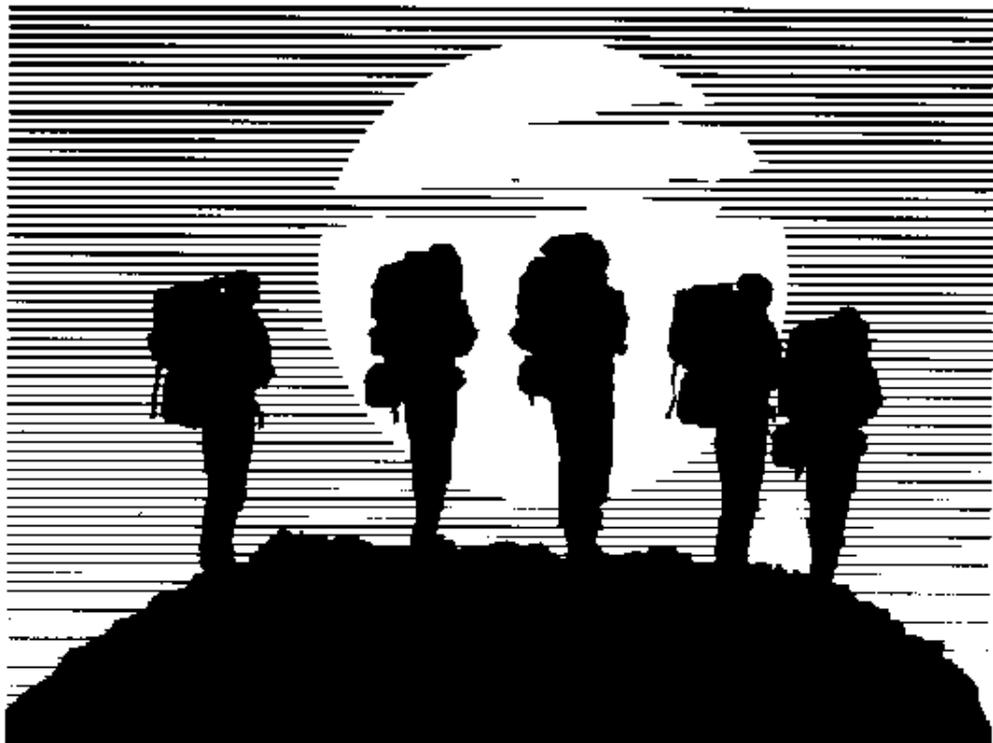


# **THE MASTER PLAN FOR CHANGING THE WORLD**



**By: Dr Don Hardgrave**

## **Dedication**

Discipleship is a journey as Christ meets us in the form of people in our lives. In the vital, formative years of my life the example and teaching of my mother were without doubt the most significant influence on me. As the years have passed, her love, faith and prayers have continued to sustain, motivate and inspire me, and I have watched with amazement the remarkable ways in which God has used her consecrated life to bless thousands of others. I am thankful to God and this book is affectionately and gratefully dedicated to her.

Sixth Edition, © 2009

Dr Don Hardgrave

A Textbook for the "Personal Discipleship" course  
CALAM training

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## Chart—What is a Disciple?

A disciple—

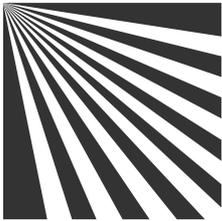
<p><b>1. KNOWS ABOUT GOD</b></p> <p>a) <b>Bible Study—</b> Systematic Devotional Memorization</p> <p>b) <b>Know about other religions—</b>eg Marxism, Hinduism, Islam, Evolution</p> <p>c) <b>Student of Apologetics—</b> Speaks with conviction and certainty— <i>Truth</i> is important.</p> <p>d) <b>Reads widely</b> (devotional, motivational, and teaching)</p>	<p><b>2. KNOWS GOD</b></p> <p>a) <b>Strong devotional life—</b> Prayer, relationship through Christ (obsessed with resurrection)</p> <p>b) <b>Does not major on doctrinal minors—</b> Predestination, Methods of Church Government, Sacraments</p> <p>c) <b>Vision, faith and persistence—</b> Personal sense of destiny</p> <p>d) <b>Accepts God's authority</b></p>	<p><b>3. KNOWS GOD'S PEOPLE</b></p> <p>a) <b>Clear on God's view of church—</b> The local church, the wider denomination of which it is a part, the wider Christian family</p> <p>b) <b>Has developed feel for history of church—</b> Sees God at work and ordinary people achieving greatness</p> <p>c) <b>Will "make history"—</b> Being clear on God's plan for church will have strategy for church growth; Communicates love of God</p>	<p><b>4. KNOWS HIMSELF</b></p> <p>a) <b>Gifts and strengths</b></p> <p>b) <b>Needs and weaknesses</b></p> <p>c) <b>Rhythms—</b> early morning or late evening</p> <p>d) <b>Positive self talk and self image</b></p> <p>e) <b>Effective use of imagination</b></p> <p>f) <b>Healthy sense of humour</b></p> <p>g) <b>Humility</b></p>	<p><b>5. KNOWS GOD'S WAYS</b></p> <p>a) <b>Has developed convictions from Bible principles not just traditions</b></p> <p>b) <b>Allows others this freedom</b></p> <p>c) <b>Knows how to decide right from wrong when a new situation emerges—</b> Principles of Scripture Principles of guidance</p> <p>d) <b>Has a teachable Spirit—</b> Able to learn from others</p>
<p><b>6. WORSHIPS BY AN OBEDIENT LIFE</b></p> <p>a) <b>Has daily Quiet Time</b></p> <p>b) <b>Consistently present when believers worship</b></p> <p>c) <b>Forgives as an act of the will those who hurt them</b></p> <p>d) <b>Gives thanks FOR all things</b></p> <p>e) <b>Lives in the light of eternity—</b> This world is not my home</p> <p>f) <b>Blends deep trust in God with sense of urgency to serve</b></p>	<p><b>7. TELLS OTHERS ABOUT GOD—EVANGELISM</b></p> <p>a) <b>Distressed by effects of sin and has passion to share Christ</b></p> <p>b) <b>Respects integrity of others</b></p> <p>c) <b>Clearly grasps basics of faith</b></p> <p>d) <b>Has a method to share</b></p> <p>e) <b>Can resist temptation of "Red Herrings"</b></p> <p>f) <b>Cares about mission beyond local church</b></p> <p>g) <b>Depends on the Holy Spirit</b></p>	<p><b>8. IS AN ACTIVE PART OF A LOCAL CHURCH</b></p> <p>a) <b>Small group accountability</b></p> <p>b) <b>Worships regularly with church family</b></p> <p>c) <b>Willing to suffer for Christ</b></p> <p>d) <b>Serves using gifts</b></p> <p>e) <b>Gives of resources</b></p> <p>f) <b>Discipling others—teaching</b></p> <p>g) <b>Delegates to others</b></p> <p>h) <b>Serves beyond the local church</b></p> <p>i) <b>Submits to His/Her Pastor as unto the Lord</b></p>	<p><b>9. CONTROLS HIMSELF AS A STEWARD OF THE WHOLE OF LIFE</b></p> <p>a) <b>Ordered Private World—</b> Mind, body, time, possessions, money, talents, testimony, influence</p> <p>b) <b>Goal settings as a way of life</b></p> <p>c) <b>Priorities/plans a way of life</b></p> <p>d) <b>Not afraid to say "no", if necessary</b></p> <p>e) <b>Adequate rest times</b></p> <p>f) <b>Called to excellence</b></p>	<p><b>10. LIVES GOD'S WAY—THE HOLY LIFE</b></p> <p>a) <b>Total consecration and obedience to God</b></p> <p>b) <b>Self discipline and self denial</b></p> <p>c) <b>Small group support</b></p> <p>d) <b>Control of imagination</b></p> <p>e) <b>Filled with love of Christ and shows the beauty of holiness</b></p> <p>f) <b>Gives credit to God</b></p>

The following categories come from Bill Hull's excellent resource, *Choose the Life—*

The Transformed Mind Transformed Influence Transformed relationships Transformed Service Transformed Character

## Foreword

A wise king about 3,000 years ago reviewed the ways of civilizations and the lifestyle of his subjects and commented, “*Where there is no vision the people perish...*” (Proverbs 29:18). A historian almost 300 years ago made the same discovery as he reviewed the decline and fall of the Roman Empire.<sup>1</sup> In our own day, thinking people recognize that something has gone desperately wrong in our society.



But it is not enough to say “we need a vision”,  
or even “we share a dream for national revival”.  
The full impact will only be seen as our dream  
becomes specific and tangible.

*Every time Christianity breaks loose with full force on a culture, the effect is remarkable.* But all too quickly, these new discoveries become traditions and rituals and within a few generations, much of the vitality is lost. Then, as the society’s spiritual life begins to be stifled, society starts to decay and people search again for reality. As in the era when Rome fell in the fifth century or when mediaeval society collapsed in the fifteenth century, so today, believers are searching to discover what the church is really supposed to be doing. No longer is it enough simply to proclaim the good news. Today’s Christians want to “make disciples” and that determination is a very encouraging sign.

By defining a ‘disciple’, the vision can be made much more specific, since ‘spiritual awakening’ is really numbers of genuine disciples going out into the community, taking their place in business, in parliaments, in trade unions, in the media and in schools, till the society has been effectively impacted with the reality of God.

Attempts to compress the concept of discipleship into a few lines of definition have proven inadequate, so I have outlined ten categories of discipleship taught in scripture. (A chart of these ten areas is found on Page 2.) Careful study of these will allow you to evaluate your own past personal experiences and to plan to strengthen those aspects which are lacking. The end result—a change in the history of our nation and our planet.

### The ten categories are:

1. **A Disciple Knows about God.** It is important that we know the truth about the One being worshipped. With so many weird and inconsistent ideas floating around in society today, Christians need to be very clear about the nature of God and what He is really like. It is also important to understand what God is not like.
2. **A Disciple Knows God.** History is strewn with the stories of those who mastered theology but failed to have a personal relationship with the Lord. The diversity of denominations in which godly Christian people are found is a clear demonstration that it is acceptable to God for Christians to differ on such issues as predestination, church government, and the sacraments, as long as they master the essence of the faith. The central issue is a knowledge that moves beyond facts and truths to a personal friendship with God.

3. **A Disciple Knows God's People.** The teaching of Christ makes it clear that Christianity in isolation is not God's desire. The church is part of the plan and purpose of God. It is the obvious and logical outcome of the ministry and teaching of Jesus. His followers must understand the Christian church as a wonderful living movement stretching back to the New Testament and, in fact, earlier to the Old Testament people of God. Then they can better learn to relate to the people of God in a positive, meaningful way on a regular basis and be able to enjoy the love and warmth of a genuinely caring fellowship.
4. **A Disciple Knows Himself.** The discovery of the power of the subconscious mind in shaping behaviour and particularly the need for a positive self-image, is part of the revolution in thinking in our day. In an age when pressure to conform is very great and society makes increasing demands, the need to pace ourselves and to know our gifts and limitations is more and more essential for effective service. So too is the wholesome gift of humour.
5. **A Disciple Knows God's Ways.** The Bible reveals God as One Who makes moral demands and expects obedience to commands and precepts. He knows that will mean His people will be different from their neighbours who don't know God. It's too easy to settle for religious tradition but that's not enough. We must know how the principles and precepts of the Bible are expressed in today's society and live by them.

As a result of thinking through the first five categories, a disciple responds in a lifestyle characterized in the following ways:

6. **A Disciple worships regularly** with God's people and also by a lifestyle obedient to the teachings and principles of Scripture. This includes nourishing our relationship with God by a regular daily "Quiet Time" of prayer and Bible reading, being thankful *for* all things, and forgiving hurts as an act of the will. A disciple lives in the light of eternity—this world is not his home, and so he blends a deep trust in God with a sense of urgency to serve his Master.
7. **A Disciple Tells Others About God.** Distress over the effects of sin causes us to have a passion for evangelism. Witnessing is sharing with others the Lord we have come to know. It is helped by having a clear grasp of the basics of the faith, a reliable method to share, and by respecting the integrity of those who listen.
8. **A Disciple is an Active Part of a Local Church.** A local unit of the body of Christ provides each believer with a place for accountability, worship, learning, and service, using the specific gifts supplied by the Holy Spirit. It is a place where we learn to disciple others, and to delegate responsibilities where appropriate. A disciple submits to leadership, especially his pastor, as unto the Lord.
9. **A Disciple Controls Himself as a Steward of the Whole of Life.** A steward cares for the possessions of his master as if they were his own. A disciple of Christ sees all he is, and all he owns, as belonging to the Lord. He recognizes the need for an ordered private world—one in which the temporary possessions of mind, body, material resources, time, talents, testimony and influence are carefully tended as a responsibility given by God.

10. **A Disciple Lives God's Way.** The life of the believer needs to be filled with the love of Christ thus demonstrating the beauty of holiness. This is achieved through total consecration, self-discipline, the support of a small group, and control of the imagination.

### Why this is Vital

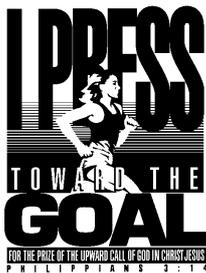
Isn't it time for God's people to pursue discipleship in an integrated, balanced way? Has this model with its ten categories stirred your thinking?

We must have a clear idea of the areas which together constitute a disciple of the Lord Jesus as the Bible teaches. Then we can begin to see how we can use them to strengthen the quality of discipleship.

#### How is your spiritual walk?

You will find some ideas in these pages to strengthen your relationship with the Lord and your witness to your friends.

Are you desperate enough in your commitment to act upon these new truths?



As you begin to climb to new heights of experience and usefulness a whole new adventure will unfold. But you must be ready to make a committed start.

This little volume is a text book for a course on Discipleship wherein the student has the opportunity to work carefully through the ten categories displayed in the middle pages of this book.

This course was first taught in a local church in Brisbane in 1991. Since then it has been shared with students from all around the globe as I have lectured at home and overseas. One student commented what many have echoed that the experience was like entering a large home and taking a peek in different rooms—a kind of tour of inspection. After that they were able to return to the areas of greatest interest and do further study. This has certainly applied to this program. This material has been upgraded several times since 1991 and I am confident will make a significant contribution to the reader's growth.

I will recommend authors from time to time but especially Bill Hull's resources on discipleship—*The Disciple Making Pastor*, *The Disciple Making Church* and *Choose the Life*.

As we Christians start to "get our act together", I am convinced that we will see a new day for Christianity as the church really starts to make an impact for Jesus and the gates of hell fall back yet again!

# Chapter 1

## Turning “Spectators” into “Disciples”

---

A member of our church had just returned from an international gathering for World Missions. Excitedly I listened to reports of what God is doing through His people around the globe. The events in Eastern Europe, and Russia in recent years have so amazed me that I looked forward to hearing what is happening there. One country was mentioned where “a number of visas had been granted to Christians from evangelical denominations and missions...” and then came the shock “and ten times that number to a cult!”. In Russia, after the fall of communism, of every one hundred books published, five were by a cult, three were by Muslims and one was Christian.<sup>2</sup>

### The Problem

Reflecting solemnly on those statistics and looking around at the Christian church in the west, it is obvious that there has been a loss of credibility and the community at large sees the church as an out-moded relic of the past with little relevance to the modern world. The media and educational institutions unashamedly reflect the second half of Romans chapter one. Parliaments strengthen this position with legislation whose worthy objectives sometimes carry sinister implications. Other religious faiths are on the increase and the next generation is struggling to find hope, meaning, purpose and identity. There is a search for community and a genuine experience of the supernatural dimension of life.

The growth of the church is at best sluggish. Many in the larger denominations have lost confidence in an infallible Bible and many churches have retreated into formalism. While this move gives some comfort to the older generation who appreciate something predictable in a rapidly changing world, the under forty-fives are not impressed. They are staying away in droves. These churches are growing older in average age each year—and smaller.<sup>3</sup>

Churches breaking out of the traditional mold present a brighter picture. There is some excitement, and growth statistics are more positive. However, there is sometimes a gap between the “hype” and the truth on which the Christian faith is solidly based.



GO GO GO

But still there is the age-old problem of the spectator mentality along with the “what’s in it for me” attitude. Is this really what the Lord wants His church to be like? Isn’t there a crisis before us—a crisis of *product*?

