 12:16 | be humble |
| Romans 15:5-6 | glorify God together |
| 2 Corinthians 13:11 | mature and live in peace |
| Philippians 2:2 | develop the same goals and desires |
| Philippians 3:16 | keep growing |
| Philippians 3:19 | turn from earthly thinking |
| Philippians 4:2 | develop healthy relationships |

Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We are at peace with one another

Mark 9:50

“Salt *is* good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.”

1 Thessalonians 5:13

“And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves.”

To be at peace means to bring to peace, to reconcile or to keep peace

**we learn to resolve conflicts by all yielding to Christ
we reconcile with one another by forgiving
we work to maintain peace by building relationships**

We pray for one another

James 5:16

“Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”



We regard one another as more important than self

Philippians 2:3

“*Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”

to think and treat one another as more important than ourself

to do this we must get rid of selfish ambition and conceit

Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We serve one another as a slave

Galatians 5:13

“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

To serve as a slave is viewed as a relationship to our Master, Christ

when we serve one another as Christians

we are actually serving Christ and following His example

We use our spiritual gifts to serve one another

1 Peter 4:10

“As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”

To serve or wait on one another viewed as a relationship to our work

we have all been given one or more spiritual gifts

we are called by Christ to use those gifts to serve one another

we will be good managers of what God has given us if we are obedient

We are to stimulate one another to love and good deeds

Hebrews 10:24-25

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

We stir up love and good works

by getting together

by encouraging one another each time we get together

Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We submit to one another

Ephesians 5:21

“Submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

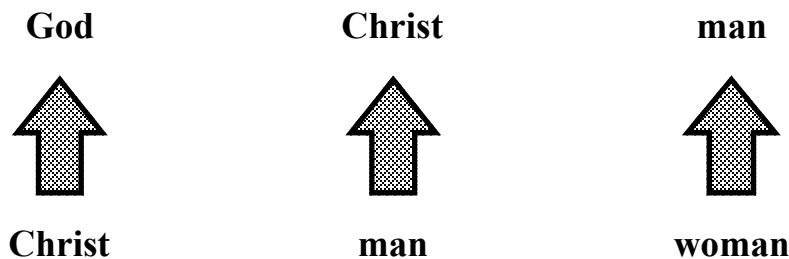
1 Peter 5:5

“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.’”

To submit is a voluntary attitude of placing ourselves under another, cooperating, assuming responsibility and helping carry a burden.

Christ illustrates this in 1 Corinthians 11:3 where He submits to the Father

“But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God.”

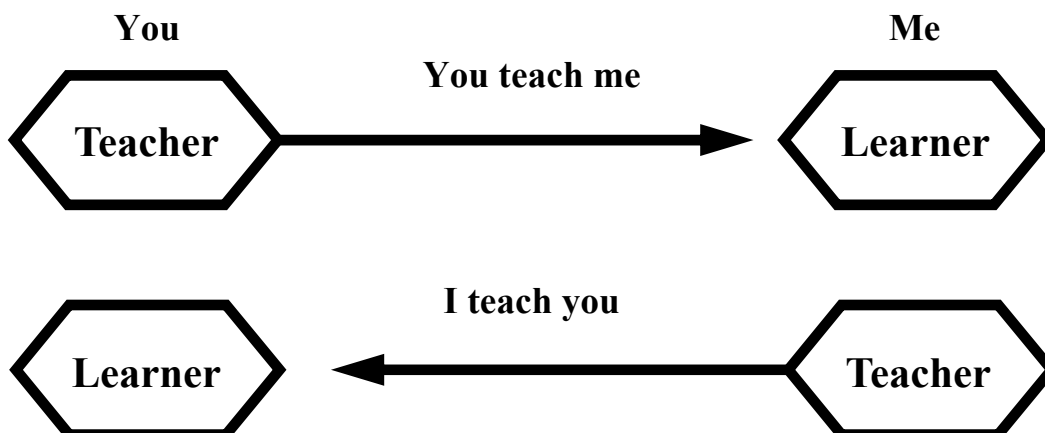


We teach one another

Colossians 3:16

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

To teach one another is to give positive instruction



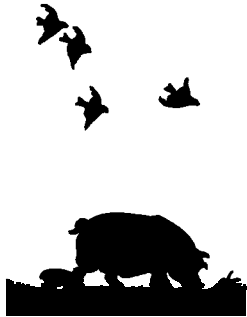
Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We wait for one another

1 Corinthians 11:33

“Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.”

