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A CHRISTIAN GROWTH MANUAL
FOR THE DISCIPLING OF NEW BELIEVERS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

BY

RAYMOND W. ELLIS

A project-dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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Approved by

Department Christian Education

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ABSTRACT

Statement of the Problem

Several factors suggest that new Christians are not receiving adequate instruction and guidance through the organized ministries of the local church. A methodology is needed to communicate biblical concepts and principles to believers in the local church setting.

Empirical Observations

The author's experience in the pastoral ministry and part-time director of Lay Witness Crusades convinced him that new methodologies and educational procedures are needed to instruct new believers and guide them toward Christian maturity.

Congregational Surveys

In addition to empirical observations two congregational surveys were administered to members and friends of the Taylor Free Methodist Church. Evaluation analysis of the surveys revealed spiritual and personal needs of those who participated as follows: (1) to understand the personal benefit of Bible study, (2) personal prayer, (3) to understand the ministry of the Holy Spirit, (4) to have a vital experience in fellowship with others, and (5) to receive training for achievement of greater proficiency in sharing their faith.
Description of Research

Method

Methods of research for the project-dissertation included a thorough study of the life and teachings of Jesus, a study of strategies of the early church's ministries, and selected passages of the Pauline epistles. The author also consulted classical and contemporary literature in the area of discipleship and evangelism. Major learning theories were examined and compared with the instructional methods Jesus and Paul used with their disciples.

Design

The method chosen by this researcher for communication of Bible principles to new Christians was the writing of *A Christian Growth Manual for the Discipling of New Believers in the Local Church*. The project was experimental in its scope and nature. The goal of the project was to incorporate both cognitive classroom study and relational informal learning opportunities for participants in the study.

The educational procedure postulated by the author to use in presenting the manual was the discipleship model learning theory. This model was designed to be utilized in either small groups or one-on-one ministries.

Field Testing

The manual is currently being field tested by two different groups in the Taylor Free Methodist Church. There are a combined total of sixty adults in the two groups. The response to the manual and method of informal instruction has been very positive. It appears that
the disciplines and principles contained in the manual produce significant changes in the lives of the learners when they are taught by utilizing the discipleship model for learning. Further testing must be made before final conclusions can be made concerning the effectiveness of the method and design of the project. The manual will be revised according to the evaluation analysis of additional testings.

**Major Findings**

**New Testament Disciplines**

The study of the life and teachings of Jesus reveal that Jesus taught his disciples both by his life and his words. His words and example focused upon the disciplines of Bible study, prayer, fellowship and witnessing to the unsaved world. The early church continued to emphasize these same disciplines in their informal meetings (Acts 2:42-47).

**Discipleship Model**

Examination and evaluation of secular learning theories show they fall short. They fail to give an adequate educational procedure for facilitation of life-changing learning to help disciples become Christlike. The discipleship model learning theory gives a more adequate educational method for the teacher to use with the discipleship manual.

**Conclusions**

My research and evaluation discloses that a better methodology is needed to communicate biblical concepts and principles to new
Christians. The instructional procedure utilized in presenting spiritual principles is crucial to transacting meaningful learning. The success of the manual's content is contingent upon the leader's ability to facilitate informal educational procedures with the discipleship group.

The discipleship manual is not an end in and of itself. It does not have the final answer for helping new believers grow toward maturity. Life-changing learning cannot be compartmentalized or confined to certain areas of the church's ministry. The method and design of the manual does develop a strategy which could become a New Testament model for the total life and ministry of the local church.
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Raymond Ellis

April 1, 1980
INTRODUCTION

The New Testament model for ministry focuses upon strategies for ministry rather than upon programs. Jesus called people to follow him and become his disciples. He instructed his followers concerning his strategy for ministry and encouraged them to imitate his lifestyle, then he sent them out to continue the work he started. The same model for ministry is needed in the church today: (1) evangelism—seeking to save the lost; (2) edification—insructing believers how to follow Jesus; and (3) equipping—sending out those who are mature enough to instruct and nurture others. The nature and scope of this project-dissertation incorporate all three strategies in its research and analysis.

Scope of the Topic

Rationale for the Project

There are several reasons I have chosen to investigate this particular area of study. The first emerges from my experience while visiting churches as a leader of Lay Witness Crusades. During a five-year period (1970-75) I conducted two Christian Witness Crusades each year. I led crusades in Kansas, Michigan, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Indiana, Saskatchewan, and Ontario. Christian Witness Crusades are sponsored by Light and Life Men International of the Free Methodist Church of North America.
In churches where I held witnessing crusades, I challenged members of the churches to catch the vision of reaching the unreached. I stressed the importance of following up new believers in order to help them understand the Bible and apply its truths to their daily lives. Five nights of each crusade were given to training and five nights were given to evangelistic visitation. From my involvement with different churches in various parts of the country, I have observed several common topics of concern.

1. The majority of members of the Free Methodist churches I visited are not reaching out to people in the community.

2. Pastors are not training members to share their faith.

3. Pastors do not have a workable plan to follow-up new Christians in order to enfold them into the life and ministry of the congregation.

4. Many of the leaders in the local church do not have meaningful prayer and Bible study habits.

5. Pastors and leaders in smaller Free Methodist churches (50-100 attendance) are preoccupied with survival. Little effort is given to empower the laity for service and evangelize the community.

6. Pastors are discouraged because they are having zero or negative growth. The pastor often blames the local church for lack of growth and the local church blames the pastor for having a stagnant ministry.

A second reason for choosing to explore this topic is a result of my experience in pastoral ministry. (I presently minister to a congregation of more than 500 families including 300 church families, 100 nursery school families, and 100 families who are a part of our Light and Life Christian School, grades K-9.) The spiritual needs I observed in other churches were underscored by the needs I saw in members of the congregation I was leading as senior pastor. I shared
my concern with the Pastor's Cabinet and the decision was made to take a congregational survey to reveal spiritual strengths and weaknesses of the congregation. A questionnaire suggested by James Engel and H. Wilbert Norton titled *What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest?* was ordered and administered on a Sunday morning, March, 1977. A sample of the survey appears in Appendix A. The breakdown of the survey according to age grouping is in Appendix B. Charts listing the needs according to the topic covered in the survey are recorded in Appendices C and D.

The congregational survey revealed the greatest needs for spiritual growth to be in the areas of personal evangelism, personal Bible study, family devotions and prayer, and understanding the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Another reason for my interest in researching this topic is the lack of materials available to help new Christians in the local church setting. Many books have been published in the area of discipleship and evangelism in recent years. They emphasize evangelism training and soul winning, but fail to offer practical guidance for new Christians within the context of the local church.

**Statement of the Topic**

There appears to be a need for an instructional book or manual for new believers. People who receive Jesus as personal Savior often are not ready for the traditional Sunday School class material and setting. They need helpful instruction toward the goal of a balanced Christian life. My denomination (Free Methodist) does not currently have a book or manual prepared specifically for teaching scriptural
disciplines to new believers. There is a need for materials to lead new Christians through a step-by-step study of the fundamental disciplines of Christian faith and life.

Thesis Statement for This Project

A Christian Growth Manual is designed to consider prayer, Bible study, Christian fellowship, and discipleship training. It is written to help guide new believers toward Christian maturity and continuing spiritual growth. It is written in a style which can be used for self-study or in a class setting to provide opportunities for relational learning.

Hypotheses Statements

1. Guided instruction is needed to assist new believers in the Taylor Free Methodist Church who have not previously developed New Testament disciplines through the established ministries of the church.

2. A Christian Growth Manual will be an effective tool for providing instruction and will help guide new Christians toward development of these disciplines.

3. The focus and implementation of the manual's content will provide opportunities for personal and group interaction on these disciplines.

4. Integration of cognitive and relational learning through the development of meaningful relationships between the teacher and students and among the students themselves will transact life-changing learning.

Theoretical Framework

Basic Assumptions of This Project

1. The teacher/leader of the manual's content should be a facilitator of the material and not teach the manual in a legalistic or authoritarian manner.
2. Students who study the manual should have experienced a genuine conversion and desire to learn and incorporate New Testament disciplines into their lives.

3. The teacher/leader of the new Christian's class should develop transactional relationships with the students and serve as a New Testament "model" of biblical principles for them to follow.

4. The teacher/leader of the manual should assist the class to develop a small group fellowship characterized by mutual love, trust, openness, honesty, acceptance, forgiveness and affirmation.

**Definition of Terms**

The following terms are used in contemporary writings in the area of evangelism and discipleship and are used throughout this project-dissertation.

- **Disciple.** One who follows and imitates the one he follows.
- **Discipler.** One who disciples a person who is following him.

**Design of the Manual**

The project-dissertation provides the local church with a strategy and program of guided study for new Christians. It incorporates both classroom study and relational learning opportunities for students in the class. It integrates biblical principles and practical experience in the making of disciples. The success of the manual's content is contingent upon group interaction, involvement, and implementation of the principles and disciplines presented.

The content of the manual is divided into five sections. The first section is prepared for teachers and leaders in the local church. It provides the teacher with information about the learning processes in adult education and the motivational processes required for meaningful learning. Sections two through five provide material for the student's manual. Students receive instruction about the
importance and development of prayer, Bible study, fellowship and discipleship training. The material may be used as a self-study, in a thirteen week Sunday School class, or in a one-on-one discipling relationship.

Discussion and interaction questions for student and teacher participation follow each chapter in the student sections. A case study follows each section to help class members reflect upon the materials covered. Through discussion, interaction, analysis and evaluation, students are assisted in transferring the concepts and principles to their own lives. A special certificate of recognition might be given by the instructor, if he chooses, to all who complete the study. See Appendix E for a recommended sample certificate.

Delimitation of the Project

The scope of this project is limited to the writing of A Christian Growth Manual. The preparation of a companion instruction leader's guide for additional teaching material and guidelines would be another project. Such a manual might include instructions for teachers concerning preparation for leading the class session and directions for using the materials presented in each chapter. It could also give the teacher suggested procedures to use in creating a relational learning atmosphere for students taking the discipleship course.

Data Needed to Test the Hypotheses

The validity of the manual to facilitate growth will be field tested through the completion of two congregational surveys. Two groups of believers are currently studying the manual. The first
group includes new Christians who have made recent decisions to follow Jesus. The second group receiving instruction from the manual is the Wednesday night adult Bible study group. Thus far section II of the manual has been presented using an overhead projector to present the materials. Part of the instruction also includes dividing the larger group of twenty-five to thirty into smaller groups of four or five to discuss and interact on the various principles and disciplines presented. After the groups have gone through the manual and experienced small group learning opportunities, they will be given a questionnaire intended to measure personal and spiritual growth. Other members of the congregation who have not participated in the small group study will be given the same questionnaire. Results from these surveys will be tabulated and compared to determine the effectiveness of the manual and small group experience as a method to transact meaningful learning. The manual will be revised according to the findings. The manual then will be printed as a handbook and given out to future participants in the discipleship group.

Experimental Design

The experimental design for this project is the writing of a laymen's manual. The outline and style of the manual is intended to communicate to all laymen in the local church.

