

# SCHOOL OF MINISTRY

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A ministry division of Christian Fellowship Church

*“Equipping saints to do the work of their ministry”*

Servanthood



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## Lesson 1

### Characteristics of a Servant

**Text: Acts 3**

**They were men of prayer. (Acts 3:1)** You cannot do any true, effective work for God apart from prayer. There are five outlets of spiritual power:

1. Your words (what you say)
2. Your life (how you live)
3. Your service (what you do for God or in the name of the Lord)
4. Your money/finances (what I release for the work of the Lord)
5. Prayer –most powerful outlet; an exciting outlet of spiritual power; so broad, so unlimited.

**They were men of faith.** In Romans 4:19 we have four keys given to us for faith. Speaking of Abraham, it reads: “*And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb.*” (cf. Jeremiah 32:27)

- ⇒ Don't look at the human aspects, at human difficulties
- ⇒ Don't stagger at the promises of God.
- ⇒ Give glory to God.
- ⇒ Believe in the ability of God.

**They were men of the Word.**

**They were men filled with the Holy Spirit, men who have been empowered by the Holy Spirit.**

**They were men of boldness.**

## Lesson 2

### Requirements of Ministry

When Jesus was talking about His church to Peter, He said, *“On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* (Matthew 16:18).

There are two ways to build a church: (1) by man’s programs or (2) By letting God build the church

The church does not exist for evangelism, but for the perfecting of the saints. The word *“perfect”* in the Greek is literally, *“of full age or full maturity.”* Therefore, the purpose of the church is to bring the saints into a full maturity in their walk and in their experience with Jesus Christ. The word *“edifying”* means *to build up*—the building up of the body of Christ.

- 1) Sick sheep cannot beget sheep. They cannot reproduce no matter how much you beat them.
- 2) Healthy sheep just reproduce naturally. It is the natural function of a healthy sheep to reproduce. Evangelism of the world is the byproduct of a healthy body. If the church is strong and healthy, there will be evangelism.

Hebrews 6:1-3                    *“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”*

Lay the foundations, but then go on to develop the people into a full maturity in Christ Jesus. And that, of course, can only be done through the Word of God and a consistent study of the Word of God.

Acts 2:42                    *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*

Acts 2:47                    *“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”*

The four functions of the early church:

1. The apostles’ doctrine, or the teaching, the solid teaching of the Word of God
2. Fellowship (Greek word *“koinonia”* meaning a oneness, a communion, a fellowship)
3. Breaking of bread. This is a very significant act in the Jewish culture which symbolizes lives becoming a part of each other. That is why a Jew would never eat with a Gentile.
4. Prayer.

The church’s task is not to mobilize for evangelism When we become what God wants us to be, God will do what He is wanting to do, He will add daily. That is God’s business. Jesus said, *“I will build My Church.”* (Matthew 16:18). My business is to minister God’s Word, God’s love, to God’s people through the anointing of the Spirit. And the work of the Spirit through the Word of God in the lives of the believers of God, is the thing that makes for success in the church.

## Lesson 3 Walking With God

**Text:** Ephesians 1:1-4

**You are Called:** **Make your calling and election sure.**

Ephesians 1:1 “*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: . . .*” (Emphasis added.) God has called each of us for a full-time calling into the ministry. “*Whatever you do in word or deed, do all to the glory of God*” (cf. Colossians 3:17).

**Priority:** **Your relationship with God has to be first priority.**

Ephesians 1:2 “*Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

A theme that runs through the book of Ephesians is: “In Christ Jesus”. Paul shows that the believer’s life is totally bound up in the person of Jesus Christ and that we are nothing apart from Him. It is in Him. It is through Him. It is by Him and it is for Him that our lives exist. (cf. John 15:8).

1. Grace and peace are commonly coupled together, always in this order because to experience the real peace of God you must experience the grace of God.
2. “Lord” is not God’s name but a title that signifies relationship. Jesus is His name. *Yeshua* means “Jehovah is salvation” (in other words, “Christ is His mission”). It is the Greek word of the Hebrew word *Mashiyach*, “the Messiah, the Anointed One”. It denotes His mission, but Lord is His title. (cf. Matthew 7:22–23; Luke 6:46). Lord is a title representing “I am your servant.” I am the ***doulos***, **the bond slave**. He is **my *kurios***, **my Lord, my Master**; and thus, I have no rights of my own. I have relinquished those rights to my Lord. To be a servant, the relationship has to first of all be established, and it is a Lord/servant relationship.
3. Romans 10:9–10 from the Greek means a submission of myself to the Lordship of Jesus Christ

**Relationship  
Blessings:**

**All of the blessings that God has for you are *in Christ*.**

Ephesians 1:3 “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*”

Your #1 and Best Blessing -- God Chose You (Ephesians 1:4)

Why? Only God knows why. But . . .

- Faith is believing what you do not understand.
- Reason is understanding what you believe.

Choose faith.

## Lesson 4

### Spiritual Blessings

There is an interesting balance in the Christian life.

- Realization that God has done many things for us.
- Our work for God in response to that realization: responding to the grace and goodness of God.

#### What Has God Done for Us?

**Ephesians 2:1** “And you hath He quickened, [or made alive] who were dead in trespasses and sins”

- Sin has as its root meaning, “missing the mark” (even if you’re trying to hit it).
- A trespass is a deliberate, defiant, willful disobedience to God.
- Either or both of them, alienate us from God.

**Ephesians 2:2** “Wherein in time past, ye walked according to the course of this world...”

In the Greek one word for *walk* speaks of a gait, a directness with a steady gait (walking with purpose and direction). But this particular word for *walked* is a word which means, “to meander” (in other words, walk without purpose or direction). In other words, life was lacking real purpose. You were not going anywhere. Life, apart from Christ is without purpose and meaning.

God is a superior Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit. Man is an inferior trinity of spirit, soul, and body. What is the new birth? It is an inversion. It is God putting man back into his proper order.

**Ephesians 2:4-5**, “But God, who is rich in mercy for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath made us alive together with Christ.”

**Ephesians 2:6-7**, “And He hath raised us up together and made us to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

God’s love and God’s grace is so great and so vast that it is going to take all of eternity to reveal it.

**Ephesians 2:8**, “For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast”.

Faith is a gift from God. Therefore, God eliminates boasting. His grace does all of this for us as we believe in Him. Through faith and the fact that faith is the agency, it eliminates boasting because even that faith is a gift from God.

