

THE COMMISSION OF
DISCIPLESHIP

Presenting everyone
fully mature in Christ



KENNETH DAVIS

THE COMMISSION OF DISCIPLESHIP



“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”

(John 14:5,12 ESV)

Kenneth Davis

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May all of the glory and honor belong to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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Forward

As a co-laborer in Christ, my wife and I have served in many churches around the USA. Over the fifty years of learning about the Kingdom of God, we've weathered many perspectives, both extremely encouraging and also somewhat challenging, on our identity as members of the body of Christ. It wasn't until a few years ago while serving as prayer ministers at a large evangelistic tent crusade we discovered the marked absence of a clear and precise implementation of biblical discipleship. Those who have had the opportunity to witness the glorious response of hundreds of individuals responding to the authentic message of the Gospel are privileged to see God's embracing love on full display as desperate souls surrender their lives to Christ as they respond to the message of salvation.

I met Ken serving as prayer minister at one of those large evangelistic tent crusades in California. Ken was the lead for our small team of about 10 souls who committed to be part of the prayer team receiving the new converts after the call of salvation. In preparation for that night service, Ken prepared us by precisely describing steps we were to follow with those who we were about to engage. It was then I discovered first-hand the depth of Ken's passion for discipleship. After a few days of serving, I became familiar with his quest for excellence and attention to detail. It was his compassion for new believers and leadership which inspired us all to show up every cold and rainy day with the same vigor and desire to help others.

Among the scarce resources on the topic of our biblical call to discipleship, even fewer have reached the depth of discovery and detailed definitions this book represents. Ken wisely prompts the reader to learn, ponder and become challenged with one of heaven's key answers to current challenges plaguing our modern society. Ken explores the meaning of the command "Go make disciples" given by Jesus 2000 years ago with a clear and compelling message of hope - all of us have the divinely inspired capacity to disciple others fully armed with clear instructions and the help of Holy Spirit. It is with great hope and a deep burning desire apparent in the pages of this book "The Commission of Discipleship" our individual call to action becomes clear, compelling and personally engaging. The book is easy to read and grasp the biblical descriptions of discipleship and its importance to ourselves and others in the Kingdom of God.

Reflecting upon his personal story of encountering Christ and finding his path of becoming a true disciple and follower of Jesus, I can clearly observe how his personal experience has become the story you are about to read in this amazing book. As Ken shares one of his greatest desires and passion coupled with years of experience with those of us who are open to learning biblical discipleship. The practical tips and detailed descriptions of discipleship principles helps those who recognize the need to disciple believers and assist them in their spiritual journey, is to fulfill the commission of Christ – make disciples of all men.

James Fuller-Moniak, Senior Pastor
Eagle View Life Ministries

Introduction

The opening sentence of any undertaking in writing is usually well presented. It is judged as successful with some profound treatise, statement, or provoking thought, but I am left with none of these. I begin simply, with a confession as to what I pray about.

These fervent prayers of mine have only increased in greater frequency over the past few years with an urgency that can only be explained through a God-given purpose and mission from on High.

Lord Jesus, I have often thought about how, for millennia, that mankind has pondered the wonder of what it would be like, to be alive during the end of times. I feel that those days are now upon the earth. Why did YOU plan for me to be alive now? What is the job I am assigned to bring glory to YOUR kingdom? How do I fit into YOUR greater plan with all of the saints? I confess that I am not listening as much as I should but spend most of our conversation just asking about things only important to me, while not listening to what YOU have to say. Amen

Or, my prayer at other times might be like this;

Lord Jesus, I feel at times blind, clueless and inadequate. I know it is because I have not spent enough time alone with you, your word, and in the solitude of meditation. Help me to be quiet. I need to spend more time of each day in praise of you when no

one is watching. Guide me, my King; to my next task, my next assignment, and my destiny, for your glory only. I know that if what you are asking of me seems impossible then I must be hearing from you, because it will demand that I am totally reliant upon you Lord. How do I know this, because I am incapable of any part of it on my own. You are faithful and I lean solely upon you for my existence, sustenance and protection for you are my Savior, Lord and King. Amen.

Your prayers might be similar or completely different, but Jesus desires our honesty in conversation. Communication is vital to any relationship and is required for success.

The consequences of life, prayer, and the amazing experiences of witnessing a renewed manifestation of God's presence, have led me to share in written words what is on my heart. Therefore, I am writing this because the Holy Spirit is quietly, 'that still small voice', filling my heart and those of other believers I have encountered recently. He is filling each of us with a Holy hunger - a sense of urgency, a tugging into a calling, an agonizing thirst for the salvation of the lost. It is a divine confidence not of our own, but an assurance of victory in a world gone upside down.

If you identify with a similar, persistent yearning by the Holy Spirit that abides within you; then please be patient with me as I disclose to you in this discourse about the commission of discipleship and what the Lord has prompted me to impart to you.

It is my fervent belief that I am not alone in this matter and that I am excited to hear and learn of the wondrous understanding, teaching, witness and wisdom that you may have inside of you that Jesus is asking of you to share with the body of Christ.

I implore you to journey with me as we travel through the Bible to explore this topic of “The Commission of Discipleship”.

I pray that my learning experience, as I wrote this book, is helpful to anyone seeking to know more about this Commission from Jesus Christ.

Grace, peace and love be yours in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

SECTION 1 – Foundations



“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 3:11 KJV)

The Bible is a book written by God, full of many stories. Each story intentionally portrays people, place(s) and a time.

As humans that are created by God, we often ask ourselves questions about the Who, the Why, and the When of being alive. Because I am alive, I seek to understand who I am supposed to be. Who am I? Why am I alive now? When is all this going to make sense?

Regardless of whether you have pondered such, or have never asked yourself these questions, each of us is still writing a life story of everything we do with each

decision that we make. That life story has our name on it. What will my story be? What will yours be?

Jesus, who being the word of God and also a living man, understands these inquiries of the human heart. His story was recorded in the Bible for us. Through reading, receiving revelation, and then believing, we have the privilege to discover both the wonder of God's grace and mercy toward us in the wondrous message of the gospel, and the sacrifice of Jesus that gives us eternal life. It is a precious gift to discover the revelation of Jesus' humanity.

To introduce this section, I ask the reader to meditate and reflect on the following quotes from Jesus. We will begin with Jesus warning us to be aware of the crucial imperative to understand the times we live in.

“² He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.'

³ And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.”

(Matthew 16:2-3 ESV)

Jesus also wanted us to know that being His followers and pupils was not going to be what the world considers as a wonder-filled, always pleasant life without potential turmoil.

“¹⁶ Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. ¹⁷ Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, ¹⁸ and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. ¹⁹ When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. ²⁰ For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.” (Matthew 10:16-20 ESV)

Our Lord knew that the life story He was asking us to live would need His presence and daily guidance. To be a pupil of the son of God is a life story not of solitary, but a union of you and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit from Heaven.

“²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” (John 14:26-27 ESV)

In establishing a foundation for this writing about discipleship, I want to begin with my personal story and then an examination of where we are in history.

What is my story? What are the times we live in?

Chapter 1: My Story



A believer's story is important because it is a history of your relationship with Jesus. The successes and failures combine together to tell a story. This is my story about the beginning of my journey with Christ. This book is a result of the current chapter of my personal journey as a disciple of Jesus.

I am the only son of a minister who served in an ultra-conservative denomination. In the church structure in which I grew up, females were not allowed to assume leadership positions, our congregational responses were scripted, and somber traditions were strictly adhered to. For context we believed that even the Baptists were liberal in comparison. We had a thorough study of scripture and teaching, but we didn't

have the knowledge of the truth of God and the personal relationship that each of us are invited to have with Him.

I was raised in this bubble of self-righteous arrogance and held a prideful self-created importance that was cloaked in a fake garment of self-generated humility. I was a Pharisee and did not know it. However, the Lord was merciful, and from the age of seven, I had these recurring secret doubts that something was not correct.

The belief system that I was raised in was the encapsulation of the scripture where Paul warns Timothy to beware of those;

“⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” (2 Timothy 3:5 KJV)

My upbringing taught me to deny the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the existence of modern day miracles. As a consequence of that theology, I was without the indwelling, the gift that was promised to the disciples after the resurrection. My walk before God was solely from the neck up, self-serving, a public performance that was meant to garner praise from men.

My religious stance was the sorry sum of assumed intellect, from what I had determined was the law (required performance) to obey from scripture and ironically just the laws that I hand-picked. I essentially was just a water baptized believer of John the Baptist,

that provided for only the acknowledgement and the repentance from my sins.

I believed and lived under the condemnation of the Old Testament law as if the cross and the resurrection of Jesus had never occurred. How tragic was my understanding of the Bible and of Jesus at that time!

Fast forward to the twenty-first year of my half truths of understanding, where I was still engaged in my academic study of theology. I had just finished the first semester of my fifth year of academic Bible studies after obtaining a bachelor's degrees in Bible and History at a conservative Christian university. My life was devoid of joy. I was entrapped in a subsistence that was plagued with mental frustrations. It was a death spiral, as I was in total bondage of my spiritual condition.

How could I ever produce enough good works in my life, while in this entrapment of a works salvation, to outweigh the sins of my soul? This false balance of eternal judgment was forever a lost cause. I lacked any confidence of success before God. I was encased, and had bound myself in the chains of condemnation. I was a condemned soul in my carnal academically versed and schooled knowledge of eternal damnation.

I was in my best moments like Saul with an intellectual scriptural education but without ever having any hope of a road to Damascus experience. Without any hope of rescue and in my desperation, the mercy of God

prevailed when I had, out loud, with my mouth, ranted a challenge to God to show himself to me, *if* He wanted to prove me wrong. My audacious outburst became God's avenue to redeem my soul.

In just a few days following my challenge to the Almighty, God answered. I will never forget what happened on January 11, 1972 at 11:05 pm, in my little apartment in the middle of nowhere, Portales, New Mexico.

While I was rolling a joint and getting ready to play some music on a phonograph record, the answer came. The Holy Spirit entered my room and began to fill me! He gently guided me through the scriptures that I had studied and read so many times before, but never understood. My eyes were opened and I began to see the truth, now having an understanding that had previously been foreign to me. In just moments this revelatory understanding became alive in my heart. Jesus was no longer a character in a book, He was real, and I was being overwhelmed by His love and presence.

I uttered a contrite prayer and an acknowledgement for salvation in Christ Jesus. Those words gushed from deep inside of my broken heart. The condemned man that I had been just brief moments before died, and I was born again. Hallelujah!

I am a product of what God was doing during that time in history that we now refer to as the Jesus Revolution.

I didn't live near the epicenter of the activity of those times. Many during that revival were in California where you could find another discipling believer or mentor. However, the Lord wasn't limited by my geographical circumstances.

May I tell you a brief short history of how our Lord Jesus exposed me to a greater understanding in the first few years after my salvation encounter? Allow me to show you how the Lord nurtured my humble beginnings in this new life.

I immediately found myself surrounded by other people searching for answers. They were, as I was, reaching out for guidance into this new life in Christ Jesus. We miraculously found each other without any prompting or effort to be searching for each other despite living before there was the modern internet and instant news.

In less than thirty days after my salvation, I was physically present when a demon was being cast out. I was also blessed to watch a few days later, a person pray, and then saw a crippled leg grow several inches for divine healing. Jesus wasted no time to reveal to me that the realm of spiritual entities and miraculous healings existed in a very tangible way.

Three years later my second daughter, at one month of age, was raised from the dead after an accident in my home. A fellow brother in Christ just prayed a simple prayer of faith over the phone. You need to

understand, my friend was not even there physically. He was miles away talking to me on the phone. It was definitely not some fancy text book prayer. He just said, “Thank you Jesus for healing Ken’s daughter. Amen.” Nothing more, it was just his simple words of faith alone that were spoken, and then he hung up the phone.

A few months later that same brother called me in the middle of the night to tell me Jesus had just asked him to immediately phone me. I was instructed to get up and go into the living room. Jesus wanted to give me a gift. I obeyed and received the gift of tongues. No one was there to lay hands on me, or anoint me with oil. It just happened because I was obedient.

During the very next year the Holy Spirit prompted and convicted me to be water baptized to obey and learn more about why I should. I just simply wanted to be obedient to Jesus' example. The encounters with Jesus and the interactions with other believers to bless, correct, instruct and share continues to this very day in my life.

Why am I telling you my story? It is my personal testimony. You have your own to share. Your story does not need glamour or mighty miracles. The simple act of sharing the wondrous beauty of when we experienced the deliverance from our mountain of sin, releases the testimonial power of the blood of the cross to all who hear it.

Each and every time, when from your heart, you tell the stories about your salvation and your life changing experiences with Jesus, those moments are a testimony begging to be shared for His glory. The journey of our personal salvation is a miracle story to be shared. It is unique and powerfully glorious!

We must not forget that our personal failures, and the subsequent confession of those events, are also a component of our story. There is profound divine power in sharing about our personal confession of wrong and then telling of our repentance that follows. These are testimonies of how the Lord rescues us from our carnality. These life changing events are also an important part of our testimonial story and the daily journey of this new life in the Kingdom.

Our journey (both ups and downs) of every day that we live in Christ is our personal testimony to share.

Why would I suggest we share our personal testimony? The importance of your personal journey with Jesus is vitally important to what we will begin to explore together in this discourse on discipleship.

Chapter 2: The Times We Are In



I was by God's grace a product of the Jesus revolution that began over fifty years ago. This experience has blessed me with the ability to view current circumstances from a historical advantage. I find myself attuned by the Spirit toward an awareness of our current times.

In the fall of 2021, Mario Murillo announced, on the Victory Channel show Flash Point, details about a tent crusade in Hanford, California scheduled for February of 2022. I knew immediately in my heart that I was to go. To go not only to be physically present and volunteer, but to witness the beginnings of a new revival that was being started by our Lord. A double

blessing for something I had not been praying for.

I knew the Holy Spirit was urging me to be obedient to His invitation. The preparation to make the journey and unexpected road blocks ensued, but the Lord was birthing in me an anticipation I had not felt for a long time.

What was I blessed to observe while in Hanford? I saw a humble man of God gifted as an evangelist delivering the gospel message and declaring it wasn't about him. Mario boldly proclaimed that Jesus was the one who would be there to deliver wholeness to the broken hearted, save the lost and heal the sick.

I have led many to the message of salvation in my life, but I have never seen hundreds respond when asked if they wanted Jesus. They literally jumped up to their feet to be ready to do whatever was requested next to be saved. Not one or a few, but hundreds, night after night. Jesus the divine deliverer from condemnation, the holy and loving redeemer from the bondage of sins and our guardian of eternal life, was manifesting His presence to us all.

This gentle overwhelming presence of God was experienced inside that tent, but it was also felt across the entire city. Every evening thousands gathered. There was worship, a salvation message, an altar call of hundreds, and then the manifestation of the healing power of Christ. All eyes and ears bore witness to the divine power visible to all who witnessed these

miraculous signs and wonders. Thousands saw that it was the power of Jesus who had done it all. I could not but be in awe that these events were providentially happening in a county with the name of 'King', (Hanford, CA is located in Kings County, California).

I was camped for nineteen days across the freeway from the crusade tent site. I would listen to the tent workers worshipping Jesus into the late hours of the night, and then rise again to see them the next morning. I would join them to raise a tent, go knock on doors and invite the citizens to come to the tent, spread out chairs, help manage the large crowds, guide the crowd from the parking lot to the tent, and feed the homeless.

Who were these tent workers that labored alongside of all the volunteers? I learned that they were young adults who had been rescued by the message of the gospel off the streets of California. They were new believers full of servitude to their Savior. I saw Jesus in their eyes, in their speech, in their joy and in their actions, that first love that I had experienced so long ago.

Oh yes, I prayed about what I was seeing each day and night. The Lord showed me in my mind the picture of a kitchen match. The white phosphorus tip of the match was being set on fire in the tent. It ignited the blue part that was the new believer(s) who were being spiritually ignited by the spark of the flame of the presence of Jesus and the manifestation of the proof of what they had just experienced through signs and

wonders. The match wood was the coming harvest of new souls that would set their homes, families and neighborhoods on fire with the message of Jesus and the gift of salvation. I could see in my soul as these fires of revival spread to all of the kindling in their communities.

That flame is still spreading, not only in the other subsequent tent meetings and gatherings across America, but on multiple college campuses over the last few years as well.

***This outpouring and fire
from Heaven is growing.***

The abundance of evidence that has been seen by thousands should lead us to the conclusion that a revival has begun. Currently there are many prophets adamantly proclaiming that this revival will be a multi-national harvest. They attest to a declaration that revival has started and will manifest upon the future horizon across the whole world.