To wait for one another is to make sure that all share equally in the love feast (potluck) and none are left out by the selfishness of others



**A selfish person is choosing to
act like a pig instead of
considering the needs of others**



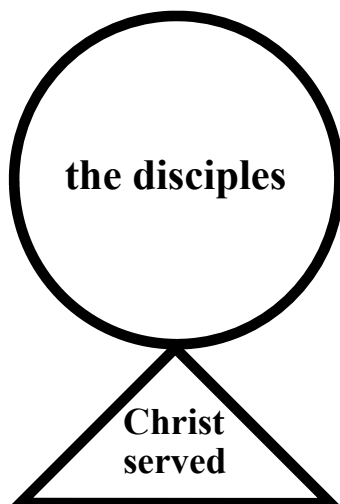
We wash one another’s feet

John 13:13-15

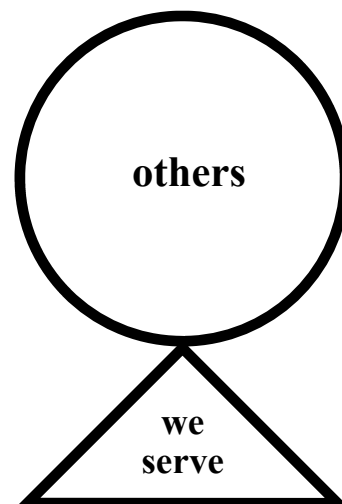
“You call me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.”

To wash one another’s feet speaks of serving one another in a way that will produce a feeling of acceptance and comfort

**Christ washed the feet of
the disciples**



**We are to look for ways to
meet the needs of others**



Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We do not do the things that destroy relationships

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>we choose not to judge one another any more</p> | <p>“Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in <i>our</i> brother's way.” Romans 14:13</p> | <p>to assume the office of judge and condemn another</p> |
| <p>we choose not to go to law with one another</p> | <p>“Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather <i>let yourselves</i> be cheated?” 1 Corinthians 6:7</p> | <p>to have lawsuits with one another</p> |
| <p>we choose to stop depriving one another in marriage</p> | <p>“Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” 1 Corinthians 7:5</p> | <p>in marriage, to use sex as a weapon to get even with one another rather than as a way to meet the needs of one another</p> |
| <p>we choose not to bite, devour and consume one another</p> | <p>“But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!” Galatians 5:15</p> | <p>To bite one another means to wound the soul by words. To devour one another means to make a habit of wounding the soul. To consume one another is the last act of swallowing down. “Bite-devour-consume” speaks of the process that destroys a relationship.</p> |