**Ephesians 2:10**, “For we are His workmanship created together in Christ Jesus unto good works that God has foreordained that you should walk in them.”

- The word “workmanship” in the Greek is *poema* which means a work-of-art, the expressive form of an artist.
- God has already foreordained that which He has planned for your life, the purpose, and the work that you are to accomplish for the kingdom. God knows exactly what He is bringing you to and God knows what He is preparing you for.

### Our Response to the Work God Has Done for Us

*“Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you were called.”*

## Lesson 5 Leaders of the Church

- 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:1      *“This is a faithful saying. If a man desires the position of **a bishop** he desires a good work.”* **Bishops are to oversee.** The term “bishop” implies accountability.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5:17-18      *“Let the **elders** who rule well be accounted worthy of **double honor**, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain’ and ‘the laborer is worthy of his wages.’”* **Elders are to rule.** The term “elder” implies a spiritual maturity. Elders are to receive double honor:
1. Respect
  2. Remuneration or financial compensation

Man’s rules have divided the bishop and elder into two positions. However, in Acts 20, Paul refers to them as the same person (bishop [overseer]/elder/pastor [shepherd]).

- Acts 20:17      *“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church.”*  
Acts 20:28      *“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers.”*

Then there is a separation, a second position mentioned.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:8      *“Likewise **deacons** must be reverent.”*  
A different position of leadership -- “deacons” meaning “servants”.  
**Deacons are to serve. They are willing-hearted helpers.**

### **Leadership Qualifications for the Bishop/Elder/Pastor (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:2-7)**

1. Blameless (there is no clear, on-going violation of the standards and the ways of God)
2. The husband of one wife. The husband and wife relationship is critical in leadership.
3. Temperate or moderate in behavior
4. Sober-minded; having a seriousness for the things of God and gravity toward the eternal stakes of heaven and hell.
5. Of good behavior; avoiding ungodly things, situations, speech, things that can become traps
6. Hospitable.
7. Able to teach or apt to teach. The elder is a pastor, a feeder, feeding the sheep the Word of God.
8. Not to be given to wine (all negative influences) but filled with Spirit.
9. Not to be violent; he doesn’t lash out at the sheep.
10. Not to be greedy for money (including position or fame).
11. Gentle.
12. Not covetous or focused on collecting material things.
13. He rules his house well. This includes the spiritual children within his church, those he’s raising up, doors of opportunities for future expansion by his spiritual children.
14. He is not to be a novice.

### **Leadership Qualifications for the Deacon (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 3:8-11)**

Notice the many similarities there are there between elders and deacons in spiritual qualities of life. The main difference is the range of responsibility and the aptitude of teaching.

### **Leadership Priorities**

- Luke 10:38-42 says that we are to be living and serving with our hearts abiding at the feet of Jesus.
- Acts 6:4 says that leaders are to be given continually to the Word and to prayer.
- Matthew 20:25-28 says that servanthood characterizes all that we do in the name of the Lord.
- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:1 says that we are to be letting God make us increasingly into Christ-like examples.

## **Lesson 6 Leadership Issues**

### **Ministry to Our Own Families**

Matthew 10:37; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5:8 -- The Lord Jesus Christ must be the centerpiece, the highest priority. But being so involved in *service for the Lord* so that we do not provide for the needs of our household, is to deny our faith by our own wrong priorities. These two truths create a healthy tension because both are the will of God. But only God can put them together, which means we need to heed His Word, and walk by the Spirit, prayer and wisdom.

### **Relationship with Other Leaders**

Mark 3:14; Romans 12:10; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:8 -- Leaders need to spend time together. If we are going to be used of God to lead others, we need to hang out with those we are laboring with in the Lord.

### **Relationship with the Church**

1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:1-4 -- Guide them. Guard them. Protect them. Help them to grow up. Feed them a healthy diet. Serve willingly, because you want to, not to “get”, but to “give”. We are accountable to Him and we are not to “lord over” the Lord’s sheep.

### **Equipping for Ministry and Leadership**

Ephesians 4:11-12; 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 2:2 -- God’s leaders are to be busy outfitting all of God’s people for ministry.

### **Intensified Spiritual Warfare**

When we serve the Lord we are not signing up for the cake walk at the church picnic. We are signing up for more battle responsibility. You are going to see the “warfare” intensify. Battle it with intensified prayer.

### **Inevitable Opposition**

Exodus 16:1-3; Numbers 16:1-3 -- As long as there are the immature, the babes, the learning or the carnal or rebellious, there will be opposition. Battle it in prayer not through arguments or “harsh” preaching.

### **Setting Up the Proper Spiritual Banner**

Psalms 20:5; Colossians 1:18 and 28; Colossians 3:17 -- Raise the banner of Jesus Christ. Be devoted to Him and His Word and let Him change all of us in conformity to His will and His way for that church. We must give Jesus Christ first place in everything. Let His name be on the banner we fly spiritually over our lives and ministries.

## Lesson 7

# Know Your Calling

**Text: Nehemiah 1:1-11**

Two Questions:

1. Have you been called?
2. What is your ministry gift/gifts? What are you to *do* in the ministry?

Hearing the need/condition/burden, Nehemiah's heart was touched. This burden constituted the call of God upon his heart to do something about it. He was not looking for a job. He was called by a burden.

Too many pastors have become reactors – reacting to criticism; reacting to the strain of the sheep. Our reaction should be in prayer, weeping, with hearts broken. Jesus said in Matthew 9:36, “And being moved with great compassion towards them...” That is the reaction of the true shepherd. Nehemiah mourned for days, then fasted and he prayed. Though it does not declare it, it surely is inferred in the whole context, that his prayer was the offering of himself as an instrument that God might use.

The Paul the Apostle said: “Woe is me if I preach not this gospel of Jesus Christ” (1 Corinthians 9:16). But the Bible encourages us to examine ourselves. “*For if we judge ourselves we will not be judged of God*” (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:31). Take a look at your own life and ministry. Let the Holy Spirit really search your heart. The call of God is essential for the ministry. It says in 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter 1:10 to “make your calling and election sure.” In context, I am certain it is talking about salvation there, yet I think that it is important that we make our calling sure. Do I still feel called to the ministry today? Am I still burdened over the needs that are there? Am I willing to make any sacrifice necessary in a personal way in order to fulfill the calling and the burden on my heart?

## Lesson 8

### What is Revival?

**Text: John 15:16**

Revival is not religious excitement, but a “continuing work”. The true measure of revival is “lasting fruit”; fruit that remains.

When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem it was a great disappointment.