I cannot allow myself to be idle. God is moving. What should be my response? Spiritual discretion requires that I must ask myself hard questions. I must ask them, because God is doing something. Am I going to be a spectator or a participant?

So, I am prompted to ask the question. Have I ever desired, prayed for, or sought for revival? If I have, then what is the product of those prayers? When you

ask yourself these types of questions, you find yourself looking at that person in the mirror. The face stares back at you. All of the facade of pretending dissipates as you become able to be openly truthful to your inner most self. You ask, “What is the fruit of my prayers?”

You continue asking yourself, “Have I ever prayed for something but never actually prepared for the divine answer?” I know I have, so if your answer is the same, you are not alone. The scriptures that define the consequence of those empty prayers, shrouded in our unbelief and subsequent actions, are not comfortable.

“²² And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” (Matthew 21:22 KJV)

“¹⁷ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” (James 2:17 KJV)

Do I actually believe that what I am praying for will be answered? Does an outcome without doubt actually occur? This self query comes to the foreground when I am being honest. I have reached an intersection. A decision must be made. I know the answer, but first I must confess the shortfall.

The truth comes out, as I confess, that I cannot be asking the Lord about, or for *anything*, and then not be actively involved in the faithful anticipation of His response.

Lord, help me to change how I think.

Help my faith see what is not yet visible.

*Help me to begin to prepare
for something not yet happening.*

My heart aches because I want to actually get ready to be a co-participant in the fruitful actions of Heaven's answer, especially when there is no evidence to substantiate it.

This discussion comes full circle when we look at the times we are living in. Revival is upon us, whether we were praying for it or not.

This fact requires that we must ask ourselves pertinent questions. I discovered that the formation of these questions, let alone their contemplation to be a painful personal examination. This unpleasantness was necessary to accomplish an honest introspection of my walk before God.

I love Jesus too much to not pursue whatever was required to correct my walk, my thinking, my actions; to find His gentle voice.

I pray for Heaven to grant you boldness and courage to ask these and similar questions. Jesus will always lead us to the truth we desperately need when we ask questions and then expect Him to answer.

It is not possible to list all of the possible questions that could be asked, but the following are relevant and must be considered in the context of this discourse.

Why? The reality of the harvest of thousands of new souls being redeemed into the Kingdom of Heaven is happening. How can I not become aware of the necessity to care for these eternal new-born children of Jesus Christ?

Consider this, abortion is an evil that murders the unborn. I cannot look at that evil with any form of righteous indignation, and then without any excuse, ignore the absolute need to care for these new eternal children of God.

My soul will not allow me to abandon the maternity ward of the revival that is upon us.

Therefore, these questions are meant to be spiritually provocative. They need to be honestly addressed if one is willing to entertain a personal inspection of everything the Spirit leads each of us to appraise.

- Where are the warehouses of Bibles for the new believers that are coming?
- Where are the warehouses of training materials for the new believers that are coming?

- Where are the prepared teachers and discipling training materials for the new believers that are coming?
- Have I asked God what is my personal assignment for the new believers that are coming?
- Have I begun in faith to prepare myself for His divine assignment?

It is not my intention to unfairly provoke nor to make anyone feel unnecessary guilt. At least not any more than I have felt myself for having an unprepared belief system.

I confess that I am guilty of not having gotten prepared for the harvest of this revival.

Of course the Lord was not caught unaware by my inactivity. Nor, has He abandoned me. In the sermon on the mount, Jesus spoke these words.

“⁶ Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”
(Matthew 5:6 KJV)

When we find ourselves empty, Jesus offers to us the avenue for being filled. Jesus wants to take residence in those He has redeemed. He guides us to empty out what does not need to be inside of us, so that He can then fill that void with what is desperately needed.

When the questions of our response to these times we live in and the coming revival are reviewed, a process begins to manifest itself, the process of being emptied and refilled.

Do you have a stirring in your heart? A hunger that is aching for filling? A growing thirst to see our Lord move mightily in our troubled world? Jesus said that those empty places, hungers and needs would be filled.

I know Jesus is multiplying in many hearts a new hunger for the lost. I know He is granting us an opportunity to seek a renewed Spirit led awakening to gain revelation and sight into the importance of sharing our personal testimony of His gracious goodness, merciful rescue and loving steadfastness. I know He is providing us with an opportunity to elevate our awareness to amplify our sense of the urgency for the times we are living in.

All of these are a spiritual tugging that God is manifesting in the hearts of His disciples who divinely stand in opposition to the carnal news of the ever increasing conflicts between peoples, tribes and nations.

This divine filling confronts the public display of diseases of the human heart, the unashamed pride of wickedness, and the public evil and lies of the news of each carnal day.

How will I? How will you? How are we going to react to the times and to the desperate necessity of the propagation of the wonderful knowledge of Jesus, His salvation message to the lost, and the rewards of the harvest of new eternal brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus?

If we find ourselves lacking knowledge, unprepared or asking for answers to these and other soul provoking questions that arise from these events, subjects and circumstances of the times we live in; then the only true source for clarification is to look to our owner's manual the Holy scriptures.

“¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:” (1Peter 3:15 KJV)

I am convicted, and with a singularity of mind, to proclaim that the true answers are found in God's words. I do not need another instruction book, manual or some newly authored church program that uses any source of instruction in addition to the word of God. How can I take this position? The proof of my opinion is self evident.

The book of Acts provides historical proof that God's word and the Holy Spirit were all that was needed to obtain the correct answers required to accomplish the Lord's will. The history lessons in Acts contain the

stories of the profound growth of the discipling of the world by the early believers in the immediate days and decades of the first century.

These stories tell how Christianity grew, survived and thrived in the first great revival. When we examine the times they lived in, those ancient times do not seem too much different than the tumultuous times we are currently in.

All of the Spirit led growth and wonderful events we can read about in the book of Acts were accomplished while under the horrific persecution and conditions of the evil Roman Empire.

The answers we seek are there. I invite you to journey with me as we explore together and discover what the scriptures can teach us.

SECTION 2 – What is Discipling?



A typical English dictionary defines a disciple as a person who believes in the ideas of a leader, especially a religious or political one, and tries to live according to those tenets of instruction.

This generic definition is rather vague. However, we must understand that this is the world's definition. It leaves a rather large opening to cause confusion regarding what is the biblical definition of a disciple.

For example, notice how this definition is self determined. I can be a disciple of anyone who's teaching I consider to be of merit. I might pick one who requests followers to alter their identity, or possibly to become a clone of this teacher and sacrifice their personal self identity.

I might choose to talk, dress and act under my own will power to be a copy of my teacher. Or, I might believe some of their precepts, to the point that I believe that, I get to live multiple cycles of life, as in the falsehood of reincarnation, to eventually reach some advanced level of nirvana.

I could even convince myself to alter my physical appearance, even to the extent of surgical alterations, to become a copy in appearance of the teacher I am following. Or, I might believe that I can adapt myself to be a follower of multiple teachers. Why limit myself to just one teaching?

In each of these examples, these disciples are solely operating under their own power, under a contrived mental or emotional view of their self created bubble of truth, which is based upon whom they chose to follow.

The question is, regardless of how absurd some of those examples are; have I, or am I, possibly influenced by the world's definition of disciple or discipleship?

It becomes obvious, the teacher you choose better be the right one.

An honest response for the Christian is to dive into the word of God. What can be found, revealed and then understood from an examination of scripture?

I must search to discover what God has defined and shown by example in His word. The word of God will lead me to the truth of what a disciple is.

Chapter 3: An Examination of Discipling From the Words of Jesus

It becomes tantamount that a pupil of Jesus contemplate and study the actual words that Jesus gave to His disciples to begin any discussion as to what comprises the true meaning of discipling.

What did Jesus say to help us understand how we are to conduct ourselves as one of His disciples? What are the answers from Jesus' words (the teacher) to learn about how we personally develop and abide in this self discipline of living as His disciple (pupil)?

To accomplish this we need to examine the actual instructions recorded in the scriptures from Jesus as He personally spoke His instructions to His followers before He left the earth to reign as the King of kings from Heaven.



The Great Commission of Jesus

“¹⁸ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and **teach** all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ **Teaching** them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.” (Matthew 28:18-20 KJV)

“¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ **teaching** them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20 ESV)

Vocabulary Confusion in our English Bible Translations.

To find the answer to any question requires that a pupil must do some homework. After all, we are not robots or a just a thoughtless mechanical process. The

conviction to begin a personal undertaking to study scripture allows us to explore what Jesus was actually saying. (Note: the New Testament was compiled from manuscripts written in ancient 'koine' Greek).

The King James version in verse 19 tells us to “ **teach** all nations”. However the newer English Standard version tells us to “ **make disciples** of all nations”. Which is it?

The actual word (μαθητεύω matheteuo) in the original Greek was used for each translation. It is the active verb form of being a (μαθητής mathetes) which translated in modern English is the word 'disciple'. That word simply means a learner, pupil, or disciple.

Each translation wasn't wrong. The problem is that the English language is complex. English can have many words that are similar in meaning.

I often read many different versions and translations. I then compare them (side-by-side) not for a single word answer, but the general concept that is best intended from the original language. This has helped me to utilize a simplistic approach to get a more comprehensive understanding in English.

The result for Matthew 28:18 would read like this: “*making disciples happens by teaching the pupils of all nations*”. That seems for me to grasp the whole of the original Greek's meaning.

However the beauty of this is not finished. Both of these Greek words about 'teaching' and 'disciple' are similar to (μανθάνω manthano) which is the Greek word for learning, or to increase one's knowledge, to listen, hear and become informed, to learn by use and practice. Look at these words of Jesus as an example:

“²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and **learn** of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:29-30 KJV)

It becomes obvious that teaching is co-existent with learning. The foundational principle of being a teacher or a pupil is a perpetual learning experience. The classroom never ends.

What Does This Examination of the Original Language Teach Us?

Jesus had disciples - His pupils, His students, those whom He was personally teaching.

What is the context (the setting or circumstances) of the moment Jesus was telling His disciples these words? Jesus when He was speaking this commandment to His disciples was going to be returning to Heaven. Jesus knew He was not going to be present in human flesh on the earth anymore to be

their teacher.

As a result Jesus was instructing His student followers now to do for others what He had done for them. Jesus was explaining how you are still my pupils (disciples), but now I am asking you to become teachers (discipling) for the new disciples (pupils of Jesus).

How many new pupils was Jesus asking them to disciple? All nations (everyone alive on the whole earth). Jesus had made them His disciples (pupils) by teaching them, and they became His pupils by allowing themselves to be taught.

These words were extremely important because Jesus was in His last classroom on the earth. Jesus was giving this great commission to His followers to become the new teachers (discipling) while they always remained in the role of being His disciples (pupils).

What Were They Supposed to be Teaching (Discipling) Their New Pupils?

“¹⁹baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19 ESV)

Jesus gave a direct request for us to become teachers who were to deliver the salvation message of the

gospel (the good news).

What immediate example do we have to show how this would be obeyed? Less than two months after Jesus spoke these words, on the day of Pentecost, Peter stood in front of a crowd of thousands. Peter was obedient to the commandment of Jesus and delivered the gospel message. What happened as a result of Peter's obedience?

“³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” (Acts 2:37-39 ESV)

Peter was being guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit to begin in his obedience to what Jesus had asked.

“²⁰ **teaching** them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:20 ESV)

What can we learn from Peter's example to conduct ourselves as pupils of Jesus Christ? When we look at

this word 'teaching' we find additional information. The original language helps us discover the following.

The word “**Teaching**” in Greek (διδάσκω didasko) means simply to teach, conduct one's self as a teacher. This implies that a teacher holds a discourse with others in order to instruct them by imparting a teachable instruction.

Teaching is more than lecturing.

Disciple teaching is a two way conversation (teacher to pupil *and* pupil to teacher). This conversation is disclosing new knowledge and the subsequent interaction with the pupil as the teacher is answering the pupils questions.

How Are Disciples Going to be Capable to Accomplish This Task Given to Them?

"²⁰ And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20 ESV)

Jesus was soon to not walk the earth anymore, as He was to ascend to Heaven. How was Jesus still going to be with His disciples? His Kingdom is a *spiritual* kingdom. Christ Jesus is not constrained by the laws and forces of our physical world.

Are you with me? This is deeply vital; I want and

desire that you understand. The concept and the subsequent comprehension that Jesus is not bound to our carnal senses is fundamental to being a believer in the Kingdom of Heaven. It is a spiritual kingdom. God's Kingdom greatly surpasses what I can see, smell, touch or feel. How is this possible? Jesus has the answer.

Jesus had already promised He would send them the 'helper', the 'comforter', the Holy Spirit. Please review, meditate and reflect on these words of Jesus. What do they tell us? What understanding and comfort can we receive from knowing about the 'Helper'?

Consider these words of Jesus as He tells us about the 'helper', the Holy Spirit.

“¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” (John 14:16-17 ESV)

“²⁶ But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” (John 14:26 ESV)

“²⁶ But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.” (John 15:26-27 ESV)

“⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. ¹² "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” (John 16:7-14 ESV)

The 'Helper', the 'Comforter', the 'Spirit Of Truth'; the Holy Spirit

I implore you to read again and reread, and then meditate on the following list of all of the wonderful things that the Holy Spirit would provide the disciples (teachers) and the disciples (pupils) of Jesus.

- He comes from God.
- He abides inside of us.
- The world cannot see or know Him.
- He will teach us all things.
- He will remind us of what Jesus has said.
(We cannot be reminded of what we have not read or heard. You and I must read the word.)
- He will bear witness of Jesus in you. So that we can then bear that same witness to others.
- He will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.
- He will guide us into all truth.
- He will not speak on His own authority.
- Whatever He hears He will speak.
- He will declare to you the things that are to come.
- He will glorify Jesus.
- He will take what has been given to Jesus and declare it to you.

Can we honestly answer and then believe without exceptions, that these provisions from Heaven are completely sufficient to accomplish everything that is

required of us to live in obedience? That obedience is accomplished, when and only when, we co-exist with and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Are we capable of taking in this knowledge, the understanding of what the gift of the comforter will provide (which is a vital part of our faith's foundation), only to go on living a life that is unchanged?

Knowing these truths will I actually turn that faith into actions of belief? I fervently believe that with the knowledge of Christ in me, I then have a responsibility to answer in the positive.

If I can answer by faith, "Yes", granting permission to the Holy Spirit allowing Him to guide me in all things; then am I also not required to teach others this truth?

If my answer was, "No", then should I not feel compelled to find a teacher to disciple me? To be taught, growing in knowledge and understanding so that I may one day become a pupil that will become capable of answering, "Yes".

Hallelujah! Thank you Lord Jesus, for the gift of the 'Helper' means, we are never alone once we accept Jesus' precious gift.

How Long is This Great Commission to Last?

"²⁰ And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20 ESV)

The great commission is given to us until the end of the age. That means that this assignment it is not over until Jesus returns to earth from Heaven. It is very clearly obvious to me that we are still inside of the timeline of this great commission of discipleship. This commission stills remains as a directive from Jesus to all believers, it has not expired.

By What Authority and Power Can We Operate as These Discipling Teachers?

Consider what Jesus said before the great commission was given.

"¹⁸ All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." (Matthew 28:18 ESV)

The master teacher Jesus has given us this great discipling assignment because He has the authority and power to give the order. I ask myself and the reader to contemplate the immensity of what "All authority in heaven and on earth" represents.

The very thought of the Biblical fact that the son of God, this Jesus, the one whom has ALL power and authority, desires to take residence within me is the greatest revelation I have ever encountered. This is

beyond the scope of carnal understanding.

Jesus has all authority to request that every believer (pupil) endeavor to disciple others.

The order to disciple did not come down through the ranks to us as foot soldiers by a mere human sub-commander.

- Jesus, the commander in chief, gave the order directly to each one of us.
- Jesus did NOT ask us to somehow get the job done by ourselves.
- Jesus did NOT ask us to hire someone to do the job for us.

We must understand that this is a personal assignment from Heaven that has been given to every believer. Consider these things and meditate on them for understanding and encouragement.

- Jesus gives us the opportunity to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to abide within us and manifest the authority of Heaven in each one of us.
- We are commissioned to be ambassadors of the Kingdom of Heaven on the earth.
- We are never the source of truth; we are only the conduit of Kingly authority, tasked with delivering His divine truth.
- Jesus has the full authority of Heaven, every right to request that each and every believer (pupil) disciple other believers.

- Jesus is not asking us to muster up obedience to disciple others based on our own personal energy.

Jesus has all power. He is the single source of everything that we need. If Jesus has all power (and He does), then no other source has any at all, unless He gives it to them. We are completely dependent upon Him. Do I really understand what this means?

