



Kingdom Households

A Governing Principle:

Bearing One Another's Burdens & The Law of Christ

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface - 3

Tribes - 6

Extended Families - 9

Kingdom Households - 23

Household Burdens - 31

Bearing One Another's Burdens – 41

The Law of Christ – 51

Belonging - 63

* * * * *

At Christ's Table ~ ACTpublications

"Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."

1 Corinthians 2:13

© 2024

W.D. Furioso, Writer ~ Frances Furioso, Editor

At Christ's Table Ministries ~ ACTpublications ~ <https://www.AtChristsTable.org>

ACTpublications may be freely shared, reproduced, and distributed - unaltered, in digital or print formats. Any quotations or excerpts must also be unaltered and referenced with the above information. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard Bible*.

Kingdom Households

W.D. Furioso ~ ACTpublications (2024) ~ At Christ's Table ~ <https://www.AtChristsTable.org>

Preface

I have desired to begin writing this for quite some time, but continuously felt I was not sufficiently prepared to do so. However, the topic remained on my heart and mind – and active in my personal life. So, I've begun to write. I think what I have to offer is not a description of the destination, but rather some observations along the way.

The overarching theme is **“The Kingdom of God” – “The Household of God”** (Greek: Oikos¹) - as witnessed to and manifested in the Church (Greek: Ekklesia²), with particular commentary on the biblical concept of **“Tribe”** - in more modern terminology - **“The Extended Family”**. In addition, this is yet another article in which I continue to explore the meaning of **“the Law of Christ”** (1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2) which governs His Kingdom. I am also commenting on the fact that according to the apostle Paul, **“bearing one another’s burdens fulfills the Law of Christ”**. (Galatians 6:2)

¹ Strong’s # 3624

² Strong’s # 1577

In this article I will be using the phrase “**Kingdom Households**” as a label for the biblical prototype of “Tribe” or “*Extended Family Household*”. The “*Governing Principle*” is “**Fulfilling the Law of Christ by Bearing One Another’s Burdens**”. Galatians 6:2

Even as the Bible is held to be “the rule of faith and practice” by all true followers of Jesus Christ, I suggest that the biblical model presented here would therefore be universally applicable for God’s people in any place and time regardless of their cultural and socio-economic differences.

14“I bow my knees [in reverence] before the Father [of our Lord Jesus Christ], 15from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name [God--the first and ultimate Father]. 16May He grant you out of the riches of His glory, to be strengthened *and* spiritually energized with power through His Spirit in your inner self, [indwelling your innermost being and personality], 17so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through your faith. And may you, having been [deeply] rooted and [securely] grounded in love, 18be fully capable of comprehending with all the saints (God’s people) the width and length and height and depth of His love [fully experiencing that amazing, endless love]; 19and [that you may come] to know [practically, through personal experience] the love of Christ which far surpasses [mere] knowledge [without experience], that you may be filled up [throughout your being] to all the fullness of God [so that you may have the richest experience of God’s presence in your lives, completely filled and flooded with God Himself]. 20Now to Him who is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly more than all that we dare ask or think [infinitely beyond our greatest prayers, hopes, or dreams], according to His power that is at work within us, 21to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

Ephesians 3:14-21 AMP



Tribes

God's Prototype for His Kingdom People

For His Kingdom purposes, God has worked through individual men like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But the **tribe** – the “**extended family household**” – which was a principle inherent in the lives of the spiritual fathers I just mentioned, came to the fore when, through Moses, and Joshua, God brought His people to the

Kingdom Households

W.D. Furiioso ~ ACTpublications (2024) ~ At Christ's Table ~ <https://www.AtChrist'sTable.org>

point of “possessing the land” He had promised in His covenant. Then during the lives of Saul, David, and Solomon, *God’s kingdom people took the form of the 12 tribes* which emanated from the sons of Jacob and their respective *extended family households*.

Upon the death of Solomon, the kingdom was divided into two – the Southern Kingdom of Judah - consisting of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the Northern Kingdom of Israel - consisting of the tribes of Asher, Dan, Ephraim, Gad, Issachar, Manasseh, Naphtali, Reuben, Simeon, and Zebulun.

After the Babylonian Captivity, and the return to Jerusalem, the identities, and homelands of the 12 tribes became less distinct. The destruction of the 2nd Temple and the city of Jerusalem by the Romans, and the dispersion of the Jews further blurred the lines of distinction between the tribes. But the concept of *tribe in the form of extended family households* continued to be **the foundational structure of the society of the people of God’s kingdom.**

A more detailed history of the tribes of ancient Israel would afford many rich spiritual lessons, but suffice for this article, I simply want to point out that using the Hebrew nation as a prototype,

God established the concept of tribes – extended family households – as a model for His kingdom people.

Again: I am calling this model “Kingdom Households”, and proposing that this is still a model for God’s kingdom people, the Church, which is His Body. (The Ecclesia which Jesus is building). And to restate the specific proposals of this article:

- The governing principle in Kingdom Households aligns with God’s governing of His Kingdom according to “The Law of Christ”.
- “The Law of Christ” is encapsulated in His command, **“Love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”** John 13:34
- While this “Law of Christ” can be expressed in infinite ways, God intended the extended household to be the prototype of His Kingdom. Therefore, this law of love can be manifest most compellingly and most convincingly to the world through Kingdom Households. The specific vehicle of this expression given by the apostle Paul was through the broad category of **“Bearing One Another’s Burdens”**. Galatians 6:2
- The mission of the Church (the Ecclesia of which the Kingdom Household is the prototype) is to be **“a testimony to all nations”** of the good news of this Kingdom and its Law (Matthew 24:14), and **“to make its wisdom known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places”**. Ephesians 3:10



Extended Families

A Biblical Model

In the Jewish marriage customs, the man promises to provide a dwelling place for the bride. As part of the betrothal, the groom to be would return to his father's household and prepare an additional dwelling place to his father's estate. The groom to be would speak words to the bride much like the words Jesus spoke to us, His Bride, in John 14:2-3: **"In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, so that where I am, there you may be also."**

Agricultural and Shepherding Communities

Of course, in biblical times, and throughout the majority of human history, these aforementioned households were agricultural or shepherding communities. The family estate would consist of land and a family enterprise which engaged parents, children, adult children, and their spouses, also including grandparents, as well as non-biological household servants.

The Industrial Revolution

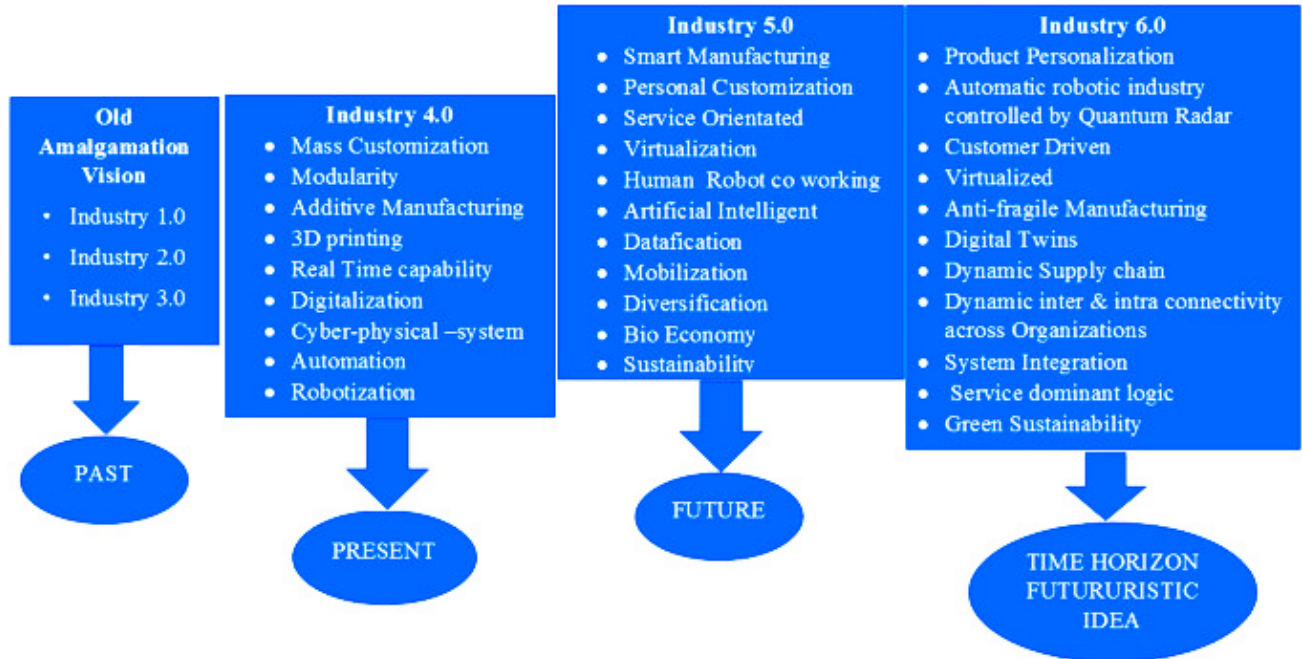
This was the norm up until around 1750:

“The Industrial Revolution was the transition from creating goods by hand to using machines. Its start and end are widely debated by scholars, but the period generally spanned from about 1760 to 1840. According to some, this turning point in history is responsible for an increase in population, an increase in the standard of living, and the emergence of the capitalist economy.”³

