I think Christians
- ~~This class is pretty~~ would benefit a lot from knowing a Christian worldview. Starting w/ the world instead of the Bible.
- Still would like to read The Reason For God (there is no reason for God)

- Talking w/ friends that had different perspectives was so eye-opening!

Dining halls → stop
apartments
- cook
- mom
- other

- Of all the universes & beings possible, God made this one. Where we "can be like God" and He doesn't intervene all the time but lets us keep ~~seeking~~ rationalizing them away. If we ~~do~~ ignore God, we realize we are from dust and to dust (and time) we will return... and how fragile we are.

- Why are we here? → on Earth Reas
- How much are we to depend / use our own strength?
- Would God have us invent aspirin? (science / technology)

- If you were to go on the journey of discovering the true religion (or if they are all fake), how would you go about it?

- Skye Jethani: Why must we only listen / about things that have Christian messages attached?
  - The whole Earth displays the splendor of God.

Oblivion:

- If God is ~~this~~ alien sucking us dry, then we should oppose him, build up structures & science on our own, ignore religion.
  - Maybe that's why Bill Nye is so worried

} is investigating this not "turning away from sin", be like children to sin?
- Kind of sounds like Satan "can you really trust God?"

Are you going to resist?
- So many unfounded statements.

Better to try to not judge the author but try out and test his statements before you judge so you don't miss out on a new perspective.

- Maybe you are looking for more of $\boxed{\text{apologetics}}$: a rational defense of faith using logic & reason

How do I work through these things best?

1. ~~Stay~~ Commit to it
2. Think of good options
3. Try some
4. Ask for help when stuck

To reuse

NEWSONG

· Do you love the people here? Beyond what they do/ ~~are~~ feel like they're supposed to do?
· Purity of faith/ worship in Guatemala
· what are 12 steps of AA?

Foundations Class

Preface

Dear Believer,

And you love me, through and through...

You are about to embark on a Journey, undoubtedly the most significant journey of your lifetime. This is a very unusual journey that we all hope never ends. As a matter of fact, if you are a diligent traveler, that will prolong your journey, rather than shorten it. The more conscientious you are, the more enjoyable your travel will be; on the other hand, the more casual you tend to be about the details of your going, the less meaningful your journey will be.

Like most trips you'll take, this one costs something. It may actually cost you a great deal but not in dollar or cents; rather, the cost is counted in terms of persistence and patience and even your personal suffering. Normally a journey has rest stops for the traveler but on this pilgrimage, your progress will come from consistent walking, while stopping en route will actually cause setbacks. Another unique feature of this journey concerns companionship. While you may be traveling in the company of one or two friends, you are also accompanied by the uncounted millions who have made this same trek before you.

Jesus issued the call to discipleship with the words **"Follow me."** Implicit in this invitation are three truths about being Christ's disciple: 1) disciples travel *with* Jesus; 2) disciples go *where* Jesus goes; and 3) disciples walk *like* Jesus walks. You cannot be a disciple unless you walk in His steps (Matt 16:24). You cannot be a disciple if you turn from His path to go your own way (John 12:26). You cannot be a disciple without reflecting His manner of walking (1 John 2:6).

The journey then, is the Journey to become Christ's disciple. The next weeks represent only the beginning and please note that a strong beginning makes a better finish more likely. So take heart from the fact that others are journeying beside you and **discipline yourself so that other activities or responsibilities won't halt your progress**. Train hard and faithfully, just as you would prepare for any great distance and keep your eye on your Leader. The writer of Hebrews expressed it well when he wrote, "Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and *let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us*, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfector of our faith" (Hebrews 12:1-2a).

The Journey lies ahead. Christ moves on, looking back over His shoulder at you...

Have a good trip! Deny yourself, Take up your cross, and follow me. → Disciple = Cross Bearer like Jesus was

Get signed up & do background check

Define:
Believer
Follower
Disciple

Introduction

Introducing the Principle of Discipleship

There are three words that we find in the Bible which describe a Christian: 1) *Believer*; 2) *Follower*; and 3) *Disciple*. Are you a believer in Jesus Christ? As you understand it, are you a follower of Jesus Christ? Would you call yourself a disciple of Jesus Christ? The focus of our study for the next six weeks is *the meaning and practice of discipleship*. But first, let's look at these terms.

There are a number of verses in the New Testament where Jesus and others talked about the importance of being a believer. John quoted Jesus as saying, "let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1). We know that it's important to believe in Jesus Christ. He brings a sense of comfort, peace, assurance, and purpose to our experience. Jesus also told us that we needed to believe in Him in order to have life. Do you remember the occasion when Jesus met Martha and Mary at the burial site of their brother Lazarus? Jesus called Lazarus out of the grave, and He told them, "He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live" (John 11:25). It is important to believe, for Christ has the power of resurrection. When Paul and Silas were in a jail cell in Philippi, there was a great earthquake, one of such force that the jailer was frightened. When he asked Paul and Silas what he might do to be saved, they replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). We know that belief is important – that we need to be believers. But if we study the New Testament, we will discover that *there is more to being a Christian than just believing*. We can believe in a lot of things that we don't totally give ourselves to. Being a follower and a disciple of Jesus carries us beyond the mere condition of believing in Christ. Belief only is not enough. James 2:19 says, "Even the demons believe – and shudder." Even the demons believe, fear, and respect the power of the Son, but they are still demons!" *It's not enough just to believe.*

It is not sufficient just to be a follower. There are several verses in the New Testament where Jesus called people to follow Him. He was walking beside the Sea of Galilee when he called Peter and Andrew to leave their nets, follow Him, and He would make them to become "Fishers of men" (Matt 4:19). One day a man ran up to Jesus and said, "Master, I want to be associated with you...I want you to be my teacher." And Jesus said "Okay, come on." But the man answered, "My father has died. Let me go attend to the details of his funeral." But Jesus said, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead" (Matt 8:22). One time Jesus said that if we don't follow Him, then we are not worthy to be His disciples (Matt 10:38), and another time He taught that if we are going to serve Him, then we must follow Him (John 12:26). *But it's not enough just to follow Jesus*. When the disciples were with Jesus in the garden and the mob came to arrest Jesus, the disciples all scattered. Peter, we are told, followed Jesus "at a distance" – a distance, not walking hand in hand with Him, nor walking side by side with Him. On Palm Sunday, Jesus rode to Jerusalem to the shouts of "Hosanna" and "Crown Him." But many of those same followers were shouting, "Crucify Him!" just a few days later. Matt 4:23-25 says that great crowds followed Jesus. When they saw His miracles – great crowds came to see Him. When Jesus

walked through Jericho, the crowd was so great that Zacchaeus had to climb in a tree in order to see Jesus.

But whom did Jesus rely on to spread His word? Was it the great crowds who covered the Hillside or clogged the streets? No, *it was his disciples,* just a handful of men – eleven men actually, for one of the original twelve fell by the wayside. Jesus depended on His disciples. How did he train His disciples? Did He meet them every Sabbath day at 9 o'clock at the temple, in a certain classroom, where He taught them? Did He duplicate scrolls that contained His teaching which He handed out as study material? No, Jesus stayed with His disciples every day. They ate together, walked together, slept together, talked together, prayed together and worked together. *He poured His life into the lives of those twelve men by constantly being with them*. When Judas led the band of soldiers out to find Jesus, he took them directly to the garden, for he knew the place. Why? He knew it because "Jesus often met there with His disciples" (John 18:2). Jesus and His disciples had established a regular pattern of sharing together in that place. *The disciple is one who regularly and often draws aside to be with His Lord*. Before He sent His disciples to do His work, Jesus told them, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master" (Matt 10:24).

A disciple is a person who is like his master. He doesn't just believe in – intellectually affirm the truth of his master. *He doesn't just follow* – either at a distance or up close. *The disciple gives himself so totally* to being with the teacher that he begins to sound like his teacher. The servant spends so much time with the master that he begins to act like his master (Christ-likeness).

It is necessary to be believers. It is required to be followers. But what Jesus wants is for us to be disciples. This is His expectation for us. Jesus gave Himself to twelve men whom He was relying on to spread the Good News after He had gone away. After His resurrection, Jesus met them again to use what has been called "The Great Commission" (Matt 28:19-20). This verse says, **"Go then to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples; baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of this age."** Jesus did not say to go and lead people to become followers of His. He said to make them disciples, to call for the greatest level of commitment, that of learning by living with Him! This is the principle of discipleship.

Suggestions on how to organize MediaWiki / Wikipedia

Introducing the Nature of the Foundations Class

The Foundations class is a six-week course for Christians who want to gain knowledge and skills that will help them to live as Disciples of Jesus Christ. The course is taught by other Christians who have previously studied the material.

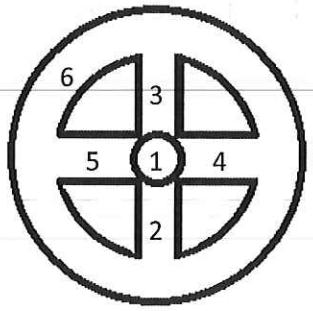
Each lesson of the Foundations will consist of the following parts:

- **Preparation** – reviewing the assignments from the previous lesson(s).
- **Revelation** – discovering together the Scriptural truth for the lesson.
- **Application** – sharing experiences based on a related passage of Scripture.
- **Explanation** – studying the material center on lesson theme.
- **Illustration** – picturing a key insight in a memorable way.
- **Variation** – trying a new technique to improve understanding or skill.
- **Obligation** – looking at the homework assignments for the week.
- **Celebration** – enjoying some final minutes with one another in prayer.

The homework for each lesson is not very demanding. Thus, you should have no problem completing it on schedule. Each week's homework will consist of four assignments – one that is a review of old material, the other three that are based on new material. The three new assignments will be: 1) *memorizing a verse* 2) *mastering an illustration* and 3) *practicing a technique*.

Introducing the Illustration of the Wheel of Discipleship

Each of the lessons for this Foundations class is based on a different part of the Wheel of Discipleship, a simple illustration.



Lesson No. 1 is based on **"The Lord, Jesus Christ."** The Lord of the wheel gives us strength and stability.
Lesson No. 2-5 relates to the spokes, which need to be equal length in order for the Wheel to be balanced.
Lesson No. 2 is the foundational spoke, called "**The Word**".
Lesson No. 3 is labeled "**Prayer**". These two spokes are the vertical dimensions of a Christian disciple's life.
Lesson No. 4 is called **"Fellowship"**.
Lesson No. 5 is termed "**Witnessing**". These two spokes are the horizontal aspects of our faith.
Lesson No. 6 is the rim, is entitled "**Obedience to Christ Commands**", and is the part of the Wheel which touches the ground.

Introducing the Agreement We Make Together

Each disciple and disciple-maker needs to commit to the Foundations class so that other demands and interests will not crowd out the activities and responsibilities of becoming and remaining Christ's disciple. In order to signify this importance we place on this study, let's make some promises together, which shall be known as the Discipleship Covenant.

The Discipleship Covenant

I, Nolan Hergert, promise that I will commit myself to the Foundations class, as demonstrated in the following ways.

1) Permit Jesus Christ to influence me in each area of my life

2) Attend each Foundations meeting as scheduled.

3) Complete the assignment faithfully week by week.

4) Support my Discipleship partner(s) with my prayers.

5) Practice the new skills I learn as a means of strengthening my Christian life

6) Work at being open and honest with my partner(s), God, and myself

7) Share my Christian faith with others through word and deed.

I understand that these are promises I am making to the Lord, but also to my Discipleship partner(s) and to myself. I realize that failure to keep any of these pledges will affect everyone concerned. Therefore, I agree that to the best of my ability – based on God's help – I will fulfill this covenant. oh boy

Date: 10/8/'13

Name: Nolan Hergert

Discipleship Partner's Names: _____

_____

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Christ the Lord

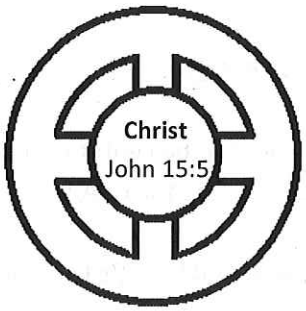
Preparation

As we prepare to look closely at the person of Jesus Christ, and to review His claims upon our lives, we should recall that final command of His, known as The Great Commission. In our introductory session we worked a little at memorizing this important passage. Let's review it once again: "Make Disciples – Matthew 28:19-20. Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, to the end of the age.

Let's turn back to The Discipleship Covenant and read together our promises to one another. Have you signed your name to this agreement as an indication of your commitment to the Foundations class? Do you understand each item of the agreement? Do you have any hesitancy about signing this? If so, please share your feelings with your Discipleship Partner(s). Do you feel that this agreement is too demanding? Not demanding enough? Each of the agreements in the covenant has a purpose behind it. Can you express what is behind the first promise? How does this promise you have been asked to make relate to the theme for this lesson? Does Jesus Christ have an influence now upon your life? Christ has promised to be with us always. Can He be with us if we refuse to include Him in our activities, our plans, and our dreams?