The goals of the manual are to present New Testament disciplines utilizing a number of teaching methods: lecture, discussion, group interaction, case studies, small group fellowship, and the discipleship model of learning. The discipleship model for use in teaching the manual will be defined and explained in chapter two, "The Teaching-Learning Process in Adult Education."
SECTION I

LEADERSHIP AND MOTIVATION FOR TEACHERS OF NEW BELIEVERS

Chapter 1  BASIS FOR A DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY
Chapter 2  THE TEACHER-LEARNING PROCESS IN ADULT EDUCATION
Chapter 3  LEADERSHIP AND MOTIVATION
Chapter 4  THE TEACHING METHODS OF JESUS
Chapter 5  INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES
Chapter 6  CASE STUDY--LIFE-CHANGING LEARNING
Chapter 1

BASIS FOR A DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRY

Discipleship training is grounded in principles that teachers and leaders of new Christians teach both through what they say and by what they are. Spiritual principles are learned and transacted as students cognitively assimilate the principles in a classroom setting, and relationally in their association with the teacher and each other. Herman Horne in his book Teaching Techniques of Jesus, points out that the great moral and religious teachers of history associated themselves with an intimate group of learners—disciples. The disciples learned more from the example of the teacher than from the lessons taught by the teacher. The truth was passed on from one learner to another. This was the teaching method used by Confucius, Buddha, John the Baptist and Jesus.  

Biblical Foundations

The basis for a discipleship ministry is found in the great commission given by Jesus, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). Jesus spoke the command and then

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1 Herman Harrell Horne, Teaching Techniques of Jesus (Grand Rapids: Kregel 1920), p. 143.

2 The New International Version (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1978). Scripture quotations are from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noted.
gave the disciples instruction about how to carry out their mission. Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem until they were empowered with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit would give them the power needed to "go and make disciples of all nations." The Holy Spirit would also give them power to witness, "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). The book of Acts documents how early believers participated in making disciples through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

The great commission emphasizes two primary functions for the church--evangelism ("to make disciples") and edification ("to teach them"). The church in the New Testament as a "gathered community" focused on edification and as a "scattered community" focused on evangelism. Both functions of the church are equally important. They cannot operate separately. What happens when believers gather for worship and study predicts what will happen when they go out into the world. The book of Acts and the New Testament epistles report the great evangelistic impact believers had on their community. Today the same impact is needed in our society. Believers are needed today who will reflect Christlikeness in their daily contacts within the community, at work, and at school. It is their authentic love backing up their spoken words that impresses the community. Their influence in the community reflecting love, unity, and Christlike living attracts the attention of others and helps fulfill the great commission.

New Testament Words

Several New Testament words describe the importance of the ministry of discipleship. Disciples are taught both by verbal
instruction and through meaningful relationships. Education in the New Testament sense involved the twin concepts of "instruction" and "modeling." The following Greek words and their use in Scripture describe the intermix of the two concepts.

Didasko is used to describe verbal instruction. The disciples said to Jesus, "Lord, teach (didaskon) us to pray, just as John taught his disciples" (Luke 11:1).

Paideuo is translated to mean bringing up or educating as a child and implies discipline and correction (Acts 7:22, 22:3).

Hupodeigma means example, model, or pattern (James 5:10).

Mimeomai is translated "imitate." The apostle John in writing to his friend Gaius said, "Dear friend, do not imitate (mimou) what is evil but what is good" (III John 11).

Mimatas carries the idea of believers serving as followers, imitators, and reproducers of a model. Paul instructed the Christians in Ephesus to "Be imitators (mimatai) of God, therefore, as dearly loved children" (Eph. 5:1). Paul also challenged the Christians in Thessalonica, "You become imitators (mimatai) of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe sufferings, you welcome the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit" (I Thess. 1:6). Paul said that because they were imitators of Jesus they became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia (I Thess. 1:7).

The discipleship ministry has its foundations in the teaching ministry of Jesus and the early church. Jesus invited those who followed him and became his disciples to obey his teachings and imitate his life. The process of discipleship speaks to the needs of the whole
person, physical, mental, and social. Physically, the disciple is challenged to discipline his body and use it to the glory of God. Mentally, he is to allow the Holy Spirit to renew his mind and help him develop Christ-like thoughts. Socially, he is to use Jesus as his model in his relationships with others in the world.

Who is a Disciple?

The most common New Testament word translated "disciple" is mathetes. It is used 250 times in the Gospels and Acts. In a general sense a disciple is a learner and imitator of his teacher. The New Testament disciple accepted the authority of Jesus unconditionally and was willing to follow Jesus regardless of the cost. A true disciple has counted the cost of following Jesus and has made the commitment to willingly take up his cross and follow wherever Jesus leads (Luke 9:23). Dwight Pentecost vividly describes the depth of commitment involved in following Jesus:

Christ demanded absolute submission to His authority, complete devotion to His Person, confidence in His Word, and trust in His provision, and men excused themselves because they would not commit, could not trust, and did not believe . . . The disciples were those who, after they were convinced of the truth of the Word, completely committed themselves to the Person who had taught them. If one stops short of this total complete commitment to the Person of Jesus Christ, he is not a disciple of Jesus Christ. He may be numbered among the curious, or he may even have progressed to the place where he is convinced of the truth of what Christ had to say or of what God's Word says, but until he completely commits himself to the Person whose Word he has come to believe, he is not a disciple in the full New Testament sense.

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of the word . . . One will not become a disciple simply because he
assents to the truth of what Christ taught, but he becomes a
disciple when he puts himself under the authority of the Word of
God and lets the Word of God control his life.  

The conditions for discipleship have not changed. The depth of
commitment today is as demanding and rigorous as in New Testament
times. Discipleship requires a person to totally commit himself to
follow Jesus. Only then can he call himself a disciple of Jesus.
The call to Christian discipleship is not a call to a comfortable life. It is a call to unconditionally obey the teachings of Jesus and allow Jesus' goals, ambitions, and desires to become the disciples.

Model for Discipleship Training

The New Testament model was carried out in small groups and by
a one-on-one ministry. While the Apostle Paul was busy traveling as a
missionary he was also conducting a discipleship ministry by training
others. Paul learned from Barnabas during the year he spent with him
in Antioch (Acts 11:25-26). Then Paul shared what he had learned with
Silas, Luke, and Timothy. Paul outlined his strategy to Timothy, "And
the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses
entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others"
(II Tim. 2:2).

The ministry of making disciples includes all that Jesus
taught by both his life and his words. The process of edification and
discipling helped equip believers to become mature in Christ so they

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4 J. Dwight Pentecost, Design for Discipleship (Grand Rapids:
Edification leads a person on toward completeness in Christ. The location for New Testament edification is the local church. Believers in the fellowship of the church are to experience deep and satisfying relationships along with Bible teaching. As the body of Christ works together, members of the body minister to one another and each is built up in love and becomes stronger through mutual ministry. Biblical teaching assists members in their development of theological and spiritual stability.

Mutual ministry in the local body of Christ does not focus on the pastor or leaders in the body. The corporate body serves as a discipling community to all members of the body. Members have different functions but each member is important to the edification of all in the body.

**Care and Nurture of New Believers**

The teachings and examples of Jesus and Paul demonstrated their concern that new believers receive nurture in both corporate and
and personal follow-up. When a person repents of his sin and invites Jesus to become Lord of his life, he becomes a new babe in the Kingdom of God. The Apostle Peter emphasized the importance of the new believer growing through the spiritual food of the Word of God (I Pet. 2:2-3).

A new Christian is analogous in many ways to a newborn baby. He needs love, nourishment, protection, training and guidance. Paul outlined the importance of giving new believers instruction in order for them to become mature in Christ. He said, "We proclaim him, counseling and teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ" (Col. 1:28). Through the preaching, teaching ministry, and person-to-person ministry new believers are led from the milk of the Word toward maturity into the meat of the Word. Peter encourages believers to add the following disciplines to their lives: goodness, knowledge, self control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (II Pet. 1:5-7). The Apostle John taught that God is not interested in having believers remain spiritual children, but rather He desires that they grow to become strong, young men (I John 2:13) and fathers (I John 2:14). The discipling ministry endeavors to build up and edify new Christians. The "discipler" (one who teaches and leads a disciple) helps the new believer grow toward maturity—teaching him, strengthening him, encouraging him, admonishing him, and exhorting him.

Discipling new believers is an awesome and challenging task. The halting and sporatic growth of new believers plus the amount of time required to encourage new believers pushes the one doing the
discipling to the limits of his commitment. Paul reassures the discipler with these words, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Gal. 6:9).

Summary

The basis for a discipleship ministry is found in the life and teaching of Jesus. It includes the twin concepts of "instruction" and "modeling." Jesus invited those who followed him and became his disciples to obey his teachings and imitate his life. The invitation to discipleship remains the same today. Those who would call themselves disciples of Jesus must yield themselves unconditionally to follow the teachings of Jesus and allow Jesus' goals, ambitions, and desires to become theirs.

The discipleship manual endeavors to assist new believers to grow toward maturity through obedience to the teachings of Jesus and through their incorporation into the local body of believers. The manual guides believers in learning how to communicate with God, make the commitment to becoming a disciple, discover their gifts, and witness to the unsaved world.5

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5 An effective communication model has been prepared by James Engel and H. Wilbert Norton to help identify the level of a person's spiritual commitment. When a person can identify his level of commitment he then knows what steps are needed for growth. This discipleship manual focuses on the post-decision part of the Engel-Norton communication model. For further study see their book, What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest? (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), p. 45.
Chapter 2

THE TEACHING--LEARNING PROCESS IN ADULT EDUCATION

A person who accepts the role of discipling new believers has the opportunity to teach a new way of life to those he leads—a life patterned after the teachings of Jesus and the Bible. The challenge is twofold: (1) to communicate concepts and (2) model biblical principles so new believers will apply the principles to their daily lives.

A focus of discipleship teaching and training concentrates upon adults. Jesus welcomed the children, but he chose and trained adults during his earthly ministry. Therefore, the primary thrust of the educational program in the local church should be on edifying and equipping adults for ministry.

Considerable research has been given to the subject of how adults learn. Adult teachers will become more effective in their teaching ministry as they understand the adult learning process. This chapter presents several learning theories with the intention of presenting a conceptual framework so leaders can use these principles to guide new believers toward meaningful learning. A discipleship model of the teaching--learning process is presented as an alternative to the secular learning theories cited. The following views of adult learning theory present a basic summary of the more predominant theories.
Secular Learning Theories

Psychoanalytic Theory

The psychoanalytic theory views learning as being achieved through natural drives and desires. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) developed the theory of psychoanalysis to help set people free from their inhibitions. He believed man was driven by inner forces and drives that operated unconsciously. When these forces are brought to the conscious level of a person's mind and controlled by the individual he then is able to operate rationally. These unconscious forces and drives are brought to the conscious level through the process of "free association." This takes place when a person freely shares his past history, tells about present events, about his dreams, and verbalizes everything that comes to mind. A person's uncensored sharing helps him get in touch with his true self and then he is able to find freedom from inner fears and anxieties.

The psychoanalytic theory of learning assumes open and honest sharing of views and concerns in a classroom of peers. The open sharing encourages students to realize their common struggles and the normality of shared experiences.

