



*for the work of service, to the
building up of the body of Christ*

BOOK 3

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ETS 3/1

Assignment Sheet

Date _____

Name _____

Topic _____ Discipleship

Lesson _____ Definition of Discipleship

Class _____

Lecture	Completed	
	Yes	No
Review "Definition of Discipleship"		
Bible Study		
Do "Purity of Life"		
PSMA		
Do 5 PSMA		
Write objectives for this term.		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
Disciples Are Made Not Born--Chapter 1		
Evangelism/Follow-Up/Discipleship		
Pray for 1 person to share the "Bridge" with.		
Pray for your disciple.		
Meet with your disciple.		
Scripture Memory		
Romans 8:32		
Philippians 4:19		
Review previous verses.		



DISCIPLESHIP

- **Definition of Discipleship**
- **A Principle of Discipleship**
- **Commitment to Discipleship**
- **Focal Point of Discipleship**
- **Finding the Will of God**
- **Spiritual Reproduction**
- **Interpersonal Relationships**



DEFINITION OF DISCIPLESHIP

Introduction

The word DISCIPLE comes from the Greek word "Mathetes" which means LEARNER. It implies a student/teacher relationship and necessitates the disciple's adopting the philosophy, teaching, practices, and lifestyle of his teacher.

This is what Jesus had in mind when He called men to follow Him. He wanted men to leave their sinful way of living and adopt His new teaching, philosophy, practices, and lifestyle.

The learning progress of the disciples was not evaluated by their retention of information or knowledge taught. Rather it was to be demonstrated in their daily living. They were taught the true meaning of the commandments and how to fulfill them each day by imitating Jesus. Paul said it a little differently but hit at the same idea or issue.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

II Corinthians 5:17

The World's Standard for Discipleship

By the world's standard, a person is considered a good Christian if he goes to church for an hour every Sunday, tries to live a good life, and is kind to others. Some Christians tend to create their own standards for discipleship and end up creating God in their own image rather than allowing God to transform them into His likeness. Since the Scriptures are not all that important to them, they fail to realize that God has His own standards for discipleship.

Jesus' Standards for Discipleship

NOTES

Jesus was very clear about His standards for discipleship. Certain things were to characterize the life of every follower of Christ. Without these, Jesus said, a man could not be His disciple.

Continues in God's Word

A disciple is characterized by a continuance in the Word of God.

If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed.

John 8:31

In God's standard the Scriptures are of supreme importance since they reveal God and His will for us. If we are to continue in His Word, we must incorporate the various fingers of the Word Hand into our personal lives. Since Satan knows the value of the Word to strengthen us in our battle against him, he is forever trying to see that we have no time to read or study God's Word. Are you winning the battle?

Loves others

A disciple is characterized by his love for others.

A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

John 13:34-35

One of the distinguishing marks of every disciple is the love he has for other people. Jesus was not just talking about loving other Christians; He was talking about all men. The tensions that exist between Christians, to say nothing of those that exist between non-Christians, make one wonder how well we are keeping this commandment.

If we are to follow Jesus' standard for discipleship, we need to bring this area under the Lordship of Christ. We need to resolve our differences so we can love people.

Bears much fruit

NOTES

A disciple is fruitful--both in the fruit of the Spirit and in the winning and discipling of others.

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

John 15:8

The fruit John is primarily talking about is the people who come to Christ as a result of our witness. Are you asking God to give you men and women to win and disciple so that there will be fruit in your life?

Not only should we be concerned with the fruits of evangelism, but also with the fruits of the Spirit listed for us in Galatians.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

Galatians 5:22-23

The Spirit of God is ever at work trying to make these fruits a reality in our lives. How are you doing with them?

If we were to ask your family--those who know you best--to evaluate you in these attributes, how would they rate you?

Puts God first

A disciple must put God first above all other people--even one's self!

If a man come to me and hate not (prize less dearly) his father, mother, wife, children, brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:26

Here Jesus says that our relationship to Him must come before every other human relationship. To children, it means God must come before their parents. To parents, it means God must come before their children. If we put Him first, the result won't be weaker relationships, but stronger ones.

In some instances it is easy to put God before others. But Jesus says we must not only place Him before others but also above ourselves. This is a somewhat harder task. But if we don't, we cannot be Jesus' disciple.

Bears his cross

A disciple must not allow any thing or interest to hinder him from obediently following Christ.

And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:27

When Jesus talks about putting God first in our lives, He brings us to a place where there is a cross. On that cross we must put to death our dreams and aspirations and replace them with His will. God can then redirect our lives so that He can live out His will for us in our bodies. For some people this is more of a cross than it is for others. To some it means a radical change, while to others it is only a minor correction. But to each it represents a cross because it means the death of our wills and the doing of His.

Jesus says a person cannot be His disciple unless He is willing to bear that cross. Are you willing?

Forsakes the old sinful ways

A disciple must forsake all of the old ways of life to follow Jesus.

So likewise whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:33

In this passage Jesus rules out a double standard for discipleship. He did not say that we must be willing to forsake all we have. He did not say that there was going to be a watered-down form of discipleship for all who refuse to pay the price. He said, "He that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Have you forsaken all? Does he count you as his disciple?

The Cost of Discipleship

NOTES

Discipleship is a costly venture. It cost Jesus his life to redeem you and make you His disciple. Ten of the remaining apostles were put to death, martyred for their faith in Jesus. Only John escaped a violent death. But even he spent part of his later years exiled on the island of Patmos for his faith.

Discipleship is a costly venture no matter which way you decide. It will cost you your life if you are serious about exchanging your life for the fulfilling of Christ's Great Commission.

But discipleship is even more costly if we choose not to obey Christ and choose the temporal rather than the eternal values. It is only through a life of discipleship that we win for ourselves during the vapor of our life the eternal reward and crown that the New Testament writers tell us to be concerned about. It is only through discipleship that we can find our true self and be totally fulfilled and satisfied.

Jesus then said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to be a follower of mine he must leave self behind; he must take up his cross and come with me. Whoever cares for his own safety is lost; but if a man will let himself be lost for my sake, he will find his true self. What will a man gain by winning the whole world at the cost of his true self? Or what can he give that will buy that self back?"

Matthew 16:24-26 (NEB)



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PURITY OF LIFE

Taking a stand on the moral absolutes of God's word is not popular. But even though many people seek freedom from all moral responsibility, Christians must live by biblical values.

GOD'S STANDARD

1. Using a dictionary, define purity.

freedom, purity

exhortation, instruction

2. What does God promise those who are pure in heart?

Psalm 24:3-5; Matthew 5:8

They will see God.

God will

3. What are God's standards for our behavior?

Matthew 5:27-28 lust (in your eye)

II Corinthians 7:1 cleanse yourselves from all uncleanness so that you will bear fruit to the glory of God

I Thessalonians 4:3-8 ontvullen van heilichheid, goed begrip
van de heilichheid → zacht van meken, maar God versiert

I Peter 3:3-4 voeding van de heilichheid en de
goed = juist bij God.

4. How does God describe those who practice impurity?
Ephesians 4:18-19

voelwitheid, versierd, versierd en leze van God
verruyde de heilichheid in de heilichheid → in de heilichheid

THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL PURITY

5. From I Corinthians 6:13-20, list several reasons why we should avoid immorality.

Verse 13 Heer is niet te lieven, geen heilichheid

Verse 15 Heilichheid = 10 van 10

Verse 16-17 heilichheid is een heilichheid, maar 10 van 10 in heilichheid en 10 van 10

Verse 18 heilichheid: 10 van 10, maar 10 van 10

Verse 19 heilichheid: 10 van 10, maar 10 van 10

Verse 20 Niet een heilichheid

6. From Ephesians 5:3-5, in which specific areas of our lives is purity important?

in heilichheid, heilichheid

7. The world's standards differ greatly from God's. From I John 2:15-16, what are foundations for the world's standards? List and define these.

FOUNDATION

DEFINITION

8. What does Scripture say to the following excuses for wrong moral behavior?

a. "Since everyone does it, it must be all right."
Proverbs 14:12

b. "I only need to discover if this is right for me." (Ecclesiastes 11:9)

c. "As long as I don't hurt anybody, it's okay." Leviticus 5:17

d. "Nobody will ever find out that I did it." Hebrews 4:13

e. "I'll stop after this one time." Galatians 6:7-8

f. "I didn't really do anything--all I did was think it."
Matthew 5:28

THE PATH TO PURITY

9. What are the steps from temptation to sin? James 1:14-15

10. Read Genesis 3:6,8 and Joshua 7:21. How do these two passages compare? List the similarities.

GENESIS 3:6,8 JOSHUA 7:21

a. What physical sense was stimulated?

b. What feeling resulted?

c. What act resulted?

d. What was done with the evidence?

e. Do you think every act of sin follows this pattern? Why or why not?

11. What three important principles for living a life of purity are mentioned by Paul in II Timothy 2:22?

Try to forget the number 13. When you have forgotten it, check this box ☐. Can you do it? This is how some people try to avoid immorality--they think they can just make themselves not think about it.

It is impossible to eliminate a wrong thought from your mind unless you substitute something good in its place. Paul said that we are to "put off" the old nature and "put on" the new nature (Ephesians 4:22-24). This passage illustrates the principle of substitution. How would you relate Scripture memory and meditation to this principle?

Yakovlev 138 - 03.01.13.

12. What can we do to live a clean life pleasing to the Lord?

Psalms 51:10

Proverbs 4:14-15

Romans 13:14

I Peter 1:22

13. Study Genesis 39:7-12 and II Samuel 11:1-4. Compare the events in Joseph's and David's lives.

JOSEPH

DAVID

a. What were the surrounding circumstances?

b. What were their respective attitudes?

c. What were their
resulting actions?

d. Why do you think these two men responded in different ways to
a similar situation?

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Several New Testament passages state the qualities of life of a
person who is rightly related to others.

14. How should you treat the following people? I Timothy 5:1-2

Older men

Older women

Younger men

Younger women

Is there any relationship you have with someone that needs to be
brought into conformity to these standards? If so, what should
you do about it?

15. Read Titus 2:2-8 and record at least three qualities that should appear in the lives of the following four categories of people.

	OLDER MEN	OLDER WOMEN	YOUNGER MEN	YOUNGER WOMEN
1.				
2.				
3.				

a. In which of the above qualities would you like to see progress?

b. How can you go about doing this?

c. What qualities are important to you in someone of the opposite sex?

d. Do these differ from standards you have had previously? If so, how?

- e. State at least two scriptural standards you have concerning your relationship with the opposite sex.
-
-

PERSPECTIVE ON MARRIAGE

16. Read Genesis 2:18-25

- a. Who originated marriage? _____
- b. For what purpose was marriage instituted?
-
-
-
-

c. State the ideas of verse 24 in your own words.

