

A Disciple's Handbook

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP

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The Supernatural Church and its Commission

Believers need to be nurtured in order to grow as disciples. The '*great commission*' was given by the risen Christ (Messiah) to the original disciples. In it he commands them to "make disciples" of every nation. This reveals two important principles: First that the kingdom would grow through the making of disciples; second, that these disciples would be from not only Judea (the Jews) but from all nations. Prior to this the "Gospel of the Kingdom" was a message limited only to the elected people of Israel who worshiped JHVH God.

In about week after the *ascension*, Jesus' departure into heaven, the "Church" of Jesus Christ came into existence. Previously prophecy hinted at a time when the gentiles would also be gathered into Israel's covenant; but when and how this would happen was not considered seriously nor understood. The Church was born on Pentecost, a Jewish commemoration 50 days after Passover.

When I use the term "church" I imagine it in quotations because not everyone regards this word the same way. How we in the twenty-first century regard it is a far cry from that experienced and understood by the disciples who witnessed the arrival of the Church (the *ekklesia*). It was initiated in power on that day of Pentecost. The church was never meant to be institutional including edifices and temples to gather. It was rather, a body of people who had one thing in common; that they were *born again* by the power of the Spirit of God and became adopted as *the children of God*. The church in its mode of meeting may consist of a gathering of any number of individual believers with as few as two or more.

Typically we refer to the church as its familiar church meeting-house model, a dedicated meeting house location where Christians gather. It is sometimes called a house of "worship." This is not the original New Testament model. The term *ekklesia*, *ek-kle-si'-a* in the original Greek text, is translated "church" throughout the Bible. The proper connotation of *ekklesia* is *the called out, the gathered out*

ones. We tend to assume that church life in early Christian times is equal to its present day form. However, the form of the 'church' in the days of the apostles was unlike our modern understanding of religious practices that occur in a church house.

In ancient times an ekklesia was a gathering in which members came together to transact a specific kind of business on behalf of a community. In the case of the Christian ekklesia it is the business of the Heavenly Shepherd, Christ Jesus. In this kind of fellowship all members are free to participate actively. As members of this church body we have been called *out of the world* by the power of the Holy Spirit to be a part of Christ's Body.

Christ the Messiah, is the head of HIS body. All called-out members become a part of the body. Each individual brings with them unique abilities and gifts. The Spiritual gifts provide what is needed for the growth of God's Kingdom. It is *grace* provides the activation or enablement of those many gifts that are needed for Spiritual fellowship and growth in understanding. (1 Peter 4:11) The body functions and grows with the empowerment of God's grace.

Becoming A Disciple

Membership (our discipleship) in the Body of Christ, occurs through faith by ***believing***.

What do we need to *sincerely believe and acknowledge*?

We have to have a belief that addresses:

Who Jesus is, (Christology) – He is the *Son of the highest, the Lamb of God, Savior of mankind, God in human flesh, the creator and Coming King.*

What He has done, and can do *He has the power to forgive all of our sins, He has the power to make us into a New Creation.*

What we expect Him to do for us. *To take away our sins, remove all uncleanness and unworthiness, to save us from destruction and the wrath of judgment, and bring us into eternal life, Christ Jesus has paid the penalty of every sin of humanity on the cross.*

We Come to Jesus Believing That:

He is alive, He is enthroned in glory.

He is supernaturally empowered and able to meet with us, meet our needs, and change-remake our lives.

That He is willing and able to fulfill every promise that He promised in His word. (The Bible is true, the inspired Word of God.)

Religious notions are expressed in church ministries

There is a general attitude that joining a church is the source of entry into God's kingdom. This is assuredly not the case! The entry point in reality, is having your

name written in the "Book of Life." No church can do this although they would like to have that authority. The membership of becoming a disciple is established by a supernatural and sovereign act of God. It has been called by various names: Coming from death into life; being born of the spirit; becoming a new creation; being born again; having your sins forgiven and wiped clean, being born from above. Every "Believer" must say, "Yes" to His call.

Actions of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the divine personage who brings to each believer the gifts or enablements of Grace.

The Spirit is also called the Comforter;
the Helper;
the Gift giver;
the Power from on high;
the Spirit of Truth;
The Spirit of Jesus.

The Spirit is a gentle one, like a dove. He does not speak for himself. The role of the Holy Spirit is always going to reveal Jesus and deliver His knowledge, His attributes of character, and His power to us.

We who are *called* to partake in the Kingdom of God are empowered by His Spirit to grow, mature, gain experience and develop our own *testimonies* concerning heavenly things. These testimonies are our personal 'God Stories.' "We declare the things we know and we testify about the things that we have seen." (John 3:11) This is what it means when the resurrected Jesus declares, "You shall be witnesses to me, In Jerusalem, In Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

These God stories and testimonies, when shared, build faith among those with whom we share. Testimonies describe the reality and the dynamics of how heaven has touched us individually. Through the power of Grace, we are not only regenerated and positioned into the kingdom of God, but also endowed with various Spiritual gifts. These gifts are supplied to every believer as enablements that bear witness of God's presence in our own day to day experience. There is through the ongoing Grace of God the ability to learn the Word, to depart from the past life from which we were rescued, to mature and grow as a disciple. Church house religion, has proven to be deficient in providing a platform to grow and flourish as a disciple. Every believer-disciple is to be a partaker in the things of God. It is God's intention to use all whom he calls. The true expression of the ekklesia is to provide a platform for both growth and ministry. Such a platform is mostly absent in the majority of traditional churches.

Among the assertions I want to present in our discussions of discipleship is that we as believers after being born of the Spirit, may not only know God, but that we (all men, women, boys, or girls) can receive a spiritually *empowered* life. The "church" as Jesus Christ established it, was given this indispensable provision. But in spite of this provision, both knowing God and developing a spiritual life, is often unrealized. Time, circumstance and unrelenting forces of spiritual resistance by our spiritual adversary assail believers, to derail or to side track us from attaining the Spiritual life. Religious traditions are substituted instead. Jesus warned his disciples in Mark 15 to beware of *the leaven of the Pharisees and also the leaven of Herod*, superficial religiosity, and worldliness. Jude, half brother and an apostle of Jesus, writes in his brief letter, that we must, " - - *earnestly contend for the faith given to us once and for all by the apostles.*"

AN INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP

Disciples, Learning the "Way"

The foundation of the life of Christ begins when we become a disciple of Jesus. As Jesus made disciples in the time of His earthly ministry, so he continues today. (John 8:21 ; 17:20) Religion has made the life of the Bible dry, remote and impersonal. Christian religion has made Peter, James and John or John the Baptist into icons or religious folk heroes. The sense of these being our brothers in the faith, sharing the same life of trials, has been all but lost. In our minds Bible days were another time, another kind of application. This is not so. Religious tradition places the apostles on pedestals. This should not be so, because it is contrary to every apostolic and Christ-uttered teaching. God does not show favoritism nor does he show respect of persons. We do not worship men. Even the greatest were partakers of a "gift" as we are.

A short time after the apostolic age, lust for human rulership and impure motives undermined the apostolic foundations. Liberty and spiritual forms of worship began to erode. We are entitled to the same promises and gospel practices that New Testament believers knew. The Christian life, being Holy Spirit inspired, is not of human authorship nor human tradition. It is the way that I have found to be God inspired, life-changing, fulfilling, and in perfect accord with the Bible.

Discipleship described here is modeled by the saints and apostles in the beginning of this *church age*. Many denominations and religious teachers, attempt to mentor and advise others about the spiritual life. Since there has been a history of promoting religious traditions instead of knowing God, it is important that we look to grow in wisdom through the guidance of the *Spirit of Truth*, the *Holy Spirit*.

God has told us through the Word (James) that we may ask for wisdom or truth to be revealed to us. He further instructs us to be confident knowing that God is willing to give *good gifts*

which bring fulfillment and blessings and not sorrows. When seeking the revelations which are of God and not false we must be fully aware of the risk of error and counterfeit.

Deception and false teaching is everywhere. In order to discern the true from the false It is very important to invoke the name of Jesus Christ. His is the *name above every name!* And also know that His Spirit will not lead us into bondage, fear, submission to abusive men, or lawlessness. Meekness, gentleness, compassion and service to others is the right spirit.

The Bible teaches that Jesus' name commands all powers of heaven and earth. It is above the authority of any other god or angel or worldly authority. The word states that at the name of Yeshua, Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess his lordship. It is in His name that we can consecrate any prayer or any request. It is a safeguard and assurance that anything which will be revealed or imparted spiritually will be without deceptive influence. If you ask in Jesus, name *the deceiver* is unlikely to make his intrusion.

The Seeker Becomes Reconciled with God

The Spirit of Christ Jesus is the spirit of love, forgiveness, gentleness, meekness, selflessness, and patience. *The nine fruit of the Spirit define Christ's character.* His Spirit is not tinged with fear, with condemnation, with urgency or panic, It is not contaminated by a lust for personal gain, ownership of another or any desire to control or manipulate another person. Check yourself if you are seeking with motives containing any of the negatives stated above for they are contrary to the nature of the God who will insure your being lead into truth.

Receiving True Gifts and not Counterfeit

Jesus instructs us about receiving gifts from God, especially the gift of the Holy Spirit. He teaches us that the God of heaven gives *good gifts* and not devilish or perverted ones. Christ also characterizes the fact that there are two sources who might affect spiritual results. God's gifts are good and true. Let us look at the scripture found in Matthew 7:8-11 and in Luke 11:11-13: These shed light on Spiritual gifts. The greatest gift is to become a "New Creation." It is the gift of God to recreate our nature into something fit for God's purposes. See 2 Corinthians, 5:17.

"For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened." Matt 6:8; "Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? v.9; "Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?":10; "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"- v.11. The two gifts which are requested are bread and a fish, God gives things which are life-giving (bread) and safe (meat of fish). Luke chapter eleven restates the same teaching about asking from God the Father with a slightly different emphasis, and includes the gift of the *Holy Spirit* which is the living gift of God's power and presence: *"If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he*

give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?"; "Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" -- Luke 11:11-13

The references to the counterfeit gifts are not just coincidental or random examples they represent the fact that there is a source of the *bad gift*. The enemy is Satan. He does not give good gifts, nor give valid revelations. His gifts are not life giving, they give neither joy, nor health nor liberty. Yet it is possible that he will try to come in unless you exclude him from having any part of the asking and seeking transaction (namely the spiritual search for a spiritual life.) Satan's gift is characterized as a stone instead of bread, as a serpent instead of pure food, a poisonous scorpion instead of an egg. Jesus has portrayed Satan as the deadly counterfeiter who will insinuate himself into the seekers life subtly and at any opportunity. Forewarned is forearmed; for this reason we will need to initiate safe guards and precautions as I suggested above in order to keep the deceiver out of your life. There was a time when our lives were entirely under his (Satan's) control. We may not think that this was the case but the apostle is very clear about it. A couple of apostolic letters bring attention to the nature of the unredeemed life, common to each and every life before that life is renewed *In Christ*.

Paul states in his letter to Ephesus, Chapter 2, verses 2 and 3."- - *in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, (Satan) the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; Among whom also we all had our conversation (lifestyle) in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*" Paul's letter to Colossae, Chapter 1 verse 21."And you, that were sometime before now) alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled" Paul's letter to Corinth, Chapter 1 verses 10 and 11, "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God; And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

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CHAPTER 1 B INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW EVERY BELIEVER BECOMES A DISCIPLE

Paul Defines the Apostolic Emphasis

In the first two chapters of his letter to Corinth, Paul presses a very important foundation point. He stresses the difference between a Spiritual (a supernatural message) contrasted to a conceptual one. In chapter 1 verse 17 he states that his gospel emphasis is not based upon words of human wisdom (analysis or philosophy) but in the display of *power (greek; dunamis)* that is supplied from heaven where Jesus Christ is now enthroned. It was on the cross where the exchange of righteousness was made. The cross is where the messiah died paying the sin debt of humanity. Yeshua Jesus paid the price with his sacred blood for any sinner who received that the cross bought pardon and a new life. This doctrine of the power of the cross is about far more than a man's death for it was prophecy foretold and fulfilled. "*The lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world,*" for the fallen race of humanity. Christ died, was buried and raised in power. Thus the doctrine that Paul emphasizes includes both the death and the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah. The resurrection was the proof that the mission of Jesus to redeem a fallen race was fulfilled. The foundation of the Christian faith is the fact that Jesus was crucified, dead, buried and is risen. He now is the Eternal Sovereign who reigns from heaven and in a time soon to come he will rule upon the earth. In the holiday we call Easter, Jesus fulfilled Jewish Spring festivals of *Passover, Unleavened bread and First Fruits*. These Jewish festivals are called *moedim* they point to a future prophetic event. They are also portrayed as a kind of "dress rehearsal."

It is truly unfortunate that so few Christians understand or honor the Jewish roots of Christianity. The fact that Jesus (Yeshua) and most of the first disciples and apostles were Jews points to God's chosen race as the foundation upon which we believing gentiles have been established and *grafted in*. Yeshua rose from the dead, *ascended on high, took captivity captive, and gave gifts to all who would believe*. The cross illuminates the ultimate victory of life over death, not sorrow or loss. The resurrection speaks of *the power of an endless life, laying a foundation of redemption for all believers*. It reveals the Father's plan to extend grace and peace to every man, woman and child who believes. Jesus' resurrection speaks about the supernatural gift of eternal life, *becoming a new creation in Christ*.

It is sad, or I might say tragic, to find people who profess to be Christians who neither understand or experience the "*Power of God.*" Without a resurrection there would be no power of God. There would be no new creation, no witness of heavenly things. There be no such entity that we call "the church." **Question:** How many Christians today could live out their lives with their same lifestyle and beliefs if there was NO RESURRECTION? The Gospel is predicated upon the supernatural. The **power** (*dunamis*) of God derives from supernatural abilities which God supplies. ***The Gospel is the Power of God. See: Romans 1:18; 1 Peter 1:5; and Romans 1:16.*** These are powerful Biblical proof texts that direct believers to believe in a supernatural Gospel.

Kingdom of God Wisdom Versus Human Wisdom

Paul introduces the theme of wisdom in the opening chapters of 1 Corinthians. Paul contrasts human wisdom to divine wisdom. He explains that a the natural man deems himself wise through the power of reason. He struggles to accept the wisdom of God. God's wisdom is framed in paradoxes and conundrums. Seeming paradoxes such as the least being the greatest; the weak being strong; the first being last; the wise being foolish; the living being dead while the dead are being awakened to live. If these concepts make any sense to you, perhaps God has already opened your eyes in a very significant way. God has framed truth in such a way that Truth sounds preposterous, or irrational to those whose minds are set on things of this world. Spiritual things become a stumbling block for those who are worldly-wise.

The world says,

"Be someone, do your own thing, express your individuality." God says, "Decrease to your wants and self importance and take up your cross. We are told to let the outward "you" be crucified so that the Spirit of Christ can have effective sanctuary and expression in you. The ways of the world and this world's thinking are enemies to God's way. The scientific mind requires proof. The eye measures and discerns the things which the unbeliever considers reality. Yet Christians are entreated to disregard outward manifestations the objectified world. The mind is not the highest faculty to lead and direct.

Sons or daughters of God are led by the Spirit,

(Romans 8:14) - *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God -", are the sons/children of God."* Where spiritual truth is concerned the only reliable and eternal truth is the Word of God. *1 Corinthians 2:14: The natural man (man without the Spirit) receives not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them because they are Spiritually discerned."*

Accessing God's truth and becoming a Christian requires **faith** on our part. Paul, in the same letter to Corinth talks about the priority of proving God and making Spiritual realities

manifest. "*I did not come teaching and preaching with enticing words of man's wisdom but with demonstration of the Spirit and of power that your faith should not stand upon man's wisdom but upon the power of God.* (1Corinthians 2:4,5) The Spiritual life only begins to manifest because of the *grace* of God. It is actually God who gives us the ability to act in faith.