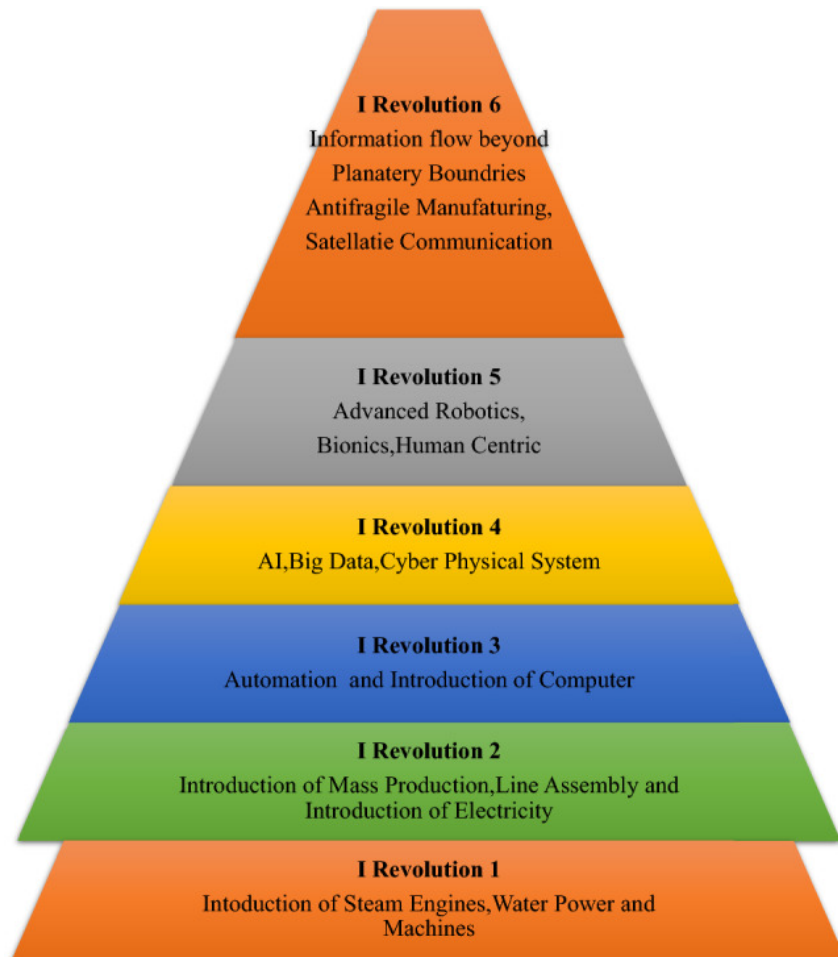
As we know, changes in agriculture, manufacturing, mining, transportation, and technology have had a profound effect on the social, economic, and cultural conditions of the times. Just a cursory glance (without commentary) at the two charts below

³ National Geographic

gives us an indication of the changes which have taken place and the further changes likely to take place in the world⁴:



⁴ For a much more detailed history and assessment of the Industrial Revolution see David Brooks’ essay, “The Nuclear Family was a Mistake” (The Atlantic, March 2020)



5

In less industrialized countries, and also somewhat with families which have immigrated to more industrialized countries, the extended family household model has not been totally abandoned, but to various extents, has been retained for a generation or more.⁶ However, it is true to say that in western nations, the extended family model has, for the most part, been

⁵ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8905282/>

⁶ An historical survey of the immigration of various peoples into the United States would afford many examples. And a recent film entitled “The Farewell” makes for an excellent attestation of the point I am putting forth in this article. <https://youtu.be/aK1oXZ-jCZQ>

abandoned and replaced with “**the nuclear family**”, consisting of husband, wife, and 2.5 children.⁷

The reality is that *most Christians in western nations have bought into materialistic aspirations and goals, even mistakenly labeling the nuclear family as the “Christian” model.* **The nuclear family has become the norm, replacing the biblical model of extended family households.** This has been possible because technological advances in the context of capitalism have enabled people in western societies to live “independently” of their extended families and communities. There may be nothing intrinsically wrong with capitalism and technological advances *per se.* *But with “the nuclear family” model, what is proving to be unwise and fragile is the habit of living “independently” of extended families and communities.*

Those who are educated, equipped with the desired skills in the current labor market, and are financially comfortable seem to be enjoying their “independence”. But this is proving not to be the case with the increasing numbers of those who struggle financially and are not being gainfully employed.

⁷ Gallup Poll: “Americans: 2.5 Children is the ‘Ideal’ Family Size”:
<https://news.gallup.com/poll/27973/americans-25-children-ideal-family-size.aspx>

What happens in a nuclear family living to the max of their budget when the main bread-winner loses their job, or even if the second income earner loses their job? What happens when serious health conditions or various forms of disabilities befall the workers in the nuclear family? What happens when the nuclear family workers “age-out”, can no longer obtain good-paying jobs, and go into retirement? Surveys show that the idea of savings for that “rainy day” are no longer a viable reality for the majority of people.⁸ More and more, jobs with sufficient retirement benefits are becoming a thing of the past. At best, these nuclear families must depend upon government welfare programs. And anyone who has personal experience with these programs knows they are poorly administrated, and insufficient provisions in any case.

In addition to financial issues, there are many negative marriage and child-rearing issues which have been the fruit this nuclear family approach to life minus the supports of extended families and communities.⁹

⁸ 1 in 5 Americans have zero savings. Most Americans have less than \$1000 in savings. If they lost their job, 2 out of 3 would not have enough in savings to cover 1 month of living expenses. 1 out of 3 have more credit card debt than savings.

<https://www.bankrate.com/banking/savings/emergency-savings-report/#tips-on-building-emergency-fund>

⁹ Again, for a much more detailed assessment of the short-comings of the nuclear family model see David Brook’s essay, “The Nuclear Family was a Mistake” (The Atlantic)

At best, this nuclear family phenomenon is only a temporary scenario - an unwise approach to life – which I am suggesting is contrary to the Lord’s desire for His Ecclesia. Jesus said that the people who belong to Him are “IN the World” but “Not OF the World”.¹⁰ We cannot escape the world system, nor does God plan to remove us from it until the return of Christ and the start of the new age in the new heavens and new earth.¹¹ But, as the Church – the people of the Kingdom of Heaven¹² – how are we to be IN but not OF this World? Indeed, the failure to understand and live out that dichotomy has plagued the Church throughout its history. And the situation is getting even more challenging as time goes on.

“God is at work for good”

“God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to *become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brothers *and sisters*.” Romans 8:28-29

I am NOT suggesting that the extended family household model is without its own possible pitfalls. We all have experienced the

¹⁰ John 17:15-16

¹¹ Cf., Isaiah 65:17; 66:22; Mark 3:31; 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:2, 5.

¹² Philippians 3:20

various “downsides” of family relationships in this fallen world. Our Adversary has been quite successful in his attacks on the family and family relationships. We see some of these even recorded in the scriptures.¹³ Nevertheless, what I AM suggesting is this:

Firstly, the Holy Spirit uses the frailties and failures in human relationships (fallen and redeemed) for our instruction and training in forgiveness, for our growth in agape love¹⁴, and for our being transformed and conformed into the image of Christ¹⁵. A discussion of these things would require a number of additional articles.

Secondly, while not without possible pitfalls, the extended family household model DOES offer benefits for the human condition, and a biblically-based “fail-safe” for dealing with human weakness and failure in relationships.

¹³ “The Bible doesn’t gloss over sin, and it records a number of family problems, starting with Adam’s blame-shifting, with his wife as the target ([Genesis 3:12](#)). Sibling rivalry crops up in the stories of Cain and Abel, Jacob and Esau, and Joseph and his brothers. Jealousy among wives—one of the negative consequences of polygamy—is found in the stories of Hannah, and Leah and Rachel. Eli and Samuel dealt with wayward children. Jonathan was almost murdered by his father, Saul. David was brokenhearted by his son Absalom’s rebellion. Hosea experienced marital difficulties.” (*What Does the Bible Say about Family Problems?*)
<https://www.gotquestions.org/family-problems.html>)

¹⁴ Strong’s # 26. The God-kind of love. Jesus commanded us to love one another AS HE LOVED US. John 13:34. Cf., 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

¹⁵ Romans 8:29, 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18

Thirdly, I believe the extended family household model is the institution God has designed for the human family – and particularly as a witness to the world through those who are part of the Household of God.

Goshen

As I said earlier, the 12 Hebrew tribes emanated from the sons of Jacob and their respective *extended family households*. Let's review the story of Jacob and his sons early in their history - when they were in Egypt.¹⁶ “Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”¹⁷ “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”¹⁸

The sons of Jacob had sold their brother, Joseph, into captivity in Egypt. What they meant for evil, God meant for good: God promoted Joseph to a place of respect and stature in Egypt, through an ability to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, and the ingenuity to prosper the nation of Egypt.

¹⁶ Cf. Genesis 46-47

¹⁷ 1 Corinthians 10:11

¹⁸ Romans 15:4

In time, because of a famine, the sons of Jacob traveled to Egypt seeking survival. In the Scripture, Egypt signifies the world system. Here is a picture of God's people being **"IN the World, but not OF the World"**¹⁹ God allowed His people to be in captivity to Egypt - a worldly power. The descendants of the tribes of Jacob would experience this same kind of captivity again and again later in their history – namely, captivities to the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans. It is no different for those in the Ecclesia, who are "strangers and exiles"²⁰ IN this World, but not OF this World.