Revelation

The first aspect of the Wheel of Discipleship is the Lord. Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Wheel, and thus should be the center of the disciple's life. When you became a Christian, Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, came to live in you. But He may not have been given the central place in your life, in which case your Wheel will move in a lopsided, non-productive fashion.



Not only does Christ live in us, but also, we live "in Christ". Being a Christian means to be "in Christ". This expression, found 164 times in Paul's writings, means that because Christ lives in you, you are living in Him. This provides a fresh perspective on life for you as a Christian; you begin to see things as Jesus does.

The key verse for this week in John 15:5 "*I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without me.*" Our relationship with Jesus Christ should be as close, as inseparable, as a vine and its branches. We must remain in Him, just as He is in us, and this union will result in the bearing of fruit. In the same way – that we shall bear fruit, if we are closely related to Christ, we shall be able to do nothing apart from Him.

Define bear fruit: exegetical, word study. Just try one thing, see how it goes

It'd be really nice to have an intro to Christian worldview book.

Remaining in Christ (abiding in Him, living in Him) means that there must be a conscious dependence upon Him, a realization that Christ's power, wisdom, resources, ability, and strength are available in your life. After all it is the Lord that gives strength and stability. You can do nothing without Christ; but if He lives in you, then you can say with Paul, *"I can do all things in Him who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13).

Application

Do you know that you have two natures? Since birth, you have had an old nature. Since your new birth, you have had a new nature, too. The old nature wants to glorify self. The new nature wants to glorify God. These two natures are always in conflict, because even after you make a commitment to Jesus as Lord of your life, your self-glorifying nature wants to dominate.

Let's look at a related verse, Matthew 5:16; *"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven,"* Your new nature would produce good works as a means of glorifying God. Your old nature – however, would view good works as a way of obtaining glory for self.

Think about your own life now. Do you let your light shine before men? When your light does shine, whom do you wish to see glorified? Share an experience with your Discipleship Partner(s) in which you did some good work in order to be praised. Share another experience in which you did a good work for the sheer joy of doing something good. Discuss your feelings about the two different experiences.

Explanation

If Christ is the center of the Wheel, then all of life revolves around Him. This makes Christ the One who controls the turns. Another term we can use for Christ is "Lord".

The Fact of Christ's Lordship

Christ is the Lord. This is a fact, whether we accept or reject Christ does not alter the fact of His Lordship. How is the fact of Christ's Lordship demonstrated?

- **Jesus claimed to be our Lord**. In John 13:13, He said to His disciples, *"You call me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am"*.

- **Jesus taught about His Lordship.** In Mark 12:35-37, Jesus was teaching in the Temple when He pointed out, *"How can the scribes say that Christ is the son of David? David himself calls him Lord; so how is he his son?"*.

- **Jesus showed His Lordship by His actions**. He fed the hungry (John 6: 11,34), brought sight to the blind (John 9:6, 38), raised the dead (John 11:27,44) and washed His disciples feet (John 13: 5-6).

- **Paul wrote about Christ's Lordship**. In 1 Corinthians 1:9, Paul identifies Jesus as both God's Son and as our Lord.

- **Paul changed his life because of Christ's Lordship**. He changed from persecutor (Acts 9:1-2) to preacher (Acts 9:28-29).

The Acceptance of Christ's Lordship

Not every Christian treats Jesus Christ as if He were Lord. He took up residence in your life when you became a believer. He is present in all Christians in this way. However, in spite of the fact that Jesus lives in your life, if you are a believer, you can "assign" Him only to certain "rooms" of your "house", that is – you can limit His freedom to live in and control each area of your life. You may allow Him into the dining room, being careful to talk to Him before meals. You may permit Him in the living room, by displaying His book on the coffee table, or in your bedroom, by hanging a poster about Him on your wall. But can he enter your library, to influence what you read, or your game room, to have say over how you use your leisure time? Is Jesus permitted into your family room, to be part of your relationship, your conversation, your interactions with family and friends? Can He freely enter your kitchen, to influence what you put into your body, His "temple"?

Christ the Lord needs to be welcomed to your throne room – your house does not have one, but your life does! **If you let Him be on the throne in your life, He can thereby influence and direct each aspect of your life**.

Christ is *present* in all believers, *prominent* in just some Christians – where He can participate in decision-making and behavior – and *pre-eminent* in only a few Christians – where He is allowed to sit in the throne of life. **Jesus has taken up residence in your life and He wants you to yield complete control to Him and invite Him to be the Lord of every area of your life.**

cite scripture please!!

The Practice of Christ's Lordship

It is not enough to accept Jesus as Lord if you continue to live as if you are Lord. But if you acknowledged Christ's Lordship in your life, you should be proving that He is Lord by submitting the areas of your life to His control. The question is not whether you enter vocational Christian work, but rather you yield to Christ's leading in ~~each~~ every area of your life. The issue, then, is one of will – Christ's will versus yours. Whose will do you follow when it comes to Friendship? Self? Which of these areas are the hardest to surrender to Christ's control? What can you do in these areas to begin practicing Christ's Lordship? Remember that, you do not have to struggle to be "like Jesus". By crowning Jesus Lord of your life, you simply are letting Him be Himself within you.

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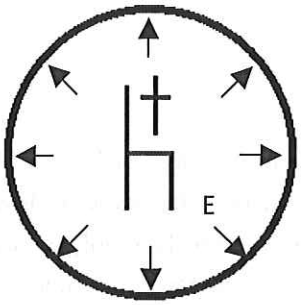
Illustration

The throne is a good illustration to portray two types of Christians – one who is allowing Jesus to reign in his life, and another who in controlling his own life.

The Spiritual or Christ-controlled Christian is pictured like this:

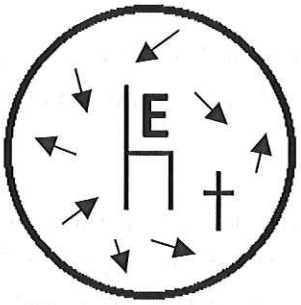
Love		Christ-centered
Joy		Empowered by Holy Spirit
Peace		Introduces others to Christ
Patience		Effective prayer life
Kindness		Understand God's word
Faithfulness		Trusts God
Goodness		Obeys God
Humility		Thinks?
Self-control		



This individual has invited Jesus Christ to come into his life and is allowing Him to control and empower his life. Christ occupies His rightful place on the throne of life; Ego (self) has been dethroned.

The Carnal or Self-controlled Christian is pictured like this, however:

Legalistic attitude		Ignorance of spiritual heritage
Impure thoughts		Unbelief
Jealousy		Disobedience
Guilt		Loss of love for God and others
Worry		Poor prayer life
Discouragement		No desire for Bible study
Critical spirit		Pride
Frustration		
Aimlessness		



Aww yeah.

This individual has invited Jesus Christ into his life, but has taken over the throne of life. Jesus has stepped down, resulting in a loss of fellowship. Though this person is still a Christian, his life is spiritually immature.

Which of these pictures looks like your life?

Variation

Think carefully about your own Christian life. Consider as many areas of your daily activities as possible. After you have reviewed these areas in your mind, write your own definition of the word "Lord", as you feel it applies to Jesus Christ.

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Obligation – (Homework)

Your homework assignments each week will consist of four tasks – review, memorize, master, and practice. They are assigned responsibilities that you have agreed to in the Discipleship Covenant. However, don't worry because these are not very demanding.

Review – Matthew 28:19-20

Memorize – this week's verse: "Be Christ-like" John 15:5

> *I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, will bear much fruit; for you can do nothing without me.* What does it mean??!!
>
> Write this verse on a small white card or paper, practice it until it's perfect. so what?!

Master – the Throne Illustration. Draw it on paper or notebook. Practice drawing and labeling each picture until you can draw and explain it naturally and smoothly to another person.

Practice – demonstrating what Galatians 5:22-23 calls the "Fruit of the Spirit" – Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control.

* You may do this in various ways this week. Focus on one fruit and work at demonstrating it to lots of people. Or select different fruit for various people. Either way, be serious about this assignment. Make notes about your experience in your notebook – to share next week.

Celebration Didn't get to this. I don't interact w/ people that much. Not very faithful w/ relationships Maybe try ~~sitting~~ near/next to ~~with~~ young people ~~in~~ at work?

Join together in prayer, thanking God for His Son, Jesus Christ, and asking help in following Jesus as His disciples. Pray that God will help you enthrone Jesus and to follow His leading. Pray for one another by name, remembering experiences shared and needs expressed earlier in the session.

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Acknowledge His Lordship in Practice

Good intentions don't guarantee good results. A good start does not ensure a strong finish – decision is only the beginning. Once you have decided to acknowledge the lordship of Christ in your life, you will prove that He *is* Lord by submitting to Him hour by hour and obeying Him in the daily affairs of life. Some of these areas are represented in the following illustration.

Take a few moments to evaluate your practice of the lordship of Jesus Christ in these areas.

A good way to determine if Christ is in Control, is to ask, "Am I willing to do whatever Christ desires in this area?" or "Will I be able to thank God for whatever may happen in this area?".
? → Job

a. Are there areas in this illustration which you are not allowing Christ to control?

b. Are there other areas which you are not allowing Christ to control?

c. What can you do in these areas to acknowledge Christ's lordship?

We should not be concerned about what we would do for the Lord if we only had more money, time, or education. Instead, we must decide what we will do with the things we have now. And what really matters is not who or what we are, but whether Christ controls us.

Whenever you assume control of your life, you will soon become unhappy and anxious. What did Peter say you can do? 1 Peter 5:6-7

What can happen if cares and worries are not committed to Christ? **Mark 4:18-19**

How do you think this takes place?

In **Luke 9:23**, what three things is the person who decides to follow Christ called to do? (Write them in your own words)

Read **Colossians 3:23-24**. Underline the best answer and explain why it is better than the other two: Paul said a Christian should:

Serve Christ more sincerely than he serves people

Not try to mix his religion and his everyday life.

Do ordinary tasks wholeheartedly because he is really serving Christ

According to **Luke 6:46**, what is a good way to evaluate if Christ is truly Lord of your life?

Read **Luke 18:28-30**.

a. What had the apostles done?

b. How did Jesus respond?

c. What does the lordship of Christ mean to you personally?

Remember these Points

- **Jesus Christ is declared to be Lord in Scriptures. He is worthy to be Lord because of who He is and what He has done.**
- **Because Jesus Christ is Lord, the Christian's responsibility is to acknowledge His authority every day, in all areas of his/her life.**
- **Various areas of a believer's life may not be subject to the control of Christ. The Christian should submit these areas to Christ and continue to recognize that Christ's control of his/her life is for his/her own welfare and joy.**

Preparation

Let's begin this week by reading aloud the Discipleship Covenant (see Introductions). Read the agreement in unison, as a good way of signifying that everyone on your Discipleship team has made these promises to God, to each Discipleship partner, and to self. Look carefully at item #5: "Practice the new skills I learn as a means of strengthening my Christian life." Can you guess how this pledge might relate to this session on God's Word? You will be discovering some new skills today, and if you are faithful to develop them, you will grow in your Christian life. But first, let's check the homework assignments as a means of preparing for the new lessons.

No doubt you can quote Matthew 28: 19-20. *Let's say it together now*. Do you recall the title we have to this verse? What is the popular designation for these two verses? What version of the Bible did we use for our memorization?

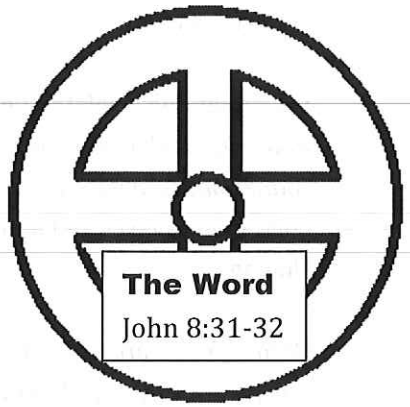
Quote John 15:5, the key memory verse for last week. What is the natural result of remaining in Christ and allowing Christ to live in us? What aspect of the Wheel of Discipleship is John 15:5 related to? What similarities are there between Christ living in the disciple and the hub of the Wheel?

Take a piece of paper and draw the Throne Illustration. Why is the Christian's life pictured as a throne room? In your own life, Christ is present. Are you allowing him to be prominent, or pre-eminent? Try to honestly evaluate and share your own situation. Check, also if the Throne Illustration you have drawn is correct.

When Christ is central in your life – that is, when He is on the throne – the "Fruit of the Spirit" is produced in your life. Share with your discipleship partner(s) about your effects in demonstrating this fruit last week.

Revelation

The second part of the Wheel of Discipleship is the Word. Jesus relied on the power and the presence of the Word in His own life. When Satan tempted Him with food, Jesus answered, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). When Jesus was talking with the Samaritan woman, and the disciples brought Him food to eat, Jesus told them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know. My food is the will of Him who sent me, and to accomplish His work" (John 4:32,34). The Word of God was like food for Jesus. It gave strength to face trails and temptations. It revealed God's will and work as the staples of a healthy spiritual life.