Jesus is Depending On His Pupils to Finish This Great Commission

“¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14 ESV)

The commission to disciple all of the nations is to be accomplished before the end times can and will take place. Jesus is depending upon His followers to finish His work.

What Other Lessons Did Jesus Teach Before He Ascended to Heaven

I urge you to carefully weigh the words that Jesus spoke after the cross and His resurrection.

“¹⁴ Afterward he appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining at table, and he rebuked them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen. ¹⁵ And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation. ¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸ they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover." ¹⁹ So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. ²⁰ And they went out and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by accompanying signs.” (Mark 16:14-20 ESV)

Jesus had to repeat His commission and instructions because the eleven had not yet received the Holy Spirit, the empowerment they needed to be successfully obedient. Without the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, Jesus had to rebuke them for their unbelief

and hardness of heart, they did not even believe the reports of His resurrection.

Can we honestly boast that we would have acted any better? Without the promised gift of the Holy Spirit can anyone fulfill the requirements of the commission of discipleship?

An honest appraisal requires that the followers of the Christ must understand that these words of Jesus after the resurrection require that the empowerment of the gift of the Holy Spirit from Heaven must become part of our journey of obedience.

So, what happens when we do operate with the Holy Spirit abiding within us? Jesus told us that signs and wonders would coincide with and give confirmation to a disciple's teaching the salvation message of the gospel to new believers.

Signs and wonders?

- Jesus said that His disciples would cast out demons.
- They would speak in new tongues.
- They would be protected from evil animals and poison.
- The sick would be healed.

What have we discovered? What have we learned? Each one of us must seek out the truth and answer that for ourselves. I myself, am compelled to follow the path of discipling others based on the truth of what is written in the Bible.

I think it is wise that we ask, “What effect does the testimony of this history of those who followed Jesus have upon me personally?”

I pray that we find ourselves ready to write a new chapter, to rewrite our personal stories, as a result of that pursuit. I pray that the stories of today’s living disciples (you and me) will exemplify what Jesus proclaimed to the eleven before the arrival of the Holy Spirit, “I knew you from the beginning.”

Jesus is expecting us to be obedient like the eleven and receive the gift from Heaven of the empowerment of the Holy Spirit to assist us in becoming what His pupils were created to be.

May our new stories bring glory to Him whom we serve. Amen.

Chapter 4: The Implications of Being a Disciple



*Who Me? Am I supposed to be a
disciple teacher?*

I am in awe of the plan of God for our redemption through our Lord Jesus Christ. The apostles had physically walked with the son of God for almost three and a half years. They experienced Jesus on a 24/7

basis, continually immersed in learning of Jesus as His students. They were living with Him, camping with Him, walking with Him, listening to His every word, asking Him questions, and seeing Him perform supernatural miracles. Now on the cusp of Jesus being sacrificed on the cross, we find Jesus telling them that He is leaving.

Wait? What? Talking about having something grab your attention. The Messiah is leaving? Jesus tells them that He must leave so that the plan of God can unfold. Jesus then discloses to them what He had planned for them.

“²⁶ But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.” (John 15:26-27 ESV)

The apostle Paul explains this Helper, as he is discipling his students, by teaching them about the Holy Spirit in his letter to the Romans.

“²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the

saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” (Romans 8:26-29 ESV)

Paul’s brief examination of the Spirit discloses a list of the ramifications of what Jesus has gifted us with. The list comprises an awesome resource of blessings and promises that equip us so that we are able to accomplish and effectively carryout the discipling commission.

- Jesus is going to Heaven, but He will not leave us alone.
- Jesus wants us to begin to disciple (teach) others as His words have taught us.
 - Remember that Jesus has been given all power and authority in heaven and the earth to make this possible.
- Jesus is providing each of us with a gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - The Holy Spirit will be inside of each of us and help each of us to accomplish obedience to His words.
- The Spirit is from Heaven and will repeat to each of us only what is being said in Heaven that is meant for each of us to hear.
 - Jesus' words, Jesus' guidance, Jesus' power

and authority are operating inside of each of us so that we can do His will.

- Jesus is giving each of us new instructions.
 - The Holy Spirit will enable each of us to disciple the inhabitants of the whole earth.
- Each new believer that we baptize in His name has the opportunity to receive the same gift that each of us has received. (Acts 2:38-39)
- The life of a disciple (pupil) of Jesus can be the life of every believer who receives what He is offering.
- The Spirit will bring Jesus' words to our remembrance.
- The Spirit will enable the power of the witness of signs and wonders.
- The Spirit will provide miraculous proof of who is responsible for what is happening.
- The Spirit will enable our mouth to be filled with a new language.
- The Spirit will moan and pray for each of us when we have no words or do not even know what to say.
- Jesus will never leave us alone.
- The Spirit will speak words that are Heaven's guidance and wisdom when interpreted.
 - Jesus will guide each of us through the Spirit abiding in us.
- The Spirit led disciples will disciple (make pupils) of everyone that is in their lives that are ready to accept the gospel invitation of salvation.

I understand that some might not agree with this literal

and somewhat simplistic assessment. I am always open, with an open heart to discuss this with anyone who might ask, who might have a differing perspective, or who might have more questions than have been presented here. There are many other scriptures to explore on this subject that provide greater detail. It is my intent in this discourse to lay a foundation of a basic understanding of the need of living the life of a disciple.

Why? Jesus asked us by commandment to live that life. We need to begin discipling others in obedience to a heavenly commission from Jesus to all people and nations.

I truly believe that if we are to pursue a greater and deeper understanding of our assignment to live a discipling life for Jesus, that we must examine and study the story told in the book of Acts with some of the last instructions given by Jesus Himself. This would serve as a better form of discussion and any required subsequent debate.

It is the story of the immediate events that occurred in the lives of those who heard this great commission of discipleship from Jesus in person. It is my opinion that this was the primary purpose for the writing and inclusion of these stories in the Bible; they are to give us a proven example of how this great commission of discipleship should work.

If anyone has a better plan than the one God made, go

ahead and raise your hand or voice. That was meant to be rhetorical; however, before I found Jesus by an encounter with the Holy Spirit, I was living in a carnally man built construct of a lie.

I do not know the circumstances of your individual situation. If the baptism of the abiding presence and indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a component of your story, then I implore you to press on with me in this discourse.

If you have not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, I invite you to seek out a disciple of Jesus who can lead you into that experience. It is a gift from heaven for you, from Jesus.

Chapter 5: The Testimony of Discipleship From the Book of Acts



**What Happens
When the Holy
Spirit Enters
Into the Life of a
Disciple of Jesus?**

1. Jesus' Instructions Before He Ascended to Heaven.

“³ He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵

for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (Acts 1:3-5 ESV)

Out of the approximately four hundred witnesses of these events, one hundred and twenty obeyed. The promised reward of obedience came.

2. The Holy Spirit Arrives.

Let us look to the story of when the Holy Spirit arrived after Jesus ascended to Heaven. One hundred and twenty believers obeyed Jesus' request and were gathered together in Jerusalem patiently anticipating for what Jesus had instructed them to wait for.

“¹ When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were

bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.” (Acts 2:1-6 ESV)

The baptism of the Holy Spirit fell on the 120 who had obeyed Jesus. A crowd of thousands in Jerusalem heard the noise of this supernatural event. Peter and the other apostles and disciples found themselves standing in front of the crowd that had gathered. Peter began to deliver a message explaining to the crowd what they were witnessing. Peter then explains who Jesus is to the crowd.

“³⁶ Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.” ³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” (Acts 2:36-39 ESV)

This passage ends with the declaration that the promise is for everyone that God calls to himself. There is no ending to this promised gift! It is still available to this

very day because the end of the ages has not yet happened. God is still calling the lost to Himself.

To say the opposite that the gift of the Holy Spirit has expired would also require that the opportunity for God to call new believers to Himself has also expired.

3. The Immediate Result of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit to the New Believers.

“⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. ⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:41-47 ESV)

There is nothing about what transpired that is recorded for us that omits a single thing that Jesus had said would happen when He gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Everything that Peter, the apostles, the disciples, and the saints experienced that day at Pentecost is absolutely for the believer today. Read again these passages from John.

“²⁶ "But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me. ²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.” (John 15:26-27 ESV)

“⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. ¹² "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will

guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” (John 16:7-14 ESV)

On the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the 120 who had obeyed Jesus, everything He promised became a reality.

- The words of Jesus' promise of this gift was being fulfilled.
- Everything offered by this baptism of the Holy Spirit was given.
- The benefits of the indwelling and presence of the Spirit were manifested in public.
- Each person who received the gift of this anointed baptism became an empowered disciple.
- They all became capable of doing what Jesus had requested of them.
 - A power not of their own but a gift from Heaven.
- They became discipling teachers that delivered the message of the gospel to the lost.
- They started doing exactly what Jesus had requested of them.
- They became living examples of Jesus (through the indwelling of the 'helper') and provided to others exactly what Jesus had done for them with the message of salvation.
- They were by their own obedience co-participants

(living vessels pouring out the mercy and grace of God to all who choose to receive) in this first great harvest of souls for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Who do you think was glorified? The one hundred and twenty? No, God was. They became ambassadors of Jesus' Kingdom. They now being endowed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, the divine presence of power, mercy and grace, obediently poured that blessing out upon the nearby crowd. The result was 3,000 new disciples (pupils) of Jesus.

Consider the immediate actions of these new disciples (pupils) as they were learning from the 120 and the apostles under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was also teaching and assisting the apostles with new activities that this growing body of believers in Christ would embrace.

Notice how the will of the Father God through Jesus and the gift of the Spirit manifested in them as they begin to engage in these activities as a functioning united group.

“²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...” (Matthew 28:20 ESV)

“⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were

being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”
(Acts 2:42-47 ESV)

Do you see the testimony of a new witness of the abiding presence of Jesus in these disciples? Brand new activities sprouted from the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

The apostles are not the same men that they had been just two months before that day of Pentecost. This new way of life was unknown to them a mere two months before. They became new Spirit filled children in the Kingdom of God.

The only spiritual adult in the upper room that day was from Heaven. These 120 gathered together became Spirit filled children of the living God, and the product of these brand new babies was profound. They felt, witnessed and heard the voice of their Father coming from their own mouths in power.

Please consider the following analogy from my own childhood. In grade school, I succeeded and performed well only when I paid attention to what was being taught, asking questions when I did not understand. My teacher expected these healthy student behaviors from me and would encourage me daily to expand my understanding and to adopt the mindset that I never stop learning.

When I gained the understanding of Jesus' plan for my life, that of a life long learner and disciple of Christ, I understood that I was expected to exercise my new knowledge by my faith becoming belief. My knowledge (faith) that I had obtained and now comprehended was being put into action (belief).

I began to exercise these newly learned abilities so that I could become whom I was destined to be. As I progressed I became capable of teaching others about what I had learned and experienced.

I chose this easily understood example of a child's development because it is important to Jesus.

“² And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them ³ and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 18:2-4 ESV)

I am asking myself and the reader to consider that we must find in ourselves this child-like humble mindset as we continue. This is a fundamental and powerful opportunity to open a door within us, that will allow us to consider questions yet to be explored and as a consequence grow exponentially.

The Holy Spirit can utilize a child-like heart.

What are the characteristics of the heart of a child? That child-like heart will spontaneously with curiosity, begin to ask, seek and find.

A child-like heart is able to crave the righteous simplicity of being unafraid and then exercise the freedom to ask the questions of How and Why. A child's heart asks because it is convinced without any reservation that the parent knows the answer.

***When we believe
that God has the answers,
the Holy Spirit can guide us
to ask the questions
that we need answers for.***

In our exploration of the information given to us in the scriptures we can ask for answers to questions like the following.

- Does this Holy Spirit outpouring transformation end with this first episode of Pentecost?
- How does the knowledge of this spiritual

- outpouring apply to us today?
- Do I hunger and thirst enough to ask to learn more?
 - Am I intrigued by the prompting of the Holy Spirit to seek more?

I repeat this because it is so important. We must begin by seeking with a child-like heart, and asking the right questions. We must give ourselves permission to be open, unafraid and compelled to become curious. The child inside of each of us wants to know how the story ends. We are excited to find out more. We naturally begin to adopt a, “Daddy, tell me more.”

We become empowered to ask the Father to guide us toward abiding in this youthful desire to be exposed to what comes next. Life becomes a school of learning from our parent, our teacher. Being a disciple is no longer an objective goal, it becomes a component of who we are and how we live.

The book of Acts provides to us in the recorded stories answers to this yearning to ask, seek and know more about this discipleship life. We must press on as the story in Acts has just begun to record this birth of the body of Christ in the story of the spread of this good news of the gospel of salvation in Christ Jesus.

We are at the infancy of the story about the leadership of Jesus through the gift of the Holy Spirit abiding in the disciples. We must continue in our exploration of this recorded story as it discloses to us more amazing

information.

4. How Did the Holy Spirit Provide Guidance?

My desire is that you understand that the book of Acts is a straightforward historical witness exposing us to the story of how guidance from Jesus is being given to the disciples by the Holy Spirit.

These new disciples are not spiritual robots, nor are they clones. The disciples are learning to look to the Spirit as their 'helper' and their 'comforter'. There is much to learn when we examine what transpired in what many consider to be just the first two year period after the day of Pentecost.

I am not including the actual Bible references for a reason. I desire that you take the time to read these first twelve chapters of the book of Acts on your own and use the following list as a reference. Make your own list if you desire.

- Supernatural signs and wonders show the miraculous acts are from God.
 - A lame man is healed.
 - Disciples were delivered from prison.
 - Demons were being cast out.
- The believers became bold when confronted with persecution.
 - The number of believers grew. 5,000 more

men were added.

- The martyrdom of Stephen occurred, and we learn how the believers reacted when confronted with violence and persecution.
- Believers grew together in unity by sharing their possessions.
- The consensus of each believer individually receiving the same guidance created unity, and the story of lying about it brought divine respect among the believers with the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira.
- The office of Deacon was created to solve their first organizational controversy, when by unity and then asking by prayer for guidance.
 - This resulted in a new appointed leadership to handle necessary physical business requirements of the growing number of believers.
- The gospel message expanded past Jerusalem.
 - Philip went to Samaria.
 - Philip was sent by the Spirit to bring the salvation message to the Ethiopian eunuch.
 - Peter's had a vision which initiated events that sent him to Samaria.
- The gospel message spread outward toward the end of the known world.
 - Saul was converted and a vision was given to Ananias to bring the gospel to this known murderer.
 - Peter heals Aeneas in Lydda.
 - Peter raises Dorcus from the dead in Joppa.
- The gospel is delivered to Gentiles with the story

of Cornelius in Caesarea.

- Peter is given a vision to help him comprehend what he needed to understand.
- Peter goes and gives the gospel message to Cornelius and his family.
- The Holy Spirit falls on the Gentiles.

5. How Did the Disciples Deliver the Full Message of Salvation?

Everything we have been looking at; the words from Jesus, the promised gift of the comforter, and what this helper would provide for us; becomes a historical testimony of it all happening just as Jesus promised.

A disciples's textbook is exposed by reading what transpired in just the first few years of the story told in the book of Acts.

6. How Did the Disciples Deliver the Gospel Message of Salvation?

- There was no unique order of events, no requirements for a specific entry level of scriptural understanding or condition that the Holy Spirit did not intervene in to provide the missing information or knowledge.
- The Holy Spirit delivered what was required to lend assistance to the opportunity for each new

believer to receive the complete gospel message.

a. A cook book formula for salvation cannot be found.

- Salvation's complete message comes in a variety of the order of the component events.
 - Some only knew about the baptism of John the Baptist.
 - Others needed to hear the gospel message of salvation that comes from the sacrifice of Jesus, the cross and the resurrection.
 - Others needed to know about the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - All received what part of the complete message that was missing, so everyone got to hear the whole salvation proclamation.

b. The Holy Spirit provided guidance.

- In each of the many different stories, the Holy Spirit provided guidance to whatever was missing in each situation. The new disciple could be instructed with the missing information and the required teaching to bring each new believer pupil to an opportunity to receive everything that was being offered by the complete message of salvation in Jesus.

c. Obedience provides opportunity.

- The action of an obedient response in each situation became a Spirit led opportunity to seek direction in prayer and unity.
- Then as an immediate result, by faith, each participant could act upon what was being provided by the Holy Spirit and then respond to that divine teaching guidance.

d. Obedience provides direction.