But as is often the case, Statism (Emperor Worship) develops, as we human beings have the natural tendency to serve our source. And so, we are constantly learning to seek God and our "heavenly citizenship"²¹, amidst our "struggle against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*"²², and against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. But this very struggle serves to forge us into the people of God – "a Bride having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless."²³.

¹⁹ John 17

²⁰ Hebrews 11:13

²¹ Philippians 3:20

²² Ephesians 6:12

²³ Ephesians 5:27

But back to the tribes of Jacob in Egypt: There they were reunited with Joseph. Through his influence with Pharaoh, Joseph was able to secure his family provision in Egypt in a land called **Goshen**.²⁴ They lived in Egypt as a society set-apart to God. But they were under the rule of Egypt (as is the Ecclesia). Both Egypt and Goshen represent *spiritual* entities in the New Testament: *Egypt signifies the world system*, and **Goshen, which means “drawing near” in Hebrew²⁵, signifies the promises of the New Covenant guaranteed in Christ.**²⁶ God’s people prospered and increased while they were in Goshen, for it was a **place of divine provision**. And after the divinely designated 400 years, the Lord delivered His people completely out of that world system, as He will again, but only at the end of this age at Christ’s return.

From Shepherds to Slaves

Scripture informs us when that Pharaoh died, the next Pharaoh had a very different perspective on and attitude towards the tribes of Jacob living in his domain. In Goshen, God’s people had prospered and increased in number, so much so that the Pharaoh felt it would be in his best interest to change the shepherds into

²⁴ Cf. Genesis 48

²⁵ Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon

²⁶ Cf. 2 Corinthians 1:20

slaves who would serve the welfare and expansion of his estate.²⁷ As poor and oppressed slaves (in the World system), the tribes of Jacob **learned to bear one another's burdens**. The government was oppressive. Times were hard. Life became too much to bear without the material, emotional, and spiritual support of the brethren. And so, we see that in His wisdom, as He has done a number of times in history, God utilized the world system to conform His people according to His kingdom plans and purposes.²⁸ He took an independent nomadic people, and began to forge them into a cohesive community by virtue of the necessity of interdependence.

After the divinely designated 400 years, the Lord delivered His people completely out of that world system (as He will again, only at the end of this age at Christ's return). And further shaping would take place for the 40 years they wandered in the Wilderness, so that they might become unified enough to function as an army to possess the Promised Land which lay ahead.

And so, God brought the tribes of Jacob into a physical "Promised Land" and into a particular covenant with Himself – the Old

²⁷ Cf. Exodus 1:6-14

²⁸ Historically, God's people are well-acquainted with Captivity: 400 years in Egypt; 40 years in the Wilderness; approximately 400 years of living with the pagan nations of Canaan; 70 years in Babylon; and the Dispersion from Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Covenant – the Mosaic expression of His Kingdom. Of course, the “Promised Land” for believers in the New Covenant is NOT anywhere on this present earth, but rather in the new heaven and the new earth²⁹ – “a better country, that is, a heavenly one”.³⁰

A New Testament Interpretation of an Old Testament Type

Could Goshen signify for us today a place of God’s provision for His people in the midst of the world system? Is it a place of spiritual provision? Or material provision? Can it represent “kingdom life” here on this earth, in this age, for tribes, households of extended families of God’s people who are IN the World, but not OF the World?

A couple of initial observations: In the Old Testament, Goshen was a place of material provision for the Israelites. It was IN, but not OF Egypt. It should be noted that in God’s provision for His people in Egypt, **He did nothing to make the surrounding society less pagan, or more religious, or more Israeli, or in any way “nicer”**. In fact, as time went on, He allowed that human government to become oppressive of His people.

²⁹ Revelation 21:1-8

³⁰ Hebrews 11:16

In a New Testament interpretation, Goshen represents primarily spiritual provision – that is: “The kingdom of God is not meat or drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit”.³¹ While we are not OF the World, we are IN the World, where Jesus said we **“will have tribulation”**.³² God doesn’t take us out of the World, nor does He make the World more Christian-friendly, but He **“keeps us away from the Evil One”**³³. However, while “the kingdom of God is ... righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”, the New Testament does indicate that God promises material provision for His people. (Matthew 6:31-32; Luke 12:22-31; Cf. 2 Corinthians 9:8; Philippians 4:19) So, we should bear in mind that God is fully aware that we are IN the world: Our heavenly Father knows what we need materially, and promises material provision, if we **“seek first the kingdom and His righteousness”**. While Christ’s kingdom is not OF this world, God has a manifestation of it IN this World, **“in the whole world for a witness to all the nations”** (Matthew 24:14), and **“so that the multifaceted wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.”** (Ephesians 3:10)

³¹ Romans 14:17

³² John 16:33

³³ John 17:15 He did not pray to keep the Evil One away from us, but rather to keep us away from the Evil One!



Kingdom Households

What Do They Look Like?

What do we mean by the term “Kingdom Household”? What would they look like? To begin, let me address a particular issue in an effort to eliminate some false impressions – namely, multiple families under one roof: While out of necessity, it MAY very well be the case temporally, but I am NOT advocating a situation where multiple families MUST all live under the same roof.

“For this reason (hence, therefore, because of this, on account of this³⁴) a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.” Genesis 2:24

Almost universally, this verse is interpreted to mean that a son “shall leave” (literally) the house of his parents when he takes a wife and begins a family. But what does it mean to “leave”? MUST

³⁴ Hebrew: ‘ai-, Strong’s # 5921; Greek: *heneka*, Strong’s # 1752

the married son live under a different roof in order to “cleave to his wife”? If out of necessity, MAY the married son live under the same roof with his parents? Please consider this commentary on the passage by Ziony Zevit:³⁵

*“Verse 24 follows logically on verse 23 in its projection that men will take wives and become “one flesh”: Just as Eve came from Adam’s flesh, so are men and women destined to reunite. But what of the text’s apparent statement that men must leave their parents? **Adam, after all, has no biological parents to leave.** How, then, does this statement relate to its narrative context?”*

Reconsidering the meaning of ya‘azob: The Biblical Evidence:
The Bible contains 216 verbs formed on the root of ya‘azob: ‘-z-b. In three passages, the sense of “leave” or “abandon” is inappropriate, and the verbs must be understood as conveying a different sense.

Helping One’s Neighbor’s Donkey

The first of these is Exodus 23:5:

שְׁמוֹת כִּגְיָה כִּי יִתֵּר אֶהְיֶה מִוֹרֵשׁ נֹאכָר רַב־יָצַת חֶתְמֵשׁ אֹרֶן
וְחִדְלַת מַעֲזֹב לֹוּ עֲזָבְתָּ עֲזָבְתָּ מִן־וְ

Exod 23:5 ‘When you see the ass of your enemy lying under its burden and would refrain from setting it right^[4] (me‘azob), you must nevertheless set it right (‘azob ta‘azob) with him.’ In other words, together with your

³⁵ Ziony Zevit is Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Biblical Literature and Northwest Semitic Languages and Literatures at the American Jewish University. He earned his BA at USC, and his MA, Can. Phil., and Ph.D. at UC Berkeley. He currently teaches at the Hebrew University. Among his books are *The Religions of Ancient Israel* (2001), *Diachrony in Biblical Hebrew* (2012) (with Cynthia Miller-Naudé), and *What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden?* (2013).

enemy, you must help reposition the load on the donkey's back so that the animals can stand up.

Although Deuteronomy 22:4, addressing a similar set of circumstances, does not use forms of the verb 'z-b, it clarifies the intention of the words in Exodus. Deuteronomy instructs Israelites not to be oblivious when they see a kinsman's donkey or ox fallen on the road, most likely under a load:

דברים כבד: לֹא תֵרָאֵה אֶת חֲמוֹר אָחִיךָ אוֹ שׁוֹר רֵעִי נֹפֵל יָם
בְּדַרְךְךָ וְהִתְעַלְמֵת מֵהֵם הִקְסַתְּ קַיִם עִמּוֹ .

Deut 22:4 'If you see your fellow's ass or ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it; you must help him raise it (hakem takim).' This verse instructs the Israelite to help his kinsman get the animal to its feet, to help correct a situation deemed unfortunate.

Restoring a Wall

The second passage occurs in a description of workers reconstructing gates and repairing breaches in the walls of Jerusalem:

נחמיה ג:ח עָלִי דוֹ הַחִזְקֵי עֲזַיָּא בְּחֵר הֵי צוֹר פִּיִּם סוּעַ לֵ
יְדוֹ הַחִזְקֵי חַנְנִיָּה בְּחֵר הֵי קַיִם יְעֲזָבוּ יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עַד
הַחוֹמֵה הַרְחֵבָה .

Neh 3:8 'Next to them, Uzziel son of Harhaiah, [of the] smiths, repaired.

Next to him, Hananiah, of the perfumers. They restored (ya 'azebu)

Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.' The third passage occurs later, in

verse 34 of the same chapter in Nehemiah. In a speech to fellow

opponents of the wall-building project in Jerusalem, Sanaballat asks:

נחמיה ג:לד ...מַה הֵי יְהוּדִים הַאֲמַלְלִים עֹשִׂים הֵי עֲזָבוּ לְהֵם
הֵי עֲזָבוּ חוֹ הֵי כְלוּ בִיּוֹם הֵי חֵיוֹ אֶת הַאֲבָנִים מֵעֵרְמוֹת
הַעֲפָרוֹ הַמֵּה שֶׁרוֹפוֹת .