Nehemiah 13:7-8      *“I came to Jerusalem and I understood of the evil that Eliasheb had done for Tobiah in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore; therefore I cast him out with all of his household stuff.”*

Now what was the problem? People can be all excited, returning back to the celebration of the feast, worshipping God, weeping before God, fasting, praying, and then how is it that so quickly they can just return back to the old ruts that they were in?

They had become a “mixed multitude”. Like the Israelites, in our churches today, we have a mixed multitude who are mixed with the people of God. There are those who are dedicated and committed to following Jesus Christ full on, eager and wanting to just have more and more of the Lord. But then there is also that mixed multitude who are lusting after the flesh. They are there on Sunday mornings unless there is something better to do. The mixed multitudes are always a problem that has to be dealt with.

Do not let the mixed multitude hold back the people. Do not cater to them. Minister to those who want to go on with the Lord, and if the mixed multitude happens to fall away, rejoice! God often subtracts in order that He may multiply.

Nehemiah 13:11      *“And I gathered them together, and set them in their place.”*

The word “*contend*” means “fight”. He rebuked them and got things going again. Then he dealt with further issues of their failure to keep the Sabbath in verses 15-21. Why? Keeping the Sabbath day was a sign of God’s covenant with the people. The fact that they violated the Sabbath then was indicative of a broken covenant. In every covenant that God has established with man, God has a sign of that covenant.

Further, Nehemiah dealt with the issue of the mixed marriages in verses 23-25. He took drastic action in order to get things back in order.

The incidents of Nehemiah 13 point to the necessity of strong leadership. If God has made you a leader of His flock in your community, take care of the flock of God. The words “feed My sheep, translated into Greek mean “to tend, take over, or oversee”. When Peter was writing to the elders, as an elder himself, he used that same word. “Take care of the flock of God that is among you” (1 Peter 5:2). Tend them. Do not forsake them. Do not neglect them. If God has called you to be the shepherd over a flock, no one else can take the necessary actions to protect that flock and the purity of the flock.

## **Lesson 9**

### **Surviving Opposition from Within**

Nehemiah 5:1                    *“They brought to Nehemiah their grievance. There was a great cry of the people, and of their wives against their own Jewish brothers.”*

Satan generally uses open opposition (ridicule and threats) as his first tactic against you. When that fails, then Satan comes with a more subtle strategy of opposition from within. He seeks to create a disgruntled people and conditions that are not good. As he so often does, he is using the greed of man to oppose the work of God.

#### **Nehemiah Used Godly Wisdom – Nehemiah 5**

1.        He sat down and “consulted with” himself. He thought it over first. (vs. 7)
2.        While calming himself and thinking, he came up with a course of action. (vs. 7)
3.        He dealt with the wrongdoers. (vs. 8-9)
4.        He explained the situation to the church. (vs. 13)
5.        He once again set the example for the people. (vs. 14)

Why do people do what they do? They are lacking a fear of God.

- “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Psalm 111:10).
- “To fear the Lord is to hate evil” (Proverbs 8:13).

The result: They set the example themselves. (vs. 15) “And all the people praised the Lord and the work continued.” When the opposition from within is dealt with, people rejoice and praise God; and the work of God continues, as God builds up the defenses to protect His people from the enemy.

## Lesson 10

### Self-Promotion in Ministry

#### Texts: Jude 11 & Numbers 16

Many of us fall into the very real vulnerability, the very real temptation, to *make something happen* in our own energy—self-promotion—the path that leads to the pit.

The name “Korah” means “bold one”. But here his boldness was not based in purity but self-ambition. The Targum translates verse 3 as Korah saying to Moses, “You have ruled too long.” Regardless, Moses did not “get in his face”; rather, he fell on his face. The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, they are not argumentation, or proving our point philosophically or theologically.

Korah did not realize the glorious position he already *had* to minister. All of us need to regularly be adjusted in our understanding of the true priority of ministry: not standing before people, but ministering to the Lord. (Ezekiel 44:10-15)

On three occasions Peter, James and John were called away with Jesus.

- into the house of Jairus
- to Mount Hermon, the Mount of Transfiguration
- into the Garden of Gethsemane

Why did He do this?

- Who was the first to die of the disciples? It was James.
- Who was crucified upside down, so brutally taken where he would not want to go? It was Peter.
- As for John, history tells us that they put him into a caldron of boiling oil that did not kill him, so they exiled him to a living death on the Island of Patmos.

Jesus pulled those guys away because He knew what they would soon go through.

Do not strive to move “higher” in men’s eyes because there is some weight there. There are some challenges that might not be beneficial for you, but distracting to you and to the ministry that God really has for you. Which is what? To minister to God.

In Numbers 16 they took **brass** censers and put incense therein and lit fire. The Levitical law said that censers in ministry were to be made of gold. Why didn’t the rebels have golden censers? Maybe they used it all in making the golden calf in another rebellion. Brass is that metal that speaks of judgment. Gold is beaten. It is carefully beaten out. Brass is molded. What are we being told in this passage? There is a difference between brass and gold.

Moses had paid the price and was willing to keep paying the price, to go through the difficult times. Korah had not.

Numbers 16:30, 33      The Lord caused the earth to open up and they went down quick into the pit. They were swallowed up in the pit, and the earth closed over them and they perished there in the midst of the congregation.

Do you want to get in the pits in ministry? Just push yourself. Leave the ministry God has called you to serve in—the sphere, the size, the priority – and start trying to make a name for yourself. (cf. Matthew 20:21). Are you really ready for the challenges or the requirements that come with that position you seek?

- Matthew 6:33
- Romans 8:32

## Lesson 11

### Bitterness & Hatred

**Text: Jude 11**

Jude's theme: Keep yourself in the love of God.

**The Way of Cain:** Begins within our relationship to God. In some way, we have departed from God.

Cain had advantages: (1) he had an impressive spiritual heritage; and (2) God spoke directly to Cain. Yet, he went his own way. But Cain took a series of downward steps before he murdered his brother.

1. Hypocrisy: He was self-willed in his service to the Lord. (Genesis 4:3-5) Although he brought an offering, it was one after his own accord, a self-willed, selfish service. (Hebrews 11:4) Cain had a surface relationship with God. He brought service but not a lifestyle of obedience. (Genesis 4:7). Cain knew the truth but he did not practice it.
2. Envy and Jealousy: *"In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest; Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. That we should love one another, not as Cain, who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's were righteous."* (1<sup>st</sup> John 3:10-11). Cain became envious, jealous of Abel. **"Envy"** has been defined in the Bible dictionary as: "A discontent or uneasiness at the sight of another's good fortune accompanied with a degree of hatred." (cf. John 3:20) Instead, cultivate greatness in others.
3. Anger: Genesis 4:5. He became angry with God and angry with Abel. His anger led him to sin(cf. Ephesians 4:26).