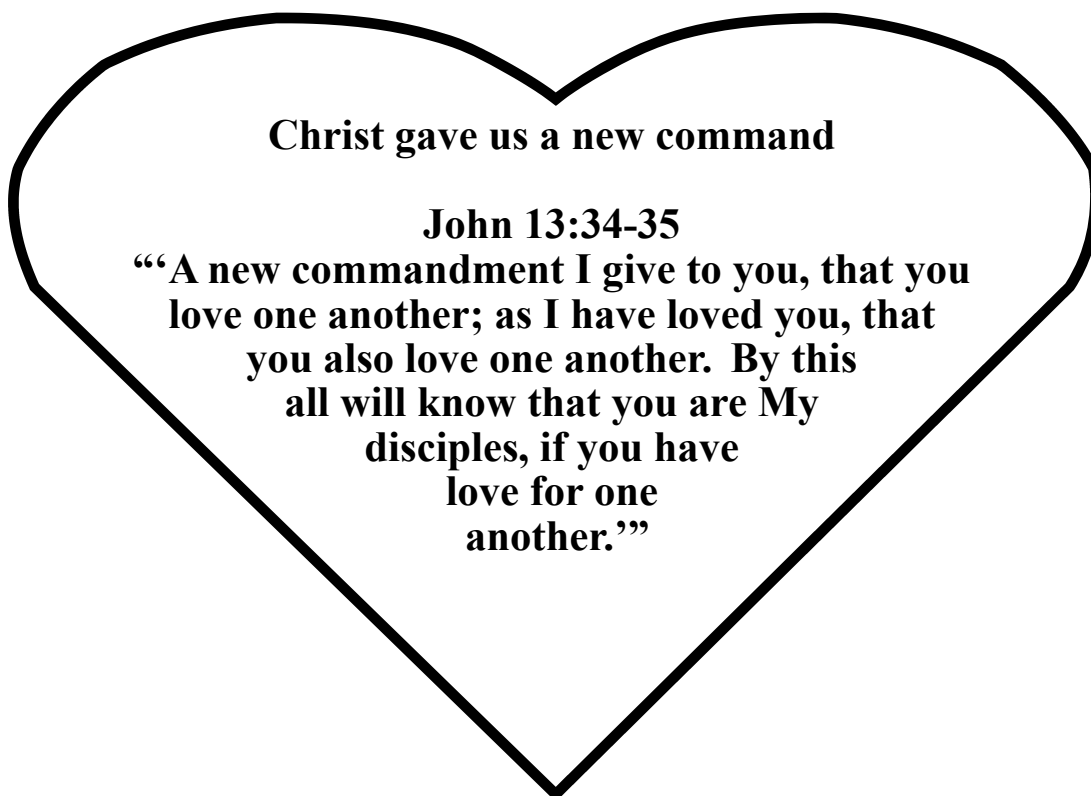
Characteristics of healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships (continued)

We do not do the things that destroy relationships - 2

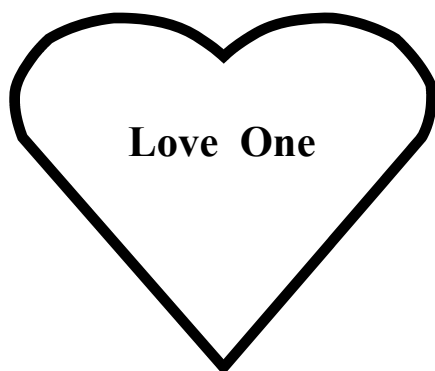
| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <p>we choose not to challenge (provoke) or envy one another</p> | <p>“Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.” Galatians 5:26</p> | <p>to challenge - to stir up what is evil in another</p> |
| <p>we choose not to lie to one another</p> | <p>“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.” Colossians 3:9</p> | <p>to deceive by telling lies to one another</p> |
| <p>we choose not to repay one another with evil for evil</p> | <p>“See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.” 1 Thessalonians 5:15</p> | <p>this is the opposite of doing good to one another and speaks of getting even when someone hurts us</p> |
| <p>we choose not to speak against one another</p> | <p>“Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.” James 4:11</p> | <p>to speak against or to slander</p> |
| <p>we choose not to complain against one another</p> | <p>“Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!” James 5:9</p> | <p>to grumble or groan (used of an inward unexpressed feeling of sorrow)</p> |

Christ gives us His power to make and carry out wise choices.