The Word

Peter wrote to the Christian exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Asia Minor. Those men and women faced persecution and even death. They were confronted daily by false teachings and alien practices. To keep the faith in such pressurized circumstances, demanded Christians to be strong and growing. Thus Peter wrote them, "Like newborn babes, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up to salvation" (1 Peter 2:2). The Word of God was the pure spiritual milk they needed in order to grow.

The Word nourishes and feeds the Christian disciple. You would not consider eating only occasionally, or just whenever the mood struck you. You know that your body requires the regular, adequate intake of nourishing food in order to stay healthy. Besides that, eating three meals a day has become habitual for you, so that if you miss a meal, or have to eat later than usual, your body sends out signals to remind you it's time to eat. Go a couple of hours past your normal mealtime and you are apt to say, "I am starving to death!" In a similar way, you need to have a regular, adequate intake of the Word in order to stay healthy spiritually. When you don't your stomach may not growl – but your personality might.

The key verse for this week is **John 8: 31-32**: "*If you obey my teaching you are really my disciples: you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.*" In a world where falseness and perversion are attractively packaged and persuasively offered, it is liberating to know the Truth. Jesus said, "I am… the truth" (John 14:6). The truth, which we come to know through the pages of the Word, is the very same Truth who lives in our hearts. By living in and living by the word, we enthroned Christ and help assure that our Christian life is strong and healthy. And so the bottom spoke of the Wheel, rather than any other spoke, is labeled "The Word" – so that we might be reminded that feasting on **God's Word is the foundation of the Disciple's life.**

Application

Remember that you have two natures – an old and a new nature. Your Christian life can be affected by the conflict of these two natures. Your old nature would cause you to *minimize* the importance of spiritual things. It would have you believe that living in the Word is not important, that God's Word has no particular application to everyday life. The new nature, however, would *motivate* you to use Scriptures to enrich your life and the lives of others.

This is just some religious book! Is it?

Let's examine a related verse, Colossians 3:16 "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*" Your old nature wastes God's Word in the same way that a naughty child might waste a plate of nourishing food. Your new nature uses God's Word with thankfulness and singing.

What is your situation? Does the word of Christ dwell in you richly? Do you waste opportunities to feed on God's Word? Or do you sit down regularly to feast at Christ's Banquet Table? Are you poor spiritually, because you rarely open the Book of Treasures? Or are you rich because God's Word lives in you? Share the answers to these questions with your discipleship partner(s). Be honest.

It's difficult to understand. Pray for seeing & feeling the heart. You lack prayer time.

The Word

Explanation

What makes the Word foundational in the Christian disciple's life? There are at least three explanations.

The Uniqueness of the Word:

The bible is truly a remarkable book, unlike any other. It is composed of 66 books written by about 40 authors, each of whom worked independently from the others. These books were written in several countries and in three languages – Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The period of composition extended over 1500 years. The authors were quite different in background, some, for example, being merchants, priests, farmers, laborers, and kings. Moreover the literature of the Bible is a hodge-podge of poetry, history, biography, prophecy, legal document, and epistle.

The Authority of the Word

The Bible is the divinely inspired Word of God. Paul wrote, "All scripture is inspired by God" (2 Timothy 3:16). Peter claimed, "No prophecy of scripture… ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Peter 1:20-21). The Bible doesn't contain the Word of God it is the written Word of God.

The Bible makes three great claims for itself: (1) that it is eternal or everlasting – "The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever." (Isaiah 40:8); (2) that it is a source of wisdom – "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." (Psalm 19:7); and (3) that it is a source of righteousness – "I hold back my feet from every evil way, in order to keep thy word." (Psalm 119:101). The God-breathed Book, then, is authoritative for us. Its words of wisdom and righteousness will never fade away.

David realized the authority of the Scriptures, and he wrote, "I will give thee thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart… for thou has exalted above everything thy name and thy word" (Psalm 138:1-2). Centuries later his descendant, Jesus, recognized the authority of the Scriptures. In His prayer to the Father, He said, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the word. I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me. I have given them thy word. Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth" (John 17:6,8,14,17). If Jesus, who is Truth incarnate, accepted the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, we who want to be His disciples, need also to make the Word foundational in our lives.

Is "human wisdom" good too? It's ultimately ~~too~~ not everything & not able to save

The Sufficiency of the Word:

The Bible offers great resources for whoever faithfully uses it. It's a source of help: "For whatever was written in former days was written… that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope" (Romans 15:4). It's a source of instruction: "All scripture is… profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16). It's a source of protection and victory. "Take the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God… that you might be able to withstand in the evil day" (Ephesians 6:17,13). It is a source of guidance: "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). It's a source of cleansing: "You are already made clean by the word which I have spoken to you" (John 15:3). It's a source of provision for daily life: "All scripture… (is given)… that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:17).

The Word

The Bible is not a resource book to be kept on the shelf, but a Source Book to be kept in the heart. As God's unique, authoritative written Word, it is sufficient to meet our every need.

Illustration

The Hand is a useful illustration, which shows how we get and keep a firm grasp on God's Word. Place your Bible on top of a table. With your palm down, and your pinky resting on top of the Bible, try to hold the Word securely in place, while your discipleship partner attempts to snatch it from you. It was easily taken, wasn't it? HEARING is one method of gripping the Word. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes from what is heard." *But hearing only will not give a strong grasp on God's Word.*

Now hold the Bible on the table with your finger and ring finger. Your partner can still take the Word from you quite easily. READING is a second method to gripping the Word. Revelation 1:3 teaches, "Blessed is he who reads aloud the words of prophecy." *Yet, even reading plus hearing fails to give a firm grasp on the Word.*

Now hold the Bible on the table with your little, ring, and middle fingers. Your partner can still seize the Bible, though it is becoming more difficult. STUDYING is the third way of gripping the Word. 2 Timothy 2:15 admonishes, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." *Nonetheless, even studying, plus reading, plus hearing will not give the best grasp on the Word.*

Now add your forefinger to the other three holding the Bible in place on the table. This time it is more difficult for your partner to take the Bible. MEMORIZING is the fourth method of gripping God's Word. Psalm 119:9, 11 explains, "How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to thy word. I have laid up thy word in my heart, that I might not sin against thee." *However, even memorizing, plus studying, plus reading, plus hearing fails to give the grasp you should have on God's Word.*

Now put your thumb on top of the Bible also. This gives much more leverage and perhaps your partner cannot take the Bible, but perhaps he/she still can. MEDITATING is the fifth method of gripping the Word. Psalm 1:1-2 reveals, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night." Still, there is something lacking. *Even meditating, plus memorizing, plus studying, plus reading, plus hearing – your grasp on the Word is incomplete.*

Now hold the Bible with the binding in the palm of your hands, your fingers on the front and your thumb on the back. Unless he/she tears it, your partner cannot take the Bible from you. APPLYING, then is the final way to grip the Truth of God's Word. Paul wrote to his disciple, Titus, the following words: "I desire

you to insist… that those who have believed in God may be careful to apply themselves to good deeds" (Titus 3:8). James emphasized this same truth when he wrote, "Be ye doers of the word, not hearers (readers, students, memorizers, meditators) only… deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22).

Variation

There are many techniques which you might learn to help you more efficiently hear, read, study, memorize, meditate upon, and apply God' Word. Let's look at two such techniques; one to aid your reading, the other to improve your study. The first variation is called the "**Arrow Technique**". As you read a portion of scripture, draw an arrow pointing up in the margin beside any verse that inspires you – gives you a lift – causes you to say "Wow!" Put an arrow pointing down, beside any verse that convicts you – makes you stop and think – aims straight at your own need. Now read Psalm 19, which speaks of the works and Word of God, and use the Arrow Technique. It is not necessary to mark every verse, but only those which really get your attention. Share a few of 'your arrows' with your discipleship partner(s).

The second variation is called the "**Six Question Technique**". When you are studying a section of scripture, you can use this way of organizing what you find in the passage.
1.) Take a piece of paper and write 6 headings down the left side of the page: *Temptation/Sin – Example – Promise – God – Truths – Warnings/Rebukes*. (Skip several lines between each heading.)
2.) Next, as you read the passage, look for verses or statements that relate to one of these headings, and write them under the proper section
3.) Actually, there are three ways to write the verses – by quoting, by paraphrasing (putting the verse into your own words), or by applying (saying what you will do as a result of a verse). ← from your heart to your mind?
In a given chapter or passage, not every verse can be classified by the Six Question Technique. But this is a helpful method of Bible study you should learn to use.

Obligation
Review – Matthew 28: 19-20 and John 15:5
Memorize – this week's verse "Know the Word"

> *"If you obey my teaching you are really my disciples; you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."* John 8:31-32

Master – the Hand Illustration. Practice drawing and explaining it until you can share it naturally.
Practice – the "Six Question Technique" of Bible study on Psalm 119. Use the quotation method on verse 1-56, the paraphrasing on verses 57-120, and the application method on verses 121-176. Remember that you need not classify every verse.

Celebration

In prayer, express your gratitude to God for His precious gift of the written Word. Ask Him to open your eyes to the truth. Pray that you might be able to regularly feed on the Word of Life. Pledge your best to God this week in using His Word.

Prayer

Preparation

This week we will be studying one of the most important aspects of the Christian life. But first let's prepare ourselves. Let's read together the Discipleship Covenant (see Introductions). Item 4 is especially relevant for this lesson: "Support my Discipleship Partner(s) with my prayers." Have you been faithfully praying for your partners in this journey? You have promised in to Covenant to support your fellow travelers with your prayers. How else might you support them?

Today we have two verses to review, Matthew 28: 19-20 and John 15:5. Let's say them now. Did you remember to use the titles with each passage? Can you quote these verses perfectly?

One by one, let's all quote the key memory verse for last week, John 8:31-32. What is a sign that we are Christ's disciples? What exciting result comes from knowing the truth?

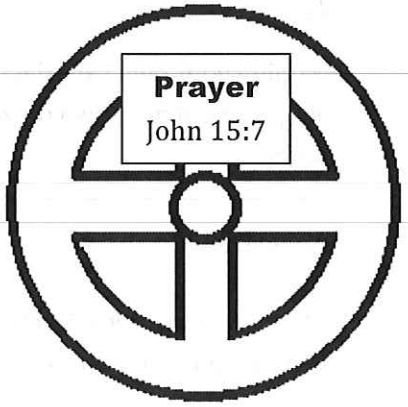
Now take your paper and draw the Hand Illustration. Label correctly every part of the hand, and give the Scripture references where you can find emphasized each way of grasping the Word. What kind of grip do you have on God's Word? Which "fingers" do you regularly use to hold on to the Scriptures? Now, check your Hand Illustration drawn previously, for accuracy.

Share with your discipleship partner(s) some of your findings from Psalm 119. First, let each person give a few examples of the "quotation" style of the Six Question Technique, used for Psalm: 1-56. Next, talk about verses 57-120, which were studied with the "translation" style of six-questions. Lastly, look at the "application" style of six-questions used on verses 121-176. Be sure each person in your discipleship team gives examples of every style used in the Six-Question Technique.

Revelation

The third facet of the Wheel of Discipleship is Prayer. Prayer and the Word go hand-in-hand. Both are a part of the communication that is so essential for a growing relationship with God. In the Word, God speaks to us – in the prayer, we speak to God.

The key verse for this week is John 15:7 – "*If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, then you will ask for anything you wish, and you shall have it.*" In this verse we find references to each of the first three lessons in the Foundations class: "If you remain in me..." (we are to be in *Christ* and to allow Him to be enthroned in us)... "and my words remain in you..." (*the Word* must be foundational in our lives)... "then you will ask for anything you wish, and you shall have it..." (effective *prayer* stems from a life centered in Christ and grounded on the Word). Notice that Prayer and the Word have been drawn on the two vertical spokes of the Wheel. This is to signify that these are two parts of a disciple's life – Prayer and the Word – are the ones, which pertain to his/her relationship with God.



Prayer

We find examples in the Bible of men who relied on prayer to help nurture their relationship with God. Jesus had the habit of praying. On the night He was arrested, Jesus left the Upper Room with His disciples "... and went, as was His custom, to the Mount of Olives" (Luke 22:39). Other great leaders of the Bible had this same habit as well. "Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord" (Genesis 19:27). David said, "O Lord, in the morning thou shalt hear my voice; in the morning I will set in order before Thee my prayer, and will look up" (Psalm 5:3). Daniel kept his custom of prayer, even when he knew the king's decree forbade it: "When Daniel knew that the document had been signed... he got down upon his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously" (Daniel 6:10). We need to pattern our lives after these who were so in tune with God.

How does the Holy Trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit relate to our praying? We pray to God the Father (Matthew 6:9), we pray through God the Son (John 14:6), and we pray in God the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:18). When we pray in this fashion, we have linked ourselves with our *Creator, Savior*, and *Comforter*: no wonder that Satan would rather we not pray! Someone has written, "*Satan laughs at our toiling, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when he sees the weakest saint on his knees*."