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3The psychoanalytic theory is man-centered and leaves out the supernatural dimension available through the resources of faith in God, prayer, and divine revelation as contained in the Bible. For additional
Behaviorism

Behaviorism explains all of human behavior as the result of conditioning. Responses linked to stimuli are what determine a person's personality. Consequently, the chief content of a person's personality is learned responses from his environment. The learner's role is to react and learn from his environmental stimulation. For nearly half a century the theory of Edward L. Thorndike dominated all others in America (1845-1949). Thorndike developed his theory from his experiments with animals. He believed that the most basic form of learning is trial and error learning. Learning is incremental (occurs in small systematic steps) rather than insightful. The more a stimulus-induced response is repeated, the longer it will be retained. A response is strengthened if it is followed by pleasure and weakened if followed by displeasure. Learning takes place as ideas are connected together to see the whole. Edwin R. Guthrie (1886-1959) followed much of what Thorndike postulated but differed with him at the point of learning through pleasure and displeasure. Guthrie regarded learning as a sudden, not gradual, process. He

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5 Hilgard and Bower, op. cit., p. 29.

6 Ibid., pp. 28-32.
embraced the view that learning can occur with one connection and last for life; therefore, there is not a need for reward, pleasure, or satisfaction to explain learning.  

Clark L. Hull (1884–1952) and other psychologists adopted positions somewhat different from the classical views of behaviorism. They emphasized the importance of reinforcement in learning. They promoted the view that learning is reinforced when a certain behavior brings satisfaction to a basic biological need or drive. Erikson expanded the reinforcement view of learning to include identification. He concluded after his research that learning is a process by which a person patterns his thoughts, feelings, or actions after another person who serves as a model. According to Erikson, ego strength is achieved through the development of lasting personal relationships.

Behavior theorists view man as being confined to his human nature and the stimulus and response he experiences with his environment. A person's personality and outlook on life are determined by external factors over which he has little control. This theory limits the grace of God and the possibilities of man who is able to experience a new nature through faith and obedience to Jesus Christ (II Cor. 5:17).

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7 Bigge and Hunt, op. cit., p. 331.

8 Ibid., p. 329.

Cognitive Theory

Cognitive learning understands everything as being relative in that nothing is perceived as a thing in itself. Everything is perceived or conceived in relation to other things. What matters is what one gains through his senses or otherwise. According to the cognitive theory all learning is a cognitive phenomenon. The learner comes to see the solution after pondering a problem. He thinks about all the alternatives to solving the problem and then puts them together cognitively, first one way and then another until the problem is solved. Cognitive learning views the teacher as a "facilitator" to place the learner in contact with life problems as a form of "experimental" learning. Learning rests not upon the teaching skills of the teacher, the curriculum, or the method of instruction. Significant learning depends upon the personal relationships between the facilitator teacher and the student. Carl Rogers makes several assumptions he believes are relevant to significant experimental learning:

1. Human beings have a natural potential for learning.

2. Significant learning takes place when the subject matter is perceived by the student as having relevance for his own purpose.

3. Much significant learning is acquired through doing.

4. Learning is facilitated when the student participates responsibly in the learning process.

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5. Self-initiated learning, involving the whole person of the learner—feelings as well as intellect is the most pervasive and lasting.

6. Creativity in learning is best facilitated when self-evaluations are primary and evaluation by others is secondary importance.¹¹

**Gestalt Theory**

The Gestalt theory is closely related to the cognitive theory of learning. Gestalt psychologists regard learning as a process of developing insight. Interpersonal experience is the key according to Gestalt theorists to the cultivation and restoration of mental health.¹² They define learning as the process of studying the totality of a subject and not a collection of parts of the subject. Component parts of a subject are only important as they relate to the whole. Learning is not linking ideas together, but rather gaining insight into the subject.

The Gestalt and cognitive learning theories come closest to the New Testament model for learning according to this researcher. Jesus taught his disciples through experimental learning. He developed a close relationship between himself and his followers. He encouraged his disciples to get a global view of life and then helped them gain insights from their experiences. Didactic teaching was always augmented


by personal experiences. Jesus depended more upon his personal relationships with the disciples to facilitate learning than upon his teaching ministry.13

Secular adult learning theories give the teacher-leader of adults a larger perspective on learning. Selected views from the theories can assist the teacher to affect meaningful and significant learning among the adults he leads. The psychoanalytic theory reveals the need for teachers to encourage students to become open and honest in their relationships. Mutual learning is possible when students share their common struggles and experiences. Behaviorism teaches that students need a model for patterning their thoughts, feelings, and actions. The teacher, who disciples new Christians, can serve as the model. The Gestalt and cognitive theories encourage both teachers and students to view their learning experiences from a total perspective. The global view will help the learners to gain insight on the subject. The teacher-leader acts as a facilitator to the development of meaningful relationships. The prudent teacher will not depend upon a rigid set of teaching techniques or rules for learning. He will seek to combine views from secular learning theories with the New Testament model for learning. The New Testament model looks to the Holy Spirit as the guide for both teacher and student to transact meaningful

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learning. The Holy Spirit is the paramount change-agent and motivator for learning in the strategy and program of discipleship. The following discipleship theory for learning is the learning model accepted by the "experimenter" of this project.

Discipleship Theory

This model for learning is eclectic, gleaning views from the secular theories but going further to develop a higher and more demanding view for learning.

The discipleship theory of learning uses Jesus and his teaching methods as the model for the theory. Lawrence Richards states the concept of discipleship teaching-learning when he says, "'being with' and 'modeling' are of vital significance to Christian education." The discipleship model is utilized to help learners become Christlike. The communication of information is of secondary importance. Learning through discipleship involves the teacher leader, learners, dynamic interactions within the group, and meaningful relationships with others in the body of Christ.

This model focuses upon an intermix of cognitive and relational learning experiences. The teacher-leader does not present himself as an authority, but as one under the authority of God. He leads those in the discipleship training class by saying, "Follow me as I endeavor to follow Jesus." Relationships between the teacher and students outside the organized study are as important if not more than the actual study and sharing time as a group.

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The discipleship model is the theory of learning advocated by the author. It is applicable for the teacher to use as his instructional method in guiding new believers through the discipleship manual. The teacher acts as a facilitator-discipler of new believers by creating a learning climate for the group. The manual is presented on the assumption that students in the class desire to learn the principles and disciplines presented. It is based on the concept that the discipleship class will provide the kind of an atmosphere needed to provide positive learning and growth for all participants in the group. This position agrees with Malcolm S. Knowles who says it is the teacher who seeks to "build relationships of mutual trust and helps the students to share responsibility in the process of mutual inquiry."

The text of the manual has been presented by the "writer" and field tested with two groups of laypersons in the local church with some degree of success. The classes were organized and structured according to informal educational procedures. Class sessions utilized small group dynamics for personal sharing on the principles presented by the teacher. Agree-disagree sheets were mimeographed and handed out to facilitate discussion in small groups made up of four or five persons. The small groups were also given different biblical concepts to brainstorm and then share their consensus views with the total group.

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The goal of the discipleship model for learning is to see adult lives changed. Life-changing learning takes place when the student has the ability to transfer knowledge in his decisions and actions.

**Life-Changing Learning**

Learning in the context of Christian education in the local church is called life-changing learning. A student can master facts and memorize Bible verses and still fail to change. Life-changing learning assumes that change has to take place before learning is accomplished. Biblical principles must be transferred and acted upon in a person's daily life before life-changing learning has transpired. Learning takes place, according to Malcolm Knowles, when the following changes occur: "(1) addition of information, (2) increase in understanding, (3) acceptance of new attitudes, (4) acquisition of new appreciations, and (5) doing something with what has been learned." 

The most important aspect of learning is what the learner does with what he hears and experiences. The Apostle Paul describes learning as change in Romans 12:1-2. Paul declares:

> Therefore, my brothers, I implore you by God's mercy to offer your very selves to him: a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for his acceptance, the worship offered by mind and heart. Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade and your whole nature thus transformed (NEB).

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Meaningful learning takes place when a significant change transpires. The disciples of Jesus experienced a gradual transformation in their lives through their association with Jesus. Meaningful learning goes beyond the didactic presentation of facts. It is transactional in its nature and scope. Out of a relationship of trust between the teacher and learner the disciple observes lifestyle of his teacher and applies the truths learned to his own life.

The teacher's task is to help his students think for themselves and assimilate the biblical truths to their own lives. The students experience significant learning when they can take the instruction of their teacher and then think and act on the principles presented. Larry Richards, a specialist in Christian education adds further thought on this view. He says students must "toss the ideas around in their own minds to formulate and express them in their own words. For this kind of learning the students have to participate, to express their own ideas and their own insights." 17

Sensitive to Felt Needs

For life-changing learning to be affected the teacher-discipler must give special attention to the felt needs of those under his care. When the teacher is sensitive to class needs he can prepare to meet those needs that are evident. He should be aware of a number of

intrapersonal feelings that members of his class are probably experiencing. The following list suggests possible thoughts going on in the minds of people in any study group:

- I'm tired. Why did I stay up and watch the late movie?
- The teacher's really neat!
- My head hurts.
- I hope I don't get laid off next week.
- I wonder if I'll be accepted at the graduate school.
- Life is a bore. I must be going through a mid-life crisis.
- I'm so lonely, I hope somebody talks to me after class.
- I wish he wouldn't talk so loudly.

In order for a teacher to understand the intra-dynamics and feelings of students in his class he will need to interact with them on both formal and informal occasions. The wise teacher will also act as facilitator of the group to create an atmosphere of acceptance and trust. The possibility for significant learning to occur is increased when individuals in the group get caught up in the dynamic process of group thinking.

The teacher must continually remind himself that persons are more important than the information to be learned. An atmosphere of trust and confidence is crucial if the teacher is to meet felt needs. A group of eight to fifteen is the ideal size for a caring group. The classroom setting should help, not hinder, the group process. A room without distractions with comfortable chairs in a circle is ideal. Martha Leypoldt shares a variety of ways the teacher can use creative methods to teach in groups in her book, *40 Ways to Teach in Groups*. She says, "An atmosphere of trust, security, and mutual confidence must exist so that the learner will feel free to express his ideas
honestly." She goes on to say that "Changes in persons are more likely to take place in an atmosphere of interaction between the teacher and the pupils where there is opportunity for give-and-take in the clarification and expansion of ideas." Anything the teacher can do to facilitate the group to minister one to another, encourage each other, and build up each other will help the learners share their true feelings. Marlowe and Reed believe that how a person feels about what he hears is more important than the information shared. They state that "A person's emotional reaction toward information, ideas and facts may determine whether or not he learns."20

Age Factor in Learning

Research in the area of adult theory gives assurance to the teacher of adults that adults of all ages can learn, but at different levels and speeds. Most educators generally accept the view that learning is measured in terms of performance as an observable act. A person has learned when he improves his performance or changes. Huey Long concluded from field research that "age is a factor in learning to the extent that it may take an older person longer to learn a certain fact or task."21

19 Ibid., p. 28.
20 Monroe Marlowe and Bobbie Reed, Creative Bible Learning (Glendale: Gospel Light, 1977), p. 47.
Celia Friend and John Zubek came to the same conclusion after they conducted tests on 484 volunteers ranging from 12 to 80 years of age. According to their testing, critical thinking, (the ability to evaluate, draw inferences, detect assumptions, weigh evidence), is not highly developed until after the teen years. The ability develops rapidly in the early twenties and peaks in the mid-twenties and holds up well through the mid-thirties, and then declines steadily through old age. The over 60 age group allowed their emotional feelings, biases and prejudices to influence their decision making process to a greater degree than the under 25 age group.22

Age factor studies suggest to the local church the most productive age for the discipling and learning process. Special care should be given to provide discipling of adults between the ages of twenty and thirty-five in the total program of the church.