17. Read II Corinthians 6:14-15.

- a. What principle does God set forth in this passage?
-
-
-
-

b. How does this apply to a Christian marriage?

c. What do you feel would be some of the resulting problems if this principle were violated in marriage?

18. What can you do if you are already married this way?
I Corinthians 7:12-16

19. What possible reasons might there be for not marrying?
I Corinthians 7:7-9, 25-35

20. Read Ephesians 5:21-33--a passage on Christian marriage.

a. What is God's desire for husbands?

b. In what ways can a husband fulfill God's desire for Him?

c. What is God's desire for wives?

d. In what ways can a wife fulfill God's desire for her?

Remember These Points:

Add a sentence or two to the following statements to summarize the most important things you learned from each section of this chapter.

God's Standard

God has definite standards for purity of thoughts, speech, and conduct.

The Importance of Personal Purity

The Scriptures give clear reasons for maintaining personal purity.

The Path to Purity

Application of scriptural principles leads to a pure life.

Personal Relationships

God wants us to have personal standards in our relationships with others.

Perspective on Marriage

The Scriptures reveal God's perspective on purity in marriage.



EQUIPPING THE SAINTS PERSONAL EVALUATION FORM

LIFE OBJECTIVE	Objectives	
	Present Position	
	Obstacles	
	Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
	Plan to Implement	

SCRIPTURE MEMORY	Objectives	
	Present Position	
	Obstacles	
	Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
	Plan to Implement	

BIBLE READING	Objectives	
	Present Position	
	Obstacles	
	Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
	Plan to Implement	

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS PERSONAL EVALUATION FORM

BIBLE STUDY		Objectives	
		Present Position	
		Obstacles	
		Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
		Plan to Implement	

PRAYER		Objectives	
		Present Position	
		Obstacles	
		Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
		Plan to Implement	

WITNESSING		Objectives	
		Present Position	
		Obstacles	
		Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
		Plan to Implement	

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS PERSONAL EVALUATION FORM

FOLLOW-UP		Objectives	
Present Position			
Obstacles			
Activities to Overcome Obstacles			
Plan to Implement			

EXERCISE & SLEEP		Objectives	
Present Position			
Obstacles			
Activities to Overcome Obstacles			
Plan to Implement			

FAMILY RELATIONSHIP		Objectives	
Present Position			
Obstacles			
Activities to Overcome Obstacles			
Plan to Implement			

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS PERSONAL EVALUATION FORM

CAREER/STUDIES	Objectives	
	Present Position	
	Obstacles	
	Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
	Plan to Implement	

USE OF RESOURCES	Objectives	
	Present Position	
	Obstacles	
	Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
	Plan to Implement	

	Objectives	
	Present Position	
	Obstacles	
	Activities to Overcome Obstacles	
	Plan to Implement	

DISCIPLES ARE MADE - NOT BORN

by Walter A. Henrichsen

FOREWORD by Howard G. Hendricks

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Foreword

- 1. The Kind of Person God Uses**
- 2. Jesus as Lord**
- 3. The Cost of Discipleship**
- 4. A Proper View of God and Man**
- 5. Evangelism and the Disciple**
- 6. Recruiting a Prospective Disciple**
- 7. How to Train a Disciple--Follow-up**
- 8. How to Train a Disciple--Imparting the Basics**
- 9. How to Train a Disciple--Conviction and Perspective**
- 10. How to Train a Disciple--Gifts and Calling**
- 11. Multiplying Your Efforts**
- 12. Choosing a Life Objective**

Foreword

"Make disciples" is the mandate of the Master (Matt. 28:19-20). We may ignore it, but we cannot evade it.

Our risen Christ left this legacy--the magna charta of the church. He provided both the model and the method. His life--and death--recast the lives of men. He demonstrated that you have not done anything until you have changed the lives of men.

"Follow Me," He urged His men. And then that staggering assurance: "Lo, I am with you always"...Somehow we have forgotten that this promise is not a carte blanche; His promise is linked with a process. We cannot embrace the promise and ignore the process.

Much of the feverish and frustrating activity of the contemporary church is devoid of relevance and fulfillment. Entertainment, not education, is our program. Laymen are disenchanted. They are looking for an involvement with eternal bite. C. S. Lewis said it: "All that is not eternal is eternally out of date."

Disciples Are Made--Not Born is not a collection of dry, doctrinal dust, but an eminently practical and provocative cud to chew on. The writer constantly hits the nail with his head.

Walt Henriksen is no mere theorist. Long associated with The Navigators--an organization committed to disciple-making--he has probed the Scriptures persistently, and has presented effectively the results of his study and experience.

He also writes out of the reality of family life. He and his wife, Leette, are having the joy of discipling four active children. And they have known the heartache of losing their older son to leukemia.

Here is a primer on discipleship, commended to the one who wants to walk where Christ walked and sustain a ministry of multiplication. These pages fill an urgent need in our generation when the battle is for the minds and hearts of men.

"Everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher," our Lord avowed. (Luke 6:40, NASB) This book invites you to take His yoke upon you and learn of Him.

--Howard G. Hendricks
Professor of Christian Education
Dallas Theological Seminary

The Kind of Person God Uses

When Jesus Christ voluntarily gave his life on the cross some 2,000 years ago, He did not die for a cause. He died for people. During His ministry on earth He "ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach" (Mark 3:14). Just before His death on Calvary, Jesus prayed for His men (see John 17). Over forty times in that prayer, He made reference to His twelve disciples.

During His brief ministry on earth, Jesus had the world on His heart, but He saw the world through the eyes of His men. Prior to His ascension, He gave to these men what is commonly referred to as the Great Commission. As recorded in Matthew 28:19, Jesus charged them to take the Gospel through the world by making disciples.

Jesus had world vision. He expected His men to have world vision. Jesus expected them to see the world through the disciples that they would produce, just as He had seen the world through the 12 men He had raised up. His vision of reaching the world through the use of multiplying disciples is not found in an obscure passage in the Bible--it is a theme that pulsates from page to page.

It was obviously the thing that was on the Apostle Paul's heart as he wrote his "Last Will and Testament" to his son in the faith, Timothy. Let's briefly analyze 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

"Thou" includes the importance of the individual. At Jesus' meeting with Peter, He said, according to John 1:42, "Thou art Simon... thou shalt be called Cephas." (You are Simon, you will become a rock.) When Jesus saw Peter, He did not see him as he was but as he would someday be. There is tremendous potential in the life of one man.

"Thou...me" indicates the importance of personal relationships, of mutual confidence and trust built up through years of laboring together. When Paul wrote from prison to the church at Philippi, he said that because he was unable to visit them, he would send Timothy, his son in the faith. In essence what he said was, "When Timothy arrives, it will be as though I myself were present."

Many years earlier Paul had seen the potential of this young man from Asia Minor and decided to invest his life in him.

"Commit" suggests transmitting something from one person to another. It indicates the deposit of a sacred trust. Paul is saying to Timothy, "You are my disciple. This is the relationship that exists between you and me. Now transmit this as a disciple-maker to other disciples." When we invest in the lives of other people, we transmit not only what we know, but more importantly what we

are. Each of us becomes like the people with whom we associate. I am sure that if we could meet Paul and Timothy, we would find them similar in many respects.

Later Paul wrote to him, "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions" (2 Timothy 3:10-11). This gives a synopsis of what was committed to Timothy by Paul and what in turn was to be committed by Timothy to faithful men.

Faithful men--discipling stands or falls with these two little words. Solomon, that wise king of ancient Israel, said, "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness; but a faithful man who can find?" (Proverbs 20:6) Faithful men and women have always been in short supply. God still seeks them out. "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him" (2 Chron. 16:9).

Teach others also--this is where the discipling process begins to pick up a head of steam. We are now in the fourth generation. We began with Paul, then Timothy, then faithful men, and finally others also. Teaching others cannot be done solely through a classroom situation. In entails the imparting of a life--the same in-depth transmission that occurred between Paul and Timothy.

This is a multiplicative process. While the faithful men are teaching others also, Timothy is in the process of raising up more faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Implementing this vision of multiplying disciples constitutes the only way Christ's commission can ever ultimately be fulfilled. Other ministries and approaches can augment it but never replace it.

Dawson Trotman, founder of The Navigators, used to say, "Activity is no substitute for production. Production is no substitute for reproduction." Whatever ministry we are engaged in, it ought to be reproductive.

We have already pointed out that the key to this disciple-making ministry is faithful men and women. What are the qualifications for a faithful person? What qualities of godliness must be characteristics of his life? Let's mentally digest a few essential traits of the person who wants to qualify as "a faithful man."

- He has adopted as his objective in life the same objective God sets forth in the Scriptures.

Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). Rarely did the Lord Jesus ask people to seek something, but here He suggests we seek two things (which are to become the two-fold objective of every believer): His kingdom and His righteousness.

Notice that Jesus does not say to seek money or a wife or a dozen other things that could easily occupy our attention. Rather, He is saying that if we seek His kingdom and His righteousness, He will assume responsibility for meeting every other need in our life.

A friend of mine is a lawyer in a prestigious law firm. Year after year he had the highest earnings in the firm, but his colleagues would not make him a senior partner. The reason was that all these men gave their lives, their time, and their energy to the firm. But because my friend was a Christian, he did not feel that the practice of law rated that high on his priority list. He was a superb lawyer and did as good a job--as the financial records indicated. But his objective was Matthew 6:33. Being a lawyer was a means to an end, not an end in itself. I believe it was because of his commitment that God entrusted him with so much success.

Whatever your vocation is, it must never be your life objective; for your vocation, no matter how noble it may be, is, in the final analysis, temporal. The Scriptures teach us that we are to give our lives to the eternal and not to the temporal. A faithful man is a man who has chosen eternal objectives for his life.

- He is willing to pay any price to have the will of God fulfilled in his life.

This is a crucial issue. After instructing Timothy to commit to faithful people the things that Timothy had learned from him, Paul goes on to say, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (2 Tim. 2:3-4). Having committed himself to God's objective, the faithful man steadfastly resists the temptation to become ensnared in the world's glittering attractions.

Let me ask you: Is there anything between you and God? Are there any little pet sins that you have been unwilling to confess and forsake? Any areas that you have not put under His control? How about your finances? The question is not how much money do you have in the bank, but rather who has the power to draw on your account? Do all of your financial assets belong to Jesus Christ? Do you know what it means to give sacrificially? And by that I mean to give what you know from a human perspective you cannot afford.

How about "things?" Do your possessions play an inordinate role in your life? Paul says, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Phil. 3:18-19). The Bible says that people "who mind earthly things" are enemies of the cross of Christ.

All that you hold dear to yourself--your family, your health, your dreams, your aspirations and goals--must be held with an open hand. If you desire to fulfill God's will for your life irrespective of the price, the sum total of all that makes up you must belong to Jesus Christ. He must be free to do with you and take from you as He pleases. You need not open your hand to God with a sense of fear, for God loves you with a perfect love and has your best interest at heart. But having said that, the faithful person is one who is willing to pay any price to have the will of God accomplished in his life.