The gospel states with respect to the Kingdom of God, that we are all *pressing into it*. In Luke 16:16 The Lord is pictured as standing at the door knocking and seeking entrance. The action of faith opens that door to him. Again, grace is the initiatory cause, it is God's hand in matters concerning our life that stirs, directs and empowers. Grace is the hand of God outstretched to us, beckoning; he bids us to come forth. We respond to him and we press in to the world of Spiritual life that awaits. The hand of grace is outstretched in love. Grace speaks in the voice of love, kindness, compassion and giving. This love is caring and constructive in nature. Love builds and empowers the body to grow. Love builds the bonds of those who come together to share their faith experience. Love, not knowledge defines the character and the parameters of the spiritual life. There is always a knowledge component involved in studying God's word. We grow and are enlightened from studying the Word of scripture. Little by little precepts grow from information. The Spirit of God gives 'understanding' and begins to make connectivity (*hermeneutic=equals a system of interpretation*) and consistency to the whole of scripture. Scripture reminds us that knowledge alone ultimately has the affect of "puffing up" our egos. We find that knowledge without compassion becomes a deficit. We will always find that the "knowledge" aspect of Christianity is closely linked to "religious systems." We find that even among theological experts there are vast areas of disagreement. In the religious realm expertise should equate to Godly wisdom and Spiritual experience that fully agrees with the apostolic beginnings of the faith. The Spirit of God provides maturity in the study of the word of God.

How much do we have to know before we become Spiritual?

Let me remind you of Jesus' statement: John 5:30 "*I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.*" Why then should you and I try to do the will of God on our own strength? See also John 14:10 and John 15:5 which speaks of *abiding in the vine*.

The Apostle Paul continuously emphasizes *the power (dunamis) that God provides*.

Activation in all spiritual matter derives through Christ Jesus' Spirit. This spirit is given to empower our lives and relationships. The fruit of the Holy Spirit brings the believer into the reality of *Christ in us*. (Galatians 5:22-23)

Fellowship in The Body

The Spiritual relationships within the body of believers lies closer to the center of the gospel than any other factor. The *koinonia*, fellowship and relationship among believers animates the

life of the body of Christ on earth. It was the foundational principle in the apostolic first-century church. In order to glimpse the New Testament church of the Book of Acts, "*They continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread, and with prayer.*" (Acts, Chapter 2:42) The apostles knew the way of God in the richest measure and guided novices into the same vibrant experience. By witnessing first hand the mighty ways of God, the community of faith grew dynamically. In the first century the church which expressed the Kingdom of God expanded throughout far flung regions of the world. A Spiritual and righteous community stands in contrast to a world of unbelief, carnality, and unrighteousness.

God calls us into a family-like community in which *God is not only glorified but in which God continuously interacts with the disciples of this community.* Genuine affection and fellowship with a heavenly focus is what koinonia is about. This 'family' is characterized by sharing the joy of redemption (salvation is the first step in participating in this community.) The intimate fellowship of believers is the closest thing to heaven that God has for us on earth. We share a common mind, a common testimony, a common hope. We are baptized into one Spirit into a common destiny. This community is redemptive owing to the fact that deceptions that tarnish this world can not endure in the presence of the Living God. Things which defile the flesh can't prevail in his presence. We welcome those who enter this community of faith where we find restoration, strength and edification. We come together in fellowship to repair the bumps, bruises, and blemishes that life in this world inflicts upon those who are "*not of this world.*" (See John 17:14, 17:16) The world continues on its own course not hearing and not seeing and resisting the Truth and hating the righteous ones.

The life of that body, called the body of Christ, is 'organic' and natural. It is not defined by laws of human organization or any dogmatic religious requirements. The only limitation is defined by the *authenticity of the personal redemption* that is experienced by each. There are always a few who are masquerading as believers who try to maintain their lives by the strength of their own will and abilities. The **natural man** (without the Spirit) primarily, continues to value worldly matters which are at odds with the God life.

God Chooses People With a Diversity of Human Gifts and Abilities

As we gather in the body we soon realize that there are so many different life experiences. These display the diversities of gifts and abilities. There needs to be a welcoming of these unique gifts that these individuals offer. We are not meant to be like another. However, the path to discipleship is a long and gradual process. Some progress more quickly owing to the grace of God. During the continuous process of discipleship we must be open and teachable. We need to respect the mature and seasoned in matters spiritual. Spiritual experience among the mature may be broad enough to demonstrate a total range of spirituality and anointings.

See Romans Chapter 12; 1Corinthians 12; and 1Corinthians 14, and Ephesians 4. We are reminded that Paul is so bold to admonish his own disciples to "imitate him as he imitates" Christ Jesus.

To Summarize:

Learning Christ according to the Apostles Doctrine requires:

To be spiritually renewed by faith in Jesus Christ

To receive the empowerment of the Holy Spirit

To renew your mind through the study of scripture

To seek personal fellowship of God

To seek the fellowship of God's family-where your loved and valued

To imitate those who have matured spirituality

To walk in faith, (the knowledge that God cares for us in this very present moment)

To minister to others, the same gifts and wholeness that we have received from God

A Disciple's Handbook

CHAPTER 2 KOINONIA

Every Believer Becomes a Disciple -
Matthew 28:19

As many that have received the gift, minister it to one another,
as good stewards of the manifold Grace of God
1Peter4:10

DISCIPLESHIP IS ABOUT PARTAKING IN THE LIFE OF GOD
AND THE MINISTRY OF YESHUA (JESUS)

SHARING, COMMUNICATING,
AND PARTAKING IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Disciples Are Partakers In The Life and Character of Jesus

You Can Become Part of God's Family

*Jesus is the living "head of the church" for all believers. He has provided a way for us to come to the Father, to know him, and to follow him. The original twelve disciples followed him during the Lord's earthly ministry, they walked at his side, conversed with him, and were both **witnesses** to and **partakers** of his Spiritual ministry. They knew his voice; witnessed his power and authority; and marveled at his wisdom. On a strictly physical level they knew him! Nevertheless this was not considered adequate to qualify these original disciples to bring the gospel to the world. They were exhorted to receive a supernatural empowerment which was "the promise of the Father." "Wait in Jerusalem until you receive power from above- -." This is the empowerment that would demonstrate and build the Kingdom of God. In the Christian world today I suspect that too few nominal Christians are able to say they know him on a *Spiritual level*. Yes Christians today are familiar with the name of Jesus the Christ, We hear his name mentioned in sermons, have studied some Biblical doctrines and teachings; but how much do we truly know the power of his love and in the power of his resurrection? Paul teaches us that the **Gospel** is about Christ's power directed to us! Without the manifestation of the *dunamis power* of God we would have another an incomplete*

gospel.

Perhaps the greatest thing to be revealed in the "gospel" is that we not only **may know God's True Son**. We may not only know him but have fellowship with him **and partake** in his divine nature and *in his ministry*. When we gather as believers at any particular place of meeting can we say as we leave that meeting knowing him better because we have witnessed his presence? Can we say that we have heard his voice, or have been empowered by his touch?" **1 Peter 4:10,11** one of my most essential scriptural foundation texts, defines God's idea of the importance of each believer sharing the gift that is uniquely his or her own. Each one of us has received a Spiritual gifting or many gifts. These are to be **shared** from his or her life. Tradition has had the negative effect of discouraging the ordinary believer from being called to ministry, even though apostolic scripture consistently teaches this. Religious tradition suggests that ministry is only for those who are formerly ordained or credentialed.

Maturing as a disciple, is God's expectation for every believer. No church attender should remain a novice, a baby in the faith or an outside observer. Through the power of the Spirit we may attain "unto the stature of a 'mature man' even the stature of Christ." (Ephesians 4). The exaltation of only a single pastoral voice to turn parishioners into disciples is seriously limiting. Pulpit ministry is an unfortunate self-perpetuating legacy of 17 centuries of the "Church" age. Those who in fact have experience in Christ's life and ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit have the title, "elders." Church denominations today use the same term for individuals who are experienced in the doctrines of the denomination. Elders may differ from what religious might label as elders. Elders (or Deacons) should reflect experience of Holy Spirit and Biblical knowledge not equal to those with familiarity with denominal traditions such as Baptist or Catholic.

The apostle John, the disciple who Jesus loved, begins his letter by talking about Spiritual experience as the qualification (credentials) that we must look to and learn from. He noted what he had seen, touched, looked upon, and handled in the Word of life. *(1 John 1:1) That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life, these things we declare unto you - -; This statement points to the hands on experience of Spiritual things which are provided by the Holy Spirit who takes that which Jesus provides and presents this to us. By this the Father is glorified.*

Koinonia is Fellowship, Participation and Sharing Among the Brethren

True fellowship is elusive and hard to achieve since religious traditions tends to separate rather the body more than unite in belonging and feeling of one accord. The wrong motives and wrong understandings create disharmony. Correction is occasionally necessary but in the right Spirit. For we are to have the same Spirit that is Christ's and *"- say the same thing - ", seeking that there be no schisms, walls, or disharmony among us. * *(1 Cor. 1:10,11)* In an ideal Christian fellowship there is an openly expressed bond of love and fellowship and an honoring of the lives of our brethren. Love and acceptance unifies the body and religious

titles only create divisions due to perceived status or supremacy.

Ministry Edifies, Strengthens, and Blesses

Discipling pertains to the edification and maturing of the body of Christ. This need not be a formal sort of ministry as religion class or catechism experienced on Saturday or Sunday fare in a typical congregation. In the form presented by the apostles it is the living, pure, peaceable, and entirely informal sharing of the life of Christ and the acknowledgment of the revelation of the Word of Truth, among believers. In a gathering of believers there is give and take, dialogue and teaching or sharing from the word. There is the idea of the body edifying one another as described in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 and in 1 Peter 4. We pass through various stages as we grow. Just as in the natural, we begin as babies, then children, the strong young 'men', then mature sages expressing the character and spiritual nature of Jesus Christ. So is it in the matter of Spiritual growth. The Bible shows how we each are called to *minister our individual Spiritual gifts to one another*. (Rom.12; 1Cor.12. 1 Cor. 14, and 1Pet 4:10,11)

Any who are not spiritual renewed, or born again, will find koinonia more difficult (or uninteresting) because only those who have been quickened will have an affinity for spiritual food. The proper and best time to edify and grow with one another is when believers come together in koinonia (fellowship). When two or more true believers get together the natural result is to share their common salvation and to have "fellowship" to minister "edification" to each other. When these two or more gather, Jesus joins them and becomes a co-participant! This fellowship process is not complicated, nor is it formal, it is not domination of one individual authority over others. It is not adversarial. Discipleship happens as we share the several gifts given to each believer. Koinonia is about participation, communication and sharing. It begins with actual experiences given as a witness of Jesus' life and resurrection. It is about the revelation of Christ within each person and how he is living through our lives and doing his work through us. **Koinonia is about sharing what Christ has given to each believer and ministering that gift to others.**

Individuals will, in time, accumulate various testimonies and experiences, some have more, some less. There may be some with musical gifts which enhance worship and some with less of that ability. Some may have verbal skills, some less. Some with practical kinds of skills, some not so much. Some may be working through personal tragedies or rejection, while others have already had healing in these areas. All need to be encouraged to participate at some level so that **leadership skills** may be fostered in each. See more about the body and its many parts that come together in God's kingdom (*romans 12, 1 Cor. 12*)

The dynamics of fellowship changes from week to week as fewer or more people are present at a house or meeting place. I believe fellowship should never turn into something that is impersonal or formalistic. However it may become so especially when everything is controlled by one leader. Those unfamiliar with such kinds of fellowship need to experience what things can and do happen in a place of meeting where the Spirit of

God is given liberty! God can make his glorious presence known; lift people out of their fears and oppression; bring joy and healing; restore broken hearts and broken relationships and save peoples souls. The Holy Spirit administers just such actions. (See link to [Why We Gather](#)) Sometimes in an informal gathering we must wait in silence for the Lord to move and illuminate the way. This is because the cares of the world have burdened the minds of many and it takes a little time with our minds focused heavenward to feel the leading of God to inspire and to direct. Those who are new to Koinonia may have questions which can be used as a source of teaching and discussion.

The Encroachment of Formalism

A **Religious spirit** in the form of rulership, control or formalism, continuously stalks the believer with the aim of transforming God-life into *dead religion*. Church liturgy was put together in times past, perhaps following just after the kind of glorious fellowship described above. Liturgical forms may have started with good intentions with the hope of bottling up some very good and worthwhile times of worship, perhaps to preserve some of the glory of an earlier day. If only God's manifest presence could be captured and preserved, but alas it can not. He is moving on as the pillar of cloud moved ahead directed the sojourners in the wilderness in the book of Exodus.

The Bible demonstrates that God's presence can not be captured and preserved. The Israelites of old tried to do so, but when God's Glory departed it was gone they were left with a lifeless object (an idol.) The temple remained, the glory was gone. The brazen serpent remained, but the manifestation of its power was gone. A cistern remained, the fount of living water was gone. God's continued glory and fellowship with us is determined by the hearts of those who gather to worship him.

With passing years catechism remained but the glory had been lost. The ritual enactments remained and the liturgical trappings but the presence of God vanished. Ritual happens, I believe, when men try to duplicate a behavior which once brought forth God's 'glory' through waiting upon Him in faith.

As God's presence leaves it is replaced by religion. Elements and doctrines that remain are a substitute for God's presence. "Ministry" follows a similar transition. Leadership becomes the domain of a very small body of liturgical experts. It has come to pass that the priesthood or the clergy only is trained and authorized to govern and rule over the flock of God. But in the new covenant as it was presented to the saints, discipleship is the domain of every believer.

A Paradigm to Re-think: Abolish the Laity!

God wishes each believer to be a ministering priest, just as he wishes each of us to become a **true worshiper**. What is a true worshiper and what is *worshiping the Father in Spirit and in Truth*? (John 4:23) God is always looking for True Worshipers. Any one other than "true worshipers" fall short in worship. The natural mind is not accustomed to partaking in heavenly things. These are strangers in the inner court of the temple. Our Heavenly Father

looks at the hearts He does not regard the man who is adorned with outward regalia of religious uniform over any common believer whose heart is open. Our Father does not favor a cathedral over a Holy dwelling site inside of us. As Jesus told the woman at the well of Samaria, John 4:23 (It is not about where you worship,) not 'this mountain or another mountain,' *we worship what we KNOW! Many do not know what they are worshipping.* The truth is that worship is inseparable from salvation. Salvation is through the root and foundation of the Jews. The time was coming, Jesus explained, when men and women would worship the Almighty God in Spirit. Those without this Spirit receive nothing of the revelation and fellowship of God of which Jesus spoke. A divine meeting place for the first priest hood was a place behind the veil into the presence of God where no human could stand without having been made pure by scrupulous preparation. In the presence of God man does not utter a word nor risk the defilement of his own sweat.

Disciples, Learning the "Way"

The foundation of the life of Christ is laid by becoming a disciple of Jesus. Just as Jesus set about making disciples in the time of his earthly ministry so he continues today. (John 8:21 ; 17:20) The Great Commission is about discipleship. Too often, the Christian world has made the life of the Bible remote and impersonal through religion . It has made Peter, James and John or John the Baptist into icons or religious super heroes. It is too easy to lose the sense that Peter, James, Paul and Barnabus and the host of others are our brothers and our teachers. Though now having run their race, they shared the same life of trials and faith as we ourselves. In our minds Bible days were entirely another time, another kind of faith life , another dispensation. This is not the case. Religious tradition places men on pedestals. This should not be the case because it is contrary to every apostolic and Christ-uttered teaching. God does not show favoritism nor does he show respect of persons. s many that have received the gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the Grace

You may be interested in checking out the writing of Frank Viola and George Barna [See www.ptmin.org](http://www.ptmin.org) and listen to some interviews as sound files describing the return to open, house church.