Whether we measure by the number of missionaries being recruited and sent out, the tone and vibrance of the average church, or by its impact in the community around, something is dreadfully wrong. The fact that many Christians and even some church leaders do not, or will not see the problem, only serves to underline how serious it is!

Listen to Bill Hull’s realistic assessment in this extended quote from his excellent book *The Disciple Making Pastor*:

*Churches are too little like training centers to shape up the saints and too much like cardiopulmonary wards at the local hospital. We have proliferated self-indulgent consumer religion, the what-can-the-church-do-for-me syndrome. We are too easily satisfied with conventional success: bodies, bucks, and buildings.*

*The average Christian resides in the comfort zone of “I pay the pastor to preach, administrate, and counsel. I pay him, he ministers to me... I am the consumer, he is the retailer... I have the needs, he meets them... that’s what I pay for.”*<sup>4</sup>

These sobering observations are the more disturbing in the light of his next comment:

*The all-too common measure of greatness is the number of people gathered for worship. If 3,000 people gather, some may make the snap judgment “this is a great church”. Measuring greatness this way has two important flaws. First, numbers themselves do not indicate greatness. Large groups can gather for any number of events, such as lynchings, mob riots, or Tupperware parties. The more accurate observation concerning a large church gathering might be “the number of people gathered here indicates that those leading the church—the pastor and the music leader—must be highly talented”. That would be a good and generally true judgment.*

*The second flaw of such a superficial measure is that you have asked the wrong question, “How many people are present?”. The right question is “What are these people like?”. What kind of families do they have? Are they honest in business? Are they trained to witness? Do they know the Bible? Are they penetrating their workplaces, their neighborhoods, reaching friends and associates for Christ? Are they making the difference in the world for Christ that He expects? These are the right questions, the issues of the heart, and the criteria for greatness.*<sup>5</sup>

These questions cannot be ignored. In addition to focusing on the wrong questions about the profile of a healthy church, more and more pressure is being placed on the pastor to perform. He is expected to preach like Billy Graham, counsel like James Dobson, sing like Robert Coleman and motivate like Robert Schuller. Is it realistic to expect our churches to be like a local version of Hillsong every week?

If we were to interview members of a congregation, none would expect the above performance, but if we put their corporate expectations together this is precisely what tends to emerge.

The mass media has created a climate where an unrealistic excellence is felt to be a churchgoer’s right—with or without commitment on their part.

What’s more the bonds of loyalty to denominations which provided stability in days past are replaced by a “shop for the best available” attitude. When this is coupled with high mobility and an uncertain economy the local church pastor’s position is pressured, uncomfortable and lonely, to say the least.

It really isn’t surprising that the local church begins to feel inferior as their service is compared with the tele-evangelist. The building doesn’t look like the Crystal Cathedral, and the music isn’t like Hillsong. The average believer is very fearful at expressing his faith and when he looks at the sacrificial zeal of student agitators and radicals around the globe, he is down-right depressed.

In the years before World War 2 the average Christian family went to the church of their background with the children fitting in, at least till they were 21. Even then there was an expectation that after marriage they would continue to attend. Today the parents choose on the basis of “whether my kids will fit into, and like, the youth program”.

There is an issue in the area of language too. The King James Version is unintelligible to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the population. The fact that a large number of Christians don't grasp the implications of this is alarming. Furthermore the songs that the Reformers used to teach the truths of the faith are set to tunes that are out of step with the musical idiom of the culture. As a response to these cultural changes, some churches have services just for the unchurched and the positive results reveal how foreign the average local church meeting is to those we are called upon to reach.

The distinguishing mark of the New Testament church which stands in such marked contrast to the 21<sup>st</sup> century equivalent is its sense of identity, mission and very obviously in its success level at impacting society.

### The Answer

Robert Coleman's very valuable book *"The Master Plan of Evangelism"*<sup>6</sup> analyses our current strategy and observes:



the method of Jesus is so different from the pattern of life in the average local church that the implications are shattering.<sup>7</sup> We must go back to the New Testament model

Our priorities must shift from meeting cultural expectations to moulding and equipping leaders. When we take this task seriously, the results such as effective evangelism and godly living will come naturally.

*The greatest threat to Satan's kingdom is not the American megachurch. It is whenever and wherever a motivated disciple-making pastor coaches an awakened laity to work together. When they do, multiplication is near. To Satan the most frightening thought is that pastors and leaders would take seriously the commands of making disciples and multiplying themselves. The exponential growth of the church, through its members, is the most dynamic force possible to man.*<sup>8</sup>

### What Do Disciples Look Like?

Ask the average churchgoer "who is a disciple" and you might hear

- Aaaah, obviously one of those men who spent all their time with Jesus.
- "A disciple is a follower of Christ—you know, someone who goes to church—and reads the Bible and prays".
- "Well, there are born-again ordinary Christians who have accepted Christ as Saviour and then there are super-deluxe fully committed ones called 'disciples' who have accepted Christ as Lord".

Is that really what it means to be a disciple—or is there more to it?

When Jesus gave His great commission to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20), He indicated that it would take place in relationships with others who knew of His risen presence and authority.

The task itself would involve two basic areas:

- *testimony* (of which the most vivid picture is believers' baptism)
- *truth* (which needs to be understood and taught).

The Bible teaches accountability from Genesis 3 to Revelations 22. This is how Jesus worked with the twelve and how He wants us to work. The accountability for our “testimony” or Christian experience comes through a small group and the accountability for “truth”, or study of His teaching, comes through some method of systematic personal study. An unhappy fact is that these two areas are rarely required in western Christianity.

Bill Hull, comments on accountability:

*“What would students learn without exams? What work would get done without deadlines? What teen would clean his room without his parents threatening life and limb? Why does behavior change when the teacher leaves the room, the coach the field, the parent the house? The answer is simple: It’s the nature of human nature. Yes, even regenerate human nature is not perfect or always mature human nature. Report forms, report cards, authority figures and systems are essential to good human performance.... The Christian is called upon to hold on, work hard, and look up. Work hard for your convictions and expect to hear His voice say, “Well, done, My good and faithful servant.”<sup>9</sup>*

Take a moment to review the ten categories of the definition of a disciple and you will see that:

Parts 1 to 5 emphasize primarily—  
*teaching truth* (foundational concepts).

Parts 6 to 10 emphasize primarily—  
*testimony* (how our lives are lived).<sup>10</sup>

A moment’s reflection comparing Christianity with the cults and “isms” which abound, reveals that their emphasis on accountability in both behaviour and learning has produced a very effective result. What the cults and especially Marxism, and more recently Islam, have clearly demonstrated is that *only those who are disciplined will change history*.

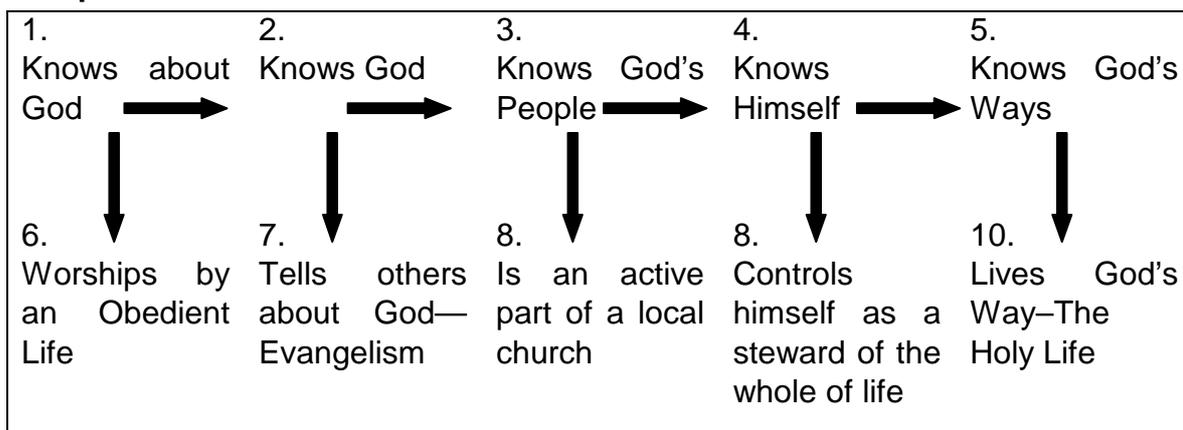
Note: This study does not replace or compete with the biblical truths we have learned and taught down through the years. What it does is provide a framework to identify those areas which are weak in our own lives and in the lives of those for whom we are responsible.



Bill Hull, in his outstanding book “Choose the Life” on discipleship<sup>11</sup> builds on his previous research. His categories, which focus on the attributes of character we are to develop have been included under the existing chart (see page 2). It was encouraging to see how naturally the insights fitted with the ideas the Lord has been leading us to in studying this subject.

## How the Model Works

### A Disciple



The whole picture is carefully integrated so that—

Category 1 leads naturally into category 2.

The God we have **learned about** is looking for a **relationship**.

Once established (through conversion) we are called to **identify with** the people of God (category 3)

This will be hindered unless we have come to **accept ourselves** (category 4) and

**understood how** the Christian lives in the world according to Biblical principles (category 5).

Similarly,

Knowing about God provokes a response of **worship** (category 6)

This naturally leads to **sharing** this knowledge (category 7), not just as truth but as a result of a relationship discovered (category 2).

If we come to grasp the awesome picture of the people of God in 4,000 years of history, (category 3), we will want to **be an active part** of a local church (category 8),

**using our gifts** as a faithful steward (category 9).

We will discover those gifts as we come to know ourselves better (category 3).

Finally, the whole picture culminates—not just in knowing what Christian behaviour entails (category 5)—but also in **living** a life of holiness (category 10).

*The whole is a wonderful adventure in discovery  
and growth in truth and Christian experience  
which goes on for a lifetime.*

We will examine each of the categories more fully in the following chapters.

## Chapter 2

### A Disciple Knows about God

---

Our starting point must be the knowledge of God, because no people has ever risen above its religion and no religion rises above its idea of God. If we are committing ourselves to the Christian faith we must know clearly what kind of Being we are worshipping and serving.

All around us there are rival ideas about God and we need to distinguish the true from the false. (We may say that they're all wrong as the atheist does but we can't say they're all right! It is intellectually dishonest to say that two opposites are both right.). A brief survey of the subject reveals that there are some very different thoughts from many gods to one and varied descriptions of what he is like.

As we evaluate these ideas we are, in fact, laying the foundation for our whole lives. What is right and wrong flows from what God is like and what He demands. Our understanding of suffering begins with what God is like. The process of setting priorities, so essential in today's world, requires a clear concept of God. How we see ourselves and how we view our neighbour is tied closely to our concept of God, and the whole quest for knowledge and science requires a knowledge of God as its foundation and starting point.

Ravi Zacharias, in his excellent book *A Shattered Visage—The real face of Atheism* comments that:

*It has been said that, if one does not know the facts, argument is to no avail, and if one does know the facts, argument is unnecessary. Like all epigrams, this one also runs the risk of over generalization. But it does so while pointing out a vital truth. Facts are indispensable to justify belief. And that is where a solution to the problem begins.*

*Bertrand Russell, who was no friend of religion and was quite outspoken on such matters, argued heavily for the scientific outlook on life and described the scientific method. The first step, he said, consisted of observing the significant facts. But there, precisely, is a predicament—significant for what? There are an infinite number of facts out there that are in need of interpretation. How does one determine what is significant...*

Ravi continues by describing an address that he gave to a group of scientists at the Bell Labs in New Jersey and comments

*"The most telling aspect of that afternoon was the nature of the questions that were raised following the address. None had to do with the technical or scientific expertise that the audience represented. They all had to do with the heart-searching questions of men and women in pursuit of meaning in life.*

*I have found these same questions asked time and time again in a variety of settings. After the intellectual smokescreen is cleared away, it is the felt reality of life's struggles within each individual that comes to the fore.<sup>12</sup>*

Another writer who has wrestled with the question of whether God exists is Lee Strobel. He became a Christian after many years as an atheist and as an award winning journalist has penned two excellent volumes, *The Case for Christ* and *The Case for Faith*. Most recently these are now available in audio & DVD. In the second of these two he describes an interview with Charles Templeton who was once a platform colleague and close friend of Billy Graham. Strobel refers to Templeton's

most recent book *Farewell to God: My Reasons for Rejecting the Christian Faith*, which he took with him to the interview.

As he sat in Templeton's luxury apartment in Canada he found a man who was very warm and willing to discuss his reasons. However they were not philosophical but rather reflected a wrestling with the issues we all recognize.

*Why is there disease in our world? Why starvation? Why suffering? When asked "Would you like to believe?" Templeton replied "of course, if I could I would" [Later in the interview Templeton was asked to assess Jesus. Again there was] a softening of his body language as if he suddenly felt relaxed and comfortable as if talking about an old and dear friend. "He was" Templeton began, "the greatest human being who has ever lived. He was a moral genius. His ethical sense was unique. He was the intrinsically wisest person that I've ever encountered in my life or in my readings. His commitment was total and led to his own death, much to the detriment of the world. What could one say about him except that this was a form of greatness?"<sup>3</sup> Templeton continued with a very moving tribute and expressed his deep pain in no longer being in touch with Jesus.*

As a matter of honesty we have to come to terms not just with the reality of a creation which evolution cannot explain but also with the person of Jesus in the face of tributes such as this and 2000 years of history.

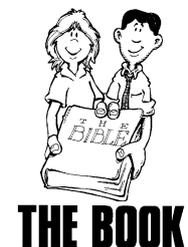
In a world where deep hurts seem to be a fact of life, we also need the knowledge of God personally in order to cope and forgive. As Christians we have an example and a command in the Bible, but these are both inseparable from the nature of God. Thus, this study of God's character is of the utmost importance. It is so important that you will find that every person has some sort of answer, however vague, to the question "What is God like?". The tragedy is that most have a concept of God that is so unworthy and inadequate that their lives are sinking into the shifting sands of superstition and public opinion.

### **Christianity as Revealed in the Bible**

Because the Christian faith is a revealed religion, it is inseparable from the Bible. We are not evaluating the ideas of great thinkers of past ages set down in some poetry/prose form. Rather, God has revealed Himself in the created world and that continues to speak to every person on this planet.

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20 NAS).

Scripture is a commentary to protect people from drawing wrong conclusions about the Creator. It presents the historical aspect of God's nature as it is revealed in His dealings with the human race, especially a particular nation, the Jews. He chose them as the channel to bring this knowledge to all people and sent Jesus to complete the picture. When He came, the world had a living example of what God is like.



**THE BOOK**

Jesus showed the power and strength we would expect if God were to become a man. He stilled a storm, healed the sick, multiplied loaves and fishes and even raised the dead. He showed warmth, love and deep humility and His teaching was such that even hostile observers were impressed —

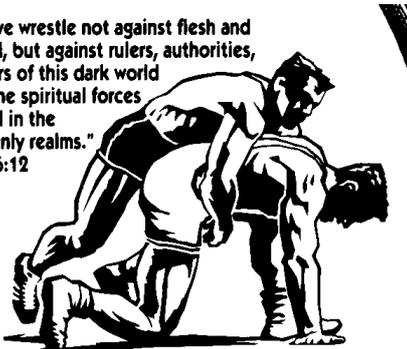
*"never did a man speak the way this man speaks" (John 7:46 NAS ).*

It is no wonder that His followers were surprised when He tried to explain that He would be falsely accused and suffer the cruel death penalty and that such a terrible crime would benefit the whole human race, but so it proved to be. Scripture tells us that sin brought separation from God who is holy and good, but that this *“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself...”* (2 Cor 5:19), and has commissioned His people to share that good news.

What we think and believe governs what we do. Therefore it is not surprising that the New Testament makes it clear that God not only calls on us to believe what the Bible says but to act upon it. We are to confess our sins, turn from them, and by God’s grace live a life that is consistent with His character. Here again, the knowledge of God’s person and character is important.

In order to have an adequate knowledge of God and His character, daily systematic Bible study is essential. So also is memorization of key Scripture verses.

**“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”**  
Eph. 6:12



God can use memorized verses to protect us from temptation and re-program our sub-conscious mind.

Many adults say they have difficulty with memorization, but the key is an increase in our motivation, and the use of frequent repetition.