● He has a love for the Word of God.

The prophet Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts" (Jer. 15:16). Do you have an insatiable appetite for the Word of God? Do you crave it like you crave food? Are you in submission to the authority of the Word of God? Or do you pick and choose what you believe and obey?

A carpenter whom I have known for years averages ten hours each week in Bible study. This man has never gone to college or Bible school. He is not a learned scholar, but for him the Scriptures have a place of priority. I believe it was St. Jerome who said that the Scriptures are shallow enough for a babe to come and drink without fear of drowning and deep enough for theologians to swim in without ever touching the bottom.

One day I was in the office of a surgeon. In the course of his training, he had to master the contents of scores of books. If he were to operate on me or one of my family, I would certainly want it that way! As I thought about this, it occurred to me that as Christ's disciples we really only have one Book we must master--the Scriptures. Yet, when I talk to people about investing five hours each week in Bible study and memorizing a couple of verses a week, they look at me as though some monstrous demand is being made on them.

What is your Scripture intake? Do you have a regular Bible reading program? Are you systematically studying the Scriptures? Is your craving for the Bible so great that it is impossible to satisfy?

● He has a servant heart.

Jesus once reminded His disciples that non-Christians enjoy being served and exercising authority over others. In contrast to this He said, "But it shall not be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant; even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:26-28).

The motto of the British Royal Military Academy is "Serve to Lead." This is the same truth Jesus was seeking to communicate to His disciples when He washed their feet (see John 13). If, as their Lord, He washed their feet, they ought to be willing to do the same for others.

A person may try to recruit others to help him accomplish his vision. The disciple-maker, however, seeks to invest his life in another to help that person accomplish his own vision.

- He puts no confidence in the flesh.

The Scriptures emphasize this principle often. Paul said, "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead" (2 Cor. 1:9). Again he said, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. 7:18).

Worldliness and having confidence in the flesh are very closely related, for worldliness can be defined as "living as though you have no need for God." For example, to leave for work in the morning without first spending time with the Lord to me indicates having a tremendous amount of confidence in oneself. It is equivalent to saying, "I can run my life today without an absolute dependence on God."

One of the ways of determining exactly how much confidence you have in the flesh is to take an inventory of the number of times you come into your own conversation. How often do you talk about how great you are and the things you have done?

- He does not have an independent spirit.

There is a great deal of talk today about "doing your own thing." In this antiauthoritarian society in which we live, the attitude is, "Don't let people tell you what to do." Accomplishing the work of God, however, is a team effort. It is done in concert with like-minded brothers and sisters in the faith. There is no room in the life of the disciple for a loner's attitude--the kind of attitude that says, "If it is not done my way, then I'm not going to do it at all."

A young man once told me, "I will listen to what God has to say to me, but I will not learn from other people." To have such an attitude is to live in self-deception. People are often God's instruments to communicate to other people. God is looking for faithful people who are willing to subjugate their own ideas for the sake of the team.

- He has a love for people.

The Apostle John said, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our

sins" (1 John 4:10). To be godly is to be God-like. To be like God is to love people, because God loves people.

I remember reading a Peanuts cartoon in which Charlie Brown said, "I love the world. I think the world is wonderful. It's people I can't stand." Yet, people are the reason Jesus invaded human history. He came to redeem people. That is what the Gospel is all about. The disciple is one who is involved in the lives of people. The faithful person has a love for people.

- He does not allow himself to become trapped in bitterness.

The writer of Hebrews warns us to be watchful "lest any man fall of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Heb. 12:15). The context of this verse is the giving and receiving of rebuke. Many a person has become bitter because someone pointed out a fault in his life. He takes the attitude, "Huh, who does he think he is, telling me about my sins? Why doesn't he take the beam out of his own eye before he takes the little speck of sawdust out of mine?"

As a young Christian, I remember hearing someone preach on this verse, and I jotted in the margin of my Bible next to it, "Bitterness comes as a result of real or supposed ill-treatment--it doesn't matter which." Somebody may really wrong you, or you can just think that somebody wronged you. In either case, if you are not careful, it can cause you to become bitter.

A wise, old saint once said, "I will never allow another person to ruin my life by making me hate him."

The root of bitterness can come through a competitive spirit, a breakdown in communications between you and fellow Christians, or feeling that you have gotten a raw deal. I believe more disciples become ineffective in the Christian life because of a root of bitterness than because of any other sin. Faithful Christians guard their hearts well in this critical area.

- He has learned to discipline his life.

One of the most motivating passages of Scripture that I know was penned by the Apostle Paul. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

One day I sat down and meditated on what would be the most horrible thing that could happen to me as a Christian. The conclusion to which I came was that when I die, God would take me aside and

say to me, "Henrichsen, let Me show you what your life could have been like if only you had done what I asked, if only you had been faithful to Me, if only you had disciplined your life and made it really count, as I wanted you to."

Have you learned to discipline yourself? Have you learned to say no to temptation? Maybe there is a habit that you have been unable to conquer. You know that the Spirit of God would like you to get victory, but you have done nothing about it, having rationalized that, "If God wants me to give up this habit, then He will have to give me the power to do it." Although this is true, it is avoiding the issue, because God has already given you the power. It has been made available to you through the Holy Spirit. All you need to do is appropriate it--and such appropriation requires discipline. Never blame God for your failure to do what you know is right.

It is the evening that you have set aside for Bible study, but you discover that one of your favorite programs is on television. So you rationalize by saying you will do the study some other time. Not only does the Bible study not get done, but you also stay up so late that night that you are unable to get up the next morning in time to fellowship alone with the Lord before going to work.

It is not the one or two isolated times of compromise that will make the difference. The problem is that once you make an exception, it is so easy to do it again, and again, and again. You sow a thought and reap an act. You sow an act and reap a habit. You sow a habit, and you reap an eternity.

It is evident that one does not become a "faithful person" by being a week-end Christian. The faithful person is one who has applied the Scriptures to every area of his life. The life of discipleship is a life of discipline--the two words come from the same root. A disciple is a disciplined person. Such a life is not easy, but God never promised us it would be. That it is not easy is clearly seen by the fact that there are so few faithful people around today.

The gold medal goes to the athlete who has worked hard, who has learned how to discipline himself, who has learned to say no to the myriad distractions that cross a person's life, who has a clearcut objective and has resolved in his soul to stay with it until he accomplishes it. This is the kind of person God uses.



ETS 3/2

Assignment Sheet

Date _____

Name _____

Topic _____ Discipleship

Lesson A Principle of Discipleship

Class _____

Lecture	Completed	
	Yes	No
Review "A Principle of Discipleship"		
Bible Study		
Do "Integrity in Living"		
PSMA		
Do 5 PSMA		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
Disciples Are Made Not Born--Chapter 2		
Evangelism/Follow-Up/Discipleship		
Share "Bridge" with non-Christian.		
Pray for your disciple.		
Meet with your disciple.		
Hand in Follow-Up Guide for Convert and Disciple.		
Scripture Memory		
Hebrews 2:18		
Psalm 119:9,11		
Review all verses.		



A PRINCIPLE OF DISCIPLESHIP

Introduction

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus introduces us to a very simple principle which every disciple must come to grips with. The 10 verses Jesus devotes to it in Matthew 6:24-34 are worth our consideration.

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek): for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Matthew 6:24-34

Principle: Singlemindedness Toward God

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No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Matthew 6:24

In this verse Jesus is communicating a spiritual fact: it is simply not possible for a person to successfully serve two masters. Tragically, many Christians spend most of their lives attempting to do what Jesus has already told them is impossible.

In the Greek this verse says "no one can be a slave to two masters." If a person tries to take orders from two different authorities, there will certainly be strife and conflict in his heart. Almost always, he will find himself drawn to one and bitter toward the other.

Translating this principle to the Christian experience, we see there is an enduring struggle in our hearts to try to serve the two masters which Jesus identifies as God and mammon. The word mammon literally means "that in which one trusts." In its original, common usage, it meant wealth, riches, and possessions. The natural inclination of the human heart is to trust in such material things--things which we can see and touch. However, Jesus is calling us to a different lifestyle--one where, living by faith rather than by sight, we trust in Him. Since the two ways of life are at two opposing ends of the spectrum, it is not possible to both trust Christ and money or possessions. If we attempt to do so, we will certainly find ourselves in tremendous conflict.

The conflict comes because God does not honor token faith. We may say that we trust God, but deep in our hearts we really don't think God will come through for us. In order to save face for God, we build up a little nest egg of financial security to help God out if He should prove unable to meet our needs. It is not surprising that, if we do pray for God's provision with such an attitude, He will probably not answer our prayer. We are therefore reinforced in our misconception that God cannot meet our needs, and our faith in Him dwindles--forcing us to put more and more trust in mammon or money.

Insincere Faith
(Failure to trust
God completely)

God does not
honor insincere
faith

Bitterness
toward God
resulting
in still
less faith

No answers to prayer
for provision if we pray
with insincere faith

Of course, faith is a growing thing in the life of a believer. It is like a spiritual muscle which is strengthened through use. God does not expect a person to have giant-size faith overnight. In the beginning, a person may only have enough faith to trust God for small things; but if that person sincerely asks, believing in God's ability to provide, God will meet his need. Faith is strengthened and he will be able to trust God for larger needs. God is not so much concerned with the size of our faith as He is with its quality. It must be sincere and wholehearted--not half-hearted and insincere.

Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

Matthew 17:19-20

The apostle James described the insincere type of faith this way:

A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

James 1:8

To sum this up, we could say a small and sincere faith in a great God is of far more value than a giant-size but insincere faith in the wrong thing.

Dissecting the Principle

In order to more completely understand the principle which Jesus is trying to communicate in Matthew 6, we will examine it point by point. Through a series of

commands, examples, questions, facts, and problems, Jesus leads us to a practical application for our own lives.

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Command: Be not anxious

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Matthew 6:25

Jesus is not saying here that we should be irresponsible or unconcerned about the things of life or the needs of the future. On the contrary, the Bible tells us in many places we are to plan carefully, save, and invest for the future.

Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.

Proverbs 6:6-8

Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.

Proverbs 6:10-11

Anxiety vs Provision

We are also to be prudent in providing for the physical needs of our families.

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.

I Timothy 5:8

However, we are not to become anxious or fearful about these things. The Greek says we are not to have "anxious thoughts" or "worry" about the needs of life. When our everyday needs like food and clothing begin to preoccupy us and cause fearful responses in our hearts, we become double-minded rather than single-minded toward God. If we have our attention focused upon Him, we can be assured that He will provide for us.

