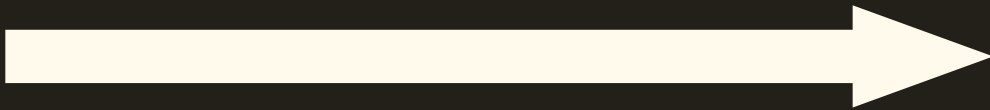




# ADULT CONNECTION



JULY 2017

# FOLLOW JESUS

MINISTRY OF A DISCIPLE



The purpose of First Baptist Church of Fort Worth is to **introduce** people into a loving relationship with Jesus, **instruct** them in spiritual growth through God's Word, **inspire** them to serve for God's kingdom, and **incorporate** them in authentic worship to glorify God.

## *A Note From Our Pastor*

Dear FBC family and friends,

Jesus commanded us to “GO” and make disciples in Matthew 28. This is the Great Commission to the church and our primary purpose, but it often gets lost in the midst of secondary activities. As we focus the lessons this month on discipleship, we must think about the making of a disciple and what that should look like—not in terms of outward appearance, but inward spiritual growth. How are we to be involved in this process? Each week we will study different aspects of the making of a disciple and what active discipleship truly is.

As a reminder, the layout of this Curriculum begins with a 7-day approach for both the teacher and the members to get the most from each study. We also acknowledge that teachers may have their own method for preparing the lessons and we encourage them to prepare in the way that makes them most effective in presenting God’s Word and the weekly lesson. We also encourage each teacher and member to use the suggested 7-day approach for each one’s own personal study and encouragement.

Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). One way that we should follow Christ is connecting in the discipleship process by leading people into a relationship with Him and assisting them in growing in that relationship as a disciple. Pray and ask the Lord to help you become a disciple-maker.

-Blessings  
Pastor Don



## *Suggested Plan for Using this Bible Study Guide Effectively*

### *Introduce*

**Day 1:** Read and meditate on the Scripture, asking God to guide you throughout the week as you study His Word and allowing Him to speak to you through the Spirit. Read the **INTRODUCE** portion of the lesson commentary.

### *Instruct*

**Day 2:** Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and read the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary. Concentrate on memorizing the focal verse for that particular week.

**Day 3:** Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and answer the focal questions in the **INSTRUCT** portion of the lesson commentary.

### *Inspire*

**Day 4:** Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and begin thinking about tangible ways you can incorporate the principles you learned in your daily life. Read the **INSPIRE** portion of the lesson commentary.

### *Incorporate*

**Day 5:** Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and apply the theological principle that you learned from this week in a tangible way. Use the **INCORPORATE** portion of the lesson commentary to guide you.

**Day 6:** Read the Scripture, meditate on it, and in the journal section describe how God allowed you to apply this passage in a real and tangible way this week.

**Day 7:** Review the Scripture and share with others in your Connect Class on Sunday morning at 9:30am. Be ready to share your experience about how God allowed you to apply the lesson for that week.

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July 2, 2017



*The Marks of a Disciple:  
What a Disciple is Not*  
*Galatians 5:16-21*

Focal Verse:

"I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Galatians 5:16

## Introduce

Rarely getting to spend time with my family in Southern California, I relished the opportunities I had to visit my grandparents every couple of years. As a child, it seemed like an adventure to hop on the freeway and go with my grandfather to the store to get whatever item he needed. As a bi-vocational pastor in smaller Southern Baptist churches in the Los Angeles basin, my grandfather had a booming voice and freely shared his opinion with anyone—whether they wanted to hear it or not. I can vividly remember how my grandfather often failed to display patience, becoming easily frustrated and angry with store employees. Because he was a pastor, I thought that the way he dealt with people was appropriate and should be emulated, so I keenly watched and tried to learn his techniques.

One time I distinctly remember going to a massive hardware store much like Lowe's or Home Depot that have become so commonplace today. Just like now, finding something in the store was nearly impossible unless you could find one of the employees who could



direct you to the right aisle. With something specific that he needed, my grandfather waited and waited for someone to come and ask him if he needed help. Several employees passed by as we waited—each of them having “How May I Help You” written in bold stitching across their aprons. Growing increasingly impatient, my grandfather finally stopped one of them and inquired, “How do you get help around here?” The employee

## Introduce

cheerfully replied with a smile, “All you gotta do is yell for it.” My grandfather said, “OK. Thank you,” and let the employee go. Because they had not helped him in a timely manner, at the top of his lungs in the middle of the aisle he began to scream, “H-E-E-E-L-L-P.” With his booming voice echoing down the aisles, employees came running from every direction. Standing there, I thought that this was the way to ask for help in the store because everyone came immediately and tried to help him find the item—not realizing because of my youth they were merely trying to get him out of the store.

After spending several weeks in the summer with my grandparents, I came home to rural Kentucky and stood in a fast-food restaurant with my parents. The employees never came to take our order as they seemed to loaf in the back of the food preparation area. Becoming incensed, I began banging on the counter and yelling, “I want service and I want it now.” “We aren’t standing here because we want to buy your cheap and tasteless food while paying you to clown around,” I continued. Needless to say, my mother wasn’t very happy that I behaved that way and asked why I had done it. Just having returned with my grandparents from a cross-country drive, I explained that we had stopped in Tulsa, Oklahoma at a unique McDonald’s that spanned Interstate 44 and my grandfather had said something similar to the employees there because they hadn’t served our breakfast promptly. My mother tried to explain that there are some things that grandpa does that we shouldn’t imitate, but being a child and not being a follower of Christ at the time I didn’t quite understand what she meant.



Now, having a relationship with Christ and having read Paul's letter to the Galatians, I understand what my mother meant. As followers of Christ, we shouldn't act like the world around us; there are certain characteristics that we **ought not** have on display in our lives. Therefore, we need to rid ourselves of these fleshly desires and attitudes that don't reflect Christ while learning to live in a way that reflects His transformation of our character. Over the next two weeks, we will learn about the "Marks of the Disciple." This week we will examine "What a Disciple **is Not**" whereas next week we will learn "What a Disciple **is**" and how we ought to bear fruit that exemplifies Christ.

Key  
Question

What are the actions that we ought to avoid as disciples of Christ so that we represent Him well to those around us?

### Galatians 5:16-18

#### *A DISCIPLE WALKS IN THE SPIRIT:*

In 5:16, Paul contrasts two opposing lifestyles: living according to the **Spirit** which leads to life and living according to the **flesh** which leads to death. To glorify God and visibly manifest the change in our lives that He has brought about, we must allow the Holy Spirit to guide us; therefore, it requires total surrender to **walk in the Spirit**. For this reason, we should view things from God's perspective rather than a human perspective when making decisions about our course in life. If we allow the Spirit to guide us, we **will not** participate **in the** desires of **the flesh**. Although we have been transformed and made a new creation in Christ ([2 Cor 5:17](#)), we still exist in the **flesh** whereby we constantly struggle with imitating Christ and living according to His holy standards. Throughout our lives as followers of Christ, we face a daily battle between living in a way that reflects His character and glorifies Him or living in a way that satisfies our own selfish desires. Although the choice is clear, it often becomes difficult to implement because we allow our **flesh** to seize control of our lives rather than **walking in the Holy Spirit**. Consequently, Paul sets up this battle when he points out that **the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh**. (v. 17).

In what way is the Spirit at war with the flesh in our lives?

Question  
# 1

In a way, the **flesh** creates a roadblock to the **Spirit**; when we succumb to our lustful desires, we **don't do the things that we wish**. These

roadblocks come in the form of hindering our spiritual growth and robbing us of the joy in our relationship with Christ. If we aren't intentional about forging through the roadblocks, they often lead to a lack of direction which culminates in sin. Until recently, our church had one entrance which allowed us to access our building only from the service road. During the many years of construction, we often found our access to church impeded on Sunday morning—sometimes blocked entirely. One such Sunday when barricades blocked the only way to church, one of our senior adult ladies didn't let that stop her. Carefully maneuvering around the construction barrels blocking the service road from Denton Highway, she started to make her way to the church, but soon noticed flashing lights in her mirror. As the police officer approached the vehicle, he explained, "Ma'am, this road is closed. You aren't allowed to drive here." To which she responded, "You're going to tell an old lady that she can't go to her church. My church is just up there and this is the only way I can get there." To her surprise, the police officer said, "Be careful," and gave her an escort to the entrance. In the same way, we need to be intentional about avoiding the roadblocks in life that hinder our maturation in Christ; we need to have a plan when the roadblocks arise so that we turn to the **Spirit** for resolution rather than our **flesh**.



In what way can the Spirit help us anticipate and avoid roadblocks in our walk?

Question  
# 2

## Instruct

To battle the misunderstanding of legalism, Paul interjects that **if we are led by the Spirit** then we **are no longer under the law** (v. 18). In other words, Paul asserts that **the law** is powerless both to keep us from sinning and to save us; thus, it only points out the boundaries which one should keep to maintain holiness whereas the Spirit guides, convicts, and ultimately has the power to transform our lives to keep us from sinning. This function of the Spirit becomes more evident in [Rom 8:3-4](#) when Paul explains, “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.” When Paul says that we **are no longer under the law**, it doesn’t mean that **the law** has ceased and we are no longer responsible for the way that we live, but rather it means that we have a higher standard by which we have been called because the Holy **Spirit** now resides within us and guides us to fulfill God’s holy requirements which separate us from the rest of the fallen world.

### ***In-Depth Information***



*Legalism means strict adherence to principles of the law and tradition as a means of salvation. In other words, some of the Galatians claimed that it wasn't just a relationship with Jesus that saved them, but that they had to follow certain regulations and rituals to be saved.*

*Consequently, Paul wrote the letter to the Galatians to inform them*

## In-Depth Information—continued



that the gospel was freely given by Christ through His sacrificial death on the cross—we cannot perform certain rituals or follow the law legalistically to attain salvation. On the other hand, after we have a relationship with Christ, the Spirit guides us to fulfill the righteous obligations of the law so that we have a transformed character that represents Him to others.

What does it mean to be led by the Spirit?

Question  
# 3

### Galatians 5:19-21

#### ***A DISCIPLE AVOIDS WORKS OF THE FLESH:***

After Paul generally outlines how we ought to **walk**, he lists specifically some of the areas that we should avoid. Although Paul provides an extensive list of the **works of the flesh**, it is by no means comprehensive; thus, it constitutes a starting point for the **works** that those who **walk in the Spirit** must not participate at all (v. 19). To facilitate discussion, we will combine the list into six broader categories into which most of the traits will fit. First, those who **walk in the Spirit** must refrain from any type of sexual impropriety: **adultery** and **fornication**. The latter word, **fornication**, encompasses every type of sexual sin, including but not limited to **adultery**. In [1 Cor 6:18](#), Paul admonishes us to “flee” all types of “sexual immorality.” In a world that



## Instruct

bombards us with sexually explicit images, we must protect ourselves from entertaining lustful thoughts because of what we watch on television or at the movies, what we view on the Internet, and what we read in print which can escalate fantasies on which our impulse to act may grow and give birth to sin (see [Matt 5:27-28](#)). Sexual sin comes in a variety of forms which society has tried to temper today and many people no longer regard as sinful: sexual relations prior to marriage, living together before marriage, adultery or cheating in any form on one's spouse, divorce for unbiblical reasons, self-gratification, and homosexuality or bisexuality. The Bible, however, clearly states that any type of sexual interaction outside of marriage is wrong and should not be part of the Christian's **walk**.