- The new believers experienced the results of disciplined obedience after seeking spiritual direction from their teachers and the Comforter.
 - A unity (agreement of the group involved) of the believers was a common testimony of proof that what was happening was correct and from Heaven.
 - New directions and guidance was provided for needs, and answers to problems or conflicts by instructions received from the Holy Spirit.

e. Prayer is answered with boldness.

- The disciples experienced boldness given to them from Heaven after persecution and prayer.
- Miracles were performed by the authority of Jesus to publicly witness to observers that the gospel was from Heaven and not just another earthly religious experience .

- The immediate result of this divine boldness; thousands were becoming new disciples.

f. A nation is disciplined.

- The fulfillments of the great commission accomplished in the generation(s) of the early body of believers is profound.
 - The Roman Empire became 'Christian' over the next 300 years.
 - This success for the Kingdom occurred while under brutal persecution and political bondage.
 - Many scholars believe that some of the apostles traveled into Africa, as far east as India, and possibly into the barbarian areas of modern Europe.

g. The New Testament was written.

- The Holy Spirit inspired the apostles and other new disciples to finish the writings of our New Testament. Please understand, most of the growth recorded in the book of Acts was before most of these writings were even written and had been dispersed among the disciples alive during this period of history.
- The united body of the disciples accomplished these events with the guidance of the Spirit after prayer, exercising their faith for answers; and, then being obedient to the guidance given by the

Holy Spirit.

- The only scriptures the early disciples had were the Old Testament writings located in scrolls at a Jewish synagogue, or from recalling individual memory.

h. This was all done without the wonders of modern technology.

- The new Spirit led believers just engaged in word of mouth activities between the fellow disciples and the people(s) in their immediate communities.
 - No phones.
 - No internet.
 - No church buildings.
 - People meeting people in person. Discipling each other directly face to face.

i. They utilized existing public places to present the message of Jesus.

- Their primary meeting places were in each other's homes to study, disciple, worship and pray.
- Please take note and understand that many women were individually honored by name in the New Testament because the believers were meeting in their homes.

The profound amount of evidence presented in these

birthing moments of Christianity are more than just tenets of our faith. They are a testimony to the explicit fact about the success of the redemptive plan of God to harvest the sinner from death to an eternal life of a divine relationship with Almighty God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The conquering of death by our Lord and Savior Jesus at the cross has set free the liberty of the indwelling of the presence of the Holy Spirit to enable the will of God to come to every heart and life of the disciples of Jesus.

Unity of direction and clarification of daily necessity was given to each one who sought to know the Father's will. This was reinforced and confirmed by each believer discovering that their fellow travelers in this journey were hearing the same voice.

A Holy bonding occurred among individual disciples who were teaching each other and growing in their individual relationship with the son of God into a unified group – the '*ekklesia*' church was being built by Jesus.

The result of these birthing activities was supported by the supernatural signs and wonders to prove to those who were lost in sin, that what is occurring was from Heaven and not of men. Thousands are becoming new disciples of Jesus and members of the Kingdom of Heaven.

This divine leaven, of a life alive in the abiding presence of our Lord Jesus, was permeating the community, the nation, and then the whole world. The Heavenly activities simultaneously abounded in a world full of trouble, persecution, imprisonment, the strife of an evil government and ceaseless hostile religious confrontation.

We must ask ourselves, with sincere honesty and retrospect how does this Biblical story reflect upon how discipling is happening in our lives, our communities and our nation?

I am confident that if we ask our Redeemer for direction He will answer.

My hope is that the simplistic beauty of how discipling occurred in the book of Acts can be grasped as a story book full of instructions and examples for how Jesus intended His church to function, survive, grow and flourish.

Chapter 6: The Example of a Discipling Teacher, the Apostle Paul



The first twelve chapters of Acts cover the subject matter we have briefly examined in the last chapter. These stories tell of the leadership and accomplishments of Peter, the other apostles and fellow disciples.

However, beginning with the thirteenth chapter of Acts, the story of Paul takes center stage as the growth of Christianity spreads across the known Greek speaking

world of the first century.

When we look at the life of Paul we see a great story of the transformation of a zealous lost soul redeemed by Jesus. Paul becomes the author of a vast proportion of our New Testament.

The story of Paul's life in service to Jesus, as an apostle to the Jew first and then to the gentiles (non-Jewish peoples), is told in the last half of the book of Acts. There are plentiful accounts of him teaching for hours, days, months and years in many different places.

Paul is a historical example of a very intense individual being tempered by Jesus to be a discipling teacher. Paul's example of discipling was accomplished by individual conversation, public discourse and interaction with both friend and foe.

When one considers the amount of time Paul spent teaching in person with the few letters we have in writing, the letters are small by comparison. Even though these letters take mere hours to read in comparison to the thousands of hours he spent teaching, the writings of Paul give us a record of what it must have been like to hear him teach and talk about Jesus.

The letters Paul wrote are both profoundly personal and often very deep in disclosing the wonders of an understanding on many subject topics that comprise a textbook of learning material for the pupils of Jesus.

The life of Paul is a vital example of discipling.

In this discussion on the commission of discipling there are two main areas that I have chosen to consider from Paul's example.

The first area I have chosen are the letters Paul wrote to illustrate how discipling is communicated from the perspective of being the teacher when it is not possible to be physically together with the pupil in the same place. Paul in this situation wrote letters to individual pupils.

Our modern version of this type of communication would be similar to a written letter, an email, sending a text, FaceTime, or a Zoom meeting. Paul though far away from his pupil still thought of and sought to communicate to his student disciple.

The second area I have chosen are the letters Paul wrote to groups of believers. We now in modern times have the internet to send books, videos, and instructional articles to groups of pupils.

The reader may choose to stop and read the remainder of the book of Acts to review the story of Paul's life.

Paul's Letters to Individuals

Paul wrote four letters to pupils whom he was teaching

and co-laboring with for the cause of Christ. Paul personally talks in his writing how to propagate the message of the gospel and how he personally disciplined his pupils in the knowledge, tasks, attitude, proper reaction, and self discipline to respond to the situations or circumstances they were living in.

1 Timothy

Two letters were written to Timothy. Timothy was chosen by Paul to be one of his pupils to continue his mission to the Gentiles. A learning opportunity is available to explore the subjects and instruction that were given to Timothy as an example of discipling.

Paul often addressed Timothy as his son in Christ. Though in Jesus we are all just a single generation (brothers and sisters) of Jesus, Paul illustrates the parental aspect of the teacher's relationship to the pupil. The disciple teacher is parenting the pupil as they mature in their personal instruction.

- Paul warned Timothy about false teachers and how to respond to them.
- Paul urged Timothy to hold on to his faith.
- Paul reminded Timothy about the proper respect for prayer in public meetings.
- Paul taught Timothy about the qualifications for church leaders.
- Paul taught Timothy about pastoral care for the young, old, widows and slaves.
- Paul reminded Timothy to protect and guard his

motives.

- Paul reminded Timothy to live and be an example above reproach, by ministering faithfully to his calling.

2 Timothy

Paul knew he was soon to be executed and was passing along to Timothy the commission of his work. This is a profound example of discipling a new generation of discipling teachers.

- Paul reminds Timothy of the heritage he has in Christ and to rekindle the gift he received from God.
- Timothy was to use his gifts to prepare others to follow in his call of ministry.
- Timothy was reminded to be prepared for suffering and to keep his eyes on Jesus.
- Paul reminded Timothy to keep sound doctrine, confront error; and, avoid godless talk.
- Paul reminded Timothy about the false opposition to the faith that would come, and how to counter it by living as a good example.
- Paul reminded Timothy to respond with the strength of the power of the word of God.
- Paul commissioned Timothy to fulfill his ministry since he was imprisoned.

Titus

Titus was also a fellow traveler with Paul on his

missionary journeys. Titus had stood before the leadership of the church in Jerusalem as a living testimony of a Gentile believer (Galatians 2:1-3).

- Titus had been Paul's ambassador to Crete (2 Corinthians 7:5-16).
- Titus eventually became the leader of the church in Crete (Titus 1:5).
- Titus was instructed in the qualifications for the office of elder.
- Titus was instructed in the faithful duties of the younger and older believers.
- Titus was reminded about maintaining a Godly life in the world as a witness for Jesus.

Philemon

Consider these words of Paul that clearly state that Heaven's classification of people is in total deference to the world's standards.

“⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. ¹¹ Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.” (Colossians 3:9-11 ESV)

Paul writes this letter to address the return of an

escaped slave to his master. This letter was to convince Philemon (probably a Colossian believer) to forgive his slave Onesimus who had escaped and was now returning as a follower of Christ to his master.

- A wonderful instruction on forgiveness.
- An example of the Christian perspective about how to resolve an issue.
- An example of how a believer is to reconcile a serious violation of the world's law.

These letters of Paul to individuals provide a multitude of examples of the life of a believer of Jesus who is dedicated to discipling others.

I ask that you give careful consideration to the major tenets of Paul's teaching example.

- A personal parental attitude is expressed in the consistent pursuit of seeking the ultimate well being of the pupil as a functioning representative of Jesus to fellow believers and to the world around them.
- The discipling teacher is governed by the goal of guiding the pupil to be nurtured in the path that Jesus has chosen for them.
- The discipling teacher is doing more than just teaching, he is also co-laboring with the pupil for the cause of Christ.
- The discipling teacher is helping the pupil to become capable of discipling new pupils.
- Discipling is not limited to just a calling to a

ministerial leadership role.

- It entails a tutored development of a life dedicated to the Lord's work; whatever the individual calling might be.

Paul's Letters to Peoples and Nations

The apostle Paul has left us with a library of literature in the form of letters to groups of believers. Paul even wrote a letter to a group of believers in Rome he had never met at the time of the writing. This entirety of the library of discipling (teaching) left to us by the Holy Spirit guiding Paul is beyond the scope of this discourse.

I have chosen to briefly summarize each book and their respective major subjects. Please treat this as a summary of the vast library of resources of scriptural instructions we have to aid us in our education, and then to dispense that knowledge to our pupils.

Romans

- Teaching on the sinfulness of mankind.
- Teaching on the forgiveness of sin.
- Teaching on how Christ sets us free from sin.
- An exegesis of the history of Israel from past to future.

1 Corinthians

- Detailed teaching on church problems.
- Exhortation on how to correct errors being taught.
- Teaching to correctly deal with division and disorder.
- Instruction on marriage.
- Instruction on the freedom found in Christ.
- Instruction on the proper conduct of public worship.

2 Corinthians

- A discourse on how to defend your ministry.

Galatians

- A concise letter on the reputation of the gospel.
 - It is valid because of the message and the messenger.
 - It is superior to the law given to Israel through Moses.
 - It sets us free.

Ephesians

- Unity:
 - In God.
 - Christ is the center and we are the church under Christ's control.
 - We are Christ's family and should act as such.

Philippians

- Joy in:
 - Suffering.
 - Serving.
 - Believing
 - Giving.

Colossians

- A blueprint of what Christ has done for us.
- What Christ's followers should do as a result.

1 Thessalonians

- Faithfulness while under persecution.
- Watching for the Lord's return.

2 Thessalonians

- Hope and living in anticipation of the Lord's return.

Hebrews

- A letter to a nation of people.
- Christ is:
 - Greater than angels.
 - Greater than Moses.
 - Greater than the priests of the Old Testament.
 - Christ's covenant is greater than the old

covenant.

- The greatness of faith in Christ.

When we examine the breath of material we have available from Paul we are left with no excuse to not utilize this abundant source of knowledge to form a foundational reference library of what is Heaven's truth(s) for us to teach our pupils.

Paul's writings are not all that has been given to us. There are also the works of John, Peter, James and Jude to add to this library of knowledge.

This far-reaching and profound New Testament library is there for us to hear the voices of the first century leaders. Their Spirit led voice of divine knowledge and Holy tutoring is ageless. Their voice is timeless.

The human condition has not changed over the centuries. The issues, needs and struggle for the lost is the same today as it was then. Our calling is to be obedient to Jesus and take up the same mantle as these brothers and sisters of long ago. What will we do?

I am prayerful that this discourse has provided a foundation to the calling, personal dedication, and the written resources of the Holy scriptures.

I also pray that you are finding a yearning to seek the indwelling and abiding presence of the Holy Spirit to equip us all to understand our individual responsibility to our Lord Jesus, and by faith under the divine

guidance and indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit become capable to fulfill the commission of discipleship.
Amen.

SECTION 3 – The Current Condition of American Christianity?



Is it this bad?

It is prudent to begin with scripture that grasps the essence of what should comprise the boundaries that define us as a Christian body of believers.

The apostle Paul gives us a plethora of scriptural information to choose from. The reader has freedom to find other references than the ones I have chosen, but they all will confirm each other.

There is an abundance of scripture to provide guidance and instruction about our collective activities, callings, tenets of our faith, civility and personal interactions. Truth is from Heaven above and provides us with clarity to define who we should be as a body of believers in Christ Jesus.

These scriptural quotations from Paul's letter to the Ephesians express the context of character, unity, the bonds of the believers, and their calling in Jesus Christ as a body.

“¹ I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³ eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call- ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4:1-6 ESV)

“¹⁰ He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. ¹¹ And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the

body of Christ,¹³ until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,¹⁴ so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.¹⁵ Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” (Ephesians 4:10-16 ESV)

Using those verses as a benchmark, a measuring stick; what is an honest appraisal of American Christianity?

***It is not a hidden fact
that Christianity in America
is not a unified body.***

Conservative estimates list over 2,000 different denominations as Protestant, Evangelical, and Unaffiliated. Catholics are divided into two main sects; Roman and Orthodox. We are divided by theological doctrinal positions, church organization constructs, and interjected cultural influences. The list of differences, where we contend against each other, is continually growing.

When this request of Paul in Corinthians is measured against the church in America; we fall miserably short.

“¹⁰ Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” (1 Corinthians 1:10 KJV)

What are we to do? Tear it all down and start over? Or, maybe just continue to argue and self promote our personal preferences. Are there other solutions? What is the answer?

Again, the word of God contains the wisdom, guidance required, and corrective actions needed to answer the condition the church must face.

“¹ And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. ² I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to *bear it*, neither yet now are ye able. ³ For ye are yet carnal: for whereas ***there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions***, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” (1Corinthians 3:1-3 KJV)

“¹⁶ For where **envying and strife** *is*, there *is*

confusion and every evil work.” (James 3:16 KJV)

Consider reading these two previous scriptures again and substitute the following synonyms based upon the actual Greek words used.

- **Envy**
 - (ζήλος *zelos*)
 - The fierceness of indignation, punitive zeal, an envious and contentious rivalry and jealousy.

- **Strife**
 - (ἔρις *eris*)
 - Contention, strife, wrangling

- **Divisions**
 - (διχοστασία *dichostasia*)
 - Dissension, division, seditious.

The word of God is sufficient to establish an honest assessment of the condition of the church when examined in the proper perspective. Christianity in America is divided. It doesn't pass the litmus test of the word of God.

How bad is it? Each of these conditions (envy, strife, division), if they exist, reduce the circumstances in most instances from spiritual to carnal.

*Is it so broken that it is of the world,
and not of Christ?*

When we humbly put ourselves in the absence of being judgmental, and appropriating authority we have not been granted, the assessment of American Christianity is still not what it should be.

Despite major denominational differences we do seem to possibly agree on a few issues.

- The Trinity – the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit.
- The divinity and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Similar core beliefs on the subjects of Grace, Truth and Love.

Sadly, even these areas of similarity do not contain a complete unified consensus. American Christianity as a whole is a construct of carnal man's self defined silos that do not comprise a body in unity.

I am of the firm belief that the word of God contains the instructions to correct this condition of the broken state of Christianity in America.

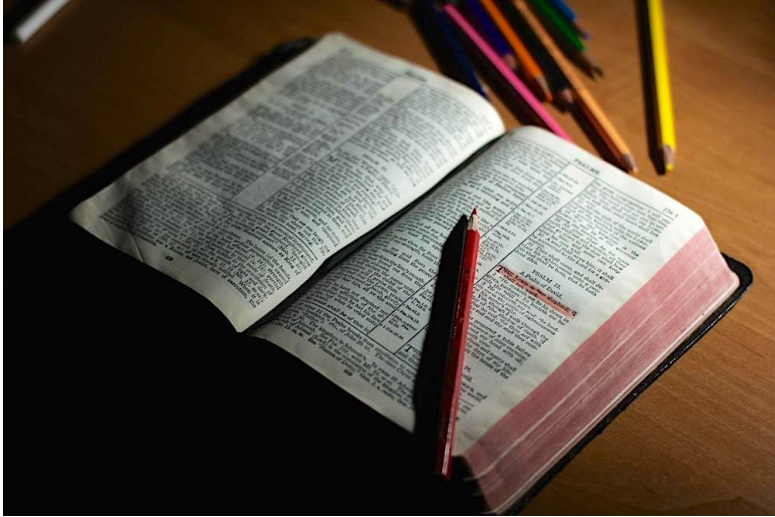
I cannot speak for you, but are you willing to be open and to examine personal beliefs? Are you willing to not become defensive and pursue the words of God? I say we must endeavor to believe these words of Jesus:

“⁹ And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you;

seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.” (Luke 11:9-10 ESV)

Let Jesus’ words become a foundation to allow Christ to guide us to surrender our differences upon.