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Philippians 4:6

But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:19

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

I Peter 5:7

If there is a question in your mind as to whom you are really trusting, there is a simple test which will quickly answer it. Simply evaluate yourself--your actions and reactions--when your funds are running low. If you are trusting self and your bank account, you will find your mind and heart full of apprehension, fear, and worry. If you are trusting Christ, your mind and heart will be at peace in the confidence that He will provide.

Example: Behold the Birds

Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.

Matthew 6:26 (a)

In this example Jesus tries to illustrate for us the message that we have no cause for worry or anxiety.

When was the last time you fed the birds? Occasionally, it is fun to feed them and watch them eat. However, if the birds were dependent upon humans for their food, most of them would have starved to death years ago. Yet, when was the last time you found a bird who had died of malnutrition? Starvation does not seem to be a leading cause of death among the bird populations of the world. Why is this? It is because God is deeply concerned about each one of them and feeds them Himself. He's been doing this consistently and regularly since He created birds.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

Matthew 10:29

Imagine the intimate concern of the Creator God for these the smallest and most common of His creatures!

NOTES

Question: Who is of more value?

Are ye not much better than they?

Matthew 6:26 (b)

The answer to this question is obvious. As much as God loves and cares for the birds, He is even more concerned about you. In Romans we are reminded that even when we are in sin or rebellion to God, He keeps extending His love to us.

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

But the very hairs of your head are numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Matthew 10:30-31

God is so aware and sensitive to us that He even takes note of the number of hairs that come out when we wash our hair (which for some of us is considerably more than others).

Question: Does worry help?

Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment?

Matthew 6:27-28 (a)

No matter how much you worry and fret about your height, it will never change. Worry can turn your hair gray and take years off your life span, but it won't help what you were worrying about.

There was once a man who maintained that worry certainly did help because 95% of all the things he worried about didn't happen. However, this fictitious statement further illustrates the futility of anxious thoughts and fears. Many of the things that so preoccupy us either never change or never happen.

Worrying not only is futile concerning things that cannot be changed, such as our height or stature, it is also useless in providing the everyday needs of life. No one ever got the needed clothing or money to buy it by becoming anxious over it.

Example: Consider the flowers

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Matthew 6:28(b)-29

In His first example Jesus drew from the animal world to prove His point. Now He reaches down into the world of plants. Flowers are not even animals, yet the whole world stands in awe of God's provision for them. He has dressed them in such splendour that even royalty cannot compare with their magnificence.

Question: Shall He not clothe you?

Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you...

Matthew 6:30

God has been demonstrating from the very beginning of time that He is not only able to clothe the earth, he is able to clothe people as well. After Adam and Eve sinned we read:

Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.

Genesis 3:21

God is concerned with our clothing needs as I discovered early in my Christian life. After becoming a Christian, I became so excited about giving money to missions that I became a bit overzealous and over-committed in my pledges. My clothes were becoming a bit shabby, especially my white shirts which I wore for church. Because of my pledges, I did not have enough money to buy new ones. Having discovered this passage in Matthew, I brought my need for white shirts to God in prayer but said nothing to anyone else.

One weekend shortly thereafter I went home to visit my parents. My mother informed me that my dad had just purchased six white shirts for himself which did not fit him comfortably. She said he would like to give half of the shirts to me. Since my father always bought the best quality shirts, I found myself not with the cheapest shirts available (which I probably would have bought for myself) but with some extremely nice white shirts.

This was only my first experience in trusting God for clothes. Many times over the years I have seen Him provide exactly what I needed to be clothed, not shabbily, but very adequately. He really does care for our needs in this area, and as we trust Him and experience His provision, we grow in faith.

Problem: "O ye of little faith"

This is the heart of the problem. In the Greek the phrase "little faith" really means "of puny persuasions." We have the right answer in our minds, but we lack the conviction to really believe it in our hearts. We listen to Satan who is telling us that we must trust ourselves and our own monetary resources. We try to help God out financially rather than trusting Him. When we do this, we don't help at all, but rather hinder God's working. We find ourselves caught between the commands of two masters--one of whom is telling us to trust self and money and the Other who is telling us to rest in Him. If we try to obey both masters, we find ourselves caught in the love-hate relationship Jesus described earlier.

Faith pleases God

The Scriptures remind us:

But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them than diligently seek him.

Hebrews 11:6

According to this passage (and the entire rest of the Bible), there is only one way to please God--by the demonstration of our faith. Faith is simply trusting God to do what He has promised. Our puny persuasion is strengthened as we trust God and stand strong.

Faith is sometime tested

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The Apostle Paul was one who had determined to stand strong in his faith no matter how grim the situation seemed to be. And in Paul's life there were some very grim testings.

Of the Jews five time received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned. Thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren: In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.

II Corinthians 11:24-27

However, through it all Paul said:

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

II Timothy 1:12

Paul's absolute confidence kept him trusting God. This is the kind of faith that pleases God and causes us to remain firm and single-hearted in God.

Command restated: No anxious thought

Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Matthew 6:31

In verse 25 Jesus stated the principle. Now on the basis of His logic and examples concerning the birds and flowers, He draws the conclusion again: Therefore don't worry or be anxious about food, drink, or clothing.

Jesus wants us to be absolutely certain that God both can and will provide the things we need. Though He doesn't actually use the phrase "sovereignty of God,"

this is exactly what Jesus is teaching. We need to be anchored in the conviction that God will take care of the temporal as He promised in order to be able to give ourselves to the eternal.

Fact: God sees all our needs

(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knowest that ye have need of all these things.

Matthew 6:32

There are some people who probably have a right to worry--those who have no Heavenly Father (the Gentiles). They had to work and slave to provide all their own needs in their own human energy. But Jesus reminds us that we not only have a loving father, we also have one who is aware of our smallest needs, even before we are. Nothing is overlooked with God or takes Him by surprise. Therefore, we can rest and be assured that in His time He will provide; and He is never late.

Application: Kingdom of God first

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Matthew 6:33

Jesus says on the basis of all these things, there is only one conclusion or application to make. We must put His Kingdom and His righteousness first and leave the rest to Him.

In the very first session of our course we said there are only three things that last forever.

- **God**
- **People**
- **His Word**

If we are to give ourselves in exchange for eternal things, we must invest in these three areas. Notice how three external qualities are mentioned in Matthew 6:33.

- **God**--God's Kingdom--His authority on earth is what we must put at top priority in our lives. First, He must reign in our hearts as supreme Lord of all areas of our own personal lives.

● **People**--The Kingdom of God is made up of all people who have crowned Him Lord of their lives. In seeking first His Kingdom, we must not only honor Him as Lord personally, we must work to win others to Christ and extend the power of God over more and more people. World rulers think of kingdoms in terms of real estate. Jesus' kingdom is people.

● **Word**--The righteousness of God is found in the Word of God. In this book God expresses His great unchangeable truths.

...The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

Psalms 19:9 (b)

Seek Ye First

The Kingdom of God

His Righteousness

- Personal Lordship to Christ
- Extension of His reign over People
- The Word of God

Jesus says if we will give ourselves to these three things and make them first priorities in our lives, he will provide the mammon or material things. Since God promises to provide the mammon, there is no need to serve the mammon. We can be single-minded and can set our hearts on God.

Command restated: No anxiety about tomorrow

Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Matthew 6:34



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Finally Jesus restates His command, this time in bite-size pieces. God does not expect or request us to be anxious about tomorrow but simply to trust him for today and its needs. When tomorrow becomes today, we will have a new supply of grace to meet the needs it contains.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23

By learning to trust Jesus one step at a time, we can rejoice in the present and relax about the future. We will find it unnecessary to serve two masters because our Master meets all of our needs.

Jesus As Lord

One of the men on The Navigators staff is a Jamaican. Some years ago, he worked for a banana company near his home town of Kingston (in Jamaica). He was doing so well in the company that one day one of the executives invited him into his office to discuss his future.

After assessing the young man's potential, the executive said, "You have a great future with our company, with excellent prospects for rapid promotion. But we are looking for committed men. If you are going to be a success, I want you to know that you have to give your life in exchange for bananas."

The young man thought about it for a few moments and decided that he could not sign away his life for bananas.

Lordship involves giving Jesus Christ the number one place above all the possible "bananas" in your life.

This chapter deals with four aspects involved in making Christ the Lord of our lives.

- The fact that Jesus is Lord whether we want Him to be or not.
- Reasons we don't want to acknowledge Him as Lord.
- What it means to acknowledge Him as Lord.
- Why Jesus wants to be our Lord.

Let's look at these one at a time.

Jesus Is Lord Whether We Want Him To Be Or Not

Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things and "by the word of His power", He holds everything together. "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him, and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist; and He is the Head of the Body, the Church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:16-18).

Have you ever considered how little of your life you control? Did you decide when you would be born? Or who your parents would be? Or in what country you would be born? Did you decide the color of your skin? Your eyes? Your hair? Did you decide your intelligence or your gifts and talents? How about your height--did you determine that? Or your appearance, whether you would be good

looking or rather plain? The answer to all these questions is no. In every one of these areas and in many more, you have no say in the matter. Your vote counts for absolutely nothing!

Then at what point do you exercise control? The Bible suggests that you control a small but important part of your life, namely your will. Lordship has to do with your will. It involves surrendering it to Jesus Christ. It means that Jesus is Lord of all of you, not just part of you. In making this decision of the will, remember that He has control over most things that concern you, whether you like it or not.

Why We Do Not Acknowledge Christ As Lord

Though every person has his own reasons not to acknowledge Jesus as Lord, some reasons come up with remarkable frequency.

- He may ask us to do something that we do not want to do.

Of course, He will. If this were not so, there would be no issue involved. When you make Jesus Christ Lord of your life, you can count on Him asking you to do things you would rather not do.

Abraham did not want to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice. Moses did not want to go before Pharaoh. Joseph did not want to spend all those years in prison. Jesus Christ did not want to go to the cross.

Nobody likes the cross. Nobody likes to die. Nobody likes to deny himself. But this is what lordship is all about. A disciple is a disciplined one. He is one who says no to what he wants in deference to what his Lord wants. The disciple does not pamper himself by satisfying his wants and desires in a self-gratifying fashion.

When Jesus Christ is Lord of your life, every area is under His jurisdiction--your thoughts, your actions, your plans, your vocation, your leisure time, and your life goal. All of these are under His Lordship.

- We think we know what is best for us.

Nothing could be farther from the truth. A child left alone would kill himself. He might eat the wrong things, or run out in the street, or grab hold of a sharp knife, or play with something equally dangerous. The parent must keep constant watch over his child. That is, the parent must be lord of the child's life. In fact, the law requires that this be so; and when the parent refuses to exercise such lordship, the courts hold him accountable.

When we reach physical maturity, however, we think that things suddenly change. This is where we make our mistake. A child left

to himself will probably hurt himself. As mature adults, left to ourselves, we do hurt ourselves. Statistics reveal that more people die each year in automobile accidents than by cancer and heart disease combined.