Summary

Leading and motivating adults to grow in Christ through meaningful learning is a challenging responsibility. The teacher's involvement in teaching and discipling new believers is a vital part of helping the local church fulfill the great commission. The process of making disciples is "... teaching them to observe all I have commanded you..." (Matt. 28:20). The teaching part of the great commission includes life-changing learning, meaningful learning, and ministering to the deepest needs of members in the discipleship group.

The discipleship model of the teaching-learning process is presented as an alternative to the secular learning theories cited in this chapter. Secular learning theories confine man to his human nature and limit the grace and love of God. The discipleship model focuses more upon leading learners to live like Jesus than upon the communication of information. The model incorporates both cognitive classroom study and relational informal learning opportunities for learners in a small group setting.
Chapter 3

LEADERSHIP AND MOTIVATION

A major consideration in the adult learning process is motivation. We learn what interests us and what we want to learn. The discipler of new Christians should be motivated to grow and embrace the biblical characteristics of a leader if he is going to lead and teach others.

Qualifications for Leadership

The Apostle Paul gives a list of spiritual qualities required for leaders in the local church (I Tim. 3:1-7 and Tit. 1:5-9). These qualities are more concerned with the inner character of a person's life than with his charisma (gifts) or personal talents. According to the above two passages, spiritual qualifications for leadership would include the following:

- above reproach
- husband of one wife
- temperate
- self-controlled
- respectable
- hospitable
- able to teach
- not given to much wine
- not quarrelsome
- not a lover of money
- manages his own family well
- not a recent convert
- has a good reputation
- disciplined
- knows sound doctrine
- not violent, but gentle.

The effective spiritual leader is committed to incorporating biblical qualities into his life. He develops personal traits to help him lead others. Ted Engstrom suggests nine traits common to all who are effective spiritual leaders: "enthusiastic, trustworthy, disciplined,
confident, decisive, courageous, light hearted, loyal and unselfish."  
Leadership does not come naturally for most people. Leadership ability requires taking the necessary steps to learn techniques and developing traits which will enhance leadership potential.

The Gift of Administration

The gift of leadership is not included in the biblical list of gifts (Eph. 4:11, Rom. 12:6-8, I Cor. 12:27-30). The gift that comes closest to leadership is the gift of administration. The Apostle Paul declares in I Cor. 12:28 that administration is a gift of God. Paul writes, "And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with the gift of administration." Gerhard Kittel discusses the gift of administration in relation to other spiritual gifts:

The reference can only be to the specific gifts which qualify a Christian to be a helmsman to his congregation, i.e., a true director of its order and therewith of its life. It is the grace of God to give gifts which equip for government. The striking point is that when in verse 29 Paul asks whether all are apostles, whether all are prophets or whether all have gifts of healing, there are no corresponding questions in respect of antilenpseis and kubernesis. There is a natural reason for this. If necessary, any number of the congregation may step in to serve as deacon or ruler. Hence these officers, as distinct from those mentioned in verse 29, may be elective. But this does not alter the fact that for their proper discharge the charisma of God is indispensable.  

Kenneth Gangel interprets the gift of administration as "a capacity for learning executive skills, not a package of already

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developed skills." According to both Kittel and Gangel, leadership traits can be developed by anyone who desires to study and develop the necessary skills. If a person has the desire to lead, his desire may be an indication he has the capacity to learn the necessary skills needed for leadership.

**Leader-Servant**

Jesus' leadership role focused on training individuals to model their lives after his life and teachings. He demonstrated the style of leadership he desired for his disciples to possess. He humbled himself and assumed the role of a servant (John 13:1-13). On several occasions he said, "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:26-38).

Lawrence Richards reminds us, "Only when we realize that each believer is both to be discipled and to disciple, to be ministered to and to minister, can we understand the role of leadership in the church."

Leadership in the local church is not a matter of a chosen few lording it over all the others, but everyone in the church working and serving in mutual leadership. The Apostle Peter sees the Christian leader as a servant who sets an example for others to follow. Peter instructs the elders in the church to be "shepherds of God's flock that

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is under your care, serving as overseers, not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock" (I Pet. 5:2-3).

The purpose of leadership in the local church is to build up the body. Christ gives the church leaders (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph. 4:11-12).

**Motivation**

Coupled with leadership is the factor of motivation to help and guide new believers to grow and mature in their Christian faith. Spencer Goodreds tells of an old gentleman riding on an ocean liner. A storm blew up at sea and a young woman, leaning against the ship's rail, lost her balance and was thrown overboard. Immediately another figure plunged into the waves beside her and held her up until a life boat rescued them. To everyone's astonishment the hero was the oldest man on ship--an octogenarian. That evening he was given a party in honor of his bravery. "Speech! Speech!" the other passengers cried. The old gentleman rose slowly and looked around at the enthusiastic gathering. "There's just one thing I'd like to know," he said, "Who pushed me?" 5

The task of the discipler is not to push, but gently lead and motivate new believers to grow. The discipler's life and witness should convey the words of the Apostle Paul, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1).

The leader and motivator of new believers needs a positive mental attitude while working with the people he is discipling.

Motivation Defined

Motivation is primarily an intra-dynamic attitude and can be defined as anything within the individual which incites him to motion; any idea, need, emotion or organic state that prompts to an action.

We are motivated from two sources, internally and externally. Dayton and Engstrom define motivation as "whatever it is inside a person that makes him continue his activity as a human being." Motivation is more an emotional than a logical process. It is complex in nature and not easy to define. Dr. Mungo Miller, the president of Affiliated Psychological Services, suggests six general principles given by psychologists in their research on motivation:

1. Motivation is psychological, not logical. It is primarily an emotional process.

2. Motivation is fundamentally an unconscious process. The behavior we see in ourselves and others may appear to be illogical, but somehow, inside the individual, what he is doing makes sense to him.

3. Motivation is an individual matter. The key to a person's behavior lies within himself.

4. Not only do motivating needs differ from person to person, but in any individual, they vary from time to time.

5. Motivation is inevitably a special process. We must depend on others for satisfaction of many of our needs.

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6. In the vast majority of our daily actions, we are guarded by habits established by motivational processes that were active many years earlier.7

Paul J. Meyer, President of Success Motivation Institute, makes these helpful comments concerning motivation:

No matter who you are or what your age may be, if you want to achieve permanent, sustaining success, the motivation that will drive you toward that goal must come from within. It must be personal, deep-rooted and a part of your inner-most thoughts. All other motivation, the excitement of a crowd, the stimulation of a pep-talk, the exhilaration of a passing circumstance is external and temporary. It will not last.

To get at the dynamic behind motivation is to discover the deepest needs of people. It is not my purpose to discuss in depth the various motivational theories. My purpose is to help the discipler of new believers develop awareness of the process of motivation and adapt his leadership to meet real needs.

Felt Needs

Abraham Maslow, a social psychologist, researched the basic needs of people and summed up his findings in five hierarchical concepts: (1) physiological needs, (2) safety needs, (3) belongingness and love needs, (4) esteem needs and (5) the need for self-actualization. Maslow postulates that needs on the higher level cannot motivate when lower needs are not met; but when the lower needs are fulfilled, they


cease to motivate and higher needs take over. The hierarchy of needs can be illustrated in a stair-step model. See figure 1.

Physiological needs include bodily desires, such as hunger and thirst. If these desires go unsatisfied, all resources of the human being are given toward meeting them. Safety needs are directed toward physical safety and emotional assurance. Belongingness and love focus on the need to give and receive love. Esteem is closely related to belongingness and love. Esteem is a desire for a sense of self-worth and self-respect. The highest need, according to Maslow, is self-actualization. At this stage people can give of themselves and find individual fulfillment through creative activities. Maslow says,

Self-actualizing people are, without one single exception, involved in a cause outside their own skin, in something outside themselves. They are devoted, working at something, something that is very precious to them - some calling or vocation in the old sense, the priestly sense. They are working at something which fate has called them to somehow and which they work at and which they love, so that the work-joy dichotomy in them disappears.10


The hierarchy of needs listed by Maslow is relevant to the local church as it helps believers grow in their faith. Jesus was interested in meeting the basic needs of those to whom he ministered. Before Jesus communicated his message of salvation and forgiveness of sin he touched the blind, healed the sick, and demonstrated concern at the lower needs level. The local body of believers should help new believers feel a sense of belongingness and love. As each member ministers to one another there should be mutual acceptance and building of each person's self-worth and self-respect. The ministry of the Holy Spirit helps a new believer reach the level of self-actualization. In the power of the Holy Spirit a person is cleansed from selfish ambitions and given agape love for selfless service.

Taylor McConnell sees people being motivated by having truistic needs met. He believes people who have the ability to motivate others are actually responding to the feelings of others—responding in such a fashion that others are able to gratify some of their desires, while at the same time helping you to gratify some of yours. This mutual satisfaction of internal desires is what motivation is all about according to McConnell.\footnote{Taylor McConnell, \textit{Group Leadership for Self-Realization} (New York: Petrocelli Books, 1974), p. 63.} McConnell's view of motivation misses the New Testament motivation of self-less love seen in the life and ministry of Jesus and the early Christians in Acts.
Spiritual Motivation

A higher level of motivation than self-seeking and need-met activities is the motivation of biblical love. Christ works in the believer's heart transforming selfish motives into self-forgetful attitudes. The Holy Spirit is God's agent for transforming a person from the lower level of humanistic motivation to the higher level of Christlike love. The Apostle Paul testifies that his old selfish desires were crucified with Christ as he allowed Christ to live through him (Gal. 2:20). Christ living in us is our hope of glory.

Paul says, "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us" (Rom. 5:5).

Motivation for the Christian focuses upon loving and serving God because God first loved us and manifested His love by dying for us (I John 4:8-10). Donald Joy describes Christian motivation as commitment to the highest spiritual values. He says:

It is divesting myself of self-interest: escape from hell, obedience for obedience's sake. It is dying as a means of displaying love. It is being so responsive to the ultimate needs of the world as to lose my ego in reaching out to serve: but it is (homonomy) to discover that in doing so, I find my truest fulfillment, my best realization of my own identity. It is to be motivated by commitment to the highest values in heaven or on earth, and to spontaneously obey the inner conscience in which they reside. It is to be able to say, 'Blot out my name, but let these live,' or 'though He slay me, yet will I trust him.'

Motivation of the highest order goes beyond legalistic obedience to Biblical principles. It manifests itself in loving God with

all our mind, heart, and strength because of who God is and not because of what we desire God to do for us. Motivation of the highest order does not fluctuate according to the emotions of the moment. It is grounded in the total commitment of one's will. Jesus gives the believer more confidence, more joy and excites and moves him to action. Jesus motivated people in his earthly ministry by getting involved with them and leading them through love. Motivation modeled after Jesus is selfless. It is that self-less love that should motivate the discipler-leader of new believers.