#### Three Times When Anger is Unjustified:

1. When somebody else is blessed and you are not. (cf. Romans 12:15)
2. When God didn't do things your way. (cf. The Book of Jonah)
3. When we react without gracefully responding. We react because we do not know all the facts. (cf. Numbers 20; Ecclesiastes 7:8-9; James 1:19.)

God punishes Cain for Abel's murder, but Cain still did not repent. In Genesis 4:13, Cain said to the Lord, "**My punishment** [he did not say, My sin] *is greater than I can bear.*" He was only concerned about the consequence.

#### Safeguards

1. Do not prolong the conflict when there is one. Get it over quickly. (Ephesians 4:26)
2. Overlook offenses. (Proverbs 19:11)
3. Watch your tongue. (Proverbs 15:1).
4. Be honest. (Proverbs 27:5-6)

## Lesson 12

### Abiding in Christ

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 2:16     *“And who is sufficient for these things?”*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:5-6     *“Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of Christ who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”*

There were people who were so opposed to the message of grace that Paul was proclaiming they felt it was their God-given duty to follow Paul wherever he established churches. As soon as Paul left, they moved in like vultures to try to discredit his ministry; they would challenge his apostleship and his authority. Those who have heresy to proclaim never proclaim it to the world (because heretical doctrines are rarely evangelistic); they proclaim it to the church. Therefore, Paul found it necessary many times to write letters to encourage the people not to listen to these smooth-talking deceivers who would follow him.

#### **People Form Their Concepts of God Based On Their Concepts of You**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:27     *“God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise”*  
John 15:5                 *“Apart from Me you can do nothing.”*  
Philippians 4:13         *“For I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”*

Apart from Him we can do nothing, but there is nothing we cannot do *with* His help.

#### **Two Things Most Needed in the Church Today**

1. Sound doctrine/theology (do not handle the Word with craftiness or deceit):
  - Psalm 115:3-8
  - 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:2
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:1-2, 5
  - Matthew 6:1
2. That pastors live out their lives as role models for the people.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 4:5, 7
  - Philippians 3:7-8

**“The highest capacity of man is that of a container.”**  
***The Deep Things of God* by Norman Grubb**

## Lesson 13 Jesus (Part 1)

### “The Greatest in the Kingdom”

What is God like? He is like Jesus. In order to know someone, they must reveal themselves to you; otherwise, you make less than accurate observations.

1. **He who is great must be a SERVANT to others.** Mark 9:33-35
  - Jesus is about freedom through His service (slavery). To be like Him, each of us must be others-centered and give ourselves away. Every single part of your body is a slave to the rest of your body? Not one part of your body exists for itself. Every part serves the rest. The medical condition wherein one part of your body begins to serve only itself is known as “cancer”. A servant’s job is to make life better for someone else, to live toward others in a way that frees them to become all that they were created to be. A slave is “others-centered” not self-centered. Matthew 16:25
  
2. **He who is great does NOT “LORD OVER” others.** Matthew 20:25-26
  
3. **He who is great must LEAD BY EXAMPLE.** Matthew 23:2-4; Matthew 4:19
  - Like Christ, Paul also led this way. (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:1; 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 2:14; Philippians 4:9). So should we.
  
4. **He who is great must be HUMBLE, serve with humility.**
  - Paul tells us in Ephesians 3:14-15 that God, the Great I AM, is the Father after whom His whole family on earth is named. That means our last name is also I AM. Therefore, our very name calls us to “I Amness” -- to honesty. It calls us to being the ones who are unhidden, who say, “Here is the truth about me.” That is humility.

## Lesson 14 Jesus (Part 2)

### “The Greatest in the Kingdom” (cont’d.)

Matthew 18:1-5; Matthew 20:16, 25-28; Matthew 23:1-3, 11-12

Mark 9:33-37; Mark 10:42-45

Luke 22:24-27

5. **He who is greatest must be as a child.**
  - A child tends to be who he is. He cannot be sad when he’s happy, happy when he’s sad, etc. He does not pretend to know things he doesn’t know.
  - A child is unable to deceive. When Jesus calls us to be His children one of the things He is calling us to be is a non-deceiving person, the kind of person that has no hidden agendas.
  - A child is very unthreatening. People should not be afraid of us/our nature. (Matthew 10:16). Throughout Scripture this has been God’s approach to the world. He takes something that was naught and speaks a universe into existence. He takes a people who are nothing and makes them something (individually and corporately). (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:26-27; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:10, 19).
  
6. **He who is greatest must be as the younger.** Luke 22:26
  - Jesus was saying, “I want you to know that the system will never be on your side. In this world the way things are will always be your enemy. So don’t expect your government or the system of the world to ever become the vehicle by which the world will be won.” Luke 22:26
  
7. **To be great, be a pilgrim, one who is traveling light, passing through.** Hebrews 11:10; Luke 18:18-25; Philippians 3:8
  
8. **He that is greatest must be as the least and/or the last.** Matthew 20:26

## Lesson 15 Jesus (Part 3)

### “The Mind of Christ”

Philippians 2:5 *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”*

**Question:** What was His mind? What was this central core of motivating being?  
What was the set of attitudes that were in Christ Jesus?

Philippians 2:6 *“Who though He was in the form of God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.”* (NIV)

9. **He used no force on us, no physical force.**
- He has the power to force us and He does not.
  - He is gentle.

The only way you can make a genuine decision is if you are not forced.  
The first year of Chris’s ministry is referred to as “the year of obscurity”;  
the second is “the year of popularity;”  
and the third year is “the year of opposition.”

10. **He was not driven by blind ambitions.**
- Matthew 4:10

11. **He made Himself of no reputation.**
- Philippians 2:7-8
  - Isaiah 53:2
  - Matthew 8:20
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:18

*“As the Father has sent Me, even so send I you.”*  
John 20:21

## Lesson 16 Jesus (Part 4)

### “The Mind of Christ” (Cont’d)

Philippians 2:5-8

*“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who though He was in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. But made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man.”*

**12. He was human.**

The Council of Chalcedon came to the proper conclusion—He was fully God and fully man. Jesus was exactly like God and exactly like man.