A group of scientists have warned that the United States has enough atomic warheads to destroy every human being on the face of this earth--the equivalent of one railroad boxcar load of dynamite for every man, woman, and child in the world. And this is to say nothing about the atomic warheads that other nations of the world have.

Have you ever thought about the fact that we hire policemen to watch over us to make sure that we don't do anything wrong. Yet, we have the audacity to say that we know what is best for our lives.

● We are not sure that God has our best interests at heart.

If God wanted to make it hard on us, can you imagine what He could do? If He wanted to make us miserable and plague us with difficulties, He could make life absolutely intolerable.

One might argue that God does not want to get involved in our lives, but it is ridiculous to say that He wants to hurt us.

However, you cannot argue that Jesus Christ does not want to get involved in your life. The very issue of Lordship revolves around the fact that He does want to get involved in your life. Listen to what He says through the prophet Jeremiah. "For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord. They are plans for good and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11, The Living Bible).

What It Means To Acknowledge Him As Lord

The implications of recognizing Jesus Christ as Lord are readily seen in the prayer He taught His disciples. "After this manner therefore pray ye: 'Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen'" (Matt. 6:9-13).

Notice that the prayer begins, Our Father. Jesus did not instruct us to say "My Father," but "Our Father." The disciple must be able to identify with people where they are, to sit where they sit. The disciple himself is not one who has arrived. On the contrary, he is a learner, a pilgrim, one who is on a quest to make his life all that God would have it be. Therefore, he must understand the needs and frailties of people.

Hallowed be Thy name. Jesus did not pray that His name would be hallowed, but that the Father's name would be hallowed. Acknowledging His Lordship means surrendering your name.

Are you interested in making a name for yourself? Are you desirous of being recognized by people? Are your life goals self-serving, to make a great scientific discovery, do well in business, be married to an important person--anything that would bring you recognition? To have Jesus as your Lord means to desire that His name, not yours, be hallowed.

Thy kingdom come. God's desire is to rule here on earth just as He rules in heaven.

He is in the process of building His kingdom. Are you untiringly laboring to build the kingdom of Christ, or are you busy building your own little kingdom? In your church, is it your Sunday School class, your Board of Deacons or Elders, your building project, your missionary program? Do these things get your attention, or can you in all integrity say it is Christ's kingdom that you are seeking to build?

A way to seek God's kingdom is through evangelism by "bringing men from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God." Are you actively involved in evangelism? How many non-Christians do you know who would consider you a close friend?

Thy will be done. Again notice the Lord Jesus did not say, "My will be done," but "Thy will be done."

This is the same thought that Jesus communicated when He said, "I can of Mine own self do nothing. As I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." (John 5:30).

You cannot pray, "Thy will be done," unless you are actively involved in finding the will of God for your life and doing it. Begin by doing what you know through the Scriptures to be the will of God. If you do this, the Holy Spirit will be faithful to make clear those areas that are uncertain.

Give us this day our daily bread. We can truly pray this prayer only if our attitude is, "All I have comes from and belongs to Jesus." Otherwise, why ask Him for something that "naturally comes to us anyhow"? Paul put it this way, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Because Jesus bought you at the price of His blood, you are not your own. You belong to Him. Lordship means recognizing this fact and surrendering all that you are and have and hope to be to Him.

Think over the things that you own which you consider to be precious. It might be your favorite crystal or china, or it may be your sports equipment. Maybe it is your stereo or your automobile. Whatever

it is, ask yourself who owns it? If it truly belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, then of course you will not mind making it available to Jesus to be used as He sees fit.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Jesus is telling us to pray, "Lord, I want You to forgive me in just the same way that I forgive other people." Could you say that? Could you settle for God forgiving you in proportion to how you forgive others?

Lordship leads to a mutual commitment, involving not only receiving, but giving. Grace is God's willingness to commit Himself totally to us. Lordship is our willingness to commit ourselves totally to God. Everybody wants God to commit Himself totally to him, but few are willing to commit themselves totally to Him.

And lead us not into temptation. Here Jesus is praying that the Father will not lead us into situations where we can be tempted. There are many situations in life that are not wrong in themselves, but they provide opportunities for Satan to overpower us.

Jesus did not say, "Lead us not into sin." He said, "Lead us not into temptation." To pray this prayer means that I am willing to surrender questionable things. I am not only willing to surrender those things that are sin, but I am also willing to surrender all those areas of my life that tend to lead me into temptation.

You yourself know what these areas are. To make Jesus Christ Lord of your life means that you are willing to lay them aside.

Deliver us from [the] evil [one]. This is the same prayer that the Lord Jesus offered for His disciples on the night of His betrayal (see John 17:15).

Lordship involves the recognition that there is no way we can fight our own battles. Christ, and He alone, must keep us. No one in his own strength can do battle with the enemy and win. Even Jesus Christ defeated Satan only at the price of the cross.

James, the brother of our Lord Jesus, puts it this way, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). The devil will flee from us if we do two things: First, submit ourselves to the Lord, and, second, resist him in the Lord's strength.

Why Does Jesus Want To Be Lord Of Our Lives?

Why does Christ bother to get involved in our lives? Why does He not just leave us in our misery? This is one of the great mysteries of the Bible. But the Scriptures are very clear that He loves us and does want to be Lord of our lives. When I look at my own sinfulness, my own propensity for evil, I must confess that this is a staggering thought.

I know a salesman from Oklahoma City who uses a small aircraft for business trips because he travels to many out-of-the-way spots across the country. He was flying once over some rugged terrain when he saw an automobile trying to pass a large truck. It was obvious that the driver of the car was extremely impatient to get around the truck; his car crossed back and forth from one lane to the other.

My friend decided to throttle back and watch. Each time the auto sought to pass the truck, it would either reach a double line, a hill, or a bend, or meet another car coming in the opposite direction. From my friend's perspective, he could see several miles down the highway, and he thought, "If I could enter into communication with that man in the automobile, I could tell him when it was safe to pass and when it was unsafe."

As we are on the move in this great adventure called life, we cannot see around the bend into tomorrow or over the hill into next week. Consequently, we are not sure when it is safe to pass. Because Jesus Christ is Lord of all, seeing the end from beginning, He does know.

His willingness to be our Lord reveals His desire to get involved in our lives so He can tell us when it is safe to move ahead and when it is best not to move. Would we not be extremely foolish to turn down such a gracious offer?

INTEGRITY IN LIVING

We struggle each day with issues of right versus wrong, good versus evil. We often tend to rationalize our behavior and compromise God's standard of integrity. We may explain away or ignore these sins. These are the "vices of the virtuous"--sins which may have become accepted as the normal standard. But God is holy, and we must not allow any compromise with sin to infiltrate our lives.

THE STRUGGLE FOR INTEGRITY

1. What does God say about the need for integrity or honesty?
Leviticus 19:11

2. Read Jeremiah 17:9.

- a. What fact in your life makes the struggle for honest living so intense?

- b. Can you list an example of when you tried to justify an action which you knew to be wrong?

c. How did God work in your life to show you that it was wrong?

3. What are some ways we can be deceived?

By ourselves

James 1:22

I John 1:8

By others

Romans 16:17-18

Ephesians 4:14

By Satan

II Corinthians 11:3-4

Genesis 3:1

4. Since we can be deceived so easily, how can we know when we have sinned?

Psalms 139:23-24

Hebrews 4:12

DISHONESTY EXPOSED

5. Compare II Corinthians 8:21 and Acts 24:16.

a. What guidelines helped Paul in his daily living?

b. In order to keep a clear conscience, what do you suppose Paul did when God exposed a sin in his life?

c. Can you think of any area in your life right now in which you do not have a completely clear conscience?

☐

Yes

☐

No

d. If you answered "Yes", take a moment to confess that sin frankly to God. Ask for his help and wisdom in dealing with it. Give thought to what steps you can take to gain a clear conscience. (Check one or more blanks below.)

_____ I have confessed it.

_____ I have asked God for His help and wisdom.

_____ I have given thought to steps I can take to gain a clear conscience.

6. We must be careful to avoid hypocrisy.

a. How did Jesus describe hypocrites? Mark 7:6-8

b. What is one reason this style of living is dishonest?
Romans 2:23-24

c. Give an example of how God's name might be dishonored because of us.

7. Our lives should be able to withstand close examination by other people. We should live honestly--not pretending to be something we are not in order to create a false impression.

Imagine an invention that could tell us what a person is really like and what he is thinking.

a. Would you want this invention used on you?

b. Why or why not?

8. Read Acts 5:1-11

a. Why was this an act of dishonesty toward the Holy Spirit?

b. What effect did the death of Ananias and Sapphira have on the other believers in Jerusalem?

9. Meditate on 2 Corinthians 8:21, then consider the following list. Are any of these problem areas for you? Place a check by any that are.

_____ exaggeration

_____ "white lies"

_____ cheating

_____ failure to keep promises

_____ allowing people to believe false impressions

How can you deal with this problem?

10. Read Psalm 15:1-5 and list at least five qualities of an honest person.

11. What does Paul's statement in 1 Thessalonians 2:10 reflect about the way he lived?

THE PRACTICE OF HONESTY

12. Honesty should be displayed in all aspects of our lives. List below some of the areas we might neglect.

Romans 13:6-7

Colossians 3:23-25

I Peter 2:13-14

Two essential standards for honesty are:

Make sure everything you own was obtained honestly.

When you speak, speak the truth. There is no such thing as a "white lie."

13. Read I Samuel 15:10-23.

a. Was Saul's statement honest?

b. In what way did he disobey?

c. What was Saul's response to the accusation?

d. How did he try to justify his disobedience?

e. Have you ever used a similar method?

f. In what does God delight? I Samuel 15:22

HONESTY IN SPEECH

14. What does your speech indicate? Matthew 12:34-35

15. How does the psalmist describe the tongue? Psalm 52:2-4

16. Why are lying and abusive speech inconsistent with the Christian life? Colossians 3:8-10

17. Can you think of a personal situation in which dishonest action led to lying? Explain.

Any distortion of the truth--in word, actions, attitudes, or silence--is deceitful and lying.

18. Paraphrase the following passages:

Ephesians 4:29

Colossians 4:6

19. Can you apply one of the verses in question 18 to a relationship with someone you know? What will you do? When will you do it?

Who? _____

What? _____

When? _____

Remember These Points:

Add a sentence or two to the following statements to summarize the most important things you learned from each section of this chapter.

The Struggle for Integrity

Deceit creates a struggle and exposes the need for integrity.

Dishonesty Exposed

Our goal is a clear conscience and a transparent life.

The Practice of Honesty

God sets forth standards for honesty in the Scriptures.

Honesty in Speech

Our speech exposes and expresses our heart.