Application

Don't forget that as a Christian you have two natures. Your old nature has been with you longer than your new nature. Your old nature will encourage you to complain, to worry, to fret, and you agonize. It will bring tension into your life. Your new nature however will cause you to whistle, sing, and shout – to celebrate life! It will remind you to look to God for the answers to life's questions. It will promote a sense of assurance and peace in your life.

Let's consider a related verse, Philippians 4:6: "*Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God.*" Your old nature produces anxiety, but your new nature results in a thankful heart laid open before the God who helps His children.

Examine your own experience. What is your normal response to crisis or pressure? Share with your discipleship team how you would typically tend to react to difficult circumstances. Give specific examples.

Explanation

We see how significant prayer is in the disciple's life. Now we need to investigate some reasons for praying, some benefit for praying, and some methods of praying.

Prayer

A. The Purpose of Prayer

The Christians of the Early Church were devout men and women who based their lives on Christ's teachings, and who daily experienced joy in their fellowship with other Christians and their prayer fellowship with God. After the Day of Pentecost there were thousands who lived in this way *"And they devoted themselves to the apostle's teaching... and the prayers. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved"* (Acts 2: 42, 46-47). Because the book of Acts repeatedly emphasizes the important place of prayer in the lives of those first Christian disciples, let's use ACTS as an acrostic to help remind us of the purposes of prayer.

A – *Adoration*: Another word for adoration is "praise." Psalm 145:3 says, "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised." When we think of the nature of God – His power, righteousness, mercy, and love, especially as demonstrated in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus – we will want to praise Him through prayer.

C – *Confession:* In the original language of the New Testament "to confess" meant "speaking the same." So to confess is to say the same thing about sin that God says, to have the same attitude toward sin He has. 1 John 1:9 promises, "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." One purpose of prayer, then, is to tell God that we, too, dislike our sinful behavior.

You give and take away,
my heart will choose to say,
Lord, blessed be your name.

T – Thanksgiving: An unthankful heart is displeasing to God. In Paul's great theological statement to Christians in Rome, he noted that ungodly, wicked people were characterized by an ungrateful spirit (Romans 1:21). Jesus was distressed that nine cleansed lepers either forgot or refused to give thanks (Luke 17:17). Christians are to "give thanks in all circumstances for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). And so, another purpose of prayer is to thank God continually.

S – *Supplication*: A supplication is a request, either for someone else (an intercession) or for self (a petition). Philippians 4:6 which we looked at earlier in the Application section of the lesson, told us that we were to make our requests known to God.

Intercession is one kind of request prayer. We can pray for the sick, the poor, the lost, or the lonely. Or we might pray for leaders, parents, teachers, or friends. But whoever is on our mind should also be in our heart, so that we could say – as did the prophet and judge of the Old Testament, Samuel – "Moreover for me, far be it from me that I should cease to pray for you" (1 Samuel 12:23). The purpose of some prayer, therefore, is to pray for others.

Petition is the other type of request prayer. Peter tells us, "*Cast all your anxieties on Him, for He cares about you*" (1 Peter 5:7). There are three kinds of petition prayers, represented by the verbs in Matthew 7:7-8, "*Ask, and it will be given to you*" (asking is requesting something that we already know about) "*...seek, and you will find*" (seeking is requesting an answer about something we do not know about) "*... knock, and it will be opened to you*" (knocking is requesting Christ to enter an area of need that is behind closed doors). The purpose of asking, seeking, and knocking is to lift up prayers for ourselves.

B. The Privilege of Prayer

There are at least three privileges in prayer. First, we enter the presence of God. This is made possible through the mediation of His Son. Thus, we may with confidence draw near to God' throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16), knowing that we are not His slaves but His sons and daughters (Galatians 4:7).

Secondly, we claim the promise of Jesus Christ. What did He promise? He said "*Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*" (Matthew 11:28). One privilege of prayer is to claim this promise and lay our burdens at Jesus' feet. The contemporary songwriter expressed it this way:

"Are you tired of chasing pretty rainbows?
And are you tired of spinning round and round?
Wrap up all the shattered dreams of your life,
And at the feet of Jesus lay them down.

Give them all, give them all, and give them all to Jesus
Shattered dreams, wounded hearts, and broken toys;
Give them all, give them all, give them all to Jesus
And He will turn your sorrow into joy.

Thirdly, we receive the power of the Holy Spirit. As the Word is a source of power in our lives, prayer is the channel allowing Christ, through the Spirit, to use His power to work in an area of need. How much power is available to us? Jesus said, "*All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth*" (Matthew 28:18).

C. The Procedure in Prayer

Jesus has set a good example for us in the matter of how to pray: (1) He prayed alone – "*And in the morning, a great while before day, He rose and went out to a lonely place, and there He prayed*" (Mark 1:35); (2) He prayed before making major decisions – "*In those days He went out into the hills to pray – and all night He continued in prayer to*

God. And when it was day, He called His disciples, and chose from the twelve, whom He named apostles" (Luke 6:12-13); and (3) He prayed in the midst of a busy schedule – *"But so much more the report went abroad concerning Him – and great multitudes gathered to hear and to be healed of their infirmities. But He withdrew to the wilderness and prayed"* (Luke 5:15-16).

How can you find time, in the midst of your busy schedule, to get alone with God in order to talk with Him about decision in your life? You must do several things you to accomplish this:

1. Make time – set a definite time of day, the time that is best for you.

2. Find a place – hunt a quiet, private place where you can concentrate.

3. Anticipate meeting God – go with a sense of expectancy.

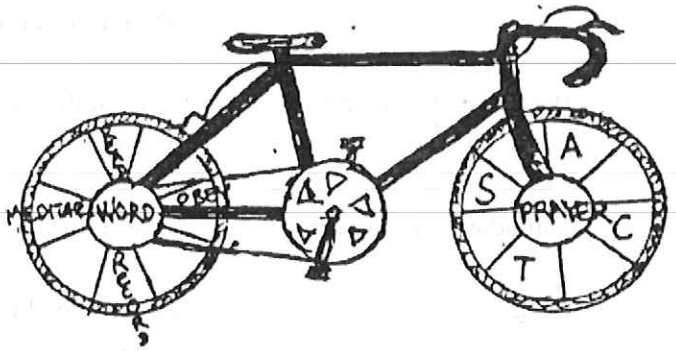
4. Be still – begin in spirit of stillness, as commanded in Ps: 46:10; "Be still and know that I am God."

5. Set a goal – determine your needs for that day, before you begin your devotional time.

6. Don't stop – "Pray constantly" is what 1 Thessalonians 5:17 teaches; this verse means "never miss an opportunity to pray", and is describing prayer that is constantly recurring.

Illustration

In our previous lessons, we have looked at the Throne and the Hand. In this lesson we will consider the Bicycle. The Bicycle is an illustration that graphically portrays the way the Word and Prayer work together in the devotional life of the disciple. The wheels of the bicycle represent the Word and Prayer. What observations about the devotional life can you make from this illustration? How do you rate your own devotional life?



Variation

One technique that will improve your devotional life is entitled "Seven Minutes With God." Out of 1440 minutes of the day, plan to spend 7 minutes in communion with God. Use your 7 minutes like this:

30 seconds – *Prepare your heart*	Thank God for your night's rest. Ask Him to cleanse your heart, to speak through His Word, to convict you by His Spirit.
4 minutes – *Read the Scriptures*	Choose a passage wisely. Read about 20 verses. Don't hurry, but read slowly and thoughtfully. Use the Arrow Technique as you read.
2 ½ minutes – *Talk to God*	Pray to God, basing your praying on the 5 purposes in the acrostic ACTS. Use 30 seconds for each kind of prayer.

As you grow in your desire to meet with the Father, you will want to expand your time involvement. But as a beginning, here is a simple, workable plan that anyone has time for.

Another technique, which helps you, pray specifically is to set up a "Prayer Control" schedule. You can form a monthly schedule by listing birthdays of friends, special events, or specific concerns beside the days of the month. A weekly schedule can be devised by dividing all of your prayer into 7 sections, one for each day. Here's one example of classifications you might use:

Sunday – *People*:	Family, discipleship partners, friends, church workers, teachers
Monday – *Possibilities:*	Things God is putting on your heart, this includes your hopes, dreams and ideas
Tuesday – *Places:*	Countries and peoples around the world; the needs of missionaries, the needs of the countrymen.
Wednesday – *Prospects:*	Opportunities for witnessing; those from your "world" who need to know the Savior.
Thursday – *Production:*	Goals for life, ministry, and mission.
Friday – *Power:*	Areas of need where only a miracle can help; The hopeless problems you know about and personally face.
Saturday – *Personal*:	Specific requests involving your own life.

Prayer

Obligation

Review – Matthew 28: 19-20 , and John 18: 31-32

Memorize – this week's key verse "Pray"

> *"If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, then you will ask for anything you wish, and you shall have it."* John 15:7

Master – the Bicycle Illustration. Practice drawing and explaining it until you can share it naturally.

Practice – (1) "Seven Minutes with God" every morning this week. Write down any impressions you have in your notebook; (2) Praying according to a weekly calendar. List all your prayer concerns; divide them into 7 groups; assign each concern to one of the days of the week. Put your new schedule into your notebook, and try to govern yourself by this schedule.

Celebration

Take at least seven minutes right now to pray as a discipleship team. Hold hands together as you pray. Ask God to help you to pray more effectively. Pledge to God your best efforts in trying to talk with Him daily.

- I am restless, until I rest in You, Oh God.
- Engineer Author: When it hits 8 am, I can't focus.
- Why do Christian leaders spend multiple hours in prayer? What can prayer be like?

- Plane
- Dentist
-

Preparation

Let's prepare ourselves to learn about "Fellowship" by reading together the promises we made to one another and to God (see Introductions). Is it becoming easier and easier to keep this agreement? Are there parts of the Covenant, which you find difficult to carry out? Item 6 is especially relevant today: "*Work at being open and honest with myself, my partner(s), and God*". Do you think *honesty* and *openness* are important foundations for true fellowship? Why? Would you have very much fellowship with someone whose life was closed to you, or with one who was dishonest?

We are to review three verses today: Matthew 28: 19-20, John 15:5, and John 8:31-32. Let's say them individually, listen for errors and correct your partner's mistakes. Which verse is entitled "*Be Christlike*"?

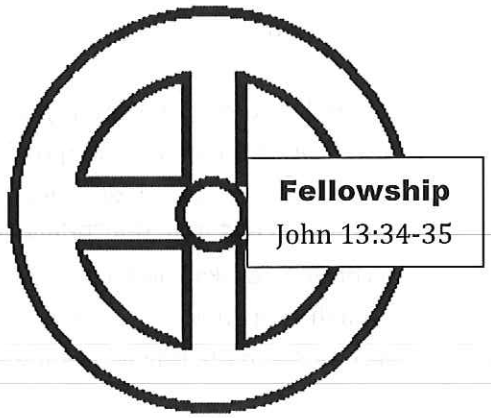
Now let's quote the memory verse for today, **John 15:7**. Let's do this verse one at a time also. What part of this verse reminds you of the lesson on the Word?

Take a sheet of paper and draw the Bicycle illustration for your discipleship team. Explain the function of the back wheel in relation to the front wheel, and in relation to the bicycle itself. Check your drawing with the one in your notebook.

How did your daily devotional ("7 minutes with God") go this past week? Did you remember to practice this every day? Did you feel pressed by the 7-minute framework, or did you find it hard to last for 7 minutes? Share with one another the weekly prayer guide from your notebook. Did you find praying from such a schedule helpful?

Revelation

We are now halfway through the "Wheel of Discipleship." We have looked at the hub of the wheel *Christ the Lord*. And we have studied two of the spokes, the vertical ones – *the Word and Prayer*. These vertical spokes relate to the disciple's relationship to God. *Living in the Word and living by prayer will keep Jesus at the center of your life*.



The fourth aspect of the Wheel of Discipleship is Fellowship. This spoke, along with its companion spoke, which we will see next week, are just as vital as the two we've already studied. Being a Christian means that both our relationship to God (vertical relationship) and our relationship to others (horizontal relationship) have been made right. Jesus was the One who placed emphasis on both dimensions of a follower's love (Luke 10:27).

There should be no "*Lone Ranger*" Christians – this is another way of saying that being a "Masked Stranger" is not compatible with living as a Christian. (Remember Item 6 of the Covenant.) The very act of following Jesus is also a commitment to the others who have vowed to follow Him.

The key verse for this week is **John 13:34-34**: "*A new commandment I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then all will know that you are my disciples.*" The early Christians apparently obeyed this new commandment, so much so that the secular historian Josephus, analyzing the Christian phenomenon of his first-century world, wrote "Behold, how they love one another!" If we do not obey this commandment to love, all our preaching about a God of love and forgiveness will be hollow. 1 Corinthians 13:1 says it clearly: "*If I speak in the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.*"

How are we to love one another? We love as Christ has loved us. Why ought we to love? "*We love, because He first loved us*" (1 John 4:19). We love so that all will know that we are His disciples. If we do not love, it will appear to the non-Christian world that we do not love God, for "*If someone says he loves God, but hates his brother, he is a liar. For he cannot love God, whom he has not seen, if he does not love his brother, whom he has seen*" (1 John 4:20). Thus, one ungracious, ill-tempted unloving Christian can become a real stumbling block to others.