- John 1:14
- Romans 8:3
- Hebrews 4:15

He understands us! Therefore, we can pray as in Matthew 6:13 and believe as in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:13.

**13. He was obedient even unto death.**

He said, “I only do what I see the Father do.” (cf. John 4:34).

“Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt” (cf. Matthew 26:39).

- Philippians 2:8
- Matthew 16:22-23

When Jesus stood before all of the courts, opportunity was given to Him to escape and He resisted. He would not let anything keep Him from fulfilling His call.

**14. His death.**

Philippians 2:9-11 *“Therefore, God has raised Him up and given Him the name that is above every name, at whose name every knee shall bow in heaven and earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father.”* (Emphasis added.)

Death is the ultimate test of our servanthood. For what are we willing to die?

If we walk in obedience to the Lord, we succeed to the limit of God’s ability, which is unlimited. Contrarily, when we do things our way:

1. We succeed only to the limit of our ability (abilities);
2. We usually damage other people in the process;
3. Our fruit does not remain.

Wouldn’t you rather hear, *“Therefore, God . . .?”*

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:10
- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:27

Hebrews 11, that great chapter of faith, lists individuals who, by their faith, wrought such mighty deeds that they would end on the front page of today’s newspapers because of their faith. But in that same chapter you discover individuals who, by their faith, lived in caves, were fugitives, starved, were tormented, and gave themselves up to die. In the world’s eyes all of them were failures because of their faith. But what did God think of them? He said, *“The world was not even worthy of them”* (cf. Hebrews 11:37-38).

## **Lesson 17**

### **The Suffering Servant**

John 12:37-41 *But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again: "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them." These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. (cf. Isaiah 53)*

#### **The Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53**

1. Vs. 2: His humility – *"For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant"* (cf. Philippians 2:6-8; Zechariah 9:9)
2. Vs. 2: His appearance – *"He has no form or comeliness"* (cf. Isaiah 52:14)
3. Vs. 3: His sorrow and His grief (cf. John 11:35; Mark 14:34; Romans 9:2-3)
4. Vs. 4-6: His affliction -- Why was He afflicted?
  - (1) It was for us.
    1. It was for our grief and sorrow. Isaiah 53:4.
    2. It was for our transgressions and our iniquities. Isaiah 53:5-6.
    3. It was for our peace. Isaiah 53:5.
    4. It was for our healing. Isaiah 53:5. The word *"stripes"* literally means blows or thrashings that cut into the flesh. Notice that it was *"by His stripes"* that you and I are healed.
  - (2) It was by God. (cf. Isaiah 53:4, Acts 2:23, Revelation 13:8)
5. Vs. 7: His silence
6. Vs. 8: His death (cf. Daniel 9:26, Zechariah 12:10)
7. Vs. 10-11: His righteousness (cf. John 6:38; Luke 22: 42; Isaiah 53:11)
8. Vs. 12: His victory (cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:54)
9. Vs. 12: His intercession (cf. Luke 23:34; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:25)

## Lesson 18

### Following Good Examples

3<sup>rd</sup> John 1-4     *“The elder, To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth: Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of **the truth that is in you**, just as you walk in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that **my children walk in truth.**”* (Emphasis added.)

John makes a correlation between the health of your soul and the health of your body. If the health of your body right now could immediately reflect the health of your soul, how would you look? Further how healthy would your body be right now if it reflected the state of your soul? What makes your soul healthy: *the truth* (verse 3).

#### Three Examples

1. **Gaius** (3<sup>rd</sup> John 5-8) is praised for hospitality, for opening up his home and taking care of others, because:
  - A. He did it well/faithfully (vs. 5). Far beyond the success of your work, far beyond the size of your work, far beyond what the human view of the importance of your work is, God looks at the faithfulness of your work.
  - B. He was actually doing their ministry, too (vs. 8). You can share in other people’s ministry by being a fellow worker with them by helping them. (cf. 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 30)
2. **Diotrephes** (3<sup>rd</sup> John 9-11) is rebuked because:
  - A. His heart was full of pride (vs. 9). When you have a heart that loves the preeminence you have the devil’s heart because that is what he loves. That is what Satan said when he fell. When Satan rebelled against God he said, “I will be like the most High.” In his heart he wanted to have the preeminence. The greatest way to tell if you are a servant is to see how your heart reacts when people treat you like a servant, and then you will see if you really are one. (cf. Philippians 2:6; James 4:6)
  - B. He was a gossip (vs. 10)
  - C. He was a control freak (vs. 10))
3. **Demetrius** (3<sup>rd</sup> John 12) is commended for having three good references from: (1) everybody; (2) the truth; and (3) the Apostle John;

## Lesson 19 Mary & Martha

Now as they were going on their way, he himself entered a certain village and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him as a guest into her home. And she had a sister called Mary, who also having seated herself beside the Lord's feet, was listening to his word. But Martha was going around in circles, over occupied with preparing the meal. And bursting in upon Jesus, she assumed a stance over him and said, 'Lord is it not a concern to you that my sister has let me down to be preparing a meal alone? Speak to her therefore at once that she take hold and do her part with me.' And answering the Lord said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and excited about many things, but of few things there is need, for Mary chose out for herself the good portion which is of such a nature that it shall not hastily be snatched away from her. (Luke 10:38-42 as read from a translation by Kenneth Weist.)

Service is very tangible. The presence of Christ is often not as tangible in our human eyes. For the Christian, this passage is a great exhortation because oftentimes we are not choosing between good and evil. It is choosing between what is good and what is best.

John 11:3-5      *"Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, 'Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest [phileo meaning "brotherly love, fondness or friendship"] is sick.' When Jesus heard that, he said, 'This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.' Now Jesus loved [agape] Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."*

In the face of excommunication and public outcry, Martha received Jesus into her home. But then she gets so wrapped up in cooking that she comes out to accuse Him.

The times we read about Mary in the Bible she is at the feet of Jesus (John 11, John 12, Matthew 26, Mark 14). But in Luke 10:39 we read, *"And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word."* What it does not mean is that Martha also sat there. That is not the context of the story. It means that Mary was working in the kitchen, but what she also did was leave the kitchen and sit at Jesus feet to hear his word. She also did that.

When service becomes the first line of ministry rather than the second or third:

- We complain to God about our work.
- We manipulate situations.

But Jesus did not rebuke Martha. He was not angry. There is a *pathos*, there is a real emotion to his answer. It is with great expression—Jesus says, *"Martha, Martha, you are so careful and troubled."*

*"Careful"* is our word from the Parable of the Sower; it is the cares of this life that choke out the word of God. That is the same word "careful" the *merimnao* meaning *to be pulled in different directions*.