Neh 3:34 ...'What are the miserable Jews doing? Will they restore

(ya 'azebu), offer sacrifice, and finish one day? Can they revive those

stones out of the dust heaps, burned as they are?'

Homonyms: Two Meanings of ‘-z-b

In commenting on Exodus 23:5, medieval Jewish exegetes such as Rashi, Rashbam, and Ibn Ezra point to the distinctly different sense of the verbs formed from the root ‘-z-b in these verses. Only in the twentieth century, however, did scholars associate these meanings with a second root, which lexicons list as ‘-z-b II, with cognates in Akkadian, Epigraphic South Arabic, Ge‘ez, and Ugaritic. On the basis of these cognates, the posited meanings of ‘-z-b II are “to help, fix, make whole, set right.”

The Ge‘ez cognate, ‘azzaba, “to assist, uphold, help,” is particularly relevant to Genesis 2:24. Based on this understanding of ‘-z-b, our verse can be translated: “Therefore a man strengthens / supports / helps his father and his mother and clings to his woman / wife and they become one flesh.”

God as Adam’s Parent

Once we recognize that Genesis 2:24 is making use of this second root of ‘-z-b II, we can understand how it connects to the preceding narrative. As noted earlier, Genesis 2:24 follows a narrative in which God brings Adam into the world, employs him in his garden, provides for his sustenance, and provides him with a proper, human wife. In all these matters, God acts like a good, responsible parent (Gen 24:1–4; 38:2, 6; Jud 14:2–3). The typical parent was expected to raise children to adulthood and, in return, expected that they (the children) would remain loyal and responsible (Isa 1:2; Prov 10:1; 17:6; 22:6). By working in the garden, Adam has fulfilled his obligation to God, and he will presumably continue to do so. The “hence” of verse 24 spells out the implication of the complete Adam narrative for all of his descendants: they are obligated to care for their parents (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16) and, simultaneously, to cling to their wives.”

Proximity

While I do believe the commentary above is accurate, I would not say that multiple families living under the same roof is in some way a *requirement* for a “kingdom household”. I believe the functioning aspect – the practicality of **helping, upholding, and comforting, encouraging one another** – is the essence of kingdom households, rather than the physicality of having to live together under the same roof. However, I do think it obvious that **physical proximity** is a major factor. But in any case, even if the two families are not in close proximity, that does not totally negate the ability to **help, uphold, and comfort, encourage one another**, although there are obvious limitations.

Whether the situation is living under the same roof, living in close proximity, or living a distance away from one another, we are to understand that “leaving” does not mean literally abandoning “the garden” – the household – of the parents. But rather the married son is **helping, upholding, and comforting, encouraging one the parents**, while simultaneously “being joined, and becoming one with his wife”. This is what the parents previously did for the son, and this is what the son should do in return. I suggest that this is very much related the commandment, “**honor your father and your mother**” (Exodus 20:12) – “which is the first commandment

with a promise". And it is significant to point out here that the promise is: **"that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth"**. (Ephesians 6:2-3) That **"well-being"** encapsulates the theme of this article: **"Bearing one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ"**. (Galatians 6:2)

Extended Household Family Privacy

The independent spirit was born in the Garden when Adam and Eve chose to live independent of God and His law. It wasn't long before we hear Cain challenging: **"Am I my brother's keeper?"** (Genesis 4:9) The answer to his rhetorical question is, "Yes". The Lord's intention was indeed for brethren to **"bear one another's burdens"** (Galatians 6:2)³⁶ - INTERDEPENDENCE (inter-relationship, mutuality), not independence (autonomy, self-rule, self-determination).

Yet, the Scriptures have much to say about privacy, discretion, and confidentiality in our inter-personal relationships – **and in our living quarters**. While we are to be "without guile"³⁷, and open and transparent with one another in Christ's Body, His love also **"keeps every confidentiality"**. (1 Corinthians 13:7) There is wisdom in the Scriptures addressing privacy, discretion, and

³⁶ Shortly, we will address the apparent contradiction between Galatians 6 verse 2 and verse 5.

³⁷ Psalm 32:2; John 1:47; 1 Peter 2:22

confidentiality *in conversation* (Proverbs 11:13, 12:23, 16:28, 20:19; Matthew 18:15; 1 Timothy 5:13), as well as *physical privacy in our living quarters* (Genesis 43:30; Joel 2;16; Matthew 6:6).

From our personal experience ... There have been times in our lives when we have lived as two families under one roof: There have been times when our adult children were temporarily unemployed, and their spouse and family needed “a place to stay”. There have been times when we as parents or adult children and their families were re-locating and have needed temporary housing. There have been times when our health problems necessitated “live-in” care. In fact, at a certain point in the lives of the elderly, decisions need to be made as to how to best provide “full time” care. And parents being taken in by their adult children and grandchildren has historically been the answer until the nuclear family became so prevalent, and “nursing homes” then became the dominant solution. But “aging in place” with “family care-givers” is now again becoming the preference because of recognized physical and emotional benefits.³⁸ These

³⁸ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9495472/> “77% of adults over 50 would prefer to age in place.” (AARP 2021) <https://livablecommunities.aarpinternational.org> “In the past 20 years, the number of community-dwelling adults in traditional housing has increased, while those living in nursing homes has declined.” Trends in the use of residential settings among older adults.” *The Journals of Gerontology. Series B, Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 77(2), 424–428. 10.1093/geronb/gbab092, Toth, M., Palmer, L., Bercaw, L., Voltmer, H., & Karon, S. L. (2022, February 3).

situations are germane to the human condition, and **it is a wonderful comfort to know one can depend on the support of one's family at such times.**

Of course, this is not to say that two families living under the same roof is not without its problems and challenges. To be clear, the privacy of each family unit should be respected and maintained. Whether two families are living under the same roof or not, this privacy is of course not always easy to accomplish or maintain. And because of our human weaknesses, we will at times end up violating one another's privacy, then repenting, forgiving, and restoring peace in the extended household. But according to our faith, **“we know that God is at work in all things for good ... to conform us to the image of His Son”** (Romans 8:28-29) – even in and through familial relational conflicts. In fact, that is one of the sharpest and most delicate scalpels in the Divine Physician's bag.

Household Burdens



The Family Business & The Business of Family

“HUSBANDRY”, in its original usage, referred to the management of domestic affairs, and resources. In the Old Testament, the word translated *husbandman* comes from the Hebrew word *adamah*³⁹, which simply means “of the earth” or “of the land”. This is the same Hebrew word from which we get Adam, the name of the first man, whom God placed in Eden⁴⁰ - purposely “to work it and take care of it”.⁴¹ In the New Testament, the word *husbandman* is a translation of the Greek

³⁹ Strong’s # 127

⁴⁰ Genesis 5:2

⁴¹ Genesis 2:15 NIV

word *georgos*.⁴² The verb form, *georgeo*,⁴³ means “to till and cultivate the field”.

In Scripture, God’s kingdom (Hebrew: *mallku*⁴⁴, Greek: *baselia*⁴⁵) and God’s Household (Hebrew: *bayith*⁴⁶, Greek: *oikos*⁴⁷) are for all intents and purposes, synonymous. In a manner of speaking, we could say by extension that running a household is like running one’s personal God-given little “kingdom”. At the very least, it is like running a business.

Living in Captivity

An Experience of the Captivity ~ Psalm 137:1-4

“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. Upon the willows in the midst of it we hung our harps. For there our captors demanded of us songs, and our tormentors, jubilation, saying, ‘Sing for us one of the songs of Zion!’ How can we sing the LORD’S song in a foreign land?”

⁴² Strong’s # 1092. 2 Timothy 2:6; James 5:7

⁴³ Strong’s # 1090

⁴⁴ Strong’s # 4437

⁴⁵ Strong’s 932

⁴⁶ Strong’s # 1004

⁴⁷ Strong’s # 3614

While not OF the world, the followers of Jesus are IN the world. (John 17:6-16) The fact is, the Lord's people have lived in captivity to the World System ever since the Babylonian Captivity - more than 2 ½ thousand years of captivity.⁴⁸ Even before that, the people of God experienced periods of captivity.⁴⁹ It is probably easier to imagine the overt oppression of the sons of Jacob in Egypt, or the Jews in the Babylonian Captivity, or the first century Christians under Roman persecution, than it is for us to come to terms with *the more subtle enslavement we ourselves are subject to in the technological age in which we live as nuclear families.* Others have written excellently on the particular challenges of life in contemporary western societies – specifically how technology, while in a sense has made our lives more “convenient”, yet has in various ways served to enslave us to itself and its imposed organizational systems, procedures, and practices, as well as its mechanistic methodologies.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ The conventional date of the Babylonian Captivity is 597 B.C., but there were actually several different times during this period (607-586 B.C.) when the Jews were taken captive by Babylon.

⁴⁹ 400 years in Egypt, 40 years in the Wilderness, approximately 875 years of living in the midst of the nations of Canaan, 70 years in Babylon, and after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., the dispersion of the Jews into Gentile nations

⁵⁰ For further reading on this subject, I would recommend the writings of Jacques Ellul, particularly “The Technological Society” and “The Technological System”.