Many people live the motto, "*If you'll do your part, I'll do mine.*" But this is conditional giving and not genuine love. God desires that we say, instead: "*I'll love you even if I receive nothing in return.*" It is this unconditional giving that compromises the love spoken of in our key verse. The very fact that love is **commanded** in this passage plainly reveals that "loving" is more than having an involuntary emotional response to someone. "Loving" basically involves setting our will to seek another's highest good, by giving to them without any expectations of receiving. When we have that kind of love for one another, no one will doubt that we are Christ's disciples.

Application

Your old nature will constantly wage war with your new nature. This is not unusual. It occurs within all Christians, even within the Apostle Paul, who described his battle-scarred experience in Romans 7:15-20. Paul wrote: "*get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to*" (Ephesians 4:22); thus it is the domain of Satan, the "Prince of Darkness." It is Satan, through your old nature, who influences you to continue walking in the dark places to keep on performing dark deeds. But it is the Holy Spirit, through your "*new self, which is created in God's likeness*" (Ephesians 4:24), who influences you to live with others in the brightness and warmth of God's light.

Our related verses are found in 1 John 1:5-7 "*... God is light, and there is no darkness at all in Him. If, then, we say that we have fellowship with Him, yet at the same time live in the darkness, we are lying both in our words and in our actions. But if we live in the light – just as He is in the light – then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from every sin.*" Your new nature would cause you to live in the light.

How about your own life? Are you aware of times when your old nature was dominant, and you did things, went places, spoke words that made you feel ashamed, dirty, or repentant? Did your experience tend to separate you from others – due to fear, or embarrassment, or disagreement? Can you share at least one such time with your discipleship partner(s)? Do you recall other times when your new nature was victorious; so that you felt "good all over" as a result of your action, words, or thoughts? Did that situation cause you to feel closer to your Christian friends? Please share at least one of those occasions when you walked in the light, and enjoyed the warmth of Christian fellowship.

Explanation

The new fellowship with God, which we receive at conversion, implies a new fellowship with other believers. Because of God's love, as revealed in and exemplified by Christ Jesus, the barriers that tend to separate us from others can be knocked down. Colossians 3:11 identifies these barriers as racial ("Greek and Jew"), religious ("circumcised and uncircumcised"), cultural ("barbarian"), national ("Scythian"), and social ("slave, free-man"). With these walls of resentment, mistrust, and fear torn down, what then is the nature of the "building" described in Ephesians 2:21-22 as "a holy temple in the Lord" and as "a dwelling place of God in the Spirit"?

A. The Context of Fellowship:

The building is made up of "living stones" (believers) joined together by the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Chief Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20, 1 Peter 2:6). Thus, when you hear the word "church", you don't think of a building made with bricks, but a Building made of Living Stones, of people like yourself who – because they love the Lord and want to base their lives upon Him – also love one another.

The "Church", literally "the called-out ones", is a Community of believers who have begun to walk in the light. The Apostle Peter says of us who are the Church: *"But you are the chosen race, the King's priests, the holy nation, God's own people, chosen to proclaim the wonderful acts of God, who called you out of darkness into His own marvelous light"* (1 Peter 2:9). As everyone who is in the church has come from the darkness (and occasionally briefly returns to the darkness), the Church can be viewed as a community, or a fellowship of the forgiven. Robert B. Munger has pointed out that "the Church is the only fellowship in the world where the one requirement for membership is the unworthiness of the candidate."

Besides being a Building and a Community, the Church is also the Body of Christ (Romans 12:5). Christ is the Head of the body (Colossians 1:18). The members of the spiritual Body are as diverse as the parts of a physical body. But they are unified (1 Corinthians 12:20) while still maintaining separate functions (Romans 12:4). Thus, when God called you to His Body, He made you a working member, He gave you spiritual energies, or "Gifts", with which to accomplish your functions and responsibilities within

the Body (Romans 12:6-8). A gift, unlike a talent - which everyone possesses and which may be used either for God or for man - is a spiritual power possessed only by Christians, inspired by the Spirit (I Corinthians 12: 11) and given for the common good of the Body (I Corinthians 12:7) or for the Body's ministry and service in the world (Romans 12:6-8).

What is the context of Christian fellowship? Fellowship takes place within the Church - among the "living stones" of the Building, the citizens of new Community, and the members of the Body.

B. The Ingredients of Fellowship:

Whereas two stones will sometimes rub the wrong way, the refining Spirit of God can smooth the rough edges; Christ Himself is the cement, which joins one to another. As the Holy Spirit works to shape and perfect two living stones, the irritations and differences that grate and scrape are replaced by forgiveness and acceptance: fellowship is the result

Although one citizen may experience occasional conflict with another, our Community has an unusual and very special trait: like some village nestled far back in the mountains, ours is the community where every citizen is related by birth (the New Birth) to every other citizen. We are a family (Ephesians 2: 19), and so patience and consideration bring peaceable solutions to problems: and fellowship is the result.

While each member functions according to his own gifts, there should be no jealousy within the Body, for why should a nose be jealous of an elbow (see I Corinthians 12: 15-20)? Instead, each member should recognize the beauty of personal uniqueness, and offer affirmation and support to the other: thus fellowship is the result.

What ingredient is basic to all the possible configurations of Christian fellowship? It is love that has been given by the Father, demonstrated by the Son, and inspired by the Holy Spirit. This love produces unity, so that we "rejoice with those who rejoice (and) weep with those who weep" (Romans 12: 15), or - in the words of the poet - it produces such oneness between persons "that when one cries, the other tastes the salt." This ingredient of love is thus characterized by giving and receiving, by mutual ownership (of sorrows and joys as well as property), and by joint participation. The first Christians "were together and had all things in common" (Acts 2:44). They gave and received, mutually owned, and jointly participated (see Acts 2:45-47). Their lives, seasoned by love, produced fellowship; indeed, "fellowship" is derived from a Greek word, *koinonia*, which means, "sharing in common."

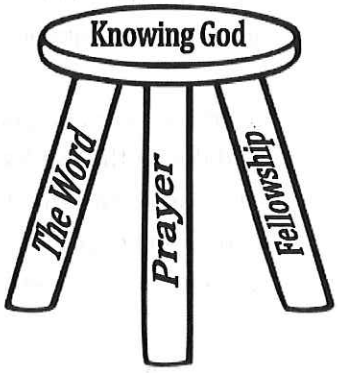
C. The Purpose of Fellowship:

Fellowship fulfills many needs: (1) it enables one Christian to "sharpen" another (Proverbs 27: 17); (2) it gives an opportunity to help the discouraged (I Thessalonians 5: 11); (3) it creates the setting where a man can lift up his fallen brother (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10); (4) it allows us to stir up others to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24); (5) it provides the care of Family for helpless spiritual babies (I Thessalonians 5: 14) or for growing young Christians (Proverbs 22 :6); And (6) it brings glory to God the Father (Romans 15:5-6).

In addition to these purposes for fellowship - all of which relate to a Christian's ministry to others - there is a purpose, which is more self-serving. Fellowship will keep you from growing cold or slipping into darkness. Just as a hot coal will lose its glow and warmth if separated from the rest of the coals, a Christian's life will lose its brightness and joy when not lived in fellowship with other Christians within a local branch of the Church. In other words, if you are to be light for a dark world, don't try to burn alone, for if you do, you'll surely be snuffed out.

Illustration

The Stool is an illustration, which pictures three equally important ways of knowing God better. In your own life, the strongest area should have the longest leg, the weakest area the shortest. What does your "stool" look like?



Remember these cautions: a believer strong in the Word and weak in fellowship and prayer could become a cold Christian; a believer strong in fellowship and weak in the Word and prayer could become a shallow Christian; and a believer strong in prayer and weak in the Word and fellowship could become an emotional Christian.

As a Christian, are you cold? Or shallow? Or emotional? If so, check the ways you seek to know God. Perhaps your stool is not sitting level.

Variation

The technique for this week is one, which can help nurture healthy relationships with others and therefore improve your fellowship. It is an **Affirmation Exercise.**

You and your discipleship partners should stand in a circle facing one another. One at the time each of you will step into the center of the circle while the others remain in place. Standing before each partner in turn, the one in the center tells why he likes/appreciates/loves/respects/... his partner. He begins by saying: ("name"), I (one of the verbs used above) you because you are a person who .;" Each should

share positive feelings (as many as he likes) about the other, and conclude by touching the partner in some fashion (a hug, squeeze, kiss, handshake, hands on shoulders, etc.) which symbolizes and summarizes those feelings.

This exercise should be done in a serious and quiet manner, which only the one in the center, talking and others listening. The one being affirmed may respond verbally or by touch, after he has been affirmed.

It may not be easy, at the outset, to affirm another, or to be affirmed by another, especially in an attitude of honesty and openness. But remember Item 6 of your Discipleship Covenant and give it a try! You won't be sorry, because real affirmation is a tremendous technique for achieving fellowship.

-Why is this so ~~hard~~ awkward?

Obligation

Review – Matthew 28:19-20, John 15:5, John 8:31-32, and John 15:7.

Memorize – this week's key verse: "Care for Each Other." John 13:34-35.

> *"A new commandment I give you: love one another. If you have love for one another, then all will know that you are my disciples."*

Master – the Stool Illustration. Copy it into your notebook. Be able to draw the stool and explain the possible consequences of a stool that is not sitting level.

Practice – affirming your friends this week. Keep a record in your notebook of three experiences you had during the week of affirming another person. Include the following things in your report: the names of those you affirmed; where you were when you affirmed them; What you said to them; what physical expression of your feelings you used with them; And what their reactions/responses were. Be ready to share these experiences with your discipleship team next week.

Celebration

Stand in your circle again. Hold hands. Look at one another in silence (for a full minute, if you can - though that is easier if there are more than two). Pray for the person standing on your right, each in turn doing the same. Pray with your eyes open, looking at the one for whom you are praying. Be sure that you make eye contact as you pray for him.

Preparation

By now you can probably quote the Discipleship Covenant; hopefully the repetition of this agreement has helped to emphasize for you the importance of these individual promises. Let's turn once again to this pact and read it together (turn to Covenant). Now repeat Item ~~1~~ 7: "Share my Christian faith with others through word and deed." This promise concerns our topic for this week - the sharing of our faith. Do you feel that this is going to be a difficult promise to uphold? Or has it already given you trouble? Or have you experienced the.joy anj1atisfaction that can come from sharing your faith with another.

Let's review our four verses for today - Matthew 28: 19-20, John 15:5, John 8:31-32, and John 15:7. Be sure you can say them without hesitation and with meaning. After all, your purpose in memorizing them is to have at your disposal verses you can readily share with someone else.

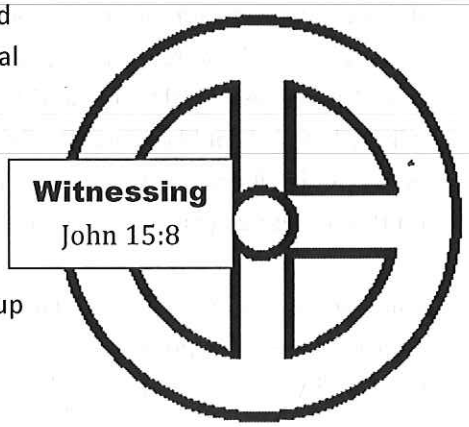
Now say your memory verse from last week, John 13:34-35. This is the second passage we have had where Jesus gave us a definite statement about being His disciple. What was the other passage? Be sure each person on your discipleship team can say this verse perfectly before you move on.

Share the Stool Illustration with one another, each person drawing and explaining the Stool for the team members. Be sure to include in your explanation what could be the various influences of an unleveled "stool" on a Christian's life. Check to see that each person has drawn this illustration into his notebook.

Finally, each person should turn in his notebook to the record of his three affirmation experiences. Share them with one another. How did you feel affirming your friends/family members/teachers/etc? Were they surprised? Did your affirmation seem to make an impression upon those you affirmed? Did it alter, or improve in any way, or were you at ease and confident? Did you feel good about affirming before you did it? Afterwards?

Revelation

Unfortunately, the People of God (the Church) are often like a host of people standing in groups around the edge of a large field. The crop is ripe, mature, and ready to be harvested. But one group of would-be laborers is in a heated argument about the best thing to do with the crop once it has been cut. A second group is studying topics like "Agriculture in the Ancient Near East" and "Farm Implements of the First Century", thus has not time for personal labor. A third group is busy praying that the professional field hands will soon arrive, so that the field can be worked. Yet another group is seated in a circle, facing inward, enjoying the sunshine and camaraderie and oblivious to the crop all around which is dying and falling to the ground. The crop is ready, "fields are already white for harvest" (John 4:35), but the people are doing everything but rolling up sleeves and moving into the field to work. .