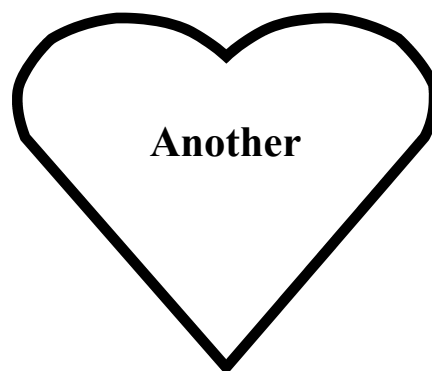
Healthy, loving “spiritual family” relationships are all developed by our obedience to the new commandment



Other passages that repeat the new commandment



John 15:12, 17
Romans 13:8
1 Thessalonians 1:3
1 Thessalonians 4:9-10
2 Thessalonians 1:3
1 Peter 1:22
1 Peter 4:8
1 John 3:11, 23
2 John 5



1 John 4:7, 11-12

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God...Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us.”

Healthy Relationships in the Family of Christ Mature As We Learn to Become Adult Spiritual Sons and Daughters

**This is primarily a change in relationship to our spiritual parents
and requires a change on their part as well as ours**

An adult son contributes to the ongoing spiritual development of the parent

Acts 9:26-27

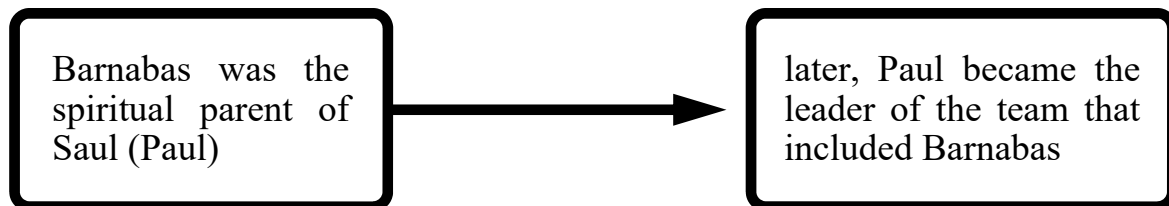
“And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought *him* to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.”

Acts 11:25-26

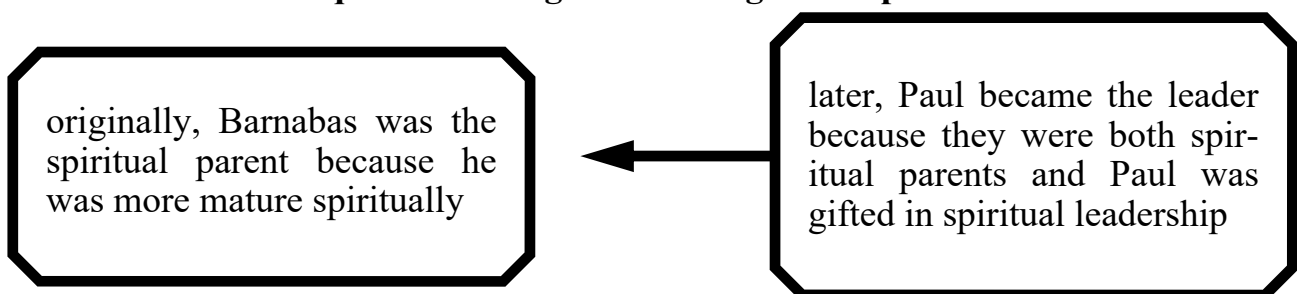
“Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.”

Acts 13:13

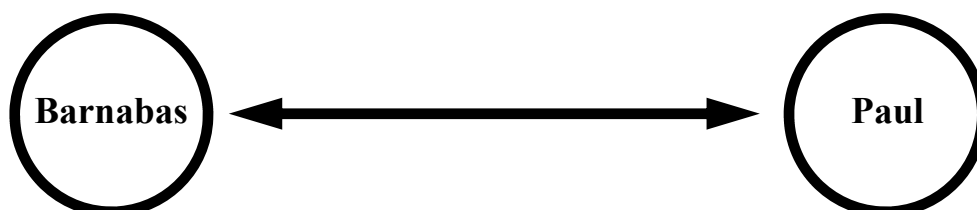
“Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.”