The Rise & Fall of the Nuclear Family

Historically, the movement away from the extended family to the nuclear family has served to increase the weight of everyday burdens on men, women, and children alike. And now, during the times in which we live, with the disintegration of the nuclear family, and the emergence of new societal “solutions”, the burdens continue to become heavier. In his article, *“The Nuclear Family was a Mistake”*, David Brooks skillfully gives us an historical overview of what has taken place, where we are, and what needs to be restored. I highly recommend reading the article.⁵¹ But hopefully, just some key quotations here may help serve the purpose of this present article:

“We’re likely living through the most rapid change in family structure in human history. The causes are economic, cultural, and institutional all at once.”

“The period when the nuclear family flourished was not normal. It was a freakish historical moment when all of society conspired to obscure its essential fragility.”

“I often have asked African friends who have immigrated to America what most struck them when they arrived. Their answer is always a variation on a theme – the loneliness.”

⁵¹ “The Nuclear Family was a Mistake”, David Brooks, Atlantic, March 2020.

“For many people, the era of the nuclear family has been a catastrophe. All forms of inequality are cruel. But family inequality may be the cruelest. It damages the heart.”

“The family structure we’ve held up as the cultural ideal for the past half century has been a catastrophe for many. It’s time to figure out better ways to live together.”

In the context of what has been said above, let’s take a moment to reflect on the “everyday” burdens germane to all households – in both past and present generations. There are many “burdens” to be borne – both material and emotional.

Economic Burdens

Every household has its income and expenditure to balance in its economy. This requires sufficient income-producing work but also skillful household administration for maintenance.

These are well-known facts: While the standard of living is increasing in developing nations, generally speaking, the opposite is true in western nations.⁵² This phenomenon, coupled with relentless inflation is increasing stress in households. While those in developing nations are enjoying more material wealth, in

⁵² With the exception of the infamous “1%” of billionaires.

western nations there is a disappearing middle class and an increasing “poor” class, particularly in the case of those who are less educated and less equipped with particular skills for employment in the ever quickly increasing technological economy. I entered the American workforce and became a householder in the 1970s. But I also later lived in a developing nation for 13 years. Being “poor” is physically stressful in both situations, but being “poor” in a western nation has an added emotional stress I did not observe in the developing nation.⁵³

Also, as technology progresses, governments, and companies, put more and more responsibility on the individual personal computer or smart phone owner to do more and more of the things that their office staff used to do in transactions as part of their regular service for their clients. Whether you think that technology has produced more convenience, or more stress, or both, households are under more stress today than ever. And whether you think that “earning a living” and “making ends meet” was easier or more difficult in previous generations, households are still under stress that did and still does break too many

⁵³ Having said that, I also must add: I minister to many in developing nations, and have observed that even though their standard of living is increasing, they have high unemployment, and are indebted to landlords and health care facilities.

marriages and nuclear families. Households need the extended family model to help carry economic burdens.



Emotional Burdens

Because of the Fall, every family carries emotional burdens. What I mean by the term “emotional burdens” in this case is:

- Emotional “wounds” from past life experiences which are a result of our own personal sin and sin against our person by others.⁵⁴
- The resulting perceptions, interpretations, attitudes, responses, and behavior patterns which are adopted and played out towards others in inter-personal relationships (including family relationships) which are rooted in these “emotional wounds”.

⁵⁴ A colloquial term would be “baggage”.

Fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, husbands, wives, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, grandparents, and grandchildren - were all born in sin, and all are in ongoing repentance and recovery from sin. This process is particularly intense in families and family relationships. Yet it is **precisely in families and family relationships which the Holy Spirit can accomplish His most effective work of healing, recovery, and transformation.** I've written about this process in detail in my article [“Spiritual Life & Growth”](#).⁵⁵ But hopefully the following brief excerpt will communicate why and how **“God is at work in all things (and in all families) for good – to conform us to the image of His Son.”** (Romans 8:28-29)

*“Along with the ‘deathly’ results of being ‘born in sin’ and the results of the ‘pits we have dug for ourselves’⁵⁶, there are **the effects of sins that have been committed against us.** There is a recovery from sin that comes through repenting of our own sin, but there is also a recovery – a healing and wholeness – **in point of fact, transformation that comes through forgiveness of those who have sinned against us.**”*

REPENTANCE IS NEEDED FOR OUR SINS.
FORGIVENESS IS NEEDED FOR THE SINS OF OTHERS.

To be a human being is to be ‘damaged goods’. We are all damaged by the Fall into Sin, damaged by life in a fallen world, and damaged by

⁵⁵ Also available is a 2-Part Audio version: 1) [“The Normal Christian Birth Into Spiritual Life”](#) 2) [“The Normal Christian Life of Ongoing Spiritual Growth”](#)

⁵⁶ Cf. Psalms 7:15, 35:7-8, 57:6

*sinner. All relationships – in families, marriages, friendships - carry the results of the Fall, and therefore carry the potential to inflict ‘death’ – unmet expectations, rejections, hurts, wounds, etc. through transgressions. ‘It’s a fact of life’. So, we all need recovery – we all need a measure of healing – **in point of fact, we need transformation, because of various negative life experiences.***

*If we do not find God’s grace to forgive those who have sinned against us - be it parents, spouses, siblings, friends, authority figures, etc. – there is the danger of that unforgiveness developing into a ‘root of bitterness’ which will cause trouble’ and ‘defile’ relationships. The writer to the Hebrews warned us: **“See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled.”**⁵⁷*

Family households have the nature and environment of a “hothouse” within the context of the natural bonds of familial love. And so, **it is precisely in households and family relationships that the Holy Spirit can accomplish His most effective work of healing, recovery, and transformation with regards to emotional burdens. Households need the extended family model to help carry these emotional burdens.**

⁵⁷ Hebrews 12:15

Burdens Associated with Aging & Illness

These are burdens which are rarely considered - except by those who have become “elderly”, and those who are called upon to give care to the elderly. With age, also come the added burdens of deteriorating health. However, there is definitely increasing awareness of the specifics of the requirements and difficulties of caregiving for the elderly and those with chronic health conditions. There is also increasing awareness of the toll it takes upon the caregivers. Historically, the elderly and disabled were taken care of by the extended household. With the rise of the nuclear family, the elderly and disabled were more often placed in various types of assisted living facilities. Only recently, has the tide been turning back to household caregiving. And recent studies have shown that household caregiving is highly preferred by those who are the elderly and ill, and that this type of household care affords many benefits. Studies have also brought to light the hardships such household care can bring upon family members, particularly those doing the hands-on care.⁵⁸ **Households need the extended family model to help carry these burdens.**

⁵⁸ For more information: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5052697/>



Bearing One Another's Burdens

¹“Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. ² Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. ³ For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have *reason for* boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. ⁵ For each one will bear his own load.” Galatians 6:1-5

An Apparent Contradiction

Firstly, we need to address the apparent contradiction between verses 2 and 5 in Galatians 6: ²“**Bear one another’s burdens**” – and - ⁵“**For each one will bear his own load.**” Are we to bear one another’s burdens, or should each one bear their own burden? Both.

Verse one sets the context for the passage (vv. 1-5):

¹“**Brethren, even *if anyone* is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.**”

Concerning “if anyone”: The Greek word is *anthropos*,⁵⁹ simply meaning a human being. But *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon* informs us that this particular Greek word was used in numerous places in the New Testament to communicate *various aspects of human weakness*. Paul using this word to set the context of “**Bearing One Another’s Burdens**” implies that the burdens each one of us carry may be the consequences of our universal fallenness from “missing the mark”⁶⁰ and falling short of the glory God intended⁶¹ - that is, the results of our earthly, fleshly generic

⁵⁹ Strong’s # 444

⁶⁰ Greek: *harmartano*, Strong’s # 264

⁶¹ Romans 3:23

human weaknesses.⁶² In other words, what we try to communicate with our colloquial phrases: “We’re just human.”, “No one is perfect.” “We all make mistakes.”

Now, to be clear, sin is a transgression of the law of God⁶³; and we are all born in the state of sin⁶⁴. But it is also beyond dispute that sin has left its mark on every one of us – what I have come to see as *moral “disabilities”*. We are all “disabled” – “falling short” of

⁶² *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*: *c.* with the added notion of weakness, by which man is led into mistake or prompted to sin: οὐκ ἄνθρωποι; (R G σαρκικοί) ἔστε; [1 Corinthians 3:4](#); σοφία ἀνθρώπων, [1 Corinthians 2:5](#); ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμῖαι, [1 Peter 4:2](#); κατὰ ἄνθρωπον περιπατεῖτε ye conduct yourselves as men, [1 Corinthians 3:3](#); λαλεῖν or λέγειν κατὰ ἄνθρωπον, to speak according to human modes of thinking, [1 Corinthians 9:8](#); [Romans 3:5](#); κατὰ ἄνθρωπον λέγω, I speak as a man to whom analogies from human affairs present themselves, while I illustrate divine things by an example drawn from ordinary human life, [Galatians 3:15](#); κατὰ ἄνθρωπον θηριομάχαι, as man is accustomed to fight, urged on by the desire of gain, honor and other earthly advantages, [1 Corinthians 15:32](#): οὐκ ἔστι κατὰ ἄνθρωπον is not accommodated to the opinions and desires of men, [Galatians 1:11](#); (for examples of κατὰ ἄνθρωπον in secular authors see Wetstein on Rom. as above); with the accessory notion of malignity: προσέχετε ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, [Matthew 10:17](#); εἰς χεῖρας ἀνθρώπων, [Matthew 17:22](#); [Luke 9:44](#).

