

- I. Introduction. *God's mission on Earth has always been to build a family of which He is the Father, both head and source of all things.
 - A. Family values
 - 1. Oxford dictionary: values held to be traditionally learned or reinforced within a family, such as those of high moral standards and discipline.
 - 2. WebMD: Family values are beliefs, ethics, priorities, and worldviews shared by each family member. These behavior codes create structure in families and can define each member's role. They also help families cope with difficult challenges and determine right from wrong in complex situations.
 - 3. *In our family, when our kids went out, Sherri would say, "Make good choices." While other families might need some definition to that, our family understood what that meant because of our values that we share as a family. This is not to mean that choices were always consistent with our family values, but the values were clear.
 - B. While "family values" can be assumed to be understood, it is not fair to think that way - every family defines what their family values are.
 - C. God's family values
 - 1. God, in creating humanity, has created a human family with whom He has shared His family values.
 - 2. Yet, His family veered from those values early on, thus changing the nature of God's human family.
 - 3. Through Scripture, we see moments and examples of God's values that He shares and expects from His family - now defined as those who have responded to His call of repentance, received forgiveness, and are adopted back into His family as sons and daughters and full heirs.
 - 4. *Before we start to look at how the Church (body of Christ, Bride of Christ, family of God) is called to live as family, we need to look at what God's family values are.
- II. God's family values from Genesis to Revelation
 - A. Adam and Eve
 - 1. Genesis 2
 - 2. God values us to live in familial community because it is not good to be alone.
 - B. Cain and Abel
 - 1. Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9)
 - 2. God values some degree of responsibility for one another within His family.
 - C. Calling of Abram
 - 1. Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will

bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the Earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3)

2. God values His family as more than blood relations.

D. Abraham and Lot

1. Then Abram said to Lot, “Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herdsmen and my herdsmen, for we are kinsmen. Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself from me. If you take the left hand, then I will go to the right, or if you take the right hand, then I will go to the left.” And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw that the Jordan Valley was well watered everywhere like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, in the direction of Zoar. (This was before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) So Lot chose for himself all the Jordan Valley, and Lot journeyed east. Thus they separated from each other.” (Genesis 13:8-11)
2. God often values leaders in His family to sacrifice for others.

E. Jesus and the disciples

1. And He called to Him His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him. (Matthew 10:1-4)
2. Range of the disciples’ ideologies
 - a. Jesus gathered three Zealots (militant nationalists), a tax collector (favored the Sadducee party and participated in Roman exploitation), one member of the Sicarii party (a branch of the Zealots who believed that violence was necessary to end oppression), and a wealthy nobleman who was linked to the Pharisees (focused on observance of ancestral laws avoiding civic engagement focusing solely on the temple religious system).
 - b. This family that Jesus brought together was an ideological tinderbox.
3. God values His family to rise above ideologies and center themselves on the person and work of Jesus.

F. Philemon and Onesimus

1. For this perhaps is why he was parted from you for a while, that you might have him back forever, no longer as a bondservant but more than a bondservant, as a beloved brother—especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. So if you consider me your partner, receive him as you would receive me. If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, write this with my own hand: I will repay it—to say nothing of your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, I want some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ. (Philemon 15-20)
2. God values His family to see each other through the lens of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ that brought every person inclusion into God’s family, and to not see their cultural status or ethnic bias.

G. Euodia and Syntyche

1. *I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the Gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life. (Philippians 4:2-3)*
2. God values unity in His family as they work together on His mission.
3. *God's ultimate vision for His family is that they will all gather together as one family at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" (Revelation 7:9-10)

III. Assignment

A. Challenge/assignment

1. Read Scripture with a lens of identifying what God is communicating about His family values for His family.
2. Take some time to read the stories and even the instructions in both the Old and New Testament and be aware of what God is communicating about His family.

B. Prayer/fasting

1. Spend time praying that the Holy Spirit would open you up to seeing how God defines His family and what He expects from us. That you would be willing to lightly adjust or radically alter the way you live depending on what Scripture says and how the Spirit convicts.
2. Consider fasting a meal or a day this week in your pursuit of knowing God and His values.