In what ways can we protect ourselves from succumbing to sexual temptation?

Question  
# 4

Second, Paul urges us not to perform any obscene activity: **uncleanness** and **lewdness**. Even though these two characteristics can also include sexual impropriety, they have a much broader scope and refer to anything in speech or activity that has a hint of immorality. The term **uncleanness** has the connotation of anything that makes us morally impure. It can include lying, gossip, manipulating situations by slandering others, and lacking integrity—saying one thing, but doing another. Similarly, the term **lewdness** refers to one having no moral restraint; in today's terminology, we would say that these people have no filter. Not only do they not have a filter, but they also actually brag about their sin—having no conscience about participating in sinful activities

publicly. **Lewdness** can include such actions as wearing immodest, revealing, or clothing with inappropriate messages or slogans, using unfiltered, obscene language or gestures, having explicit conversations about sexual activity or using innuendos or telling dirty jokes, talking about matters of family dysfunction and airing personal differences through social media, and taking inappropriate or suggestive pictures through social media, texts, or email. We must remember that what we do in private and public has ramifications on our testimony, so we must exercise integrity to maintain a good witness for Christ rather than being charged with hypocrisy and bringing disgrace to His name.

For a Christian who is Spirit-led, what are some other areas of uncleanness or lewdness in which we ought not participate?

Question  
# 5

Third, those who **walk in the Spirit** should not participate in any idolatrous activity; in short, this means placing anything before our worship and service to the Lord (v. 20). Like the previous categories of **uncleanness** and **lewdness**, **idolatry** pervades almost every aspect of our modern culture and many Christians engage in it without even knowing it. Most Christians identify a love of money as the chief source of **idolatry** in our culture ([1 Tim 6:10](#)), but it also can occur in the form of seeking fame or success as well as pursuing our careers or jobs above service to Christ. In addition, one's family and children can easily become idolatry—just think about



## Instruct

how hectic our lives are in participating in extra-curricular activities or allowing our children's activities to dictate our schedules. Above all, education, technology (television, social media, the Internet, and gaming), hobbies, sports, and entertainment all can become idols if we aren't careful to give God the priority in our lives.

In what ways can one's family become an idol?

Question  
# 6

Fourth, Paul urges us not to partake in acts that express anger, cause division or disunity, and lead to violence: **sorcery, contentions, outbursts of wrath, dissensions, and murders** (vv. 20-21). The word translated as **sorcery** is derived from the Greek word which means to dispense drugs; in this sense, it further means to use drugs to poison someone or put a spell upon them. Today, most don't use drugs to poison others, but rather recreationally to get buzzed themselves so that they "feel good" or have an "experience." Anything that alters our body chemically ought not be used as our body houses the Holy Spirit and is the temple of the Lord ([1 Cor 6:19](#)). In addition, the preponderance of this category focuses on uncontrolled anger or disunity; a quick perusal of the news reveals that our society has a major problem with anger. It can occur in the form of road rage, domestic violence, violence under the guise of protesting or to harass people who don't share the same beliefs, or threatening to assassinate or kill public officials with whom one disagrees. We must not participate in violence, but at the same time we cannot ignore or tolerate sin—we ought to condemn the sin, but love

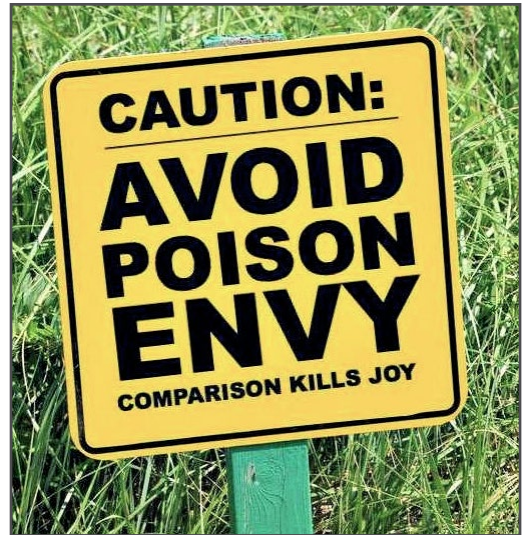


others through the Spirit and lead them to repentance.

In what other ways does violence pervade our society?

Question  
# 7

Fifth, we ought to avoid actions that lead to greed: **jealousies**, **selfish ambitions**, and **envy** (vv. 20-21). The word **jealousies** actually comes from the Greek word to be zealous, but used in this negative connotation it means to resent others and covet their success. The Ten Commandments expressly prohibit coveting whether it's someone's family, possessions, or success ([Exod 20:17](#)). Along those same lines, **envy** pictures a grudging spirit that cannot tolerate another's success. Frequently, **envy** manifests itself through verbal put downs of others—whether in a joking or serious way. The phrase **selfish ambitions** describes someone who would do anything to get an advantage or get ahead—including unscrupulous acts. As a Christian, we should have selfish ambitions, but our ambition should be to please the Lord and accomplish His will to which He has called us.



Finally, as people who **walk in the Spirit** we should not engage in activities that display a lack of self-control: **drunkenness** and **revelries** (v. 21). Obviously, we ought not get drunk because we lose control of our faculties; in the same way, worldly parties, i.e. **revelries**, often engage in over-indulgence and people lack self-control when around others

## Instruct

participating in ungodly deeds—whatever they may be. Lack of self-control, however, may manifest itself in a variety of ways as seen through the preponderance of addictions that we have today—whether it’s alcohol, drugs, pornography, overeating, time management, or any number of things. To close this section, Paul reiterates that we shouldn’t live as those who **practice such things** for **they will not inherit the kingdom of God**. He isn’t saying that we will lose our salvation if we stumble and fall in one of these areas, but he describes how we ought to live differently by exhibiting a transformed way of life. For this reason, he transitions to show us now how we ought to live in the **Spirit**. (We will cover this topic more in-depth next week.)

In what ways does a lack of self-control manifest itself in our lives from time to time?

Question  
# 8

## Inspire

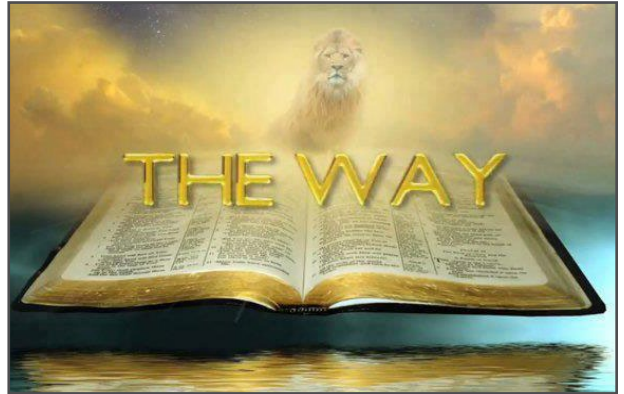
As disciples of Christ, we have been called to bear the marks of our Savior. In other words, we are to distinguish ourselves from the world around us in the way that we live. We are no longer to live according to our flesh whose desires are selfish and rebellious, but we are to live by the Spirit whose purpose is to glorify God and guide us to lead transformed lives that visibly represent Him to others. The question, therefore, becomes: Do our lives bear the distinct characteristics of Christ or do we look like the world around us without any observable change? Take stock of your life. Be honest by looking at your life from God’s perspective; from time to time, we may fool ourselves when evaluating

our lives because we tend to compare ourselves to other imperfect humans around us, but let us look at the standards by which our perfect Savior lived and compare ourselves wholly to Him.

When we compare ourselves to Christ, we will then get a true picture of how we are living as His followers. Look at how you deal with temptation, how you respond to others, and how you react to both good and bad situations.

Can you observe a distinct difference between the way that you respond to others and react to situations or do you act just as the world would? Every one of us has areas in our lives in which we

need to allow God to transform us to be more like Him. We must continue striving to be more and more like our Savior every day because there is no perfect person; therefore, let us do our best to bear the marks that point others to Him and glorify our Savior.



## *Incorporate*

Spend time in prayer asking God how effectively you've allowed the Holy Spirit to lead your life. Write down on the following lines what God reveals to you.

What are some areas in your life in which you continue to allow your fleshly desires to surface?

In what areas do you need to allow the Holy Spirit to transform your life so that you bear more fruit? Name some specific ways that you can work on your attitude or actions so that God can bear more fruit through you.

July 9, 2017



# *The Marks of a Disciple: What a Disciple Is*

## *Galatians 5:22-26*

Focal Verse:

*"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."*

Galatians 5:25

## Introduce

In May of 2004, I waited with great anticipation for Margaret Chacha to take me to DFW Airport along with her husband Chacha Mwita and their son Brian to board the flight for my first international mission trip. I had the privilege of working with Chacha in the Computer Lab of the library at Southwestern Seminary in the four years prior where he shared with me his vision for evangelizing the people in his home country so he persistently asked me to join him on a mission trip to Kenya. The time had now come, so in the days before the trip I packed and re-packed my luggage, thoroughly checking my list to ensure that I had everything that I needed; indeed, I concluded that I was ready to go.



After arriving at the airport that afternoon and checking our luggage, we sat down to wait for the flight to Chicago, but after only a few moments the words “DELAYED” appeared on the monitor because of severe weather affecting the Midwest. In the meantime, Chacha had discovered that he had forgotten an important item so with the flight indefinitely delayed, he sent Margaret home to retrieve it. With plenty of time to spare, she brought it and we entered through security, taking our time because the monitor still relayed the status of the flight as delayed. As we approached the gate, however, the flight just suddenly disappeared, so we inquired of the stewardess as to the status. To which she responded, “It has already left. I tried calling you, but you never came to board.” It turned out that the speakers in the part of the airport in which we had been waiting were not

## Introduce

working and the monitor didn't reflect the current status of the plane, so we had to go through the process of re-booking.

As we approached the ticketing agent, we explained the long story of what had transpired and caused us to miss the flight. With professionalism, she began trying to rebook us on flights that evening, but found none available because of the weather which had disrupted several airports nationwide. After failing at that, she tried to book us through other international cities, including Toronto and destinations in Europe, but because of Chacha's VISA, he couldn't have transferred planes. As she became frustrated that she couldn't help us, we thanked her and told her we would be glad to try again tomorrow if she could find something that worked. To our surprise, the next question she asked was not about the flight, but about us personally; she said, "You're Christians aren't you?" To which we replied, "Yes, we are. We're going on a mission trip to Kenya to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with those who've not heard." She retorted, "I could tell that you're Christians. You didn't get upset. You weren't yelling or cursing, and you have been smiling and relaxed this whole time. Thank you." Using the opportunity to witness to her, we found out that she was also a Christian who lived in Burleson.

This taught me a valuable lesson—the way that we walk, or behave, identifies to Whom we belong; therefore, our character should reflect Christ. Consequently, we were able to witness to this woman in a genuine way because our lives matched our demeanor. Being hypocritical and demonstrating anger and bitterness could have hampered our testimony, but even without saying anything the ticketing agent noticed that we



were different. Although living a good life as a disciple of Christ is a requirement, it doesn't excuse us from explicitly sharing the gospel to instruct people how to have a relationship with Him. Nonetheless, Paul, in Galatians, urges us no longer to live according to our old, fleshly ways which are characterized by sin and selfishness, but to live according to the Spirit who produces a transformed character which mimics that of Christ.