### **Problems with A Wrong God Concept**

Many rival ideas about God are circulating today and most are being taught incidentally rather than in an obvious, systematic form. The film “Star Wars” and other scifi movies teach many religious concepts, but some important ones are different from the Bible, even though they often use the same words Christians use. The “force” is said to have both a good and a dark side and the implication is that both good and evil may draw on the same power.

The Bible says that God is good and there is no evil in Him— *“...God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all”* (1 John 1:5), and also *“...God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone”* (James 1:13 NAS).

The Bible does not speak of a blind impersonal force, but of a loving, caring Person Who communicates and invites us to call Him “Daddy” (Abba) when we pray and talk to Him.

The Bible says it is impossible for us as humans to fully understand our Creator. For example, the teaching of tri-unity — three persons in one God — is a mystery to us. However, when this life is over, we will have much more knowledge. Those who have been Christians will find this very exciting and those who have rejected the truth will be saddened by eternal separation from God.

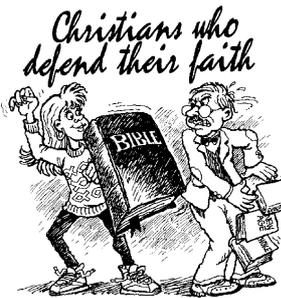
Marxism and Hinduism are similar to each other in that both deny the God of the Bible. The Marxist (and the Humanist) say God isn’t there at all, and the Hindu has millions of gods. Neither recognizes a personal being such as the Bible describes,

but both can accommodate the idea of a “force” out there which impacts on our world.

The disturbing thing is that many Christians have interpreted “Star Wars”, and its teaching of values, as a movie sympathetic to our faith, because some parallels do exist. This can only result in confusion and a weakening of the foundations of the Christian faith. This factor is less apparent, at first, in adults who were grounded in Sunday School lessons and hymns which taught Bible truth, but is very serious in children and teens who do not have this foundation as a corrective, and are thus not really sure of what God is like. They have a feeling that He is not to be trusted. The result is damage to their friendship with God and it makes sharing their faith very much harder.

That misconception is only one of many. Many now think of God as being like a supernatural policeman or a tyrant parent or a spiritual Santa Claus. The whole business of distorting our concept of God is Satan’s primary objective because it is the first step to separating us from the Lord (Genesis 3:4–5).

Once Satan can get us believing in an unbiblical picture of God, he can inject thoughts into our minds and thus lead us to believe that God is the cause of tragedies for which Satan himself is to blame. This process has caused many to become bitter with God and with the world. Their personalities and friendships have withered and life has become a foretaste of hell — separation from God.



To counterbalance people's misconceptions of God and His work in the world, we must know what is truth and how to defend our faith in a gracious way.

We can then speak with conviction and certainty. We will need to know how to present the overwhelming evidence for the physical resurrection of Jesus, and the remarkable impact of His life on world history since then. The resources produced by such outstanding men as Josh McDowell<sup>14</sup>, Ravi Zacharias<sup>15</sup>, Greg Koukl and Lee Strobel are a marvelous resource for defending the faith and lay a sound foundation for evangelism. Every disciple must have these basics in today’s world. This is especially so for those working with people born since 1960 and trained in the sterile, secular education system of the West.

### **God is in Control**

We must strive to bring our concept of God into line with what He has revealed in the Bible, and especially in Jesus. We can then pass on the benefit to those in our care. As we understand God’s great power and sovereign control, even though at times things seem to us to be out of hand, we will cope effectively with our fears. The uncertainties of the future do not trouble those who know and trust One who is in complete control of the end result. The Bible teaches that God’s sovereignty is so complete that *He can give people a free will and still not lose control*. There are certain areas where we mortals are virtually powerless and it is encouraging to remember that. We cannot control the weather, our health, our selfish desires, and most especially, what others think about us. Thus, the dictators of this world are much more vulnerable than they would care to admit and the Christian much more secure than he could ever imagine.

An understanding of God's wisdom and love will make it easier for us to resist the temptations to disobey Him. If we are absolutely convinced that God's way is wisest and best and that He really loves us, this will greatly assist in living the holy life. The presence and power of the Holy Spirit within the life of the Christian provides the strength we need to do what is right.

The justice of God has been satisfied by the life and death of Jesus and so, as Christians, we can deal with our guilt feelings and not simply deny or suppress them as the humanist tries to do.

Similarly, when we grasp the full impact of the truth that God has created us with our particular stature, temperament and personality, many of our feelings of inferiority and worthlessness fade. These can then be replaced with true emotions based on His calling us to serve Him and to use our gifts as resources for our life's work.

A knowledge of God's faithfulness is the basis for accomplishing that great task using His provision and power. This knowledge also frees us from the dominion of sin and energizes us for effective service. We labour knowing that our God reigns and His majesty assures us that one day the battle will be done and the victory is the Lord's.

Daniel and his three friends, by their lifestyle, laid part of the foundation of the reforming of the Jewish faith after the natural and spiritual disaster of the fall of Jerusalem. They stood against tyranny and their integrity was vindicated. They illustrated the truth that the people who *"...know their God will display strength and take action"* (Daniel 11:32 NAS ).

Our task is similar today. We must recognize the dangers of an unworthy concept of God both personally and for those we teach.



We must strive to bring our ideas  
and impressions into line  
with the truth  
as the Bible reveals it.

Consider our intake of ideas. In our listening, viewing and reading, the importance of discernment cannot be overemphasized. We need to read widely for teaching, for motivation, and to keep our devotional life vibrant and healthy. As we do, the knowledge of God impacts our lives by virtue of its sheer good sense and we find ourselves looking back on the years with increased satisfaction and fulfillment.

As we do, confidence and power will be ours to build a new tomorrow for our nation and our world.

### **For Action**

1. Set a goal to memorize a verse of Scripture each week and ask someone to check up on you.
2. Read one of Josh McDowell's or Lee Strobel's books<sup>16</sup> dealing with the evidences for our faith. Each has a different style. Both are excellent.
3. Visit: [www.creation.com](http://www.creation.com)

## Chapter 3

### A Disciple Knows God

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A comparison of Christianity with the world's religions quickly reveals that the most basic difference lies in the area of relationship to the founder. Whether one considers the teachings of Confucius, Buddha, Mohammed or Marx, the founder's contribution consisted of putting together ideas about life and how to live. When passed on to future generations, these provide an answer to questions about the meaning of life, the origin and destiny of the human race, the cause of suffering, and so on.

The Christian faith also answers those questions but its essence lies in the concept of a friendship with a God Who is both living and personal. Both Old and New Testament "greats" reveal this idea as central and crucial.

#### Friendship with God

Abraham is called the friend of God. Even the trickster Jacob's life illustrates God's dealings on a personal level, though in his case it is expressed in struggles and wrestling (Genesis 32). Whether one considers Moses (Exodus 33:13) or Paul (Philippians 3:10), the consuming passion is to "know Him". Perhaps the most moving of all, in our age where nothing seems certain, are the words of Jeremiah:

*Thus says the Lord, "Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches;*

*but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises loving kindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the Lord. Jeremiah 9:23-24 (NAS)*

Micah called to God's people who had lost this reality in the days of national decadence. The religious ceremonies were firmly in place and encrusted with tradition and the self-righteous asked the question, "What more does God require?" Answers suggested include more sacrifices or even human ones, but the prophet replied:

*He has told you, O man, what is good;  
And what does the Lord require of you  
But to do justice, to love kindness,  
And to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8 (NAS)*

So too for us, the way we behave is only part of the picture. The essence of Christianity is friendship with God.

When this truth breaks in on our understanding, issues such as standards and doctrines take their proper place. This is not to say they are unimportant, but rather that they are secondary. We do need to give careful attention to understanding the revealed truth about God and in putting together our personal concepts. But many issues that have divided Christians are not of the essence of the faith at all.

I used to wonder how people could believe so many different things and still be Christians. As a young Christian I grappled with the teaching of the church on such issues as predestination, baptism of the Holy Spirit, whether women could be ministers, how to govern the church, what is the correct way to baptize or celebrate the Lord's Supper.

I discovered that the followers of Christ have a freedom to differ on these issues and as long as they have a relationship with the Lord, they can still be brothers and sisters.

Similarly in the area of standards, there are wide variations on such issues as liquor, gambling, how to keep Sunday holy—or is it Saturday? Paul does not say that it doesn't matter, but rather urges each person to be “...fully persuaded in his own mind” (Romans 14:5) on the basis of a careful study of God's Word.

Because much of the legalism and rigidity that has given Christianity a bad name arises from failure to see relationship as central, such a discovery is very liberating.

It means we have a freedom to go on learning and discovering truth about God and His ways and even to change our views on the basis of further information, without being inconsistent.

We all express our worship in ways that reflect our background, personality and culture. It is sobering and humbling, even exciting, to recognize that others can differ from us in many areas, and yet each one can still be accepted by God on the basis of a relationship of trust.

It is true that the Christian faith sets high standards. The New Testament is much more demanding than the Old, and the issue of our attitude (so clearly spelled out by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount), offers no comfort to those wanting a hard and fast list of rules. God requires that our thought life come under His scrutiny, and tells us that lust, hatred, deception and religious ego tripping are unacceptable. Such a discovery is devastating for human pride. Anyone who says they live by the “Sermon on the Mount” obviously hasn't read it recently!

### **God Lives in Us**

The good news is that God does not abandon us in our spiritual poverty but actually undertakes to live within the Christian and in so doing, enables us to live in conformity with this incredibly demanding model. The result is a whole new outlook on life, as our lifestyle escapes the chains of legalistic religion. God Himself enables us to live as we in our best moments, really want to live. The keeping of standards becomes not a ceremonial observance, but a way of showing the Lord how much we love Him.

Bible study and prayer should not be religious duties to be done to get heaven “off our backs”. Rather, they become the process whereby we communicate with our Beloved. He speaks through the pages of Holy Writ and we adore Him, admit our sins, ask for our needs and show appreciation for His goodness in prayer. It becomes not a ritual but an interview with new discoveries every time we are together.



## The Importance of the Resurrection

I discovered these grand truths in a new way during my ministerial training and made it the subject of a thesis. The oral exam that followed brought forth the question from one professor, "If Christianity is a relationship with the Lord, does that mean it doesn't matter what you believe?". The answer that came so quickly to mind was this,

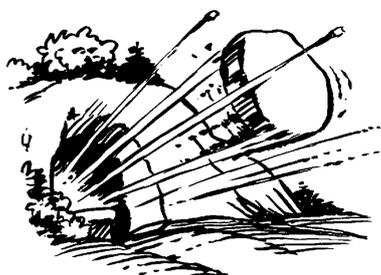
"It matters especially what you believe about the resurrection, because you can't have a relationship with someone who is dead."

No wonder Paul, after stressing relationship, goes on to mention the resurrection as the key to the Christian life and to coping with its hardships.

*that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Philippians 3:10-11 (NAS)*

Our relationship with the living Lord is also the key to sorting out our life's purpose or mission. As we get a vision from God and harness it to faith and persistence, our personal sense of destiny begins to mature and become a powerful force in God's hand. There is a new authority and integrity as the relationship with the Lord grows stronger every day, and we stride through life with a new awareness of our importance as His child.

What a thrill to realize that our faith is not a collection of man-made ideas from a past era, but an up-to-the-minute friendship with our Creator! How incredibly liberating to see the standards we hold as avenues to express love for the Lord and for one another.



How comforting to know that  
the risen Christ Who indwells us also  
desires to enable us,  
by the Holy Spirit,  
to be all that He plans  
in His wise, loving providence.

## For Action

1. Set aside a certain amount of time for prayer and Bible reading each day. Make it the same time each day if possible. Most people find that first thing in the morning is best.
2. Get involved in your local church. Attend as many of its meetings and activities as you can. There you can meet Jesus face to face in His people.
3. Discuss the following quote from Bill Hull on "Our Default Setting":

*Computers are programmed with basic settings regarding type size and style, margins, columns, and so on. These are called the default settings, so when you create a new document, the same settings come up every time. The church can develop default settings as well. If a church has held to a non-discipleship Christianity for twenty-five years, a couple of sermons that create temporary inspiration will not change the default settings—the basic belief system. The*

*gospel of salvation as separate from discipleship is the church's default setting, and it is challenging to change it.*

*In my years as a pastor I have seen a lot of self-inflicted wounding in the church that is deeply troubling. So many choose not to live in the power of the Spirit. In fact, it is highly unusual when Christians return good for evil, bless those who curse them, and pray for those who use them (Luke 6:27-28). The works of the flesh are easier to find than the fruit of the Spirit. Gossip is rampant and so is the tendency to believe the worst of others.*

*Very few of us share our faith or honor God with 10 percent of our income. Fewer still are devoted to prayer and the spiritual disciplines. Such activities as listening prayer, fasting, solitude, silence, and scriptural meditation are considered practices for only the elite. We have taught that any effort to pursue God is optional and not part of the proof of salvation. Dallas Willard puts it this way: "The 'natural' outcome of all this is what we see among Christians in this country as a visible group. Namely, no real difference in spiritual and moral quality of life from the mass of non-Christians. The life we see among Christians generally is a result of what they do regularly and are routinely taught. They are the outcome of what those of us who teach and lead intend and expect, or at a very minimum accept!"*

*The church's default settings must be changed. How much longer can we stomach the reality that our work is fraudulent? How much longer will we allow people to think sin management is acceptable? I raise the white flag of surrender to my sin; I just sin and confess, sin and confess, sin and confess, without expecting victory.*

*How much longer will we tolerate thinking we cannot really be like Jesus, follow Jesus, and be transformed into his likeness? The problem is that we have given up on everyone being transformed disciples. We have said by our actions that carnal Christianity is acceptable. We have downgraded the norm; it is no longer taking up one's cross daily in an act of self-denial. We have settled for pseudo-transformation characterized by external behaviors that pass for holiness. We go after the "hot sins" of adultery and other sexual crimes, but we wink at people who gossip, slander, and hoard. People can be control freaks with selfish ambition and lead lives of worry and fear, and we look the other way. In fact, often these very people are our pastors, elders, and respected members.<sup>17</sup>*

## Chapter 4

### A Disciple Knows God's People

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Early in 1729 the rector of a neighbouring parish and friend of the family said to John Wesley, "Sir, you wish to serve God and go to heaven? Remember that you cannot serve Him alone. You must therefore find companions or make them; the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion."<sup>18</sup>

One of the results was that he visited and later joined the small group meeting weekly at Oxford University which was undoubtedly one of the most formative influences on his life.

#### Christ's Plan for His People

As we turn the pages of the New Testament we see that Jesus intended to establish a movement made up of such groups, both large and small. It is clear from His references to the "called out ones" (which in Greek is "ekklesia" and is usually translated "church")<sup>19</sup> The words of Jesus to Peter (Matthew 16:18) indicate His clear intention to build His church so that the witness to His Person and work might continue.

In Matthew 18:15-17 we see another of His purposes for the church, that of accountability and the benefit which that brings in helping believers achieve their full potential.

His commitment that "*where two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them*" (Matthew 18:20) reinforces the idea that Christians should meet together. His choosing of twelve disciples for specialized training would have been seen by the Jews of His day as a parallel with the twelve tribes of Israel. Here was a visible parable. When taken with His teaching and fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy about Messiah, they recognized that a fresh foundation was being laid for a new expression of the people of God. His teaching after His resurrection clearly has the same implication (Luke 24:13-49, John 20:19-21:19). The whole of the New Testament confirms this as we read of the growth of the church, and the letters sent to churches by apostles and leaders. God's purpose unfolded as they assisted and guided the expansion of the network of churches across the then-known world.

Paul developed this idea when he likened different church members to parts of a body—one an ear, another a hand, a foot and so on. What a thrill it is to realize that others need our contribution, however small, and we need theirs. It is also great to see that we are all unique—no mass production here—with gifts and talents. These are given, not just for serving others, but to help us discover God's personal plan for our lives.

Gloster Udy, in his book "*Key to Change*",<sup>20</sup> correctly notes that the 18<sup>th</sup> century Spiritual Awakening in England was intensified and preserved by the network of small groups. These provided an extended family especially for those needing support as English society was fragmenting in the face of revolutionary changes. In a similar way today, Christians need a group where they can be loved and accepted as they cope with the personal crises that come with the breakdown of western society.

