

A Disciple's Handbook

DISCIPLESHIP 07

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SUMMARY: GROWING AS A DISCIPLE GOOD GIFTS vs. COUNTERFEIT GIFTS

ISSUES OF DISCIPLESHIP

God has purposed that each believer *born of the Spirit* may grow in the Spiritual life. Learning Christ, in a general sense is becoming familiar with God through the Word and through his Spiritual presence. It is through the Holy Spirit that we gain familiarity with his divine nature and our place in Him. We begin to partake of his love and his understandings. 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 the Spirit and respond as 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. The apostle Paul exhorts us to follow (*imitate*) me as I imitate Christ.

RECEIVING THE GIFT OF God (POWER FROM HEAVEN)

Receiving authentic Gifts not Counterfeit Ones

Jesus instructs us about receiving gifts from God. There are numerous gifts of the **Holy Spirit** to be accessed. The Lord teaches us that the God of heaven gives *good gifts* not evil, hurtful or perverted ones. Jesus reveals fact that there are two sources of gifts; true gifts and false, spurious or dangerous gifts. God's are always good, pure and true. The scripture is found in Matthew 7:8-11 and in Luke 11:11-13: "*For every one that asks*

receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks 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 11:11-13kvy. 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.

Demonically inspired gifts must be recognized as *counterfeit gifts*. As the devil has power to assume a pleasant face, his gifts though they may appear as miraculous, do not redound to God's glory. So given the possibility of receiving a counterfeit gift, how can these recognized and avoided? Spurious gifts bear upon the setting and environment from which from whom this "ministry" occurs. The first line of defense against counterfeit gifts is the sincerity of the hearts who seek the promised gift from God *through Jesus Christ*.

Our common enemy, Satan, an opportunist, is always ready to move in to insinuate his influence. His gifts are not good gifts. His revelations are not valid revelations. His gifts are not life affirming. They bring no joy, health or liberty. Satan's gift is characterized as a stone instead of bread, as a serpent instead of pure food, something infused with poison instead of food. We must make an effort to block him from any part of our seeking, knocking, and asking. Jesus has portrayed Satan as the enemy seeking the opportunity to make a prey of the seekers life. Forewarned is to be forearmed; for this reason, it is wise to initiate safeguards and precautions as I suggested above in order to keep the deceiver out of your life and out of every spiritual transactions. There was a time when our lives were entirely under Satan's control. Many of us may doubt this was the case, but the apostle Paul is very clear about this.

A couple of apostolic letters bring attention to the nature of the unredeemed life. This is all of our lives before our renewal *In Christ*. Paul's letter to Ephesus, Chapter 2, verses 2 and 3. *"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience; Among whom also we all had our conversation (lifestyle) in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* KJV Paul's letter to Collosae, Chapter 1 verse 21. *"And you, that were sometimes (before now) alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled"*

The apostle Paul contrasts the previous unredeemed nature our previous lifestyle with the redeemed nature. In the letter to Corinth, Chapter 1 verses 10 and 11, he lists a number of these life styles; *"-Neither - thieves, - covetous, - drunkards, - revilers, - extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.; And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."*

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES OF FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS

Jesus Christ is True son of God Almighty.

Jesus Christ was virgin-born, fulfilling the Messianic Scriptures.

Christ Jesus, was crucified, resurrected and is alive forever.

Jesus Christ, is the **one and only** mediator between God and man.

Redemption is made possible through the blood of God's Lamb (Jesus Christ).

Jesus Christ, the perfect and acceptable sacrifice for mankind's redemption.

The blood of Jesus Christ the lamb of God has the power to take away our sin.

The Cross provided an exchange, Christ's virtue and perfection for our fallen state.

The blood of Christ washes away **all** of our sins.

Jesus' resurrection from the dead acknowledges the approval of God the Father.

The resurrection purchases the empowerment of Grace in the life of believers.

True Believers become an entirely new, Spiritually-conceived creation in Christ Jesus.

We are enabled in Christ to manifest to us through Grace gifts by the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of Truth (the Holy Spirit) reveals all wisdom and truth in Jesus.

Christ Jesus reigns from heaven as the High Priest, Intercessor and Mediator.

All dominion, judgment, and all authority are given to Jesus Christ.
Each essential doctrine of Faith and Grace are verified and affirmed in Scripture.
The Word through the Spirit provides intimacy with God, wisdom and power.
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 while it unites believers in love.
Those who approved by God walk in meekness and humility.
Believers must build fellowship bonds, walking in Love and Forgiveness.
The Holiness of God and Spiritual "fruits" are evident in those who are born of the Spirit.
All believers must be alert to matters of Spirituality, faith and doctrine, with vigilance.
Believers must be diligent to discern and safeguard against false teachers.
Worldly rebellion and unbelief will be dealt with at the hand Jesus in divine judgment.
Jesus' first advent was prophetically precise; his second advent will be prophetically precise.
The adversary, Lucifer, is the deceiver who kills and destroys those in God's image.
Judgment awaits the ungodly and unbeliever in the day of the Lord.
Judgment will be visited upon the unbelieving and the lawless.
The culmination of the church age is not the end of the world.
We are entering time before Christ's return. The "Last Days" started with the church age and has continued until today. As we approach the last of the last times we will witness increasing evil, leading to the malevolent rule of an Antichrist and his minions. Who Jesus the Messiah will destroy in his coming to rule and reign. The redemption of Israel shall be a praise in all of the earth; After The Second Advent, Israel will be the head of all nations.

Paul's Insights into the Gospel

Paul an intellectual's and a 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 as the other apostles clarified the difference between the fashion of this world and the world of God. Paul 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 Diotrophes.)

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