Key  
Question

What does the life of a disciple of Christ look like in terms of practice?

## *Instruct*

### *Galatians 5:22-24*

#### *A DISCIPLE BEARS FRUIT IN THE SPIRIT:*

Last week, we learned how Paul described the battle between the **flesh** and the **Spirit** as a war. Often in this war, if we aren't surrendered wholly to the guidance of the **Spirit**, we will find ourselves doing the things that we don't want to do—i.e. sin; therefore, Paul highlighted some of the things in which we ought not participate. Having described what we ought not do, he now discusses how we should live in the **Spirit** and what characteristics should be visible in our lives. He describes them in terms of nine types of **fruit** which the Holy **Spirit** produces in our lives.

Before we look at the nine **fruit of the**



## Instruct

**Spirit** individually, it is important to understand that the word **fruit** in the Greek is singular and not plural. Because it is singular, it functions collectively which means that a Christian's life should reflect all nine of these characteristics; thus, it's not that some Christians can selectively display **peace** and **love** while others bear **self-control** and patience. On the contrary, every believer should have each of these nine characteristics visible in his or her life every day. Even though the Holy **Spirit** helps cultivate each of these nine areas in the life of a believer, it still requires conscientious effort on our part. To have a fruitful life and ministry, we must pay attention to how we walk and choose to follow the Spirit's leadership daily. If we don't read God's Word, pray, and fellowship with other believers daily—but rather submerge ourselves in the culture and fill our heads with carnal thoughts—we will never be as productive as we ought. Even if you're not a gardener, imagine for a moment what would happen if you never watered, fertilized, or pulled the weeds from your garden. By chance, it may produce some **fruit**, but the weeds will choke the plants and the lack of water will rob them of their nutrients. As disciples of Christ, we cannot allow the world and our **flesh** to dictate the amount of **fruit** that God produces through us, but we must allow His **Spirit** to work regularly in our lives so that we can be as fruitful as possible.

In what ways do we need to cultivate our relationship with our heavenly Father so that we can be more fruitful in our lives?

Question  
# 1

Paul begins with the single, most-important **fruit** in the Christian’s life because it demonstrates the character of God: **love** (see [1 John 4:16](#)). This quality distinguishes us the most from the world because people without a relationship with Christ truly don’t understand selfless and sacrificial **love**. For the most part, the world looks for what it can get out of a relationship rather than what it can give. Even if people seem to have pure motives in

their **love**, generally a self-serving purpose underlies it—whether they want to feel loved themselves or it gives them some satisfaction to express **love** to others. As followers of Christ, however,



we are called to **love** selflessly in all circumstances: we are to **love** God ([Matt 22:37](#)), **love** others ([Matt 22:39](#)), and even **love** our enemies ([Matt 5:44](#); [Rom 12:14](#))—which totally contradicts the world’s view of what **love** ought to be. Consequently, others will know that we belong to God because of the **love** that we have for one another ([John 13:35](#)).

In what ways does love differentiate us as followers of Christ from the world around us?

Question  
# 2

We express our **love** for God through our faithfulness to Him; in [Gal 5:5](#), Paul points out that we demonstrate it by “faith working through **love**.” In other words, **love** is not merely affirmed by a statement, but rather it is shown through our outward deeds. Therefore, we express our **love**

## Instruct

through our obedience to Christ: “If you **love** me, keep my commandments” ([John 14:15](#)). Imagine that someone declares their **love** for you, but then never demonstrates it through their actions; we would label them as phony or hypocritical and argue that they never loved us in the first place. **Love**, however, is not conveyed through legalism, but through complete devotion to Him whereby He leads our lives in such a way that produces holiness that reflects His own character. Consequently, our **love** for God is shown through our service to Him as well as to others. The author of Hebrews writes, “For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of **love** which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister” (6:10). Out of all **the fruit of the Spirit**, **love** should be the most prominent characteristic in our lives.

In what way have we been called to demonstrate our love for God?

Question  
# 3

In addition, we ought to bear the **fruit** of both **joy** and **peace** in our lives. We have **joy** because we abide in Christ, knowing that He will meet our needs and equip us to serve Him ([John 15:11](#)). We can also have **joy** because we know that God remains faithful to His promises and will one day send His Son to return and gather those of us who have a relationship with Him to live for the rest of eternity ([1 Thess 2:19](#)). **Joy**, therefore, results naturally when we focus on praising and serving the Lord rather than our circumstances whatever they may be: we can have **joy** during our trials ([James 1:1-2](#)), when others mistreat and cause us trouble ([Phil 1:15-18](#)), when we have disagreements and don't get our

way in matters of personal preference ([Phil 4:2-4](#)), and when others begin a personal relationship with Christ ([Luke 15:7, 10](#)). As followers of Christ, we ought to have **joy** in every situation because we know that God desires the best for us and will care for us even above our own abilities.

Why is it important to display joy in every situation? Why is it difficult, if not impossible, to have joy when we focus on our circumstances rather than God?

Question  
# 4

The **joy** of the Lord also produces **peace** in our lives. In Hebrew, the word peace (*shalom*) means more than just the absence of physical conflict; it signifies complete well-being of a person: spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. The primary way that **peace** is displayed in our lives is through the absence of rebellion against God (i.e. our salvation); when we turn from our sins and give God the place of priority in our lives, then we have **peace** with Him because His wrath is averted from our sin ([Rom 5:1](#); [John 3:36](#)). Therefore, **peace** allows us to trust God and free ourselves from worry of any kind ([Matt 6:31-34](#); [1 Peter 5:7](#)) and offers us comfort during any trial that we may face ([Phil 4:7](#); [2 Cor 1:3-12](#)). The **peace** of God also points others to Christ because we are to live peacefully with others as far as possible, sharing the life-changing gospel with them ([Rom 12:18](#); [Heb 12:14](#)). However, we shouldn't shy away from



sharing the gospel for the sake of political correctness or to live at **peace** with others in terms of avoiding outward conflict because this shows a lack of love in telling others the truth. As a result, we must allow God to speak the truth in love through us in such a way that it encourages people and expresses His love for them even while they are yet sinners ([Rom 14:19](#)).

What does true peace look like in our lives as a follower of Christ?

Question  
# 5

Through the **Spirit**, we should also demonstrate patience (**longsuffering**) and **gentleness** in our lives. In the introduction, both my grandfather and I demonstrated a lack of patience with people. It's



not that we can't express our displeasure or allow someone to take advantage of us, but it's how we communicate that displeasure that reveals Christ. We must remember that God reveals patience for us in the salvation offered through Jesus:

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is **longsuffering** toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" ([2 Peter 3:9](#); see also [Rom 2:4](#); [1 Tim 1:16](#)). Because God has been patient toward us, we ought to also express patience to those around us: we ought to practice patience in

ministry/evangelism even when the world rejects the message of truth ([2 Cor 6:4-6](#)), we ought to express patience with one another for the sake of unity in the body of Christ ([Eph 4:2](#); [Col 1:11](#)), and we ought to have patience when teaching even when people refuse to listen to the truth or seem not to pay attention to sound doctrine ([2 Tim 4:2](#)).

Not only should we exercise patience, but we should also act with **gentleness**. Today, **gentleness** is often seen as ineptness in which one in his weakness allows others to take advantage of him and walk all over him without a fight. However, biblical **gentleness** corresponds more with humility and patience than being passive. Jesus, who would we characterize as loving and gentle, certainly expressed His anger and displeasure against corruption in the temple ([Matt 21:12-13](#)), but He always corrected people with humility and patience. In our lives, **gentleness** is conveyed to God by having a teachable spirit that humbly listens and abides by His Word ([Jas 1:21](#)), by restoring erring brothers and sisters in Christ with a humble spirit that seeks their repentance rather than condemning judgment ([Gal 6:1](#)), and by debating with unbelieving opponents so that they might be receptive to hearing the truth ([2 Tim 2:25](#)). When we live with a gentle spirit with all humility, it will allow us to have more opportunities to share the gospel and see people transformed than if we have an arrogant and judgmental attitude.

How can we distinguish gentleness from weakness and being passive?

Question  
# 6

As a follower of Christ, we should allow the **Spirit** to produce both **kindness** and **goodness** in our lives. The concept of **kindness** can be somewhat difficult to define, but it signifies benevolent acts done in

## Instruct

love through grace and mercy. The greatest act of **kindness**, therefore, came from God Himself who sent His Son to give His life so that we might have eternal life in Him: “The **kindness** and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared” ([Titus 3:4-7](#)). In the same way, we have been called to display **kindness** through acts of forgiveness ([Eph 4:32](#)), serving with others in love through the local church ([1 Cor 13:4](#)), and to our opponents as testimony of God’s grace and mercy ([2 Cor 6:6](#)). The concept of **goodness** doesn’t so much mean doing good things for people, but rather living in holiness and righteousness for God. The term “good” in the Bible carries with it the idea of moral **goodness**, ethical living, and holiness; it was much more strongly associated with moral uprightness than today. In the **fruit of the Spirit** in [Eph 5:9](#), Paul pairs it with the ethical traits of righteousness and truth. Thus, to exercise **goodness** means to live ethically in all holiness and avoid any of **the works of the flesh** that we studied last week.

In what ways can we display goodness & kindness in our lives to bear fruit?

Question  
# 7

Finally, Paul specifies that the qualities of faithfulness and **self-control** should characterize our lives in the **Spirit**. We’ve already established that faithfulness to obey God demonstrates our **love** to Him. Therefore, we ought to be faithful in every area of our lives: our obedience to His Word ([John 14:15](#)) and our service as His stewards or caretakers. In [1 Cor 4:2](#), Paul writes, “It is required in stewards that one be found faithful.” In addition, faithfulness is also revealed through our exercising of **self-**



**control. Self-control** often means temperance or moderation such as not overindulging (i.e. [1 Cor 9:25](#)), but it also signifies that we ought to abstain from any activity that brings dishonor to God. We ought to exercise **self-control** by participating in good deeds and maintaining a good character that honors God ([1 Peter 1:6](#)), allowing the **Spirit** to guide our lives to abstain from debauchery or evil ([Eph 5:18](#)), resisting temptation ([1 Cor 10:13](#)), focusing our thoughts on righteousness by monitoring



what we consume mentally ([Phil 4:8-9](#)), maintaining patience and ridding ourselves of anger ([Prov 18:21](#); [Jas 1:19](#)), and finally by abstaining from sexual immorality ([1 Thess 4:4](#); [1 Cor 7:9](#)). To have a fruitful life, we ought to maintain **self-control** to do the things God has called us to do and avoid those things which will harm our testimony and distance our relationship from Him.

In what other ways ought we to exercise restraint or self-control in our lives?

Question  
# 8

To conclude, Paul asserts that when we belong to Christ we ought to **crucify the flesh with its desires and passions** (v. 24). In other words, we ought to die to our old way of life and live according to the transformed and holy way that Christ expects; thus, we ought rid ourselves of anything that doesn't glorify God and participate in only the activities that bring honor to Him. In [Rom 6:4](#), Paul explains

it this way: “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Dying to our old way of life means that we surrender control to the Holy Spirit and His desires now become our primary focus.