Peter in epistle 1 Chapter 4 instructs us saying that; *any that have received the gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the Grace of God*

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which is usually desired by those in leadership. This should not be the case because it is contrary to every apostolic and Christ-modeled teaching. God does not show favoritism nor does he show respect of persons. *As many that have received the gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold Grace of God.*” (1Peter 4:10-11)

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A Disciple's Handbook

CHAPTER 3 THE POWER OF PARADIGMS

Thinkers and sages attempt to bring their best insight and understanding to these questions:

Who are we?

Where do we come from?

Where are we going?

Where Do We go to Seek Wisdom About the Meaning of Life?

Do we inquire according to secular wisdom, or religious teachings? Or is there another?

How does Godly Wisdom contrast to secular wisdom?

How does Godly Wisdom contrast with "religious" wisdom?

THE PARADIGM OF WORLDLY WISDOM

Worldly wisdom extols and rewards self-exaltation and individuality. Godly wisdom (the Truth) says deny yourself, take up your cross, die to yourself. In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom, no man is "good." Worldly wisdom is based upon observation and the appearance of things. Godly wisdom (the Truth) The unseen things are eternal and have a substance yet to be known by human reason.

Worldly wisdom is based upon "scientific" principle and measurable phenomena. Godly wisdom teaches that if you believe in the unseen, you have faith and will see the results manifested.

Worldly wisdom features the domination or rule of the strong and the mighty. Godly wisdom teaches that God chooses the weak and the insignificant to shame the wise and strong.

Worldly wisdom devalues humans with few assets, childlike meekness and simplicity. Godly wisdom reveals that the greatest in the kingdom of God are like children. Humble, trusting, and meek.

Worldly wisdom values and rewards intellectual achievement and scholarship. Godly wisdom teaches that the wisdom of man is foolishness to him.

Worldly wisdom recognizes classes as inferior or superior rank and class, this is respect of persons. Godly wisdom teaches that those who are poor shall eventually receive the blessings of the kingdom. The proud and the mighty he scatters and turns away.

Worldly wisdom's view of the "vast timeless universe" diminishes or negates the need of a savior. Godly wisdom teaches that God created the heaven and the earth by wisdom and all things that are in it. And he called his creation "good."

Worldly wisdom features "self preservation" as a principle Godly wisdom speaks of self sacrifice as a divine virtue

Worldly wisdom believes life may well be over when one dies Godly wisdom that we are eternal beings who retain our own soul's personal identity forever. Some will inherit eternal blessings and others will inherit eternal separation from God.

Worldly wisdom presumes that God regards each religion or faith democratically. Godly wisdom reveals that one nation is the chosen people of God. The Bible established upon infallible promises, states that there is only one mediator between God and man. Jesus the son of God, the king of the Jews.

Worldly wisdom presumes that God does not favor any one nation over another. Godly wisdom reveals that one nation is the chosen people of God. There is only one mediator between God and man. Jesus the son of God, the king of the Jews.

Worldly wisdom would suggest if there is a God he is simply called by many names. Godly wisdom though there are many gods there is but one God who is above all and we can hold no god higher than He.

Worldly wisdom presumes that God is essentially impersonal. Godly wisdom says that we can become sons of God. Adapted into the family. We are called to inherit the blessings and partake in His divine nature.

Worldly wisdom believes that all of the human race are automatically "children of God" Godly wisdom says whoever believes on the Son of God, Jesus Christ has eternal life. Whoever has not the son has no life but the condemnation of God remains upon them.

- ! Worldly wisdom is Self Directed, It extols and rewards self exaltation and individuality.
- ! Worldly wisdom is focused on acquiring, having and getting.
- ! Worldly wisdom is based upon observation and the natural appearance of things.
- ! Worldly wisdom is based upon "scientific" principle and measurable phenomena.
- ! Worldly wisdom is not likely to believe in spirit beings who are unseen.
- ! Worldly wisdom tends to believe that the human race is evolving and becoming more enlightened.
- ! Worldly wisdom features the domination or rule of the strong in mind and body and devalues childlike meekness and simplicity.
- ! Worldly wisdom rewards those with leadership personal strength, intellectual achievement and scholarship.
- ! Worldly wisdom recognizes classes of humanity denoting some to be of inferior or superior rank and class.
- ! Worldly wisdom's view of a 'vast universe' or "infinite time" diminishes or negates the need of a savior.
- ! Worldly wisdom features self preservation survival of the fittest.
- ! Worldly wisdom allows that life may well be over when one dies.
- ! Worldly wisdom reasons that if we are not "caught" there is no consequence.
- ! Worldly wisdom presumes that if there is a divinity that each religion or faith be valued democratically
- ! Worldly wisdom would suggest there is one God who is simply called by other names.
- ! Worldly wisdom presumes that God is essentially impersonal.
- ! Worldly wisdom believes that all of the human race are automatically 'children of God'

1Cor:1:19: For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. (KJV) 1Cor:1:21: For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (KJV) 1Cor:2:14: But the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. (KJV)

The Religious Paradigm

All formal religions feature some of the following descriptions of the *orthodox* way they minister the "Truth of god" to people. In the religious paradigm the religious life occurs in or centers around a temple or a 'church house.' In the religious paradigm the church house is called "the house of God" Children are taught that this where the god/God lives. In the religious paradigm traditions include various church features or components such as:

In the religious paradigm the religious life centers around a "church house"

In the religious paradigm the church house is called "the house of God"

In the religious paradigm the church building is called the "Church"

In the religious paradigm traditions include various church features or - - traditions such as: pulpits and pews, stained glass windows, organs and 'sacred music' solemnity and formalism, ecclesiastical garb robes, orders of service, ritual, - - designated ranks of clerical authority.

In the religious paradigm a formally trained priest or clergy "officiates" over the "services"

In the religious paradigm a formal address or sermon delivered to the faithful is called "preaching"

In the religious paradigm one or two hours a week meets the requirements of personal involvement In the religious paradigm only the professionally trained clergy are qualified to "minister"

In the religious paradigm there is "respect of persons" relative to spiritual rank or authority

In the religious paradigm members may be totally disassociated in worship or prayer

In the religious paradigm a person's spiritual life is governed, directed or sustained by another

In the religious paradigm the exploits of God and Saints are in the past

In the religious paradigm people are taught how to please God with certain deeds or obligations

In the religious paradigm there are duties required to attain "good standing"

In the religious paradigm one often does not experience God only hears about God

In the religious paradigm one often doesn't know if he/she is saved

In the religious paradigm Bible doctrine plus traditional teachings form the core doctrines

FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF THE FAMILIAR ELEMENTS OF RELIGIOUS CHRISTIANITY

pulpits and pews

stained glass windows

organs and "sacred music"

solemnity and formalism

robes and apparel

orders of worship

catechisms

rituals, sacraments and ceremonial routines

ranks of credentialed authority

priest hood, who meet with God for us

paid clergy

human oversight, accreditation and approval

In the religious paradigm a formally trained priest or clergy "officiates" over the "services"

In the religious paradigm a formal address or sermon is called "preaching"

In the religious paradigm one or two hours a week fulfill requirements of personal involvement

In the religious paradigm only the clergy are the only ones qualified to "minister"

In the religious paradigm there is disparity due to "respect of persons" in spiritual rank / authority

In the religious paradigm members may be totally disassociated from worship or prayer

In the religious paradigm God was glorious and supernatural in times past but not today

In the religious paradigm a person's spiritual life is governed, directed or sustained by another

In the religious paradigm the exploits of God and Saints occurred only in the past

In the religious paradigm people are taught how to please God by performing deeds or obligations

In the religious paradigm one often does not experience God but hears about God

In the religious paradigm one often does not know if he/she is saved and heaven-bound

In the religious paradigm Bible doctrine plus traditional teachings form the core doctrines

Most of these religious paradigms are added on to original Christianity

Biblical Support For Contrary Views to the Above Paradigms

1. The church is comprised of each person who believes and has been born into the kingdom of God. Each believer is described as a 'living stone' that forms the greater house, also known as the body of Christ

2. You do not go to a church rather each believer is a component of the the Church (Ekklesia Christ's called-out body.) You and others are called to come together in Jesus' name.

Whenever two or three gather in His name, you become an assembly of believers Christ the Messiah is manifested. The Ekklesia. He has called us OUT of darkness into the glorious light of the sons and daughters of God. (See link: Why Should Christians Gather?)

3. The Jews sought to stone Jesus when he inferred that God was his father. There was no such designation as 'children of God' until Jesus pronounced this doctrine on our behalf and taught his disciples to pray, " Our Father... " Furthermore, no man comes to the Father except through Jesus Christ, the door. ***Others in the world are not children of God.*** Jn 1:12 - for those who believe on His name he gives the power (exousia = authority) to become the sons (children) of God.

4. The priesthood has actually been eliminated in the new covenant Gospel of the Kingdom.

In the days of Moses, the people of Israel rejected God's plan to become a nation of kings and priests (Exodus 19:) and demanded that Moses and Aaron become the intermediaries before God on their behalf. Since the founding of the church (also the day of Pentecost) The fire of God fell on each believer and they received the Power (Gk.dunamis) to be witnesses of the wonderful works of God. Gradually after the original apostles passed from the scene, the priesthood insinuated itself back into the world of Christianity and has held believers captive until this time. The ecclesiastical traditions of formal religion dominate the whole world of Christendom today.

5. Heaven. Jesus prayer among other matters, include every petition that is essential to the life of faith. It begins, after glorifying the Father, with the theme of connecting the realm of the heavenly (The Kingdom of Heaven) which is the realm of the Spirit with **this world**. *Let thy Kingdom come. Let Thy will be done. On earth as in Heaven!* This revelation of the Kingdom can be experienced two ways; First, in this present dispensation, while we live as people 'born of and led by the Spirit.' We have overlooked that which is that which prevails at the present most fundamental in the religious experience. (The Lord's prayer or the Disciple's prayer.) Heaven is a continuing reality but on a Spiritual (non intellectual) plane. Heaven was presented by Jesus as accessible by his disciples. How can heavenly things become accessible? Only through a Spirit-born and spirit-governed life in which the natural man has been transformed. The "new man" with his natural limits subdued and crucified by the POWER OF God. Access to heavenly things is gained by losing one's self awareness, self-identity and self-governed life. Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am you may be also. - -" To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord - - I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day - - I heard - - and behold - - I see - -. Physical death is the ultimate loss of self control. ***"Carrying the cross" is about losing our preoccupation with self*** so that Christ's life may manifest within us.

6. The concept of pastoral authority (or covering) is a feature of the tradition-bound, priest-led institutional church. From early times priests were designated clergy and the general congregation of pew-sitting listeners was designated laity. In this system the laity functions primarily as a personal support system that supports the institutional church. (Ownership of a flock of God permits the overseers to make merchandise of them.) ***Pastoral leadership should not be a distinctive superior class but as examples to disciples*** who are maturing in their own leadership. John writes regarding this misuse of authority: Read about Diotrophes in 3 John and in The Revelation see: (Nicolaitinism. See Rev. 2 and Rev. 3) This answers the question of human headship; The Lord is my shepherd - My sheep hear my voice - - "There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." Also we are told in " Matt. 23: 7-11. to ***call no man master; call no man Rabbi; call no man Father.*** "I extend the

assumption that the term "pastor" fits the criterion of religious titles that set leaders apart. We do not follow a man (person.) Servant leadership is the correct model.

7. We who believe and have received the transforming gift of New Life, are called to be Saints, for we are all called to be "in Christ Jesus", seated in heavenly places. We are exhorted to grow up in the knowledge of Him until we reach the fullness of Him. (Ephesians 4:13.) The only question is how do we grow and how are we disciplined? The pastoral leadership (discipleship) paradigm is only partially effective as it does not prepare all brothers and sisters for leadership and full participation in the things of God. There is a continuing notion that some are called into the ministry and then seek to be trained in "the ministry." I have heard this countless times. Discipleship is what the great commission seeks to produce. "Make disciples of all nations - - ." (Matt. 28:19) Discipleship is best realized through Koinonia meaning mutual participation and sharing of the God life in fellowship. (It is my position that there is no Ekklesia without Koinonia!) Those called out of the world into the body of Christ have within them the essence of Jesus' love. These believers are drawn to value and share their fellow brothers and sisters that make up the body. A number of authors are adding to the same message that I promote here. We see liberty in the body being promoted and the trend to come out from institutional religious systems." Mega Shift" by James Rutz and other web published writings which teach the full gospel message free of institutional religious connection: One of my own published titles is found under the title, ["The Gospel Without Religion."](#)

8. Signs and wonders and miracles are either part of your religious experience or they are not. Those who exclude this from their doctrines do not participate in the living reality of a church that is that first delivered to the saints. (Jude 3) Miracles and supernatural that was part of the Pentecostal awakening movement that began in the recent century in 1906. But experiencing the supernatural seems to be waning among the Pentecostal/Charismatic Christians today. If your paradigm does not allow for the supernatural you will not see it because you are essentially saying No to the experience. Today more supernatural signs and wonders are in evidence than ever before. There is no more powerful key concept to understand than Paul's statement that the gospel is the "POWER OF God" I have never heard a substantial teaching on this phrase. Yet it is a key to our understanding the promise of the gospel. The Power of God is all about what God does, is doing, and will do. It is not about our ability to understand the Bible, solve problems or transform ourselves. The "new creation" is a product of the power of God. Spiritual gifts are a product of the power of God! But here is a note of caution: There is a movement of the supernatural which is being manifested in the Apostolic, Prophetic associations but they do not follow the whole of Scripture in their doctrines or in the manifestations. Apostolic humility and selflessness

seems to be absent. The spirit of pride should have not place in the fellowship of God's people. That is a token of Satan's domain. One must have discernment to avoid falling into the control of false apostles and prophets.

9. The most amazing thing any believer can ever discover is that God can and does reveal himself to us individually. The miraculous and revelation awaits any who through the power of the Holy Spirit seek first the kingdom and knock at heaven's door. Hebrews 11:7 is a powerful key concept in realizing that some seem to never believe or receive the gift of salvation. "- - whoever comes to God must FIRST believe that he is and that he WILL REWARD those who diligently seek him. (!) Hebrews 11:7

10. The paradigm of the Old covenant (Judaism) is the root into which Christianity has been grafted. Christianity is actually nothing more than Messianic Judaism in which we discover the wholeness and fulfillment of God's word in which the Mashiach was foretold and depicted in typology from Genesis to the prophets and in the Psalms. The New Creation redeemed believer fulfills the promise of the "One new man," Jew and Gentile joined under the Messiah. It is unfortunate that the terminology of the Messiah was traded in for the Greek term *Kristos* (the anointed one) This designation has reinforced the deadly deception that Judaic foundations has been replaced by Christianity that rejects anything Jewish. We Gentiles by the grace of God have been grafted into the vine of Israel. To disregard this HERITAGE of our root and foundations is unbiblical and damnable. The Gentiles in the age of the church is a distinct chapter and expression of God's planned time-table in restoring his people Israel, The physical kingdom and rule of the Messiah upon the earth is the culmination of God's plan. It will be the reign of the Messiah for 1000 years upon the earth. Replacement theology is the widespread doctrine among the mainline churches that the church as replaced Israel. **

11. Religious studies have prepared scholars to ordination thus to qualify to become priests and overseers. They erroneously give themselves power over the laity. The laity remains a passive but supportive group who serve to support a limited group in leadership. We may well place our faith in a priest to communicate with God on our behalf. If only the Christian world knew and understood that there is but "one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus."

** [An excellent resource to inform you on the "signs of the times" and prophetic place of Israel in the "end times" is Jan Markell's "Olive Tree Ministries" which has regular radio broadcasts on 600 stations.](#)

The Paradigm of Godly Wisdom, (Modeled by Jesus)

Jesus' Spirit-led model of wisdom presents paradoxes to natural instincts or wisdom of man; the least shall be greatest in the kingdom; greatest are servants, etc.