## The Church as a Nurturing Family

It is sadly true that many have had painful experiences in days past in churches and some have responded by deciding never again to belong to a church. This is a tragedy because we Christians really need the care, support and encouragement of each other. For all its limitations, the church is still God's chosen way to care for the spiritual growth of His people.

When Jesus highlighted "*love your neighbour*" (Matthew 22:37–39) as the second greatest commandment, He obviously intended that we would be spending time with people, enjoying their friendship, giving and receiving ministry. The New Testament often uses the word "holy ones" or "saints" to describe Christians but it is always in the plural. As individuals, we will never develop by ourselves, the saintliness to which God calls us. We need to learn the truths of the Bible both in teaching times and also by observing the example of others.



The rough and tumble of relationships with others provides a vital ingredient for the development of character, and of our relationship with the Lord.

The suggestion that churches are only for people who've "got it all together", is as silly as the idea that hospitals are for those who are completely healthy. The truth is that the local congregation is the place where we are free to fail, in a secure environment. Here we grow to maturity in our relationships with one another as a vital part of developing our relationship with God.

Each one has a role to play in the outreach program of the local church. What needs in the community is your church seeking to meet? Stand with the willing team building bridges in this way. Further, there are many areas of service within the fellowship, from leading or assisting with children's work, youth or adult groups, to working bees, singing as part of the worship team, making cups of tea, flower arranging, or cleaning the church. A multitude of avenues is appropriate because of the marvelous way in which we are all so delightfully different. All of these jobs are important in the life of the church, and are a service to Christ. If you give the matter some careful thought, and consult with your pastor, you will find the area of service best suited to your personal gifts.

## A larger Family

Also the disciple knows that for the church to be governed democratically, he must accept the responsibility of commitment to a local fellowship and the wider movement of which it is a part. Membership however, means much more than having voting rights. As members of the church we are able to share to an even greater extent the privileges of belonging to God's family as we laugh, cry and grow together. It is a unique relationship as we seek together to accomplish God's purpose in the world.

Remember that the family of God is much broader than any one local community of faith so make sure you participate or have contact with the wider Christian church whether in your own denomination or in the spread of inter-denominational missions which the Lord has raised up and blessed.

Charles Wesley summed it up well:

*Help us to help each other, Lord,  
Each other's cross to bear,  
Let each his friendly aid afford,  
And feel his brother's care.*

*Help us to build each other up,  
In fellowship to move;  
Increase our faith, confirm our hope,  
And perfect us in love.<sup>21</sup>*

## **The History of the Church**

Some of the happiest moments with my children have been times when I have read to them biographies of great men and women. A much neglected aspect of the disciple's link with the people of God is the importance of studying the history of the Christian church.

There are several benefits which flow from it. The study of the history of the early church gives us great encouragement to face persecution, trials and false teaching. Further, we can be helped in the area of ethics. Beginning in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the monastic period with their vows of "*poverty, chastity and obedience*" reminds the believer that the three areas deserving of special care in the Christian life are "*money, sex and power*". The 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritans replaced the vows with "*industry, faithfulness and order*". Richard Foster has studied the parallel benefits of these options and come up with a new cluster for the 21<sup>st</sup> century "*simplicity, fidelity and service*".<sup>22</sup> Each of these three trios are most helpfully understood in the light of the other two.

Hull comments that:

*"Today's church is packed with people who claim to be followers of Jesus but they are not connected in community; they are going solo. To them discipleship is what a person does in a program.... To be a disciple as described by Jesus requires a person to submit himself or herself to a more mature follower of Jesus [a mentor]"<sup>23</sup>*

History confirms his observation.

Whenever I read of the Reformation, I am reminded of the trustworthiness of the Bible, the liberation of salvation by faith and the way every believer is called to serve the Lord. The English Reformation reaffirms my confidence that truth will win in the end. The importance of assurance, of purity of heart and the need for small groups are seen in the Great Awakening movements of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Salvation Army and its kindred missions speak of God's concern for the poor and the whole modern missionary thrust speaks of God's concern for the lost. Pentecostalism also reminds us of the need for the community of faith to make ever deepening commitments to the Lord

As you read history, especially the era since the Reformation, catch the spirit of each of the great movements of the Holy Spirit of which the differing denominations today remind us. I am always encouraged and inspired to be reminded of how great God is and how sure are His purposes and His ways. When you read of opposition to the church remember that it will be with us till the Lord returns—but that it will always serve His purpose.

So a study of the history of the church through the ages shows us God at work. We see ordinary people achieving greatness as they communicate the love of God to others. We learn God's strategy for church growth as we see His plan for the church unfold.

## **Church Growth—Tomorrow's History**

The church health movement could be more correctly named Making Church History. Church health experts are godly men who have studied the ways that God has moved to grow His church and then methods He has blessed. Time spent mastering these principles will be great equipment for more effective use of our limited resources of money, time and energy. If you really want to be an effective member of your local church, it is vital for you to be reading books on the subject of church growth.

Most of all as a disciple, let these studies feed your sense of destiny.

Remember that God has a unique plan for your life as surely as for the greats in the books. Thrill that bit by bit it is unfolding that one day it will be as clear as a big picture and all the experiences of these days will be seen to be part of the preparation.

*Spiritual formation has been largely a product of the monastery and the academy, but now it is coming out of those closed environments and is joining forces with the classic disciple-making movement. The piece that forms the tour de force is the addition of the environmental or climatic movement, which says people only accept truth they trust. And that trust is only present when the faith community experiences relationships of trust in an environment of grace. I believe this combination created by the Holy Spirit will sweep the nation and transform the church...<sup>24</sup>*

### **For Action**

1. Find out what your church believes. Most churches will have a resource that sets it out or maybe a Web site—check it out.
2. Read up on the history of the church. Use an encyclopedia, your pastor's library, published study courses.
3. Consider enrolling in the "Church History Survey" course which gives an excellent overview of the history of the church universal over the centuries.
4. Read biographies of famous Christians.

## Chapter 5

### A Disciple Knows Himself

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To be effective disciples, we must come to terms with our personal strengths and limitations. One result of the fall is that we have difficulty maintaining balance in our lives and we swing to one extreme or the other. This applies in many areas of life, but our effectiveness is going to be greatly limited if we have not come to *know ourselves*. Socrates saw this as the secret of living. For a disciple it is certainly a very important area.

Much has been said about *positive thinking*. No doubt some Christians of past centuries had a 'worm theology' that set out to exalt God by 'knocking' the human creature, and dwelling on his fallen, sinful state. It is a welcome sign for that to be corrected. But life is much more than thinking positively.

We must know and face honestly our areas of limitation and find ways to compensate for them if we are to be really effective disciples of Christ.

We must also identify our areas of strength and recognize our responsibility under God to use the talents He has given us, in ways that will count for eternity. Jesus warns against 'burying one's talents' and reminds us that a day of reckoning is coming.

#### What We Think, We Are

The truth is that we carry in our subconscious minds a picture of the kind of person we think we are. Our every action and word is made to conform to this, almost like a preset computer program. Sadly, our society with its 'knocker ocker' tradition combined with the depersonalizing effect of evolutionary thinking, plus the distorted view of happiness and success promoted by most television programs, has produced a generation of people who can't accept or love themselves.



We need to see ourselves as the creation of an all-wise, all-powerful, loving, caring Heavenly Father. He chose our parents, our stature, and the culture in which we would grow and develop. It is part of His great and good plan to make of our lives something beautiful and something good. Paul recognized that one reason God allows us to suffer is to help us to understand when others are hurting and to offer them real comfort (2 Corinthians 10:12).

The New Age Movement has very serious errors in its teaching, especially the human-centred view of life and the denial of sin. However, they have correctly taken hold of Dr Maltz's discovery of the self-image (that subconscious "computer-program" picture we have of ourselves) and have urged their followers to re-program the mind using the imagination. This is a timeless truth which every growing religion has harnessed. We see it in the Bible. For example, Jesus saw the danger of 'imagining' sin (Matthew 5:28) and James stressed that sin begins in our thoughts (James 1:14–15).

We should use this marvelous dynamic of the imagination to overcome the ungodly negative influences in our world.

*“Where there is no vision, the people perish....”* (Proverbs 29:18)

*“As a man thinks in his heart, so is he....”* (Proverbs 23:7)

*Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence, and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on those things”* (Philippians 4:8 NAS)

*“Set your mind on the things above...”* (Colossians 3:2 NAS)

If we can identify the bad and unworthy thoughts about ourselves as originating with Satan and replace them with a positive certainty that God has a plan for us, things will start to change. Our sense of destiny will begin to surface and we will begin to set goals for what He wants us to achieve with our lives. We will begin to seize control of our time. Our energy and resources will be channeled into areas that are our real priorities, areas which bring fulfillment.

One further benefit will be an enriching of our relationships with others. While we are preoccupied with our own problems and hassles, we cannot be true friends to others.

*When we see ourselves as God's children, we can begin to accept ourselves, relax and start caring for others.*

*This is the key to having a circle of true caring friends and of being really effective in changing history for God and for good.*

### **Our Temperament**

One area of self-discovery that has been popularized in recent years is the concept of temperament. Some find it easiest to classify people according to whether they are introverts or extroverts. Others broaden the categories into two extroverted types—the “driver” and the “entertainer” and two introverted types—the “analyst” and the “relater”. Regardless, the believer needs to resist the all-too-human tendency to expect everyone to be “like me”. Thus we become more tolerant of other personalities. But we must not misuse the model by excusing ourselves. Comments like “I can’t help it because I’m a ‘driver’” are irresponsible, especially for the Christian. The truth is, we can improve on our weaknesses with God’s help, self-discipline and the support of those close to us.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses**

The disciple thus begins to understand himself as created by God with a destiny and a purpose. In the security of the local church he begins to discover his strengths and the things he likes doing, the areas where he is gifted. Also in the security of the local church, especially the small group, the disciple faces honestly personal areas of struggle and weakness and learns how to improve in some of those areas and to compensate for others. He also discovers how God gives friends who complement those areas for Him. While this is in some respects a humbling experience, it is also a time of growth because no person can really be great who has not discovered what he is truly like deep down inside.

Read books on how the human mind functions, for example, “*Psycho-cybernetics*” by Maxwell Maltz<sup>25</sup> and “*How To Win Friends and Influence People*” by Dale Carnegie.<sup>26</sup> The more you can understand the way the human person functions, especially in the area of goals and relationships, the better you will cope with the “ups and downs” of life in this world and be able to understand and help others. Every disciple will find himself counseling others at some time, so this knowledge will be essential for us to serve the Lord and our neighbour effectively when that need arises.



The disciple learns to identify his rhythms. As we begin to find out whether we work best late at night or early in the morning, we start to discover whether we are an “owl” or a “fowl”. Neither of these is better than the other, but we do need to know when our most creative times are so that we can use them for the things that are most important and let the more repetitive, routine tasks wait for when our minds are tired and we are functioning at less than our best.

One exciting spin-off from this whole discovery that we are a good and great person created by God, is that it releases our natural gift of humour. God intends that we should enjoy humour. It is a gift from Him and every great leader has been able to use this to lift tension in times of pressure and to learn to laugh at himself.

These then are some of the characteristics of the disciple as he gets to know himself. As we make these kinds of discoveries we become aware more and more of God’s love for us and realize how critical it is to be totally depending on Him to let His love flow through us to those around.

### **Today’s Culture**

Even a casual observer can see that there has been a massive change in western society in the last 50 years. Fed by the disillusionment of the world wars, the influence of Hollywood and the globalization of the period, the rising generation no longer believes in inevitable progress.

They have lost hope, identity and purpose and are searching for meaning, and a community where they can belong. As Jesus looked with compassion on the great city of Jerusalem and wept, the true disciple reflects on the needs of the world’s peoples and weeps still. The community of faith can no longer afford to ignore the study of the mission field to which we are called, to communicate a message of truth and hope.

Hence another facet of understanding ourselves and those around us is a study of today’s culture. We learn our patterns of behaviour, values and ideas from those around us. Speech, clothing, property and possessions all reflect the way in which people look at life.

These values are always derived from people’s religious beliefs. One of the results of sin and human rebellion against God is that the above influences tend to make it harder for people to follow God’s way, by various forms of peer pressure. The disciple learns to look critically at his culture in the light of Scripture. One of the great blessings of Scripture is that it shows God’s people living in a number of different cultural contexts.

An understanding of culture and its effect on us will help us to know when we can “be like everyone else”, and when it is necessary for us as Christians to hold a position different from the prevailing opinions. It will also help us avoid creating unnecessary barriers with people when we share our faith with them.

### **For Action**

1. Recognize your needs and weaknesses. Ask your friends to help you.
2. Identify your gifts and strengths. A spiritual gifts questionnaire may be helpful.
3. Work out your life rhythms—do you work best in the early morning or the evening?
4. Begin to discipline your mind and imagination by an act of the will. Accept the Bible teaching of yourself as God’s child and imagine yourself as succeeding in His plan for your life. Start seeing it come to pass by faith.
5. Exercise the gift of humour, but never at another’s expense.
6. Investigate our present Australian culture. A number of recently published books describe the current scene from a Christian perspective.
7. Learn about different temperaments from Christian counseling books.

## Chapter 6

### A Disciple Knows God's Ways

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Are Christians allowed to go to night clubs? Does it really matter if I only have one drink at the party? What about playing cards? Is it OK? Further, are there activities that are not appropriate for a Christian church? Finding answers that we are satisfied with and can believe in, is a growing experience.

Learning about God, the Church, and even understanding ourselves, is a great start in the process of becoming a disciple but we also need to know how to live. When we take seriously the concept that our whole life is God's, seven days a week, then life is full of questions, especially regarding right and wrong. Until we know how to answer them, the process of discipleship is not yet complete.

God has given clear instructions in areas such as morals, theft and murder, in the ten commandments. He has also clearly shown us that it is important to study and memorize Scripture, to pray to the Lord daily and to meet with His people for regular, meaningful worship. Clear commands are to be welcomed. They simplify life and save us from being hurt, since God, our Creator, knows how life runs best.

#### **How Do We Know what is Right?**

Paul recognized another great truth when he stressed that Christians will see things differently in some areas of conduct. This applies just as much as when customs differ within a country as it does from country to country. We understand that modesty of dress means different things in the Western World to the Pacific Island people, but even within a culture, the younger and older generations usually differ on such matters.

A careful reading of Romans 14 indicates that the Bible is teaching not uniformity, but unity in diversity. In our changing world, this is going to pose a challenge which will stretch us and make us grow.

That traditions alone are not equal to the challenge is clear from the experience of most readers. As children, many of us were taught that certain things were wrong, such as alcohol, playing cards, gambling, drugs and tobacco, but rarely were we helped to think behind the tradition to a Bible principle. Unhappily, when reasons were given they often stressed an undesirable result rather than a Bible principle.

To tell a teenager that sex before marriage is wrong "because you might have a baby" is to leave them almost defenseless when contraceptives are freely available and abortions are funded by the government. The issue must go deeper to God's authority in the life of a Christian and His statements in the Bible of what is right and wrong. Sex before marriage is wrong because *God says so*.

#### **Our Responsibility**

If we are to be salt in our community, to shape rather than simply react to our society's trends, we must heed Paul's counsel. His teaching is wonderfully liberating because it protects us from legalism and judging on one hand and being "wishy-washy" on the other.

There are a number of principles that guide us, but consider several that are clearly set forth in these statements from Romans 14 and 15.

- Do not regard with contempt a fellow Christian with different standards. (Romans 14:3)
- Be fully convinced in your mind—develop your own convictions. (Romans 14:5)
- Distinguish between matters of command and matters of freedom. (Romans 14:14, 20)
- Let your liberty be limited by love when necessary. (Romans 14:13–15:2)

Christians face questions in a host of areas including entertainment, Internet, Sunday observance and ethics in the market place, to mention just a few. Careful, systematic study of the Bible by pastors and people is needed. Only as we discover and faithfully apply its principles, will we live a lifestyle that brings honour to the Lord and blessing to our community. But the exciting thing is that as we do this, we also discover that we are growing spiritually, and becoming a true disciple of Christ. We will also have the ability to decide right from wrong when a new situation arises.