What does it mean to crucify the desires of the flesh?

Question  
# 9

### Galatians 5:25-26

#### ***A DISCIPLE LIVES HUMBLY:***

Paul reiterates that if we **live in the Spirit** then we should **walk in the Spirit** (v. 24). To **live in the Spirit** means that we have a relationship with God through Jesus; therefore, because the Holy Spirit lives within us we should reflect God’s character. Further, he urges us not to become **conceited** or **provoking and envying one another** (v. 25). Since we all have the same Spirit, we are on equal footing and should not have any spiritual pride above fellow believers; no one is holier than anyone else; no one is superiorly gifted; and no one has an inside-track to obtain more favor from God. Bearing **fruit** in a fallen world is tough enough without bringing a sense of spiritual pride into the mix; we must realize that we did nothing to earn our salvation, but God freely gave it to us. Because God has saved each one of us through His mercy and allowed us to participate in His ministry by grace, we ought to work together to honor and glorify Him rather than compete with one another.

Living in a fallen world, we must allow the Holy Spirit to guide our lives and separate us from a depraved and rebellious culture so that we reflect God's holy character as a testimony to unbelievers. Although we may fail at times to live a holy life, we should still seek to bear the nine characteristics of the fruit with the aid of the Spirit in our lives each day. Bearing this fruit is impossible if we rely on our own strength and continue to live according to the flesh—that is our old way of thinking and behaving. We need to give the Spirit maximum control in our lives, knowing that He will guide and empower us to live out the truth of Jesus so that others may see it and be drawn to Him through our testimony of His transforming power.

If we live like the world around us and succumb to the works of the flesh which are sinful, then why would anyone desire a relationship with Jesus Christ? If we are no different than the world, then why would anyone want to trust in Christ because it makes a relationship with Him seem phony and unnecessary? Instead, we are to be radically different from the culture—being led by the Spirit who produces supernatural qualities of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. When people see something radically different in our lives it will help them to understand the power of Christ to transform because these nine characteristics are impossible for humans to exhibit on their own. Therefore, if as in the introduction you were standing at an airport ticketing agent or any other public venue, would the people with

## ***Inspire***

you say, “You’re a Christian. I can tell by how you’re responding.” Or would they lament, “I don’t want to be around you. You act just like everyone else?” We must ask ourselves: How does the world see us? Do they see the power of Jesus Christ reflected in our character or do they see someone no different than they?

## ***Incorporate***

Pray and ask God to reveal to you in which of the nine fruit you excel and see most often in your life. In what ways do you see that fruit supernaturally manifested in your life and ministry?

## ***Incorporate***

Ask God to reveal which of the nine fruit you need to work on the most. What are ways you can incorporate them into your life and ministry?

How do you see others in our church bear the nine fruit of the Spirit in their lives? Give examples and thank God for their faithful service.

*July 16, 2017*



# *The Measure of a Disciple*

## *John 15:1-8*

Focal Verse:

*"By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."*

John 15:8

## Introduce

Although yards have grown smaller with the number of people crowding into the Fort Worth area, many of us still try to plant a vegetable garden so that we can have the taste of fresh fruits and vegetables which is beyond compare with those in the store. At my former apartment, I attempted to have a small farm on my back patio in pots where I grew tomatoes, peppers, onions, and cucumbers. I had my plants positioned in the optimal space where they would get some water from rain, but not be subject to the hail and high winds that we typically experience in the Spring. From seedlings, the plants grew vibrantly and had healthy foliage and blossoms as the weather warmed.

Seeing my plants, my neighbors tried their hand at growing tomatoes and purchased two seedlings in pots and placed them outside by the bushes which decorated their walkway toward their front door. The plants were fully exposed to the elements in which the scorching sun in the early Spring heat of May beat down on them and wilted them. Then the rainfall that we did have, which

was minimal, came at once in the form of severe storms which beat the plants with torrential rain and quarter-sized hail. Not drilling any holes in the bottom of the bucket, the water pooled at the base of the plant and caused the main stem to rot. Within a matter of weeks, the brown, wilted, sickly-looking plants perished without bearing any fruit.



was minimal, came at once in the form of severe storms which beat the plants with torrential rain and quarter-sized hail. Not drilling any holes in the bottom of the bucket, the water pooled at the base of the plant and caused the main stem to rot. Within a matter of weeks, the brown, wilted, sickly-looking plants perished without bearing any fruit.

## Introduce

Trying to find the right combination of water and fertilizer, however, my plants looked healthy and continued to grow—even to the point of being covered in numerous blooms along with some small fruit. However, my plants also experienced some obstacles in our inhospitable Texas environment. In one night, I found my pepper plant gnawed to the stem without any leaves or blossoms; later I surmised that grasshoppers had feasted heartily. The tomatoes did not have the same appeal to the grasshoppers so they began producing small fruit with the largest tomato being about the size of a half-dollar. After picking a few tomatoes, the furnace known as our Summer kicked into high gear, causing the plants to grow dormant. I continued to water and fertilize the sickly-looking plants only to be surprised that again in the Fall it became renewed with life and bore an even healthier crop.

As Christians, Jesus instructs us to remain connected to the vine, which He is, so that we might have the nutrients and resources with which we can bear fruit in Him. In [John 15](#), Jesus applies such a farming metaphor to our lives when He explains that we must remain in Him as the vine. We are called to bear fruit consistently, not inconsistently like my plants, but this takes work and perseverance in addition to relying upon God to produce the fruit within us. Storms of life may assault us from every side, but we need to remain connected to the vine so that we may be productive regardless of whatever may happen.

Key  
Question

Why must a disciple remain connected to the vine—that is Christ?



#### ***GOD PRUNES HIS DISCIPLES:***

To illustrate a point and provide His disciples with a concrete example they could understand, Jesus often used parables or stories from everyday life with which they would have been familiar. At the Last Supper just before His death on the cross, Jesus uses an agricultural story about a farmer and his vineyard to stress the importance of both having and maintaining a relationship with Him—especially since He would no longer physically be with them in person though He would send His Spirit to guide and care for them ([John 14:18-19, 26](#)). The disciples would have undoubtedly been familiar with the objects in the story both from their use in the Old Testament and their familiarity in Israel with their abundance of vineyards. In first two verses of this chapter, Jesus introduces each of the three participants in the story: the **true vine** (Jesus), **the vinedresser** (God the Father), and **the branches** (the disciples who we find out later in the story represent two types of people). First, Jesus identifies Himself as **the true vine** (v. 1). To understand why Jesus designates Himself as **the true vine**, we must look at [Isaiah 5:1-7](#) in which God portrays Himself as the owner of a vineyard; in this illustration, Israel is the vineyard who should represent God in the way they live, point others into a relationship with Him, and bear good fruit through



## Instruct

their works of service. Israel, however, failed in her mission even though God had given her everything she needed. In fact, God laments, “What more could have been done to My vineyard that I have not done in it? Why then, when I expected it to bring forth good grapes, did it bring forth wild grapes?” ([Isa 5:4](#)). Jesus, on the other hand, did not fail at the mission that God had given Him and successfully fulfilled each of these three tasks that Israel could not. For this reason, Jesus is **the true vine** because unlike Israel He points others to God and through Him they can have a relationship directly with the Father.

Why do we sometimes fail in our mission like Israel did?

Question  
# 1

Second, as the **vinedresser**, God the Father cares for His vineyard so that it can be most productive and fruitful; hence, God does two things:



1) He **removes** the dead and unproductive **branches** from the **vine** and 2) He **prunes** the productive ones so that they **may bear more fruit** (v. 2).

Anyone who has ever gardened will understand the need to **remove** dead foliage and **prune**

the productive. For example, dying, withered, and fruitless **branches** on a tomato plant take away nutrients and water from the healthy ones so

the healthy **branches** won't get the nutrients they need to be as productive as possible. In the same way, pruning removes the smaller fruitless branches at the base of the plant so that nutrients can arrive where needed most. In this story, the **branches**, therefore, represent two types of people: 1) those who have mental knowledge about who Jesus is, but do not truly have a relationship with Him (i.e. the dead **branches** that are removed) and 2) those who have a relationship with Jesus whom God makes more productive by pruning. In [verse 6](#), we will talk more about the fate of those who don't have a relationship with Christ; however, here we must understand that the branches that God removes and disposes did not lose their salvation, but they never truly had a relationship with Jesus in the first place.

As followers of Christ, God **prunes** us and provides for us in three primary ways. First, He removes the imperfections and sin out of our lives. To ensure healthy growth, we cannot maintain or live according to our former lifestyles that we had before we were saved. We must ask God to take a scalpel to our lives and get rid of any dead or sinful works—thoughts, attitudes, and actions. Second, though more difficult, God **prunes** us by seeing us through trials and difficulties in life—He doesn't always deliver us from experiencing the trials, but He always delivers us through them. For this reason, Peter writes, "The genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" ([1 Peter 1:7](#)). Finally, God provides the basic nutrients we need to be productive in our lives: His Word, prayer, wisdom, godly counsel from other believers, and ultimately the Holy Spirit who guides us. As Christians, we have everything that we need to be productive in our lives; we simply must

## Instruct

remain attached to the vine—having a strong relationship with Him so that we don't drift and lose focus.

In what specific ways does God prune us in our lives?

Question  
# 2

### John 15:3

#### **GOD PURIFIES HIS DISCIPLES:**

After explaining the process of pruning the two different types of **branches**, Jesus reassures His disciples that they **are already clean because of the word** he has **spoken to** them (v. 3). Because they have an authentic relationship with Jesus, they aren't in danger of being removed like the unbelieving dead **branches**. Through their relationship with Him, Jesus has cleansed and transformed their lives, beginning the process of pruning them to make their character more like His. Jesus' **word** here would have reminded the disciples of what He had done and



said earlier in the supper when He began to wash their feet as an example of how they should participate in humble service. As Jesus came to Peter, he objected saying, "You shall never wash my feet"; however, Jesus explained that if he does not "wash" him

then he "will have no part of" Him ([John 13:8](#)). As typical, Peter blurts out without thinking, "Lord not my feet only, but also my hands and head." To

which Jesus responds, “He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely **clean**; and you are *clean*, but not all of you.”

Jesus’ point to Peter is that though he has been “cleaned” (i.e. has a relationship with Him), he still must remove the occasional sin that manifests itself in the lives of disciples. Indeed, we know that in a few short hours from this point that Peter sins when he lies and denies Christ three times ([John 18:15-27](#)). Overall, our goal as a **branch** connected to the **vine** should be to become more like Him each day by ridding ourselves of impurities and imperfections and not living in habitual sin; when we do sin, we ought to be quick to repent, asking Jesus to forgive and cleanse us so that we might be an effective fruit-bearing **branch** in Him.

Why is it necessary for us to be purified so that we can be effective in ministry for Christ?