ETS 3/3

Assignment Sheet

Date _____

Name _____

Topic _____ Advanced Follow-Up

Lesson _____ Leading Bible Discussion I _____ Class _____

Lecture	Completed	
	Yes	No
Review "Leading Bible Discussion I"		
Bible Study		
Do "Character in Action"		
PSMA		
Do 5 PSMA		
Reading		
Bible Reading Chart		
Disciples Are Made Not Born--Chapter 3		
Evangelism/Follow-Up/Discipleship		
Pray for person to win to Christ.		
Pray for your disciple.		
Meet with your disciple.		
Scripture Memory		
Matthew 6:33		
Luke 9:23		
Review previous verses.		



LEADING BIBLE STUDY DISCUSSION I

Introduction

In many parts of the world, committed Christians are experiencing the dynamic impact of small home Bible discussion groups. Sparked by a growing hunger to know God's Words, people are banding together to study and discuss the truths of Scripture. The fellowship and personal interaction over the Bible along with mutual commitment to apply the discovered truths make the Bible discussion group one of the most effective avenues of Christian growth.

We have already examined the "Word Hand" and we discussed the importance of personal Bible Study. We will now learn how the Bible discussion group can be effectively used to encourage the regular and systematic study of the Word which is so indispensable to a vital Christian walk.

The early church met in small groups in the homes of believers. They studied the Scriptures, prayed, fellowshiped and set about reaching their community with the Gospel. The Book of Acts records their stories and the impact they made on the world for the cause of Christ.

And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also...

Acts 17:6

It only takes two people to get a group started. That group can spawn others which in turn will affect a whole community for Christ.

Why Discussion Groups Are Helpful

There are at least five ways in which a Bible Study Discussion is beneficial for a Christian.

- Provides incentive to do and complete Bible study

Because the group will be actually discussing what each member has prepared, everyone will be motivated to complete his Bible Study.

- Enables people to study beyond their limits

Being a part of a group exposes each individual to the ideas and discoveries of the other members.

- Creates an atmosphere conducive for sharing

Personal discoveries, questions, observations, problems or needs find expression and help in a discussion group. An atmosphere of love and acceptance builds confidence and allows members the freedom to talk about the Scriptures without fear of criticism.

- Fosters positive Christian fellowship

Group members can develop solid personal relationships in an informal environment. They can learn how to pray, share and bear the burdens of others.

- Equips Christians with a tool to help others

Bible discussion groups are one of the most effective and simplest tools available to Christians today as they seek to help fulfill Christ's Commission to make disciples in every nation. Even a young Christian can learn to lead a group if he is willing to do the preparation.

Starting A Discussion Group

When a person understands the value of a Bible discussion group, his next question will certainly be, "Where do I find people for such a group? Most people don't seem to be interested in the Bible or in spiritual things. How do I get started?"

Pray

Begin praying daily that God would help you get a discussion group started. Ask God to attract the people He desires to the study, to unify them and to lead and encourage the group.

NOTES

Prov. 17:17

Different people →
different views.

ex. Hells

→ leads:
- inter personal
relationships within
- among group members

why?
Ex. family, wedding

ston with one:
- with your group
- recruit a young
Christian yourself

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

James 1:5

The Objectives

It is important that the leader and the group understand the objectives of your Bible Study Discussion Group. Objectives do three things:

- They tell you where you are headed or what you are trying to accomplish.
- They help you evaluate your progress and detect deviation so the proper correction can be made.
- They are the basis of all decision making and help you to be productive rather than just active.

A possible objective for your group might be something like this:

The objective of our Bible Study Discussion group is threefold in nature:

1. To encourage Bible study and discussion for the purpose of knowing God better and personally.
2. To apply His commandments to our personal lives so that we walk in obedience to His Word.
3. To learn to share our faith with the world we are commanded to disciple.

We will do this by studying a portion of Scripture and discussing it in the group each week. We will aim to apply the passage personally and digest it well enough so as to be able to share the principles with others whom we hope to disciple.

Our objective will be accomplished when these three objectives are a reality in our lives weekly and not just a philosophy or theology.

Select the Type of Study

Before you start inviting people to a discussion group, determine what type of Bible study you want to do. There are many good materials available for any type

NOTES

#85 / 85 Grouping

Deeper in word



Marking a plan in

and cover better

John 15:16

Each one young
Christian / non-Christian

God

yourself

others in word
follow
Christianity

of Bible study. Some Navigator materials that may be helpful to you are:

- Leader's Guide for Evangelistic Bible Studies (Using the Gospel of John) - The leader is the only one who needs to prepare for this type of study.
- Design for Discipleship - This series of seven books lets helps a Christian grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ. This series is very good for people with a Bible Study background. There are more thought questions which require some previous knowledge of basic Bible truths.
- Search the Scriptures - A method of studying books of the Bible one chapter at a time is presented.
- Studies in Christian Living - This series of nine books encourages growth as a disciple of Jesus Christ. It takes you from a simple question-answer type of Bible study to a chapter analysis study. This series is ideal for people who have little or no Christian background because it presumes no prior knowledge of the Scriptures. But the later books can also be used very successfully with any group of young believers who are eager to learn basic Bible doctrine as well as how to analyze passages for themselves.

Invite the People

Once you obtain the materials you need, begin inviting people to the study. Whom you invite depends upon what type of study you are planning. For example, you would invite non-Christians to an evangelistic study.

When inviting people be specific. Tell them what you are planning to do, when you plan to meet and how many weeks it will take to complete the course of study. It is a good rule to have the first study course last no longer than six weeks. Then you can make plans with the group for further study if they show continued interest. One way to get a neighborhood Bible discussion group started is to invite several people to your home for coffee and dessert. Then you can share your desire to start a Bible discussion group and ask them to join you.

In a dormitory or barracks just invite people to the first session. At work you may find a few people interested in joining you for discussion during the lunch hour.

Considerations for Inviting the People

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- Invite people who have common interest background, education, vocation, age or location.
- Be positive and enthusiastic about the study.
- Explain that in order to have an interesting and profitable study, you are going to ask them to commit themselves for a specific period of time and to do the individual preparation necessary for the study.
- Don't pressure people to come. Interested people make the best members.
- Keep the group small enough to be manageable. Five to eight people is ideal. A group this size is big enough to provide an interesting discussion, but small enough for everyone to share.
- If only one person comes, rejoice. That's all you need to get a group started.

People often accept an invitation to a Bible study and then fail to come. It is easy for them to forget something that is not part of their normal routine. The devil desires to keep people from God's Word and will set obstacles and distractions in the way. Remind them of the study a day or two in advance. After the first couple of weeks this shouldn't be necessary. By then they will have discovered the profit of their Bible discussion group.

Prepare the Lesson and Discussion

Preparation

A successful Bible study leader needs to prepare for every session. Purposeful, stimulating and rewarding discussions seldom "just happen." It requires careful and prayerful preparation, and the degree of success is usually proportional to the thoroughness of the preparation.

What kinds of preparation are necessary for the leader to do?

The Leader Must Prepare Himself

...in the art of discussion leading. It will be helpful for you as the leader to read these notes periodically. As your experience increases, your

understanding of these principles will deepen and these notes will become a part of you. But until that time, it will help to review the suggestions listed in these notes.

..in the study itself. In order to lead well, the leader's personal preparation must be adequate. If you have already done the study some time ago, review it in depth before leading it. Many leaders become slack in their review, and as a result the discussion suffers.

..in prayer. The most important part of any discussion is you, the leader--not materials or methods. Personal preparation in prayer is therefore essential. You should pray:

- for your own personal dependence upon God during the discussion,
- for wisdom to lead the discussion well,
- for sensitivity to each member of the group,
- and that the Holy Spirit will cause those things to be emphasized which He wants to teach the group.

Practical Considerations

Many practical details affect the success of a group. You need to plan in advance for your guests. Have every thing ready when they arrive so you can devote your attention to the people and not to last-minute details which should have been taken care of before.

- Meet in a comfortable atmosphere.

Make sure the room is not too large or too small. The warmth of a living room, the unity of a kitchen table, or the informality of a dorm room or barracks all lean themselves to a learning atmosphere.

- Make appropriate physical arrangements.

Meet in a circle because this is the best arrangement to see and discuss with one another. Plan your seating in advance. Don't sink into a soft chair--be as high or higher than your group for good eye contact.

- Maintain good lighting.

Lighting not only helps illuminate the room, it also creates a warm feeling. No one should have to look into the sun or toward a bright window.

- Provide proper ventilation.

Too much heat or cold will make group members uncomfortable. Start with a well-aired room which is warm enough to be comfortable.

- Guard against distractions.

pets, TV's, radios, etc. take attention away from the discussion. Make arrangements with babysitters if they are needed.

- Start and stop on time.

Starting promptly will encourage late comers to be on time. Stopping on time is courteous and thoughtful since people may have other commitments after the meeting. It is better to quit on time and not finish the study than to cover every point.

- Consider refreshments.

These are not essential, though they do encourage people to stay around and meet informally after the study. If you have refreshments, let them be simple so as not to require extravagant preparation which could be better spent in prayer for the Bible study. Elaborate refreshments can even become a distraction rather than a help to a discussion group.

You will discover other practical details as you lead your group. Strive for the best possible situation. However, remember God working in hearts is the key to successful Bible study.

The First Meeting

This is the most important meeting, since you will set the stage for the following weeks. It is almost impossible to overestimate the importance of the first meeting. The impressions created during this meeting may influence the participation of the members for weeks to come.

Remember this is a group discussion. You are the leader not the director. Be unpretentious and honest. Don't assume airs of superiority, but exhibit the quiet confidence that comes from having a plan and knowing how to execute it.

The effective discussion leader will act as a chairman and guide, not as a teacher or authority, because he realizes the authority is the Word of God and the teacher is the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures are the sword of the Spirit. The leader's role is to guide

the discussion, encouraging personal interaction according to each individual's need. This means the Bible will be the focus of attention, not the leader.

Your major objectives for this meeting are fourfold in nature.

Get Acquainted

Honest discussion and interaction takes place best when people know one another. As each person arrives introduce him to the others. To help the people remember each other's names call each person by name as often as possible. Name tags can also be useful.

Help them get to know one another by having each person share about himself. Start with general, impersonal questions. Home town, occupation and hobbies are good topics to begin with. You should share first. This helps establish what to cover and how long to take. If the group is comprised of Christians, you can have each share a brief testimony. By this time everyone should feel relaxed in the group.

Introduce the Materials

Now it is time to introduce the group to the Bible study plan and give them any materials they will need. If you are using printed materials, be sure to go over the introduction and instructions carefully. To help everyone pay close attention, go around the circle having each person read a paragraph. Stop and discuss what has been read whenever a question arises.