- God presents humanity with paradoxes like; the first shall be last;
- mankind through natural ability and understanding can not come to God or know God
- many called but few chosen;
- we must die to our selves in order to fully live;
- we must not value, love or seek the rewards only in this world;
- we must be like a child, open, teachable, and innocent, not trusting in our own abilities
- God has hidden wisdom from the wise; personal brilliance does not equate to Spiritual wisdom
- the Kingdom of God is unseen but, for the faithful, a greater reality than that which is seen.
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom, man is not essentially good but fallen, and unredeemed;
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom, mankind is born outside of God's favor
- Unredeemed man is under the ruler of Satan, the god of this world
- The race of humanity is under the limitations of a "curse" which has been in effect since Adam and Eve
- A human being can be recreated by God's power and be changed his innermost nature
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom, the focus is upon others and serving.
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom no man is good (approaching Godliness).
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom a natural man can do nothing of *eternal* value.
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom, the spiritual man is totally dependent upon the guidance of the Spirit.
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom, the body is the temple of the Spirit of God.
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom we are in a perpetual spiritual battle for survival and dominance in life.
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom there is eternal life beginning with the moment of Salvation
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom the Kingdom of the Heavens is ours with promised rewards
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom there are consequences for words spoken and deeds done.
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom only those born of the Spirit and led of the Spirit are the children of God.

- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom, God rewards with wisdom those whose hearts are right toward him.
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom all disciples are called, matured and charged with ministry.
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom ministry is directed by the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom true worshipers worship in Spirit and in Truth.
- In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom, Truth and wisdom is hidden from the double minded and the unredeemed.

In the Jesus, Spirit-led model of wisdom we could memorize the Bible and not fully understand truth - only the Spirit reveals heavenly things.

A Disciple's Handbook

CHAPTER 4

ALL DISCIPLES MATURE FOR THE PURPOSE OF MINISTRY

click below for

[AUTHOR'S VIDEOS ON YOUTUBE](#)

Ephesians 4: 11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, **12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry**, for the edifying of the body of Christ, **13** till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man." Note in verse 12; *There should be no comma after "equipping the saints."*

Jesus is the living "head of the church" for all believers. He has made a way for us to follow him, even as the original disciples followed him. They walked at his side, spoke with him, and were witnesses and partakers of his spiritual ministry. They knew his voice; saw his miraculous power; and marveled at his wisdom. They knew him! Sadly, I fear that few nominal Christians are able to say they *really know* him. Yes, they have heard stories him, but do Christians know him? Perhaps the greatest thing revealed in the "gospel" is that we not only may know him, but can have fellowship with him.

He has invited us to partake in his nature, his mission and calling. We are called to do our part to reveal the rule and authority of God to the principalities and powers arrayed in the heavens. (The heavens above the earth is the domain of Lucifer and his Angels.) "For this reason the Son of God was manifested, that he should destroy the works of the Devil." (John 3:8) We worship what we know. (John c. 4) We who are believers know him. He called us to have fellowship with Him. We who are "his sheep" hear His voice; we can understand what he shows us in the Word. It is revealed from his place of dominion in the heaven above the heavens. As we gather as believers in a place of meeting can we say that we leave that meeting knowing him better? Can we say that we have heard his voice, felt his presence, or were empowered by his touch?

Ministry Edifies, Strengthens, and Blesses

It would be good for unbelieving eyes to see what can and happen in a place of meeting where the Spirit is given free reign. In such times of fellowship God can make his glorious presence known; God's presence can lift people out of their fears and oppression; bring joy and healing to minds and restore broken hearts. It can initiate repentance and save souls. Church liturgy, put together in a time far past, perhaps may have had good intentions but mostly falls short. It is God's manifested grace that builds the Kingdom.

Liturgical forms may have come about with hope to preserve some of the glory of earlier days. Perhaps to insure the manifestation of God's presence as it was once experienced. After a while God's wellspring began to cease its flow. But the Spirit can not be bottled and preserved! He, The Spirit of Christ, is alive and powerful. He acts in the NOW, never in the Then.

The Bible shows reveals that God's presence can not be captured and preserved. The Israelites of Old tried to do so, but when God's Glory departs that which remains becomes a lifeless idol. The temple remained the glory was gone. The brazen serpent remained but the manifestation of its power was gone. God's continued glory and fellowship with us is determined by the hearts of those who gather to worship him. With passing years catechism and religion classes remained but the glory of his presence had departed. The rituals and the liturgical trappings remained but the presence of God vanished. Ritual is born, In my opinion, when men try to duplicate an action which once brought forth the glory of God through faith. That which remained was vainly held only to become a substitution for God's presence.

With the passing of time after the apostolic age, "Ministry" became the focus of a very small body of liturgical experts, called the priesthood or the clergy when it was always meant to be the domain of every believer. Just as God wishes each believer to be a ministering priest, he wishes us to become a true worshiper. What is this *true worshiper* and what is meant by *worshipping the Father in Spirit and in Truth*? (John 4:23) God is always looking for True Worshipers. God looks at the heart. He does not regard the man wearing religious garb above a common person whose heart is open. *Worship in the Spirit* can be experienced only by those who are *born of the Spirit*.

God does not favor a cathedral over a location which has been made ready on the inside of us. As Jesus told the woman at the well of Samaria, it is not where you worship, neither this mountain or another mountain but who we worship. He said to her that some do not know what they are even worshiping but the truth is that salvation is connected to worship, it has been built upon the foundation of the chosen Jewish traditions. The law and the prophets foretold the chief cornerstone, the Jewish Messiah. The time was coming and now is, Jesus

explained, when men and women women would worship the Most High God in Spirit and in Truth. Those who do not have this Spirit can not have the True revelation of God of which Jesus spoke.

The Truth is expressed in Revelation Chapter 19:10, *“Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”*

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CHAPTER 5 CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP & WORSHIP EXPECTATIONS AND GUIDELINES

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WHEN WE GATHER AS A BODY (KOINONIA)

The eternal purpose of the triune God was to expand that triune intimacy to the human race. Jesus prays his intention to that end in his priestly Prayer to Father God, (recorded in John 17.) We achieve fellowship in God as when that Word that takes root in us. Jesus is the living "head of the church" for all believers. He has designed a way for us to follow him, even as the original twelve disciples followed him. They walked at his side, talked with him, and were both witnesses and partakers of his spiritual ministry. They new his voice; saw his power; and marveled at his wisdom. They new him! Though I fear that few nominal Christians are able to say they know him. Yes we have heard some things about him, but do we know him? Perhaps the greatest thing to be revealed in the "gospel" is that we may not only know him, but have fellowship with him even to the extent that we can partake in his nature and his ministry. In the gathering of believers in a place of meeting can we say that we leave that meeting, knowing him better? Today can we say that we have heard his voice, felt his presence, or were Empowered by his touch?

ARE ALL BELIEVERS CALLED TO MINISTER?

Ministry Edifies, strengthens, and blesses. God gives each human being potential and promise with gifts. Each believer has a field of influence in the world according to his own measure of Grace. These gifts may or may not be focused upon ministry to a traditional church body (as in church centered pulpit ministry.) The gifts of God are designed to bring glory to God in any setting. When members of the ekklesia (the called out ones) come together whether few or many it is to exhibit the gifts and to edify one another in a community of affection and sharing.

It would be good for religious eyes to see what things can and do happen in a New Testament meeting. God can make his glorious presence known; lift people out of their fears and oppression; bring joy and healing; restore broken hearts and broken relationships and save peoples souls.

Church liturgy began to replace the ministering body of koinonia very early. Before the 3rd or 4th century of the 'church' age formalism had already begun to materialize. The wise overseers began to establish a top down control. Orders of service replaced anointed teaching and worship. Services became rituals and occluded the liberty and fellowship known in the days of the apostles. The authority of Biblical sources became diluted and added onto. Who knows what were the motivating intentions behind formalism? Perhaps it was for the purpose of preserving some of the truth or glory of those earlier days. Maybe they wished to insure the manifestation of God's presence and to provide a platform to disciple those who needed to understand the truth of Christ's eternal ministry. The manifestations of God's glory and anointing finds new ways to manifest. God does not always do the same thing the same way; to insist upon formalization and repetition of what worked before, easily leads to becoming a religious 'sacred cow.'

The Bible shows that God's presence can not be captured and preserved. The Israelites of old tried to do so, but when God's Glory departed they were left with a relic; as in the case of Moses's brazen serpent, which became a lifeless idol. The temple remained but God's presence was gone. Whether God's glory and fellowship remains with us is determined by the hearts of those who gather to worship him. Yes, through the years, churches preserved catechism, but remained but the glory had been lost. The ritual remained and the liturgical trappings remained but the presence of God vanished. Ritual happens, I believe, when men try to duplicate a behavior which once brought forth the glory of God through faith.

Elements preserved by the Roman church substituted mystery and iconography for God's presence. "Ministry" became the focus of a very small body of liturgical experts, called the priesthood or the clergy, when it was always to be the domain of every believer. Just as God wishes each believer to be a ministering priest, he wishes us to become a *true worshiper*. What is a true worshiper and what does it mean to worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth? (John 4:23) God is always looking for True Worshipers. He looks at the hearts and determines sincere devotion and thankfulness. He does not regard the man with the religious more highly than a common person whose heart is open. He does not favor a cathedral over another location whether a meadow or humble home. As Jesus told the woman at the well of Samaria, it is not where you worship, *not upon this mountain or another mountain*, but what and how we worship. He said to her that some *do not know what they are even worshiping* but the truth is that salvation is connected to worship, it is through the foundation of the Jews. The time was coming, Jesus explained, *when men and women women would worship the*

Most High God in the Spirit of Holiness. Those who do not have this Spirit can not have the authentic and true revelation and witness of God.

Disciples, Learn the "Way of God"

The foundation of Christ-centered life of proceeds after becoming a disciple of Jesus. Just as he made disciples in the time of his earthly ministry so he continues today. (John 8:21; 17:20) The Christian world, through religion, has made the life of the accounts in the Bible remote and impersonal. It has made Peter, James and John or John the Baptist into icons or religious folk heroes. These pillars of faith who have gone before should be thought of as our brothers who shared lives of trials and faith and triumphed. In our minds Bible days were another time, another faith, a mythical past. This is not the case. Religious tradition places men on pedestals and this should not be the case because it is contrary to every apostolic and Christ-uttered teaching. God does not show favoritism often called "*respect of persons*."

The form of Christian fellowship and worship which I describe here may be very different from your traditional religious experiences. It is mostly absent in contemporary denomination churches. It is nonetheless entirely scriptural, modeled after the teachings of Paul in his epistles.

Koinonia (fellowship) is the hallmark of apostolic Christian gathering.

Biblical koinonia is best suited to home meetings. Traditional church experience that is common to denominational Christianity lacks any substantial participation among the body of believers aside from hymn singing and responsive readings. The familiar form of denominational Christianity is guided by credentialed leaders or overseers or priests who determine an order of service. An order of service replaces the moving of the Holy Spirit who has a fresh agenda of Christ's concern for the people, place and time.

The Ek-kles-si'-a is the Greek word for church. It translates to "called out assembly." The term generally consists of a group of professing Spirit-empowered believers. When such a body of believers gather they share and participate in active worship and interaction with God. Such sharing is exercised with openness and liberty.

The essential aim of the gathering consists of transacting matters particular to the Kingdom of God. As in the book of Acts, there is sharing food, making prayer, offering praise, bringing forth teachings and communion. There are testimonies about what God is doing with his people. There is shared music as psalms, spiritual songs. (Colossians 3:16) Prophetic

revelations are encouraged. (See 1 Corinthians c. 14) Koinonia gatherings are mostly democratic but always with appropriate order. There is generally a good deal of freedom to express whatever the Holy Spirit is pleased to do in that time. Since there will be individuals with varied amounts of experience and maturity there needs to be oversight by a someone who knows the scriptural authority The Way and discerns spiritual matters. Oversight is based upon experience and Spiritual experience and not credentialing as is common today.

We can know from the truth of Scripture that each believer has a place, a gift and a essential role to play in the Kingdom of God.

1 Peter describes that each believer has a gift that should be employed and welcomed in the "Body" of believers. (1Peter 4;10-11)

For more understanding of "Body of Christ" see also; Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and 1 Corinthians 14. No one is excluded as a necessary member that has an honored placed in the Body of the *called out believers*.

The Lord Jesus is the rule and the authority of any Ekklessia. When and where the body gathers Christ Jesus is always the invited guest and most welcomed participant.

WHY GATHER AS A BODY? SOME GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

1. To be: United in Spirit and purpose - knowing the reality of Jesus as Savior; and having fellowship with God our Father through Him and giving glory to God. After any person is reborn spiritually, they become part of one heavenly family who share the "gift of God." To continue to be United in Spirit - The same Spirit that is in Christ Jesus.
2. For the body in fellowship to continue to grow (be edified) in knowledge of truth (Holy Bible is the guide)
3. To be bound in mutual love and acceptance. The spirit of Love denotes we are Christians.
4. To seek God's manifested presence corporately. (Seeking and activating His kingdom to be manifested on earth)
5. To recognize and invite the Holy Spirit to empower, lead and guide; to reveal Jesus.
6. To value and build from the unique gifts and abilities that the Holy Spirit of God has given to each believing disciple. (our brothers and sisters)
7. To follow the "Gatekeeper", shepherd, or the head of the home, who is practiced in following the Holy Spirit in an orderly way.
8. For all to discern and guard against spiritual pitfalls, against against disunity; To guard against the expression of any wrong spirit -- anger, prejudice, suspicion, jealousy that will "grieve" the Holy Spirit.

9. To see to it: That all things serve to edify and build each believer kindly with liberty in the Holy Spirit.

Doctrinal purity must employ the whole counsel of God, The Word of God. (Scripture) Scripture is used for instruction in Godliness, correction and reproof thus it is the proper authority when contending for correct doctrine.

The Scriptural model of intimate corporate fellowship (Koinonia) is found in 1 Corinthians, Chapters 12, 14; 1 Peter 4:10-11

MODELING JESUS' SPIRITUAL PATH

The Spiritual Life-Learning Christ
"Be Ye Imitators of Christ as dear Children."

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DISCIPLESHIP CHAPTER 6

HOW JESUS' MODELED LIFE & MINISTRY JESUS' SPIRITUAL PATH

THE JESUS CYCLE OF MINISTRY

With Christ's life within us and after our egos are yielded to him, we read, “As he is so are we in this world.” (John 16:16; 1John 4:17) Spiritually poverty is our natural human state despite the many who are gifted with great talents and intellects. We must come to understand that we all are unredeemed in a fallen condition. The best of us are helpless and without the enablement to live a truly spiritual life.

We can't be the light of the world if God's light does not burn within us. We can not be witnesses of his resurrection if we have not been touched by the fiery hand of God that raised Jesus from the dead and quickened our own body and spirit. We can not reflect the goodness of God if he has not made us good. Who are once reprobates? The best to worst of humanity fall short of the glory of God. (*Romans 3:23*) We come into this world not knowing God. Some come and go from this world not realized that calling. If we are fortunate to have God reveal himself to us then we press on to the next stage, that of being a functional witness. We are called to be a light in a dark world and give testimony to the truth. It is also unfortunate that many are thwarted at this stage predominately by the incomplete or ineffectual teachings of religious tradition.

As we have noted, the institutional church has either lost sight of, or failed to actualize the provisions of the New Covenant which is the Gospel of Grace in Jesus Christ. Time has eroded true understanding, and spiritual subterfuge directed by an unrelenting adversary has come in to subtly sidetrack our spiritual lives and foster a human-centered understanding instead. I am not sharing a private methodology that is contrary to Biblical teaching. What I share here is not a unique revelation but simply a restatement of the way that was presented by Jesus to his servants the apostles, in the beginning of this gospel age.