Question  
# 3

### ***In-Depth Information***



*In Jesus’ response to Peter, He specifically points out that “not all of” them “are clean.” In [verse 10](#), He further reveals that He’s speaking about the one who would “betray” Him—Judas Iscariot. Judas, therefore, fits into the first category of a **branch** that knew and heard Jesus, but did not truly have a relationship with Him. The other eleven disciples, however, were genuine in their faith even though at points they erred and made mistakes; they did not habitually live in sin, but asked for forgiveness for their mistakes and allowed Christ to cleanse and transform them.*

#### **GOD PRODUCES FRUIT THROUGH HIS DISCIPLES:**

In a plant, the stem carries the nutrients to the **branches** so they can **bear healthy fruit**. Without the stem, the **branches** would be unable to **bear fruit** and would die. Twice in verses 4-5, Jesus reminds the disciples that if they do not **abide** in Him they **cannot bear fruit** by themselves and **without** Him they **can do nothing**. To **abide** in Christ means that we cultivate or strengthen our relationship with Him; this doesn't mean that we have semi-occasional contact with Jesus attending church every few weeks, praying infrequently, and reading God's Word when we have time. On the contrary, to **abide** means that we maintain our relationship with Him daily. Although it requires a significant investment of time, God has provided everything that we need for success. When we also see how much God has invested in us through His Son's sacrificial death on the cross, the investment that He asks us to make pales in comparison.

Why is it important to abide or remain in Christ?

Question  
# 4



Although we have the responsibility to **abide** in Him, God is the One who produces the **fruit**. Just as a tomato plant can't **bear** cucumbers, but only that which God designed it, the **fruit** that God produces in our

lives **bears** His character. As we studied last week, God produces **fruit** through His **Spirit** that that differentiates us from the world and marks us as His disciples ([Gal 5:22](#)). In addition, God desires that we bear fruit through evangelism and missions through the local church so that others may know how to have a relationship with Him ([1 Cor 3:6-11](#)). For example, Paul emphasizes that he “planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase” ([1 Cor 3:6-7](#)). The increase of which Paul speaks here results through the ministries of the local church fulfilling the Great Commission ([Matt 28:19-20](#)). When we have a consistent testimony and allow God to work and speak through us, He will draw other people to Him and save them; therefore, as His disciples, we ought to seek daily opportunities to verbally share the gospel with others while being consistent in having a character that represents God.

How does God help us to share the gospel and bear fruit?

Question  
# 5

### ***John 15:6***

#### ***GOD PURGES THE ONES WHO AREN'T HIS DISCIPLES:***

Having focused on His faithful disciples to this point, Jesus now turns to a discussion of the fate of those who don't have a relationship with Him. Those who don't have a true relationship with Him are **cast out as a branch and** are **withered**. The word **cast out** literally means to cut off—which signifies death. From the New Testament, we know that “he who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life” ([1 John 5:12](#)); therefore, the penalty for rejecting God “is death”

## Instruct

([Rom 6:23](#)). Consequently, Jesus explains that those who don't have



a relationship are **gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned**; in other words, they incur the wrath and judgment of God for their disobedience. Some may have a mental understanding of who Jesus is, but they have never truly surrendered their lives to Him.

Although we can't lose our salvation ([John 10:28-29](#)), those who may have not truly surrendered their lives to Him may still say and do things in His name (see also [1 John 2:19](#)). For instance, Jesus warns, "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" ([Matt 7:22-23](#)). Salvation is never based upon what we do, being a member of a particular church, or even the physical heritage of being born into a "Christian family," but it is given freely through the grace of God through Jesus' sacrificial death. We can know, that we have a relationship with Jesus because our desires reflect His and we **bear** the good **fruit** ([1 John 5:11-13](#)).

### In-Depth Information



[Ezekiel 15](#) describes the unfaithfulness of those in Israel who have rejected God as wood and branches gathered to be burned to which God declares: "Thus I will make the land desolate, because they have persisted in unfaithfulness" (Ezek 15:8).



***GOD'S DISCIPLES PARTICIPATE IN HIS WILL:***

Jesus reassures the disciples that they can know that they have salvation in Him because they participate in the desires of His will. When we have a relationship with Christ, our mission as His disciple is to **glorify** the **Father** (v. 8); therefore, every decision that we make should bring honor and glory to God rather than be self-serving. For this reason, when Jesus tells His disciples to **ask what you desire and it shall be done for you** (v. 7), it is not a license to **ask** for things selfishly; instead, we are to **ask** according to God's will which we find by reading Scripture. Thus, to know God's will we must **abide** in Jesus' **words**—that is Scripture. Many times, people incorrectly use this verse to claim that Jesus will give us our **desires** whatever they may be, but this fails to consider the context that we must measure our **desires** against Scripture (i.e. Jesus' **words**) and the glorification of God. Jesus serves as an example about how we ought to seek the Father's will and glorify Him; in a debate with the Pharisees, Jesus states, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God." As His disciples, we ought to measure our **desires** and thoughts against those of Jesus so that in whatever we do or say that we bring honor and glory to God.

Why must we evaluate our desires and decisions based upon Scripture?

Question  
# 6

In the introduction, we saw what happened when my neighbors set their tomato plants in the weather and failed to monitor their progress. They did nothing to protect them from the weather and ensure that they grew properly so the plants perished from neglect. God, however, gives us every advantage to mature in Christ. Consequently, we must remain connected to Him—surrendering our lives wholly to Him. Because God through Christ has provided everything that we need to flourish, we are responsible for remaining connected to the vine (Christ) so that we receive the proper nourishment to produce good fruit in our lives. We bear fruit that both transforms our character in Christ and seeks to build His kingdom by being faithful in evangelism and missions.

To measure our maturity as disciples we must test ourselves against the standard that Jesus set in both His actions and His teaching. Too often, we attempt to measure our success based on imperfect standards in the world around us, but when we test ourselves against Jesus' standards we will get a true picture of our maturity. Achieving success can only come when we abide in Christ; abiding in Christ means that we cultivate our relationship with Him by studying His Word, praying, and serving Him faithfully each day. When we are faithful in these areas, God will purify our lives and purge anything that may hinder fruitful production. Therefore, our success as disciples depends upon how much we bring glory to God and how much fruit that God can produce in our lives because we have obediently surrendered to Him. Let us remain connected to Christ so that we can grow in Him and bring honor to God by the way that we live and how we serve.

## ***Incorporate***

Spend time in prayer asking God to help you evaluate your life. How well have you truly abided in the vine (Jesus)? How much time do you spend in prayer and reading Scripture daily? How much time do you invest in serving through the church?

What type of fruit have you seen God produce through your life and ministry? How often do you share the gospel with others? If not daily, what hinders you from being more active in sharing your faith?

## ***Incorporate***

Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal what He desires for your life. Write what God reveals to you in the space provided.

As you pray this week, ask God to help you measure your success as a disciple. Write what God reveals to you in the space provide. What things have you done well and what things do you need to improve so that you bear more fruit?

# ***Journal: Document God's Work***

*July 23, 2017*



# *The Making of a Disciple*

## *Luke 9:18-26*

Focal Verse:

"Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."

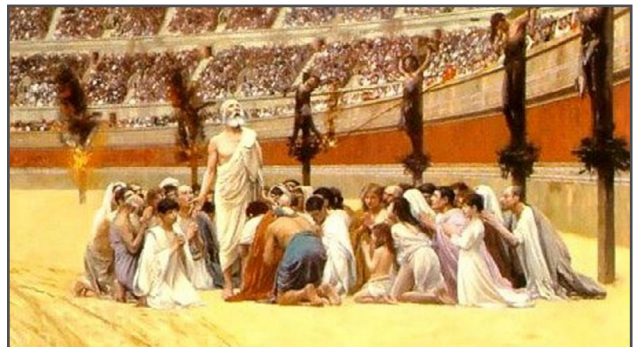
Luke 9:23

## Introduce

Early Christians in the Roman Empire faced many more perils for following Christ than we in the US have faced. Persecution, however, around the world is on the rise today and many of our brothers and sisters in Christ have surrendered everything—including their very lives—to follow the Savior. When we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, we must learn to relinquish control of our lives to Him. This usually doesn't come easily or naturally for us, and many times it involves tremendous sacrifice, but it still pales in comparison to the sacrifice that Jesus endured on our behalf.

When Jesus admonishes His disciples “to take up [their] cross daily, and follow” Him, He isn't merely referring to a superficial sacrifice that we must make, rather that we must surrender our lives completely by dying to our old, fleshly desires. In some cases, like that of Polycarp from Smyrna, complete surrender indeed meant that he would give his life to follow

Christ. According to church history, Polycarp studied about Jesus under the Apostle John (i.e. the one who wrote the fourth Gospel). With the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius on the throne, Christians, especially in Asia Minor (modern Turkey), faced a great risk of persecution



*Polycarp just prior to being burned at the stake for his refusal to deny Christ.*

because they refused to denounce Christ and pledge sole allegiance to the emperor.

Roman officials persistently pursued Polycarp and arrested the aged church leader after he fled from Smyrna. Taking him to a stadium in which

## Introduce

the gladiatorial games were held, he stood before the Roman proconsul who begged him to recant his faith and reject Jesus. The proconsul pleaded, "Swear [to Caesar], and I will release thee;--reproach Christ." With the utmost respect, Polycarp replied, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never once wronged me; how then shall I blaspheme my King, who hath saved me?" As the proconsul grew angrier, Polycarp pleaded with him to take time to assess Christian belief and hear the gospel, but he steadfastly refused and began to threaten the elderly leader with death at the hands of wild beasts. To which Polycarp responded, "Call for them, for repentance with us is a wicked thing, if it is to be a change from the better to the worse, but a good thing if it is to be a change from evil to good." At this point, the proconsul in a fit of rage condemned Polycarp to be burned alive for his failure to swear allegiance to Caesar and to reject Christ.

Polycarp, however, understood Jesus' teaching about taking up the cross daily; he realized that being a follower of Christ required complete devotion and surrender. It also means that one should repent and turn from his or her sins to live a life that exemplifies Christ; therefore, to be a genuine disciple, we must die to our own way of living and thinking which is dominated by the selfishness of the flesh, and see things from the perspective of Jesus. When we have the perspective of Christ, no cost for following Him is too great and we will willingly devote our lives to His service regardless of whatever challenges we must face! See [In Reference on page 66](#) for more information.

Key  
Question

What does it mean to take up our cross daily and follow Jesus?



### Luke 9:18-20

#### ***A DISCIPLE REQUIRES A RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST:***

Throughout His three-and-a-half-year ministry with His disciples, Jesus routinely took them aside in private to teach and invest in them. Although the disciples sometimes failed to grasp His teaching completely and often made mistakes along the way, Jesus never gave up, but persistently continued to instruct them until they understood.

In [Luke 9:1-6](#), the time had come for the disciples to assume some responsibility in the ministry, so Jesus instructed them “to preach the kingdom of God” and then

“sent them” into the villages to impart “the gospel.” As they were preaching, they attracted not only the attention of Herod the tetrarch ([9:7](#)), but also a great “multitude” of onlookers. Jesus attempted to meet in private



with His disciples to review their mission and continue their training ([9:10](#)), but the multitude of nearly 5000 men followed them ([9:11-17](#)). To serve as an example for his disciples, Jesus preached the gospel to the crowd and even physically fed them from five loaves and two fish, but ultimately Jesus sought to be **alone praying** and communicating with the disciples (9:18).