Chapter 7: What Are Jesus' Priorities Found in the Gospels?



“⁵ I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
(John 14:5 ESV)

A good student of history knows that it is an imperative to always look to the primary source of any undertaking to find the foundational truths. We look for the source that was recorded by an actual eye witnesses of what transpired. The primary source for the words of Jesus in the New Testament are the books of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), and the first chapter of Acts.

This primary source contains the actual written history of the words that Jesus spoke and were chosen by God to provide us with a written record of everything Jesus

said and did that comprises His message while living as a man upon the earth.

The book of Revelation contains the other words of Jesus as recorded by the apostle John after Jesus had ascended to reign from the throne of God.

There are many priorities in the recorded words of Jesus. I have chosen the following as relevant to this discourse on the commission of discipleship.

A. The Church

What did Jesus say about church?

“¹⁵ He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my **church**, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 16:15-19 ESV)

Jesus asked the ultimate question about His identity and Peter's reply was, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." This confession of Peter stating who Jesus is, was then declared by Jesus to be the solid foundation of, "on this rock I will build my church."

What word did Jesus actually use that is translated in English to 'church'? (ἐκκλησία *ekklesia*)

This word '*ekklesia*' was a Greek government term defining when people would gather together to assemble for a specific purpose.

- Jesus stated that He would build this body of believers gathered together.
- Jesus is the sole builder and foundation of the church.
- Jesus explicitly declares that the church, this '*ekklesia*', belongs only to Him, "**my church**".

Whenever the disciples of Jesus gather together, it is an *Ekklesia*, a gathering of believers. From our previous review of the book of Acts we can see this '*ekklesia*' assembly gathered for a variety of reasons.

They gathered together:

- to pray together for guidance.
- to break bread together.
- to conduct the business of taking care of the poor.
- to eat, share and distribute their possessions.
- to worship.

- to study the scriptures.
- to be taught by their teachers.

It is something to consider that the word 'ekklesia', (church), is only mentioned in 2 verses by Jesus in the gospel record.

The two times the word 'church' is mentioned only occur in the gospel of Matthew. The books of Mark, Luke and John do *not* contain a single instance of the mention of the word 'church'.

Jesus only mentions this word '*ekklesia*' one more time in the gospel record.

"¹⁵ If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the **church**. And if he refuses to listen even to the **church**, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three

are gathered in my name, there am I among them." (Matthew 18:15-20 ESV)

This passage informs us that the '*ekklesia*' (church) was given authority to settle disputes and to determine the outcome of individual conflict between assembled members.

It also tells us an important wonderful aspect of when the believers gather together.

“²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” (Matthew 18:20 KJV).

What comprises the definition and function of the '*ekklesia*', the church, from these two times Jesus spoke about it?

- The foundation of the church is the confession that Jesus is the Christ the son of God.
- Jesus would build the church.
- Jesus is the sole owner of the church.
- The church is when believers gather in Jesus' name.
- The gathering (church) can be anywhere, at anytime, for multiple reasons as long as it is a gathering in His name.

- The gathering (church) is not limited by numbers, it can be just two believers or of any larger number assembled.
- The founder (Jesus the Christ) is in attendance at every meeting of the 'ekklesia'.

B. The Kingdom of God

What did Jesus say about the Kingdom of God?

What exactly is a kingdom as spoken about by Jesus in the Bible? The word for kingdom in Greek is (βασιλεία basileia) which means the territory or realm of royal power, kingship, dominion and rule that a king has.

That implies that the name following the word 'kingdom', is the defined territory or realm the king controls or has been give authority to rule over.

More than 50 times Jesus speaks about the Kingdom of God.

The recorded words of Jesus in the four gospels speak of the Kingdom of God more than twenty-five times more than Jesus refers to His church that He would build. Here are a few examples to consider.

1. The Kingdom of God is the Provider When We Seek the Kingdom.

“³¹ Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? ³² (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. ³³ But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
(Matthew 6:31-33 KJV)

2. The Kingdom of God Presents Itself When Souls Repent and Believe the Gospel Message.

“¹⁵ And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” (Mark 1:15 KJV)

3. The Kingdom of God Comes With Power.

“¹ And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.”

(Mark 9:1 KJV)

4. The Kingdom of God Can be Entered With a Child-like Heart.

“¹⁵ Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” (Mark 10:15 KJV)

5. The Kingdom of God Is For the Poor of Spirit.

“²⁰ And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed *be ye* poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20 KJV)

6. To Enter the Kingdom of God One Must Be Born of Both Water and the Spirit.

“⁵ Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5 KJV)

7. After the Resurrection, the Kingdom of God is a Priority To Jesus.

“³ To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:”
(Acts 1:3 KJV)

In Revelations we are told that our Lord Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords (Revelations 19:16). This King Jesus has a kingdom. It is the kingdom of God.

In the gospel record, Jesus proclaims how to enter, what is provided, and what is given by the Kingdom of God.

Jesus also explains to whom the invitation is given, and how to respond to this invitation of the gospel when the Kingdom of God has come to the earth.

C. The Kingdom of Heaven

*What did Jesus say
about the
Kingdom of Heaven?*



The recorded words of Jesus in the book of Matthew speak about the Kingdom of Heaven fifteen times more than Jesus refers to His church that He would build. Here are a few examples to consider.

More than 30 times Jesus speaks about the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. The Kingdom of Heaven Is For the Poor of Spirit.

“³ Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3 KJV)

2. The Kingdom of Heaven Is For Those Persecuted For the Sake of Righteousness.

“¹⁰ Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:10 KJV)

3. The Kingdom of Heaven Is Entered By Doing God's Will.

“²¹ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matthew 7:21 KJV)

4. The Kingdom of Heaven Is Offered To All of Mankind.

The declaration that the kingdom is for even the Gentiles.

“¹¹ And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 8:11 KJV)

5. The Kingdom of Heaven Has Suffered and Required Violent Force To Come To Mankind On the Earth.

“¹² And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.” (Matthew 11:12 KJV)

6. The Kingdom of Heaven Parables.

The Kingdom parables that are recorded in Matthew provide many examples of understanding regarding what this Kingdom of Heaven is.

These parables also expound upon the cost Jesus was willing to pay to provide this Kingdom for us.

These parables also explain about the value Jesus places on those who enter into the Kingdom.

- The Sower - Matthew 13:3-9
- The Tares - Matthew 13:24-30
- The Mustard Seed - Matthew 13:31-32
- Leaven - Matthew 13:33
- The Hidden Treasure — Matthew 13:44
- The Pearl of Great Price - Matthew 13:45-46
- The Drag Net - Matthew 13:47-50

7. The Kingdom of Heaven Comes With Power and Authority.

“¹⁹ And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” (Matthew 16:19 KJV)

8. The Kingdom of Heaven Is Entered With a Child-like Heart.

“³ And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”
(Matthew 18:3 KJV)

9. The Kingdom of Heaven Requires Wisdom and Persistence To Endure.

“¹ Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.” (Matthew 25:1 KJV)

10. The Kingdom of Heaven Required Our Lord To Travel From Heaven To Bring It To Us On the Earth.

“¹⁴ For *the kingdom of heaven is* as a man traveling into a far country, *who* called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.”
(Matthew 25:14 KJV)

Can you imagine that if this happened today the

headlines would read – “Carpenter from Nazareth announces that a heavenly kingdom has come to the planet earth.” Though when you think about it, it does not seem at all odd that the religious authorities and the government were the main objectors to His words.

Jesus is the living word of God bringing the gospel message of the Kingdom of Heaven coming to earth. However, Jesus is so humble in His role of bringing the invitation of the gospel, that He does not even refer to himself as a King.

A student of the Holy scriptures is guided by the fact that what is recorded in the scriptures was by the providence of God and the Holy Spirit led writers.

It was Almighty God who chose to record Jesus’ words in the four gospels. Jesus mentions ‘church’ twice. Jesus talks extensively about the ‘Kingdom’ over one hundred times.

The Kingdom is mentioned 31 more times in the books of Acts, the writings of Paul, James, Peter and John. It is one of the largest subjects mentioned in the New Testament. The word ‘*ekklesia*’ (church) is mentioned 72 times in New Testament.

The biblical evidence clearly indicates that Jesus spent a vastly larger portion of His ministry announcing the Kingdom.

It behoves a follower of Christ to seriously consider

that the Kingdom is at the core of Jesus presenting the gospel message for the redemption of mankind. This requires that we must examine the priorities that we have determined to be foundational to how we present Jesus' message of salvation.

I ask you to honestly appraise this statement.

The undeniable fact that the word of God has shown that the message of the Kingdoms of God and Heaven are substantially a major subject from Jesus must not be ignored.

Jesus spoke of the Kingdom more than one hundred times and the church only twice.

D. The importance Of the Kingdom Brings Many Things Into Focus.

- The concept of a King is not familiar to many people.
 - This is especially in opposition to the American concept of individualism where there is no understanding of royal authority.
- Spiritual heavenly authority and dominion has come to the physical earth.
- The gospel is the King's message of salvation to offer entrance into a Spiritual kingdom.

- The Kingdom of Heaven and the kingdoms of this world are in confrontation with each other.
 - These kingdoms are totally different.
 - One Kingdom is of the Spirit.
 - The other kingdom is of the flesh.
- The church is when the (disciples of Jesus), the King's subjects, meet together in the name of the King.
- A kingdom requires that men surrender control to the King.
- Jesus, as King, is the head of the body (the church).
- The King is present at every '*ekklesia*' gathering.

The discovery of the ramifications of what the Kingdom is, does, provides, includes and whom is the King; is about a subject that is not much talked about, studied nor taught.

This begs the question and demands that one is required to ask why this is happening. To ignore to such a degree, a subject so important to our Savior, cannot be ignored nor abandoned anymore.

I am aware that the subject material contained in this section may be difficult and contradictory to what many have thought to be true. My response is that it was for me also before I sought guidance from Heaven to open my mind and heart. I desire we all find the truth from God's word.

I also desire that we agree that the word of God is the sole authority of what is true. If that is not agreeable then there still remains an opportunity to discuss differences. If you agree and find any of what I have written to be incorrect, then stand on the inspired word of God. I have no difficulty in understanding that position. I desire that all followers of Christ communicate with respect toward each other in the spirit of peace.

In conclusion, we have explored the condition of Christianity in America. It is faltered and desperately cries out for a course correction.

That course correction is why I am asking that we begin by returning to the words of Jesus. This perspective allows us to see the impact of the gift of the Holy Spirit in the birth of Christianity. We can then absorb the witness of how it functioned from the historical narrative found in the book of Acts.

Please let all that was written in the scriptures bear witness to how it was planned by God before the universe was created.

***The cost of the lamb of God on the cross
was agreed upon as the requirement for our
redemption before it all was set in motion.***

There is power in the blood!

Why then should we hesitate to return to the fundamental truths we have just examined together? The priorities of Jesus must become foundational to our view of discipleship, the King as commander, the realm and power of His Kingdom, and the true comprehension of the ownership and function of what is the church Jesus said He would build.

On this foundation and perspective of these truths, the exploration of the divine gospel message becomes our next subject to focus upon.

Chapter 8: What Is the Good News?



*We all enjoy to hear someone say,
“I have good news.”*

The informal English phrase in the caption above is often used in regard to a variety of subjects. The 'good news' is, “I didn't get fired, I found my glasses, our baby was born without complications.” These common examples illustrate a variety of positive, encouraging and uplifting statements.

Christians often refer to the gospel message using the phrase, 'good news'. What defines the gospel message as 'good news'?

Compare these two Bible passages found in Matthew as Jesus responded with a message to be delivered to

John the Baptist.

“⁵ The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have **the gospel preached** to them.” (Matthew 11:5 KJV)

“⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have **good news preached** to them.” (Matthew 11:5 ESV)

The King James version above in verse 5 reads “ **the gospel preached**”. However the newer English Standard version reads “ **good news preached**”. Which is it?

Each of these translations are based upon the same word in the original Greek. This word in the Greek is a verb. The word there is (εὐαγγελίζω euaggelizo) which means to bring good news, to announce glad tidings, to preach.

The noun for this verb is the Greek word (εὐαγγέλιον euaggelion) which is commonly translated in English Bibles as the word 'gospel' which means 'glad tidings'. The gospel (good news) when spoken is preaching, or speaking about the good news or glad tidings.

Then what is the 'good news', this gospel of 'glad tidings' spoken about in the New Testament? As this discourse has done before, it requires that we look to what scripture states about this subject to form a foundation of understanding and a reference point to begin our study.

Isaiah Prophesied About the Proclamation of the 'Good News' By Jesus.

“¹ The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound; ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; ³ To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.” (Isaiah 61:1-3 KJV)

- Good news is preached to the meek.
- The brokenhearted are being made whole.
- Liberty is proclaimed to the captive.
- The doors of those in a prison of bondage are

- opened.
- The year of the Lord is announced and God will avenge wrong.
 - Beauty is exchanged for ashes.
 - The oil of joy is exchanged for mourning.
 - A garment of praise replaces a spirit of heaviness.
 - The Lord is planting trees of righteousness.
 - All of these statements are to glorify God.

The prophet Isaiah clearly states God's plan about the blessings and consequences of Heaven's redemption plan when the Messiah comes to earth as a man. The list of promises, blessings, correction, deeds, and reconciliation from bondage that Jesus will bring is revealed and released. This is truly an announcement of 'good news'!

I find it revealing that Jesus quotes Isaiah to explain that the 'good news' was planned by God. Jesus is now proclaiming the 'good news' with His voice and His actions as living proof of the words of Isaiah. These words in Luke are a proclamation from the Messiah as He speaks declaring that what Isaiah had proclaimed is now actually a reality.

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Luke

4:18-19 ESV)

Jesus Declares His fulfillment of Isaiah:

- The Spirit of the Lord is upon Him.
- Jesus has been appointed by God to proclaim this good news to the poor.
- Jesus has been sent to proclaim liberty to the captives.
- The blind will receive their sight.
- Jesus will set at liberty those who are oppressed.
- This is the year of the Lord's favor.

We see more evidence that the 'good news' begins with the human presence of Jesus speaking and doing the work of God to redeem mankind as it is recorded in Matthew.

The theme of the Kingdom of Heaven being brought to the earth by Jesus' words and actions is central to this 'good news' (gospel).

“³⁵ And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.” (Matthew 9:35 KJV)

“¹⁴ And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all

nations; and then shall the end come.”
(Matthew 24:14 KJV)

Again this theme is recorded by Mark.

“¹⁵ And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.
¹⁶ Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. ¹⁷ And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; ¹⁸ they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.” (Mark 16:15-18 ESV)

Jesus Is Defining the Gospel ‘good news’:

- Jesus is physically going to the people.
- Jesus is teaching the gospel of the Kingdom.
- Jesus is healing every sickness and every disease among the people.
- Jesus is assigning His pupils to proclaim this gospel to the whole creation.
- Jesus is declaring that all who believe His gospel will be saved.
- Jesus states that supernatural ‘*signs*’ will be come with this gospel message.

- Jesus proclaims the saved will cast out demons and speak in new tongues.
- Jesus proclaims the saved will have divine protection from serpents and poison.
- Jesus proclaims the saved will lay hands on the sick and they will be healed.

The commission given to publicly proclaim this gospel 'good news', is a task given to every pupil (disciple) of Jesus. The disciple's faithful obedient actions are to be divinely co-existent with miraculous signs, wonders, healing power, and protection.

There are hundreds of other Bible verses that could be presented about this announcement and proclamation of 'good news'. The mountain of evidence in the four gospels define that Jesus is telling us that the 'good news' is more than just a salvation message of the forgiveness of sins. It is eternal Salvation, and:

- Healing,
- Miracles,
- Deliverance,
- Liberty,
- New Tongues,
- Grace, Mercy, Hope, Love.

The gospel 'good news' is everything that Jesus offers to those who have been saved.

The apostle Paul also spoke about the gospel message of 'good news'.

“¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” (Romans 1:16-17 KJV)

Paul admonishes us as followers of Christ to not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. He explains that this gospel is:

- The power of God unto Salvation.
- The righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.

Paul explains to us what happens when this gospel is preached and accepted by the one hearing this 'good news' message.

“¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.” (Ephesians 1:13-14 ESV)

Believing the good news of the gospel of Christ is for salvation that is sealed by the promised Holy Spirit.

That seal is the guarantee of our inheritance.

Do we need more proof that the gospel is more than just getting saved from our sins? Look at Jesus' prayer in the gospel of John before going to the cross.

“¹ When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”
(John 17:1-3 ESV)

The good news of the gospel is more than just a salvation message for the forgiveness of sins, it is the beginning of eternal life. An eternal life that is sealed by the presence of the Holy Spirit to guarantee our eternal inheritance to abide with Jesus, the Father God, and the Holy Spirit for eternity in Heaven.

This is ‘good news’ for any disciple of Jesus to preach (proclaim out loud to all humans on the earth).

***The actions of discipleship when it is publicly
proclaiming the 'good news'
is not a burden when the pupil of Jesus
is taught the complete 'good news' message.***

A disciple begins to abundantly live with a Holy Spirit guided understanding of the awesome message of this gospel of Christ.

This disciplined growth is co-nurtured by other fellow believers. These interactions define the fellowship of the '*ekklesia*'. This discipling among the believers and followers of Jesus produces a Holy Spirit led unified persistent need to grow together in a personal relationship with Jesus.

Consider these words Paul wrote to help us understand this gospel message. Paul talks about how the gospel's 'good news'; was proclaimed in the city of Thessalonica.

“⁵ For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. ⁶ And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:”
(1Thessalonians 1:5-6 KJV)

The gift of the Holy Spirit abiding in the disciple allows the gospel message to be more than a human only (carnal) self motivated effort of communication.

The disciple is empowered to grow by the divine presence of the gift of the Holy spirit's presence, and fellowship with other pupils of Jesus. The power of

God is present in our lives to divinely show evidence that this 'good news' is from God.

Paul gives us a great example of the teacher's perspective and heart toward a pupil he is disciplining. I ask that you meditate on Paul's advice to his pupil Timothy.

This a gracious passage about how the disciple is giving a teaching message of comfort and guidance to a pupil of Jesus. It contains powerful information about the heart of God towards each one of us who are the bearers of this 'good news'.

“⁷ For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. ⁸ Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; ⁹ Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, ¹⁰ But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:” (2 Timothy 1:7-10 KJV)

- God prepared the gospel's 'good news' before the

world was created.

- God is asking each one of us to be His voice to share this ‘good news’.
- When we faithfully are using our spoken voice to share the ‘good news’, a divine witness of our actions is proven by God's power.

When we view this fuller understanding of the ‘good news’ that is to be shared among the disciples of Jesus, He becomes our source and example. Jesus can be seen as the King of kings, and we can see that the proclamation of the gospel is the announcement of God's plan for the redemption of mankind from Heaven.

This perspective allows the pupil of the Christ to see disciples of Jesus as the ambassadors of the Kingdom of Heaven living in a foreign land, the kingdom(s) of this world.

We are His voice, hands and Heaven's witness to preach (speak out loud) with our mouths and our lives the gospel's 'good news'.

Consider in conclusion these passages, and ask the Spirit to teach you.

“²⁵ but the word of the Lord remains forever.”
And this word is the good news that was
preached to you.” (1Peter 1:25 ESV)

“⁶ And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, ⁷ Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” (Revelations 14:6-7 KJV)

Chapter 9: The Battlefield Cannot Be Ignored



I desire for the reader to understand that what I am about to write was never on my list of things to consider when I began writing this book four months ago.

I am no different from the audience who will read my words. It does not matter whether you are old or young, a new believer in Jesus, a member of some church ministry or just someone who has been sitting faithfully in a pew seat.

Hopefully, what you have read so far has brought you to a greater understanding of what this discipleship calling is that Jesus desires each of us to become engaged in.

I pray that the voice of the Holy Spirit and an exposure to the words from the Bible in this discourse have opened you to a calling to become active in discipleship. That discipleship being the biblical way, and not the old way of a manmade works salvation model of self driven siloed programs and forced conduct.

Are The Disciples Of Jesus In A Battle?

You may be feeling, like I am right now as I write this, that I must ask myself a few questions. When I self examine myself, these questions come to the forefront.

- Do I find myself at a crossroads?
- Is there a choice to be made?

My personal answers to these questions are. For me, “Yes.” The King of kings has commanded me and all His followers to disciple one another. I can be either the teacher or the student, but I need to be involved in discipling. Have I been consistent or obedient in this task? For me, “not always.” Do I know now that I should be? “Yes.”

The beauty of the message I wish to convey is, Jesus does not condemn, but He will discipline His followers. We cannot remain idle when we know that our inactivity is against the will of Jesus. Jesus

patiently invites us to be obedient.

His polite invitation is not to provoke a forced compliance, but a relationship that can be shared. Jesus has commissioned us to actively share our journey as a believer and follower of the divine Savior of mankind.

When we discover that we are idle, we must endeavor to personally examine ourselves. We need to search for what holds us back, and discover what may have bound us with inaction. Then after that discovery, ask the Lord to sever those hinderances from our thinking, habits or actions, our sins conscientiously confessed.

This internal examination of ourselves is a journey that becomes less burdensome when shared with another fellow believer. We desperately need this (iron on iron) personal discipling interaction to operate in a safe environment that is absent from fear, gossip and condemnation, and especially from immature fellow believers.

If those who surround you are not of this mindset, then consider asking the Lord to lead you to other believers who are capable of being Christ-like in their journey. We all need fellow believers to safely travel with toward the calling Jesus has for our lives.

Unfortunately, our lack of discipling each other has left many of us inactive. The evidence is apparent. The ‘*ekklesia*’ is divided and has isolated itself from the

world. The result of the '*ekklesia*' being absent from bringing the truth(s) of Heaven to the world, the world has become openly evil.

This isolation from each other has weakened our ability to function as we were created and commanded to operate as representatives and ambassadors of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We must repent (change how we think), humble ourselves and agree to come to an honest assessment and understanding that the body of Christ does not appear to be properly functioning.. The body of Christ is not prepared to disciple the new believers from the coming revival's harvest of souls purchased by the blood of the lamb of God.

The body of Christ is woefully ill-prepared to disciple those already in the pews. Our leadership is divided. Many of Christianity's leaders are self-serving.

The world around us is consumed in evil pursuits, our government(s) are corrupt, education is an embarrassing disaster, and popular entertainment is empty and debased. Evil is openly displayed and protected from criticism.

Christianity's message is openly rebuked and segregated from openly defending common decency. False labels are placed upon groups of thought to subdue them from any voice, nor be able to defend against the impunity of false reputation.

This and multiple other forms of depravity and corruption from the pit of hell are on display in our streets, our schools, our homes and our churches.

Is A Correction From Heaven Coming?

This appraisal of our times requires that we need to clarify some words that are often used, but rarely defined. Those words are ‘judging’ and ‘judgment’. Consider how Jesus uses these words in His sermon on the mount.

“¹ **Judge** not, that ye be not judged. ² For with what **judgment** ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” (Matthew 7:1-2 KJV)

When we examine these words in a Biblical setting, their usage brings clarity to our understanding.

The Greek word for judge is (κρίνω krino) which means to approve, or to determine and pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong, or pass judgment on the deeds and words of others.

The Greek word for judgment is (κρίμα krima) which means to issue a decree or condemnation of wrong which is the decision one passes on the faults of others, the sentence of a judge.

The warning by Jesus in Matthew 7:1-2, is about when I judge something or someone based upon my personal opinion, assuming that I have the authority to judge. I should be careful when judging (or pronouncing an opinion on a matter). I should never become the ‘Judge’, and pronounce a sentence of judgment.

Jesus warns us, that how we judge will be used as the criteria for our personal judgment by Heaven’s authority.

Consider these words from Jesus as an example. Even on the cross Jesus did not utter judgment, nor did He condemn, but rather He made intercession for His murderers.

“³³ And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁴ And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:33-34 ESV)

I understand that I am not the ‘*Judge*’, but it appears that things are so wrong that judgment is overdue. How is Heaven going to respond to the times, the apathy of the church, our disunited effort to make disciples of the nations, and the condition of the world that we live in?

The ‘ekklesia’ is at a crossroads.

This troubling introduction to the subject we are about to explore was necessary for us to recognize the times, the personal commitment required of all who choose to follow the Lord's commands; and, for us to conscientiously become aware of the conditions of the fallen world we are living in.

I sense the remnant crying out for the voice of Jesus to arise in the body of Christ to confront the evil nature of our times. Our hearts cry out, “But how?” “Where do we begin?”

A Warning From Jesus To The ‘*ekklesia*’.

Jesus already told us where it begins. A warning of judgment from Heaven is required for correction.

“¹⁷ For the time is come that **judgment** must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” (1 Peter 4:17 KJV)

Scripture tells us that judgment begins with the house of God. Where has Jesus spoken directly to that house? We find that Jesus did exactly that when we read the letters to the seven churches in Revelations.

When we examine these letters to the seven churches we must understand that these words from our King are for God's people and not addressed to the world's

problems.

Jesus is speaking directly to His '*ekklesia*' in each of these cities.

Please, take the time to read the main content of each letter as a reference for our discussion. I am asking that you observe that each of these letters is unique. There are both praises and warnings. These churches were facing both demonic enemies and their own capacity to be carnal; all in the face of the turmoil of their time in history and potential tribulation.

I ask again, that you carefully read these excerpts from the seven letters.

Ephesus

“² I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars: ³ And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. ⁴ Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. ⁵ Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent. ⁶ But this thou

hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.” (Revelations 2:2-6 KJV)

Smyrna

“⁹ I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan. ¹⁰ Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” (Revelations 2:9-10 KJV)

Pergamum

“¹³ I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat *is*: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. ¹⁴ But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. ¹⁵ So

hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.”
(Revelations 2:13-15 KJV)

Thyatira

“¹⁹ I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first.²⁰ Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.²¹ And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.²² Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.²³ And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.²⁴ But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.²⁵ But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come.” (Revelations 2:19-25 KJV)

Sardis

“¹ And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. ² Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. ³ Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. ⁴ Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.” (Revelations 3:1-4 KJV)

Philadelphia

“⁸ I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name. ⁹ Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. ¹⁰ Because thou hast kept the

word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. ¹¹ Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” (Revelations 3:8-11 KJV)

Laodicea

“¹⁵ I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. ¹⁷ Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: ¹⁸ I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” (Revelations 3:15-19 KJV)

The content of these letters reveals that the body of Christ, assembled as an ‘*ekklesia*’, will be evaluated (judged) personally by Jesus. We today are not exempt from Jesus’ examination.

The problems the early church faced are very similar to what is still prevalent today. Compare their issues with the ones that we confront.

- A call to not forsake our first love.
- We are to remain in patience while facing false teaching.
- We are to prevail in tribulation and suffering.
- We are not be afraid to confront evil within the assembly of believers.
- We are to recognize the demonic powers that are fighting against us.
 - *Baal* – a false god who promotes child sacrifice.
 - *Jezebel* – who brings the teaching of *Ishtar* into our midst.
 - *Jezebel* is a harlot who desires to bring paganism to poison the Godly.
 - *Jezebel* uses the demon god *Ishtar* to promote sexual immorality of many forms.
 - *Nicolaitans* – other centers of false teaching who seek to infiltrate and bring Pagan rituals into our thoughts, lives and worship.
- We are warned to not be found lukewarm.

Current events reveal the necessity to add to this list the demon god *Mullock*. This demon god seeks to translate a woman to a man, and to emasculate manhood and demonize women.

The *Ekklesia* As Disciples In The Modern Battlefield.

The battlefield the body of the '*ekklesia*' faces in today's fallen world has enemies on multiple fronts. Do you recognize the times and the situation we are in as disciples of Jesus Christ?

Our enemy wishes to consume our tolerance and apathy of evil to leave us weak, and to place us under divine judgment. We are surrounded by enemy camps of the world. How are we to respond? What are our weapons of warfare?

In this book I have endeavored to present a revival call to renew the '*ekklesia*' toward obedience to the commission of our Lord to disciple the nations. Jesus Christ who gave us the directive to disciple, makes it perfectly clear that this commandment is to be in each and every '*ekklesia*'. The role and activities of every disciple is to be active in the gathering(s) of the believers.

In each of Jesus' letters to the churches in Revelation, His priority was to ask the body of believers in each assembly to address their own problems. We were created to work together in unity in our individual gatherings, the '*ekklesia*', under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Consider these words of the apostle Paul about how we

are to help garner and equip each other in this spiritual battle to bring Heaven to the earth, and address the issues in our individual gathering(s), the '*ekklesia*'.

When we decide to equip the '*ekklesia*' that each of us assemble with; and, then in unity prepare ourselves with this armor, the forces we face are defeated - without exception.

“¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. ¹⁶ In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; ¹⁷ and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, ¹⁸ praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for

all the saints,” (Ephesians 6:11-18 ESV)

***We desperately need
a paradigm shift in our thinking.***

Paul was not telling his student pupil Timothy, “Now go find this stuff and get dressed.” **NO!** Paul was discipling his pupil about truth, righteousness, gospel peace, faith, salvation, and the sword of the Spirit.

Paul then explains to Timothy how to wear this spiritual armor. Timothy had been schooled to understand why these parts of armor were designed by God for each part of his being.

I see Paul, as the servant teacher, dressing the pupil warrior.

Paul loved Timothy and did not want him to be improperly dressed to face the world he lived in. Paul then, after he has told Timothy what to wear, gives him the reason for this armor clothing. To pray in the Spirit. To pray for all the saints. This is how you fight a Spiritual war.

This example of discipling from Paul is instructing us that we are called and empowered by Jesus to become teachers. Teachers who in obedience, disciple the Timothys that the Lord brings to each of our classrooms.

I ask that you welcome this call, and discover the Lord

bringing each of us to a place that we are capable to tell our students in our classrooms of the '*ekklesia*' in a similar passionate way that Paul speaks to Timothy.

“⁶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷ for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. ⁸ Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁹ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰ and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹ for which I was appointed a preacher and apostle and teacher, ¹² which is why I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. ¹³ Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.” (2 Timothy 1:6-14 ESV)

We as the '*ekklesia*', gathered together in Jesus' name, must begin to disciple each other with these words from Paul and seek to "guard the good deposit entrusted to you" in each other.

It is also imperative that the '*ekklesia*' heed the warnings of Jesus to the seven churches in Revelations as these matters are applicable to the battlefield of today. It is better to respond to the divine warning than to remain apathetic or idle, and potentially receive Heaven's judgment.

The world around us has gone mad, but the answer is still the same. We are to make disciples of the nations. How? It begins with this. We cannot address the world's problems till we have first started cleaning our own house. I desire that the Spirit allows each of us to pray this prayer; or, the words He gives to you, to bring us into the calling He has for each one of us.

Lord Jesus, I pray for guidance and wisdom to become equipped as your warrior ambassador of the Kingdom of Heaven in the commission of discipleship in the battlefield of this fallen world, for Your glory alone. Lead me to a body of believers who are like minded that we may unite in this mission and nurture each other to do what is Your will for the times we live in. May all that we do, say or endorse be to your Glory. Amen.

SECTION 4 – What Now?



The situation of the times that we live in can be viewed from a variety of perspectives. Let us first consider the wrong way to view these days that are upon us. This wrong perspective will harbor these types of questions and doubts, or a plethora of similar defeating thoughts.

- I am overwhelmed by the circumstances of how broken the world, the church, the times has become.
- I am so fearful of my incapacity to be of any effect to intervene, that I am paralyzed to act.
- I feel confused as to how I am to respond.
- I know I must do something, but I just do not know where to begin.
- I am a failure and unworthy of making any

contribution to the cause.

Those thoughts and feelings are not new. The apostles suffered the same when Jesus was led to the cross. The men who had been blessed with a day to day interaction with the Messiah for over three years, fled into the night when just moments before were boasting of their devotion to fight and die for the cause. Why?

The situation they faced was greater than the power that resided within them.

They were still in the mindset of thinking about being part of and fighting a war against a carnal kingdom with the Messiah being their champion and military leader.

Jesus rescued them by letting them see Him alive again after His resurrection from death. He gave them the commission of discipleship and asked them to wait till the anointing power of the Holy Spirit would come. They answered singularly with one simple act, obedience. Pentecost came and all things became new.

The divine power of this lesson of obedience and our individual Pentecost moment is the answer we need to be over-comers in the midst of the times we are in.

Jesus is not asking us to train for decades to become eligible to join His private group. He only asks everyone to be willing to respond with obedience to His request(s), and the surrender of their broken lives

to Him. The result, this simple act brings one to an abiding peace with God.