Any church or teacher (including denominational groups) who are attempting to mentor or direct others into a spiritual life are under divine obligation to be accurate, and to be doctrinally correct. Private interpretation risks wrong doctrine. Since there is always a danger of deception, it is important that we proceed cautiously, both as teachers and learners. We are obligated to discern all things with the wisdom, the help, and guidance of the *Spirit of Truth* who is the *Holy Spirit*. (1 Thessalonians 5:21 "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good.") God tells us through the Word that we may ask for wisdom and for truth to be revealed to us. He instructs us to have confidence in asking, knowing that God is willing. God is willing!

God is willing to give *good gifts* which bring fulfillment and blessings and not sorrows. When seeking the revelations are of God, or *from God*, it is up to the seeker to be on guard against deceptions and to discern the true from the false. In asking for anything from God it is very important to invoke the name of Jesus Christ. This is the name above every name and above every spiritual entity and authority. This name will consecrate or make pure anything that transpires. It guarantees that anything which will be revealed or imparted spiritually will be free of any corrupt or deceptive influence. If you ask in the name of Jesus, *the deceiver* can not work his way into your transaction.

EVENTS IN CHRIST'S LIFE & MINISTRY

The Bible reveals that certain key Spiritual events ushered God's Son into the world, the promised Lord Jesus. I believe the Bible reveals that we who are born of His Spirit as new creations of the Lord will replicate those same patterns in a very real way. These surely may not be as profound or dramatic as that Jesus experienced. We are still largely limited flesh bound human beings. We manifest too much our fallen nature the Adamic inheritance having lived most of our lives under the domination of the God of this world and the understanding of this world.

The Traditional religious world, however, will discount any such replications as to God making his abode within us. The religious world of Jesus' time accounted it blasphemous for a man (Jesus) to be made to be made a son and equal to God. For centuries of religious life church authorities had no interest in promoting the divine potential of the individual believer. We are crucified in the likeness of his death and have already risen with him in Glory. We are seated with him in heavenly places. (*Ephesians 2:v6: "-And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."*) Amazing indeed is the fact that we have been placed above all things in this world in Christ Jesus.

The apostle urges believers to pray that their eyes be enlightened with respect to this amazing potentiality of the inheritance of the children of light. Reading the letter to Ephesus we find in Chapter 1 verses 18 to 22, Paul tells us to pray to have enlightenment on three specific large questions, "*the hope of his calling;*" "*the riches of his glorious inheritance to us;*" and

"*what is the exceeding greatness of his power given to us.*" The chapter concludes with the nature of the church placed, over all things as as rulership and power. As yet Christians simply can not fathom and don't know how much has been promised to be accessed of the divinity of Christ within each of us individual believers.

Yeshua, Jesus, Was Divinely Conceived By the Holy Spirit-God has come to indwell and earthen vessel, Human Flesh

We know that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. The *virgin* birth was a supernatural birth. It was not a natural process of the flesh but a supernatural work of the Spirit. The manifestation of the Christ in human flesh begins with a divinely planted "seed" which gives rise to a "miraculous conception." After this "conception," Mary brought forth her first born. In the fullness of time, the life of Jesus is revealed in the world.

When a sinner comes to the knowledge of Christ as *a savior*; repents and asks God to give him a new life, a parallel miracle occurs. The Holy Spirit conceives and implants a whole new *Holy and Spiritual life* within a mortal human being. A spirit once dead in the semblance of Adam is reborn. This is the baptism into Christ. Regardless of the measure of our sins and shortcomings in our lives, Even though our sins were as red as scarlet they become purged and made pure as that of the virgin. We are all part of a fallen world, typified by the "barn manger" and so the divine is again revealed in the presence of beasts and uncleanness. *We were born in a corrupted form and are being raised incorruptible. We ascend from Glory to Glory as Christ is fully being revealed in us.*

(1Corinthians 15:53: "*For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*")

Becoming a Christian, therefore is not just about believing something and judging it to be true! This would be merely intellectual assent. But in reality becoming a believer, or "coming to Christ" is a miraculous new life which has been birthed, imparted by God in the Spirit. It is a new birth from an incorruptible seed and becomes in an instant a new creation. The old ceases to be and the new commences.

Angels rejoice and give praise at the birth of Christ (the Holy Child)

The angels surround the place of the birth of the infant Jesus Christ. They rejoiced and gave praises to God. The Glory of the Lord shown forth in the heavens. The family of God is portrayed as universal in nature, it spans heaven and earth. Its kingdom includes heavenly beings and human earthly beings. Heavenly events touch happenings upon the earth, earthly events impact things which happen in heaven. The "cloud of witnesses" described in the epistles of Paul, may probably refer to angels who continue to applaud the

victories and glories of salvation as they impact humans who find their place in the family of God.

Jesus Grows in Wisdom and Stature and in the fear of the Lord

The life of the young Jesus is described with little detail. In the briefest description we read that he grew up in the fear and admonition of the lord and grew in wisdom and stature and favor with God and man. Jesus is aware of his divine calling though his ministry is not yet fully activated. He works and learns the Torah, the laws of Moses as any other Jewish youth. In this time we see growth in the knowledge of The Holy.

Each believer has a Spiritual infancy, and grows in subsequent levels of maturity. In the spiritual sense there is no set number of years which allow the foundations of wisdom and understanding. Many never leave the stage of novice. It is the availability of the Holy *Spirit*, *the Spirit of Truth* which (by the [The Spirit of Grace](#)) allows our growth in wisdom and authority. (*If you continue in my word then are you a true disciple, and you shall know the truth; and the truth will make you free. John 8:31*) The word of God is the guide to wisdom and understanding; the Spirit upon the Word is life and power as it is spoken into our inner Spirit.

Yeshua, Baptized by the Holy Spirit and is Equipped for Ministry

The gospel accounts begin with Christ having reached *maturity* at about 30 years of age. We read of the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan river by John the Baptist. What was Jesus doing the day before, the week before, the year before? Probably finishing jobs in the carpenter's shop in Nazareth; attending the synagogue; studying and meditation on scripture; and praying (*communing*) with the Heavenly Father. The time came, however, when he was revealed to Israel. This time was precisely in keeping with God's prophetic timetable. (Daniel 9:v26)

When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, the Spirit came to rest and remained upon Jesus. From this moment on he was fully empowered by the Holy Spirit. He received the Spirit in full measure. This is when his ministry and teaching began. The Spirit of God descends from above, the voice of the Father proclaims, "***This is my beloved, in whom I am well pleased!***"

In God's time we ourselves, may partake in the same experience which Jesus modeled. We are instructed to receive the Holy Spirit. It is commanded as seeking to receive the "promise of the Father." Our growth and maturity in the knowledge of truth depends entirely upon this "good gift." We are born of God by being baptized into the body of Christ. Now we are invited to partake in the baptism of the fullness of the Spirit which we see throughout the book of The Acts of the Apostles. In all of the God empowered growth in the first century the new believers were baptized into the power of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speak in unknown languages. The power of the Spirit and His 9 gifts is predicated on this second act

of grace. (Have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?") *Act 19:2 And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."*

In this passage Paul attends to the ministry omission of the disciple named Apollos. He then lays hands on the new believers and they receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit baptism. *Acts 19:v6 - "And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying."*

The Holy Spirit baptism causes the Holy Spirit to infill and empower the believer. This experience is called "*the promise of the Father*", after receiving the Holy Spirit's baptism we become "*Witnesses of Christ*." Christ begins to take those things which are his and reveal them to each of us as we seek him in fellowship. The father is well pleased to call us into his family. We are the latter borne of many brethren. The Father in heaven has many great plans and many precious promises which he is anxious to deliver to his sons and daughters. The numerous enablements of the Holy Spirit is what makes the life of a believer rich in deeds and experiences to share among the brethren.

Tempted and Tested (in the wilderness)

Until the Holy Spirit Baptism we have not really been very aware of the two Spiritual Kingdoms which stand continuously opposed to one another, but now after this initiation into the Spiritual kingdom and the "Mind of Christ" we now sense that the world is a spiritual place, and that thoughts and actions of others are inspired by spiritual influences and are not just "our thoughts." Satan who has possessed human flesh and human institutions and nations since the fall, is not willing to let go of his influence on the life and thoughts of human beings easily. *Jesus experiences the temptation of Satan.*

In the wilderness temptation, Jesus received temptations on three levels, of the flesh (physical), the soul (personal) and the spiritual. (The apostle John's includes the domains in his epistle as the Lust of the Flesh, Lust of the eyes, and the Pride of Life.)

Jesus response to each temptation was the Word of Scripture to answer the voice of the tempter: He was tempted through appetites and responded, "*Man shall not live by bread only, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*" He was tempted in the soul or ego when offered fame, fortune and power, and responded, "*You shall worship the Lord only and him only shall you serve.*" He was tempted in the Spirit when told that he could exercise his God-given inheritance for vain reasons, and responded, "*You shall not put the Lord thy God to the test.*"

Believers are no threat to the kingdom of darkness until we have been born of the Spirit and Baptized in the Spirit. Being religious offers no threat to the kingdom of darkness. Satan is religious too and in fact promotes [religion](#) and religiosity. Satan's kingdom is terribly at risk

when a believer knows his inherited rights in Christ. Jesus said, as I am so are you in this world! (1 John 4:17) For this reason there are very attacks which are leveled against believers who know about the power of God. Jesus through the Spirit was victorious in great trials, Likewise, refined, and fully empowered, the man of God is prepared for ministry. We are not ignorant of the enemies ways.

Jesus returned from the wilderness experience not weakened and discouraged but "*full of the Spirit and power.*" Victorious in great trials, refined in affliction, the man of God is prepared for ministry; he is *thoroughly prepared for every good work.*

(2 Timothy 2:21)

Empowered to Minister through the anointing of the Holy Spirit

In Luke's gospel Chapter 4, we are shown Jesus announcing the whole purpose of his ministry to the lost, the bruised and the needy of this world. "*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for He has anointed me -to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are bruised, and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord (the Lord's favor.)*

This proclamation of ministry defines completely the purposes for which Jesus Christ was called. The same declaration may be claimed by every believer. This is a stark contrast to human religious tradition. Every redeemed soul is called to the same potentiality, the same anointing, the same ministry which is to be performed by the same unction or anointing of the same Spirit. This kind of ministry is hardly possible except for the empowerment which comes from God through the His Spirit. In our own natural abilities and strength all we can do little more than to discuss concepts of ministry and the nature of God, as a theological concepts. In the anointing we become as He was in this world!

This is where true ministry lies, not in services and rituals conducted in church buildings but in the power of God to impact lives whether in or out of a house of worship or any kind of building.

Jesus Sought Continuous Intimacy with the Father.

Jesus is described as continually seeking the father in the most intimate way. This is where the power and direction came from. This is where the revelation came from; This is where the authority came from; This is where the strength came from. This is where we who are seeking need to seek more. This is where we who are without power need to find our connection to power and authority. Without relationship in the secret place of the most high we can have no hope at all in doing the works of God. For in the most basic of understanding

we have got to know that we can not in our natural ability do the works of God. Only Christ can empower and direct those works. Seeks intimacy with God, Daily, even Hourly.

Before anything like revival can happen in the Christian world, we as individuals have got to come alive in Christ. The "*waste places*" of human life and thought have got to be restored and rebuilt to make them a habitation for the life of God to make them flourish and bear fruit.

The soul thirsts or longs for various things. Most of these things have no bearing on the Kingdom of God or His righteousness. These things are the pleasures and longings of the heart of man. We long for human treasures and human pleasures. We fall short of seeking the life of God. It is the grace of God which can turn our hearts again to Him.

Until we esteem the life and reproach of the "life of Christ" more highly than the pleasures of this world and its lusts and pleasures we have not crossed the river into the land of fulfillment and of promises which are in Christ. *Friendship with Christ is enmity to the world and friendship with the world is enmity with Christ.* The meditations and treasures of our hearts can be focused on transient treasures or eternal treasures. The abiding in Christ which brings the Spiritual life is an unmet task in all but a few in the Christian world today.

Meditating on The Word Word a Token of Intimacy

"In thy law do I meditate, day and night." (psalm 1:2)

We can not meditate on the word of God if we do not know what that word may be. Part of discipleship is to learn the word and the Way of God. This requires that at some time we have to journey into that place of understanding and revelation that is written in the Word, from Genesis to Revelation.

The Scriptures are an empowering force and also allow the voice of God to speak to our hearts. It is the Word speaking to our hearts which defines meditation. Yes, we can also have meditations on any number of things, but when we see and hear things which are worldly, vain, sensuous or profane, we can be sure that God is not speaking to us but the spirit of the world, and the God of this world.

Christ Responds to the Father's voice

"My sheep hear my voice, and another they will not follow." (John 10:4)

To have an active spiritual life as Jesus did. The meditations of our hearts must be adjusted significantly. We need to address the issue of double mindedness which is discussed in the epistle of James. Double minded Christians do not receive things from God (the things of God.) The Christian who is not different from the world in thoughts, beliefs actions and attitudes is not yet the kind of Christian that Jesus encouraged us to become.

We have a benchmark or a high standard to conform to it is the fullness of the stature of one man, he is Jesus Christ. God grant us grace to understand and to know what is the greatness of his power to us which believe to empower us to become sons of God, having the same mind which was in Christ, having hearts which are ever turned toward the kingdom of the heavens.

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A Disciple's Handbook

DISCIPLESHIP CHAPTER 07

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GOOD GIFTS VS. COUNTERFEIT GIFTS

ISSUES OF DISCIPLESHIP

God has purposed that each believer *born of the Spirit* may grow in the Spiritual life. Learning Christ, in a general sense is becoming familiar with God through the Word and through his Spiritual presence. It is through the Holy Spirit that we gain familiarity with his divine nature and our place in Him. We begin to partake of his love and his understandings. As it is written, we go from *glory to glory* (2Corinthians 3:18,) and *from faith to faith* (Romans 1:17.) We learn to hearken to the voice of the Spirit and respond as we are directed. I call this *learning Christ*.

God's model for learning Christ is **imitation** of the first born Son of God, Jesus Christ. We are to model his manner of thinking, and his manner of acting. We are to duplicate his interacting with the Heavenly Father and his Spirit-directed ministry. The first disciples were given a living model but they were only able duplicate his Spiritual behavior after they had received the enabling Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul exhorts us to follow (*imitate*) me as I imitate Christ.

RECEIVING THE GIFT OF God (POWER FROM HEAVEN)

Receiving authentic Gifts not Counterfeit Ones

Jesus instructs us about receiving gifts from God. There are numerous gifts of the **Holy Spirit** to be accessed. The Lord teaches us that the God of heaven gives *good gifts* not evil, hurtful or perverted ones. Jesus reveals fact that there are two sources of gifts; true gifts and false, spurious or dangerous gifts. God's are always good, pure and true. The scripture is found in Matthew 7:8-11 and in Luke 11:11-13: "*For every one that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened.*" :8; "*Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?*" :9; "*Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*" :10; "*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your*

Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" :11. KJV The two objects which are sought are bread and fish. God gives things which are life-giving and safe (bread, and meat.) Luke chapter eleven restates the same teaching about asking from God the Father but expands the emphasis, toward the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the living gift of God's power and presence: *"If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?"; "Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" -- Luke 11:11-13kfv.* I have emphasized the word son to emphasize that relationship is the key to receiving from God. There are a whole lot of different kinds of seekers; some sincere and some less sincere. If a dabbler negotiates to receive a spiritual manifestation from God, it is uncertain what may transpire. But God wishes to emphasize that he is for blessing His family. He is the giver of Good gifts.

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

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

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

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

ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES OF FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS

Jesus Christ is True son of God Almighty.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All dominion, judgment, and all authority are given to Jesus Christ.

Each essential doctrine of Faith and Grace are verified and affirmed in Scripture.