Revelation 21:2-3 tells us that (1) we are going to be with God; (2) He is going to be our God; and (3) He is going to be with us. Those are the things He is most concerned about.

Your service is important, but remember to put it in its proper perspective

## Lesson 20

### Exhortation to Maturity (Part 1)

1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 3:1-4 *I wish I could speak to you as mature Christians, but you are not. You are still infants, babies in Christ. I fed you milk and I cannot give you solid food. And still today you are infants, you are carnal people in the way you behave and the way you conduct yourself by having strife and hatred and envy and bitterness. Aren't you behaving like mere men?*

Romans 8:1 *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, **who do not walk** according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (Emphasis added.)*

- The word *walk* or *walking* basically means how we conduct the every day affairs of our life.
- The word *condemnation* comes from “to be condemned” as in a guilty sentence.
- The word *convicted* is the realization that the evidence is stacked against you.
- The word *flesh* in the Greek is *sarkikos* meaning body meat. Translated into Latin it becomes *carne* meaning plain meat. (Example: chili con carne)

There are two motivating forces mentioned in Romans 8:1 – the flesh and the Spirit. Many Christians who have been walking with the Lord for years are in a state of arrested development. They are not growing spiritually because they are carnal Christians, powerless and impotent.

Romans 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, **to those who are the called according to His purpose.** (Emphasis added.)*

Romans 8:2-6 *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. **For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.** (Emphasis added.)*

When your mind is controlled by the flesh and your mind and heart are governed by the flesh, it is enmity against God. Romans 8:28 does not work for everybody; just those who are walking in the Spirit of God. The Son of God produces life and peace.

Rom. 8:9-11 *But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to [quicken] your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

Rom. 8:15-17 *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

## Lesson 21

### Exhortation to Maturity (Part 2)

Galatians 5:16 *Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, [which is witchcraft or drugs] hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

The key—those who practice these things regularly. Biblically the word *carnal* implies: an earthiness, weakness, sensuality, and the absence of sensitivity. It involves the dominance of the lower nature, and it is diametrically opposed to spiritual maturity. Being carnal is characterized by the physical rather than by intellectual or spiritual orientation. It is giving too much heed to the material aspects of day-to-day life. In contrast, Galatians 5:22-24 outlines the real Christian life which is active; it is walking in the Spirit, Who is the One that causes you to act in such a way that denies the flesh. It is the Spirit of God, not a religion.

Heb. 5:9-12 *And having been perfected, He [Jesus] became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become **dull of hearing**. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.*

#### Carnal Christians:

1. have no practical use in the church because they have a critical spirit
2. have no source of joy
3. are often fretful and peevish, they complain a lot
4. are often not very open to reasonable appeal, they want things their way
5. are no credit to Christianity, but make it questionable to the eyes of those in the world because they have become poor witnesses
6. are unstable in doctrine (Hebrews 5:13-14)

Jer. 17:5-10 *Thus says the Lord, "Cursed is the man who trusts in man And makes flesh his strength, Whose heart departs from the LORD. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, And shall not see when good comes, But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, In a salt land which is not inhabited. Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, And whose hope is the LORD. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, Which spreads out its roots by the river, And will not fear when heat comes; But its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, Nor will cease from yielding fruit. The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.*

## Lesson 22

### Equipping, Edifying, Protecting

Eph. 4:7-16 *But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore He says: "When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, And gave gifts to men." (Now this, "He ascended" [speaking of Jesus]—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.*

The church exists "for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (vs. 12)

- The word *equipping* means "training", "education", "preparing" and a "complete furnishing". It is interesting that in all other fields there is an expectation that equipping is required and that it is sometimes difficult. It requires diligence, sacrifice, study, hard work.
- The word *knowledge* is *epignosco*. The word *gnosco* in the Greek language is not talking about a head-knowledge. It is a knowledge that comes by experience. And *epi* means a more intense form of *gnosco*; therefore, an experiential knowledge of the Son of God.
- The word *perfect* means: "to be fully aged, or to be mature." It is a place where we can come to maturity. Maturity on a purely physical level is when one is able to reproduce. And the same thing is true on a spiritual level. It is the ability to lead someone else to Christ and then to disciple them into maturing in their walk with the Lord—that is Christian maturity.

Equipping, edifying and protecting occurs primarily through the teaching of the word of God.

- Matthew 28:18-20
- Acts 2:42, 47; 20:26-27
- John 21:15-17
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:16-17 and 2:2

Six things the church should do:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

## Lesson 23

### The Joy of Servanthood

The theme of the book of Philippians is joy; the word *joy* is used 19 times therein. The reason for the joy in our lives is recorded 40 times in Philippians and that is the name of “the Lord Jesus.” He is the source of our joy. Joy is superior to happiness because happiness is inferior in its quality, having its basis in our physical circumstances, whereas joy has its basis in Christ.

Paul writes to them describing himself and Timothy as bondservants of Jesus Christ. There are three characteristics of a bondservant (*doulos*) and Paul carries that imagery over into his relationship with the Lord.

- I love my Master, and . . .
- of my own free will . . .
- I chose to become His servant for the rest of my life.

Philippians is “To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi.” The word *saints* comes from the Greek word *hagios* meaning “to be holy” or set apart from the world specifically for God’s use. Notice the definition of a saint in the next three words of Philippians 1:1, “in Christ Jesus.”

His salutation: Grace & Peace = Karis & Shalom

- Paul’s thanksgiving to God for them.
- Paul’s reaffirmation that God will “complete” them: Christ-likeness
- Paul’s commendation for their giving and co-work.
- Paul encourages them to grow in love with knowledge and discernment.
- Paul exhorted them to aim for excellence.
- Paul prayed that they would be sincere and without offense (without wax filling impurities or gaps); without hypocrisy. That word “sincere” speaks of what we are inside, and “without offense” means that we are not offending people or living our personal life in a way that is stumbling people outwardly.
- Paul encourages them to be filled with the fruits of righteousness. Our lives should manifest fruit in a way that a tree just needs some help to hold up the abundance of fruit.

## Lesson 24

# The Supremacy of Love

**Text: John 13:18-35**

The love of Jesus is the supreme mark of being His disciple. “By this all men shall know that you are My disciples.” (John 13:35) Thus, Christ’s love is the mark of genuine servanthood. (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:13). The Lord Jesus Christ has put the mark of His love upon our hearts and lives.