Jesus understood the importance of reaching the crowds, but also of personalized instruction with the disciples in an intimate and private

## Instruct

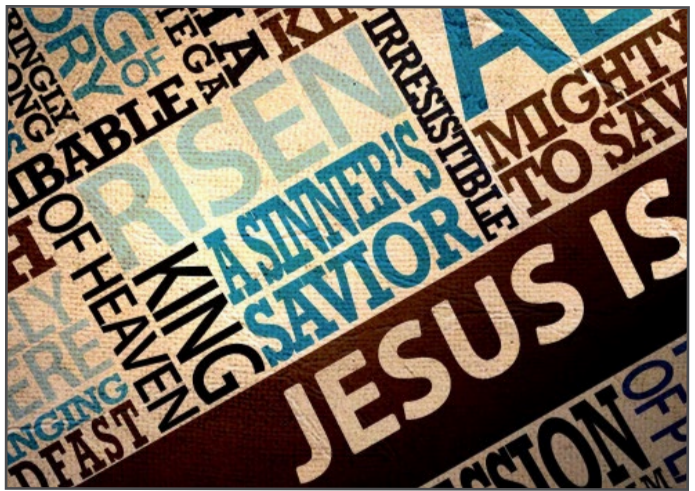
setting. In ministry, we must have a balance between reaching the masses for Christ by preaching the gospel and making disciples by instructing them in a one-on-one setting. To make disciples we must spend quality time mentoring and teaching them apart from the crowds because learning typically occurs more effectively in smaller groups. Smaller groups allow disciples not only the ability to ask questions in a safe environment, but also to discuss openly the challenges and obstacles they may face. Consequently, frank discussion can also lead to candid criticism in a loving way which helps disciples to grow in their faith. If disciples are never challenged to know what and why they believe something as well as a having a critique of how they live, then relatively little growth will ever occur. Above all, small groups also enable disciples to learn first-hand by watching and imitating in such a way that they will apply what they have learned. Knowing that discipleship occurs best in small groups, Jesus separated Himself from the crowds so that He could spend personal time investing in His disciples—**praying** and conversing (v. 18).

Why is it important to make disciples—teaching and training them—in a small, intimate setting?

Question  
# 1

In v. 18b, Jesus begins a conversation with His **disciples** by asking a question to test their perception of the crowd: **Who do the crowds say that I am?** The **crowds** that surrounded Jesus often failed to grasp exactly who He was because they did not truly have a relationship with Him. In response, the disciples replied with a list of three people whom

the crowd thought that He was: **John the Baptist, Elijah,** or **even one of the Old Testament prophets** who has **risen again** (v. 19). The crowds understood that Jesus taught with authority and spoke with wisdom ([Matt 7:28-29](#)) in a way that the prophets of old would impart the Word of the Lord, but they failed to recognize Him as the Messiah sent by God the Father because they had misunderstood why the true Messiah would come and what He was destined to do. They saw His teaching as interesting and one that would perhaps foreshadow the coming of the Messiah, but they did not realize that God had already come to them in the flesh.



Although Jesus wants us to be aware of the culture and customs around us, our understanding of Him must be based on a personal relationship with Him and not ultimately what others say about Him. For this reason, Jesus asks them: **But who do you say that I am?** To which Peter responds rightly, **“The Christ of God”** (v. 20). Unlike the world, Peter recognized Jesus as the Messiah. Even though he didn’t always immediately understand His teaching, Peter recognized Jesus as the Messiah because he spent time with Him, observed His ministry, heard His teaching, and saw God’s presence in His life ([Matt 16:17](#)). To recognize truly who Jesus is, we must have a personal relationship with Him in which we know Him intimately—not based upon what others have said, but what we ourselves have experienced and confirmed through God’s Word—the Bible.

## Instruct

Too often, the world only has patience to hear what others have said about Jesus rather than discovering for themselves what Jesus has actually said. Instead of reading the Bible in its entirety, people tend to use the Internet and other modern media whether books in print, television, or radio as their guide without confirming facts or checking the context of statements. Just like the **crowds** in Jesus' day, this lack of concern for first-hand information breeds misunderstanding and oft-times leads to erroneous and false information. Although the Internet and other forms of media can have godly counsel and contain wisdom from His Word, we still must take the time to investigate what we believe and why we believe it from the primary, first-hand source itself—the Bible.

In what ways has the world perpetuated misconceptions about Jesus/God because they have relied on what others have said and not the Bible?

Question  
# 2

## Luke 9:21-22

### ***A DISCIPLE RELIES ON THE SPIRIT FOR GUIDANCE:***

Ironically, Jesus **warns** His disciples **to tell no one** after Peter made this bold assertion of faith that Jesus is **the Christ of God** (v. 21). As Christians, this goes against the very fabric of our being because we have always been taught to proclaim the name of Jesus and make Him known wherever we go—and we should do this relying on God for the right timing. So why does Jesus forbid them **to tell** anyone? To fulfill His mission on the timetable that the Father had given Him, Jesus had to reveal His mission at

the right time and in the right way. He reminds the disciples of His ultimate purpose for coming to earth: His sacrificial death on our behalf to pay the penalty of our sins. In verse 22, He explains the reason for forbidding them to say



anything: **The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.** Because of the political and religious climate of the day, Jesus exercised wisdom to communicate His intentions in the right way so that violence would only occur against Him at the appropriate, God-given time and that He would have the ability to train the disciples to carry on the ministry after His ascension into heaven as well as to reach the masses with the truth from the Word rightly applied.

Just like Jesus, therefore, a disciple must rely on God's timetable which He communicates to us when we surrender to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. For us to be most effective in making disciples, we must rely on the Holy Spirit to give us wisdom, especially when witnessing. Through the Holy Spirit, God will give us wisdom when sharing the gospel in two primary ways: 1) He will help us recall Scripture and give us the right words to speak and 2) He will reveal the best time and method to present the gospel so that the person will listen and reason logically. We can certainly antagonize people and force the gospel upon them, but what does that accomplish other than make them more defensive and perhaps more belligerent? Presenting the gospel requires sensitivity to the Holy Spirit so that we know when and how to proceed.

## Instruct

Several years ago, Bro. Fulton Cook and I were evangelizing an apartment complex on Baker Boulevard—knocking upon doors randomly. We had success in being able to pray and share the gospel with three people until we knocked on the door of the apartment manager. After a bit of a conversation, she demanded to know who had given us the permission to solicit the residents. Answering her kindly, I responded, “Solicitation by definition means that we want something in return for our services. We serve a Savior who asks nothing in return. We are offering services to you and your residents by the grace of Jesus Christ.” She hatefully retorted with flared nostrils and a rising voice, “The North Richland Hills police department considers what you’re doing as solicitation.” I wasn’t deterred and inquired, “From who do we get permission to meet your residents so that we can offer them help. Surely you have a bulletin board or common area that your owners would agree for us use.” Seeing she was agitated even more, I thanked her for her time, mentioned that we would pray for her since she had just been released from the hospital, and made our way home. At that time, the Holy Spirit guided me to say somethings about solicitation that would make her think, but we weren’t able to share the gospel completely. As we share the gospel and minister on behalf of our Savior, we need to be sensitive to His timing and His methodology that we are the most effective disciples that we can be.

In what ways does the Holy Spirit guide us to accomplish ministry on God’s timing?

Question  
# 3

***A DISCIPLE RELINQUISHES CONTROL OF HIS LIFE TO CHRIST:***

Jesus next turns to a discussion of what true discipleship requires. Having just described by what kind of death He would die at the hands of the Jewish leaders, Jesus explains that those who wish to **follow** Him must

**deny himself and take up his cross and follow** Him (v. 23). We hear this phrase tossed about casually, but do we truly understand the total commitment required to **follow** Jesus? We may joke that people serving in a tropical locale like Hawaii are “suffering for Jesus” or we may interpret this statement to mean that we make sacrifices which we ourselves choose so that they don’t hinder our lives too much. However, Jesus’ command to **deny** ourselves and **take up** our **crosses** daily has three profound implications for our lives in which we must completely surrender.

First, following Jesus requires sacrifice and self-denial so that we no longer have a selfish perspective, but we are focused on bringing God glory and serving in His Kingdom. When Jesus states that we should **deny** ourselves, He doesn’t mean that we must live a destitute life, denying ourselves of any godly pleasures and amenities in life. On the contrary, Jesus is emphatically stating that everything we do should please God and bring honor to Him. We should view things from Christ’s perspective so that our sole desire is to fulfill God’s will. When we live according to the world’s standards, we

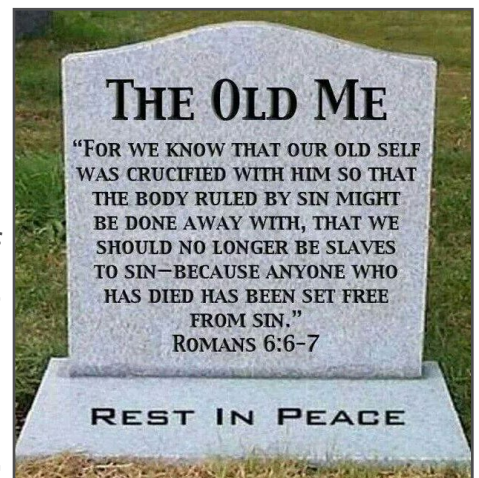


base our actions and desires upon what will bring us the greatest benefit and satisfaction personally. Often, this involves money, prestige, power, and pleasure through entertainment. Yet, none of these things apart from Christ have eternal value and all of them one day will perish with us. For this reason, Jesus stresses that even **gaining the whole world** has no **profit** for a person if he himself is **destroyed or lost** (v. 25). If we have everything that the world holds dear and do not have a relationship with Christ, then we truly have no hope and no lasting joy. Consequently, we must **deny** ourselves from seeking our fleshly desires and turn to seek the things of the Spirit so that we have incomprehensible peace and joy from serving God and bringing Him glory!

What does Jesus mean by denying oneself?  
In what ways should we have a more Christ-like perspective?

Question  
# 4

Second, following Christ means that we must die to our old way of life; thus, when we **take up** our **cross daily**, we crucify our bad habits and desires so that we now live according to Christ's holy standards. **Taking up** our **cross**, therefore, is not a mere emblem of sacrifice, but it is a symbol of death—that we have completely died to our old way of life and now live in Christ Jesus. In verse 24, Jesus explains, **“Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it.”** When we have a relationship with





Christ, we must turn from our old, sinful lifestyle to a life in His righteousness. We can certainly come to Christ as we are, but we cannot remain where we are and follow Him. Christ transforms our life thoroughly. Paul affirms, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God” ([Gal 2:20](#)). Although at times we may stumble, we do not habitually live according to our former fleshly desires. Therefore, **daily** we must put to death our fleshly desires and seek to glorify the Lord.

In what ways has Christ transformed you?  
What are some areas in which you may still struggle in putting your old lifestyle to death which you may need to surrender to Christ?