The Word through the Spirit provides intimacy with God, wisdom and power.

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

Unity of all believers; All blood bought believers are one in Him;

Unity produces peace and potentiality while it unites believers in love.

Those who approved by God walk in meekness and humility.

Believers must build fellowship bonds, walking in Love and Forgiveness.

The Holiness of God and Spiritual "fruits" are evident in those who are born of the Spirit.

All believers must be alert to matters of Spirituality, faith and doctrine, with vigilance.

Believers must be diligent to discern and safeguard against false teachers.

Worldly rebellion and unbelief will be dealt with at the hand Jesus in divine judgment.

Jesus' first advent was prophetically precise; his second advent will be prophetically precise.

The adversary, Lucifer, is the deceiver who kills and destroys those in God's image.

Judgment awaits the ungodly and unbeliever in the day of the Lord.

Judgment will be visited upon the unbelieving and the lawless.

The culmination of the church age is not the end of the world.

We are entering time before Christ's return. The "Last Days" started with the church age and has continued until today. As we approach the last of the last times we will witness increasing evil, leading to the malevolent rule of an Antichrist and his minions. Who Jesus the Messiah will destroy in his coming to rule and reign. The redemption of Israel shall be a praise in all of the earth; After The Second Advent, Israel will be the head of all nations.

Paul's Insights into the Gospel

Paul an intellectual's and a theologian, set aside his worldly credentials when he began to minister the Gospel. Paul presents some of the most powerful insights into the conflict of intellectualism and theology. Paul experienced a total turn around in his life. The features of his traditional achievements were discarded as were the merits of his classical education. Paul declared that the things which he once esteemed and considered meritorious were now no better than "dung". The Holy Spirit drew a line of division in Paul's life. He as the other apostles clarified the difference between the fashion of this world and the world of God. Paul revealed the matters which pertained to mind and soul and matters of spirit; *the thoughts of the mind* versus *the intents of the heart*. Vanity no longer had a place in his life. Personal pride and striving for status was cast down he was given another job description. A "slave" of Christ.

It is Paul who addresses two points of doctrine which are at times in tension or contrast. First the purely Spiritual nature of the Gospel and the God-connected source of life; and secondly teachings on leadership, headship and government impacting the long-term course of this entity called "the church," the body of believers. Contradictions have occurred in this respect,

that individuals are placed in positions of leadership and authority who do not have spiritual credentials but merely human approval. Spiritual enablements allows the kingdom of God to be manifest according to the apostolic model. Even in the first years of the church age we hear accounts of men like the apostles Paul and John struggling with individuals who have assumed leadership though their motivation were entirely wrong or their doctrine was corrupt. We hear Paul describe associates who tried to undermine or destroy his ministry, or who departed because their hearts turned again to the world; or of the associates who preach for personal gain; or the associates who wanted to be pre eminent and gloried in having control over people. (See *1Timothy 1:19,20 1Timothy 4:14* regarding Alexander the Coppersmith; *2Timothy 4:10* regarding Demas; *3John 1:9* regarding the person of Diotrophes.)

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A Disciple's Handbook

CHAPTER 8

THE MATTER OF MINISTRY

Matters Regarding Media Ministries

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THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

How Much Do We Have to Learn Before We Become Spiritual?

Mentors and Ministries

Part of the spiritual life is to make a connection with those who can supply valuable spiritual understanding and companionship. These are the *joints* that support and nurture us. They are our brethren and connections in the body of Christ. Fellowship supplies input to areas of knowledge which will encourage and edify. When we are born into the kingdom, we must move forward or we will retrograde back to the old life in the world. Here according to most voices of ministry is where one would be encouraged to get connected to a "good Bible believing church." This should be simple but in fact it is not.

There are few church *bodies of believers* who hold more than a traditional evangelical viewpoint. Most are adhering to their own forms and traditions, or doctrines. Often these do not advance the Spiritual life to a significant level of maturity. Once in a church you are expected to "play by their rules." My best advice is to search for the church and set your sights on particular features which will allow you to be discipled and grow not in tradition but with the witness of spirituality. If one does nurture spiritual "life" move on until you sense that it is where God would have you. In the mean time if it at all possible, find a fellowship of believers who share a passion for God. It is in home fellowship you can grow with others in an informal setting.

God does not discriminate against home meetings. They are apostolic! It is how the "Church" began. It is obvious that formalized Christian ministry is to be found everywhere in one form or another. As I have already described most of these churches or ministries are a manifestation of institutional and traditional religion. The forms and expectation are in conformity to the norms of a Saturday or a Sunday ritual. People support the familiar

comfortable routines or rituals. These can add a little to their spiritual knowledge and understanding. The Kingdom of God may not advance as it was originally intended.

Churches, struggle to maintain membership so are eager to enhance interest, or involvement. A church may be jealous of their members going astray or getting involved with meetings or activities which are not sponsored by their own fellowship. There was a time when such unfaithfulness could be met by excommunication, but today the usual rebukes from the pulpit are just admonitions or doctrines which imply an obligation to support the local body. Members regard as a nearly cardinal sin to “church hop” or actively involved with outreaches from other congregations. Church *doctrine should be the focus* of finding a proper fellowship but less biblically literate Christians have not grown far enough in that direction to make a judgment on that matter.

The Electronic Church

There are many other kinds of ministries we can tune into on radio or TV. They are not always local to us. These are the myriad media ministries across the globe. In most cases they have been launched by men or women who have some special gift of teaching or evangelism or certain personal *charismas* have been able to share their spiritual understandings and insights with any who will watch or listen. Many who listen appreciate the content of a given message or the style of presentation so we may request their lesson or tape series. Perhaps we think that they have enough clout with God to pray for our special needs and provide spiritual direction. These ministries, sometimes called the "**electronic churches**" are not highly regarded by pulpit ministries. This is because local ministries serve individuals in various ways through visitations, weddings, funerals etc. Individuals also are expected to share the cost of upkeep on local church house needs.

We hear all kinds of castigation directed toward the popular ministries. Those who fill the airwaves of radio and television and short wave broadcast channels. In view of practical matters of church survival and management, local preachers and church leaders need to maintain membership and viability. 'Grandma Smith' might write a check to a radio or television evangelist and forgo giving her five dollar donation to the church collection plate. A pastor might make the following remark to parishioners, "Grandma Smith, if you want to support Reverend So and So on TV maybe you should call them when you need a trip to the doctor; or need someone to pray for you if you are sick; or have them officiate your funeral."

What has the Electric Church ministry to offer? Might they be better than some tradition-bound churches which allow so many to languish in their pews around the world? Televangelists usually have some unique strengths and certainly the ability to preach and

persuade. There are important matters to consider in choosing any ministry to support whether remote or local.

What may media churches provide for community or edification?

Let's look at some attributes of ministry:

- First and most importantly is the message; Do we hear the correct gospel being taught?
- How much of the appeal of this ministry is performance and dazzling rhetoric which attracts us and how much is a sense of devotion to the truth of the Gospel?
- Does the minister seem to model Jesus Christ? The best mode of discerning a minister or a ministry is to imagine Jesus behaving and saying the things as the evangelist or teacher.
- Is devotion and reverence modeled and portrayed?
- Does the person try to draw attention to themselves through colorful mannerisms?
- Does he seem preoccupied with authority and followings?
- Does the leader indicate as we listen to his messages that he wants influence, control, or worship?
- Does there seem to be more of emphasis on one aspect of the Gospel than another?
- Is it a Gospel of power and wholeness or just continually underscoring sin?
- Is it a Gospel in which we can become partakers of God's life or are we blessed because of our supporting the "Super Ministry of Brother X?" There are some media evangelists who I listen to and support because they have helped to mentor me in understanding the Word of God. I support them because they teach the full Gospel message, (more or less) and believe in the potentialities of becoming children of God, partaking in His Divinity. They teach what we should be taught in the local fellowship or church but are not.
- We need to practice discernment and note any inconsistencies in doctrine which place the teaching outside of norms of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The *Apostles Creed* is recited by many denominations in the context of a worship service, but in spite of this, the content of the Apostle's Creed may hardly be addressed in teaching and preaching in sermons. Based upon denominations which I have belonged to or visited before and after I became a believer, *unbelief and spiritual deadness till characterize most of the churches today even those who recite the Credo!*

Mega-Churches

Mega church leaders are gifted in special ways. They are eloquent and dynamic. When a brilliant preacher or evangelist proves his (her) ability to move and edify people they begin to develop a following. People follow spiritual anointings. They follow men or women who have demonstrated their abilities to impact the lives of others. The largest churches today

grow around the giftings of a single person. I think the majority of people would welcome a greater revelation of God. When they see God using an individual they naturally are attracted to that person. Nearly every Christian I know has a natural desire to be in the presence of "anointed" preaching. Mega-churches are built around mega-talented men. I believe there are in America today well over a hundred such mega-churches. I have attended a few and have seen others via telecasts and cable networks.

Positives Associated with Mega-Ministries

There are both negatives and positives in following this kind of ministry. A few positives: God shows favor to his servant by anointing him (her) just as God anointed Jesus and the Apostles for ministry. God's favor seems to indicate his approval to bring forth a particular gift or understanding to the body. God's approval indicates that he foreknows that many will be touched and blessed by this individual. God allows a such a man or woman with special abilities to reach more people with a Gospel message they would ordinarily hear or be exposed to. Many are born again through the media evangelists. If one should choose to go to a church attended by multiple thousands you might enjoy the anonymity of blending into the masses.

Negatives Associated with Mega-Ministries The gifted minister may be persuasive or charismatic in purely human terms, without necessarily walking in a divine anointing. The media evangelist may be preaching a partial or flawed gospel, a non Christian gospel or simply traditionalism. There is no way for the novice seeker to know whether this person teaches true doctrine or not except by natural reasoning or mental judgment. There is a temptation for the minister to become puffed up in mind and think himself higher than he/she ought. There is a tendency to succumb to wealth, focusing on money and influence. Though there may be concepts, doctrines and information imparted there is a serious limitation for immediate fellowship. To deal with this home fellowships or satellite congregations are set up to allow blessings of human interaction and loving community. Recipients of a ministry need intimacy of closeness and a human touch. *It is not good for man to be alone.* Ultimately the spiritual life is more than the acquisition of information about God but the desire for community. If a mega church has 25 thousand or more in attendance parking itself is a negative. They answer the need by having various special interest groups.

Those who attend services in a mega church are committed to be audience or onlookers. This is a terrible loss and limitation. *But the most serious limitation is that individual believers are never really trusted or free to lead when they have achieved revelation or status in God's eyes. Typically, they are told that they must be submitted to a greater ministerial authority who must oversee.*

An Impression of Mega-churches

I have attended worship services in several 'average size' mega-churches with bodies in attendance numbering 2 or 3 thousand. Some great churches have numbers approaching 10 thousand and those with 10 thousand aspire to 50 thousand. While there was brilliant teaching and preaching and outstanding musical worship, performance; one could not help but feel that those in attendance came mainly to view the show or to hear the inspired address of the mega-minister. What I saw was an enterprise in which each person was committed to make the mega-church even more of a mega-church. Something was missing. There was little or no intimacy between the "pastor" and the individual members. Individuals may have known and recognized a handful of people in the auditorium but they did not seek each other out for closeness, sharing, breaking of bread or lingering in the afterglow of God's presence. It seemed that the super Christians who were attending the super church quickly rushed home to resume life in whatever form life that awaited outside of church.

What is the Glorious Church?

The Roman Catholic empire numbers in over a billion. Is this the glorious church? The issue of a glorious church may well be addressed in the context of the mega-church or mega denomination. There is evidence that many ministries of mega-churches teach an emphasis of the gospel that introduces the concept of a "glorious church" where the church is a dynamic economic and political force in the earth as well as a power to renovate society as well.

[See the doctrine of Kingdom Theology.](#) In secular societies, Christians have now been named the bane of society because of their conservative and fundamental viewpoints but quite the opposite is true. The true Spirit of Christianity is compassion, forgiveness, and understanding. Moral precepts include personal honor and righteousness, integrity and responsibility; kindness, mutual support and family stability. Though the world does not like to recognize sin and unrighteous behavior as anything other than a "choice," Christians see that we humans *all share* alike, having a need for a redeemer along with the essential need of being hopelessly lost until God extends mercy upon our lives. In recent decades, Christians were too long absent and silenced from the counsel of social values and political ideas. In the present hour it is surely appropriate for those who have so much cause to rejoice and give voice to the life-changing testimony in the arena of public opinion. Men and women of integrity need to stand up publicly and politically. There has not been a more critical time to sound their voice on behalf of issues of righteousness.

Yet, I believe that ultimately the glorious church does not extend is not to build an empire or political power in this *present world*. The Reformers and Kingdom and Dominion theology are convinced that this the role of a church. Jesus declared when interviewed by Pontius

Pilate, "Now my kingdom is not of this world." The day is coming according to prophetic futurist interpretations of the Bible, that Jesus will make a final triumphant return to earth. Then he will deal with all Satan's kingdom and they who have rejected the Messiah.

Regarding this future kingdom, the Bible has scores of prophetic proofs. Jesus and Old Testament prophets speak of the falling away, the rebellion, the day of the Lord, the time of Jacob's trouble and the second coming. It is the final advent which is the time of Christ's supernatural judgment. The spiritual life contrasts to what the world values. It is essentially a non secular and a non materialistic life.

Social or political activism may be a Godly calling for some. Those who follow becoming Christian *apologists* to address social and political issues it should be presumed have their own foundations in correct doctrine and not equate activism as the gospel. The emphasis of the Christian life can not be focused too strongly upon the things which are social, political, or economic at the expense of Spiritual relationships. Jesus spoke these words, "*My kingdom is not of this world,*" and "*You are not of the world.*" (John 18:36; John 15:19) The nature and operation of the world is contrary to God's ways. I do not look for this situation to change until Jesus returns to establish his eternal righteous Kingdom. Just how far into the future this event will occur is open to debate, there have been hundreds of book titles addressing it. The Bible itself is subject to debate many of the questions and insights into the "second coming" of Jesus Christ. We question all matters and do not despise prophecy. This is an indispensable area of scholarship.

What is the glorious church then?

Does this "glory" refer to the size, influence and authority of mega-church or mega-denomination to rule upon the earth; or does glory refer walking in the knowledge of truth that has provided a heavenly view of life and the hereafter? Church that becomes an empire is not a new idea. It was in fact the goal of the early church since Constantine's day, both in Rome and in Constantinople. Christendom came to denote the power, influence, authority that married the political and the religious in the world. For a time church membership and theological belief was forced upon the whole world. A person was then a Christian because of political decree and not by the grace of God and such ordinances do nothing to enhance the life and promises of the Gospel. In such an empire men were exalted who held the power of life and death over others; who acted as spiritual judges over others; who were mediators between God and man and who rewarded themselves with worldly luxuries while being exalted to the point of worship in their offices.

Meanwhile the world never lacks individuals who lust for power in every arena. As Lucifer was motivated by pride desiring to rule over others the way of this world finds individuals

clamoring for recognition and striving to achieve self exaltation. They lift and promote their own names as someone great, "as the great power of God." Acts 8:10) No, I do not think this is the Glorious church. The true glory remains cloaked with humility. This veil of heavenly glory can only be penetrated with meekness, self-effacement and kindly service. The apostolic foundations, power clothed with meekness, is the true gospel which we need to follow.

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A Disciple's Handbook

CHAPTER 9 NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURAL GIVING

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I can't tell you how many church meetings I have attended that were focused on "stewardship," and support of the ministry presented by a denomination or an evangelistic association that was bringing a message to enhance living the Christian life. I have seen every sort of manipulation and strategy to intimidate or obligate the giver into giving more. I have seen "seed faith" in action and the prophetic promise of the 100 fold return if a certain amount was given to "the man of God" or the prophet. What does the Bible say about the obligation of giving? What about the giving of the tithe which nearly every church seems to require as a scriptural principle?