Goal Setting

A final thought on leadership and motivation is goal setting. Specific goals are needed to challenge leaders to act. They keep the leader from drifting in his Christian life. Goals should be within the range of challenge, low enough to be reasonable, with more than routine effort; high enough to require worthy but possible effort and still be reachable. Schaller and Tidwell suggest, "The goals meet people's needs at the levels of their needs, and beyond, until the highest needs are met."\(^{13}\)

Summary

Effective Christian leaders have the goal of guiding new Christians toward spiritual maturity by integrating leadership principles with Biblical motivation. Christ's love at work in the leader's heart gives him the following characteristics: "joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23a). The leader gently leads new believers through relationships of mutual love and trust. He also considers the intraneeds of those he is discipling, and seeks to lead with Christ-like, self-forgetting love.
Our model as teacher and discipler of new Christians is Jesus the master teacher. He demonstrated the principles for effective teaching. His friends and enemies recognized him as a teacher. Jesus taught as one who had the final word. Jesus said, "You have heard it said unto you, but I say unto you. . . ." Nicodemus, himself a teacher and ruler of the Jews, recognized Jesus as a "teacher come from God" (John 3:2).

According to the established teaching custom of his day, Jesus was quite unorthodox in his teaching style. He was not bound to any set traditional form. He taught to meet the deepest needs of people. James Stewart says, "The leading feature of all Jesus' teaching was its spontaneity and freedom. It was above all rules."¹ The principles and techniques Jesus used in teaching are still appropriate for the teacher and discipler of new believers to use today.

**Jesus Taught with Authority**

Jesus had absolute confidence in his message, therefore he taught with authority. Jesus knew the Scriptures and quoted freely from them in his teaching. Elmer Towns writes concerning the authority of Jesus, "He had confidence that stemmed from knowing thoroughly both

what He would teach and whom He would teach."² The scribes and teachers of the law would quote at length from the rabbis, but Jesus, the master teacher could declare: "I say unto you." The Jews doubted the authority of Jesus because Jesus had not gone through the normal course of instruction. Jesus answers by pointing out that God's will is done in his own person and teaching. Kittel says, "Anyone who does God's will recognizes that nature of Jesus' teaching as divine authority."³

**Jesus Understood the People He Taught**

Jesus adapted his message to his audience. He started at the level of his hearers and spoke to their needs. He used figures of speech they understood. His message was communicated in forms of parables and word pictures familiar to all. Herman Horne in his book, Teaching Techniques of Jesus, notes that, "There are at least twenty-five different stories recorded in the Gospels. The term 'parable' occurs fifty times in the New Testament."⁴

Jesus was a student of human nature. As perfect man he understood the total needs of men. Jesus could cut through the superficial questions and arguments of men and speak to their deepest needs. When Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, Jesus spoke to Nicodemus's deepest

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⁴Herman Horne, Teaching Techniques of Jesus (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1978), p. 76.
need even before Nicodemus could state it. Jesus said, "Nicodemus, you must be born again before you can see the Kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

Jesus was able to see things from every person's point of view. Jesus met lower needs before he spoke to the spiritual needs of an individual. The first concern of Jesus was not getting his message across, it was the person, himself. Donald Joy shares this view,

Our Lord always sought to minister to the whole man in such a way as to lead him into a whole and fruitful relationship with God and with other men. What is clear, however, is that Jesus did not have a series of pat answers which He reduced to a set of sermons on how to be good. He did not try to talk people into living a new life through a series of lectures. That is, 'content' was not the first concern of Jesus. The person was the first concern.5

Jesus built his lessons upon common things in life. He spoke to the interests of his audience. He spoke of the Kingdom of God in terms of the familiar—the wheat and the tares, the pearl of great price, and the good and bad fish.

Jesus used the technique of curiosity to get the attention of people. In John 4:1-43 Jesus used a number of methods to communicate truth to the Samaritan woman. Herman Horne points out six teaching methods Jesus used in talking to the Samaritan woman. First, he established a point of contact. Both Jesus and the woman were at the well for water. Jesus was thirsty and used a natural request to make a point of contact when He said, "Give me a drink." Second, Jesus aroused her attention and got her interest. Jesus did the unusual and unexpected thing by talking to the woman. It was unusual for a Jew to speak to a Samaritan. Third, Jesus used the conversational method in

his discourse with the woman. Seven times Jesus addressed her and six times she replied before the disciples interrupted their conversation. Fourth, Jesus taught her on a one-on-one basis, and exemplified the principle of personal association for a brief time. Fifth, he answered her questions, as well as fulfilling the deepest longings of her nature. He built upon her answers and expanded his teaching. Sixth, Jesus used contrast in moving from the physical to the spiritual realm in his instruction. He made the comparison between drinking water after which one becomes thirsty again and living water which one can drink and never thirst again.6

Jesus also used emotion in his teaching. He did not suppress his emotions but freely expressed his feelings before his disciples. At a wedding feast in Cana Jesus joined in the joy and gaiety of the occasion. At the funeral of Lazarus Jesus wept and then transformed the situation of sorrow into joy by raising Lazarus from the dead.

Jesus appealed to his hearers' mind by using thought and imagination in his teaching. His listeners could not evade the question, "What think ye of Christ?" When Jesus spoke in parables he sent imaginations soaring.

The teaching methods of Jesus can be used by the teacher of new believers to help them understand and apply the truths of God's Word to their lives. Implementing the methods of Jesus means more than a classroom experience. Jesus built his teaching around his association with his followers and their common life experiences.

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6Horne, op. cit., pp. 4-6.
Jesus Built on the Experiences of His Hearers

Jesus did not have a classroom in which to hold His discipleship training. He taught his disciples as they walked along the roads of Galilee. His class setting was in the great out-of-doors: in a boat while crossing the Sea of Galilee, on a mountain side in Caesarea Philippi, or on the banks of the Jordan River.

Jesus taught about practical everyday situations—weddings, home, family, sickness, health, brotherhood, and love. Jesus did not use written materials for his class. His teachings were oral. As events in his ministry came up, he spoke to the situation. Jesus declared that he was the light of the world and backed up his claim by healing a blind man. Jesus announced that he was the resurrection and the life and then raised Lazarus from the dead.

Jesus knew that we learn best by doing. He called his disciples to "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men;" rather than sit in a classroom and listen to his lesson. Jesus called his followers to action. According to Jesus, experience is the best way to learn.

Jesus Demonstrated what He Taught

Jesus taught that believers are to "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Then Jesus demonstrated the principle of love and forgiveness on the cross of Calvary. Jesus declared in his sermon on the mount, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Repeatedly Jesus showed mercy by healing the sick, the blind, and the deaf.
Jesus taught humility by saying, "He who would be greatest among you will be your servant." He exemplified humility by taking the role of a servant and washing the disciples' feet.

The teaching method of Jesus was to address the multitudes and to select a few men with whom he could associate and share the deep truths of God.

**Summary**

As a teacher and leader of new believers our task is to follow the model of the master teacher. We can teach the Word of God with authority, but we also should be sensitive to human needs and be a student of human nature. Our aim is to get the lesson content across, and also to meet the total needs of people. Our teaching should be practical and built on the various experiences of those we are discipling. Most important of all, we should practice what we teach. We must show new believers how to live by our life and witness.

Our goal is to disciple a few so they in turn will disciple others. The discipling task is not easy. As you work with new babes in Christ, remember they are "babes." Be patient. Jesus worked more than three years with his disciples and after three years they were still immature in many ways.

The following sections of this manual on Bible study, prayer, fellowship, and witnessing guides new believers in these areas of growth. The goal is to help new believers develop a balanced Christian life so they will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves of world pressures and the winds of false teachings. Instead, they will speak the truth in love, and grow up into Christlike attitudes
and actions (Eph. 4:11-15).
Chapter 5

INSTRUCTIONAL PROCEDURES

This chapter endeavors to present instructional procedures that will assist the teacher-discipler in utilizing the discipleship model for learning. The goal of the discipleship model is to see new believers become Christlike in their attitudes and actions. This teaching model is patterned after the life and teaching ministry of Jesus. Jesus' method in discipling his followers was to spend most of his time in close association with them. This procedure of training would be difficult to duplicate today. The discipleship model presented and discussed in chapter 2 seeks to integrate both cognitive and relational learning experiences. The model assumes that the teacher-discipler presents the content of A Christian Growth Manual in an informal small group setting.

Teacher Preparation

How to Present the Manual

Material contained in the student manual could be presented using the lecture method. However, recent research by Malcolm S. Knowles shows that adults are not effectively taught by the lecture method. A better procedure would be to present the main principles on an overhead projector. This would give an overview of the chapter currently being studied. Then divide the group into smaller cells of four or five members. The cell groups would interact and discuss the
principles as presented on the overhead projector. Prayer time could also become a part of the cell group activity.

One possible way to begin the discipleship manual study would be to have each person list his reasons for taking the class. The teacher might also ask the students to write down any questions they have and turn them in to him. Inform them that the questions will be discussed in the small cell groups during future class sessions. The teacher can exercise creativity and encourage the learners to accept their share of responsibility for planning the learning experiences. Mutual sharing in the responsibility for planning the class will facilitate a positive learning environment.

Discussion Leader

As a teacher-leader you should see yourself as a guide and coordinator of the class. The discipleship theory for learning views learning as an informal educational procedure. The focus is upon mutual ministry, not one person telling the others how to live or what to do. Lawrence Richards states four requisites that suggest ways to provide an informal learning experience for the discipleship group.

1. The teacher as a model does not present himself as one who is an authority but one who is subject, with the learner, to the authority of God through Scripture.

2. To serve as an example of Scripture's life meaning, there must be a relationship between the teacher and the learner which is close and personal, and which lets the learner come to know the teacher as a person.

3. A love relationship between teacher and learner is important as well.
4. Interaction in settings where the learner can see the truth lived by the teacher has priority over other settings.¹

The teacher's procedures in leading the discipleship class can serve as a model for the cell groups. The teacher is the one responsible for creating an atmosphere of acceptance and trust. He acts as a facilitator to discussion and interaction on the principles presented in the manual. The following guidelines are given to assist the teacher in serving as a discussion leader.

1. Be prepared and have on paper your planned use of the class time.

2. Be enthusiastic and call each person in the class by his first name.

3. Be careful to listen and don't put down questions and answers from students you feel are simplistic.

4. Encourage each peer to share his views. The small cell group of four or five will help students tell their personal ideas and concerns.

5. Direct the discussion so the group does not get off on tangents.

6. Do not argue and keep controversial issues minimal.

7. Summarize the various views presented by the group at the end of each discussion session.

**Discovery Learning**

The editors of Aldersgate Graded Curriculum have developed a life-changing model based on five steps of discovery learning. These five steps are listed and explained below. These steps will assist the

teachers in preparing to present the manual to the discipleship class.

Engage

The opening part of a class session is extremely important. The teacher tries to engage interest by using various methods according to the age level and interests of those in the group. When a student's curiosity and interest have been aroused he is ready for the next step.

Explore

The teacher guides his students in their exploration and investigation of the materials. He asks them questions to assist them in exploring biblical truths so they will gain insight into the subject.

Eureka

When the student gains insight from his investigation he experiences joy from his discovery. The student is assisted in gaining insight by the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would guide believers into the truth. The Holy Spirit helps the student gain insight and then it is up to the student to act according to what he has learned.

Examine

The student now examines his own life in the light of his insight. The task of the teacher is to help guide the student so he personalizes the biblical truth. The student might ask himself, "Does my life align with the insights I have discovered?" He might

also ask, "What do I need to change in my life in light of the Scripture studied?"