Witnessing

The fifth aspect of the Wheel of Discipleship is the final spoke, and is called "Witnessing". This spoke, is a natural extension of the spoke labeled "Fellowship", it is integrally related to the two vertical spokes entitled "The Word" and "Prayer". Just as a wheel built with only three spokes would be unfinished and weak; a Christian life lived without witnessing is incomplete and unhealthy....

Our Key verse is John 15:8 "*This is how my Father's glory is shown: by your bearing much fruit, and in this way you become my disciples*", Gathering the harvest (bearing fruit, making disciples) is the way to glorify God in your life and to become Christ's disciple. How can you bear fruit in your life? The real secret of a fruitful life is found in your being Christ-like. Living in Christ and allowing Christ to live in you (John 15:5), If you do that, you will bear much fruit. Christ has promised as much. But another truth can be stated about sharing the Good News. When Christ lives in your heart, it will be natural for you to talk about Him, Jesus said, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). An abundant overflow to others of the Christ-like-in-you will produce much fruit - this can only result from a vital and genuine relationship between you and Christ - a relationship nurtured and protected by faithful involvement in the Word and prayer and fellowship. Without a Vine-and-Branches kind of connection between you and your Lord, you will bear no fruit, for you will have no ties to the Source of new life.

Application

Your "old nature" will become a barrier to your effective witnessing. Because your old nature enthrones self, it is primarily concerned with how you look to others, with whether or not you are respected, or accepted, or liked. It is concerned with doing things that will bring glory to self. Consequently, if your old nature is controlling your life you will think of many excuses for not witnessing to another, such as: "it's just not the right moment," "he doesn't look interested," "I'm ashamed to witness," "I don't have time," "I really don't know him," "I'm afraid I'll fail," or "what will happen to me if I do witness?"

Your new nature however, will propel you toward others, since it enthrones Christ and seeks to glorify Him. Your new nature, if it is in control of your life, will cause you to joyfully share Him with another. You'll not be self-conscious, but Christ-conscious, Your primary thought would be "What will happen to him if I don't witness?"

Our related verses are found in II Timothy 1:6-7: "... *Rekindle the gift of God that is within you... for God did not give us a spirit of timidity but a spirit of power and love and self-control.*" Your old nature will make you timid and fearful. As you hesitate and wait and delay and remain silent, opportunities will slip past; then little by little your spiritual energy will be sapped. Your spiritual gift, like a limb never used, will wither and could eventually die from lack of use. Your new nature will fan the flame of your spiritual energy (gift); it will link your life with the greatest Power of all (Matthew 28: 18); it will lead you to rely on that power as you witness in a spirit of love and self-control.

Think about your own life. Which side of you - your old nature or your new nature - seems to be controlling your responses to witnessing opportunities? Are you generally timid, hesitant, or doubtful of your ability to bear witness to the truth? Or are you usually bold, confident, in control of the situation

What is truth & how do we know it is true?

and of yourself? Are you more often fearful- which tends to make you self-centered and neglectful of the spiritual needs of others? Or are you more at ease sharing your faith and yourself - which seems to indicate genuine concern for the welfare of others? Share with your discipleship team how you see yourself in this regard. Don't generalize. Try to give specific examples to document your conclusions.

Now, that is me

Why am I hesitant to share my faith? ~~Because~~ where it does not affect my life that much.

Explanation

An ambassador has a very significant responsibility, for he represents his king or government to a foreign country. The Apostle Paul wrote, "We are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us" (II Corinthians 5:20). We have the privilege of representing the King of kings and Lord of lords to the peoples of the world. What do we need in order to do our job well?

Any ambassador needs three things in order to be effective - credentials, instructions, and preparation. An ambassador for Christ needs these same things. We obviously have impressive credentials, for we go in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We already have the instructions, clearly given prior to Jesus' ascension into heaven (Matthew 28: 19-20). Preparation is the thing that is so often lacking in our lives, the thing that hinders our witness and makes us ineffective ambassadors.

Before we go out into the world to represent our Lord, there are at least three preparations we must make: (1) we must check to see that we are motivated to witness, and that our motives are pure; (2) we must familiarize ourselves with Christ's commands, so that we know that witnessing is not optional, but mandatory; and (3) we must take tools for our hands, skills to aid us in carrying out the task.

A. The Motivation for Witnessing:

Why must we check our motivation level? Why wouldn't I be motivated to witness? Why wouldn't you be motivated to share the Good News?

If you inherited a million dollars from a rich relative would you have to search for the motivation to tell your neighbor about your good fortune? Certainly not! And yet, in Matthew 25:34, Jesus promises that the ones who have known Him will inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundations of the world. I Peter 1:3-4 states that: *"... We who have been born anew ... to an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for (us)."* We who are Christians have inherited eternity and all of the riches of heaven, yet we hesitate to share the Good News, and act as if there is no motivation for witnessing.

If you suffered from a terrible disease, a dreadful cancer that threatened to take your life, but then because of a miracle medicine you were totally cured, would you have to acquire the motivation to tell every stranger you met that you were whole again? No! But, David writes in Psalm 103 that the Lord " *...forgives all iniquity ... heals all your diseases ... (and) redeems your life from the pit.*" 1 Peter 2:24 is a reminder that "by

(Christ's) wounds you have been healed" We have been healed from the scourge of sin, from the most dreadful cancer of all - one that can kill not only the body but also the soul (see Matthew 10:28). But still we neglect to tell anyone of the Great Physician, simply for lack of motivation.

If the President of your country chose to come live in your house for a day – to eat with you, to talk with you, to offer advice and help out of his deep reservoir of knowledge and experience - would you lack the motivation to scream from your roof top that the President (!) had come to see you? Of course not! However, God's Word teaches that the very same Jesus Christ who shall be proclaimed the King of kings and Lord of lords, whom all of the armies of heaven shall bow (Philippians 2: 10), has stood quietly knocking at the door of your heart, and has lived in you ever since the day you opened yourself in faith to Him (Revelation 3 :20). The King lives in us, but we keep that amazing truth to ourselves because we have no motivation to tell others.

But if Christ is central in our lives we will be motivated. If we are grounded on the Word we will be eager to relate Truth to someone who is "locked in a lie." If we meet daily with God in prayer we will want to share our joy with an unhappy person. If love is a basic ingredient in our lives, we will see people as individuals with a need we can help meet.

Why am I working?
- Pay loans

If the greatest thing that's ever happened to you is your new relationship to God through your trust in and commitment to Jesus Christ, then the greatest thing you can do for your parent/friend/teacher/enemy is to share the Good News. Isn't that motivation for a lifetime?

B. <u>The Mandate for Witnessing:</u>

Witnessing is not an option for the disciple's life. It will always be evident, an obvious clue to the vital, "alive" relationship he shares with his Lord. Witnessing is the steady, strong heartbeat that sounds forth from the heart where Jesus is made welcome and is enthroned.

Witnessing is not optional because it is mandatory. It is not a suggestion, but a commandment. Earlier in our Foundations Class we looked briefly at the Great Commission. Actually, the commandment to share the Good News is recorded not once, but five times in the New Testament. On each occasion Jesus emphasized a different part of the commandment. What are the five mandates for witness?

(1) Matthew 28: 19-20 focuses on the **goal** witnessing - making disciples: "Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have

commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, to the end of the age. "

(2) Mark 16:15 speaks of the **scope** of witnessing - the world: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. "

(3) Luke 24:46-47 reiterate the **message** of witnessing - repent and be forgiven through belief in Christ: "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in His name to all nations ... "

(4) John 20:21 bases our sharing on the **example** of witnessing – Jesus Himself: "As the Father has sent me, even so send I you."

(5) Acts 1:8 reminds us of the **power** for witnessing - the Holy Spirit: "But You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

We are the People of God standing at the edge of a field "white for harvest." We have been issued clear instructions. As we prepare to move into the field, let's take comfort from two important reminders: First, from a statement by A. J. Gordon: "We do not stand in the world bearing witness to the world." Our place is in the world but our stance is in Christ. Then, and only then, will we be fruitful harvesters (John 15:5). Secondly, let us be cheered by a statement of Paul Little (How to Give Away Your Faith): "It is the Holy Spirit, not we, who converts an individual. No one calls Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit has already moved before us into the field. It is He who has prepared the crop and made it ripe for the plucking.

Thus, we should not be anxious about results, for we are not commanded to be converters, but to witnesses.

C. <u>The Method for Witnessing:</u>

We need to have tools for the labor. We will soon look at two very fine tools (to be introduced in the Illustration and Variation sections of this lesson). But for now, let's dwell on some other methods for witnessing.

Witnessing is essentially a matter of sharing naturally with another person out of the abundance and overflow of your own experience in Christ. But it strengthens your sharing if you can use written truth to underscore the truth you have experienced. An ambassador would be very ineffective if he was forced to search on and on through his

briefcase for the message from his government; "I know it's here SOMEWHERE if you'll just let me find it!" An ambassador for Christ is equally ineffective if, in a witnessing situation, he has to stop and thumb through his Bible looking for some verse that is familiar which he can share.

And so, what is the message with which we equip ourselves? Briefly, it is this:

(1) Nobody's perfect - Romans 3:23;
(2) Sin always separates (death separation) - Romans 6:23;
(3) God will hold us accountable for our sins - Hebrews 9:27;
(4) But the penalty has already been paid by Christ - Romans 5:8;
(5) Salvation is a free gift (to be accepted or rejected) - Ephesians 2:8-9;
(6) We must receive Christ into our lives by inviting Him in – Revelation 3:20.

These, or other such Scriptures, are handy tools for witnessing. God will use you and His Word-in-you. If you are sensitive to the Holy Spirit, He will lead you to recognize a person's deepest needs, so that you can select verses (preferably ones you've memorized) which speak directly to his problem.

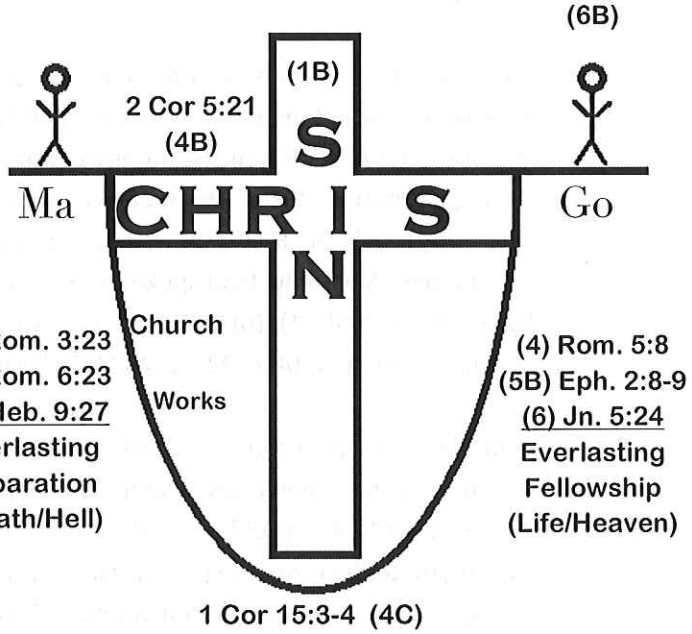
Another very important tool is love. We must love people, not as abstract "souls to be won," but as friends. Paul deliberately cultivated friendships with all kinds of people, so that he "might by all means save some" (I Corinthians 9: 19-22). It is within the context of friendship that we be the most fruitful as witnesses. But we must earn the right to be heard. We must begin by talking to people about things that stimulate us. It is important to know which truth we are to speak, but equally crucial to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

Christians don't DO witnessing. It is improper to say, "I'm going witnessing for the church tonight." Christians ARE witnesses - all the time, for good or for bad. They witness by word, by love, and by life. They share, therefore, not only by the message they speak but also by the TRUTH they live. Remember that it is difficult to witness to the transforming power of Jesus if we give little or no evidence of that transformation within ourselves.

Illustration

An illustration which helps many people understand the Gospel is the Bridge of Life. To begin, sketch a chasm with a figure representing the person with whom you are talking. Write MAN on one side of the chasm, GOD on the other. Points 1-3 deal with man's situation.

Witnessing



(1) Use Romans 3:23 to show that according to God's Word all men have sinned. (IB) At the same time write SIN down the center of the chasm to show that it is sin that separates man from God.

(2) Use Romans 6:23 to show what the result of sin will be. But read only the first half of this verse at this time.

(3) Use Hebrews 9:27 to point out that after physical death man must stand before God to be judged for his sins done here on earth. Then draw a line under numbers 1-3 and "total" up the score to equal everlasting separation, death, and hell. But man doesn't need to be lost. Points 4-6 deal with God's response to man's situation.