Many a media ministry has become a multi million dollar organization and will utilize any and all marketing schemes at their disposal to enhance their bottom line. Money preachers drive fancy cars, fly private jets and live in luxurious homes. They have gotten rich by selling their wares and claiming scriptural authority for doing so.

If you want to experience religious anger, dissonance, or heated debate, this is the topic to broach. Giving is the bread and butter of ministry. It is support for a man and his message. It provides the financing of the Gospel to world. It provides support for both the local church and missionary outreaches. Men and women go forth after devoting a large part of their lives training for "ministry" and look forward to the expectation that they will "live by the Gospel". *The Lord hath ordained that those preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.* (1Corinthians 9:14)

Professional Ministry

The concept of the clergy, professional ministry is a well establish and unquestioned paradigm. ([See the power of paradigms.](#)) The concept of **Ministry** has been traditionally connected to career or occupation. The focal point of ministry is superintending the building that a congregation attends. The concept of clergy as a professional career extends into the

dim past of "the church." The traditional church denomination operates in accord with **the professional clergy concept**. Institutionally accredited, "professional ministers" are required to serve a parish. So financial sustenance is obviously expected or *required*.

The obligation of giving and the expectation that church members should contribute tithes and offerings is a fact of church-life. However, if the truth be known, what the Bible says about giving, should reveal other criteria regarding support for the work of God. I believe each of us has to examine "giving for the gospel's sake" in light of Scripture and draw our best personal conclusions in the light of the Word.

It requires dedication and commitment to a local church body to share in meeting its financial demands. It is easy to see how giving can become burdensome or the leadership turn to preach on the requirements or obligations of giving. Almost every church I have seen teaches an obligation of paying at least a tithe and for amounts over your tithe, to give "offerings." Tithing obligations are promoted widely as commanded Scripturally using Malachi 3: 8-12. Jesus addressed the matter of required giving when confronting the pharisees. He made a distinction between giving out of the leading of the heart as opposed to the demands of the law. According to what Jesus taught his disciples in this *church*-age we are not under compunction or legal obligations to give but to give freely according the purposes of the heart.

Every believing Christian should be willing to support the **Kingdom of God** as we judge it to be **best presented**. We need to see the life of God as a Divine promise and a transforming human potentiality. We need to see ministers bringing others into this higher life. Once that criterion is met, we can go on to other matters concerning Giving. It is not my desire to subvert a system that you are committed to for your own best reasons, but rather *to encourage each person to strive to know God as fully as possible* and to experience the potential written of in the Gospel, even if it means setting aside certain long- held traditions. Every person should support the Kingdom of God as we see it best expressed. We need to see the life of God as a potentiality and the people who minister bringing others into it. Once that criterion is met, we can go on to other matters concerning Giving.

Giving: Giving & Sharing is Blessed by God

There are no laws (rules) for giving in the Kingdom of God. God has set us free from rules and obligations including rules about giving. **Giving is good!** Giving expresses the goodness and openness of the heart of God. Giving supports the man of God but giving can also **support other people** who are not necessarily "ministers" of churches but who God wishes to bless through us. Jesus said, "*Give to the poor and you will have treasures in heaven.*" (Matthew 19:21) Various kinds of worldly commitments touch upon the Kingdom of God

that need support which may include buildings, outreach expenses, travel, or any of a wide variety of needs which can only be met by others sharing the cost. God wants his will to be done through selfless sharing and contributions of money resources. Ideally, the believer will discern his part in meeting the needs of others. We need to be able to hear God leading us in ***the ministry of giving*** so that it is truly a work of God for the Gospel sake and not just a worthy cause or charity. Giving as "unto the Lord" will always have a reward in the age to come. The Almighty knows if we have a worldly reward or a heavenly one. Having a reward in this world comes from drawing attention to ourselves in ostentatious displays of generosity that *draw attention to our goodness*. *"Giving to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven," suggests that giving to the poor is following God's intentions in the gospel by giving to the less fortunate and needy.

Some basic Bible principles shed light on the subject of giving.

It is more blessed to Give than to receive

Give and it shall be given unto you

Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven

Those who give to the poor lend to God

The Tithe is the Lord's - (Old covenant principle)

In the measure you give it shall be given to you

Sow sparingly, reap sparingly

Give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven

Give as you purpose in your heart,

Let no one give out of obligation

God loves a cheerful giver

The above scriptures are a few of many references to money and giving found in the Bible. With so many ministries eager to receive our contributions it is a challenge to be able to discern who God would have us support among the ministries or servants of God. But I believe we would miss God if we *only gave to ministry professionals* and not to individuals and especially the poor. God's love is about giving. Ministry is about caring and sharing. Koinonia is also about mutual sharing and support. This whole world thrives in the light of a generous heart.

"God so loved the world that he gave -" "God so loved the world that he gave -"

Christians who have a reborn, redeemed nature do not resist giving and sharing. The unredeemed are not inclined and generally do not want to let go of anything. The world tends to think that their well being and survival are threatened by releasing any necessary resources. Believers know that when they give they are really investing in the lives of others

and God is aware of that gift and accounts for it in due time. Those returns are certain to come back to them, either now or later.

There are unscrupulous ministers who have learned how to grow rich and live sumptuously by manipulating the audience / congregation. They have discovered how to make claims that their ministry is what God is using (prophetically) to give financial "breakthroughs." The doctrine of *Seed Faith* has been used by dozens of Prosperity-focused ministries. They use worldly strategies, not heavenly ones. Such men or women will also receive their due reward if not in this world, the world to come.

The Tithe

The doctrine of the tithe (a tenth of one's increase) is taught in churches often not just as a principle but as an obligation (law). Some though I think few congregations actually enforce the giving of tithes by recording all receipts and keeping scrupulous records of the income although some come very close to this. Mostly what we hear is teaching which explains that tithing is a practice previous to the Christian era. We find Abraham tithing before the era of law in the Book of Genesis. Thus with Abraham giving a tenth to Melchisedek we might infer in typology, that Christians should follow in like principle.

The Storehouse

The Book of Malachi is usually quoted by those who teach the *obligation* of giving to **the local church house**. It argues that the storehouse is the place where you are fed (spiritual speaking.) This passage reminds us of God's displeasure at those who withhold the tithe. God calls it robbing Him. "*The Tithe is mine,*" says the Lord, therefore to withhold it is to rob him. In the time of the Levites who ministered in the temple the tithe provided for their food and care. It was there only source of income. They ate of the sacrifices.

Malachi describes the "storehouse" as the place we are supposed to bring our tithe to God. Pastors love to teach that the storehouse is the local church, where all of the sheep are fed. Remember that under the law the Levites only lived through the use of tithing. They were those appointed to minister as God's ordained priesthood were sustained by the rest of the tribes of Israel. After Jesus *ascended into the heavenly temple of God*, it is my belief that the nature of the storehouse has changed as radically as the priesthood.

At this time in *the dispensation* of the church age, the people of God are supported and fed by natural bread nor by the lambs and oxen of sacrifices once given up to the Levites. Now we are a different priesthood before God; we give spiritual sacrifices unto Christ who is now King and High Priest over all. (*Read Hebrews which explains the transition from the old covenant to the new.*)

For us in the church age, the local church model being the storehouse has some problems associated with it:

Are you fed there?

Can God be experienced there?

Is his presence manifested?

Is God's Word, the counsel of God in scripture being taught?

Is the Spiritual life demonstrated as a reality and made accessible to others?

Are the needs of the poor and needy being met?

Are other important voices for the Kingdom of God recognized and supported?

As those who also edify us individually through gifts of the Holy Spirit?

Expectations of a vibrant, Spiritual congregation:

Is God honored, exalted and given first place? Is He the focus of praise? Is there an honor afforded to the God of power and Might? Does He inspire Holy Fear? Jesus our Great High Priest who keeps accounts of everything given in his name, whether money in a church collection plate, food to a hungry child, a visit to an invalid, a drink to a thirsty man, or a visit to a person sick and alone in a hospital. (Matthew 25)

God sees every act done and sees the motive of every heart from which that gift is bestowed. God loves a cheerful giver. The motive of the heart touches faith. We know that Jesus sees our love and kindness expressed to someone in need. Giving as one giving to God that is a faithful act.

We know confidently, that he will also meet any of our needs in a time of lack because we did not withhold giving to others. We do not give out of obligation. We are not debtors to the law. We are free to give because God is a giver. Giving is sowing seeds. The seeds are recorded in a heavenly journal. If we sow bounteously we are told to expect to reap bounteously. We expect something will result from our planting. The sower of seeds also look forward to a crop which will come at *a future harvest time*. Sowing and reaping is surely a part of giving to the Kingdom of God. The commodity may be money but it can be any other commodity of kindness or care. God will meet our needs at a future time because we have planted. God stores up treasure for another day in a heavenly place, because we have given.

Tithing As Worship

The giving of tithes under the law was not just a simple token gift placed in an offering plate or bag. Tithing in the scriptural sense relates to *an act of worship in presenting the "tithe" to God*.

We find the act described in Deuteronomy Chapter 26. "Therefore it shall be, when the LORD thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God gives thee for an inheritance to possess it, that thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou shalt not forget it." *"And it shall be, when*

*thou art come in unto the land which the LORD thy God gives thee for an inheritance, and possesses it, and dwells therein;" (- 26:1-) "That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth, which thou shalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God gives thee, and shalt put it in a basket, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name there." (- Deuteronomy 26:2-15) **Note** this is during the dispensation of The LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD.*

Abraham gave a tithe to Melchisedek the King Of Salem two thousand years before the Church age and prior to the Age of the Law. This tithe prefigures the law of commandments, giving, as it were, to the King of Heaven who exists outside of genealogy forever. We give as unto him. Jesus abides forever, as the high priest Melchisedek.

Now regarding tithing as worship, I am not asking that you should memorize a ritual to recite as a rite. But it is good to have a sense of the understanding noted in the Leviticus 26 text. The giving of such a gift or tithe should be something which touches our own understanding of our previous "captivity" and God's hand at work to take us out of that place of bondage and oppression, want and sorrow. The spiritual life acknowledges that we were also taken out of bondage. It is a faithful saying which needs to be spoken. Notice that all of this tithing worship is spoken to God in the place which has His name written upon it. Today we are redeemed and the house of God is not a special place it is the human house where the spirit resides. The tithing worship reminds us of God's covenant with us and how he is taking further towards strength, blessing and victorious living. Speaking these things tells God that we know what he has done for us and that we are truly thankful that he knows and remembers us each and that he will continue to be with us supplying good things.

The Prosperity Message

The past decades have seen a great emphasis on the Prosperity message. Poverty and lack are clearly seen as a curse throughout scripture. God does want us to live without provision. The redemption from the curse of the law also freed us want and lack. We believe that "*My God shall supply all of our needs according to his riches in Glory by Christ Jesus.*" In gauging any matter of doctrine we have to hold it up not only to common sense and scripture but to discerning what the spiritual life needs to be.

("The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.") Though we should not lack nor want, God wants more of us and not less of us. Therefore anything which takes our focus away from God and places it upon unfruitful things, those worldly things which only decay, is really a stumbling block for a believer. Those who preach riches and wealth are leading people away from intimacy unless they are able to handle wealth and prosperity more graciously than I. Many are able to assume possessions of wealth and money and property without being

seduced away from God's presence. But sometimes the aware of the futility and the emptiness of wealth comes too late when are already victimized by excesses, this was the case of the writer of Ecclesiastes, Solomon who realized late in life that with wealth comes other griefs and spareness of the soul. Gain is not Godliness, the apostle writes in 1Timothy 6:5, withdraw yourselves from such doctrines. *but Godliness with contentment is great gain,* (1Timothy 6:6) God wishes to supply our needs, to bless us in our going out and our coming in to make us fruitful in body and in all of the pursuits of our life. (Deuteronomy 28:3-6)

The doctrine of *prosperity does associate with blessing* (Deuteronomy 28) but the negative side of riches is its link to selfish motives both in the giver and the receiver. Many who preach the prosperity message are in a position to directly benefit by the unrestrained giving that is encouraged in sermons and in seminars. Some of those who preach the doctrine exceed the Word of God by suggesting that gifts given to their own ministries have the greatest return connected to them. Of course the hyper faith doctrine ascribes a greater degree of return, thirty, sixty or one hundred fold spoken of in scripture insured as a consequence of giving. There is greater insight in the 30, 60 and hundred fold metaphor than mere cash and assets. The prospering of the soul is accounted above all, in Spiritual richness. Giving, according to Jesus, should not be in the manner of the Pharisees who "sound a trumpet" to give notice that they are doing an alms deed. Jesus teaches to give in secret and for the left hand not to see what the right hand does. All of these teachings address anonymous giving rather than a public display in which people are applauding the giver for his excellent generosity. The Lord says of such people, "-they receive their reward." by the act of receiving public acclaim and applause. It is far better to give with only the Father who sees in secret knowing our deed. He will be the one who insures a return in the best possible time. Any man or woman can give or contribute in any kind of thing or commodity. One can give a gift of service another a gift of a song. Another a gift of kindness. The same principle applies when the motive is right, God who is the author and overseer of every good and perfect gift. The Father knows when our giving is free from self exaltation. He will insure the return.

[A description of Thanksgiving, Praise and Worship,](#)

updated 2024

A Disciple's Handbook

WORSHIP THANKSGIVING, PRAISE AND WORSHIP

The experience of True Worship is uncommon.

True worship is empowered by God.

The Spirit of God engages the Spirit of Man via the anointing.

Musicians even having a musical gift, fall short performing worship.

Worship is the domain of being a true child of God

[YouTube Video by the Author, Why We Worship](#)

John 4:23 "- But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. (24) God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

Worship plays a part in all religion.

Certain religions believe in worshiping their ancestors; others worship or hold in reverence, creatures or objects; others worship myriads of gods by name. All of these kinds of worship consists of intricate and specific rituals and rites practiced by its followers. All of these come from sincere beliefs and are fervently held. Religious worship may be in the form of the burning of incense, or the spilling of blood sacrificed in the most solemn manner. Praise and worship are practiced in all Christian Churches but in a variety of ways.

Priests or 'holy men' wear sacred garments in order to follow the rigor of their prescribed worship. Worshipers follow rites of purification, bow and posture, fold their hands, or make mystical gestures heavenward. Supplicants learn to follow such rituals and think that by so doing they become a true worshiper. The natural man or woman may easily learn a ritual and follow that ritual with some degree of solemnity and in doing so believes they have completed their spiritual duty. What does Jesus Christ say regarding such worship?

What Jesus said about True Worshipers

A foundation of understanding of the subject of worship is found in the gospel account of Jesus' encounter with the woman at a well in Samaria:

John 4:19 - John 4:24 19 - -The woman said to Him, “*Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. 20, Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.*” 21, Jesus said to her, “*Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22, You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. 23, But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24, God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*”

We, who believe ourselves to be True Worshipers, claim to know who we worship. We also have our own notions about whether or not we are worshipping “***in Spirit or in Truth.***” Certainly not all of the world's religions worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. We born from above Christians are now permitted to call God "Our Father." It was not possible prior to Christ dying for our sins!

But I would further suggest with confidence that not all those who surround us in Christian meeting houses know the one they claim to worship. A spiritual union with the Father is the very first requirement. This results from a supernatural spiritual act by the *Grace of God* The Father. By believing in the Lord Jesus Messiah who paid for our salvation (redemption.) we become adopted sons and daughter. This same Jesus declared that, “ - ***no one comes to the Father except through me.***” *John 14:6*

Following is a description of a typical Christian worship service

Musical preludes performed by an organist or musicians.

The congregation sings hymns from a hymn book or screen projection at intervals.

Partakers may share a handshake or a greeting with others.

An individual, priest or pastor, offers a teaching, a Bible lesson or homily that engages the congregation to enhance the spiritual life and understanding of the congregation.