The other element to our awakening is dependent upon coming to terms with these words of Jesus. Consider Jesus' offer of soulful rest found in those words from Matthew.

“²⁸ Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30 KJV)

Jesus Is The Answer:

- Jesus is the source of rest.
- Jesus desires us to bring all of our burdens to Him.
- We must take on Jesus' yoke and obey whatever He asks of us.
- Our obedience brings restful peace.
- Whatever Jesus is asking is easy.
- Whatever Jesus asks is light.

It should not require any great mental exercise to honestly come to terms with what these words from Jesus imply. In just three sentences Jesus provides instructions for a spiritual perspective that stands in opposition to the carnal one of doubts, apathy, fear, false accusations and paralysis from being incapable to be whom we were created to be.

If what besets, annoys, disturbs, confronts, controls, brings anxiety, doubt or fear; all of these enemies of internal soulful peace that are burdensome or heavy – the answer is surrender it to Jesus.

A defensive reply would be, “It is not that easy.” That might seem to be true, but only if, I do *not* believe that Jesus wants to solve the problem with me personally.

Remember, the apostles faced the same doubts and remorse. Jesus intervened. That is the game changer.

Chapter 10: I've Got Questions, Heaven Has Answers



Ask, Seek, Find

We all have questions. The choice is to whom do we seek as the source for an answer. The apostle Paul knew that his pupil Timothy would want answers. Read what Paul told him.

“¹⁶ All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷ That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”
(2Timothy 3:16-17 KJV)

Have a question that needs an answer? The creator God has provided answers, examples and insight that we require, from Heaven to the earth, in the scriptures of the Bible.

***Yeah, but when I read it,
I do not understand
what I am reading.***

Ask yourself, “Did I stop to think that maybe I should ask Jesus to help me understand what I need to know?”

Have I at least attempted to seek and find some other person who might be able to explain it to me?

The carnal man is afraid or ashamed to ask for help. Our response in Christ should be automatic, “Jesus, I need your help.”

The time for petty excuses should be in our past. We can no longer afford to be held captive by an excuse or by an apathetic ignorance of understanding. We should be seeking and finding what Jesus has provided for us.

***Coming to terms
with an honest personal assessment
describes the necessity of our need
to begin to disciple each other.***

Our response should be to know that asking questions is important. Whether we study, meditate, pray, or ask

and seek guidance from the Spirit — Heaven has provided the tools for answers.

The disciple teacher is required to be capable of providing guidance toward good answers to their pupil's questions. This is vital. Consider these words from the apostle Peter.

“¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:” (1Peter 3:15 KJV)

***God doesn't zap us
with a theological degree.***

It requires individual effort and interaction with other disciple partners to grow in knowledge to answer questions that could or should be asked. Do not forget that your answer can also be, “I don't know.” We desperately need to work together and ask Jesus to help us find the answers.

In the context of this discourse, we will examine together some of the foundational subjects that a disciple must know, be a living example of, and capable of sharing with a student believer.

The Foundation of Salvation.

We must know and have assurance of our salvation. This assurance is fundamental to our faith in Christ; and is the validation and proof of our testimony about the hope of glory that abides in us.

The disciple teacher must be capable to share how salvation is established in a verbal confession from the heart.

“⁹ That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:9-10 KJV)

The disciple teacher must provide guidance for each pupil to understand that salvation is evidenced in the simple act of obedience to be baptized.

“³ Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ⁴ Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been planted

together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of *his* resurrection: ⁶ Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. ⁷ For he that is dead is freed from sin.” (Romans 6:3-7 KJV)

Every believer is to disciple others to grow in Christ. This fundamental obedience bears the fruits of a united growth and union of the body of Christ.

“¹⁴ That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; ¹⁵ But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ: ¹⁶ From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” (Ephesians 4:14-16 KJV)

The Disciple's View of Relationship.

An issue that is familiar to many believers is that we

are living our lives isolated and alone. A few hours with other believers on a Sunday morning is not sufficient to sustain a healthy and vibrant life in Christ.

We were created to be relational. We need the interaction and participation of others. What does the other 166 hours of the week occupy in our lives?

Jesus gave us the task of discipling each other because we were made to be healthfully functioning and interacting with other believers. A wonderful aspect of this is that the other entity involved might be Jesus himself. Alone time with our Lord in prayer and meditation on His words are equally important.

A relationship grounded in honesty, openness, trust and honoring respect is fundamental. These basics allow for an unhindered communication to thrive.

Consider these words of Paul that describe this unhindered interaction among the followers of Jesus.

“¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. ¹² We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, ¹³ and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with

them all. ¹⁵ See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.” (1Thessalonians 5:11-15 ESV)

These words describe a spiritual boundary fence of personal action, honor and the foundational tenets of the disciple's heart that must surround, protect and defend where this discipling interaction will be safe, healthy and productive.

- Encourage each other.
- Build each other up.
- Respect those who labor with you.
- Respect those who are over you and admonish you.
- Esteem each other in love.
- Be at peace with each other.
- Admonish each other from being idle (inactive).
- Encourage those who are faint of heart.
- Help the weak.
- Be patient with everyone.
- Do not repay evil with evil.
- Always seek good for each other.

The fruit of abiding in obedience to these tenets is the core of what is desperately needed to confront the brokenness of the church, society, our culture and communities.

Does your heart see or feel hope arise within you to envision the changes possible when we individually

and collectively embark on the calling of what is obviously a divine solution? I pray that you are encouraged. Jesus has provided us with a divine and simple path to follow with His abiding presence.

You may answer in response that there is so much to change, to be done. Where do I begin? Consider these words from our Lord.

“³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴ "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” (Matthew 6:33-34 ESV)

The ‘to do’ list is simplified. It is not yesterday or tomorrow, but today only. Jesus is asking us to focus on now. Without Jesus in our lives, we are perpetually focused upon getting stuff done because it has consequences for tomorrow.

Somehow it seems that our Lord is asking us to stop all of this future fretting, and leave tomorrow in His hands.

Jesus is not asking you to ignore the future.

***Jesus is telling you to
not let the future dictate
and dominate your focus on today.***

I am inclined to consider this to be a powerful door of instruction that allows us as adults to recapture our childhood again. Let Daddy take care of tomorrow so we can live each day to the fullest like when we were children, without a care or adult anxiety.

This is something that each of us has to explore on our own. However, if Jesus thought it was important, then ask Him how it will work for you.

The Power of Anointing.

We need to understand that every aspect of what Jesus is asking us to accomplish for the Kingdom is impossible by human power alone.

We are without question dependent upon His grace, mercy and presence to be whom we were created to be.

The question is, “Who is in charge?” Do I struggle, and then when desperate, ask God for help? How dependent am I on Jesus to lead my path through life? These questions are not meant to condemn, but to provoke an honest assessment of where we are in our Christian journey.

It is imperative that we must get past this immaturity and discover who we are in Christ. This declaration by Paul is delivering to us truthful advice to consider.

“¹⁷ Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. ¹⁸ And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;” (2 Corinthians 5:17-18 KJV)

Regardless of our individual circumstances, when each of us made a mental and heart felt decision; and, then with our mouth made a confession of Christ; salvation was given. We were born again, made new, a new creature. The old you died, and an eternal life began.

God cancelled the debt of our sin and its death sentence with the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. God reconciled the book of life with the page that had your name on it, your personal account ledger. Our debt ledger now is paid. We are no longer in debt to sin or condemnation. Jesus paid it all!

As a result, God has given each of us the ministry of reconciliation. All of us are ministers (ambassadors) of the gospel news of salvation's reconciliation.

Believers of Christ have received a divine gift and commission from God to deliver the message of being reconciled from the debt of sin and death by the shed blood of the lamb of God to all of mankind.

Wait a minute, I am not confident or ready to do that. I understand. The purpose of this book is to point out

that the body of Christ has not been discipling each other. Otherwise, an existing believer would have been teaching you. Let me help you with this example.

Each of us was born into this world as a little baby. In the first three years of human life, we go through developmental stages. Someone had to care for our every need while we discovered our new life. As we grew we became dependent on this care giver, but were still self-centered and demanding.

The care giver endured this developing growth period until we discovered we were just our individual selves and a part of a much larger world. We often refer to this as; diapers and feeding, the terrible twos, and the three-year-old days of questions.

If you, or someone you know, is still not capable of spiritually feeding, dressing or walking on their own; either disciple them or find someone to disciple them.

***The conscience spiritual ability
to recognize that a believer is still a baby
is the introductory qualification
to begin discipling others.***

Are you mature enough to take care of a baby?

We are not expected to do this alone on our own energy. Jesus has empowered us to disciple. Paul tells us why this power is available.

“²¹ And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, ²² and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.” (2 Corinthians 1:21-22 ESV)

God’s anointing is a seal of divine commission. The Greek word for anointing is (χρίω chrio) which means to consecrate and furnish someone with the necessary powers for their assignment with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

If you have never been told you are anointed by God, now you know. The same Spirit that abides in Jesus is in you as a follower of the Christ.

Every born-again believer of Christ has been given a task, a commission, a seal (badge of authority), and the indwelling Helper. This guarantee seal of anointing brings to Jesus’ disciples the necessary spiritual gifts Jesus bestows to us to perform the daily calling He has requested to disciple the nations.

Let the anointed, together in the unity of the Holy Spirit, begin the work Jesus has given to us. Amen.

Chapter 11: What Changes In Me When I Disciple?



Have you ever had someone come to your defense?

Whatever the situation you found yourself in, whether you were either guilty or innocent; an advocate intervened for you. The simple fact that you were suddenly not alone was an instant comfort.

To experience this reassurance and camaraderie, or even to be the defender yourself, is a positive aspect of human nature. Why do we sometimes become a defender or an advocate? Why are we emboldened or

encouraged when being protected and defended? Is this taught, or is it part of who we are as being a human?

“²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” (Genesis 1:27 KJV)

When we look in a mirror we see our reflection. It is an image of who we are. It is only a reflection, not an actual duplicate. If we took a picture of ourselves in the mirror, we know that it is not actually ourselves, but an image.

Since we as humans are created in the image of God, what is that image? To know the answer we need to discover who God is. Who is this God that created us? What is He like? How does He act? These questions are important because obviously when God looks at us He is expecting to see His reflection, His image.

We started this book with a story. I am asking you to consider again another story bigger than yourself.

The grand story of the Bible takes on a new perspective when we begin to grasp the larger story of how God is patiently interacting with mankind to present the opportunity to redeem and restore His image, the reflection of Himself in us.

We need to investigate how God reflects Himself in His creation called man.

Bible Stories of Men Being Advocates

The scriptures are full of stories about people showing the image of God working in them as advocates and intercessors. Consider as an introduction to this larger story a review of just a few of the smaller stories we can explore to see this divine interaction of God's image restoration plan actively living out in these men in His story book the Bible.

- Exodus 8:28-32
 - Moses offers a sacrifice to be an advocate for his adversary Pharaoh.
- I Kings 8:22-51
 - Solomon quotes his father David's intercessory instructions to advocate for Israel's correction.
- Ezra 9:5-15
 - Ezra intercedes for Israel.
- Job 16:16-22
 - Job advocates for his enemies while asking for a greater intercessor.
- Isaiah 53
 - Isaiah is foretelling of Christ, our future advocate.
- Daniel 9:3-19
 - Daniel intercedes for Israel.

A central theme in these stories is the redemption of mankind from sin, conflict or persecution told in how

God is showing us Himself. God is the advocator and intercessor while showing us His image (a picture of who He really is) in the stories of people who are living and striving to reflect their creator's intentions to intervene in their lives, their fellow countrymen, their enemies and the future.

Jesus Christ, the Advocate and Intercessor

The following words from the Holy Scriptures are to be studied and grasped. They deserve a prolonged examination and introspection because of the wonderful value of what they provide. I am confident that the reader will take time to review and study each one on their own.

- John 17:
 - Jesus' prayer as the intercessor for all mankind.
- Romans 8:26-27
 - The Spirit prays as our personal advocate.
- Hebrews 7:24-25
 - Jesus as our High Priest intercedes for us.
- 1 John 2:1
 - Jesus is our advocate for our transgression (sins).

Consider these words showing us that Jesus is our intercessor on the throne in Heaven.

“³¹ What shall we then say to these things? If

God be for us, who can be against us? ³² He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? ³³ Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. ³⁴ Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.”
(Romans 8:31-34 KJV)

When the student of scripture pursues the heart of God the comprehension of subjects like love, grace, peace, compassion, etc. take on greater implications and meanings when they are divinely defined. The carnal terms explode into powerful spiritual concepts. Every action, emotion and thought when defined by God’s heart becomes life changing.

When a person absorbs the divine purpose and intent of God’s enormous heart the image of God in that person is no longer a blur but is being restored into focus, to be seen by Heaven as a reflection of Almighty God’s image.

Can you now see that God purposed in His heart an eternal plan to restore and redeem His unique individual picture in you? We cannot change our picture of who we are, but God can.

When we begin to understand the plan of God to redeem and restore the broken image of Himself in

mankind the cost becomes immeasurable. It cost - Jesus on the cross.

The ultimate action God took to redeem us defines not only who He is, but discloses the price He values us. This demands that we must discover how this heart of an advocate or intercessor functions because it encompasses our God's actions toward us.

What Is An Advocate and Why Do They Intercede?

The dictionary tells us that intercession is the action of intervening on behalf of another. There are many nouns in English where this intervention can occur: mediation, negotiation, arbitration, conciliation, pleading, petition, entreaty, supplication and diplomacy.

As you can see there are entire occupations devoted to this human trait of advocate or intercessor. The image of God is evident in many of our actions or emotions; love, anger, joy, passion, kindness, etc. Sadly, they are usually expressed and defined by our carnal fleshly fallen sinful nature.

As followers of Christ we are to pursue and seek a spiritual understanding of what the redeemed and restored image of God should be in each of us. This provides a roadmap to journey together with God. A journey to pursue a heavenly restoration of the picture

of who we were created to be.

Our question to understand intercession should be,
“What is Biblical intercession?”

Modern Christianity in America has promoted the idea of intercession into a singular ministry or to cause only a few believers to identify as intercessors. That may be true for some, but if intercession is the heart of God in action toward the redemption of the sinner, the broken-hearted, the lame, the lost, then should it not by default be a characteristic of every believer?

The answer is ‘Yes’, it defines a critical part of God’s image in each one of us. What defines this intercessor in the Bible?

In the New Testament **intercession** is the Greek word (ντευξις enteuxis) a noun meaning a petition, supplication approaching the king, hence a technical term, a petition, prayer. Properly, an intervention (intersection which literally "hits the mark") led by God, marking an intersection between Heaven and earth as it reflects the Lord's specific will.

That definition is much more than hospitality, friendly compassion or some generic thoughtful or kind act.

Notice these parts of the actual definition:

- It involves forming a petition before a king.
- This petition could be a prayer.

- The petition must ‘hit the mark’ that is:
 - The intersection between Heaven and earth.
 - That intersection is to be the location of God’s specific will.

Wait a minute. What do you mean that Heaven and earth intersect and something that is God’s plan will happen? Let me explain by an example that can be understood.

Life is full of intersections. We consistently find ourselves at intersections. Those intersections could be those of a decision to be made because of a variety of different circumstances. You find yourself at a stop sign. Do I go right, left or straight ahead? You make a decision and proceed on. Often we end up doing a u-turn and return to the decision intersection and proceed down a different path.

Divine intersection(s) can be understood by using an example you experienced when you were saved. Please go back with me to the very moment that you received salvation.

Someone presented the gospel message of salvation to you and you answered. You may have previously rejected that decision, but this time you responded. You were at a divine intersection. A divine crossroads.

Jesus shot an arrow of grace and mercy toward your contrite heart as you stood at that crossroads. You found yourself at an intersection of the Savior

(Heaven) and your lost soul (earth).

One road sign read turn this way knowing your wages of sin were going to lead you to the condemnation of death and hell. The other road sign told you that Jesus had died on the cross and shed the blood of the lamb of God for your sin debt and was offering you eternal life and Heaven as your destination.

You turned toward the correct direction and left your sin debt at the foot of the cross. Salvation was delivered. God's will was accomplished in you as Jesus interceded for your soul. You responded verbally from your mouth a confession of sin and accepted Him as your Lord and Savior.

If you have been saved then you experienced an eternal consequence of being at an intersection of Heaven and earth. A divine advocate intervened, you responded and your eternal destiny was forever changed.

The Holy Spirit Is An Intercessor For Us.

O.K. I get how Jesus was an advocate and interceded for me, but now I am expected to be an intercessor and advocate also? How is that supposed to happen? I really do not feel capable or comfortable to do this intercessor thing.

The answer to that begins with the following advice in Romans from the apostle Paul.