Nowhere is the tragedy of Christians who are ill equipped to decide right from wrong in new situations more evident than in the realm of politics. Examples of leaders who were elected to parliament because of integrity and Christian commitment but who found themselves supporting legislation that violated biblical principles come readily to our minds. This problem is not restricted to the Western World. Dr Sanguine Yu is a disciplined Christian who serves as Chancellor and President of South Korea's Myong Ji University. He comments:

*There is a problem for Christians in national leadership. Many members of the cabinet in South Korea believe in Jesus Christ. But they have little time to apply the Bible to government. So there is faith, but not the full application of Biblical principles.<sup>27</sup>*

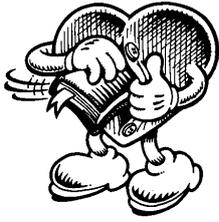
Before we can expect Christians in government to really reverse the international trends which are anti-ethical to Christian values, we must make disciples who can rightly decide God's ways.

### **Knowing God's Ways**

Earlier in this book we noted that it is important to study the Bible to get to know *about* God. It is also so important to read the Bible to get to know God as a Person as he speaks to us through its pages and shows us more about Himself and more about what He would like us to be.

The Bible is especially important when the disciple seeks to know God's ways. We are able to look at one cultural context after another, from the nomadic situation of Abraham, to the different life situation of Joseph, and later Moses, right through to the conditions of God's people in exile because of their disobedience. Then in the New Testament we see a very different culture where we have a world not unlike the one in which you and I are living.

The exciting truth is that God does not change and His expectations of behaviour for His people do not change either. This means that as we study the Bible we can discover the *principles* that guide the behaviour of God's people, and these principles will be just as useful for us today as they have been down through the centuries. They are timeless because they reflect the wishes of the Eternal One for His people.



Your word I have  
hidden in my heart,  
that I might not  
sin against you.  
Psalm 119:11

Memorizing important Scripture verses is also a tremendous help in the area of knowing God's ways because it is like money deposited in the Bank of Heaven. God can later take these very same verses and use them as a resource so that we receive a clear expression of His will for our lives and are not left to guess and stumble along.

When we come to apply the principles, there are a number of questions we can ask which will be very helpful.

- Can I ask God's blessing on the thing I am about to do?
- Does doing this thing build me up—physically, mentally and spiritually?
- Can this thing enslave me if I do it?
- Will my doing this thing appear sinful or godless to others?
- If I do this thing, is there a possibility that someone else will be caused to stumble or fall?
- Am I in any doubt at all about doing this thing?
- Would doing this thing embarrass me if Christ were to come just now?<sup>28</sup>

Moses and Hammurabi were the two giants of the ancient world when it comes to lawgiving. Whereas Hammurabi's work lasted only in the civilization for which he wrote, Moses' teaching has blessed literally thousands of different cultures and civilizations down through the centuries. What make the difference? We know of course that Moses had the Holy Spirit's help. However, there is another basic difference between these two "law-givers". There are two ways of setting out values and accepted behaviour. Hammurabi listed every thing that people could or could not do. Moses listed what was forbidden and effectively said, "everything else is OK". This meant that he set boundaries and left great freedom within them.<sup>29</sup>

The boundaries set by Scripture can be divided into four groups of things that are wrong:

- a. By their very nature  
(**content**—like sex outside marriage);
- b. By their association with wrong things  
(**context**—to do certain things puts you in places where Christians ought not to be);
- c. By honest consideration of where these things will lead if we continue doing them  
(**consequences**—eg, one out of nine social drinkers becomes an alcoholic)
- d. By virtue of the attitude of others toward certain things  
(**conscience**—a Christian brother may be offended by our activity).<sup>30</sup>

As we have already noted, God uses the discovery of His ways and the painful process of making mistakes and learning from them, as part of His method of refining us. If we have a teachable spirit and a love for the Lord Jesus, He will meet us in every circumstance of life and use that very circumstance to make us more like Himself. What a wonderful privilege discipleship really is when we see it that way!

### **For Action**

1. Write down what you personally believe about one of the following: use of alcohol, euthanasia, abortion, in-vitro fertilization. Next to each, note Scripture references which you believe support your view. Are there areas raised by these topics which you need to think about further?
2. Within local churches, tension can often develop between those who hold opposing views. The only answer to this is love and unconditional acceptance. Determine to show love to someone in your church who holds a view different to yours. What will you do?
3. Develop a teachable spirit. Ask yourself "How teachable am I?" Ask your parent, spouse, pastor, small group leader, "Do I have a teachable spirit?" Compare their answers with your own.

## Chapter 7

### A Disciple Worships by an Obedient Life

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The more we know about God, the more we are amazed by His attributes such as power, knowledge, goodness, love and mercy. These are in marked contrast to the people in authority in our fallen world who exercise some control over our lives. As our knowledge about Him increases, our response is to worship and admire Him. The more we know about Him, the more we love Him, and want to obey and serve Him.

John Ortberg comments that

*“Worship is not about filling God’s unmet ego needs. God has made us so that when we experience something transcendentally great, we need to praise it”<sup>31</sup>*

Disciples quickly discover that serving and obeying with other disciples is very uplifting spiritually. The Holy Spirit has given each one of us differing gifts. Thus, for example, when the church gathers, one with a gift of encouragement affirms others as they arrive. Another has a gift of teaching to make truth live. As the time together continues, gifts and talents are employed to help all the disciples worship the Lord much more powerfully than anyone could do alone. No wonder the letter to the Hebrews urges the readers not to be absent from worship (Hebrews 10:25).

What Christians often miss when thinking about worship is that there is another level. When we in our private devotions make a fresh commitment, that is worship. When we in the pain of living in a fallen world exercise faith and obey scripture because of love and obedience to God, that is also worship. The grand process of spiritual development continues.

There are two major areas where we all struggle to obey because the Lord’s command goes contrary to our natural feelings and also to the way the world looks at it. These are the areas of forgiveness, and giving thanks for all circumstances. We will look at these two areas now.

#### Forgiveness as an Act of the Will



*“Forgive? Never! Not after what I’ve been through!”*

These words are part of the real world of people out there, hurting one another, struggling to cope, and ignoring God’s direction on how life runs best. The Christian counselor hears them often, and always they bring a lump to his throat because he knows that the victim is going to continue to be damaged and to suffer as a result of this disobedience to God.

A disciple is a person with a mission. He follows a Master Who has begun and entrusted to him a great cause. It will demand lots of hard work and sacrifice. Many times these will be unnoticed, taken for granted or criticized. And it will hurt. Perhaps the most disturbing thing is that we cause pain to one another within the family of

God. The Psalmist speaks of it in Psalm 41:9 and our Lord experienced it at its worst with Judas.<sup>32</sup>

How are we to respond to this most devastating of all human experiences? We will look at the answer under headings of Why? When? Whom? and How?

### **Why should I forgive?**

- Jesus set us a perfect example as He hung on the cross, after the agony of Gethsemane, the mock 'trial' and Golgotha, when He prayed, "*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...*" (Luke 23:34).
- The command of Jesus is clear and allows no exceptions. "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors... But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions" (Matthew 6:12, 15 NAS ). "So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart" (Matthew 18:35 NAS ; See also verses 21–35).
- Consider the damage that I, my friends and loved ones will suffer if I do not forgive. (Hebrews 12:15).
- Blessings, in terms of freedom, growth and spiritual stature, always come to those who obey the Lord.

### **When should I forgive?**

Now! The sooner the better. David Augsburger reveals this truth in the following vivid account:

*"Sure, I'll forgive that man, when I'm good and ready", the wife said as we sat around the kitchen table.*

*The forgotten tea kettle whistled a forlorn note from its place on the old wood range. The man in question sat, eyes downcast, speechless before her anger.*

*"If only you knew the misery he's caused me, you'd understand why I'm not going to knuckle in when he says 'Sorry' for the first time," she continued. "Sure, I'll forgive him, but not until he's paid for a bit of the dirt he's dragged us through."*

*He stole a glance at her; and the air, hanging heavy hostility, hit you in the face like high humidity. Then we sat in silence. I could see by her mobile face that she was reliving one of the many scenes of combat that had happened here in this kitchen....*

*"Oh, no, I'm not knuckling under," the wife said again as she got up from the table. "He can come crawling on his knees for a change."*

*Years passed; the other woman had married and moved out of his world. Slowly, bitterly he paid, repaid and overpaid for all he'd done. At last, one night when she herself was deep in trouble, lonely and bitter, she offered her forgiveness. Too late.*

*"You can keep your phony forgiving," he told her. "I don't need any of it now. I've paid through the nose for what I've done. Who needs forgiveness when he's already paid?"*

*Who indeed? Forgiveness is a free gift of love or it is nothing of value. It is never a receipt for payment in full. It's an undeserved pardon. An unwarranted release.*

*When it's postponed until the last angry installment is collected, complete with bitter interest, it's pure vengeance.*

*If you hold back forgiveness until the offender deserves it, forget it! That's not forgiveness!*

*Forgive immediately!*

*Forgive when the first hurt is felt!*<sup>83</sup>

The only time in all of scripture that God is portrayed as being in a hurry, is when he rushes to forgive (Luke 15:20).

It is important to remember that it takes time to heal. Like any other deep wound, we need to allow a period during which our emotions can recover long after our will and mind have laid the matter to rest before the Lord.

### **Whom should I forgive?**

Things done to hurt us personally are fairly straight forward, but there is another area deserving mention. There are times when we realize the need to make a fresh start by forgiving, but we struggle when the wrong has been against someone we love rather than ourselves personally. Scripture tells us not to take up the offence of another (Psalm 15:3). We need to forgive the offender and ask God's forgiveness for our disobedience to the teaching of Scripture.

### **How should I forgive?**

The mature Christian learns to live life on the basis of the will rather than on feelings. This is especially important in the area of forgiveness because we never *feel* like forgiving. Our feelings make it hard for us to want to forgive. We would rather take revenge, so it is an issue of obedience to the Lord and the exercise of the will.

Further, we should not wait for an apology. Jesus didn't. Imagine how many people should have said to Him that they had been wrong—the Jewish leaders, the soldiers, His disciples. In the same way, there are several groups of people who hurt us, and they won't apologize either. Some are glad they hurt us, some don't know they've hurt us, and others don't know what to say. So we must do as Christ did and forgive when we experience hurt.

It is perhaps worth mentioning that some who come to apologize to us won't know quite how to, and we need to listen graciously, thank them for coming and assure them of forgiveness before God.

Sometimes we find that the hurt won't go away. What do we do then? One of the most liberating experiences in my camping ministry has been the effect of letting campers individually prepare a list of sins they have committed against God and another list, on the second half of the page, of sins others have committed against them. As they forgive the second group, they draw a line through the list and write Matthew 6:14 across it, and as they then ask forgiveness for the first group, they draw a line through it and write I John 1:9 across it. After praying a suitable prayer of recommitment, the list is burned. As they watch it burn, it helps convince the subconscious that the work is done, and they are free in a new way.

This area of the Christian life may need times of sharing with your pastor or a trusted counsellor. This much is sure: the disciple must forgive to retain his salvation and his sanity. But the experience is so very liberating that it makes us say with the psalmist: "*How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered*" (Psalm 32:1 NAS).

We mentioned earlier that there are two areas where the disciple has to go against feelings in order to obey the Lord fully. Having considered forgiveness, we now turn to the other.

## Giving Thanks **FOR** Every Circumstance

The Bible has so many exciting “do’s” that if you do the “do’s”, you don’t have time to do the “don’ts”! Disciples know the truth of this principle. They have discovered that God is not an ogre in the sky waiting to pounce and spoil their fun. Quite the opposite is the case. He thought of sex first. He gave us the gift of humour. The things that delight us, whether music, the wonders of the world around us, the fun of creating—all these are expressions of His love and His wish that we should find life fulfilling.

There is a “do” which we always struggle with, yet it is central to the life of a disciple:

The disciple says thanks by faith for every circumstance.

It is easy to thank God for pleasant things such as friends, food, possessions and times of laughter, but life is more than that. There is not just light, but shade.

As adults, we know that discipline is necessary for training. Hebrews reminds us that while it is never pleasant, discipline produces “*the fruit of righteousness*” (12:11). Most of life’s hurts and deep disappointments are not only painful, but seem pointless, until we see them used by God for our benefit. It would be unnatural and unreasonable to expect people to feel happy at such times, but the Christian life is not lived on the basis of our emotions. It is a matter of the will.

The New Testament has several places where the giving of thanks is mentioned, but the most significant is the command: “Always giving thanks for all things”. (Ephesians 5:20 NAS )

Because God is sovereign He commits Himself to causing all things to work together for our good if we love Him and are obedient to His purpose. We can know with our mind that He will use it, but the load of a painful experience does not lift until we exercise the will and say “thank you” for the benefit we can’t yet see. We must exercise faith. This brings meaning and purpose into the experience and enables us to cope with it.

Dr Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ tells of a girl whose fiancé was killed in a road accident on the night of their engagement party. She became so distressed that she could no longer sleep at night.

*Months had passed, and she had gone to psychiatrists, psychologists, ministers and many others, looking for help. She said, “If you can’t help me, I fear for my sanity.” I asked her if she were a Christian, and she said, “Yes.” We read Romans 8:28 and I asked, “Do you believe that all things work for good?” She said, “Yes, I believe that.”*

*We turned to 1 Thessalonians 5:18. She read it aloud: “In all things give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” I said to her, “Have you thanked God for the loss of your loved one?” She was shocked and could hardly believe that she heard me correctly. She looked at me in disbelief as she said, “How can I ever thank God for such a tragic loss?”*

*“You do not trust God, do you?” I asked. “Yes, I trust God,” she insisted. “Then why not show that you do?” I asked. “Will you pray and tell God that you trust Him and give thanks in everything?” As we knelt together she prayed through her tears, “God, I don’t understand, but I know that I can trust You; and I do say ‘Thank You.’”*

*When she said “Thank You” she was saying to God, “I trust you.” The Bible says that without faith you cannot please God and the best way to demonstrate faith is*

*to say, "Thank you." You may hate God because you have lost a loved one, or your inheritance, or your money, or your business, or your health. You may ask, "Why did God do this to me?" But God says, "In everything give thanks." Unbelief is sin and displeases God, according to Hebrews 3:17–4:2 and Romans 14:23.*

*That young lady came to my office early the next morning literally bubbling over with joy. She said, "Last night I slept without medication for the first time since the accident. And this morning when I awakened, my heart was filled with praise and thanksgiving to God. I just cannot understand it, but I know that it has something to do with what you taught me about saying 'Thank You' to God."<sup>34</sup>*

As a minister of the gospel for many years, I have seen many cases of injustice, hurt and heartbreak. It is rare for any of them to make sense at the time. In every case where there has been a prayer of "thanks for" I have observed a change for the better. There has been a new power in the "mess"—the power of God which works by faith. Many Christians will thank God that He is sovereign or that He is still in control. The disciple learns to trust beyond the realm of sight and to believe and say "thank you" for the *unseen* blessing the Bible promises.

Even though God does not always reveal the purpose—just as we read in the book of Job—this is always a rich time of growth. If we will trust and obey this command, our discipleship will take a great step forward. The blessing that pain can be to us in our Christian walk is described further in chapter eleven.

### **Living in the Light of Eternity**

Obedience to the Lord goes beyond any one area. The two just mentioned are stressed because they are crucial to an effective and satisfying life, but the concept extends to the whole of life. The disciple lives in the light of eternity, knowing that this world is not his home and that his value system is going to differ from the world around at those points which really matter most.

Consider our intake of ideas. In our listening, viewing and reading, the things we think about are vital. The disciple chooses carefully the music and entertainment which will strengthen faith, confident that worshipful uplifting music will refresh and energize the soul.

### **For Action**

1. Increase the amount of time you spend each day with the Lord. Listen to God as well as speak to Him. Decide to deepen the quality of your time with Him.
2. With regard to your daily Quiet Time and regular attendance at worship, never let an exception occur. When you are too tired or don't feel like it, that is the time you need it most.
3. Forgive those who have hurt you, as an act of your will. Perhaps you will find it helpful to take time alone, make a list, and burn it as suggested in this chapter.
4. Thank God **for** all the circumstances of your life—especially the tough ones.<sup>35</sup>
5. Plan to read at least one devotional book after this course. Put it in your diary, *now*.
6. Review the music you most often listen to. Does it lift your thoughts toward God? What changes are needed?