**Enact**

The final step is the most important in the discovery-learning process. Learning does not take place until the student acts on his new found knowledge. When biblical truths are implemented then life-changing learning has taken place. Only when a significant change has taken place can it be said that meaningful learning has transpired. Meaningful learning goes beyond the didactic presentation of facts. It is transactional. Out of a relationship of trust the learner examines and evaluates both the teacher's message and life and applies the truths learned from the leader to his own life.³

This manual which presents discipleship principles will not in itself produce life-changing learning. The view of this writer is that

Chapter 6

CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY AND LIFE-CHANGING LEARNING-- CASE STUDY

The introductory part of this chapter outlines the case study method. A case study titled "Life-Changing Learning" follows utilizing three levels of reflection.

**Introduction to the Case Study Methodology**

The case study method serves as a guide to facilitate reflection upon and evaluation of materials presented in the *Christian Growth Manual*. Events recorded in the case studies are relevant to the materials covered in the manual. They reflect upon events in the life and ministry of the local church or scripture passages.

**Three Levels of Reflection**

The case study method includes three levels of reflection.¹

**First-Level Reflection.** Level one reflection covers an introduction to the event, background relevant to the study, and a description of the experience or scripture passage illustrating the materials covered.

**Second-Level Reflection.** Level two reflection involves careful examination and reflection of the experiences described in level one.

reflection. Analysis of the event described in level one is considered in level two. Inter-dynamics of persons involved in the experience, their motivations, and interactions are reflected upon. The main event is examined in the light of both Scripture and practical experience.

Third-Level Reflection. Level three reflection gives careful attention to evaluation. Level three asks appropriate questions: "What could have been done differently?", "How does the experience measure up to the teaching of Scripture?", and "What changes could be made to integrate practical learning from the experience to effective ministry?"

The Use of the Case Study in this Manual

The case study presented at the end of Section I, "Leadership and Motivation," is for the leaders in youth and adult education. This case study reflects on learning and how learning is transferred and implemented into the lives of the learners. The case studies presented at the end of the other sections can either be discussed as a group in the discipleship class or the teacher can assign several members of the class to meet together in smaller groups and reflect on the study. The purpose of the case study is to serve as a springboard for discussion, reflection and integration of the truths into practical ministry.

Life-Changing Learning--Case Study

Focus

It was a hot, steamy Sunday morning in July, 1979. I was leading my first worship service following conference and family camp.
I had been appointed to lead the Taylor Free Methodist Church as their pastor for the tenth year. During the morning worship service I asked for volunteers to share what family camp and conference had meant to them. Several adults and youth stood to their feet to testify. Four youths were especially excited about their spiritual growth. Other teens testified that they had made first-time commitments to Christ during the seven day family camp held on the campus of Spring Arbor College. One young man, seventeen years old, stood and said: "I did a lot of soul searching at family camp. I must confess that Christianity has been like a hobby in my life. But from now on I want Jesus to be real in my life. I want my Christian faith to be genuine. I want my life to be a witness to others that Jesus is real." The focus of this event is how biblical teaching was transferred and applied to a high school youth and several adults.

Background

The Taylor Free Methodist Church was organized in 1970. All age levels in the church experienced steady growth for five consecutive years. Then the attendance leveled off with an average of 200 in both Sunday School and Church. The high school youth were of a special concern to me. For eight years their total thrust revolved around social activities and special youth events. Sermons, Sunday School lessons, Bible studies did not seem to soak in. There was only sporadic enthusiasm about spiritual growth and maturity. A number of events took place in 1979 that brought a fresh wind of the Holy Spirit to the youth and members of the Taylor Free Methodist Church.
Description of the Event

During the spring of 1979 I began a series of sermons on the "Mission of the Church" during the Sunday morning worship services. My messages were gleaned from the book of Acts and Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. For eight Sunday evenings I taught a seminar on "Discipleship." An over-head projector was used to present the lessons and at the end of the presentation time was given for the audience to ask questions and discuss the content of the material.

In early June I shared the outline of my Christian Growth Manual at a breakfast meeting attended by the Men's Fellowship of the church, including both adults and youth. I read Acts 2:42-47 and made comments on the four areas of the manual: Bible study, prayer, Christian fellowship, and discipleship training. I outlined the need for a balanced Christian life. During the following weeks I heard my Bible study discussed in several places. The outline was used for one of the high school Bible studies on Wednesday night by one of the young men who attended the breakfast meeting.

Our Southern Michigan Conference Family Camp was held in July. Thirty-two attended from the Taylor church. Seven of the thirty-two were high school youth and two were college young adults. During family camp two of the high school youth made first time decisions for Christ and the others rededicated their lives to the Lord. Following family camp the youth started practicing scriptural truths. Their focus turned from social activities to sincere Bible study. They initiated a Monday night teen visitation night with as many as seven going out...
visiting other youth. Their Wednesday night Bible study group grew from nine to a high of thirty during the months of July and August. Many adults and youth made decisions for Christ during the months of July, August and September. A total of twenty-two youth and adults were baptized in two lakeside services.

Analysis

The event described shows the complexity of learning. In chapter two of section I we studied several views on adult learning. Learning in its most simple form is defined as change. Learning has taken place only when the student has transferred knowledge to his decisions and actions. Life-changing learning cannot be compartmentalized or confined to certain areas of the church's ministry. Facilitators of learning are inclusive rather than exclusive. Numerous experiences in Sunday School, worship, Bible study groups and the family precipitate life-changing learning.

Learning results from the total milieu of the life and ministry of the local church. Significant learning that took place in the lives of the youth and young adults described in the case study was not limited to a particular Sunday School class, a series of sermons, small group Bible study, or experiences at family camp. All the ministries cited worked together and were supportive to produce an atmosphere of life-changing learning.

Evaluation

Meaningful learning pushes us to redefine our concept of how transfer learning is achieved. Christian education in the local church
goes beyond an hour spent in an age-level Sunday school class. The total church program must become supportive to motivating students for implementation of truth into action. When all experiences in ministry are coordinated to reach stated biblical objectives, whether in a worship service, discipleship class, or weekend retreat, then significant learning transpires.

Questions for Discussion and Interaction

1. Life-changing learning is.

2. How does the description of the event in the case study show the complexity of learning? What were some factors that laid groundwork and gave support and reinforcement to learning?

3. You have been appointed to a committee to help plan the total program of Christian education in the local church. Your goal is to provide learning experiences for youth and adults. What specific recommendations for programs would you make to the church board?
SECTION II

GROWING THROUGH GOD'S WORD

Chapter 7  BEGINNING YOUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST
Chapter 8  JESUS AND THE WORD
Chapter 9  CONFIDENCE IN THE WORD
Chapter 10 MEANINGFUL BIBLE STUDY
Chapter 11 GROWING THROUGH THE WORD—CASE STUDY
Welcome to the family of God. You have become a child of God. You have invited Christ into your heart and your goal is to make Jesus Lord of every area of your life. Your life has been transformed, it is now your desire to become strong in your faith.

When you accepted Jesus as your Saviour and Lord you took the first step into a great adventure. Your goal is to become spiritually mature and discover God's will for your life. Your model for growth is Jesus. Jesus demonstrated by his life how you can live "in a world" without being "of the world" (John 14:14-15). You can live in a world that denies Jesus and rejects the power of God. But you can refuse to conform to that world or compromise your biblical convictions (Rom. 12:1-2).

An important fact for you to remember is that you are saved by faith and you live by faith. You might be tempted to base your salvation upon how you "feel" (Eph. 2:8-9). If you rely on feelings alone you will begin to doubt God and miss the victorious Christian life God wants to give you.

Your commitment to Jesus is similar to the covenant commitment couples make when they marry. Their vow is to love in sickness or health, for richer or poorer, and until death. There will be times when the newly married husband and wife may not feel married. There will be times they might not feel loved. However, they know they are
married because they have committed their lives to one another. The Christian marriage is based upon commitment, not feeling. Even so your salvation through Jesus is also based upon commitment, not feeling.

By an act of your will you have surrendered your life to Christ. You have confessed your sins, repented of sin and personally invited Christ to be your Saviour and forgive your sins. Your assurance of salvation is not based upon dramatic feelings, bright lights, angelic visions, or explosive emotions. You are saved because you took Jesus at his Word. By faith you know Christ is in your heart and you know you have eternal life. I John 5:11-13 states,

And this is the testimony, God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life. He who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

For further thoughts on the biblical basis of assurance turn to Appendix F, and study the Scripture verses on the theme When You Believed.

As a new Christian you must stick to the fundamentals. One summer I took tennis lessons. I wanted to learn fancy serves, how to spin the ball during volleys, and slam the ball across the net. The instructor kept reminding me to stick to the basic fundamental rules of the game. Before I could hit fast serves, put spin on the ball, and play hard volleys, I had to work on the fundamentals. I had to practice holding the racquet correctly. I was taught how to hold the racquet a certain way for back-hand and another way for fore-hand. I learned how to place my feet during back-hand and fore-hand volleys. I learned the correct position for my feet before serving the ball.
I had to learn the basic rules of the game before I could enjoy competitive play.

In the Christian life there are fundamentals we must learn and abide by as long as we live. In our enthusiasm and desire to do great things for God we can get carried away and forget the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Four disciplines basic to a growing faith are Bible study, prayer, fellowship and witnessing. All four areas are needed for a balanced Christian life.

I came to a point in my Christian life and witness when I became frustrated and discouraged. I was overly success oriented. I wanted people to look at me and see what great things I was doing for God. I was quick to let people know how busy I was and how hard I was working. I couldn't figure out why I felt defeated and discouraged.

As I reflected on my life I realized I was not growing spiritually. I was not growing in Bible study, prayer, fellowship or witnessing. I needed to get back to the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

This manual is prepared to help you stick to the fundamentals. The materials included in the manual list basic beliefs you will need to apply to your Christian life as long as you live. As you build your life upon these basic disciplines of faith, your life will be victorious and fruitful.

**Growth Is by Supernatural Life**

Growth for the believer is by supernatural life. The believer has been born again not of the will of man but by the Spirit of God. He is now God's child and a member of the Kingdom of God. Growth is accomplished as he allows the Holy Spirit to direct his goals and
ambitions in life. The Apostle Peter challenged all Christians to "grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18). When you invited Jesus to come into your life, Jesus gave you a new nature, a supernatural life (John 3:3, John 1:12), a life that is honoring Jesus and committed to doing his will. Paul describes the transformed life when he says, "For if a man is in Christ he becomes a new person altogether—the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh" (II Cor. 5:17, Phillips). One of the laws of life, whether in the natural realm or the spiritual realm, is that meaningful growth takes time. Jesus describes four types of soil in the parable of the soils, Matt. 13:1-8. The soils represent four different ways people respond to the Gospel. The first soil represents hearers who reject the message and become self-hardened. The second soil is like people who hear the gospel and make a fast emotional decision to accept the message. The third type of soil is soil that becomes infested with thorns and seeds. Seeds planted in thorny soil grow up but are overcome by the thorns and weeds and die. This type of soil represents the person who hears the gospel and accepts it, but grows weak because he fails to take time to nurture the disciplines required to grow and remain strong. Eventually he loses his faith because he did not take time to become strong. Without the disciplines of growing in the Word of God, prayer, fellowship and witnessing, the Christian succumbs to the cares of the world and pleasures of life. These disciplines equip the believer to become like the good soil mentioned by Jesus in the parable. The good soil represents the person who hears and understands the message and
lives an abundant and fruitful life.

