

FELLOWSHIP the body in union

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SUMMARY: GROWING AS A DISCIPLE

ISSUES OF DISCIPLESHIP God has provided that each believer who is born of the Spirit may grow in the Spiritual life. Learning Christ, in a general sense is becoming familiar with God not only through His word but also through His presence, to gain familiarity with His character and personality. We, in the process of time partake of His glory and His character. As it is written, we go from *glory to glory* (2Corinthians 3:18,) and *from faith to faith* (Romans 1:17.) We learn to hearken to the voice of His Spirit and respond accord to the way we are directed. I call this learning Christ. God's model for learning Christ is **imitation** of the first born Son of God, Jesus Christ. We are to model his manner of thinking, and his manner of acting. We are to duplicate his interacting with the Heavenly Father and his Spirit-directed ministry. The first disciples were given a living model but they were only able duplicate his Spiritual behavior after they had received the enabling Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

RECEIVING THE GIFT OF God (POWER FROM HEAVEN)

Receiving True Gifts and not Counterfeit Ones

Jesus instructs us about receiving gifts from God, especially the gift of the Holy Spirit. He teaches us that the God of heaven gives *good gifts* and not evil, hurtful or perverted ones. Christ also characterizes the fact that there are two kinds of gifts which might be tendered, the true and the false, but God's gifts are good and true. The scripture is found in Matthew 7:8-11 and in Luke 11:11-13: "*For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*" :8; "*Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?*" :9; "*Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*" :10; "*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*" :11. KJV The two objects which are sought are bread and fish. God gives things which are life-giving and safe (bread, and meat.) Luke chapter eleven restates the same teaching about asking from God the Father but expands the emphasis, toward the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the living gift of God's power and presence: "*If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?*"; "*Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?*" "*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*" -- Luke 11:11-13kjv. I have emphasized the word son to emphasize that relationship is the key to receiving from God. There are a whole lot of different kinds of seekers; some sincere and some less sincere. If a dabbler negotiates to receive a spiritual manifestation from God, it is uncertain what may transpire. But God wishes to emphasize that he is for blessing His family. He is the giver of Good gifts.

Counterfeit gifts are a peripheral issue. The above reference represents the fact that there is the possibility of receiving a *bad gift*. These kinds of exceptions bear upon the setting and environment where and with whom the "ministry" occurs and the sincerity of the hearts who seek the gift. We have a common enemy, Satan who is always ready to move in to deflect the gift of God or to substitute a counterfeit. He does not give good gifts, nor does he give valid revelations. His gifts are

Jesus Christ, True son of God almighty, Virgin born, fulfilling the Messianic Scriptures of the Old Testament, Christ Jesus, crucified, resurrected and alive;

Jesus Christ, the *only* mediator between God and man;

Jesus Christ the lamb of God;

Redemption through the blood of God's Lamb (Jesus Christ) the perfect sacrifice;

The power to become a new creation in Christ Jesus;

Manifest enablement - Graces, through the Holy Spirit, Who reveals all truth in Jesus;

Christ Jesus reigns from heaven, He is now the High Priest and intercessor and has been given authority over all dominion and worlds.

The essential doctrine of Faith and Grace are verified in the (Scripture) The Word and Power of God

The law of the Spirit, has bought us liberty and *freedom from the Law* of sin and death;

Unity of all believers; All blood bought believers are one in Him, Unity produces peace and potentiality.

All believers must discern matters and maintaining unceasing vigilance over matters of the common faith;

Believers must build fellowship bonds, continuing to walk in Love and Forgiveness;

Worldly rebellion and unbelief will be dealt with at the hand of the returning Jesus in divine judgment before & at His second advent; He will judge each soul who has lived for an eternal consequence

The culmination of the church age; Is not the end of the world; Judgment will be visited upon the unbelieving and the lawless, Judgment concludes after a time when the anti christ and false prophet are revealed

False doctrines, false messiah and the period of anti-Christ; Rampaging ferocity of anti Christ.

Believers must be diligent to Safeguard against false teachers;

The redemption of Israel as a praise in all of the earth; The second advent. Israel will be the head of all nations

The authority of the believer against spiritual powers; Deliverance and discerning of the spiritual world

The potentiality of the children of God. Widely unknown or untaught who we are as children of God.

Awareness that doctrines of Demons that take believers into bondage

The Cross of Jesus Christ paid the price for our sin

The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead made it possible for us to become the children of God most high

Paul's Insights into the Gospel

Paul an intellectual's intellectual and a theologian's theologian, set aside his worldly credentials when he began to minister the Gospel. Paul presents some of the most powerful insights into the conflict of intellectualism and theology. Paul experienced a total turn around in his life. The features of his traditional achievements were discarded as were the merits of his classical education. Paul declared that the things which he once esteemed and considered meritorious were now no better

than "dung". The Holy Spirit drew a line of division in Paul's life. He clarified the difference between the fashion of this world and the world of God. He revealed the matters which pertained to mind and soul and matters of spirit; *the thoughts of the mind* versus *the intents of the heart*. Vanity no longer had a place in his life. Personal pride and striving for status was cast down he was given another job description. A "slave" of Christ.

It is Paul who addresses two points of doctrine which are at times in tension or contrast. First the purely Spiritual nature of the Gospel and the God-connected source of life; and secondly teachings on leadership, headship and government impacting the long-term course of this entity called "the church," the body of believers. Contradictions have occurred in this respect, that individuals are placed in positions of leadership and authority who do not have spiritual credentials but merely human approval. Spiritual enablements allows the kingdom of God to be manifest according to the apostolic model. Even in the first years of the church age we hear accounts of men like the apostles Paul and John struggling with individuals who have assumed leadership though their motivation were entirely wrong or their doctrine was corrupt. We hear Paul describe associates who tried to undermine or destroy his ministry, or who departed because their hearts turned again to the world; or of the associates who preach for personal gain; or the associates who wanted to be pre eminent and gloried in having control over people. (See 1Timothy 1:19,20 1Timothy 4:14)regarding Alexander the Coppersmith; 2Timothy 4:10 regarding Demas; 3John 1:9 regarding the person of Diotrephes.)

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