## Chapter 8

### A Disciple Tells Other about God

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It is a life-changing experience to meet with God! No wonder the new Christian is overwhelmed by the privilege of knowing and having a friendship with the Creator of the whole Universe.

When we start to take seriously the mess the world is in and the emptiness of life, the whole picture is almost frightening. The utter futility of life lived apart from God, the absurdity of living for trinkets such as cars, houses, titles, or prestige is quite overpowering.

Often it is a tragedy, such as the death of a loved one through accident or sickness, or the loss of our possessions through a business collapse, that opens our eyes to see it. Suddenly the futility and uselessness of it all is very real. Many prisoners of war, especially in South Vietnam, became aware of this. Listen to the words of Howard Rutledge:

*During those longer periods of enforced reflection it became so much easier to separate the important from the trivial, the worthwhile from the waste. For example, in the past, I usually worked or played hard on Sundays and had no time for church. For years Phyllis (his wife) had encouraged me to join the family at church. She never nagged or scolded—she just kept hoping. But I was too busy, too preoccupied, to spend one or two short hours a week thinking about the really important things.*

*Now the sights and sounds and smells of death were all around me. My hunger for spiritual food soon outdid my hunger for a steak. Now I wanted to know about that part of me that will never die. Now I wanted to talk about God and Christ and the church. But in Heartbreak (the name POW's gave their prison camp) solitary confinement, there was no pastor, no Sunday-School teacher, no Bible, no hymnbook, no community of believers to guide and sustain me. **I had completely neglected the spiritual dimension of my life. It took prison to show me how empty life is without God.**<sup>36</sup>*

The true disciple never really forgets his deliverance. Looking at the world around him with busy people rushing to and fro, he feels deep compassion. In times like these, the newspapers and magazines try to treat the collapse of society as normal and nothing to worry about, even as desirable.



The truly awakened believer sees behind  
the painted smile to the emptiness of it all.

Whether at a Parents and Teachers meeting, a study course, in the staff room at work or at the club, the disciple is moved with pity. Distressed by the effects of sin he wants so much to share that life can have meaning and purpose. In fact, if possible, to “shout it from the roof tops”.

However, there is a strange “conspiracy of silence” around Christianity. Culturally there are taboos and one is the forthright declaration of the cross and resurrection of Christ. Partly this is due to pride in the human heart and partly to the way “cranks” and inconsistent lives have brought discredit on the gospel.

Obviously this doesn't prevent us from sharing our faith, but it does pose a challenge.

## How to Share

It is always important to respect the integrity of those with whom we share. Our lifestyle must be consistent and transparent so that they can see that this faith is real and working, and not simply a tradition or religious club. No wonder the Master described it as being like "fishing for men".

We will need sensitivity for the right "bait" to open a conversation, usually after earning the right to share by listening and building a friendship with depth. A good fisherman also knows when to "draw the net". However it is important that a person knows the decision is their own personal one rather than feeling "cornered".

Douglas Hyde became a Christian after twenty years in the Communist Party. His book *"Dedication and Leadership"*<sup>37</sup> outlines the methods used by communists in recruitment and training of workers—we would call that "discipling". He comments:

*...it is quite erroneous to suppose that Communism appeals only to some particular type of class or race. Within the Communist Party you will find people of every type and class. And within the world Communist movement you will find people of every race. Discuss their case histories with them, probe into what first attracted them to Communism and invariably you will find that it was not Communist theories, policies or campaigns—important as these may be in the making of Communists—but the impact made upon them by some dedicated Communist which predisposed and conditioned them to associate with a movement and to accept a doctrine which would otherwise most probably have been unacceptable to them....*<sup>38</sup>

*The strongest impact made upon the mind of the recruit by the first Communist with whom he associates is likely to be of dedication. The first impression made by the Party comes from its activity—and the apparent relevance of that activity to our times. This being so, the man who decides to become a Communist does so in the expectation that he, too, will have to be dedicated and active as well. This, he knows from the start, is what is involved in being a Communist. He comes to the Party, therefore, prepared to have to give of himself to an exceptional extent.*<sup>39</sup>

He notes the expectation that sacrifice is part of membership in the party and the way this is developed. Then it is contrasted with joining the Christian church where often no such demands are anticipated.<sup>40</sup> It is challenging to see the same pattern reversed in the witnessing of Christians under Marxism but it is also a challenge for us to share faithfully and well the message of hope He has entrusted to us.

The disciple has a method to share which covers the basics of the faith. In this respect, Christianity in the last decade of this century has many resources and booklets, such as *"The Four Spiritual Laws"*<sup>41</sup> or *"The Roman Road"*. The most helpful one for me has been a series called *"Christianity Explained"*<sup>42</sup>, which provides a limited time commitment of six studies during which the person has a chance to honestly consider the facts in an unhurried and careful way.

One often overlooked aspect is the issue of the relationship between the witness and the person with whom they are sharing. This is partly a result of the western reformed mindset that our task is limited to proclamation.

Graham Johnston comments that "*Mark Filiatreau sums up this concern in his critique of J.I.Packer's book "Knowing God". I realized [the book ] was not about knowing God but about knowing about God ....Knowing God struck me as a careful scriptural exegesis of God's attributes, of which I was already well versed. The distance between me and God was still there.*

He continues "*This need for a relational encounter accounts for the warm reception of such programs as Alpha and Experiencing God, which are both interactive and prod participants to dialogue their findings —addressing God, not in abstract theological categories but in the context of relationships,*"<sup>43</sup>

Different methods will appeal to different people. We must have a passion to share and a method to use. It will be important to set a definite time to go as it is too easy not to get around to it. When sharing, it is important to resist the temptation of "red herrings" or side tracks. The exercise is not a class in theology but in getting to know a Person and coming to a point of understanding His invitation to become a real Christian. The disciple has this clearly in view.

### **Missions**

Our mission as Christians is wider than our neighbourhood and circle of friends. It extends around the globe. The words of Christ in Acts 1:8 speak of widening circles of outreach. "*...you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*" ( NAS )

We must take seriously the commission to be His witnesses in our suburb or town. We are also responsible to find ways to participate in missions within other parts of our nation and then overseas. We should be concerned to see that both presenting the gospel and planting churches takes place to ensure that those who respond with commitment will be consolidated in their new-found faith.

The concern of God's heart is for effective evangelism. Consider these verses :

*"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."* John 3:16 ( NAS )

*"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."*  
2 Peter 3:9 ( NAS )

*"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."*  
1 Timothy 2:3-4 ( NAS )

A true disciple remembers with gratitude his own conversion, hears the heart-cry of the Heavenly Father and finds ways to introduce lost people to Him. Then he prays and encourages the consolidation of the new disciple in a local church in every possible way.

## For Action

1. Learn a method of sharing the gospel, such as those mentioned in this chapter. Ask God to send you an opportunity to share it.
2. Find out about home missions and overseas missions in your denomination or of one of the evangelical missionary organizations which are active today. Make a point of praying for them this week. Set aside some money that you would otherwise have spent on non-essentials, as an offering to missions beyond your usual giving.
3. Discuss the communal aspect of the following quote from Bill Hull:

*The purpose of discipleship is to go deeper with God, to be shaped into the image of Christ, because character is developed in community. If we are following the New Testament model, discipleship should look like this today:*

1. *A disciple submits to a teacher who teaches him or her how to follow Jesus.*
2. *A disciple learns Jesus' words.*
3. *A disciple learns Jesus' way of ministry.*
4. *A disciple imitates Jesus' life and character.*
5. *A disciple finds and teaches other disciples for Jesus.*

*How common is this kind of discipleship in the church? ...It is quite common to find ministries with three of the five, a small minority with four of the five, but almost none of them (including my church) practice all five. The most common characteristics are:*

*A disciple learns Jesus' words.*

*A disciple learns Jesus' way of ministry.*

*A disciple imitates Jesus' life and character.*

*The reason characteristics 2 through 4 are most common is that they are the least challenging of the five. Frankly, people can do these without having to change. It goes back to the indictment that we have found ways to be Christian without becoming Christlike. Items 1 and 5 make it all work. I don't mean 2 through 4 are unimportant; indeed, they are vital. But learning about Jesus' words, ministry, and character does not require you to submit yourself to the authority of Christ through another person, nor does it require you to find and develop your own disciples.*

*The frightening truth is that most Christians fail to even do 2 through 4, let alone 1 and 5. But what scares me more is that we can practice 2 through 4 alone and be considered mature Christian leaders. The fact that we avoid submission and seldom evangelize and disciple is a troublesome fact of the body of Christ.<sup>44</sup>*

## Chapter 9

### A Disciple Is an Active Part of a Local Church

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What kind of a response would we be likely to receive if we were to ask a group of passers-by in a busy street to give their opinion of the church? Some would speak of the sad story in history where ungodly individuals brought discredit to the name of its Founder. Others would be able to add experiences of disappointment from their past and still others would speak of it in glowing terms: a place of love, discovery, truth, acceptance, a force to shape the future. What a contrast of answers to one single question!

What kind of a response would we receive if we were to ask Jesus to give His opinion of the church? Well, did you ever ask a young man to describe his fiancée? The Bible makes it very obvious that Jesus loves the church.

To the superficial observer, the church seems to be one more human institution with office bearers, activities and committees. But it is unique. It is an organism not just an organization. Through two thousand years it has survived attempts to discredit or destroy it by attack from without and by infiltration from within.

#### **Belonging to a Local Church**

The Christian is part of the church. Paul calls it the body of Christ and conversion makes us a part of it. He also stresses that we all have different functions, just like the various organs and limbs of the human body (1 Corinthians 12). When we think of the church, we think in terms of local congregations meeting in buildings with a peaked roof! But why does God tell us to participate in a situation where obviously imperfect people, live and work together showing weaknesses and sinfulness, but also love and rich compassion?

He does it for our best interests. The benefits we receive deserve careful thought, especially since we live in a world that takes all the good for granted and focuses on the bad.

Firstly, we have the blessing of corporate worship. We come together to focus our minds on the greatness of God. In this hi-tech age most are well aware of the need for scientific instruments to be regularly re-calibrated, otherwise errors will creep in and things will not go as they should.

*Worship recalibrates our mind and our perspective on life is brought back into line with reality. We do not leave our problems outside, we bring them with us and look at them in the light of God's person and presence. The music, the preaching, the prayers, the fellowship, the warm memories, are all part of this process.*

Secondly, there are times of learning. We noted that God is very concerned about truth and the Christian faith as a historical religion is based on truth. The Old Testament prophets constantly called Israel back to revealed truth about God, in the face of the world's subtle attempts to dilute and distort it. That call is still needed today.

Study classes for adults as well as children, provide a context which focuses on learning. Whereas the Sunday morning service accents worship, the Sunday night service has become for some congregations times of extra learning where non-

churched are especially welcome because the greater informality allows for questions and talk-back interaction. The vital thing is that our lives are exposed to truth and that we realign our priorities.

## **ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER**



Hebrews 10:25

Thirdly, there is something really special about being in a small group which has the safety of a Covenant. It's a something you can't get in a big gathering, but it's very precious.

In those situations where their size is limited to a maximum of twelve, heart to heart sharing can occur in the security of a commitment to confidentiality and accountability.

### **The following is a sample of a Growth Group Covenant:**

As a Christian I desire to become a better disciple of Christ in such areas as worship, outreach, prayer, relationships and intensifying my passion for truth. I realise this cannot happen in isolation so for the next three months I will commit myself to the following disciplines for the purpose of my spiritual growth, the spiritual growth of the group and for the furthering of God's Kingdom.

#### **ATTENDANCE**

I will give priority to the group meetings. I will be present and on time, except for emergencies. If I am unable to attend or if I am unavoidably delayed I will call the group leader to apologize before the meeting starts.

#### **SHARING**

I will share myself as openly as I can and contribute whenever possible so that the group can become a spiritual community. I will go out of my way to welcome newcomers to the group.

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY**

I will make myself accountable to the other members of the cell so that I may become the type of person God wants me to be.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

I will not discuss anything shared within the group with any person who was not present at the time it was shared.

#### **SUPPORT**

I will give my best to help the group reach the goals we set together as part of our pursuit of holiness, Christian community and spiritual awakening.

#### **LOYALTY**

I will be a loyal and true friend to the members of the group as we seek to grow in our discipleship (1 Corinthians 13). I will uphold fellow members of the cell regularly in prayer. I will participate regularly in the ministry of my local church and with God's help I will be a regular, faithful, caring member of the group.

After attending an orientation meeting and considering the challenge, opportunity and commitments I feel unworthy yet challenged to attempt what is asked. I have prayed about these commitments and feel God is leading me to become a Growth Group member.

Keith Drury offers this insightful comment:

*I believe accountability was the great secret of the early Methodist movement. John Wesley specified strict accountability in his "class meetings". Every week*

*each member was subjected to four questions on his personal sin, temptations, victories, and struggles of the past week. The idea has come in and out of popularity down through church history. I think it's interesting that every time accountability falls into obscurity, holiness of life falters.*<sup>45</sup>

Ministry groups are different from growth groups because they are larger and meet for a purpose other than accountability. They provide a fourth benefit as Christians are able to serve others. Whether we think of the musicians, the Sunday School teachers, or members of special interest groups, all minister to the Lord (all service is firstly to Him), to the congregation in enriching its life and ministry, and participants themselves are blessed as they use their gifts and talents. They are needed and they know it. Such knowledge and service is essential for healthy spiritual development.

### **All Christians Are Ministers**

One of the ways Satan attacked the church from the second century onwards was by promoting the unbiblical elevation of the role of the pastor to an expectation that he is paid "to do the ministry". Even with the Reformation stress on the priesthood of *all* believers, Protestants have been slow to learn that all Christians are ministers.

*As the pastor struggles to give ministry away, a poorly trained congregation fallaciously sees his giving away important work as sheer pastoral laziness or complains that he gives away the "dirty work..."*



*Take the classic example of hospital visitation. Visiting the sick is a ministry given to the entire body. The Bible gives no evidence that this is the pastor's job, yet even when the laity do visit the sick, counsel the bereaved, or intervene in a crisis, everyone expects the pastor to duplicate the task.*

*If ten lay ministers visit a hospitalized person, but the pastor does not, will that person complain he has not been visited? What is he saying? That only the pastor's ministry is worthwhile; parishioner ministry isn't good enough. Only certain visits count.*

*To paraphrase Paul's command in I Corinthians 12, the hand should not say to the foot, "I have no need of you," or, "Because you are not a hand, you are less important." When a layman does a traditional pastoral duty, requiring it to be redone by a professional is a rejection of that layperson. In effect, the ministered-to Christian says, "I will not receive the ministry of others in the body. Theirs is only a token, not the real McCoy."*

*This serious barrier needs smashing, because it has caused the church to become poisoned by institutionalism and hinders its work. Many hurting, broken pastors have been driven out of the ministry by such unreasonable congregational demands.*<sup>46</sup>

The good news is that around the world the Holy Spirit is helping Christians discover a new dimension of blessing. Churches are moving to a more biblical model of ministry as each Christian discovers and uses the gifts that allow for his or her unique contribution to the life of the Christian community.

### **The Local Church Shows Us Jesus**

How many of us have wished that Jesus were here on earth! We would make any sacrifice to sit at His feet, to give Him our gifts of gratitude, to rush to obey even His hardest demand. The Christian church serves us by meeting that need and providing an outlet for response.

We cannot sit and hear Him teach truth to us but we can attend study classes where His inspired Word is explained.

We cannot hand Him gifts of money, but we can worship in giving our tithes and offerings to His church.

We cannot wash His feet but we can use our gifts to touch others in ministry groups and in our vocations in the secular world.

We cannot listen to His audible voice telling us the next step, but we can receive counsel and submit to authority in the church.

We cannot see His smile and feel His touch but we can see the smile of kindness of a sister or brother who shakes our hand or touches our shoulder.

We cannot go to all the mission fields of the world, but we can be part of world missions, praying, giving, and encouraging. We can identify prayerfully the mission field (at home or abroad)<sup>47</sup> He has chosen for us and then work there faithfully and sacrificially for Him.

We cannot show all the attributes of a Holy God in our broken humanity, but we can be part of a community of love and caring—a church. It can be a place where people put together a picture of what Jesus is like.

Discipleship cannot be separated from the local church. It is why the church exists. In the church we as “toddler Christians” take our first few tentative steps as we use a gift publicly because we are secure in one another’s love. We can try, knowing that we might fail but that even if we do, we won’t be rejected because we are loved for who we are.