d. with the adjunct notion of contempt (as sometimes in Greek writings): [John 5:12](#); the address ὦ ἄνθρωπε, or ἄνθρωπε, is one either of contempt and disdainful pity, [Romans 9:20](#) (Plato, Gorgias, p. 452 b. σύ δέ ... τίς εἶ, ὦ ἄνθρωπε), or of gentle rebuke, [Luke 22:58, 60](#). The word serves to suggest commiseration: ἴδε (T Tr WH ἰδοῦ) ὁ ἄνθρωπος behold the man in question, maltreated, defenseless, [John 19:5](#).

e. with a reference to the twofold nature of man. ὁ ἔσω and ὁ ἔξω ἄνθρωπος, soul and body: [Romans 7:22](#); [Ephesians 3:16](#); [2 Corinthians 4:16](#), (Plato, rep. 9, 589

a. ὁ ἐντός ἄνθρωπος; Plotinus Enn. 5, 1, 10 ὁ εἶσω ἄνθρωπος; cf. Fritzsche on Romans, vol. ii., 61f. (Meyer on Romans, the passage cited; Ellicott on Ephesians, the passage cited)); ὁ κρυπτός τῆς καριδας ἄνθρ. [1 Peter 3:4](#).

f. with a reference to the twofold moral condition of man, ὁ παλαιός (the corrupt) and ὁ καινός (ὁ νέος) ἄνθρωπος (the truly Christian man, conformed to the nature of God): [Romans 6:6](#); [Ephesians 2:15](#); [Ephesians 4:22, 24](#); [Colossians 3:9](#)

⁶³ [1 John 3:4](#)

⁶⁴ [Psalm 51:5](#)

being “able” in some sense or another. And **we should all have compassion and treat one another kindly.**⁶⁵

It is true that “Sin is no longer our master.”⁶⁶ We can and should exercise the fruit of the Spirit called “self-control”.⁶⁷ But, as we all know – we still sin⁶⁸, “fall into pits we have dug for ourselves”⁶⁹, and create burdensome situations in our lives which can be overwhelming. Our Heavenly Father has pity on us: **“As a father pities *his* children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we *are* dust.”** (Psalm 103:13-14) And so, **we should also have pity on one another.**⁷⁰ While our burdens may be of our own making, we all have them. And these burdens may be debilitating – that is, we may not be *able* to carry them alone. We all need some measure of help. We need to: **“Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.”** (Galatians 6:2)

But we still have Galatians 6:5 which says: ⁵**“For each one will bear his own load.”** I found that the following commentary eliminates the apparent contradiction:

⁶⁵ Colossians 3:13

⁶⁶ Romans 6:14

⁶⁷ Galatians 5:23; 2 Timothy 1:7; Titus 2:2, 11-12; 1 Peter 1:6; Cf. Proverbs 25:28

⁶⁸ 1 John 1:8

⁶⁹ Cf. “Whoever digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit they have made. The trouble they cause recoils on them; their violence comes down on their own heads.” Psalm 7:15-16

⁷⁰ Ephesians 4:32; Cf. 1 Corinthians 2:7

*“In Galatians 6:2 and 6:5, though the same English word [“burden(s)”] is used in the King James translation, the fact is, different Greek words were used in the original manuscripts. In verse 2, “burdens” is translated from baros, meaning “weight,” or figuratively, an “experience of something that is particularly oppressive”.⁷¹ In verse 5, “burden” is from fortion, meaning “that which constitutes a **load** for transport,” or “that which is carried and constitutes a burden”.⁷² Many modern versions have attempted to show readers the difference in the two words by translating baros as “burden(s)” in 6:2 and fortion as “load” in 6:5 (NKJV, NASB, ESV). Though further explanation to the alleged conundrum is still necessary, noting the difference in the Greek should cause skeptics to reconsider their KJV-based accusations.*

*Second, Galatians 6:2 and 6:5 do not represent an either/or command. If it is possible for the Christian to both (1) bear his own burden/load, while at the same time (2) help bear another’s burden, then both commands must be followed, without assuming that one command must be obeyed to the exclusion of the other. Consider how the Bible writers condemned laziness (Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:5; 21:25). Paul even went so far as to say, “If anyone will not work, **neither shall he eat**. For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and **eat their own bread**” (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12). At the same time, the child of God is to give to the poor (Proverbs 28:27; Luke 3:11). Paul instructed the penitent thief to “labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something **to share with anyone in need**” (Ephesians 4:28, ESV). Are we to work to take care of*

⁷¹ Danker, Frederick William, William Arndt, and F.W. Gingrich, (2000), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press)

⁷² Ibid.

our families and ourselves? Yes. Are we to help others who are genuinely in need (i.e., who have burdens that they are unable to bear alone)? Yes. Should lazy busybodies expect to receive physical help from Christians? Not necessarily. (They should “work in quietness and eat their own bread.” If anyone is capable of working, yet willfully chooses laziness instead, “neither shall he eat.”)

In short, the Christian takes his personal responsibilities seriously (he “bears his own”). At the same time, for those whose burdens of life are more than they can carry, the Christian joyfully comes to their aid to provide them various kinds of physical and spiritual assistance.”⁷³

Those Whom the Lord Has Given

For many years now, the Holy Spirit has led me in ministry through the following verse: **“Here am I and the children⁷⁴ whom the LORD has given me!”** (Isaiah 8:18 NKJV) Often, He has drawn my attention to my children, saying that ministry begins with those around me, in my own household. For example, I observe that discipling my adult children takes up much more of my thought life and prayer life than the ministry to 100s of others around the world. **For most of us, we are naturally motivated to help bear the burdens of those of our own household, obviously**

⁷³ Eric Lyons, Apologetics Press, “Bear One Another’s Burdens, or Just Bear Your Own?” <https://apologeticspress.org/bear-one-anothers-burdens-or-just-bear-your-own-1273/>

⁷⁴ For me, this has been in reference to both natural and spiritual children – but also all those I find in my life – “those whom the Lord has given me” to minister to.

because they are our loved ones. For the same reason, it is also obviously a top priority in our hearts and lives – *in other words, “It’s only natural.”*

Now Jesus did indicate we must love Him more than these.⁷⁵ And He also said His family were those who do God’s will.⁷⁶ But as we saw with the apparent contradiction in Galatians 6:2 and 6:5, the Lord’s words do not necessarily represent an either/or command. It is possible for the Christian to do both. So then, both sayings must be followed, without assuming that one must be obeyed to the exclusion of the other. Neither of those sayings eradicate the fact that next to, of course, Jesus, the Lord of our lives, “**those whom He has given**” – those we find around us, in our own household – should be our top priority. (I know this can be “a hard saying” because Jesus also said that our “enemies” may also be those of our own household.⁷⁷ However, He also directed us to love our enemies.⁷⁸)

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul is speaking to the general Christian community about **Bearing One Another’s Burdens**. In

⁷⁵ Matthew 10:37; Luke 14:26; John 21:15

⁷⁶ Matthew 12:50; Mark 3:35; Luke 8:21

⁷⁷ Matthew 10:36; Cf. Micah 7:6

⁷⁸ Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27; Cf. Proverbs 5:21

his first letter to Timothy, he refers specifically to “those who are your own” – “those of your own household”:

“But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” 1 Timothy 5:8

Solomon wrote the following as wise advice for his son: **“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it.”** Proverbs 3:27

Elderly Parents

Parents naturally help bear the burdens of their children.

However, when parents become elderly, they may carry these burdens in their hearts, and minds, and prayers, but are no longer able to actually do many of the things they did for their children earlier in life. That is time for the adult children to help bear the burdens of their elderly parents. Scripture refers to it as **“honoring your parents”**. It is interesting how often this “commandment with a promise” of well-being is repeated in Scripture.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; Leviticus 19:3; Ephesians 6:1-2

The Battle of Life

³“Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward. ⁴Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth. ⁵Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them; they will not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.” Psalm 127:3-5

In many ways, life can be a “battle”. Just as godly parents help their children work their way through various issues and seasons in life by “nurturing”⁸⁰ them in the Lord, godly adult children are to be “warriors” and burden-bearers, helping their parents in their “battles” with the physical and health burdens that surely come with old age.

“Behold how good and pleasant it is...”

¹“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to live together in unity! ²It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, *as on Aaron’s beard, the oil* which ran down upon the edge of his robes. ³It is like the dew of Hermon coming down upon the mountains of Zion; for the LORD commanded the blessing there—life forever.”

Psalm 133

⁸⁰ Ephesians 6:4. Greek: *extrepho*, Strong’s # 1625, rear up to maturity, bring up, nurture.

F.B. Meyer comments:

“The word “behold” suggests that some special manifestation of unity was taking place under the psalmist’s eyes, perhaps in connection with some great religious festival; or David may have composed it to celebrate the healing of the breach after the death of Ishbosheth. We must not only be one in God’s purpose, but must be willing to dwell together, that is, to manifest our unity in outward action.”

“Bearing One Another’s Burdens” “manifests our unity” in households”. And as the psalmist says: “The LORD commanded the blessing there—life forever.”



The Law of Christ

**"Bear one another's burdens,
and thereby fulfill the law of Christ."**

Galatians 6:2

I find "The Law of Christ"⁸¹ to be an intriguing, important, and immeasurable topic. I have written about it elsewhere⁸²; and plan to write more on it in the future. In this present article, I will attempt to briefly establish *a Christ-centered New Covenant perspective* of The Law of Christ, and then focus specifically on

⁸¹ 1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2; Cf. Romans 8:2

⁸² "A New & Living Way", <https://www.atchriststable.org/ebooks/a-new-living-way/>

the relationship between “bearing one another’s burdens” and “the law of Christ”.

