

## THE PRIORITY OF DISCIPLESHIP (PART 2)

### Introduction

A month ago, I spoke about discipleship, focusing on our call to disciple others.

Matthew 28:16-20 (NIV): The Great Commission

<sup>16</sup> Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. <sup>17</sup> When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Galatians 4:19 (NLT): The heart of those who disciple others.

Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I'm going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives.

Discipleship or discipling others is about Christ being developed in our lives; it's about who we become. I gave this definition/description of what discipleship is:

Discipleship is a relational dynamic in which someone, or a group of people, who is/are secure in their identity as a son(s)/daughter(s) of God, mentors and equips another person(s) into an intimate, transformative and empowering relationship with Jesus to become more like Him in identity, character, power and authority.

I focused on the three aspects of discipleship – teaching, apprenticeship, and access – and how Jesus spent most of his time giving access to His 12 disciples, then empowering them through apprenticeship and lastly in teaching. This is the opposite of how the Church usually allocates its time in discipling others.

Lastly, I emphasized the priority that Jesus placed on discipleship. Jesus played the long game. He knew that mentoring and equipping His 12 disciples was the means to reaching the entire world; that once they were filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit they would disciple others who would in turn disciple others until the Gospel of Salvation and the Gospel of the Kingdom spread across the globe.

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Today I want to look at the aspect of sonship. In my previous message I said that discipleship is born out of sonship and flows into mentoring and equipping; that the Great Commandment precedes the Great Commission.

Matthew 22:35-40 (NIV)

<sup>35</sup> One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: <sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment.

<sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

### What is sonship?

Sonship has to do with our relational identity. Sonship is knowing, through revelation and encounter, that we are a much-loved son or daughter of the King.

Sonship is based on who we are, not on our performance. We are loved because we are His kids/children, not because of what we do. Before Jesus had done any the good works associated with His ministry, before He started His mission, before He began discipling others, He was affirmed as a much-loved son:

Mark 1:9-11 (NIV)

<sup>9</sup> At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup> Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.”

(Note: See also Matt 3:13-17 & Luke 3:21-22)

The opposite of sonship is the orphan heart.

Orphans include the wounded and those who do not want anything to do with God. They are the religious (Pharisees), the prodigals, the agnostics and the atheists. They are each one of us before we came to Christ and they are us after

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we come to know Him until we have the encounter and revelation of His love for us apart from our performance – that we also are His much-loved son/daughter.

Our woundedness and pride keep us locked away. We believe we have done something wrong, that we do not deserve His love; that we need to earn it. We believe His love is dependent on our performance; on what we do and not on who we are.

Jack Frost, in his book, *From Spiritual Slavery to Spiritual Sonship*, contrasts the orphan heart and the heart of sonship, of a much-loved son/daughter.

The heart of the orphan sees God as Master and they feel like a servant/slave, while the heart of a son sees God as a loving Father, and they feel like a son/daughter.

Romans 8:15 (NIV)

<sup>15</sup> The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba, Father.*”

The orphan heart experiences God’s Presence as conditional and distant while the heart of a son experiences His Presence as close and intimate.

Independent and self-reliant characterize the orphan heart, while interdependence and acknowledging need characterizes the heart of a son.

The self-image of the orphan heart is one of self-rejection that arises out of comparing themselves to others. The self-image of the son is positive and affirmed because they know that God values them highly.

The orphan heart has difficulty receiving admonition. They must be right, so they easily get their feelings hurt and they close their spirit to discipline. The heart of a son sees the receiving of admonition as a blessing and need in their life, so that faults and weaknesses are exposed and put to death.

Personal testimony: Walking in the woods, struggling with depression. “I cannot admonish you when you are wrapped up in your emotions.”

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The heart of an orphan sees authority as a source of pain, something to distrust and the orphan lacks the heart attitude of submission. The heart of a son is respectful and honoring of authority, seeing them as ministers of God for good in their life.

The orphan heart is driven by spiritual ambition, fighting for what they can get, while the heart of a son is motivated by love, freely receiving their inheritance as a much-loved son/daughter.

The orphan heart is insecure and lacks peace. Their lives are characterized by bondage. The heart of a son abides in rest and peace. Their lives are full of liberty.

The orphan heart lives by the love of the law while the heart of the son lives by the law of love.

Read: "Father God's Happy Thought" in *Experiencing Father's Embrace* by Jack Frost, pp 62-63.

### **How is sonship related to discipleship?**

Sonship is the very core of our identity. Everything flows from it. When we disciple from a place of sonship, we reproduce sons. When we disciple others from an orphan heart, we reproduce orphans.

Like begets like. It's a principle of the Kingdom.

Genesis 1:24-25 (NIV)

<sup>24</sup> And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. <sup>25</sup> God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

Orphans who disciple others beget those who are wounded, the religious (Pharisees) and the prodigals. Jesus called the Pharisees (Matt 23) hypocrites and blind guides, saying this about the fruit of their discipling:

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Matthew 23:15 (NIV)

<sup>15</sup> “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.

Identity is who we are. Who we are has an enormous impact in our mentoring and equipping. Thus, security in our relationship as a much-loved son/daughter must precede discipling others. Identity must precede mission - just as it did for Jesus.

We cannot disciple from an orphan heart. It is essential that we know, through encounter and revelation that we are a much-loved son/daughter of the King.

*Will you let Him heal your orphan heart?*

Music Video: *When God Ran* by Phillips, Craig & Dean

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Akv2V5fNdk>