We don’t just need the local fellowship for our own progress but also to provide a safe place for others who are seriously considering the Christian faith. It is vital that new Christians have such a place to find acceptance, answers and an avenue where they can use the gifts and abilities God has given them. The gathering week by week does have a sense of routine, but there is more. Something is happening that defies explanation. Lives are being changed and people are becoming more and more like Christ.

### **Submission to our Leaders**

One further area needs emphasis within the local church, namely submission to leadership. Paul says to the believers in Thessalonica:

*Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you are doing. But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction.*  
1 Thessalonians 5:11-12 (NAS)

The writer to Hebrews also says:

*Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.* Hebrews 13:17 (NAS)

There is an important principle here for discipleship. As we obey scripture we are blessed and we grow—especially when it is difficult. God is great enough to overrule the limitations of His servants on earth and we can trust Him even when it seems

that our leaders are mistaken. The very act of submitting is another step forward in Christian development and a much needed lesson if we are to exercise leadership ourselves.

### **A Word of Caution**

Part of the acceptance of this discipling model is the recognition of the “Judas factor”. Some people will deliberately rebel against a leader and hurt him by pulling against his leadership (cf Acts 20:30). (The worst persecutors of the church are always ex-disciples!)

Some who rebel will be like Peter who understood a part, (but not all) of what Jesus saw as His call, and opposed Him openly. Others, like Judas, similarly understood only a part of the message and opposed Jesus secretly. The difference lies in the area of attitude. Judas was not being submissive to the Lord but rather wanted to manipulate Christ to his own ends. Hence his betrayal which he thought would “force Jesus’ hand.”

It is a frightening fact that when a leader discipled a group there will often be a temptation for one to pull against him, whether out of pure or mixed motives.

However, whatever the reason, the result will deeply hurt a leader and seriously damage the group. The issue is usually one of submission to authority and usually surfaces when the leader is either absent or very busy.

The author has observed this dynamic at work in many situations. It is not often mentioned in church growth books but it is real. Robert Schuller describes it as does Dr Paul Yonggi Cho.<sup>48</sup>

It is included here for two reasons. Firstly, leaders who are committed to discipleship must count this as part of the cost. Leadership is lonely, and not everyone will show their appreciation for your efforts. Some will even react in the negative ways described. Secondly, this is an earnest appeal to readers being discipled to be *loyal* to their leader. Satan was the real power behind Judas’ behaviour and he continues to use this method to disrupt God’s work. Judas was able to convince even the disciples that Christ was wrong (John 12:1-8; Matthew 26:8). The person who gains power by betraying his discipler has sown the seeds of his own failure and lost personal integrity.

I am committed to discipleship. It is the command and example of Christ and demonstrably the most effective long term method for changing the world. May these insights make the task a joy and privilege under God.

### **For Action**

1. Become actively involved in some form of service in your church. Ask your pastor for suggestions based on his knowledge of your gifts and talents.
2. Join a small group (mid-week growth group, Bible study group, etc).
3. Think of ways to encourage others, and put them into practice. Ask God to show you how to encourage at least one person every day.

## Chapter 10

### A Disciple Controls Himself as a Steward

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People have never been more determined in their search for happiness. It seems they will do anything, go anywhere, pay any price, if only it promises happiness. Kids and adults have more toys and trinkets than they could play with in a lifetime. The result has been disappointing. A restlessness pervades society and tragically afflicts Christians as well—but *the disciple is different*.

The disciple not only knows himself,  
both strengths and weaknesses,  
but controls himself as a *responsible manager*,  
a steward of the whole of life.

#### The Steward's Care of Resources

The picture in Genesis 39:1–6 of Joseph in Potiphar's household illustrates the role of the steward—a role unknown today. The slave was purchased and tested for suitability. The one who showed loyalty, trustworthiness and ability was chosen to be administrator of the master's estate. This was very useful in making life less complicated in day to day affairs. At times, when the master was away, the steward cared for the master's children as well as managing his property and financial assets. When the master returned, there came a time of accounting to see whether the steward had been faithful.

It is wonderfully liberating to surrender the whole of life to our Master and to see all that we do as an exercise in stewardship. Some assets which He has entrusted to us include our minds and bodies. We are to care for them as the property of another. We need to feed our minds on truth and keep out damaging and evil thoughts (Philippians 4:8; 2 Corinthians 10:5). We are also to care for our bodies by fueling and exercising them properly because they belong to God.

A true concept of Christian stewardship includes the wise and careful handling of possessions, money and time as assets of our Master. They are His to be invested, given, spent to accomplish His purposes and according to His standards.

This is much more difficult than owning nothing because it involves countless day-to-day decisions between what is good and what is best. It demands knowing what the Master's priorities are, not just thinking of our whims and fancies. But it greatly helps our spiritual development and is very liberating because it lifts the pressure of worry and final responsibility, especially when some factors are beyond our control.

The worship of money, a slavery for so many, is reduced by giving the tithe (1/10<sup>th</sup>) as part of the worship of God. There is a thrill in being able to distribute His assets according to His wishes in support of the local church and then also in supporting missions and caring for His children. Many Christians cannot give as generously as they would like, to God's work due to the heavy burden of their credit card debt. Perhaps reducing this debt is an area needing attention for you? If your small group

is safeguarded with a covenant of confidentiality you may like to discuss this with your peers.



Workaholism need not be a problem for the disciple because, although we work hard, we are free one day in seven to relax and give time to loved ones. His “guidelines” urge us to do it. This includes laying aside our daily cares and work pressures to gather with His people for worship and re-creation.

Similarly, time spent reading and reviewing the week are our privilege. The Master rested on the seventh day and He reviewed His work and saw that it was very good. We too, as His disciples, can enjoy this blessing without guilt.

Less tangible assets but no less valuable include our abilities and talents, testimony and influence. Time spent in service for others is provided for in the Master's job description for us. As we invest ourselves in younger Christians we are personally benefited by the expanding of our soul and the challenge of maintaining a God-honouring example before others.

This whole view of life is exhilarating because it lifts the pressure of fear and uncertainty regarding the future. There is of course the realization that the day of accounting will be thorough (even to every idle word—Matthew 12:36) and this keeps us “on our toes”. But there is also the knowledge that the whole process is helping us grow spiritually.

The concept is both dynamic and exciting. There is freedom, there is responsibility. We are needed. We are important. We have a contribution to make. The essential spark that makes the engine fire is the principle of accountability.

### **We Are Accountable to God**

Our rebel society has put “blinkers” on us and the idea that accountability is in Scripture comes as a surprise.



But God's call is clear and solemn. To—

- Adam and Eve,  
“Where are you?” (Genesis 3:9)
- their rebel son Cain  
“What have you done?” (Genesis 4:10)
- a soldier Achan  
“Tell what you have done, do not hide it” (Joshua 7:19),
- the nation's greatest King  
“Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord to do what is evil in His sight?” 2 Samuel 12:9)
- a prophet  
“What are you doing here Elijah?” (1 Kings 19:9) or  
“Is it right for you to be angry?” (Jonah 4:4,9).

God's questions cannot be ignored.

Ecclesiastes 3:15 says “*God requires an account of what is past*” and this is the theme of the prophets in their references to the Day of the Lord.

The New Testament has continuity with this theme and its central thrust is that of accountability.

- The parables of Jesus referring to stewardship make direct reference to the reckoning at the return of the Master (Matthew 25:19; 21:33ff; 18:23, Luke 19:15) or to the Judgment at death (Luke 12:20, 48). The references to His second coming fit right in to this truth.
- The book of Acts illustrates another facet of accountability, as with the story of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1–11), and it was certainly required of the new churches. For example Peter and John were sent to Samaria and Barnabas to Antioch (Acts 8:14, 11:22). It was also required of the apostles Peter, Paul and Barnabas (Acts 11:1–4).
- Accountability is taught in the epistles (1 Corinthians 4:2; 6:12, 1 Peter 4:5, 10, Romans 2:21, 14:12) and it is the emphasis of the whole climax of the book of Revelation.<sup>49</sup>

We live in an age where freedoms are evaporating because governments avoid accountability and the failure of individuals to live honourably makes the task of law enforcement agencies increasingly difficult. Yet in business, quality control has become recognized as essential in manufacturing, and excellence has been heralded as the key to success. How dare we stand before a Holy God and say “I didn't think it mattered!”



We have much to learn about accountability. People readily comply when service clubs demand high standards of punctuality and attendance but let the church stress such commitment to Sunday worship and “legalism” is the cry. The society accepts inflation, increasing taxation demands and pays rising costs for luxuries and yet mention tithing and the cry is “the church only wants your money”.

Some people stress that they are accountable only to God in heaven (like the “Divine Right” of kings so favoured by dictators such as the Tudor monarchs). We must remember that one reason this is attractive is that no change in behaviour is demanded before the Day of Judgment—but by then it's too late to save sinners. The Bible calls for accountability to our leaders as part of our normal everyday life and we must accept that.

*Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you. Hebrews 13:17 (NAS)*

As a workman who does not need to be ashamed (2 Timothy 2:15), a disciple has no reason to fear accountability.

The environment of the local church is a vital part of this whole process. We cannot neglect relationships. The context of trust and love that authenticates the gospel also provides the fertile soil out of which the plant of hope for the future must grow. Love is the mark of the Christian and it is surely the most important characteristic of a vital alive church. All the blessings of accountability will sour without the mark of the Master, love.



### **Delegation and Accountability for Leaders**

For the pastor, one of the most sobering verses in the New Testament is James 3:1 which indicates that spiritual leaders will be judged by a stricter standard. This applies especially in the area of delegation.

Those in leadership have a responsibility to heed the counsel of Jethro to Moses (Exodus 18) and allow others to develop their usefulness for God by exercising their gifts.

*The disciple-making pastor demonstrates his commitment by giving people permission to enter into ministry. He tells them they are ministers; he addresses the misconceptions and misgivings by sound teaching....*

*The pastor who insists that people live up to their God-given calling often gets labeled insensitive, non-caring, or too task oriented. The exact opposite is true. The pastor who views Christians as good helpers, but not on his level, has a low and unloving view of people. The loving and high view means believing the average Christian is a gifted minister of the gospel and can be trusted with important spiritual ministry responsibility.*

*The pastor who does the ministry rather than training the people to do it, behaves in an unloving and non-caring fashion. Please note that I did not say he was unloving and non-caring. I said with respect to this area, he behaves like a parent who will not allow his child to mature.<sup>50</sup>*

### **Setting Goals**

Part of our development as disciples comes through the setting of goals. We are goal oriented creatures and time is not wasted when we dream of a worthy purpose for God, break it into stages or goals and then prioritize them and plan for success.

Good goals are SMART goals—

**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic and have a **T**ime frame.

Many aspects of stewardship come together in this dynamic process. We become better managers of our time, talents and energy.

The use of a Statement of Purpose or Mission Statement is helpful both personally and at the local church level. It was especially so in my church as we then developed a Philosophy of Ministry to describe how we would achieve our Statement of Purpose. The whole process is beneficial for the church and the individual, and God's work goes forward.

As we set goals and evaluate our progress toward them, making modifications where necessary, and as we stop and reaffirm our priorities according to the Master's "Book of Values", we grow spiritually. The very action of saying, "No" to an attractive option because it would displease Him is beneficial to us and lifts our integrity.

Thus the disciple not only knows himself with all the exciting possibilities that God has built into his life, but he lives the consecrated life of a wise, faithful steward and looks forward to the day of accounting when the Master returns, with a sense of positive anticipation.

### **For Action**

1. Set a goal to be achieved *this week* in the area of care of your body.
2. Set a goal to be achieved *this week* in the area of care of your mind.
3. Make a list at the start of the day of things to be done, (or better still the night before);
  - Prioritize the items on your list,
  - Start with No 1,
  - Cross items off as they are completed.
  - Try this for a week and see if it helps.
4. Prepare a personal Mission Statement of your life's work. Identify some of the goals needed to achieve it.
5. Reflect on the ten categories described in the chart (page 2). Which of these do you recognize as areas where you could be a more effective steward for the Lord. What plans will you make to upgrade and when?

# Chapter 11

## A Disciple Lives God's Way—The Holy Life

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The theme of holiness has been part of the Jewish and then Christian faith since the very beginning of time. God progressively showed Himself as Holy and called upon His children to live that way. The disciple has not only given time and effort to understanding God's ways but he has learned to regulate his lifestyle to conform to them.

Many Christians today do not lack in sincerity or desire but they are frankly disappointed by their performance. Romans 7:15 is a one sentence summary of their experience, especially when Paul says, "*The good I would I do not do but I do the very thing I hate*".



The search for a holy life gave rise to the monastic movement which at it's best contributed enormously to progress in education, agriculture and medicine. The Reformation, especially in the English speaking world saw successive waves of believers who wanted to live a more godly life. These awakenings included Puritans, Baptists, Methodists, Salvation Army, and the great social reformers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many who are attracted to the modern day charismatic scene are seeking a godly life-style and power over sin.

The disciple knows there is much more involved than sincerity and setting of standards, important though these are. There are several keys to the holy life, allowing us to become not *faultless* but *blameless* before God and man.

### Total Consecration

Total consecration is the starting place. The role of the steward as described in the previous chapter is so helpful here. All of life is to be lived for God from here on. Our possessions, money, assets, testimony are all to be seen as His. We acknowledge it and then live out this truth day by day.

Little by little, the Lord shows us those areas which are not totally His and we work through them a step at a time.

It is so easy for the child to sing, "*take my silver and my gold...*" because they don't earn wages. As life unfolds, that verse takes on new meaning with a pay packet and the pressure of needs and commitments. Similarly, as God opens the adventures of relationships with people, these can be given to Him and so the process continues.

Usually there comes a moment when we face a major crisis, though the issue itself may seem small. But we know it has wider significance and when we finally place it before the Lord there is a fullness of joy and holiness which defies description.

### Self Discipline

The disciple knows that holiness involves much more than a moment of full surrender. It also includes personal self-control which is so difficult but so necessary. Sadly, some have misunderstood living by faith to think that no effort is required on our part but it is not so. Repeatedly the Bible calls on us to live a life of godliness and to subject our bodies and desires to His will and purpose. Each of the spiritual disciplines contributes positively to this process. Almost every one of the New

Testament letters begins with teaching about the Lord, His nature and purposes, and then moves to application, showing how it works out “where the rubber meets the road”.

### **Support of a Small Group**

Small group life has been mentioned as one of the ways the local church helps Christians and it fits here. The effort required to overcome some bad habits is considerable and most of us just won't make it alone. No wonder James urges Christians to confess their faults to one another and pray for one another that they may be healed (James 5:16). This facet of accountability is neither appropriate nor possible in larger groups, but it is very helpful for progress in godliness.

### **Control of Imagination**

The use of the imagination has been mentioned in earlier chapters and it is essential in the pursuit of holiness. God has given us His Image stamped on and built into us at Creation. This expresses itself in our capacity to picture in our minds, to imagine, to see ahead that which does not yet exist.

This will greatly affect our behaviour. “As a man thinks in his heart, so is he” (Proverbs 23:7a). This truth has been well researched and demonstrated scientifically in our day and shown as a key in successful performance in such areas as the Olympic Games.<sup>51</sup> It is the same with “athletes of the Spirit”. If we are to run the race set before us, we must control our minds.

Steve deNeff comments

*Every verse we memorize, every prayer we say, every sermon we hear will be plundered of its power if we are not faithful in this matter of “[taking] captive every thought [and making] it obedient to the lordship of Christ” (2 Corinthians 10:5).*

*There are a few ways to do this. The most obvious is the discipline of avoiding people or situations which stimulate our thoughts and raise themselves up against the mind of Christ.*

*We cannot realistically expect to sit in front of a television for very long without learning to need something we really don't.*

*We cannot meander past the skin magazines or sift through the literary pornography of a romance novel for too long without desiring a little of it for ourselves, and soon afterwards becoming dissatisfied with our own marriage.*

*We cannot soak our minds in the rebellious lyrics of some music without sooner or later resenting those in authority over us.*

*We cannot sit in circles with our friends, and roast the character of other people over the open fires of slander and criticism without very soon thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought.*

*We cannot watch the violence and the carnage of Hollywood without imagining a little vengeance for ourselves....*

*Aside from this, however, is the arduous task of captivating the innocent wanderings of the mind when it is in neutral. Unfortunately, the mind still runs, even when we are not running it. Almost without warning, it slips up the antenna and begins scanning for something on which to dwell. And before we know, we are fighting the battle again....*

*The human mind—left unattended—will run to mischief as quickly as a garden runs to weeds,” wrote Tozer. And so it is imperative we captivate every thought—not just the bad ones—and make those thoughts obedient to Christ.<sup>52</sup>*

***Never let an exception occur.***

Never allow your mind to imagine yourself doing something the Bible forbids.