(4) Romans 5:8 shows us that while we were still sinners Christ died for us. Christ, by means of the cross, bridged the gap between man and God. (4B) Draw the cross to close the gap completely, writing in CHRIST so that SIN and CHRIST overlap ... because Christ became sin (II Corinthians 5:21). The cross solves man's problem of sin, death, and judgement. (4C) Use I Corinthians 15:3-4 to capsule the Gospel: the death on the cross, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus.

(5) Man cannot work his way to God, nor earn his salvation. To the left of chasm draw a couple of tiny bridges, labeled "good works" or "church" or sincerity," etc., to show various attempts to span the chasm. These bridges don't reach to God's side. (5B) Now use Ephesians 2:8-9 to show that salvation is a free gift of God, that man is saved by faith and not by works.

(6) Use John 5:24 to show God's 3 wonderful promises for the person who "hears" and "believes": (a) he will have eternal life; (b) he will not come into judgment; and (c) he will pass from death to life. Draw a line under numbers 4-6 and "total" the score to equal everlasting fellowship, life, and heaven. (6B) At this point draw a second figure on the right side of the chasm, one to represent where your friend could be if he would believe (he has already heard from you just now).

You may want to use John 1:12 to explain that believing is really the same as receiving Christ, and the use Revelation 3:20 to show that Christ is waiting at your friend's heart's door, waiting to be received. Close by asking these questions (or some like them): does this make any sense to you? Have you ever done anything about it (for example, receiving or trusting)? Is there any reason why you cannot do something about it? Then wouldn't you like to "receive" Christ now?

If your friend does respond by trusting Christ, lead him (phrase by phrase) to pray a prayer of petition - asking Jesus to forgive him, to come to his life, and to live in him and guide him daily; then pray together (phrase by phrase) a prayer of thanksgiving - thanking God that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave so that he might have salvation by believing in Him.

Variation

The technique, which is most effective in witnessing, is sharing a personal testimony. The Apostle Paul gave two personal testimonies as recorded in the book of Acts. Acts 22 is his testimony to the angry mob in Jerusalem; Acts 26 is his testimony before King Agrippa. These two testimonies were very similar, and are a good pattern for us. What can we notice about Paul's style? First, Paul used personal pronouns - "I", "me", "my", etc. He wasn't speaking in generalities, nor in abstract terms, but was sharing personal experiences. Secondly, Paul spoke of three periods in his life: (a) his life before becoming a Christian (Acts 22:3-5, 26:4-11); (b) how he became a Christian (Acts 22:7-16, 26: 12-18); and (c) his life since he became a Christian (Acts 22:21, 26:19-20). Thirdly, Paul didn't speak too long.

Your own testimony can be shared in this same fashion. Use personal pronouns to focus the attention on what you have personally experienced. Speak of the time before your conversion - your background, life style, needs and problems. Talk about how you became a Christian - the setting, the situation that stirred you to decision, the person that was instrumental in your coming to know the Lord, you're feeling at the time. Share about your life since your conversion - your victories, joy, occasional defeats or problems and how God has helped you through those times, any changes in your life style. Limit your testimony to about 500 words or to no more than) minutes. This will enable you to share yourself in a length of time that is available to just about everyone.

Obligation

Review - Matthew 28:19-20, John 15:5, John 8:31-32, John 15:7, and John 13:34-35

Memorize - This week's key verse: Share the Good News. John 15:8.

"This is how my Father's glory is shown: by your bearing much fruit; and in this way you become my disciples." John 15:8.

Master - the Bridge Illustration. Be prepared next week to share it, step by step, with your discipleship team. It will be incomplete if you do not know each of the references used (it is not necessary for this assignment to have all of the verses memorized; however, what would you do if you wanted to share this illustration but didn't have a Bible with you?)

Practice - writing and saying your personal testimony, using the suggestions given in the Variation section. Write it in your notebook as many times as necessary until you have it clearly stated within a 3-minute time frame. Then practice saying it until you can share it without looking at your notes. Come prepared to share this testimony with your discipleship team.

Celebration

Close the session with prayer, asking God to strengthen your desire, increase your opportunities, and improve your skills for witnessing.

Preparation

Let's turn once again to our list of mutual promises, the Discipleship Covenant. Have you come to think of the Covenant as an old friend? Let's read this agreement together again. Now return to items 2 and 3: "Attend each Discipleship meeting as scheduled" and "Complete the assignments faithfully week by week" These promises seem a bit routine and matter-of-fact, don't they? They even appear to be insignificant, or petty, compared with the rest of the promises. So, how do they relate to this week's topic of obedience" Here's a question to jog your memory or prick your conscience: have you been obedient in the fulfillment of these two simple, rather unimpressive promises? Or have you let class attendance or homework assignments take second place behind extra-curricular school functions or other personal involvements'? Although these promises appear to be such little things, and so unimportant compared to the total scope of discipleship, following them is a sign that you are willing to be obedient. Remember that Jesus said that "he who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and he who is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much" (Luke 16:10).

Now let's review our Scripture verses for today. First, "Know the Word:" secondly, "Make Disciples; "next, "Care for each other;" fourthly, "Pray;" and finally, "Be Christ-like. " Are you reviewing these verses daily? In order to retain these verses, and thus benefit the most from them, you need to review them daily for 6 weeks, review them weekly for 6 months, and then review them monthly for the rest of your life. Trying to remember them each class session, without the necessary review on them throughout the week, only causes you to repeat and reinforce your errors.

Say your memory verse from last week, John 15:8. How do we become Christ's disciples? How do we bear much fruit?

Now, each person should take a blank sheet of paper and draw, as well as explain the Bridge Illustration. Do this slowly and clearly, step-by-step, as if you were sharing the illustration with a friend who was not a Christian. Take adequate time to do this, being sure that every member of the discipleship team can use the Bridge as a tool for witnessing.

Finally, share your personal testimony with your fellow team members. Each person should say his testimony, rather than read it. Others on the team should check the length of time, the use of personal pronouns, and the 3 parts of the testimony. Offer suggestions, as needed. Use this friendly, receptive "audience" as a good training opportunity to sharpen this skill in witnessing,

Revelation

The last aspect of the Wheel of Discipleship is the rim and is entitled "Obedience to Christ's Commands." It is easy to see that as the wheel turns, the part that touches the ground is the rim. Neither the hub nor the spokes have direct contact with the ground. It is through the rim of the wheel that the power of the hub and the balance of the spokes are felt. In a similar fashion, it is the Christian's obedience to the commands of Christ that touches the world that makes an impression on others. It is through your

faithful obedience to His commands that it will be evident to all that Christ is the Lord of your life. And, it is through your obedience in the vertical (the Word and Prayer) and horizontal (Fellowship and Witnessing) dimensions of the practice of your faith that others will observe that you are a person whose life is on an even keel.

Unless you obey His commands, it is a mockery to call Jesus "Lord," for allowing Jesus to be on the throne of life demands submission to His will. But just as there is a relationship between the Lordship of Christ and obedience to Christ, there is a relationship between love for Christ. Our key verse for today shows this is true: "*Whoever accepts my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me. My Father will love whoever loves me; and I too will love him, and reveal myself to him.*" (John 14:21). In the same way that calling Jesus "Lord" requires that we do what He tells us to do, doing what Christ tells us to do is a sure indication that we love Him. As a child, you were obedient to your parents not only because you recognized their authority, but also because you loved them and wanted to do the things that were pleasing to them.

The children of Israel often presented burnt offerings and sacrifices to God, feeling that He would be pleased by such behavior. But He who had called the Israelites to be His people wanted more than their sacrifices. David knew this, for he sang: "*O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit (or, a spirit yielded to His control); a broken and contrite heart, O God thou wilt not despise*" (Psalm 51: 15-17). Samuel, the prophet understood what really pleased God, and he said: "*Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams* " (1 Samuel 15: 22). The Apostle Paul also recognized the sacrifice that would please God, and wrote: "*So then, my brothers, because of God's great mercy to us I appeal to you: offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to His service and pleasing Him. This is the true worship that you should offer. Do not conform yourselves to the standards' of this world, but let God transform you inwardly by a complete change of your mind. Then you will be able to know the will of God - what is good and is pleasing to Him and is perfect*" (Romans 12:1 -2).

Obedience to Christ's commands, then, is the best offering you can give to God: your obedient life will please God and demonstrate to everyone that you really do love Jesus.

Application

To be obedient to another requires a conscious act of humbling yourself in recognition of the other's rank, position, status, or age. Conversely, to be disobedient is so often a sign that self must win out, at all cost. In such situations, there is usually found at the core of the disobedience an authority problem.

Self does not want to share the decision-making with anyone else. Two cannot use the same chairman's gavel, or lead the same army, nor sit on the same throne. And when a man is disobedient to God he has a problem accepting Ultimate Authority. Thus, if self is crowned king, there is no place left on the throne for Christ.

Satan, influencing you through your old nature, will try to get you to follow self-will. He will tempt you to resist the leadership of God and to insist on your own way. The Holy spirit, working in you through your new nature, will encourage you to yield your life to divine leadership, and to resist the urge to control your own destiny.

Our related verses are James 4:7-8: "*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.*" Your old nature will have you submitting to no one but self - (and the devil's really in control, then) - while at the same time resisting the thought of obeying God. Your new nature, on the other hand, will lead you to yield yourself in obedience to God. In this way, Satan is resisted and cannot control your thoughts or actions.

How about your life? Have you been obedient to God, or obedient to your own desires? As a rule do you try to humble yourself to God and submit to His leadership? Or do you follow your own inclinations, confident in your own ability to chart the way? Can you think of one occasion where you were presented with two definite choices, and you chose what you felt to be God's will? If so, share that occasion with your discipleship team. Now can you think of another instance where you pursued your own desires, or followed the crowd, or yielded to temptation, rather than choosing what you felt to be God's way? If so, share that experience. In which circumstance were you the most comfortable - when you were near to God and within His will, or when you were near to Satan (or self, or the crowd) and outside of God's will?

Explanation

Earlier in the Foundations Class we saw that the disciple of Jesus Christ must have a level of commitment that runs much deeper than merely believing, or even following. A symbolic way of expressing that commitment is to talk of Christ being enthroned in the disciple's life. Today we have focused on obedience as the key to enthroning Christ. We have seen that obedience demands yielding life to Christ's control, of submitting will to God's will. On what basis do we yield control of our personal lives?

A. The Basis for Obedience:

Jesus, our Example in so many other ways, became, Himself, a model of the yielded, submitted life. At the outset of His ministry, Christ taught His disciples to pray that God's will might be done (Matthew 6:9- 10); but it was at the conclusion of His earthly ministry that He gave the world such a vivid demonstration of total submission of will. Facing imminent death on the cross, Jesus still could pray, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but us thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

Paul identified with Jesus in this experience to such an extent that he claimed that his life was not his own. He wrote, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Dying with Christ, Paul had certainly experienced submission of self

But although Paul had yielded his life to Christ's control, he still occasionally felt "out-of-control." He confessed, "For even though the desire to do good is in me. I am not able to do it. I don't do the good I want to do; instead I do the evil that I do not want to do. If I do what I don't want to do, this means that I am no longer the one who does it; instead it is the sin that lives in me" (Romans 7: 18b-20). Perhaps because he knew that his old nature occasionally got the upper hand, Paul felt the need to continuously submit self to Christ's control. Thus he taught that he died daily (I Corinthians 15:31). This attitude conforms to Jesus' own teaching, when He said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself (submit self to Christ's control) and take up his cross (die to self) daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

Putting Christ on the throne, then, is not a once-in-a-lifetime experience, but requires that we make a conscious decision each day to yield self to the authoritative leadership of Christ-in-us - who is the Holy Spirit of God. We yield control of our personal lives because we recognize:

(1) That we are creations of God (Genesis 1:27, II Corinthians 5:17);
(2) That Christ lives in us (Revelation 3:2, John 14:23) and
(3) That the God who lives in us knows us personally and wants the best for us (John: 14, 10:10)

Upon the example and teachings of both Christ and the Apostle Paul, and upon the firm, personal conviction of a benevolent Spirit within us, we can base our obedience to Christ's commands.

B. The Blessings of Obedience:

God will bless the one who is obedient. The Bible reveals that God blessed the obedience of Israel, of Jesus, and both Old and New Testament followers. He will bless us, also, if we will follow His teachings and obey His commands.

A lifestyle of obedience will be blessed by wisdom. Psalm 111:10 teaches, "The way to become wise is to honor the Lord: he gives sound judgement to all who obey his commands." Solomon wrote that prosperity is given the obedient person: "Don't forget what I teach you, my son. Always remember what I tell you to do. My teaching will give you a long and prosperous life" (Proverbs 3: 1-2). John said that answered prayer is available as a blessing for the obedient: "We receive from him whatever we ask because we obey his commands and do what pleases him" (1John 3:22). Jesus promised security

in His well-known illustration of the house built on the rock: "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord, and yet don't do what I tell you? Anyone who comes to me and listens to my words and obeys them - I will show you what he is like. He is like a man who, in building his house, dug deep and laid the foundation on rock. The river overflowed and hit that house but could not shake it, because it was well built" (Luke 6:-16-48).