Question  
# 5

Third, following Jesus entails complete submission to His authority. The cross was not only a symbol of death, but it also illustrated submission to the Roman Empire. Either in life or death one submitted to the Roman Empire. For criminals, they would bear **the cross** and be put on public display so that others may know the power of the Roman Empire and ultimately they had subjected themselves to their power by force. Although God doesn't force us to submit to Him but gives us the free will to do so, Jesus' command to **take up** our **cross daily** and **follow** Him symbolizes our willingness to surrender everything. To follow Christ, therefore, it requires ridding ourselves of self-serving desires, dying to our old, sinful lifestyle, and surrendering every area of our lives to Him. Ordinarily, the **cross** brought shame to people who broke the law ([Deut 21:23](#)), but to Jesus it brought glory because He fulfilled the will of the Father in that through His death He brought life by grace for those who

## Instruct

would accept His gift ([Gal 3:13-14](#)). Here, **being ashamed** of Jesus is tantamount to rejecting Him and His teaching (v. 26). When Jesus returns if they have rejected Him, He will sentence them to a second death and separation from Him for eternity. Some have rejected Him because it looked as though by His death that He had been defeated and that He offered no hope in His death. On the contrary, however, Jesus' resurrection from the dead not only signifies victory but it offers hope that can't be found anywhere else. Although many of us have a relationship with Christ, why do so many Christians act timid as though we are **ashamed** to be identified with Him—whether it's how we live or by failing to share the gospel? Instead, we must live according to His words, seek to glorify Him by our actions, and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us to share the gospel at the appropriate time through the appropriate words so that others may know the truth about how to have a relationship with Him.

In what ways do some Christians act as though they are ashamed of the gospel?

Question  
# 6

In the introduction, we learned about Polycarp who gave his life to follow Christ by refusing to renounce his relationship with the Savior. Today, we live in an ever-increasingly antagonistic society which seeks to suppress Christianity. Despite the increasing threat from outside Christianity, we have a much bigger threat in battling our flesh which we need to put to death so that we can serve the Lord in authenticity. Following Christ requires total surrender whereby we die to our old, sinful and selfish way of living so that we see things from His perspective and seek to glorify the Father. As His disciples, serving Him should become a priority. The primary way in which we serve Him should be the proclamation of the gospel—that is how to have a relationship with Him that allows us by grace to have eternal life.

When we are passionate about something, it shows by the way that we live/ behave and what we say. If we are passionate, we generally respond quickly to conversations about those things which interest us. For example, those who fish engage in stories about the “big catch.” They also love to teach others the tricks of the trade. True fishermen would pull out their tackle box and dedicate hours to teaching others what they themselves have learned by experience—from what tackles to use, how to tie the knots, and how to bait the hook. In the same way, as followers of Jesus we should be eager to share the gospel with others and teach them what God has said in His Word which we have personally experienced in our lives. If we are eager to have conversations about sports, NASCAR, hunting, fishing, quilting, scrapbooking, crafts, and a whole host of other hobbies and interests, we need to be even much

## ***Inspire***

more passionate about sharing the gospel and teaching others to grow in their faith based upon what God has taught us in His Word. How passionate are you about sharing the gospel and teaching others God's Word? If we can't say that we have completely surrendered to God's call in our lives, then we must re-evaluate and ask God to guide us to accomplish His will on His timetable.

## ***Incorporate***

In your own words, describe who Jesus is to you. In what ways does Jesus differ from other religious leaders: Mohammed, Buddha, Confucius, or even modern cultic leaders like Joseph Smith (Mormons) and Charles Taze Russell (Jehovah's Witnesses).

## ***Incorporate***

In your own words, describe how to have a relationship with Christ. Cite Scripture as support.

In prayer, ask God to reveal to you some ways in which you've matured in your walk with Him by denying yourself and taking up your cross. In addition, ask Him to reveal any areas in which you need improvement.

### ***In Reference—from page 53***



To read more about the tribulations that Polycarp faced, see [John Foxe, \*Foxe's Book of Martyrs\* \(Grand Rapids: Fleming H. Revell, 2002\), p. 19-25.](#)

*July 30, 2017*



# *The Mentoring of a Disciple*

## *2 Timothy 1:3-14*

Focal Verse:

"Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

2 Timothy 1:6

## Introduce

Every year at Christmas, we hear the name Lottie Moon in connection with our international missions offering, but do we know the story of this missionary to China? Born Charlotte Diggs Moon in 1840 to a prominent family in Virginia, “Lottie,” as she was nicknamed, was highly educated and well-connected in society. During her college years, she abandoned the Baptist faith with which she had been raised—even to the point that she recalled going to a campus revival to mock it, but instead leaving transformed: “I went to the service to scoff, and returned to my room to pray all night.” With a personal faith in Jesus Christ, she had a renewed vigor not for religion, but to introduce others into a relationship with her personal Savior; as she began teaching after the Civil War, her burden for international missions increased. In 1873, Lottie followed her younger sister, Edmonia, to China where they both began to serve as missionaries. Through a series of unfortunate life choices and ailing health, Edmonia was forced to return home—leaving Lottie alone to face the challenges of missionary work in Tengchow, China. At this time, however, single women often lacked the opportunity to be involved in sharing the gospel and were mostly relegated to teaching in school. Lottie, however, felt God’s call for her to move to the small, remote village of P’ing-tu where she would begin a ministry there among women. Yet, she still faced challenges



*“How many million more souls are to pass into eternity without having heard the name of Jesus?”*  
*Lottie Moon*

## Introduce

because the Chinese were skeptical of her—often referring to her as “devil.” Yet, Lottie persisted and in 1887 through her ministry to women God gave her an unprecedented opportunity to present the gospel to a nearby town for the first time. She later recalls that she observed “something [she] had never seen before in China. Such eagerness to learn! Such spiritual desires.” Through her efforts, the church started in P’ing-tu in 1889 began to baptize its first members when an ordained missionary pastor performed the service. In the intervening months, she worked tirelessly to mentor Li Shou Ting as the pastor and motivated him to serve and preach the gospel. By the time Moon’s health declined in 1912 at the age of seventy-two, the church had baptized over 1000 people who had accepted Christ as their Savior.

God had blessed the church and the efforts of Lottie Moon because she sought to make disciples from the people and train them to be missionaries in their own communities. Above all, she displayed the love of Christ in such a way that when a war caused mass starvation in 1911 she sacrificed her own money and food to give to the people which ultimately contributed to her death. Like Lottie Moon, God has called each one of us to make disciples and train them to be self-replicating so that they can minister to others. In his comments to Timothy, Paul highlights four key areas in which we ought to mentor or train others: 1) mold their faith, 2) motivate them to serve, 3) make the gospel a priority, and 4) model the love of Christ. See [In Reference on page 83](#) for more information.

Key  
Question

In what ways should we mentor (teach) disciples whom God has placed in our lives?



## 2 Timothy 1:3-5

### MOLD THEIR FAITH AND CHARACTER:

Paul begins his second letter to Timothy with a **prayer** of thanksgiving to **God** on behalf of his young protégé's spiritual heritage (v. 3). In the first three verses, Paul expresses his gratefulness for Timothy's **genuine**

**faith** and for those who helped to mold it by their own faithful examples. Before we examine the ways that others helped Timothy to mature in his **faith**, we must understand that **genuine faith** only occurs when we have personally responded to Christ's sacrificial

gift and have turned from our sinful lives to have a relationship with Him. **Genuine faith**, therefore, is not automatically passed down from generation to generation, but requires active belief on our part as characterized through transformation in our lives and the productivity of the Holy Spirit. (See lessons 1 and 2 in this series.)

Certainly, our families play a significant role in our spiritual development either positively or negatively, but ultimately the only one who determines our fate in response to Jesus' call is us individually. Not only do Timothy's **grandmother** and **mother** have a personal relationship with Jesus, but Paul is also **persuaded** that Timothy does as well (v. 5). The word **persuaded** carries with it the idea of confidence.

### THE ABC'S OF SALVATION



#### ADMIT:

Admit that you are a sinner and have made mistakes.



#### BELIEVE:

Believe that Jesus is God's only Son and He chose to die on a cross for you.



#### COMMIT:

Commit yourself to a life of following Jesus and serving others.

Paul can be confident in Timothy's **faith**, not because of his family heritage, but because he sees **genuine** evidence in his life through outward transformation. **Faith**, consequently, is not merely a feeling or even a mental statement of belief, but manifests itself through inward transformation expressed outwardly in the way that we live fully surrendered and committed to the Lord which others can visibly observe.

How would you explain to someone today what it means to have genuine faith?

Question  
# 1

Although Timothy had made a personal profession of **faith**, others played a pivotal role in shaping his life through their faithful examples. For instance, Paul invested in Timothy by being a spiritual mentor and father unto him (see [2 Tim 1:2](#); [1 Tim 1:2](#)). From [Acts 16:1](#), we know that his physical father was a Greek who did not have a relationship with Christ. As a result, Paul sought to become that spiritual father who would nurture and train Timothy as a follower of Christ. Unfortunately, many children, youth, and young adults today come from dysfunctional families in which one or both parents may set ungodly examples or simply have failed to train their children to imitate Christ because they were either unconcerned, selfish, or too lazy. Although God gave the primary responsibility to train children within their nuclear families, as a community we must step in when parents and families have failed lest the next generation turn completely away from God.

Through the content of his **prayers**, we can observe how Paul provides

an excellent example for Timothy to follow in three areas: 1) through his demonstration of service, 2) through his holy living, and 3) through his commitment to learn from the past. First, Paul explains that he **serves** God **with a pure conscience** (v. 3). Although we should never serve with the intention of receiving recognition, we should serve to glorify Christ and set an example for others. If we want to motivate others to serve, we must also be willing to serve. Moreover, we shouldn't wait for someone to ask us to serve, but for the sake of the kingdom we need to respond willingly and immediately to do what needs to be done. Too often, we see things that need to be done, but we either complain or assume that someone else will take care of it. If God has brought it to our attention, then we should be ready to respond with a servant's heart.

Why should we set an example of service for others to follow?

Question  
# 2

Second, Paul serves as an example for Timothy through his holy living; thus, Paul can say that he **serves** God **with a pure conscience**. To **serve with a pure conscience** means that he exercises integrity. He doesn't live one way in public and another in private; he doesn't use trickery or deceit when ministering, but presents the truth. He has no ulterior motives in presenting the gospel like those who present out of envy and strife or to receive recognition for



*Paul and Silas in jail after the earthquake witnessing to the jailer in Philippi.*

## Instruct

themselves ([Phil 1:15](#)). Having a **pure conscience**, therefore, equates to living a genuine life in Christ through which others can observe how He has transformed us. Timothy certainly observed Paul's **pure conscience** first-hand during his second missionary journey. Despite all the opposition he faced, Paul did so with grace and love, never faltering in his character, but always imitating Christ so that others might be saved through his testimony.

Why is having a pure conscience essential in ministry?

Question  
# 3

Finally, Paul is also committed to learn from the past. Although he doesn't specify who among his **forefathers served** faithfully, he notes that he **served just as they did with a pure conscience**. Not only did he have members of his own family to look to as examples, but his **forefathers** from the Old Testament served God willingly and faithfully: Noah, the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph), Moses, Joshua, Caleb, David, and the Prophets. Even though none of them was perfect, they still learned from their mistakes and sought to glorify the Lord in their lives through their obedience and faithful service. Therefore, we must learn not only from our own past, but also that of human history so that we can mature in our faith and not make the same mistakes repeatedly. Coined by the Spanish philosopher and writer George Santayana, the oft-cited phrase "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" should speak volumes to us as a disciple. Consequently, not only do we need to leave a legacy of faithfulness for

future generations to follow, but we should learn from those who forged the path before us by emulating their good traits and excising the bad.