Rather, picture yourself as the beautiful person God meant you to be. So often when Christians grasp this principle they see it only in terms of the negative when it is in fact a wonderfully positive action—



**seeing ourselves as God wants us to be.**

**Attitude to Pain**

One of the most devastating experiences for any creature is to lose hope. I have been told that experiments on rats dropped into a drum of water showed that a small hole in the lid letting a glimmer of light shine in could keep them swimming for hours longer than total darkness. People show this same need of hope in every situation.

Suffering has come to God’s people with varying degrees of intensity and for differing periods of time. It may come through natural causes such as accidents, sickness, fire and drought, or through the deliberate action of others such as persecution or cruelty.

The early Christians well understood that following Christ involved a cross and they allowed their pain to become an opportunity to show to others the keeping power of God no matter what. It became a powerful instrument in their witness because people saw they had a hope which was different. The same has been true of Christians in our day around the world, especially in the face of testing and persecution.

There are other benefits that come to us as we learn to profit from those experiences of pain which He allows and also as we deliberately deny ourselves for Christ’s sake. Suffering serves to show us our real reasons for service. Sometimes we try to manipulate God by doing His work for position, possessions or protection. Suffering calls us to confess and forsake such unworthy motives and serve Him as a response of love.

A positive benefit comes as we are helped to live for those things that matter. He allows those things which can be shaken to *be* shaken so that those which cannot will remain (Hebrews 12:28). The scriptures teach that part of our growth in holiness comes through suffering and the illustration given is the Lord Jesus Himself (Hebrews 5:5-7). Thus, there is blessing for those who persevere under trial, confident in the trust-worthiness of the Lord and His Word (James 1:12).

## **A Relationship with the Lord**

Finally, the disciple who is living God's way knows that it is ultimately an issue of relationship. He knows that as we love the Lord, it provides the power for holiness, by lifting our motivation and desire.

The power of love for God overflows not just in right living but in the way we treat others. Our world is a brighter place because as we love, we experience love in return. Though there will be setbacks and disappointments, we will know His mighty hand upon us for good. We will see our destiny unfold with all the encouragements, adventures, surprises and growth that a Heavenly Father knows will be good for His children and our land will see Spiritual Awakening in our time.<sup>53</sup>

## **For Action**

1. Ask the Lord to show you if there is any area in your life being withheld from Him.
2. Write out a description of yourself as God wants you to be. Spend some time imagining that in your mind—day-dream of how it would be. See yourself acting, speaking, doing things as that person. Ask God to help you to become that person.
3. Live with God's presence in your life throughout every day.

## Chapter 12

### God's Plan Is People

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We have discovered that instead of an “everyday” Christian and a “super-deluxe model”, according to scripture, the informed, committed, sharing, serving believer is the norm. The truths we learn, lead to attitudes which lead to action. When that happens to enough Christians we call it a Spiritual Awakening.

The big question is “Where from here?” Are we going to settle back to the conceptual routine we knew before reading this book or has the Holy Spirit stirred us to go further on the adventure with God?

#### The Need for Disciples

The starting place is becoming convinced that disciples are the need of the hour.

One of the most influential books in my whole ministry was Robert E Coleman’s book, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*. I continue to be impressed by his profound insights. I recommend that you buy this book and keep it on your bookshelf to refer to it often. The selection of quotes below are longer than usual because it is important for you to get the feel of his thinking.

*Merely because we are busy, or even skilled, doing something does not necessarily mean that we are getting anything accomplished. The question must always be asked: Is it worth doing? And does it get the job done?*

*Serious reflection at this point will bring the student of Christ to some profound and perhaps shattering conclusions, though the realization will likely be slow and arduous. In fact, at first glance it might even appear that Jesus had no plan.*

*Nevertheless, when His plan is reflected upon, the basic philosophy is so different from that of the modern church that its implications are nothing less than revolutionary.*

*His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow.... There is no evidence of haste in the selection of these disciples; just determination.*

*Hence, as the company of followers around Jesus increased, it became necessary by the middle of His second year of ministry to narrow the select company to a more manageable number. Accordingly Jesus “called His disciples, and He chose from them twelve... there was a rapidly diminishing priority given to those outside the twelve.*

*The spiritually blind leaders of Israel (John 8:44; 9:39–41; 12:40; cf Matthew 23:1–39), though comparatively few in number, completely dominated the affairs of the people. For this reason, unless Jesus’ converts were given competent men of God to lead them on and protect them in the truth they would soon fall into confusion and despair, and the last state would be worse than the first. Thus, before the world could ever be permanently helped, men would have to be raised up who could lead the multitudes in the things of God.*

*...He had to devote Himself primarily to a few men, rather than the masses, in order that the masses could at last be saved. This was the genius of His strategy.*

*...the Communists, always alert to what works, adopted in a large measure this method of the Lord as their own. Using it to their own devious end they have*

*multiplied from a handful of zealots seventy-five years ago to a vast conspiracy of followers that enslave nearly half the peoples of the world. They have proved in our day what Jesus demonstrated so clearly in His day that the multitudes can be won easily if they are just given leaders to follow. Is not the spread of this vicious Communistic philosophy, in some measure, a judgment upon the church, not only upon our flabby commitment to evangelism, but also upon the superficial way that we have tried to go about it.*

*...before we can resolve the exploitation of the people we must get to those whom the people follow.... And let us remember, too, that one does not have to have the prestige of the world in order to be greatly used in the Kingdom of God. Anyone who is willing to follow Christ can become a mighty influence upon the world providing, of course, this person has the proper training himself.*

*One must decide where he wants his ministry to count—in the momentary applause of popular recognition or in the reproduction of his life in a few chosen men who will carry on his work after he has gone. Really it is a question of which generation we are living for.<sup>54</sup>*

*The Master's Plan for Making Disciples<sup>55</sup>* by Dr Win Arn, has been an encouragement to me as it shows the importance of networks in church growth. The way people can share their friendship with Christ with their family and friends provides a refreshing reminder of the importance of “lifestyle evangelism”.

Every great movement of the Holy Spirit in the history of the Christian church has succeeded because of its ability to mobilize the rank and file believers.

Why then another book with a title so similar? Because I believe this book complements the other two, by offering a more detailed description of what a disciple is. These insights need to saturate our minds if we are to correct the unbiblical ideas we have picked up from our culture. If you can link Coleman's insights with those of Hull, in the light of our model, I pray the impact and blessing for you will be what it has been for me and for so many.

### **The Discipling Experience**

We noted in chapter one that Jesus' great commission implied a context of loving relationships in which people were aware of His risen presence and authority. Against that background, the discipling experience involves two basic areas: testimony (which is most vividly shared in baptism) and truth (which needs to be taught and understood).

The application of accountability in these areas is an essential part of making the connection between our learning and our experience—and of preserving the church. Bill Hull helpfully defines accountability as “helping people keep their commitments to God.”<sup>56</sup> He shows how incidents such as Ananias and Sapphira's discipline and the sending out of Paul and Barnabas both illustrate the link between accountability and authority. He continues:

*The modern church knows little about the positives of accountability because it knows little about discipling. When you only pay attention to a person's life-style when his actions become a church-discipline issue, he will almost always respond negatively. By ignoring the little things and pouncing on the big ones, you ask for trouble.*

*If you work on the little things that build faithfulness, character, and relationship, you prevent most larger problems by heading them off before they happen. Should a larger problem occur, because you have a relationship with the person, you can receive a more positive response to your correction.<sup>57</sup>*

He then illustrates from Paul's ministry with Silas and at Ephesus and concludes with this vital truth:

*The Ephesians held one another to their commitments. The greatest level of accountability is always based on one person's relationship with another. Unless a loving, affirming environment exists, you cannot hold anyone accountable.<sup>58</sup>*

### **A Particular Kind of Person**

The Chinese character for crisis is a blend of the characters for danger and opportunity. The years ahead will show us the truth of this as crises become more frequent in our world, and in the personal lives of people.

Only true disciples can take advantage of the opportunity part of the crisis. We need to examine our own lives against the standards of New Testament Christianity. This book has been produced to help in that painful process. Whether we look at the program of the local church, of a wider group of churches in conference, or at the training programs of Bible Colleges, it is this same principle in every case—God's plan is people. Some churches grow using a bus ministry, others grow "when they get rid of the buses".

The key is not a particular kind of program or method, but a particular kind of person. God's plan is people.

Thirty-five years ago my wife and I began study at a residential Bible College. Many of our fellow students were on their way to the mission field. We were (correctly) taught that if one is to visit a foreign culture with a view to introducing its members to Christ then one should be properly prepared. We were. I look back with deep gratitude to the benefit of those years and the way they have enabled us in ministry to effectively communicate in a rapidly changing western culture.

What do we do when we suddenly realize  
that the mission field has come to us?

For a thousand years the monastic movement taught people to spend much time in private study and limited time in the real world. The 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritans, the early Baptists and Methodists discovered that they had limited time for private study and lots of time in the world. They changed their world in their lifetime. Clearly the issue is one of balance. If we are to be effective we just cannot coast on the superficial commitment that has been acceptable for the last millennium. We are in fact missionaries in a culture with different values and beliefs from ours. Jesus spent time preparing the twelve for their mission and we must set aside time to prepare even if we are unable to retreat to a residential study context.

It is important to check out each of the ten categories described in this book. As we commit ourselves to growth in all areas, especially those where we are lacking, we will be making giant strides in the quality of our personal discipleship. Each of the ten areas is important and in fact essential, although you will find that not every category will require equal time or attention to reach a satisfactory level.

The aim is to become total disciples, well-rounded in each of the ten categories. Then the Master can use us to change history again in our time.



And so we reach the end of a study on how the world can be changed and you must now decide is this an end or is it a beginning?

We need to be aware that C S Lewis was right when he said—

*those who believed most strongly in the next world were the ones who made the biggest difference for good in this one.*

## End Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Edward Gibbon in a book by that name
- <sup>2</sup> *News and Notes* (OMS International Newsletter, Vol 1, Feb–Apr 1992)
- <sup>3</sup> Bruce Wilson, *Occasional Paper* (Eremos Institute, 1984)
- <sup>4</sup> Bill Hull, *The Disciple Making Pastor* (New Jersey: Fleming H Revell Company, 1988), p 12
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, pp 12–13
- <sup>6</sup> Robert E Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (New Jersey: Fleming H Revell Company, 1963)
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, 19
- <sup>8</sup> Hull, *op cit*, p 102
- <sup>9</sup> Hull, *op cit*, pp 115–116,
- <sup>10</sup> Obviously this division is not hard and fast, but it does serve to help see the flow from the Great Commission to these categories
- <sup>11</sup> Bill Hull, *Choose the Life—Exploring a Faith that embraces discipleship*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2004.
- <sup>12</sup> Ravi Zacharias, *A Shattered Visage—The Real Face of Atheism*, Brentwood, Tennessee, (Wolgemuth & Hyatt, Publishers, Inc, 1990), pp 1–3.
- <sup>13</sup> Lee Strobel, *The Case for Faith*, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2000), p 14f
- <sup>14</sup> Josh McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter; Evidence that Demands a Verdict; More Evidence that Demands a Verdict; Givers, Takers and Other Kinds of Lovers*
- <sup>15</sup> The DVD “Jesus, Fact or Fiction” is outstanding in this regard.
- <sup>16</sup> See Note 12 above
- <sup>17</sup> Bill Hull, *Choose the Life*, pp 25-26.
- <sup>18</sup> Robert G Tuttle, Jr, *John Wesley—His Life and Theology* (Michigan: Francis Asbury Press, 1978), p 110
- <sup>19</sup> William Tyndale more helpfully translated the word “congregation”
- <sup>20</sup> Gloster S Udy, *Key to Change* (Sydney: Methodist YP Department, 1962)
- <sup>21</sup> *A New Song* (Glenroy: Wesleyan Methodist Church of Australia, 1989), 407, pp 1–2
- <sup>22</sup> Richard Foster, *Money, Sex and Power*, (Hodder & Stoughton, 1985). Another excellent resource is by Keith Drury, *Money, Sex & Spiritual Power*, (Wesley Press, 1992)
- <sup>23</sup> Bill Hull, *Choose the Life*, p 36.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p 130.
- <sup>25</sup> Maxwell Maltz, *Psycho-Cybernetics* (New York: Pocket Books, 1960)
- <sup>26</sup> Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981)
- <sup>27</sup> *H I News*, 1992 No 2. David John Lee, “Christian Educator Influences National Policy” (Haggai Institute), p 7
- <sup>28</sup> Extract from *The Australian Evangelical* Unfortunately the date and volume of the article was not listed on the clipping
- <sup>29</sup> Don Hardgrave, *You can Know God’s Will* (MacKenzie: A Pleasant Surprise Ltd, 1990), p 20
- <sup>30</sup> Dr Gerald D Robinson, “How to Know Right from Wrong”, *New Life* (1984)
- <sup>31</sup> John Ortberg, *If you Want to Walk on Water, You’ve got to Get Out of the Boat* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2001), p 195
- <sup>32</sup> Refer Appendix
- <sup>33</sup> David Augsburger, *The Freedom of Forgiveness* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1979), pp 32–33

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- <sup>34</sup> Bill Bright, *How to Walk in the Spirit—Transferable Concept 4* (Campus Crusade for Christ, Inc, 1971), pp 44–45
- <sup>35</sup> Giving thanks *in* everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18) is in one of Paul’s earliest letters. But in his last letter to a church he shows the full impact of the lessons of his experience “giving thanks *for* all things (Ephesians 5:20)
- <sup>36</sup> Howard Rutledge and Phyllis Rutledge with Mel White and Lyla White, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies* (Old Tappan, NY: Fleming Revell, 1973), 34, quoted by Gordon MacDonald, *Ordering Your Private World*, (Nashville: Oliver Nelson, 1985), p 115
- <sup>37</sup> Douglas Hyde, *Dedication and Leadership* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966)
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p 24
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, pp 36–37
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, pp 38–39
- <sup>41</sup> *The Four Spiritual Laws*, (Campus Crusade for Christ)
- <sup>42</sup> Michael L B Bennett, *Christianity Explained* (Homebush West: Anzea Publishers, 1985)
- <sup>43</sup> Graham Johnston, *Preaching to a Postmodern World*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2001), p 122
- <sup>44</sup> Hull, *Choose the Life*, pp 36–37.
- <sup>45</sup> Keith Drury, *How to Establish Accountability*, (Booklet, np, nd) p 8
- <sup>46</sup> Hull, *The Disciple Making Church*, pp 92–93
- <sup>47</sup> Note, we must no longer think of some lands as Christian and others as heathen. We live in the post-Christendom era and every nation is a mission field.
- <sup>48</sup> Paul Yonggi Cho and Harold Hostetler, *Successful Home Cell Groups* (Plainfield, New Jersey: Logos International, 1981), p 37
- <sup>49</sup> Consider the letters to the churches and the visions
- <sup>50</sup> Hull, *The Disciple Making Pastor*, p 129
- <sup>51</sup> Maxwell Maltz, *op cit*
- <sup>52</sup> Steve Deneff, *Whatever Became of Holiness?* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House, 1996, p 120.
- <sup>53</sup> This affirmation is based on the truth contained in 2 Chronicles 7:14. Since the pattern of godliness reflected in this chapter meets the conditions of that verse we may confidently expect that God will honour His promise.
- <sup>54</sup> Quotes taken from pp 11–37, Robert E Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (New Jersey: Fleming H Revell Company, 1963)
- <sup>55</sup> Win Arn and Charles Arn, *The Master’s Plan for Making Disciples* (Pasadena: Church Growth Press, 1982)
- <sup>56</sup> Hull, *The Disciple Making Church*, p 211
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, p 212
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, p 213