This required a change of thinking on the part of both



**Spiritual adult sons minister to their spiritual parents
and with their spiritual parents**



Healthy relationships are moving from fear toward love

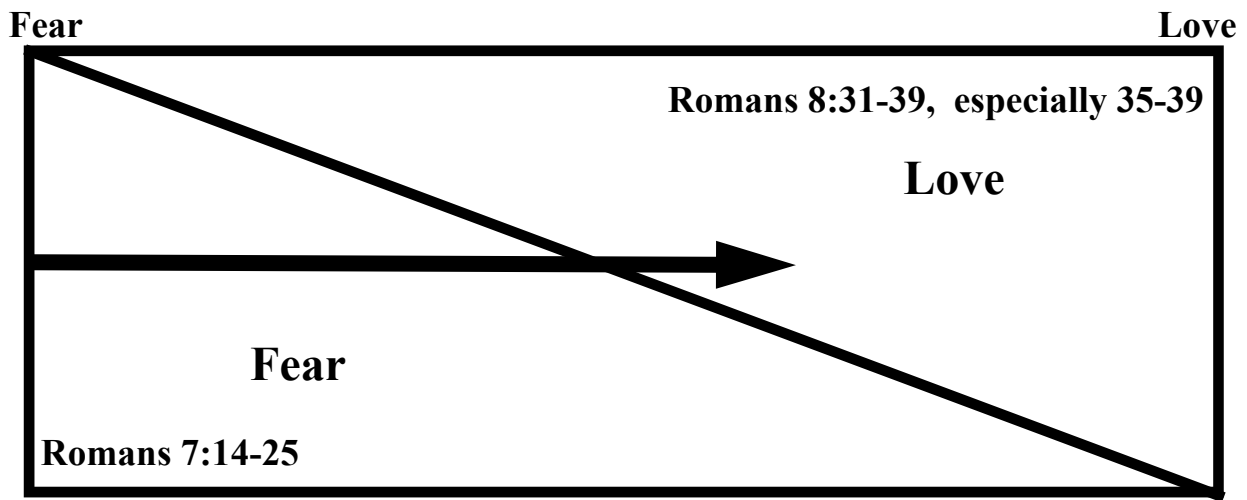
This is directly related to the process of spiritual growth

2 Peter 3:18

“But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.”

1 John 4:16-18

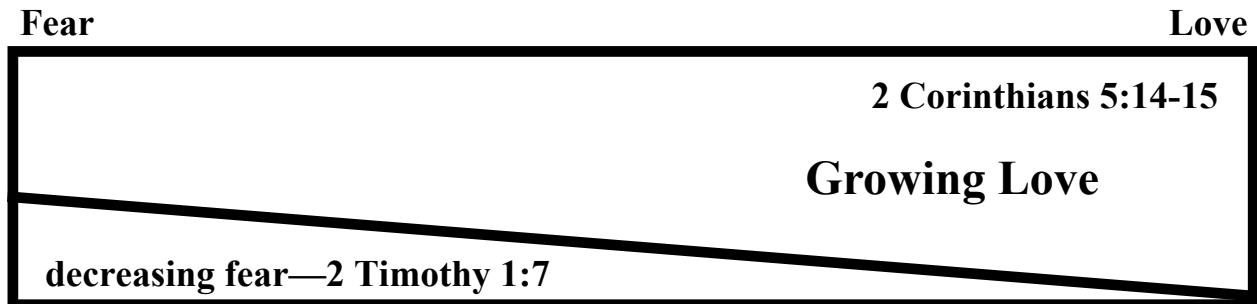
“And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.”