But love is difficult. It hurts our flesh. Galatians 6:17 *“I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.”* In the Roman Empire, often slaves were branded by their masters, so that everyone would know whom their owner was. Paul is using that as an illustration about all that he had gone through. He wanted everyone to know he was the slave of Jesus Christ. And his life was driven. He said, “The love of Christ constrains me. The love of Christ controls me and compels me. That is what motivates me to do what I do, to say what I say, and to respond the way I do. It is the love of Christ that I yield to.” That was the mark he was referring to. Obviously he had physical marks, but this mark was the love of God.

It is not a natural love. It is a supernatural love. Love is not just good feelings and saying sweet nothings. It is covering, forgiving, encouraging, and being the one who will reach out when it is hard.

The way Jesus dealt with Judas in our main text is so amazing (John 13:26). At feasts in that day, the host of the banquet could choose to honor one of the guests by taking a piece of food or bread and dip it in the sauce and then give it to them. When Jesus did this for Judas, it was an awesome example of a final extension of His love to Judas. But in verses 27 and 30 we see that Judas again hardened his heart and made the wrong choice.

John 13:31–32 *So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, “**Now** the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and glorify Him immediately.”*

Love needs to be supreme in our ministry. But unless the pitcher that contains it (us) is broken, the light, the warmth, and the glory of Jesus Christ cannot be seen. And so it is that unless we are broken, the glory of Jesus Christ and the work of God cannot be accomplished to the extent that God wants to happen.

2 Cor. 4:7-15 *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed— always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. But since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. (NJKV)*

Three reasons why God uses broken vessels:

1. That the excellency may be of God, that He might receive the glory, not us.
2. So the contents of Christ can get out to people through broken hearts.
3. So that we will continually come to the Lord to receive, because we are broken vessels and we are always pouring out and we always need to be refilled.

## Lesson 25 Faithfulness

1<sup>st</sup> Cor. 4:1–5 *Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God. (NKJV)*

Seven things that helped Paul maintain perspective and remain faithful in a thankless setting:

1. Do not let the unjust criticism of others get you down. Do not give it undue weight. Consider it a very small thing compared to what God thinks of you and what you are doing.
2. Do not judge your effectiveness. You know as little as they do.
3. Entrust all judgment to the Lord.
4. Remain a servant where God has called you. You are an under rower. You are not too good for where God has placed you and what He has you doing. Be careful of self-pity. You are an “under-rower” type of servant.
5. Stay faithful in that situation.
6. There is a praise coming your way one day that will make you forget all about its long absence in this life.
7. The Praise Giver may come tonight, so let us be found faithful.

**“You take care of your character and God will take care of your reputation.”**

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## Lesson 26

### Encouragement for the Troubled Heart

**Text: John 13:21-38**

Luke 22:31-32 *Jesus turned to Peter and said, Simon, Simon, indeed Satan has asked for you that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you that your faith would not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brothers.*

Satan himself was coming after Peter because Peter was a leader. It is always a mistake to boast of how much we love Jesus. It is far better to boast of how much He loves us. (cf. Proverbs 16:18).

Rom. 8:34-35 *Who is he that condemns? It is Christ Jesus who died, and was raised to life. He is at the right hand of God interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or persecution or hardship or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?*

We are all going to have those times when we make mistakes and we stumble, but we must learn from our mistakes.

1<sup>st</sup> Pet. 5:10-11 *And the God of all grace, who has called you through His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, He will restore you and make you strong and firm and steadfast again. To Him be the power, forever and ever, amen.*

John 14:1-6 *“Let not your heart be **troubled** (meaning agitated, disturbed, thrown into confusion); you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.” Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?” Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”*

There are troubles that we face on every level. How can we know peace? How can we not get stressed out and troubled? Jesus gives us three things to consider.

1. We know Jesus and we need to take God at His word. (John 14:1; Jeremiah 32:27).
2. “In My Father’s house are many mansions” (John 14:2). Troubles pale in comparison to your great hope of Heaven.
3. Jesus is coming again (John 14:3). When a person properly understands the teaching of the imminent return of Christ, it will cause them to want to live a more godly life.

## **Lesson 27**

### **An Abiding Relationship with Christ**

**Text: John 15:1-11**

**1. What is “fruit”?**

- a. Christ manifested (overflowing) through us (personal godliness):
  - Love
  - Holiness
  - Humility
  - Grace
- b. Good works
- c. Converts and disciples

**2. How is fruit born?**

- a. By abiding in Him -- To abide means to keep up a habit of constant close communion with Him, always leaning on Him, resting on Him, making Him our fountain of life and strength, our chief companion and our best friend.
- b. By abiding in His Word – being constantly saturated in it

**3. How is fruit increased?**

- a. By purging or by pruning (cutting back). “The fruit of Christian service is never the result of allowing natural energies and inclinations to run riot.”
  - Pruned in our personal lives // “Ephraim” means fruitful in affliction
  - Pruned in our ministry
  - NOTE: The older the plant is the greater the necessity of pruning.

We are not to try to abide in Him just so we can bear fruit. We are to abide in Him because He is where we should abide.

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*Reflections on the Gospel of John*, Leon Morris, Hendrickson Publishers, 2000.

## Lesson 28

### Our Identification with Christ

**Text: John 15:12-25**

Herein the word love is mentioned eight times. The word hatred is mentioned seven times, in the same context. This is the context of a very special kind of friendship that Jesus has with His disciples.

John 15:11      *“These things I have spoken to you that My joy might remain in you and that your joy may be full.”*

Working for Jesus as a friend, a co-laborer, is the highest form of ministry. The Lord chose you and He did not make a mistake when He chose you for the ministry. He initiated the friendship. He reveals Himself to us as our friend. Then, within this relationship, the following things begin to happen:

1. You experience the very things you must teach.
2. It changes the motive of your ministry: to glorify Him, to please Him.
3. It changes the method of our ministry: we do things more excellently.
4. It changes the manner of our ministry: you can be yourself.
5. It changes the make-up of our ministry: you realize that you’re going to have enemies; but fight the attacks (not the person) spiritually, not physically or verbally. When you are Jesus’ friend, you are going to have Jesus’ enemies.

Realize:

- You can minister with joy. It is possible to minister carelessly, perfunctorily, as a duty instead of as a joy unto the Lord. (Malachi 1:13). *“Nothing is so deadening to the divine as the habitual dealing with the outsides of holy things.”* -- George MacDonald
- Ministry is an opportunity and not an inconvenience.