Here is a solemn truth for new believers. If you are not growing and becoming strong in Christ, you are in the slow process of spiritually dying. Just as you need food for physical growth, you need spiritual food for spiritual growth. Jesus is your source for supernatural growth.

**Jesus is the Source of Our Life/Grace**

Jesus is our example for Christian growth. He grew "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Jesus grew in wisdom (intellectually), in stature (physically), in favor with God (spiritually), and men (socially). Adequate growth for our Christian life means balanced growth. Then Jesus is the center of our life and all our plans and decisions revolve around him.

The four disciplines of prayer, the Word, fellowship and witnessing give us the balance we need to become strong in our Christian faith. Each discipline is equally important for balanced growth. To spend time in one area and neglect another area is to be out of balance.

As a new Christian you should be cautious of people or groups who would try to persuade you to get excited about a specific area of Christian need or growth and neglect one of the other areas needed for vital Christian growth: Bible study, prayer, fellowship and witnessing.

The balanced Christian life was experienced in the early church. Acts 2:42 says, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, and to the breaking of bread and to prayer." For a
balanced Christian life, carefully manage your time so you can incorporate all four disciplines into your life.

We now turn to the first discipline for Christian growth—growing through the Word.

**Discussion and Interaction Questions**

1. Describe several ways Jesus serves as a model for growing Christians.

2. What does the scriptural phrase, "We are saved by faith and not by works," mean to you (Eph. 2:8-9)? Explain how the Christian life might be compared to the covenant commitment couples make in marriage.

3. Jesus grew in wisdom, in stature, in favor with God, and man (Luke 2:52). Why is it important for believers to experience balanced growth? What are possible dangers of unbalanced growth?

4. John writes in I John 5:13 that we can know that we have eternal life. What are some evidences from Scripture and from your personal experience that give you the assurance you have eternal life? See Appendix F for additional Scripture verses on assurance.
Chapter 8

JESUS AND THE WORD

Our model for Christian growth is Jesus. Jesus grew "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52 KJV). Throughout his life Jesus sought guidance and obeyed the written Word of God (Old Testament). From early childhood through his adult ministry, Jesus made God's Word pre-eminent in his life. At the age of twelve the account is given of Jesus "in the temple sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions." (Luke 2:46 RSV).

Jesus and Biblical Authority

Before Jesus entered his public ministry, he fasted and prayed for forty days and was tempted of the devil. On three occasions Jesus was tempted and all three times Jesus turned to the written Word as his authority for resistance to the temptations.

Satan questioned Christ's divinity in the first temptation by saying: "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread" (Matt. 4:3 RSV). Jesus answered with a quote from Deut. 8:3: "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4 RSV).

The devil mis-quoted Scripture in the second temptation to try to get Jesus to do something foolish. He wanted Jesus to presume upon
God's grace. Lucifer wanted Jesus to make God's grace cheap and trite. He took Jesus to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God'" (Matt. 4:5-7 RSV). Jesus quoted Deut. 6:16 in his reply to Satan's challenge.

A third time Satan tempted Jesus to worship him and commit idolatry. Matt. 4:7-10 gives the account:

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Begone, Satan! for it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve.'"

Jesus quoted from Deut. 6:13 in refuting Satan's third and final temptation in the wilderness.

Throughout his life and ministry Jesus appealed to the Scriptures as his final authority.1 Jesus asked in Matt. 19:4, "Have you not read." Then Jesus declared, "You do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29).

To every question and objection to his life and ministry Jesus replied with the Scriptures and no one was able to prove him wrong (Compare John 10:32-36). S. Pierre Ch. Marcel observes that "by the constant use of the principle of analogy--Scripture interprets

Scripture—he overrules His contradictors." Indeed, Jesus was a man of the Word. By his constant use of the Scriptures Jesus declared the authority of the written Word of God.

Our Defense Against the Devil

As a new Christian you can use God's Word as your weapon of defense against the tricks of the devil. The Apostle Paul tells us that our warfare is not a physical battle but a spiritual battle. Our fight is not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers of the universe (Eph. 6:12).

Satan is powerful. He is Lucifer, a fallen arch-angel. Sometime between God's creation of the universe and the creation of man, there was a war in heaven. Lucifer, led a rebellion against God, his creator, and desired to be equal with God. God cast Lucifer out of heaven and he became the prince of outer-darkness and hell. II Pet. 2:4 reads, "God spared not the angels that sinned but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into the chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

Satan, the god of this world (II Cor. 4:4), is powerful, but the risen Christ is more powerful. When Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave, the defeating powers of Satan were broken. The cross provided access for man to come directly to God through Jesus. Greater is Christ who is in you than Satan who is in the world. We have this promise in I John 3:8, "He who does what is sinful is of the

devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."

Jesus Our Way to Victory

Our defense against the tricks of the devil is the Word of God. Jesus relied on the Word as his authority for victory over temptation. We also must look to the Word for our authority. Throughout his earthly life and ministry Jesus lived as a man. Jesus was the Son of God, the second person of the Godhead and equal with God. But, during his earthly ministry, Jesus lived as a man. He did not rely upon supernatural powers. He lived as a perfect human person.

God became man in Jesus. He took the form of a human body and lived as a man. All divine powers were put aside. Jesus lived by faith and complete trust in God the Father. John reports that the Word (Jesus) became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). In Jesus God humbled himself and took on the form of man and limited himself to man's human nature. Phil. 2:6-8 declares that God stepped out of heaven and limited himself to become like man. As a man, Jesus was tempted in every way we are tempted; yet he did not yield to sin (Heb. 4:15).

Jesus used the revealed Word of God to gain victory over the lusts of the flesh, the pride of life, and the temptations of the devil. If Jesus, God's perfect man, needed the Bible for victorious living, how much more a Christian needs to study and apply God's Word to his life.
Questions for Discussion and Interaction

1. Using Jesus as our model, what are some ways we can respond to temptation?

2. During his earthly ministry, Jesus lived as a man. Heb. 4:15 portrays Jesus as being tempted in every way like we are tempted, yet sinless. Why does Christ's victory as a man give you hope? Turn to I Cor. 10:13 for additional information on temptation.

3. Have you recently gone through a time of testing? If so, share your experience and how you handled the temptation?
Chapter 9

CONFIDENCE IN THE WORD

When you study the Bible you can have confidence you are studying the very Word of God. The Bible deals with history, but it is more than a history book. The Bible speaks about science, but it is more than a science book. The Bible is a book about psychology, but it is more than a psychology book. The Bible reveals God's plan of salvation through the ages. The Bible is about a person, Jesus Christ the Messiah and Savior of the world. "The Word," Jesus Christ, is God's revelation incarnate in human flesh (I John 1:1, 14). The Bible is "the Word" for it is God's revelation, incarnate in human language.¹

The Bible is God's revelation and communication of truth to his creation. Rene Pasche reminds us that just as any man would want to communicate with his child, "so would not God desire to come into contact with the beings he created in His image, being capable of communing with Him on a moral, an intellectual, and a spiritual plane."²

The Meaning of Inspiration

The Apostle Paul reported that "all Scripture is given by


Inspiration of God" (II Tim. 3:16). Inspiration (Greek, theopneustos) is the combination of two Greek words, theos (God) and pneuma (spirit or breath). Inspiration means that all Scripture is "God breathed." We accept the sixty-six books of the Bible as inspired (God breathed). God inspired and instructed men to write history and truth concerning God's promised plan of salvation through Jesus Christ. The Apostle Peter describes the meaning of inspiration:

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:20-21).

We use the word "plenary inspiration" to describe our view of biblical inspiration. Holy men of God wrote the original documents exercising their own personalities and literary talents, yet writing under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. The Discipline of the Free Methodist Church of North America states:

We believe the Holy Scriptures are God's record, uniquely inspired by the Holy Spirit. They have been given without error faithfully recorded by holy men of God as moved by the Holy Spirit, and subsequently transmitted without corruption of any essential doctrine. They are the authoritative record of the revelation of God's acts in creation, in history, in our salvation, and especially in his Son, Jesus Christ.³

God through the Holy Spirit has provided an accurate and true record of his redemptive acts in Christ. The Bible is not a book intended for finding proof-texts for our beliefs. It is a source book on the life and teachings of Jesus. Christ, the living Word, is the perfect self-revelation of God. W. T. Purkiser states, "The Bible, the written Word, is the divinely inspired and completely adequate record of the

redemptive ministry and work of Christ."\(^4\) The Bible carries authority because it is a word from God. John R. Stott gives further insight into the meaning of inspiration in his book, *Understanding the Bible*. He writes:

If it is a word from God, it has authority over men. For behind every word that anybody utters stands the person who speaks it. It is the speaker himself (his character, knowledge and position) who determines how people regard his words. So God's Word carries God's authority. It is because of who He is that we believe what He has said.\(^5\)

Jesus is our final authority concerning the Bible. John says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). In the strictest sense Jesus, the Eternal Word, is the only true and adequate revelation of the Father. No person has seen the Father. Jesus alone has declared what God is like. H. Orton Wiley says, "His testimony is the last word in objective revelation and this testimony is perfected in the Christian Scriptures."\(^6\) Scripture as "God-breathed" is the supernatural revelation of God.

**Biblical Authority**

The Bible speaks for itself. The authors of the Bible were breathed into by the Holy Spirit, so their writings transcend human power and become Divinely authoritative. Peter declares that the


prophetic word did not originate in the minds of men but with God (II Pet. 1:19-21). Because the words of men were carried by the Holy Spirit, their words are reliable, more reliable than human eye-witnesses. Jesus stated that Scriptures carry their own authority. They cannot be annulled or denied (John 10:35). Scripture is authoritative because God, not man is the author. The Bible is primarily the words of the Spirit of God and only secondarily those of men. The Bible bears an authority derived directly from the authority of God. Scripture leads us to a true knowledge of God wherein his love, his justice, and his holiness become effective in the lives of individuals and the community.

The Bible is not a single book but a library of sixty-six books, written by over forty authors. Many of the authors did not know each other; they lived in different geographical areas, their time of writing spanned centuries, they had different backgrounds, yet they were all speaking the same message. God's Word is true. All authors were inspired by the same Lord. God does not lie (Tit. 1:2).

Biblical Accuracy

Several sources give us evidence that the Scriptures as we have them today are accurate and contain the basic truths embodied in the original documents. Of course we do not have any of the original manuscripts to compare and see if there are major differences. The sixty-six books of the Bible are copies of the original documents. Research reveals that the copies in existence today accurately contain the content of the originals.
The first Hebrew Old Testament was not printed until 1488, and the New Testament was printed in 1516. Before these dates we were entirely dependent upon manuscripts of books of the Bible. The oldest copies of the originals in existence were written between the eighth and second century before Christ. However, we must remember that the Jews had specific laws that insured the accurate copying of the sacred texts. Down through the centuries the manuscripts copied from the originals were written with precision. It is natural that mistakes were made, but the mistakes made in hand copying the texts were minor.

History of the Hebrew Text

The Targums. After the Jews returned from captivity they adopted the Aramaic language which became their language for ordinary communication. Sir Frederic Kenyon notes that this language continued for centuries, and was the spoken language during the time of Christ. Because the Scriptures remained in ancient Hebrew the need arose to translate them so the common people could read them. Therefore, the Hebrew text was paraphrased into the Aramaic dialect and called the Targum.