Set a Standard

It is also important that everyone adheres to a set of standards for the study. You, as a leader, should suggest these standards. Be sure not to assume a dictatorial attitude and start telling everyone what is expected. Instead you might say something like, "Can we agree that everyone will finish the study before the discussion each week?" (or "complete the assigned lesson?") Everyone should concur on the importance of attendance at the discussions and the preparation of the Bible study. It is crucial that we also agree that the Bible will be our final authority for the Bible will take precedence over every other book, idea or feeling in the discussion. Even in an evangelistic study where some members may not

believe that the Bible is God's Word, you can establish this important ground rule by saying: "Since we have all come here to study what the Bible has to say, let's establish that we will look to the Bible for the last word on whatever we are discussing." Most non-Christians will agree to this, and it sets an important precedent for any later problems that may arise.

Get Started

Ask God to guide the discussion and to teach you from His Word. Get the people started doing the study. There should be a sense of expectancy in the group. Enthusiasm can often be developed as the people actually do a little of the study. Without leaving on their seats, ask them to quietly start working on the first part of their study. This should probably take five to ten minutes.

Then ask the group to share what they have discovered from this little glimpse into God's Word. There probably won't be time to discuss these observations extensively. Instead, work at creating curiosity and anticipation for the rest of the study.

Be sure not to disparage the responses from the group at this first meeting...especially as they share what they have learned from the Bible study time. Instead, work at giving sincere compliments. People are encouraged by praise.

As you complete the time of sharing, close in prayer. If you have budgeted your time carefully, you should not be running late. Each of the four steps should take about one fourth of the time.

As you adjourn, remind everyone of the time and place of the next meeting and their assignment.



The Cost of Discipleship

Several months ago, a businessman and I were having lunch together. During the meal, I asked him what was uppermost in his thinking. He replied that he was in the process of reevaluating the cost/results ratio in his corporation. The concept was simple. To stay in business, he had to make sure that the cost of manufacturing his product was not greater than the price for which he could sell it.

Even I could understand the importance of a cost/results ratio. If it cost me \$5 to make a product, and I sold it for \$4.50, I would soon be out of business. As I mused over this concept, I thought how much the benefits of being a Christian exceed the cost. In fact, discipleship has been designed by God with our best interest at heart. It was not designed to "help God out," but rather to "help us out."

God does not need our help. It is we who need God's. Discipleship was designed by God in order to give us the help we need.

One spring a family of five was driving through Georgia in a Volkswagen. It was late at night and raining so heavily they could hardly see 100 feet down the road. As they were inching their way along, they noticed a man and woman walking along the highway in the pouring rain. They pulled over, asked if they could help, and noticed that the woman carried a baby in her arm.

She said they lived in a town several miles back but the electrical storm had caused a short in the wiring of their house, starting a fire that burned it to the ground. They had barely escaped with their lives and were walking to the next town some seven miles away to stay with her sister and family until further provision could be made. Feeling sorry for the destitute family and realizing there was no room for them in the VW, the man reached into his wallet, pulled out \$20, gave it to the woman and drove off into the night.

A couple of miles down the highway, he stopped and asked his family, "How much money do you have?" Their pooled resources came to a little under \$100. He drove back to where the couple was still walking. "Do you have the money I gave you?" he asked.

Quite surprised, the woman said, "Yes, we do."

"Then give it to me."

Perplexed, she reached into her pocket, pulled out the \$20, and handed it to him. He combined it with the money he had and handed it all to her saying, "Here, our family would like you to have this."

When I first heard this story, I thought, What a beautiful and precise illustration of how God treats us. Our Lord gives us so many

wonderful gifts, and then He comes to us and says, "I would like to have them all back--every one of them." He does this so He can combine them with His unlimited resources and give them all to us.

Discipleship is our opportunity to tap the infinite resources of God. It is our chance to give our lives to significance rather than mediocrity. In discipleship we are not doing God a favor, He is doing us a favor. It is vital that the disciple grasp this important concept.

However, Jesus also warns us to weigh the cost and weigh it well, for discipleship will cost us something. It will cost us our lives. But the results are infinitely greater than the cost, so much greater that one would be foolish to turn down such an offer.

Let's walk through Luke 14 together and note some principles of discipleship as Jesus brings this great concept into focus.

Verse 1: "And it came to pass, as He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath day, that they watched Him." Wherever Jesus went, the eyes of people were upon Him. He claimed to be the Author of a brand new way of life. He said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). And because of His claim to uniqueness, *people watched His every move to see if He was genuine.

What was true for the Savior in this respect is true for all godly people. The Christian or "Christ-one" is an ambassador of Jesus Christ. As His disciples, we claim to be in touch with reality; and consequently, the world watches us also.

Our Lord always lived by principle, never by circumstance. As His disciples, how do we live? By circumstance or by principle?

Your car is old; things are wearing out and are starting to give you trouble. The time has come for you to trade it in. So you make that familiar trek to the dealer. The salesman looks you in the eye, "Is there anything wrong with it?" You now have the choice to live by principle or by circumstance. Do you tell him the truth or a lie? The disciple is one who in every area of his life determines from the Bible what is right and lives it consistently, rather than allowing circumstances to shape his conduct.

Verse 2: "And, behold, there was a certain man before Him which had the dropsy." Jesus was constantly in touch with the needy. They were always "before Him." Seldom, if ever, in our Lord's ministry did a person come for help and get turned down. Jesus seemed to deny the Syrophenician woman, but even then He ultimately met her need.

Another great principle of discipleship comes into focus for us.

The disciple is one who is in constant touch with people in need.

*As Jesus' disciple, are you constantly meeting other people's needs?

Verses 8-10: "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, 'Give this man place'; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, 'Friend, go up higher'; then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee."

Jesus is in the house of one of the chief Pharisees. It is time to eat, and people begin to elbow their way to the best seats around the table. Observing this, He uses the situation to teach a principle.

When you come to the table, don't take the seat of honor. For when the host comes in with the guest of honor, he will have to ask you to move. The host will feel embarrassed because he has to move you; the guest of honor will feel embarrassed because he has to take your place; all the other guests will be embarrassed because they have to witness all this; and you will be embarrassed because you are the one moved.

Rather, says Jesus, when you come to the table, find the lowest seat and sit there. Then when the host comes in and realizes that you, the guest of honor, are sitting in the lowest seat, he will move you to the seat of honor. As he moves you, he will think, My, what a humble man he is. And as you move from the lowest to the best seat, you will be honored before everyone. How pleasant! Jesus is providing instruction that will result in your feeling good rather than bad.

An important lesson for the disciple emerges from these three verses; namely, that the commandments of God are never whimsical or arbitrary but are designed for our best. God is not in heaven thinking, I wonder how I can make life miserable for these creatures of Mine. Instead, He is thinking, What are some guidelines I can give my children to teach them how to live life to the fullest. God's laws and commandments are designed to help us, not hinder us. They are meant to make us happy and fulfilled. They were written to keep us out of trouble. If the disciple could learn this one lesson, many of life's problems would be resolved.

Verse 11: "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Just as football has its double reverse, so also does God. It is in the form of a simple truth: our appetites and innate desires are not wrong in themselves but are God-created. They become wrong when we seek to satisfy or fulfill them in any unscriptural way.

For example, there is nothing wrong with wanting to be exalted or to be first or to live or to be free or to be a leader--or any of a dozen other drives or appetites. What Jesus is saying is that they

must be satisfied in His way. The key to being first is being last. The key to living is dying. The key to being free is being Christ's slave. The key to getting is giving. The key to being exalted is to live a life characterized by humility.

Everybody wants to live, but nobody wants to die. Everybody wants to be free but nobody wants to be a slave. Everybody wants to get, but nobody wants to give. And this is precisely where we run into conflict with God.

He created the world, He made us, He made life, He made the rules by which we ought to live our lives. So often we want the results that God promises, but we don't want to pay the price. And in our scheming little minds, we think, "Surely it must be possible to get without giving, to be first without really being last, to live without really dying." And so we endeavor to shortcut God's rules for the game of life. But the Bible teaches us that when we shortcut the rules we short circuit the system. In no way can a person get without giving or truly live without dying. The disciple is one who has learned this great truth and is living his life accordingly.

Verses 15-24: "And when one of them that sat at meat with Him heard these things, he said unto Him, 'Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.'"

"Then said He unto him, 'A certain man made a great supper, and bade many; and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, "Come, for all things are now ready." And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it. I pray thee have me excused." And another said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."

"So that servant came, and showed his Lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." And the servant said, "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room." And the Lord said unto the servant, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

As Jesus is eating with the chief Parisee and his guests, one of the people in a burst of enthusiasm says, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God!" Jesus then proceeds to tell the parable of the Great Supper. The parable obviously refers to the kingdom of heaven and to that great feast with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Why would anyone reject an invitation to dine at God's table? Only if they did not know who was extending the invitation. As Paul says, "None of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory" (1 Cor. 2:8). The Romans and the religious leaders of the

Jews crucified Jesus Christ because they did not know who He was. People today refuse God because they are not aware of who is extending the invitation.

The parable of the Great Supper reveals that a preoccupation with the insignificant makes it impossible to bring priorities into perspective.

Possibly if our Lord Jesus were to tell the parable today, He would talk about building a dream house instead of buying a piece of ground. Instead of five yoke of oxen, He would refer to a business venture or playing the stock market. His marriage example would remain the same, for marriage through the centuries has never changed.

Becoming a Christian is free of charge. It costs the believer absolutely nothing. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). But there is a cost attached to becoming a disciple. The cost is to become involved in God's "things" rather than our own. How easy it is for the Christian to become preoccupied with his dreams, his aspirations, his own little deal, and miss God's perfect plan for his life.

Rarely does the Spirit of God shout at a person. His voice usually comes in the form of an inner prodding (as the believer reads the Scriptures). The disciple is one who is in tune with the voice of the Spirit of God.

Verse 25: "And there went great multitudes with Him." It has always been in vogue to speak a good word for Jesus. The politician is assured of extra votes if he can work a quote or two from the Bible into his orations. Gandhi, though a staunch Hindu, was an admirer of Jesus Christ. Yes, the multitudes have always followed Jesus. But note who it is that hears Jesus Christ. "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him" (Luke 15:1). The multitudes followed Him; the publicans and sinners heard Him.

This is the way it has always been, and it is the way it will probably always be. Christianity is a religion of rescue. It is designed for the desperate. It is for people who have a craving for something more than they can eke out of life by themselves. They are candidates for what Jesus has to say. They are the ones who "hear Him," who not only listen to what He says, but act on it. One of the fundamental requisites for true discipleship is a spirit of desperation that burns deep within the soul.

Verses 26-33: "If any man come to Me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient

to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with 10,000 to meet him that cometh against him with 20,000? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassador, and desireth conditions of peace.

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple."

Now we begin to talk about the cost. It starts with a willingness to renounce all other loyalties in preference to Jesus Christ.