The Law of Christ

Let me begin by saying I believe a particular verse in one of Isaiah’s messianic prophecies to be foundational: **“I give YOU as a covenant to the people, as a Light to the nations.”** Isaiah 42:6

The New Covenant is a Living Person – Christ – *not a contract of written letters.* THAT is the essential difference between the Old and the New Covenants – specifically, **“NOT LIKE the covenant which I made with their fathers.”** (The Mosaic Covenant)⁸³ What was different about it? Scripture consistently informs us it is **“by the Spirit, not by the letter”⁸⁴ ... so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.⁸⁵**

By the Spirit

³³ **“For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD: “I will put My law within them and write it on their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.** Jeremiah 31:33

⁸³ Jeremiah 31:32

⁸⁴ 2 Corinthians 3:6. Or, “according to the Spirit, not according to the letter. Also, John 6:63. Cf. John 5:21, 6:68; Acts 5:20.

⁸⁵ Romans 7:6

In the New Covenant, God’s law is written on human hearts, not on tablets of stone.⁸⁶ It is a law which addresses an infinite number of circumstances and situations. It’s a law which far exceeds the ten commandments⁸⁷, and the 613 commandments in the Old Testament,⁸⁸ and the 1050 commandments in the New Testament.⁸⁹ It’s a LIVING LAW operating in all circumstances and situations, 24/7, moment by moment, in the spirit, from within the heart.

Some offer that the “law of Christ” is found in the written words of the “Sermon on the Mount”⁹⁰, the “Great Commandment”⁹¹, and the “New Commandment”⁹². These are, indeed, EXAMPLES of the law of Christ – very important examples meant to be a guide and a measure of our actions. If we contradict these, we “lie against the truth”.⁹³ *But these are not the wholeness of the law of Christ.* Jesus told us to “love one another” – we can take that as a law or a commandment which is written in the gospels. But did He specify *HOW to love in every circumstance and situation?* No,

⁸⁶ 2 Corinthians 3:3

⁸⁷ Exodus 20

⁸⁸ Commandments in the Old Testament: https://www.jewfaq.org/613_commandments

⁸⁹ Commandments in the New Testament:
https://www.abc.net.au/reslib/201407/r1308729_17984331.pdf

⁹⁰ Matthew 5-7; Luke 6

⁹¹ Matthew 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10:25-28

⁹² John 13:34, 15:12 & 17

⁹³ James 3:14

but He did promise **His Spirit** would “guide us into all the truth” – of all the specifics of what they were not able to *receive* at the time.⁹⁴ In a manner of speaking, they could not receive, bear, carry *the infinite words that comprise the whole law of Christ*. **The Spirit would quicken what they needed to hear at any given time.** That is HOW we obey in the New Covenant - **BY or ACCORDING to the Spirit, NOT by or according to the letter.**⁹⁵ But, of course, the Spirit will never lead in a way which would contradict what He Himself inspired to be written in the Scripture.

Knowing the Lord

³⁴ **They will not teach again, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,’ declares the LORD, “for I will forgive their wrongdoing, and their sin I will no longer remember.”** Jeremiah 31:34

In this passage from Jeremiah, we see these two phrases:

“Know the Lord” and “They all will know Me”: In the Hebrew text, the word, “yada”,⁹⁶ is translated “know” in both instances. But in the Greek translation⁹⁷, two different words are used – first,

⁹⁴ John 16:12-15. “receive”: (Greek) bastazo, Strong’s # 941, bear, carry, endure, receive.

⁹⁵ Romans 7:6

⁹⁶ Strong’s # 3045

⁹⁷ *Apostolic Bible Polyglot* <https://apostolicbible.com/>

*ginosko*⁹⁸, and then, *eido*⁹⁹. (Please read the footnotes.)

Combining those two Greek words gives a much richer meaning. I'd like to offer this paraphrase: *"They will no longer need to say to one another, 'Have a personal, experiential relationship with the Lord', because they all will recognize My Spirit working in their lives, and be able to perceive and understand Me and My ways."*

Life

The good news about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection is more than the forgiveness of sins.¹⁰⁰ It is also the defeat of death – which is “the wages of sin”.¹⁰¹ What the Lamb of God redeemed back for us (which was lost in the Garden) is LIFE. Just pause for a moment and think of how many times and in what ways the word “LIFE” appears in Scripture – especially the New Testament.¹⁰² We could say that the Law of Christ in the New

⁹⁸ Greek: *ginosko*, Strong's # 1097. Helps Word Studies: “properly, to know, especially through *personal experience (first hand acquaintance)*. 1097 /*ginōskō* (“experientially know”).”

⁹⁹ Greek: *eido*, Strong's # 1492. Helps Word Studies: “1492 *eídō (oida)* – properly, to see with *physical eyes* (cf. Ro 1:11), as it naturally bridges to the *metaphorical sense: perceiving (“mentally seeing”)*. This is akin to the expressions: “I see what You mean”; “I see what you are saying.” 1492 /*eídō* (“*seeing that becomes knowing*”) then is a *gateway* to grasp spiritual truth (reality) from a physical plane. 1492 (*eídō*) then is physical seeing (sight) which should be the constant bridge to mental and spiritual seeing (*comprehension*).

¹⁰⁰ 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

¹⁰¹ Romans 6:23

¹⁰² For example: John 5:12, 21; 6:63, 68; Acts 5:20; Romans 6:23; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Ephesians 2:6; 1 John 3:14; Cf. Deuteronomy 30:19

Covenant is all about LIFE, rather than letters. And that is essentially how the apostle Paul explained the New Covenant: **“A new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”** 2 Corinthians 3:6 That is also how he identified **“the Law of Christ”**: **“The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”**. Romans 8:2

“We serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.” Romans 7:6 **“... for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.”** 2 Corinthians 3:6 And **“We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers *and sisters*.”**

1 John 3:14

Intrinsic to “passing from death into life”,¹⁰³ is the spiritual reality that, in the New Covenant, **God’s law – the law of Christ – has also passed from letters to life**. Because it is “by the Spirit”, it is not embedded on tablets of stone, but is resident and operational in LIFE – everyday, 24/7 LIFE. And for our purposes here, **“the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”** which governs the New Covenant is specifically operational in kingdom households – in the lives of extended families, including their relationships and the bearing of one another’s burdens. In the New Covenant, the bearing of one another’s burdens is done “according to the

¹⁰³ 1 John 3

Spirit, not according to the letter”,¹⁰⁴ as has been discussed above.

It bears repeating: The written words of Christ are EXAMPLES of the law of Christ – very important examples meant to be a guide and a measure of our actions. If we contradict these, we “lie against the truth”.¹⁰⁵ The Spirit will quicken what we need to hear at any given time. And, of course, the Spirit will never lead in a way which would contradict what He Himself inspired to be written in the Scripture.

The Opportunity & Context for Discipleship

I have written extensively on “Discipleship” in other articles like [“The Vineyard of the Lord”](#), [“The Husbandman”](#), [“Christ-centered Discipleship & Equipping Ministries”](#), and also [“Concerning Gathering”](#). But here I’ll share briefly on the opportunity and context for discipleship in the kingdom household and extended families.

¹⁰⁴ Romans 7:6

¹⁰⁵ James 3:14

The Cultivator

According to an etymology dictionary,¹⁰⁶ the origins of the word, “husband” were “hus”, meaning *house* and “bondi”, meaning *freeholder*. The verb tense, in the obsolete usage of “husband” meant **TO CULTIVATE**. The noun, “husband”, in its archaic use, is a manager, as of a household.

Concerning the “household” and the “freeholder” of the household: There was a significant distinction between those who are *members of the household* and *the manager of the household*. This has spiritual implications for CULTIVATORS: The members of the household have an accountability *for their functions*. But the manager of the household has responsibilities *with regard to the household members*.

Just as our Father God is a **CULTIVATOR** of our lives, by extension, a husband is called to be a **CULTIVATOR** of his wife, who is like “**a garden locked is my sister, my bride, a rock garden locked, a spring sealed up**”, and is to be nurtured and released to blossom and grow.¹⁰⁷ And a father is called to be a **CULTIVATOR** of his children who, along with his wife are “**being**

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.etymonline.com/word/husband>

¹⁰⁷ Song of Solomon 4:12-16; Cf. Genesis 3:16, I Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 5:22-33, Colossians 3:18-19

like a fruitful vine within your house, your children like olive plants around your table”, also to be nurtured to grow and bear fruit.¹⁰⁸

Of course, there is a husband-and-wife partnership in parenting. And as with Christ and His bride the Church, there is a co-laboring¹⁰⁹, and a shared administration of the household¹¹⁰ between the husband and wife. Thus, the wife in the household is also a CULTIVATOR of her children, as well as younger women – in this case – her daughter, daughters-in-law, and granddaughters.¹¹¹

*Discipling Adult Children*¹¹²

Another word about the phrase **“those whom the Lord has given”**: Who has the Lord already “given” to you? Your own children! And these may be your biological children, stepchildren, legally adopted children, or informally “adopted” children. The Kingdom of God - God’s Household – is populated by the Family

¹⁰⁸ Psalm 128:3; Cf. Exodus 20:12, Deuteronomy 5:16, Ephesians 6:2-4, Colossians 3:20-21

¹⁰⁹ 1 Corinthians 3:9

¹¹⁰ Cf. Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:29-30; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 3:21; 20:4-5.