But there is another blessing for the obedient disciple, apart from these already mentioned. That blessing is Christian growth. As the disciple is obedient in each area of his Christian life (his forefingers: **the Word, Prayer, Fellowship, and Witnessing**), he will grow as a Christian. His "fingers" will grow longer, and all the aspects of his faith obediently. He will grow in his service with others; his circle of influence will be broader; the "wheel" will cover a wider area, each time it turns. Its result will be more productive, a life which bears more fruit for the glory of God. Finally, remember that for you to grow, you have to walk with Jesus; and the spiritual growth needs to follow five spiritual exercises to that goal:

G – Guard your time, so you can meditate to the Word daily
O – Organize yourself, so you are always ready to Pray
A – Active fellowship with other Christians
L – Lead people to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior
S – Seat Jesus as the King of your life

C. The Sources of Obedience:

God doesn't want us to depend on our own strength to be obedient. He has already given us several sources of help to make our obedience possible. First, He has already sent a Comforter to live with us, His own Holy Spirit. When we became Christians, the Spirit of God dwells in us, and He is the one who teaches us everything (John 14:25). When we depend on the Holy Spirit in us, we are able to fight the devil, and in that way we are able to surpass our foes in the world, because "the Spirit who is in you is more powerful than the spirit in those who belong to the world" (1 John 4:4).

Secondly, God gave us His Word as the source of hope for an obedient life. Paul explained to us that the Scripture "... was written to teach us, in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement ..." (Romans 15:4). Life in the Word not only challenges us of God's faithfulness, but also helps us to possess it.

Thirdly, God equipped us with Prayer as a tool to have the victory over the temptation to follow the desire of the flesh (old nature). Jesus warned His disciples: "Keep watch and pray that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:-11). He also taught us to pray: "Do not bring us to hard testing, but keep us safe from the Evil One" (Matthew 6: 13). Praying will help us to get away from temptation and lead into obedience.

Finally, God gave us loving Fellowship, which has a double task, to teach the truth and admonish of wrongdoing. To the Christian disciples in Colossae, Paul wrote: "Christ's message in all richness must live in your hearts. Teach and instruct each other with all wisdom ..." (Colossians 3:16). When we listen to those who truly love us - our Christian family - we often hear good advice to help us remain obedient.

Illustration

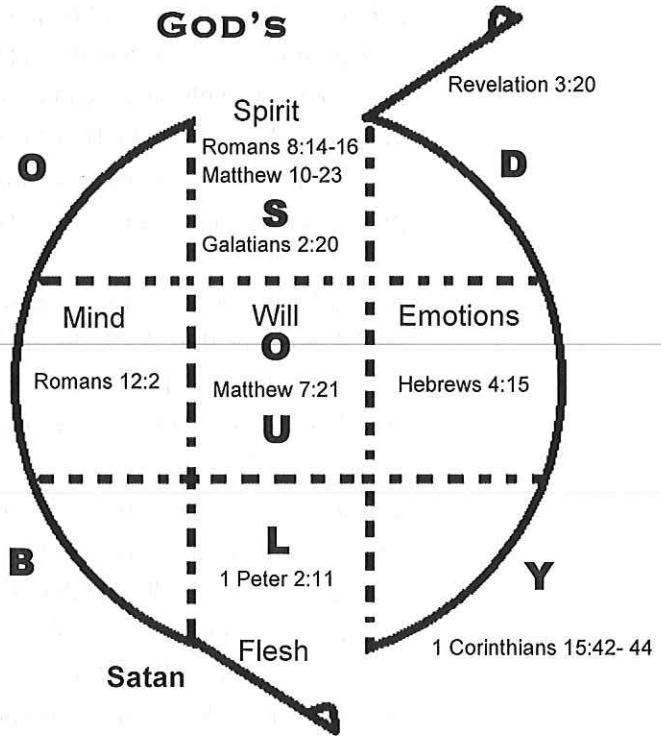
The Personality Picture of Jesus' disciple is an illustration which will help us to understand three points:

(1) The human personality from God's view
(2) The source of sin and why evil can control us, and
(3) The spiritual life which can overcome conflicts and worldly attacks of the flesh and the devil

According to the Scripture: "When anyone is joined to Christ, he is a new being" (II Corinthians 5: 17). Disciples of Jesus are new persons. This is the picture according to the Scripture of a person who has been crucified with Christ and resurrected to new life. This person, like Paul, can say, "It is not I that lives, but Christ lives in me." What are the changes that Christ wants to bring about in our lives as new creatures? We could list many of these changes but are more concerned about getting these changes into our lives. Remember that the hub is shared like a circle. Here's another circle, which will help you understand how Christ becomes the center of our personalities. (On a blank piece of paper draw a circle with a door opened completely at the top and another door about one-fourth open at the bottom. Draw a doorknob on the inside of each of these doors.)

Who Am I?

By using this picture we can answer the most important question about our lives, "Who am I as a disciple of Jesus?" This picture represents the personality of a disciple. Notice the two doors which open into your personality.



Body (1 Corinthians 15:42-44)

The Bible pictures man as a body. (Write the word B-O-D- Y so that it goes around the circle on each side. Write the reference I Corinthians 15:42-44). A disciple of Christ has a body. In heaven it will be a spiritual body. The body is an integral part of man throughout his existence.

Soul (Matthew 10:28)

The Bible pictures man as a soul. (Write S-O-U-L vertically in the middle of the circle in large letters; place the word between the two doors, and then write Matthew 10:28 above it). The Bible says man is a soul. (Read Matthew 10:28.) What is the meaning of soul? The souls is the real you. You have self-consciousness because you have a soul. Animals do not have self-awareness in this sense.

The soul consists of the mind, the will, and the emotions. (Write MIND, WILL, and EMOTIONS on the right. Draw dotted vertical lines separating these three parts of the soul.) Others cannot see the soul or know what it experiences except as it is evidenced in actions.

Spirit (Romans 8:14-16)

Notice the door at the top of the circle. This is the door of the spirit. (Write SPIRIT in the doorway. Underneath it write Romans 8:14-16.) The Bible says that man is a spirit as well as a body and a soul. What is meant by spirit? The spirit of man is that part of personality that has been given to man to allow him to fellowship with and work together with God. (Write GOD'S SPIRIT above the door at the top of the circle and above the word SPIRIT that is written in the doorway.) It is through man's spirit that the Spirit of God enters our personalities.

Doorknob to Spirit

Notice that the doorknob on the Door of the Spirit is on the inside. Man is created with a spiritual door open to God. But man is inclined to follow the devil and often shuts the door to God. Jesus comes to this door to knock (Revelation 3:20). When we open the door, the Spirit of God enters and fills our whole personality. It is most important that we keep this doorway open so that the Spirit of God has free access through our spirits to our entire personalities.

Flesh (1 Peter 2:11)

You will notice at the bottom of the circle another door that is partially closed. This door is called the Door of the Flesh. (Write FLESH in the doorway and I Peter 2: 11 just above it.) The Bible says that man is flesh. Your personality is made **of body, soul, spirit, and flesh**. Flesh is that part of man's personality through which the devil relates to man. In the Bible the word "flesh" relates more to the old nature of man than to his physical body. Many people confuse the two and think that the body is evil. In reality it is the flesh or the old nature (lower nature) that is evil. Flesh becomes an active part of man's personality when he opens the door to Satan. (Write SATAN in the space below the bottom door.)

Doorknob to Flesh

Notice that this door is also opened from the inside. This doorknob reminds man that he is responsible for his evil desires. This door of the flesh should always be closed and locked. Satan tempts us through

our body so that we voluntarily open the door of the flesh. He uses our eyes, ears, hands, etc., to get into our souls. Once he gets this door open a great war begins to take place within the soul. The only way for a disciple of Jesus to win this spiritual warfare is to close the door to the flesh and open the door to the spirit.

Functions of the Soul

The soul has three functions. It can think, do, and feel. The thinking function takes place in the mind. The doing function takes place in the will. The feeling function takes place in the emotions. (Write Romans 12:2 under the word MIND.) The mind needs to be renewed by the Word of God and the Spirit of God in order for us to have the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5). (Write Matthew 7:21 under the word WILL.) The disciple's will should be the same as will of the Father. The Spirit works in us to help us want the will of God (Philippians 2: 13). (Write Hebrews 4: 15 under the word EMOTIONS.) Although Jesus felt all the emotions we feel and was tempted in all the ways we are, He never sinned. We need to allow Him to guide our emotions so that we can live in accordance with His will.

Tension

No doubt you have felt the tension that often arises in the heart of the disciple who wants to have the thoughts, attitudes, and actions of Jesus. Why is there such tension? Tension caused by the conflict between the spirit and the flesh, between the mind and the will, and the emotions; thus therefore, between the attitudes, actions, and thoughts. The soul of man is the highest creation of the Lord. But man's personality can be completely ruined if Satan is allowed to bring sin and conflict into one's soul. The average person allows his soul to become the battleground between the forces of God and the forces of Satan. How can the disciple have victory?

Victory (Galatians 2:20)

The disciple is promised victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil (I John 5:4, I John 2: 15-17). This portrait of the disciple will help you understand the way to victory. Notice that the soul stands directly in the path of the Door of the Flesh. Notice also that the three parts of the soul (MIND, WILL, and EMOTIONS) intersect the word SOUL with WILL in the center. (Draw a vertical line on either side of the words MIND, WILL, and EMOTIONS to form a cross. Read Galatians 2:20 and write the reference under the "S' in SOUL.) The way to victory is to will to be crucified daily. By this act of will we close the Door of the flesh and open the Door of the Spirit. We kill the old man and let the Spirit of God resurrect us to live in victory. When we do this, we are filled by the Spirit of God and He takes control of our minds, our wills, and our emotions -- and therefore, of our bodies. The life we now live, we live by the faith of the Son of God. By being obedient to the commands of Christ we become His disciples and Christ lives in the world through us. We are integrated and experience peace. His yoke is easy and light. If the Spirit doesn't control us, then we experience the heavy inner tension caused by the war going on in our souls between the forces of God and Satan. But when we are continually being filled with the Spirit, we overflow with praise, thanksgiving, and mutual submission. (Ephesians 5: 18-21).

Variation

In these six lessons of the Foundations Class, you have not learned everything you will need in order to live, grow, and function as a disciple of Jesus Christ. But you have gotten a good beginning, and can build on this foundation. Your technique for this week is one that you can use the rest of your life. Let's call it "Goal-Setting for Obedience."

Take your "New Life Personal Development Notebook" and turn to a clean page. Write STUDY GOALS at the top of the page, GOAL and DATE ACHIEVED at the head of two columns, and IMMEDIATE GOALS, SHORT-RANGE GOALS, and LONG-RANGE GOALS as the headings for three columns running across the page. Your page should look like this:

Goal	Date Achieved
Immediate Goals:	
Short-Range Goals:	
Long-Range Goals:	

Next, try to decide what your objectives are for study and growth in your understanding of God's Word or other books related to your life as a Christian. Fill in those goals when you've decided if they're immediate, short-range, or long-range. Then, at a later time, come back to fill in the date when you actually achieved each goal. Use your Goal-Setting chart as a frequent reminder of your goals.

On another page, list your CHARACTER-GOAL - goals for growth in Christian character, related to the Fruit of the Spirit or to any other aspect of Christian character. Use the same style of chart.

On still another page, put your MINISTRY-GOALS - goals that relate to your service to God and to your fellowman.

Obligation

Review - Matthew 28:19-20, John 15:5, John 8:31-32, John 15:7, John 13:34-35, and John 15:8.

Memorize – this week's key verse: "**Obey the Master**" John 14:21

> "Whoever accepts my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me. My Father will love whoever loves me, and I too will love him, and reveal myself to him." John 14:21

Master – the Portrait Illustration. Draw it into your notebook. Review it each day during your Quiet Time. By an act of the will open the door of your personality to the Spirit and close the door of the Flesh. As you experience this day by day, share it with another Christian. Write the verses (references) on a piece of paper to remember them. Practice drawing and explaining the Portrait until you can share it effectively as a teaching tool, for this will help you tell another about the nature of a disciple's life.

Practice – living obediently. Adopt some of your "immediate goals" as objectives for this week and work hard at being obedient in the carrying out of these tasks. Remember that discipline is a mark of a disciple, and that your obedience in little things will demonstrate to others that your life is centered about Christ.

Celebration

Use this time as an opportunity to express your love for one another as fellow-pilgrims in the Way. Offer words of support, encouragement, and affirmation. Hold hands and pray for one another in the exciting call to be Disciples of Christ. Conclude the session – and BEGIN THE REST OF YOUR LIVES AS DISCIPLES - by singing this familiar chorus:

"I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus
No turning back, no turning back.

My cross I'll carry till I see Jesus,
My cross I'll carry till I see Jesus,
My cross I'll carry till I see Jesus –
No turning back, no turning back.

Though none go with me, I still will follow,
Though none go with me, I still will follow,
Though none go with me, I still will follow
No turning back, no turning back."