Remember: Jesus’ friends obey Him

- regularly (cf. John 14:15) and
- completely.

CITED WORKS:

- Brooks, Phillips. *Lectures on Preaching* at the Divinity School of Yale. New York, E. P. Dutton & Company, 1877.
- Lewis, C.S. *George MacDonald. An Anthology*. Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. N.Y., 1978

## Lesson 29

### What Mattered to Our Master

**Text: John 17**

John Knox called this section of Scripture “the holy of holies in the temple of the Bible.”

Herein Jesus says, “I have . . .” eight times.

1. “I have glorified Thee on the earth.” (John 17:4).  
Matthew 5:16; Isaiah 42:8  
A graven image is a “polished image” in the Hebrew.
2. “I have finished the work which Thou hast given Me to do.” (John 17:4)  
Be sure the work is what God has given you to do, not necessarily people.  
The work that He gives is going to be different than the work He gives others.
3. “I have manifested Thy name.” (John 17:6)  
By demonstration, by how you live, talk, walk, believe, pray, etc.
4. “I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me” (John 17:8) and “I have given them Thy word” (John 17:14). In other words, “I have given them the word which Thou hast given Me. And I have given them Thy word.” There are two different things being said:
  - a. *rhemata, rhema* – an anointed word for a particular occasion/situation; *machaira* – the exacting knife;
  - b. *logos* – the whole Word; the context of the complete written Word of God
5. “I have kept the flock Thou gavest Me.” (John 17:12)  
You don’t have to “lose” people when they have left the church. They can still be on your heart, in your prayers.
6. “I have also sent them into the world.” (John 17:18)  
Proverbs 14:4
7. “I have given them the glory Thou hast given me.” (John 17:22)  
Romans 8:30  
2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:16
8. “I have declared unto them Thy name.” (John 17:26)  
By information or a proclamation.

This is what was important to Christ and should matter the most to us.

## Lesson 30

### Prayer & the Word

Acts 6:4      *“But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”*

Do not let what is *important* eclipse what is *essential*. The word **devote** means an earnest, serious, persistent, intensive commitment to something, herein to prayer and the Word of God.

Prayer is talking to God, communicating with the Lord. The ministry of the Word is letting God speak to us and then helping others through the Word hear from Him. Prayer lets us meet the Lord and God lives in our hearts as we commune with Him in the word.

- Prayer affects how you receive and process the Word of God. Pray before delving into the Word. (Psalm 119:33)
- The Word of God affects how you pray. (1<sup>st</sup> John 5:14-15) When you know the Word, you can pray according to His will (which is an effective prayer that will be answered).

Ephesians 6:19 *“And pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.”* (NASB)

God wants us to open our mouths to share what He has shown us of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He wants us to make it known so that others might know. He wants us to make it known with boldness. To do so requires prayer.

#### Learn From Mistakes in History

Daniel, a Babylonian captive, was one of the most unique and godly men in all of the history of the kingdom of God. He had a resolve to follow the Lord despite the circumstances or consequences. His people were oppressed and he prayed in Daniel 9:4-19. There were two aspects to the sin mentioned:

1. The people of God turned away from the word of God;
2. They did not listen to those who warned them.

Turning away from the word of the Lord is a tragic mistake. When God sent forth men to warn the church, they would not listen to those who warned.

When God raises up people to warn us that we are off track, we need to humble our hearts before them and listen. We need to listen, and repent and turn. May we pray like Daniel.

*Deuteronomous* means “second law” or the repeating of the law a second time. Why did God give the law again in Deuteronomy what had just been given in Leviticus? He gave it to them coming and going: coming out of Egypt, going into the Promised Land -- in every situation.

## Lesson 31

### Keep a Pure Heart

Lev. 10:1-3 And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered *strange fire* before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. Then Moses said unto Aaron, "This is it that the LORD spake, saying, 'I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace.

In the exercise of our spiritual gifts, we must be careful that we exercise them in such a way as not to draw attention to ourselves. Even the Holy Spirit came to exalt and magnify Jesus Christ, and to testify of Him. The effect of a true manifestation of the Holy Spirit will be to draw men's attention and hearts unto Jesus. Seek to exercise your gifts in such a way that you blend, that you flow, that it brings the worship and the praise unto the Lord with the whole flow of the Spirit. The Lord does not want "strange fire." (Matthew 6:1; 7:21-23 )

God is not interested in any service that comes from false stimulation/strange fire. God wants us to only serve Him from a pure heart of love. (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:14). One of the greatest dangers in serving the Lord is being exalted and lifted up in your own eyes. Paul says to "serve the Lord with all humility of mind." (cf. Matthew 23:12; Philippians 2:3)

Acts 20:19-24 ***Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: [And] how I kept back nothing that was profitable [unto you], but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. (Emphasis added.)***

1. Paul points out that true ministry is serving the Lord.
  - Look to the Lord for the rewards of service.
  - Look to the Lord for the direction of service.
  - Look to the Lord for the joy of service, as unto the Lord.
  - Look to the Lord for sensitivity in your service.
  - Look to the Lord for comfort during times of "temptations" [persecutions, trials, testings] in the ministry. (cf. John 15:20)
  - Look to the Lord to help you "show" others the lessons of service.
2. He points out that a public ministry is not the only one that counts.
3. He taught them to repent and believe.
4. He did not consider it too great a price to pay.
5. He considered it a joy to serve.

## Lesson 32

### A Commitment to Holiness

Holiness is a response of my heart to the awareness of who God is. There are so many Christians who want to live “on the edge”. But when you are living as close to God as you possibly can, you are not concerned about where the edge is.

2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 16:7-9    Because you have relied on the king of Syria and not relied on the Lord your God, therefore the host of the king of Syria escaped out of your hand. [And he reminded him] In the beginning of your kingdom, when the Ethiopians came, were they not a huge host? And you called unto the Lord and the Lord delivered you. But now, you are not relying on the Lord. Do you not realize that God is looking throughout the whole world to find people in harmony with Him that He might bless them?

Ephesians 4:17            “You are not to walk as the other gentiles walk.”

Biblically speaking, gentiles walk in their own vanity and the emptiness of their own minds. (Isaiah 44:14-19; Ephesians 4:18; Romans 1:21-22; Matthew 15:14; Ephesians 4:22)

Holiness is not only what you *don't* do, but it is also what you *do*. There is the negative and the positive side to holiness. (cf. Ephesians 4:24-32) It is not true holiness until you “put on” the positive aspects and “put away” the negative aspects.