



“Do you understand what I have done for you?” Jesus. (John 13:12)

A Family Discipling Process - Part 1 of 2
By Hal and Debbie Perkins

Parents, you have been ambushed by the coronavirus. What follows could be a relevant family discipling tool for such a time as this.

This discipling process has been developed as a response to one of many question Jesus asked His disciples. “Do you understand what I have done for you?”¹ *John 13:12*

Parents can reasonably employ this process with their children, especially at mealtimes. (Debbi and I sweetened the experience by giving rewards, like a dime for sincere answers and a quarter for superior responses, maybe even a special surprise for the child with the most earnings after this meal or this week.²)

At an unrushed family meal, Dad or Mom can facilitate something like the following:

ASK FOR REPORT ABOUT GOOD

Dad: “OK, while we pass all this food, let’s talk about some of the good things you saw today, especially with each other.”

Awkward silence.

¹ For a more detailed exposition and demonstration of 5 of Jesus’ questions, refer to book by Hal and Debbi Perkins, *Discipled by Jesus*, revised edition, chapters 11-20.

² Our heavenly Father rewards us for our good acts! Matthew 6:1ff

Dad: "Silence is actually good. When we are thinking, it helps us better recognize Jesus' voice."³

Son: "This is too hard. I can't remember anything." (Legitimate. We normally must be trained to hunt for and remember the "good.")

Dad: "It is hard. But let's keep trying. I'll give a dime for every answer."

Daughter: "Well, I think it was good that Mom made this dinner."

Mom: "Super. Ten cents for you."

ASK WHAT GOD HAD TO DO WITH GOOD REPORT

Dad: "Who thinks God thinks it was good for Mom to make dinner?"

All nod in agreement.

Dad: "Why do you think God thinks it was good?"

Daughter: "Because it was loving, and God wants us to love each other."

Dad: "Anyone disagree with that?" Silence.

Mom: "I think that answer is worth a quarter."

Son, more engaged: "I cleaned my room!"

Dad: "Good. Let's come back to that. First, back to Mom cooking dinner. Who thinks it was a good idea for her to serve by fixing dinner for us?" (All nod). "Does anyone know where every good idea comes from?"

Son: "She just knew ... it is what Mom's are supposed to do when we are stuck at home because of this virus."

Dad: "Maybe. Let me ask, did Mom's serving us by fixing dinner start as a good idea?" Again, all agree. "Does anyone know from where every good and perfect idea comes?"

Daughter: "Our creativity?"

Mom: "Well, James 1:17 says that every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of the heavenly lights. Dad and I believe that every truly good idea is given by God, thus He is the Originator of all our truly good ideas. We believe that if my idea to fix dinner was truly good, and if you trace that idea back far enough, you will find God's Spirit as the author of the idea. We know we hear His voice, and He teaches or reminds us or confronts our ideas routinely."⁴

Dad: "Wow. Give yourself four quarters! Great clarity! We have talked about this a lot. Is anyone willing to try to say back what Mom just explained?"

Silence.

Dad: "It's OK. We will work on this later. What Mom said is very important to understand for our relationship with Jesus. For now, who thinks the Holy Spirit probably spoke to Mom, giving her the idea to fix dinner?"

Son: "Maybe."

³ John 10:4, 27

⁴ John 10, 14-16. These applications of biblical ideas require explanation beyond the scope of this article

Dad: “Well, let’s include that ‘maybe’ for later when we discuss this whole idea ... maybe tomorrow night at dinner. Right now, let’s assume Mom heard Jesus by His Spirit with the idea to fix dinner – she does hear His voice, and what she did was truly good.⁵ I wonder if anyone is so thankful for the Holy Spirit speaking and so thankful that Mom heard and responded, that you would like to sincerely thank Jesus for speaking to Mom – He is here and listening – and maybe really thank Mom for her part in this ‘good’ that was a good gift to all of us.”

ASK FAMILY TO CELEBRATE GOD’S VOICE AND TO HONOR THE RESPONDERS

Son: “I’ll try. God, I think You might have spoken to my Mom ... not real sure ... but if You did, it was really good of You to care for all of us by talking to her ... so thank You. Oh, and Mom, I’m not sure where you got the idea, but I am pretty sure it was a good idea, and thank you very much for doing all this cooking for us.”

As families practice this process, children AND parents will make Kingdom progress.

⁵ When a report is made that qualifies as initiated directly by the Holy Spirit or through Scripture, we love to identify that “Jesus threw the ball to ‘Mom,’ and she caught it and ran with it. Without the God-given Truth, no good would have been initiated; without ‘Mom’ catching the ball (hearing God’s Word) and running with it (being a doer of the Word), we would not have seen God’s work. I love to say, “The Word became flesh ... again!”