“²⁴ For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? ²⁵ But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. ²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷ And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”
(Romans 8:24-27 KJV)

We are saved by hope that cannot be seen. If I am hoping for an answer from God, I cannot see the answer, but I can hope for the answer that I cannot see. The Spirit then comes as my helper even when I do not know what to pray for.

Do I understand that God even takes care of me when I am clueless and without words to express my situation? We must remember that He did exactly that when we were saved. Jesus does not change how He operates and neither does the Spirit.

The Spirit, as my advocate, answers my hope with a petition of supplication and words that are groanings on my behalf that cannot even be spoken. Then God, who searches the hearts, knows the Spirit’s voice making intercession for my situation.

This is the plan of God to bring His will into my current existence when I am even without words, unable to form the question, or even clueless to utter my request.

How can I be capable of being an intercessor? The Spirit is already speaking on my behalf to God to utter forth His will in my life. If the Spirit will speak for me when I cannot, just ponder what can be done when I am able to speak.

God, Jesus, the Spirit all interceding for me to become an intercessor. Paul only said that I have to start with hope that my physical eyes cannot see, and Heaven will then intersect with me on the earth.

Jesus Is Our Personal Advocate To Help and Lead Us As Intercessors.

The real thought changer is that when I got saved Christ came into my heart and began to renew my mind. The son of Almighty God is inside of me! What does that mean?

Christians are a walking, breathing, and a living intersection of Heaven and earth.

How do we know that is true? The answer is written by Paul in Galatians.

“²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. **It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.** And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20 ESV)

Every born-again believer in Christ is an intersection of Heaven come to the earth. It changes and also humbles one to realize who we actually are as His followers.

I pray this helps everyone reading this to gain a new perspective of who we have been redeemed to be. This is our new creature identity. King Jesus is our personal advocate and intercessor who resides within us.

To continue this theme of thought, please consider and review the following words from the apostle Paul.

“¹⁵ The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. “For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 2:15 ESV)

When we begin to comprehend who we are in Christ the reality of the absolute nearness and presence of the divine should begin to change who we are. When we talk to our Lord and Savior, He is closer than we realize.

The doorway to the throne of God resides in you and every follower of Christ you meet. It should both humble and comfort us to then realize what power we have been given and the opportunity to experience the awesome wonder when two or more gather together in His name and become unified.

The viewpoint that most of us are *not* to be in the business of intercession is now unwarranted. Living intercessors of the Kingdom of Heaven living on the earth is who we are now in Christ. Why? Because the intercessor Himself is now our new life, not the old life before Jesus took residence in us.

How Do I Know When To Advocate or Intercede?

The question needs to be answered. It is *not* if I am to be an intercessor, it is, “How do I know when I am to advocate and then how to intercede?”

To answer that question, I prayed for understanding and was led to this instruction the teacher Paul gave to his pupil Timothy.

“¹ First of all, then, I urge that **supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings** be made for all people,” (1 Timothy 2:1 ESV)

Paul is telling Timothy that when one or more of these four things occur; anointed moments happen.

Let us begin with a review again of the word “intercession” and see how it fits together with “supplications”, “prayers” and “thanksgiving”.

Intercession is the Greek word (ντευξις enteuxis) a noun meaning a petition, supplication approaching the king, hence a technical term, a petition, prayer. Properly, an intervention (intersection which literally "hits the mark") led by God, marking an intersection between Heaven and earth as it reflects the Lord's specific will.

- It involves forming a petition before a king.
- This petition could be a prayer.
- The petition must ‘hit the mark’ that is:
 - The intersection between Heaven and earth.
- That intersection is to be the location of the Lord’s specific will.

Supplications is the Greek word (δέησις deésis): a noun meaning a need, an entreaty praying for a *specific, felt need* – a heart-*felt* petition, arising out of a deep personal need (sense of lack, want), any pious address to God imploring God's aid in some particular matter.

- A pious prayer for a specific need.
- It arises deep from your heart about that specific need.

- It brings one to implore for God's aid to address the specific matter.

Prayers is the Greek word (προσευχή proseuché) a noun meaning (a) prayer (to God), (b) a place for prayer (used by Jews, perhaps where there was no synagogue). A place set apart or suited for the offering of prayer.

- To pray from a specific place.
- To pray from a place reserved for prayer.
- To be at a place set apart and suited to offer a prayer.

Thanksgivings is the Greek word (εὐχαριστία eucharistia) a noun meaning thankfulness, giving of thanks, the giving of thanks for God's grace, gratitude; actively, grateful language (to God, as an act of worship).

- Giving thanks to God.
- Thankful for God's grace.
- Using an active gratitude language to God.
- Speaking worship with your thankfulness.

Amazing moments occur when one or more of these divine undertakings intersect with the believer and a circumstance, situation, need or advocacy the Spirit has placed in front of us.

The life of the pupil of Jesus enters a new realm of active intervention when these truths become part of

their daily life and spiritual walk. This new journey becomes part of the greater story of God in the lives of His children.

The grand story of the Bible is God on full display being the author of advocacy to redeem His image in anyone who will accept His invitation of grace, mercy and forgiveness.

God's son Jesus lived on the earth as a living example of the heart and words of God presented in human flesh as an advocate for all mankind.

The Holy Spirit came as the 'Helper' promised by Jesus after the cross and the commission of discipleship. The Spirit is a gift to guide us as disciples and advocates to all of mankind and the nations.

The pivotal moment came at Pentecost with the disciples obeyed Jesus and waited for the indwelling power to come.

What Happens When We As Believers Obey?

Our first act of obedience brought us immediate salvation, the total forgiveness of sin and redemption from eternal death, the promise of eternal life and our new life with the son of God as our personal advocate to the throne of Heaven.

To fully comprehend this immense miracle should

make obedience to Jesus an opportunity, *not* a burden.

The follower of Christ is a living advocate commissioned by Heaven with the power of the blood of the lamb of God.

To be Jesus' pupil is to understand that we represent the intersection of Heaven and earth. We are the ambassadors of the Kingdom of Heaven in a foreign land, the earth; wherever we are.

Jesus living in us is a badge of authority to announce and then proclaim the will of the King when it is given to us to present in obedience to Jesus' directions.

The apostle James tells us in the scriptures that our prayers are not answered because we asked amiss or incorrectly. Just because I think it is a good thing for God to do, does not necessarily make it His will.

Remember that intercession 'hits the mark' where the will of God meets the earth. Therefore, I need to know what God's will is to have the correct result. The result then exhibits the power of Heaven.

How can I know this as Jesus' disciple? The answer is found in Paul's words to his student. (1 Timothy 2:1).

- The Spirit lets me know when I am at a place where God is getting ready to do something.
 - I then know I am at the divine intersection.
(Intercession)

- My heart may suddenly be filled and become aware of a new compassion for a need I sense, see or feel.
 - I sense or know that God is letting me feel His heart to intervene. (**Supplication**)
- I know that where I am is a special place for a petition of prayer to be spoken to the Almighty. (**Prayer**)
- I feel a euphoria of joy that is focused on immense gratitude for what God is about to do, even before offering my petition to Him about the need or situation. (**Thanksgiving**)

I am not the central component of what God is doing, but I am important when I am obedient. I just need to pay attention to where I am and what God is getting ready to do.

I might have these inclinations or promptings when:

- Walking into a store.
- Entering a sick person's room.
- Seeing a person struggling with a broken down car.
- Seeing a fight or argument beginning.
- Discovering deep emotional needs, a crisis or painful crying and suffering.
- Speaking with someone who is wondering about giving their life to Jesus.
- When I see a fellow believer in sin and know I

am there to advocate for healing and deliverance.

- When I am wondering about a decision to make.
- When I am pondering how to answer a question about my faith.
- Walking past someone in a wheel chair and suddenly having a thought that they should not be in that condition.

I could list a thousand more. Each one of us, whether by ourselves with a believer or someone who does not know the Lord, is a discipling moment waiting to intersect with the will of God.

Really? Yes, because this is exactly what happened to Jesus' disciples. The apostles were Jesus' disciples and we today are no different. Disciples are disciples.

Jesus is in us. He is not on the earth as a human anymore. Jesus left His job on earth and expects us to finish it for Him.

When I obey the call to disciple the nations, just like the obedient apostles and the 120; the power comes, we are not operating on our power anymore.

Discipling Is a Lot More Than Just Having a Bible Study.

“¹⁶ Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man

availeth much.” (James 5:16 KJV)

Consider these other situations that may apply:

- Our interactions as ambassador advocates of Heaven may be very personal. We need to be unafraid to confess difficulties and failures to each other.
- When we wake up in the middle of the night with a specific person or situation on our mind.
 - Jesus is asking us to co-advocate for them.
 - You might know what to pray for, or the Spirit can for you if necessary.
- When I discipline myself to set aside time to be alone in study of the word or prayer.
- Whenever Jesus impresses or prompts me to do something and I am obedient.
- When I confess that I need to have my faith leap into belief about *Anything* Jesus is getting ready to do.

Discipling and Advocacy Work Together.

When we discover that living as a disciple of Jesus and becoming compelled, not forced, to teach others and to begin to share our journey with Christ with other believers; the power of Advocacy from Heaven flows through our lives.

The result of Paul’s advice to Timothy is at our doorstep.

“¹ First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³ This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.” (1 Timothy 2:1-6 ESV)

Every thing I do in Christ becomes a part of my growth, my experiences, my repertoire of knowledge to become a foundation for my faith. My life becomes one of action and not one of a spectator. I begin to reflect the image of the Father.

Every one of Jesus’ pupils is anointed:

- To teach others (even if it just starts with changing diapers or helping a baby to get dressed).
- To pray with understanding the desires of God’s heart and will.
- To heal the sick and lame.
- To become a spiritual listener with discernment.
- To worship in Spirit and Truth from the heart.

- To confess wrong, heal broken hearts and lives.
- To bring hope to the lost with the gospel message of salvation.

Enough with just sitting in a pew.

*Take up your cross and
follow the King.*

Chapter 12: Decision Time



Time To Decide

It is human nature to be caught off guard, or possibly become upset, when you are being forced to make a decision; especially when you feel you are being pushed into it. These feelings often occur when we hear, “Hurry up, make up your mind.”

Jesus is not that way. His burden is light and easy.

***If I do not understand who I am
as a servant of the son of God, then I am
not equipped to deal with the forces of evil
that I have been assigned to subdue.***

Let me explain how I have on multiple occasions described the wondrous power of our Lord. Consider that you find yourself opening a door to a room filled with complete darkness. Someone hands you a bucket and expects you to start scooping up the darkness and tossing it outside to bring light into the void. Every bucket you empty is not changing the darkness. The task is impossible to complete. The room remains dark.

Sounds silly, doesn't it? However, this example illustrates how we might find ourselves functioning in our Christian endeavors. You throw out a bucket full of darkness and it just seems to never change the circumstances.

As absurd as this illustration may be, it shows quite profoundly that with missing information to become a foundation for my faith (what I believe based on that knowledge), my actions seem to accomplish little, or even worse; nothing at all.

Students learn because someone taught them. They were taught to understand that usually inside of a doorway is a light switch. I have been taught by someone who knows the information that I lacked. I learned from my teacher about the power of light switches. The result; I know there should be a light switch.

I just need to find where it is located. I am sure that a switch is there somewhere. I feel against the wall

inside by the doorframe, and my hand finds it. I flick the switch, and the power of light casts all of the darkness away. That bucket idea was worthless.

The problem is solved because I was taught the information necessary to take the appropriate action; and, I understood where the real power existed to get the job done.

***What does this simple example
about the power of light teach us?***

When I find myself dormant, inactive, stalled or somehow incapable to take action, what should my immediate response be as a follower of Jesus?

Whatever the issue, decision or circumstance that has paralyzed me, Jesus is patiently waiting for me to ask for His divine intervention. I should have been taught, and then understood, that Jesus is the source of real power.

Has my inaction allowed my walk in the Kingdom to make me spiritually drowsy? Do I find myself not functioning as I know I should? Has dormancy put my faith to sleep? Do I find myself unproductive for the glory of our Lord in the Kingdom?

I need to remember what Jesus said.

“¹⁷ Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” (James 2:17 KJV)

Jesus provides the answer when I am stuck and not moving. His answer is explained by the apostle Paul in his letter to the ‘*ekklesia*’ in Ephesus.

“¹³ But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, ¹⁴ for anything that becomes visible is light. ***Therefore it says, “Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*** ¹⁵ Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶ making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”
(Ephesians 5:13-17 ESV)

There is unlimited revealing power in these few sentences from Paul to us as pupils of Jesus:

- Jesus is the light that responds to bring us out of slumber, or even death, and into the light of His power.
- When Jesus wakes us up, He shines light on us.
- The light of Jesus allows us to walk in wisdom.
- Jesus knows how to make the best use of time.
- The light of Jesus removes foolishness from our thinking when, the light of Jesus allows us to understand the will of God.

When Heaven's light shines on me as a disciple, circumstances are immediately affected. That light allows things that were hidden in the dark to be seen. My spiritual eyes can now see. My understanding changes when I turn on that light.

I need to find Heaven's light switch.

Scripture clearly defines that the task of discipleship is a commandment from Jesus to every believer saved by the shed blood of the lamb of God.

We are not being asked by Jesus to decide to disciple other pupils. Jesus already made that decision for all believers. Jesus has told us that discipling others is our job.

The question to begin to disciple other(s) and eventually the nations is greater than simply asking, "Lord, help me to become a discipling teacher." Though asking Jesus is a good start.

A more affirmative response is, "Lord, I completely trust you to guide me to become the discipling teacher you created me to be." Jesus never commands us to do something and then not provide the ability for success.

Please permit me to be rhetorical with these questions:

- Do I believe that Jesus is capable?

- Does the Bible contain all the required information to guide and instruct me?
- Am I personally responsible to be a participant in the commission of discipleship?
- Am I expected to do this task on my own power?
- Do I believe the Holy Spirit will assist me?
- Am I willing and desperate to proceed?
- Am I willing to be obedient to Jesus as a disciple teacher of mankind and the nations?

Each of us as followers of the Lamb of God must answer those questions or similar ones to understand that we need to ‘*Flip on Heaven’s light switch*’.

The words I have written are **not** the light switch. This book was written to provide an elementary library of information from the Bible to encourage and turn our hearts toward the call to disciple others. Every word I have written was never intended to be a replacement or a manual for the word of God.

The Holy Scriptures were authored by God as the library of knowledge. God’s knowledge is to be shared, instructed, nurtured in each of us, meditated upon alone in prayer, studied when two are gathered together, used in a group study, used in our homes, used at work or at play, used in our fellowship with

others.

God has already authored the disciple's program, the disciple's duties, and the disciple's instruction manual. The Holy Scripture road map is already written.

I am prayerful that we realize the following statement is truthful.

***The question about the necessity of
another new church program
to propagate discipleship is unfounded.***

I am completely convicted that God, Jesus, nor the Holy Spirit needs my counsel or advise. Heaven does not require my new ideas or some missing piece of information to make what already exists better.

So what decision is Heaven asking us to consider and act upon to be obedient to the command of Jesus to disciple? Simply put, start with this:

***I will allow myself to be obedient
to ask Jesus
to wake me up
and shine into me
the power to disciple.***

Is that all that is required to begin to have a personal Pentecost moment?

I am not the author of the truth, Heaven is. None of us

can answer for another. Each of us must seek to find and pursue our own personal journey with Christ.

Let the word of God speak to each of us. God's truth will bring us closer to the calling we have been created to fulfill. Our journey is designed for discipling each other.

In Christ we are never alone; because He abides within us.

However, something powerfully wonderful happens when believers come together in unity and begin to nurture and care for one another. This is what discipleship is all about.

Final Words

I am simply asking you to open the door of invitation from our Lord in front of you. You are an ambassador of the King, a living intersection of Heaven (Christ in you) and the room(s) in front of you (the earth) full of darkness.

The light switch on the wall is waiting for the children of God to flip the switch 'on', and release the power of Heaven to shine into the darkness of this fallen world with the power and light from the Redeemer.

The light of Jesus exposes to our Spiritual eyes what the darkness has hidden. Our task becomes simplified

because Jesus' light exposes to us the things that were hidden in darkness. Heaven's light allows each of us to be the unique disciple that God created us to be.

We can stop making disciple clones. Every single one of us is unique and created for the dark rooms of this world that the Spirit will lead us into.

It is decision time. I have decided to obey Christ and disciple the nations. What will your decision be?

Let Jesus light up the way in front of you.

The King of kings is calling us to work. My prayer is that we step into the vineyard and together toil the fertile soil to bring forth the harvest of the times we live in. Amen.