¹¹¹ Cf. Titus 2:4-5

¹¹² Parents cultivate and disciple their children when they are young, but continue to do so in different ways when they become adults. Grandparents add an additional dimension to the cultivating and discipling of grandchildren.

of God. The “family” is an institution created by God. It is God’s desire that your extended family also be a spiritual family.

As I’ve mentioned, kingdom households present a context for discipleship which is one of everyday life - 24/7. This does not preclude special sessions, bible studies, etc. But as I’ve tried to point out, this context of discipleship better allows the teachings of Christ to find their application in an infinite number of circumstances and situations. And, as is always the case, the one doing the discipling needs to be sensitive to the working of the Holy Spirit – namely, “In this circumstance, in this situation, what is it that the Holy Spirit is saying and doing with this particular person, at this particular time?” Hopefully, an excerpt from another article will serve to further explain what I have to share about discipling in the extended family kingdom household¹¹³ ...

“In November of 2017, my wife and I, along with our daughter-in-law, traveled together by car approximately 3000 miles (to and fro) in response to two separate family crises. The somberness of the two situations and the extended time together in the car (approximately 7 days in total) afforded some significant conversations about life and the things of God. As these conversations took place, I was silently having a

¹¹³ Following are some general thoughts gleaned from a particular “case study” – namely, our discipling relationship with our daughter-in-law. Actually, the content of “The Husbandman” is drawn from a lifetime of experience with discipling relationships with - one biological son, an adopted daughter, two adopted grandchildren we raised from birth - a grand-daughter (and her husband) and a grandson (and his wife, our daughter-in-law), two grandsons, a great-grand-daughter, and a great-grandson, as well as, many Christian couples, countless individual Christians.

conversation with myself – “taking notes”, as it were, on how this discipling was taking place in our relationship with our daughter-in-law. Below are some notes I made to myself:

- Discipling is cultivating “those whom the Lord has given”.
- From an elder’s perspective, the ministry of discipleship is actually a lifetime investment. Whereas the perspective of a typical church ministry sees discipleship as a “program”, which is: short- term, should see a “return on investment”, and attempts to identify the particular “techniques” which have good and measurable outcomes.
- The ministry of a discipling relationship includes:
 - time, talk & teaching
 - long-term friendship
 - long-term observation
 - imparting primarily through life example rather than merely dispensing information
- In a discipling relationship, affirmation and encouragement play a major role.
- Discipling is primarily about nurturing peoples’ lives rather than merely “equipping” people with spiritual commodities.
- Germane to discipleship is the concept of “Family”.¹¹⁴ “Family” can be re-defined to include both biological and non-biological relationships.
- Discipling is more like parenting than simply teaching.
- What has been learned by the one being disciplined is sometimes acknowledged as coming from the one doing the discipling, but sometimes not.

¹¹⁴ Again, I would highly recommend an article by Chip Brogden entitled “Family, Fellowship, and Leadership”: <https://www.chipbrogden.com/family-fellowship-and-leadership/>

- *Generally speaking, young people are busy building their lives and don't realize they need a ministry relationship with spiritual elders until they are young adults, and maybe starting their own families.*
- *Those young people who do seek out a ministry relationship with spiritual elders are somewhat rare and wise."*



Belonging

Family

¹⁴“I bow my knees [in reverence] before the Father [of our Lord Jesus Christ], ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name [God--the first and ultimate Father].” Ephesians 3:14-15

The concept of “family” originates with God. In Greek, the word for family is *patria*¹¹⁵, which is derived from *pater*, the word for “father.”

¹¹⁵ Strong’s # 3965. The Hebrew word translated family is *mishpachah*, Strong’s # 4940.

Belonging

In this passage, Paul is praying to the father for every born-of-the-Spirit child of God – that they may EXPERIENCE “the fullness of God” – a phrase which he takes four more verses to describe (emphasis mine):

¹⁶“May He grant you out of the riches of His glory, to be **strengthened and spiritually energized** with power through His Spirit in your inner self, [indwelling your innermost being and personality], ¹⁷so that **Christ may dwell in your hearts** through your faith. And may you, having been **[deeply] rooted and [securely] grounded in love**, ¹⁸be fully capable of comprehending with all the saints (God’s people) **the width and length and height and depth of His love** [fully experiencing that amazing, endless love]; ¹⁹and [that you may come] to know [practically, through personal experience] **the love of Christ** which far surpasses [mere] knowledge [without experience], that you may be filled up [throughout your being] to all **the fullness of God** [so that you may have **the richest experience of God’s presence in your lives**, completely filled and flooded with God Himself].

Ephesians 3:16-19

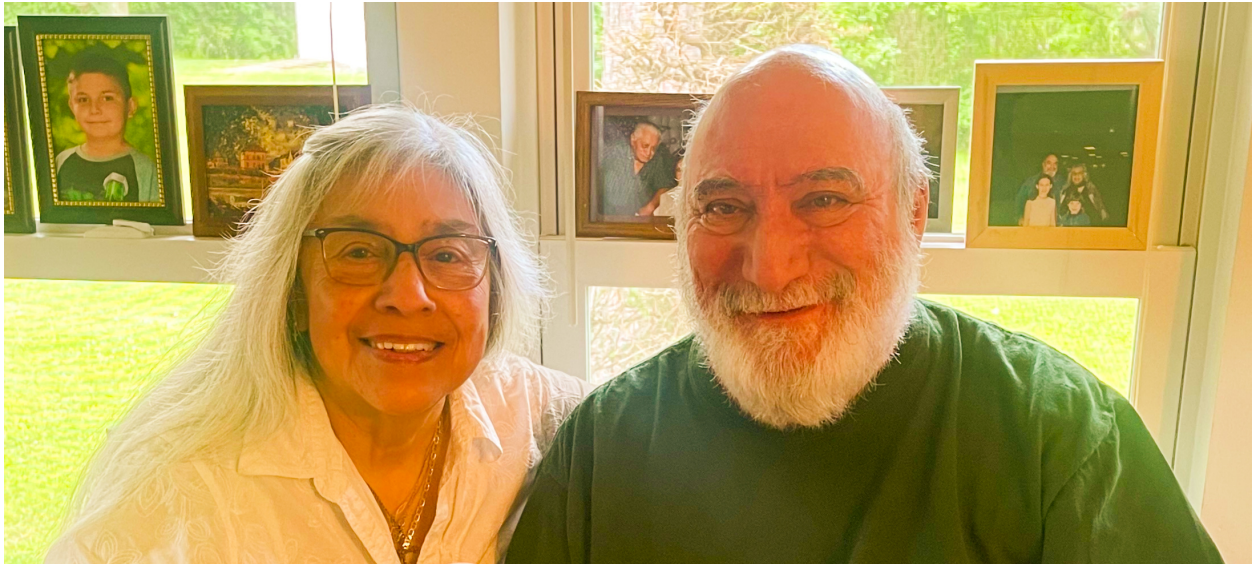
I believe the phrases I emphasized above communicate “the fullness of God” to be essentially the experience of being loved by God with a sense of BELONGING to God.

Paul is praying to the Father for the Church (Ecclesia) – those who have **“received the Spirit of Christ”** and therefore **“BELONG to Christ”** (Romans 8:9) – those who are **“sons and daughters of God, led by the Spirit of God”** (Romans 8:14) – having received **“a spirit of adoption as sons *and daughters* by which they cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’, the Spirit Himself testifying with their spirit that they are children of God.”** (Romans 8:15-16)

Paul’s words to the Roman brethren also communicate something of what it is to BELONG to Christ, BELONG to God, BELONG to the family of God. I believe this sense of BELONGING is nurtured and supported by the godly life lived together in an extended family kingdom household where all are bearing one another’s burdens and fulfilling the law of Christ.

²⁰Now to Him who is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly more than all that we dare ask or think [infinitely beyond our greatest prayers, hopes, or dreams], according to His power that is at work within us, ²¹to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever. Amen.” Ephesians 3:16-21 AMP

Bill & Frances Furioso
~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, discipled many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet...

<https://www.AtChristsTable.org>

ACTpublications

"... explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words." 1 Corinthians 2:13

A teaching ministry from Bill and Frances Furioso

At Christ's Table

Disciples of the King and His Kingdom eating and drinking of Jesus

THE HEAD

THE CENTER

THE FOUNDATION

of Biblical Christianity

with a view to

REVELATION of Christ

RELATIONSHIP with Christ

REFLECTION of Christ

FREE ONLINE MINISTRY RESOURCES

OUR WEBSITE: www.AtChristsTable.org

WRITTEN MESSAGES

Restoration Library: <https://usr.helps7.com/AtChristsTable/indexA.html>

Academia.edu: <https://independent.academia.edu/WDFurioso>

WordPress: <https://atchriststable.wordpress.com/>

RECORDED MESSAGES

YouTube: www.YouTube.com/user/BillFurioso

Academia.edu: <https://independent.academia.edu/WDFurioso>

SoundCloud: <https://soundcloud.com/user-648428572>

Spreaker: <https://www.spreaker.com/user/14502151>

SOCIAL MEDIA

Facebook: www.facebook.com/atchriststable

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/at-christ-s-table-ministries-254b5320/>

Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/atchriststable1>