This results in decreasing fear as we take root in the love of Christ

Ephesians 3:17-19

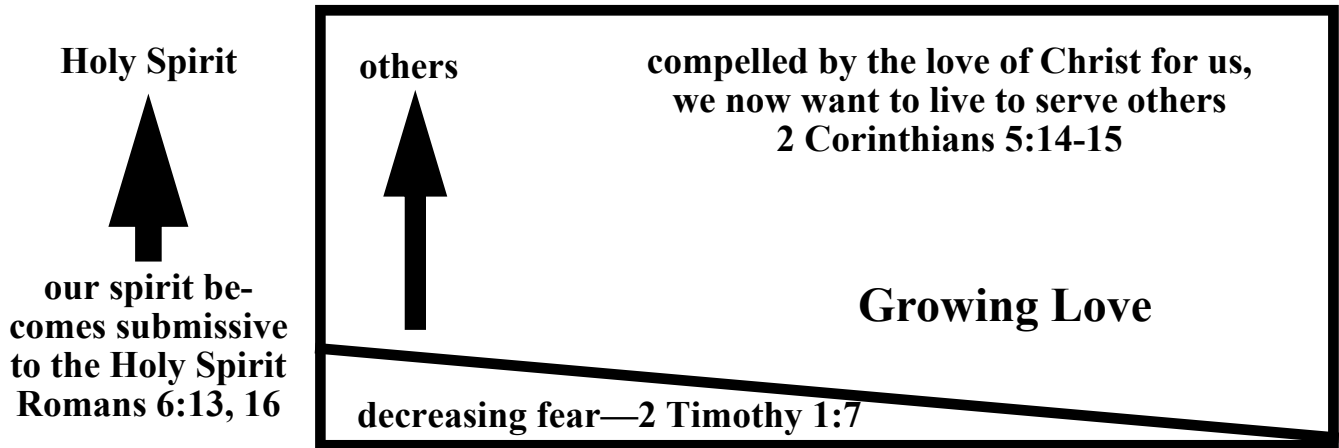
“That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height -- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”



Taking root in the love of Christ changes our motivation

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

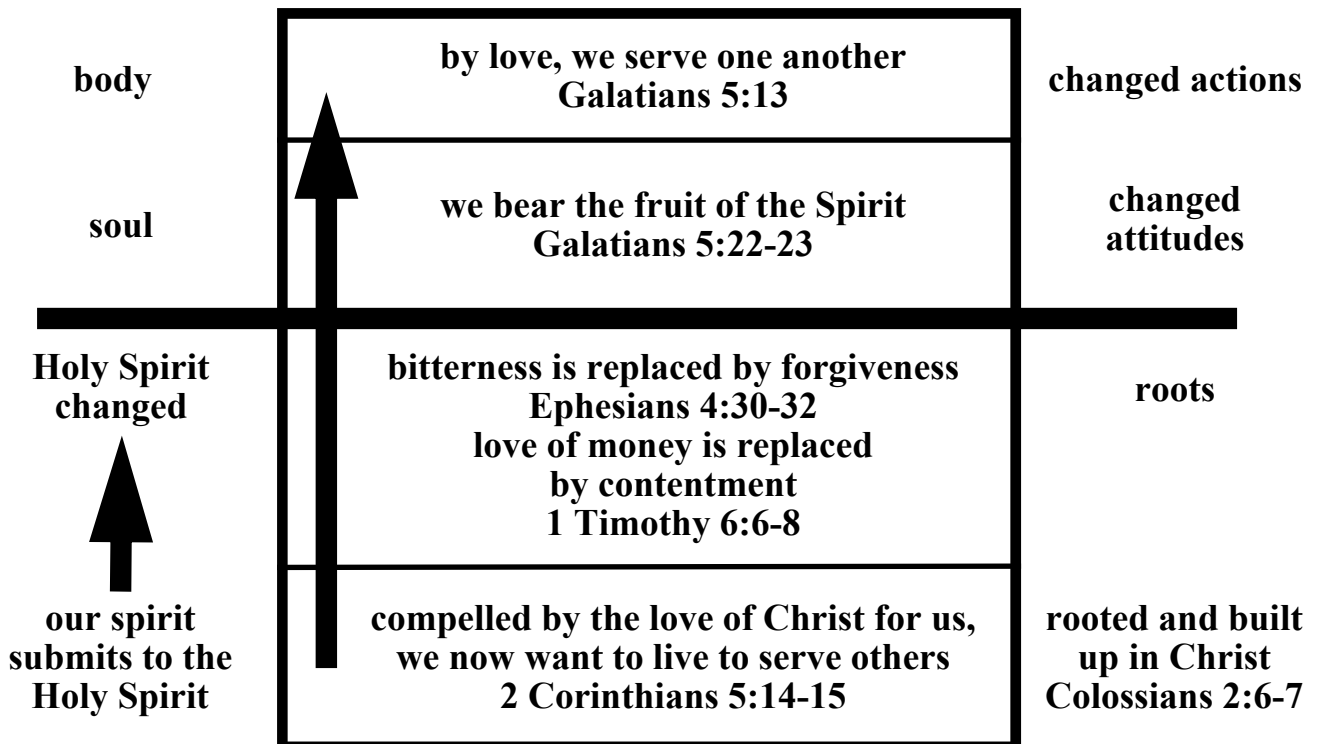
“For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”