In what ways did those in the Old Testament function as an example of serving with a pure conscience?

Question  
# 4

Not only does Paul teach Timothy, but the ones who taught him the most came from his nuclear family: his **grandmother Lois** and his **mother Eunice** (v. 5). Timothy's **mother** and **grandmother** instilled biblical values within him and taught him to **serve** and worship the one true and living God. Not only did they invest significant time in training him, but they also modeled their service to God before him through their **genuine faith**. Today, just as in Paul's day, the world seeks to indoctrinate our children from an early age, so it has become more important than ever to train them according to Scripture as well as visibly model for them Christ-like behavior.

Secular schools, for example, attempt to teach moral values, but these often conflict with biblical standards. The home, not school, should be the place



where children learn values and how to apply them reasonably.

When a child, or disciple for that matter, is taught one thing while the parent or mentor practices another, it creates conflict as to the importance of the value—and generally the bad habit not the good is practiced. Therefore, parents should closely monitor what their children

## Instruct

are taught at school, to what ideals and values their friends expose them, and what they consume using media. Because of unsupervised use of television and the Internet in many homes, children are exposed to violence, hatred, greed, and sexuality; without parental supervision and instruction and by acting as visible models for godly standards, children have a greater risk of succumbing to temptation. Mentoring a disciple must occur on the personal level—in a one-on-one basis whereby the disciple not only hears the message, but sees it applied in the life of the one teaching it.

In what ways does the world attempt to indoctrinate people? How can we combat this indoctrination effectively?

Question  
# 5

## 2 Timothy 1:6-7

### **MOTIVATE THEM TO SERVE:**

As a mentor (teacher), we must motivate others to serve in ways that God has gifted them. Because Timothy has a good foundation in Christ on which to build, Paul **reminds** him to use **the gift** which **God** has given him (v. 6). Too often, we find it easier to do the work ourselves rather than involve others and train them. However, God desires us to invest in others even if it takes a while to train them and they make many mistakes along the way. Prior to his second missionary journey, Paul returned to Lystra so that Timothy could join them and observe how the team functioned; however, Timothy wasn't just an observer, but he participated in the mission, learning along the way from Paul's teaching.

So as he wrote this second letter to Timothy, Paul had sent him as his own emissary to Ephesus to resolve doctrinal issues. Thus, Paul had trained Timothy so that he also could trust and delegate assignments to him on his own.

In addition, as seasoned disciples we must also help others not to burn out, but to continue to serve the Lord faithfully every day. In verse 6, the phrase **to stir up** literally



means to stoke the fire by fanning the flames. We shouldn't quench the Holy Spirit and the passion that new believers have for ministry, but we ought to teach them responsibility as well as time management. Some new believers invest everything they have without considering their own spiritual growth and rest. If we don't teach new believers to balance their personal spiritual growth through prayer, Bible study, and rest, then they will quickly burn out. We need **to stir up the gift** that is within them by allowing them to exercise the gift, but being focused on the ministry to which God has called them and not allowing them to overwork, trying to do everything that needs a volunteer.

*Why is it important to train new believers to balance their time serving with personal growth and rest?*

Question  
# 6

New believers are usually very bold in sharing their faith and telling others what God has done for them. Though we may need to train them how to use Scripture in presenting the gospel, for the most part

## Instruct

they tell others immediately how Christ has transformed them; we must not squelch that spirit of excitement, but instead cultivate it to become an integral part of ministry in God's kingdom while at the same time teaching and encouraging them to grow in God's Word. As they grow older, however, sometimes **fear** and apprehension manifests itself; **fear** comes when we take our focus off Christ and place it on our own ability to share the gospel. When **fear** creeps into our lives, we are basically saying that we don't trust God to give us the words to say or the wisdom to use. Consequently, Paul reiterates to Timothy that **God has not given us a spirit of fear**, but one **of power and love and sound mind** (v. 7). We are to share the gospel in **love**; we're not to be overbearing or obnoxious, but neither are we to be timid or shy in such a way that those around us don't know how to have eternal life.

Why do we need confidence for sharing the gospel? How can we instill that and fan the flame in new believers so that they don't grow weary of sharing the gospel?

Question  
# 7

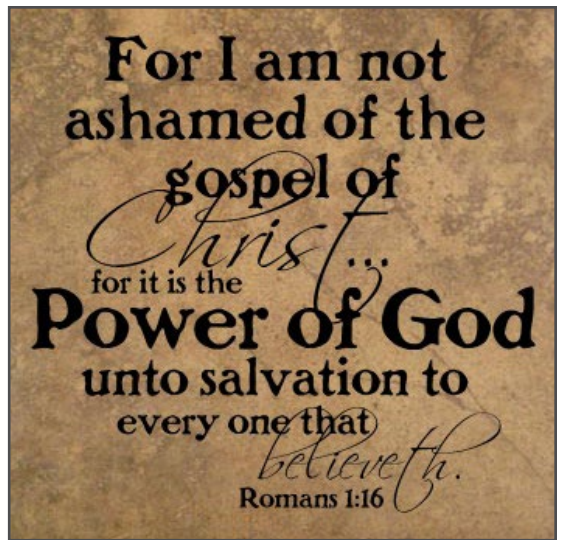
## 2 Timothy 1:8-12

### MAKE THE GOSPEL A PRIORITY:

Because God **has not given us a spirit of fear**, we have no reason to **be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord** (v. 8). Some of us, however, act like we are **ashamed** to have people know that we're followers of Christ. We feel like it may cost us relationships with our friends, perhaps a promotion at work, or even spur on persecution through verbal insults.



On the contrary, Paul reassures Timothy that though he has been imprisoned and **suffered** for the sake of Christ that it's nothing of which to be **ashamed** (vv. 8 & 12). Instead, this ought to challenge us more to present the gospel to a world without hope because we have **been saved** and **called with a holy calling** for the express **purpose** of participating in the **gospel** (vv. 8-9). Thus, we are to live out the gospel as well as be purposeful in sharing it verbally. Paul, like us, has been appointed a **preacher, apostle, and teacher** to make the gospel known to others (v. 11); the proclamation is simple: **Jesus Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light** (v. 10). Every one of us needs to make the proclamation of the gospel a priority. If we don't tell others, then how will they hear the truth; for other than the Bible there is no truth known to mankind. We need to be confident and clear in our proclamation that only Christ is the source of this truth (**light**) and only through Him can we have eternal life.



In what ways do we need to make the gospel a priority in our lives? How well are you doing at making it a priority?

Question  
# 8

## 2 Timothy 1:13-14

### MODEL THE LOVE OF CHRIST:

Paul urges Timothy to **hold fast the pattern of sound words** which he

## Instruct

has taught him and the **faith and love** exemplified in **Christ** (v. 13). The most important principle that we can teach a disciple is to live obediently in **love**. Through our obedience to Christ, we are to model His **love** to others. This is the **good thing** which **the Holy Spirit who dwells in us** enables us to perform (v. 14). Regardless of what the world may say about morality, we are to live according to the standards in God's Word and model His **love** by serving faithfully and sharing the gospel.

Even though the Holy Spirit dwells in our lives at the moment we begin a relationship with Christ, it takes time to overcome our fleshly desires with His help. Some bad habits may disappear immediately while others may seem to linger; therefore, we need to teach new believers how to pray and seek God's will through the Bible to overcome these types of temptations and follow Him obediently. As we rid ourselves of ungodly practices, God's **love** manifested in us becomes more natural. Learning to seek God's will which conforms our desires to His is not something mysterious and unfathomable, but something that can be discerned through a mature, growing relationship with Him through prayer and Bible study. Therefore, as mature believers, it becomes incumbent upon us not only to know God's Word, but to apply it in our lives in such a way that we can lead by example in teaching new believers how to pray, study God's Word, and apply it. This must be our goal in mentoring others.

Why is it important to model His love? How can we model the love of Christ to others?

Question  
# 9

In the introduction, we learned about Lottie Moon who invested in the life of Li Shou to train him to lead the church in P'ing-tu, China. As a church, we must reach future generations and disciple them by developing authentic relationships to help mold their character and see them mature in their faith. Making disciples requires a life-long commitment which doesn't end shortly after the salvation and baptism of a person, but seeks to produce a mature believer in Christ who depends upon Him to become a productive servant in His kingdom. Although we rightly emphasize the need for evangelism and introducing people into a relationship with Christ, evangelism and missions cannot be the end result, but we must commit to the mentorship and training of new and young believers. Today, unfortunately, discipleship occurs as an afterthought, but we must make it a priority so that the church can function properly by producing new generations to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth.

We need to undertake discipleship in three primary ways. First, we must show love by making time to invest in their lives whether through weekly meetings at a meal or social gatherings in the home or conversations on the phone or e-mail. Just like our physical children, we must cultivate a relationship by listening to them rather than being quick to judge and criticize, but we must always guide them to specific principles in God's Word by which to live. Part of spending time with them should also involve acts of service in which like an apprentice we train them to participate faithfully in the ministry that God has given them. Thus, we must take them with us and model for them through on-the-job training.

Second, we must have patience with them: when they succeed, we should praise them; when they err, we should remind them of God's Word; and when they fail, we should encourage them to remain faithful and keep seeking the Lord through prayer and Bible study. For instance, Jesus exercised patience with His disciples and taught them the same principles repeatedly as well as reinforcing them not only through a variety of illustrations, but also by living according to what He taught. Finally, we must be committed to mentoring others. Mentorships are a lengthy process and one is not mentored overnight, but it can take years to produce an independent disciple who can then disciple others. We must be willing to make sacrifices, just like with our children, so that the disciples whom God has asked us to train will continue to grow in their faith without becoming dependent upon us. Teaching them instead to become dependent upon God, these disciples will then grow into mature Christians who can lead and train others how to live a godly life and serve the Lord. Therefore, let us continue to grow in the Lord as we ourselves faithfully execute Jesus' call for us to go into all the world and make disciples ([Matt 28:19](#)).

### ***In Prayer***



*Prayerfully ask God how you can make discipleship a priority in your life—either by being discipled or discipling someone else. Remember that discipleship for each one of us is a life-long process and we should never stop growing or learning, but that doesn't mean that we can't disciple others at the same time that we ourselves are being discipled.*

## ***Incorporate***

Why is it important to train others to depend upon God rather than us?  
How can we as a church be more effective in mentoring disciples?

In what ways do you interact with new believers to help mold their faith and shape their service?

How do you model the love of Christ to others?

## ***Incorporate***

If you don't have someone that you mentor, pray and ask God to give you the name of one person whom you can mentor over the next year. Write their name(s) on the following lines. In addition, list ways that you can help mentor them by teaching them specific ways to use their gift in serving the Lord.

### ***In Reference—from page 69***



For an overview of Moon's life, see [Ruth A. Tucker, \*From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya: A Biographical History of Christian Missions\* \(Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983\), p. 234-238.](#)

# ***Journal: Document God's Work***

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