

A Model for Discipleship

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12

- I. The _____ of discipleship is the
_____ of God (2, 4, 8, 9)
- II. The _____ of discipleship is
_____ for people (7-8, 11-12)
- III. The _____ for discipleship is
_____ God (4, 6)
- A. _____ (2)
- B. _____ (3-4)
- C. _____ (3, 6, 9, 10)
- IV. The _____ of discipleship is
_____ worthy (12)
- A. Our _____ (Phil 1:27)
- B. God's _____ (Eph 4:1; Gal 4:4-6)

God's adopted children have, then, a very distinctive cry; they have a distinctive way of responding to life's challenges. The distinctive thing is not that God's children have fewer challenges. Nor is it that God's children don't grieve or experience disappointment. Instead the distinctive thing about God's children is this: when they cry they make a different sound than those who aren't God's children. When faced with suffering, whether great or small, God's children turn to their heavenly Father and cry out to him, "Abba! Father!" And by faith they expect their heavenly Father to hear and respond to their cry.

Have you listened to yourself cry lately? What do you sound like when you are faced with difficulties or hardships or suffering or setbacks? If we heard a recording of your response to some recent difficulty in your life, what would we hear? Would we hear the sound, "Abba! Father!"? Or would we hear something else entirely, perhaps the sound of grumbling or even the gnashing of teeth?

All too often the children of God get into difficulties in life and start to cry, as well they should, but it's not the distinctive cry of his adopted sons and daughters. Instead it sounds like the cry of those who don't know God as their Father. It's not the cry of intimacy and dependence; instead it's the cry of indignation and desperation—"What am I going to do!" or "How can God do this to me!"

God's children who are walking with the Lord don't gnash their teeth at their heavenly Father. Even when they receive a heavy blow in life, they don't curse the day they were born, much less curse the God who made them. Nor do they cry the way the world does—blaming themselves or others or God, suffocating under a sense of guilt and shame, or redoubling their efforts to work harder to get themselves out of their mess. God's children look to their heavenly Father in faith and cry out to him, "Abba! Father!" - Todd Wilson