God's tithes and offerings are collected.

The congregation or choir sings musical responses after parts of the service such as scripture readings, prayers and petitions, or

collection of offerings.

Singers may perform well rehearsed anthems.

Individuals as featured soloists may perform special music.

Programmed worship services as listed in the above example are standard fare in most Christian denominations. Such programs are performed with greater or lesser sophistication depending upon the size of the congregation and the talent and resources available. Churches with a greater pool of talent and imagination are more successful in creating quality performances and presentations. Better programs eventually attract larger congregations. An important point to note is that the participation in worship services is by relatively few individuals. The majority of the assembled worshipers are onlookers who are the congregation acting in their role of an audience. The question remains how much of this accrues to being true worshipers? God knows the hearts of his people as well as those individuals who are passive or disengaged.

Praise and worship are the cornerstone of Christian life.

In the scripture quoted just above, Jesus makes a number of points about worship that reveal a new paradigm, the mystery of relationship of believers to the (spiritual) Father. **First, worship is not about a place** to meet with God. Location, whether on the hill tops of Samaria or on the temple mount of Jerusalem is rendered irrelevant. One does not go to a place to find God. Rather worshipers carry the Spirit of God and gather together. The church is manifested as its members assemble.

I believe the next point that Jesus makes is that a large segment of the present world worships a god different from the one who Jesus presents. Such worship is one sided and blind. There is no connection of the worshiper to the object of their worship. Their god is actually unknown to the worshiper and any spiritual bond is absent.

For Christians who would be worshipers, I think it can must be stated that *if one is not born of the Spirit, any effort to be a true worshiper is in vain!* Worship is about the devotion of the heart, the seat of passion and affection. Any form of worship not from the heart fails to bridge the **faith** gap. We have a standing and status before God the Almighty. Being a blood-bought child of God fulfills the requirement of Worshiping the father in Truth.

True worshipers must be true believers

True believers must be called into the Kingdom of God. This is not a wholesale process. Each individual must approach the throne of grace seeking mercy and pardon for sins. If this seeking is sincere and *heartfelt* the individual becomes born of the Spirit. Thereafter, these, **through the power of God**, become partakers in Jesus Christ's divine nature. They have become sons and daughters of God and as

God's nature is deposited in them they begin to have fellowship with Him. This statement will not be understood or agreed upon by all religious experts. One may be a theologian or a scholar and still not know who they worship because they are outside of God's family.

Any who would say there is no God. Or anyone who says we can not know God or claim to have his Divine nature imparted to us are simply reasoning within the limits of their natural mind. Those who are **born of God have had their eyes opened** and become a brand new creation. *2 Corinthians 5:16 - 2 Corinthians 5:18 17, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 18, Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ- - "*

The Spiritual side of worship

First understand that **the mind is NOT the spirit** although many actually teach this. Understand also that **the soul or personality of a person is not the spirit**. Humans are *soulish* beings before coming to Christ and tend to remain so after coming to Christ. But the **soul which equates to -mind, intellect and emotion**, is not the part that is born from above (or reborn) in Christ Jesus. The soul can be exalted in reaction to someone else's emotional presentation. But such is not Spiritual worship. Soul music is aptly named. Soul music comes from the soulish, personality side of human beings. Uniqueness of presentation that exalts the performer characterizes soulish worship. Soul music says, look at me. Soulish performance is made to move an audience. It says, "Aren't I a snappy performer!" Spiritual worship requires no audience but God. Spiritual worship does not have to have special gifts, ornamentation or sophistication. It is simply from ourselves, who were in times past, entirely unworthy but now are raised up into a new hope and future.

The Spiritual side of worship is about our interaction with heaven. It wishes to be free and unrestrained. It exalts in the joy of salvation and the wonder of being called forth to be called, with Christ, into heavenly places. *Colossians 3:1 - Colossians 3:3 1,"- -So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2,Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, 3 for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. "*

Spiritual life is about engaging in the very presence of God. In the times of the First Covenant priesthood, the high priest went annually into the presence of God through a heavy veil but only after scrupulous preparation and purification. In such a place the priest hardly dared to make a move in the presence of a Holy God. Any falling short resulted in the death of the officiate. The veil of God's temple was rent in half at the death of Jesus on the cross allowing another kind of priest to enter into God's Holy presence. (Revelation 1:6) *To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood,*

⁶*and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

Worship within the Holy Place is now a part of the legacy of the child of God born of the Spirit. We can now boldly go into God's presence through the blood of the Messiah Jesus who has purchased this right for us. *Hebrews 10:19 - Hebrews 10:22 20, - -by the new and living way that he opened for us through the veil (that is, through his flesh), 21, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22, let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. - -"*

So to simplify and make plain: We worship the Heavenly Father with our hearts. The heart is the very center of our passion and desires, for what the heart desires becomes its worship. Those born from heaven esteem and value the Spiritual life which is given from heaven and orchestrated from heaven. Heaven interacts with our hearts to make us true worshipers. Zeal is not the emotion of the soul it is the passion of the heart for Him who called us out of darkness into the Holy presence of heavenly things. (Mount Zion and the heavenly company of angelic beings and righteous souls.

Our souls can be inspired and stimulated by stirring music but takes the Holy Spirit to lift our hearts to heaven. The Holy Spirit (Holy Ghost) animates and empowers the worshipers with inspiration and revelation in times of worship. When some particular saint is in worship he may be at the very feet of Jesus or receiving a revelation of a truth that has been hidden from us until this very minute.

Free worship versus program worship

In the beginning we may not all have a sense of comfort about openly practicing thanksgiving, praise and worship.

As we gather together we should feel free to give praise or thanksgiving with the liberty that God allows. This means it does not have to be scripted to be heartfelt.

We find throughout the Old Testament Scripture a great number of references to praise. It is a valuable study to research and discover that this word praise comes from several different Hebrew antecedents. Words translated "Praise" in the psalms and prophetic books include at least 7 Hebrew words. Each word addresses somewhat different expression of praise or thanksgiving which may include, singing, playing, shouting and others. If we understand what these words express it will help us to expand our understanding of the variety and flavors of praise.

Hebrew terms for worship and praise

1. **YADAH** - yaw-daw - to worship with the extended hand. The giving of oneself in worship and adoration. To lift your hands unto the Lord. It carries the meaning of absolute surrender as a young child does to a parent - "pick me up, I'm all yours".

Scriptures: Gen. 29:35, 2 Chron. 7:6, 20:21, Psalms 9:1, 28:7, Psalms 33:2, 42:5,11, 49:18, Isaiah 12:1

2. **TEHILLAH** -teh-hil-law- to sing, to laud. **A spontaneous new song. Singing from a melody in your heart by adding words to it.** This refers to a special kind of singing-it is singing unprepared, unrehearsed songs. Brings tremendous unity to the body of Christ. Singing straight to God. Can move into tehillah anytime. Singing it the second time would be ZAMAR. It is the praise that God inhabits (sits enthroned on) (Psalm 22:3) God manifests Himself in the midst of exuberant singing. Scripture: Psalms 22:3, 34:1, 40:3, 66:2, 2 Chronicles 20:22

3. **BARAK** - baw-rak - To kneel or to bow. To give reverence to God as an act of adoration. It implies to continual conscious giving place to God. Blessing the Lord, extolling virtue. There is a sense of kneeling and blessing God as an act of adoration in the word BARAK. Physical application - To bow, kneel or to do this with the intent in my heart that He is my KING and I yield to HIM. I am acknowledging Him as KING and GOD. SONG: BLESS THE LORD Scripture: Psalm 103 tells us how to bless the Lord and then goes on to enumerate those blessings: loving kindness, satisfaction redemption, honor, renewal. We bless the Lord by remembering all of these things.

4. **HALAL** Scripture: 1 Chron. 16:4, 23:5,30, 25:3, 29:13, Neh. 12:24 (this word appears over 110 times in the OT) 1984 halal (haw-lal'); a primitive root; to be clear (orig. of sound, but usually of color); to shine; hence, *to make a show, to boast*; and thus to be (clamorously) foolish; to rave; causatively, *to celebrate*; also to stultify:

5. **TOWDAH -to-daw** -To give worship by the extension of the hand in adoration or agreeing with what has been done or will be. This word is commonly found in connection with sacrifice-applying the giving of thanks or praise as a sacrifice before reception or manifestation. Thanking God for something that I don't have in the natural. Agreeing with His Word - faith in His Word. This form of praise goes in operation just because His Word is true. "Father, I thank YOU that YOUR WORD is TRUE. As we raise our hearts and hands in praise to the Lord, it involves a sacrifice, especially if one is very sick in body. The carnal mind would fight and ridicule this particular action, but there is great faith in TOWDAH as praise. The lifting of the hand symbolizes agreement. The right hand symbolizes my covenant with my my Father. As I go through the scriptures,

God is seen extending His Right Hand to me. That's the covenant. When He extends His right hand to me, He's saying to me - ALL THAT I AM IS YOURS, and when I extend my right hand to Him, I am saying "All that I am is yours and I agree with what You're saying. It is the sacrifice that God honors by His performing of miracles. The ATTITUDE for TOWDAH is: I'm thanking God. I'm agreeing with God that it is as He says. I don't care what it looks like. I'm agreeing with what His Word says. Example: Father, I thank You that I am healed. **Scripture: Psalm 42:4, 50:23, Jer. 17:26**

6. ZAMAR - zaw-mar - To sing with instruments. To make music accompanied by the voice. One of the musical verbs for praise in the book of psalms. It carries the idea of making music in praise to God as in Psalm 92:1. The word ZAMAR also means to touch the strings, and refers to praise that involves instrumental worship as in Psalm 150. The one word is usually translated "sing praises". 2167 zamar (zaw-mar'); a primitive root [perhaps ident. with 2168 through the idea of striking with the fingers]; properly, *to touch the strings or parts of a musical instrument*, i.e. play upon it; to make music, accompanied by the voice; hence to celebrate in song and music: KJV-- give praise, sing forth praises, psalms. to sing, to sing praise, to make music; (Piel)

7. SHABACH - shaw-bakh - to address in a loud tone, a loud adoration, a shout! Proclaim with a loud voice, unashamed, the GLORY, TRIUMPH, POWER, MERCY, LOVE OF GOD. This word implies that testimony is praise. The phrase "shout unto the Lord" can be understood as the action of SHABACH. It is not just being loud. You should have the attitude of putting your whole being into it, an attitude of being totally uninhibited. Scripture: Psalm 117:1, 63:3-4 7623 shabach (shaw-bakh'); a primitive root; properly, *to address in a loud tone*, i.e. (specifically) loud; figuratively, to pacify (as if by words): KJV-- commend, glory, keep in, praise, still, triumph.

Thanksgiving:

A heart of thanksgiving is called for by all who claim to be the children of God through Christ Jesus. If we are callous and have no true thanksgiving in our souls it would appear that we have not been impacted by God's loving kindness, mercy and grace:

If we were impoverished and received a legacy valued beyond all the riches of this world, would we not be happy and wish to give thanks?

If we were spared an eternity of judgment and hell by God's gift of righteousness which says we do not have to pay the penalty for being unrighteous or unworthy because Jesus himself bore our sins, would we not be happy and full of thanksgiving?

If we are spared from the horrors of oppression by tyrants or sorrows of natural calamities ought we not offer up thanksgiving to God?

If we eat are comfortable while thousands go without food and shelter, ought we not give thanks? The people who do not know God are called "unthankful, unholy, etc. - - "

2 Timothy 3:2 - 2 Timothy 3:2 - - -, for men shall be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, evil-speakers, to parents disobedient, unthankful, unkind -

The Psalms: Examples That Teach Us Thanksgiving, Praise

Psalms are not entirely made up of songs of praise as they include prayers and prophetic utterances.

But they are the best examples of a man possessed of God's Holy Spirit (The Ruach Ha Kadesh) whose life and thoughts are turned continually God-ward. God refers to David as a man '- after His own heart.' While addressing the matters of trouble which surround him, David looks to the Lord as his strength, his hope, and his deliverer. He never forgets God's mercy and faithfulness. Even while praising the Lord actively (with his mouth) God at various times intervenes in the midst of his utterances and begins to speak His words through the psalmist's mouth. (Psalm 91, a good example)

Here are typical utterances of Praise and Thanksgiving.

Psalms 9:1-2 - Psalms 9:1; I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. ;2 I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High. **

Psalms 111:1 - Psalms 111:1 Praise the Lord! I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, In the assembly of the upright and in the congregation.**

Psalms 34:2 - Psalms 34:3 1) I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. 2) My soul shall make its boast in the Lord; The humble shall hear of it and be glad. 3) Oh, magnify the Lord with me, And let us exalt His name together. **

Psalms 30:12 12) To the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks to You forever. **

Psalms 106:1 - Psalms 106:1 1) Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. **

Psalms 5:11 - Psalms 5:12 11 But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You. 12 For You, O Lord, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield. **

Psalms 13:5 - Psalms 13:6 5 But I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation. 6 I will sing to the Lord, Because He has dealt bountifully with me.**

Psalms 31:7 - Psalms 31:8 I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, For You have considered my trouble; You have known my soul in adversities, 8 And have not shut me up into the hand of the enemy; **

Psalms 71:23 - Psalms 71:24 23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You, And my soul, which You have redeemed. 24 My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long; **

24 This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it. **

Psalms 148:2 - Psalms 148:5 1 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens; Praise Him in the heights! 2 Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts! 3 Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all you stars of light! 4 Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, And you waters above the heavens! 5 Let them praise the name of the Lord, For He commanded and they were created. **

Psalms 148:13 - Psalms 148:14 13 Let them praise the name of the Lord, For His name alone is exalted; His glory is above the earth and heaven. 14 And He has exalted the horn of His people, The praise of all His saints— Of the children of Israel, A people near to Him. **

Psalms 149:2 - Psalms 149:6 1 Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, And His praise in the assembly of saints. 2 Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. 3 Let them praise His name with the dance; Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp. 4 For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation. 5 Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds. 6 Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, **

Psalms 150: - Psalms 150:6 1 Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty firmament! 2 Praise Him for His mighty acts; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness! 3 Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet; Praise Him with the lute and harp! 4 Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes! 5 Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with clashing cymbals! 6 Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

We see that there is no shortage of Praise and Thanksgiving addressed here in the Psalms. There is much more throughout other Old Testament books as well. "Praise is an ornament of beauty" for the upright. There is strength in praise. Praise is active and not passive. When we praise The Lord we are interacting with the hosts of heaven who continually offer praise unto Him who sits on the throne. There is deliverance in praise, it brings confusion to the ranks of the enemy (demonic spiritual orders.) Praise takes all kinds of forms. It includes music and dance. Praise includes shouting loudly to extol the virtues of God. Praise includes making joyful noises to God. Praise brings us into the very presence of the Holy presence of God. 'Enter his gates with thanksgiving' speaks of making the way into God's place, as one would enter the Tabernacle from the world of care into the gate beyond the fence. Enter into His courts with praise, addressing progressing into a place of greater intimacy. This part of the tabernacle is the Holy Place. Here we may still praise and speak to God and extol his goodness and mercies. But the ultimate place is entered with a higher lever of worship where we can nothing but *worship* in the Holiness of His presence.

For those who say there should no be noise and clammer in the zeal of worship they are not biblically accurate. For those who say there should be no musical instruments, they are not Biblically accurate. For those who say there should be dancing, again, this is not in harmony with what we have seen in the Psalms.

Liberty in Spiritual worship allows a lot of praise. It should not be curtailed. It should allow each person to engage in his or her own forms of praise. We all are called to Praise. Let everything that has breath, Praise the Lord! Freedom in praising the Lord creates a beautiful tapestry of sound and glory into which God's presence is pleased to dwell.

Mystery of God's Power - PDF FILE:

How all believers may receive

'The Promise of the Father'

Through the Holy Spirit

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