Taking root in the love of Christ changes our attitudes and actions

Galatians 5:13, 22-23

“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another... But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

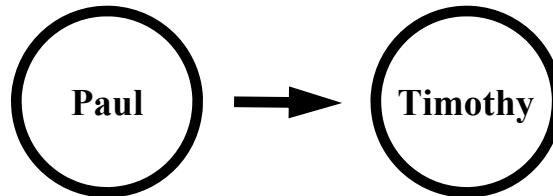


Spiritual maturity and healthy relationships give us a desire to become a spiritual parent to others

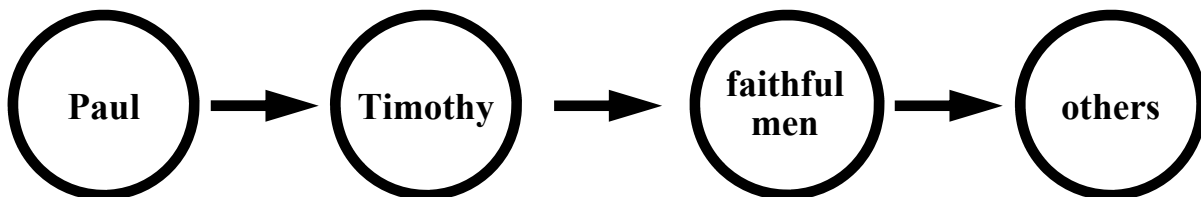
Paul became a spiritual parent to Timothy

1 Corinthians 4:15-17

“For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do not have* many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me. For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.”



Later, Timothy became a spiritual parent to faithful men



Later, those faithful men would become spiritual parents to others

2 Timothy 2:2

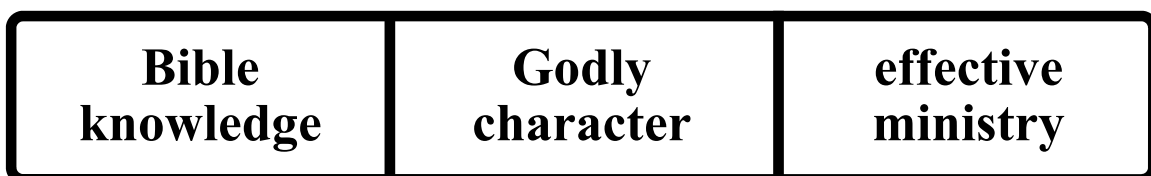
“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

As we grow, God gives us a desire to become a spiritual parent to others

Three characteristics of effective spiritual parents can be found in Exodus 18:20:

““And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do.””

To be an effective spiritual parent we must be growing in:



A spiritual parent will pass on his inner attitudes to his spiritual child

Attitudes are caught from example rather than taught by word

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| love | for Christ John 21:15-17 for one another John 13:34-35 for our neighbor Mark 12:29-31 |
| a learner's attitude | Who are you Lord? Acts 9:5 |
| a servant's heart | Lord, what do you want me to do? Acts 9:6 |

A spiritual parent will pass on his passion to:

MAKE DISCIPLES

Matthew 28:19-20

“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; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