Numbers 14 describes the children of Israel at Kadesh-barnea about to enter the Promised Land when the twelve scouts return, bringing back an "evil report." The cost of entering the Promised Land is far too high; for alas, giants live there, the sons of Anak (see Num. 13:32-33). In a moment of terror, the people decide to turn back, with the excuse that the giants would kill their wives and children.

God never promised there would be no giants. He simply promised that He would assume responsibility for their safe arrival in the Promised Land. But in their panic, the Hebrews hid behind their wives and children. One of the first signs of unbelief is an undue concern for family.

To be a disciple of Jesus Christ I must follow Him and do His bidding even when it appears that it will cost me my mother and my father, my wife (or husband), my children.

To drive home the impact of this cost, Jesus uses two graphic illustrations--building a tower and preparing for battle.

Verse 28 describes a man starting to build a tower but not finishing it. Have you ever started something and failed to finish it? Have you ever made a promise and failed to keep it? Have you ever vowed a vow and not fulfilled it? If so, Solomon has a word of counsel for you: "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth. Therefore let thy words be few. When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for He hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay" (Eccl. 5:2, 4-5).

When I lived in Fort Worth I had to make frequent business trips to Dallas. As I drove along the freeway, I used to pass a large structure which appeared to be an unfinished apartment house. The skeleton was there; but for some reason, it was never completed. Month after month I drove past the structure, but there was no apparent progress on the building. Later I discovered that a man had started building, but had miscalculated the cost. He had exhausted his

credit and was unable to draw any income from the apartment house. It stood as a monument to his poor planning.

Jesus used this kind of situation to emphasize the importance of carefully counting the cost of being a disciple before committing oneself. Don't start something unless you are willing to finish it.

Note that Jesus said, "...and is not able to finish it." The Dallas contractor was not able to finish his building. For the disciple, however, the ability traces back to the will. The ability to be a disciple is ours through the resources of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:3); the only factor we need to add to the equation is that of our will.

The Lord Jesus gave a second illustration on counting the cost: a king going to war. When engaging our enemy in battle, two questions must be answered. First, can I with my resources beat him? Second, do I want to pay the price involved in beating him? If the answer to either of these questions is no, it is wiser to send an ambassador and sue for peace.

The Lord Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Gates are for defense, not offense. Have you every heard of a person going to battle swinging a pair of gates at the enemy? Gates are used to keep the enemy out. The disciple is called upon to do battle against the massed forces of Satan, to break down the gates of Hell and set the prisoners free in Jesus' name. Jesus promises that when we do battle like this, the gates of hell shall not prevail against us. But there is a cost involved in doing battle.

"If you are unwilling to pay the cost," says the Lord, "then send your ambassador and sue for peace." As a Christian you can go to the devil and say, "Look, Satan, I am already a Christian and I am on my way to heaven; but I want to make a deal with you. If you leave me alone, I will leave you alone. I will not be a true disciple of Jesus Christ. I will not threaten your hold over the lives of men or invade your kingdom. In return, don't you bother me. Let me live in comfort and quiet."

And the devil will say, "Friend, you've got yourself a deal."

But remember, Satan is a liar and the father of liars. You have no guarantee that he will not double-cross you. The cost you will pay for not being a disciple is infinitely greater than the cost you pay for being one.

Verses 34-35: "Salt is good; but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Jesus concludes His dissertation on discipleship with this strange parable of the savorless salt. For a long while I could not understand its relation to discipleship. Then one day it occurred to me that this parable is an illustration of the believer who refuses to be a disciple. It is God's design that every believer be a disciple. But when one goes back on his commitment, he becomes good for nothing. You can't save him; he is already saved. You can't use him; he is unavailable. He is like savorless salt. "Men cast it out."

Week after week as you see him going along to church, he becomes an example of what not to be. All you can say to your "Timothy" is, "See that man? He is a believer who has refused to pay the price of becoming a disciple. In making that decision, he has relegated himself to a life of mediocrity. Given a chance to be first, he has chosen to be last. To use the words of the Lord Jesus, he is a savorless salt. Whatever you do, don't become like him."

When Cortez landed at Vera Cruz in 1519 to begin his dramatic conquest of Mexico with a pocket-sized force of 700 men, he purposely set fire of his fleet of eleven ships. His men on the shore watched their only means of retreat sinking to the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico. With no means of retreat, there was only one direction in which to move, forward into the Mexican interior to meet whatever might come their way.

In paying the price for being Christ's disciple, you too must purposefully destroy all avenues of retreat. Resolve in your heart today that whatever the price for being His follower, you are willing to pay it. Either that, or send your ambassador and sue for peace.

A Proper View of God and Man

Every problem a person has is related to his concept of God. If you have a big God, you have small problems. If you have a small God, you have big problems. It is as simple as that. When your God is big, then every seeming problem becomes an opportunity. When your God is small, every problem becomes an obstacle.

Every disciple should have a clear understanding of: (1) who God is, and (2) who he is.

You will never have a proper understanding of who God is until you understand yourself. The converse, however, is also true. You will never have a true understanding of yourself until you understand who God is. These two ideas are mutually dependent. The two questions of who God is and who we are find answers in Isaiah 40-66. Let's consider some passages.

The Nature and Character of God

Isaiah 40:3-5: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.'"

The Bible teaches that God is a glorious, self-manifesting God. The whole purpose of the devotional life is to see His majesty and become absorbed with His glory. We read in verse 4 that God has removed every obstacle standing in the way of our fellowship with Him. We see, then, that the Lord is the initiator of the relationship. For us to know God is His idea, not ours. Christianity is unique among the religions of the world in that it consists not of man seeking God, but God seeking men.

Isaiah 40:10-11: "Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

Notice the delicate balance between God's strength and power on the one hand, and His extreme gentleness on the other. Our God is a powerful God, for by Him were all things created (see Isaiah 40:26, 28). The psalmist says, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth" (Ps. 33:6). Science has taught us that energy is the substance from which matter is made. God created the universe by the sheer power of His Word. His Word is creative energy.

The illustration in Isaiah 40:11 is that of a shepherd tending his flock. It teaches us that the Lord will do two things--feed us and lead us. He has made all of our needs His responsibility. So also is the burden for giving us His direction.

Isaiah 40:13-14: "Who hath directd the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counselor hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and showed to Him the way of understanding?"

These questions are rhetorical, the answer obviously being no one. Why is it that no one has ever been a counselor to God? Or that no one has ever shown Him the way to go? Simply stated, it is that He has never had to ask. He Himself said, "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure'" (Isa. 46:9-10).

Isaiah 40:15-17: "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, He taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity."

This puts the world in its proper perspective. It is easy to look at the wrong things and become discouraged--the decadence of the human race, our own propensity for evil, our inability to control ourselves, the fact that our increased technology has often only added to our problems--all of these are enough to make many people cynical and bitter. If it is not war, then it is crime. If it is not crime, then it is scandal. If it is not scandal, then it is natural disasters. Something is always wrong.

World powers do not shape the destinies of men; neither do the economic, political, or philosophical leaders of the world. God says the mightiest of nations is less than a drop in the bucket, and as insignificant as a tiny speck of dust on a balance. He is in control!

Isaiah 40:28: "Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding." The Lord God never grows tired, never runs out of ideas, never is at a loss as to what to do or where to go. He is in perfect and absolute control. He never makes mistakes. If we would believe this, a lot of our problems in life would be solved.

There are only two persons who can hurt you--you and God. Satan cannot hurt you. This fact comes through clearly in the Book of Job. We read of the conversation between Satan and God (see Job 1) in which Satan says that he cannot touch Job because God has built a

"hedge" around him. This is true for every believer. The devil cannot touch him except by divine permission.

The wonderful message of the Bible is that God has our best interests at heart. He does not want to hurt us. He thinks only good thoughts about us. He desires the very best for each one of us. So, God has restricted Himself in that He cannot hurt us because of the promises He has made to us.

This, therefore, narrows the field. The only person who can ruin your life is you--no one else. Certainly other people cannot hurt you except with divine permission. If this were not so, it would mean that God is not in control of the destinies of His people. We would then have the ridiculous situation of picturing God wringing His hands in heaven saying, "I sure hope that My servant does not get hit by an automobile or killed in a plane crash."

No one can touch your life but you, and the Bible does teach that it is possible for a person to ruin himself. You are your own worst enemy. But if you are walking by faith and in obedience, and God is who He says He is, then no one else can ruin your life; no one else can make you miss the perfect will of God.

Isaiah 42:1-4: "Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for His law."

This passage is a prophecy relating to Jesus Christ. Jesus said that judgment belongs to Him (see John 5:22-23). The judgment He exercises is according to truth, and it is absolutely consistent with Himself. We have already seen that He never becomes discouraged or fainthearted over the iniquity of the world. Our God will bring forth judgment and equality to this planet called Earth.

Isaiah 42:8: "I am the Lord; that is My name; and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images." The Lord reminds us again and again that He will share His glory with no one. Paul made the same point when he wrote that there are not very many wise and noble people in the kingdom of God (see 1 Cor. 1:26-29). Instead, God gives wisdom to the base and the despised when it is to be used for God's glory.

The Jewish religious leaders called Peter and John unlearned and ignorant men (see Acts 4:13), and yet these unlearned, ignorant fishermen wrote seven of the New Testament books. These seven books are so profound that, through the centuries, great minds have not been able to fathom their depths.

Isaiah 43:11-13: "I, even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no saviour. I have declared, and have saved, and I have showed, when there was no strange god among you; therefore ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. Yea, before the day was I am He; and there is none that can deliver out of My hand. I will work, and who shall let [hinder] it?"

The Bible teaches that God is man's Saviour. He and He alone can save. Consequently, He alone is our security. What He is saying here is: "Beside Me there is no security." Our government through its welfare programs seeks to give its citizens security. Corporations promise employees security through pension plans, medical programs, increased wages, better jobs, and stock options. We are told that man can create his own vehicles of security. In reality, only God can save, only God can deliver, only God can redeem. Only God can give man true security.

We have hardly scratched the surface of these great closing chapters of Isaiah regarding the character and nature of God. How easy it is to see--when we are able to grasp a vision of His greatness--that all of our problems and anxieties are rather insignificant.

The Nature and Character of Man

Isaiah 40:6-7: "The voice said, 'Cry.' And he said, 'What shall I cry?' 'All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass.'" This is how God and the Scriptures view man--not as the great, self-sufficient maker of his own destiny but similar to the grass of the fields, here today, gone tomorrow. James, the brother of the Lord Jesus, put it this way, "For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14). In order to understand man, this is where we must begin.

The brevity of life helps us realize the importance of giving ourselves to the right thing. The psalmist said: "For he seeth that wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others. Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names. Nevertheless man being in honor abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him" (Ps. 49:10-12, 16-17).

What was true in the day of the psalmist is true today. "They call their lands after their own names." The states of Maryland, Louisiana, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, all stand as a testimony to this! A man in one of the cities of Michigan had a great