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8Ibid., p. 13.

9Frederic Kenyon, Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts (London: Eyre and Spottiswoods, 1895), p. 35.
The Talmud. Because the Hebrew text had no vowels, the interpretation was difficult for the common Jewish reader. Many of the words and phrases could have different meanings according to the vowels the reader would supply. Consequently, the Talmudist scribes, popular from 270 A.D. until 500 A.D., gradually collected a quantity of traditional material concerning the proper interpretation of the texts. Strict rules were laid down for the scribes copying the writings of the Talmud.

The Massoretes. The scribes, known as the Massoretes, set out to sift from the Talmud only the traditions which bore on the actual text of the sacred books. They gave actual vowel points to the text, and certain points indicated various vowels. They were precise in their translations. They numbered the verses, words, and letters of every book. They calculated the middle word and the middle letter of each verse.

Strict rules were laid down for the Massoretic scribes who copied the text. They had to use animal skins with equal numbered columns. They were required to use an authentic copy of the sacred Scripture, and could not write one word from memory. The Hebrew Bible as we have it today represents the best of the Massoretic text edition.

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10 Ibid., p. 37.
11 Ibid., p. 38.
12 Ibid., p. 39.
Dead Sea Scrolls

The oldest manuscripts of the Bible in existence today are the Dead Sea Scrolls. They date back to 100 B.C. and contain a complete Isaiah scroll, a commentary on Habakkuk with the third chapter missing, and a Manual of Discipline. The scrolls were discovered in 1947 and proclaimed to the world in 1948. Miller Burrows states that the Dead Sea Scrolls "by and large confirm the antiquity and authenticity of the Massoretic text."\(^{13}\) According to Burrows, his study and research showed the scrolls to have only slight changes in minor details from the other existing manuscripts of the Bible.\(^{14}\)

During the spring of 1979 the author had the privilege of visiting the Museum of the Scroll in Jerusalem. He saw scrolls now contained in the museum which were found in caves near the Dead Sea. These scrolls date back to 150 A.D. He saw copies of the same book written 500 years later, and another Hebrew manuscript written recently. They all agreed. The Massoretic Hebrew text had not varied in over a thousand years. The Massoretic Hebrew text is reliable.

Historical evidence shows that the Bible as we have it today is accurate. Copies now in existence are in a small degree different from the original manuscripts due to human failures and errors in copying. However, manuscripts of the Bible though written thousands


\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 32.
of years ago have virtually no variations. In all the Hebrew manuscripts examined, the text is almost word for word the same. As we read the Bible we can have the confidence we are reading the truths of God as revealed by God to the biblical authors.

Questions for Discussion and Interaction

1. Jesus is our final authority concerning the Bible. How does Jesus give authority to the written Word?

2. How does archaeology (the science of old things) give evidence to help verify the Bible?

3. The story is told of a scout sent out by one of the sixteenth century explorers seeking the Pacific. From a hill-top the scout called out, "I see it." "See what?" called the leader. "The Pacific," came the answer. "How wide is it?" "About ten miles," responded the scout. "Ah!" replied the leader, if it were the Pacific you could not see across it."

This story illustrates the principle that truth is always wider than our personal experience of it. Even so, much of God's Word awaits our better understanding of it in the experience of eternity.

Why is it more important to act on God's Word rather than to fully understand it?

Chapter 10

MEANINGFUL BIBLE STUDY

The primary source for Christian growth and maturity is the Bible. To grow in your Christian life you need to develop the discipline of regular Bible study. Paul instructed Timothy, a new Christian, "Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15).

It is God's will for Christians to grow, his Word is given as a guide for growth. R. A. Torrey advises new believers, "Have some good system of Bible study and follow it. System counts in everything, but it counts more in study than in anything else, and it counts more in Bible study than in any other form of study."¹ Consistent study of God's Word gives a basis for faith; it helps you know what you believe and why you believe what you believe. Don't be content to let others tell you what the Bible teaches; dig out for yourself the essential truths of God.

Where to Start

A good place to begin your Bible study is the Gospel of Mark. In the Gospel of Mark you will discover firsthand information on the

¹R. A. Torrey, The Importance and Value of Proper Bible Study (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Assoc., 1921), p. 54.
life and ministry of Christ. Along with your study of Mark, a good devotional Bible reading is to read from the Old Testament Psalms and Proverbs.

After studying selected books of the Bible, get a larger perspective on God's revelation by reading through all sixty-six books of the Bible. An excellent guide for reading through the Bible in a year is a monthly publication called Daily Walk, published by Walk Thru Bible Ministries, Inc., 603 West Peachtree Str., N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30308.

**Bible Study Methods**

Meaningful Bible study lets the Bible speak for itself. Don't rely totally on books and commentaries about the Bible. After you have studied and searched the Scriptures on your own then you might refer to one of the following commentaries: The Wesleyan Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972), Six volumes; Gerhard Kittel, ed., Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, 10 Vols., (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1969); Beacon Bible Expositions (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1975-78).

My personal Bible study has been enhanced through using colored pencils. I use red to mark all names of God, brown for names of people, green for geographical locations, yellow for time and numbers, and orange for references to the temple or church. You may want to develop your own color-coding system. Color coding is especially helpful for review and word studies.
It is important to study the Bible with an open heart and mind. 

As you study ask yourself six questions.

Who are the people involved?
What happened? What ideas are expressed? What are the results?
Where does this take place? What is the setting?
When did it take place? When was the historical period?
Why did it happen? What is the purpose? What is the stated reason?
How are things accomplished? How effectively? By what method?

A group of New Testament Christians in Berea demonstrated how we are to study the Scriptures. Acts 17:11 describes the Berean Christians as being more noble than those in Thessalonica in that "they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so." From their example we should set aside time daily to study God's Word.

The purpose of Bible study is not to prove some doctrine or belief we have been taught. We study the Bible to let the Bible speak for itself. Study the Bible for the general message to discover Scriptural truths which apply to your life. The Bible is not a book of chance. It is not to be read like a lottery of verses. Rather than choosing verses at random, choose a book of the Bible and follow a practical guide for your study. A suggested sequence for study is listed below:

Pray--for insight and guidance as you study.

Read--expectantly, unhurriedly, alertly, patiently and systematically. Read from the author's view-point.

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Note--what is read with a pen or pencil. Record your findings in a notebook and investigate commentaries on difficult passages. Note the theme of the book being studied and the central topics of each chapter.

Walk--in the light and share with others the good news of the Word. Application of the truth to your daily life is the most important part of the Bible study. The purpose for Bible study is for personal growth and sharing the good news with others. Absolute obedience to the Word is the key to spiritual success and a radiant Christian life. Jesus says, "For the Scriptures tell us that bread won't feed men's souls: obedience to every Word of God is what we need" (L.B.).

One of the greatest challenges you will face as a new Christian is to not grow weary in studying God's Word. When you least feel like studying the Bible is when you need to study it the most. You must not rely on feelings to guide you. Decide now to study the Bible on a regular basis and stick to your plan. Success in Bible study is spelled by one word--commitment. You are committed to grow and become mature in your Christian faith. God's Word gives you assurance and guides you in your Christian life. You can know what you believe and why you believe.

**Memorization**

A vital part of Bible study and growing through the Word is memorization. I personally will always be grateful to two Christian friends who enrolled me in a Bible memory program shortly after I became a Christian. The verses I memorized as a teen are still a part of the verses I can recall today.

In Psalm 119:9 and 11 we are instructed to memorize God's Word: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto
according to thy word. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (KJV). When we store God's Word in our heart we have victory over temptation.

Scripture Memorization Demands Discipline

Scripture memorization is not easy, but your effort will not be in vain. There are three simple steps to memorizing Scripture.

First Step—Review

Second Step—Review

Third Step—Review

There is no simple way to memorize Scripture. It is helpful to start memorizing verses that appeal to you. If particular verses speak to your needs you will be motivated to learn them more quickly than others. Have a contest with a Christian friend to see if you can memorize one or two new verses each week and check up on each other.

Memorization and meditation on God's Word acts as a cleansing agent in your heart and life. The story is told of a family living at the edge of a desert. One day they were amazed to see that seeds had sprouted in the salty desert sands behind their home. No one could figure out how this happened since they had repeatedly planted seeds without success. The mystery was solved when someone discovered that every day the mother had thrown dish water out the back door. After months and months, the salt, prohibiting growth was washed out of the sand. Seeds thrown in the same sand had sprouted and started to grow.
In the same way, as we study and saturate our minds with God's Word, it washes out evil thoughts and cleanses negative attitudes opposed to God's will. The Word helps us see life from God's point of view.

When you memorize Scripture you are making deposits of God's promises in your mental storehouse. The Scripture on deposit will be available for instant withdrawal as the Holy Spirit brings to your mind verses needed for different situations. The Holy Spirit cannot bring to mind verses from an empty account.

Coupled with Bible memorization is the discipline of Scriptural meditation. Meditation upon the Word involves both analyzing and action. It is the art of taking a good, long look at a given object just as the craftsman examines his dazzling jewel. . . polishing the diamond to reflect all of its light and beauty. Meditation upon a portion of the Holy Bible is like gazing at a prism with many facets, turning the stone from angle to angle in the bright sunlight. Steady and constant reflection reveals unlimited beauty from the Scriptures which would not otherwise be seen.

Meditation is accomplished by carefully reading a verse of Scripture and turning the theme of the verse over and over in your mind. Make the verse into a prayer and surrender to its message. Meditation is done with action in mind. It is a mental planning ahead with definite action expected for accomplishing the job. Meditation puts flesh, blood, and life into Scripture you have memorized. Josh. 1:8 says, "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be
careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." Paul reminded Timothy "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (I Tim. 4:15 KJV).

Meditation puts Bible study in proper perspective. Meditation helps us conceptualize and give meaning to what we have studied. Without meditation we fail to get a proper grip on the Word. When we hear the Bible read we remember about ten percent of what we have heard. When we hear and read the Bible we remember about forty percent of what we have heard and read. When we hear, read and study God's Word we remember about sixty percent of what we have studied. Only when we memorize the Word, do we have one hundred percent retention of the Word. However, it takes meditation to give us a firm grasp of the Word. With meditation we have both a head knowledge and a heart commitment to the Word. Meditation helps us apply the truth to our heart and put the truth into action in our daily lives. The letters of the word "speck" can be used as a reminder to meditate on a verse and apply the verse to our lives.

S - Is there a **sin** for me to avoid?

P - Is there a **promise** from God for me to claim?

E - Is there an **example** for me to follow?

C - Is there a **command** for me to obey?

K - How can this passage increase my **knowledge** about God or about Jesus Christ?^3

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Paul's statement to the church at Thessalonica illustrates how we are to apply Scripture to our life. Paul writes, "Our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, and the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake" (I Thess. 1:4). From this verse we can make an observation, an interpretation, and an application.

Observation: The Gospel Paul preached to the Thessalonians had a greater effect than mere words: the Thessalonians were aware of the kind of life Paul lived.

Interpretation: Paul's exemplary life was one reason why the Gospel had power. The Holy Spirit gave power to his words and enabled him to live that kind of life.

Application: I need to concentrate on living a life of holiness as I tell others of Jesus Christ. In particular, I need to correct my critical attitude toward those who are not immediately receptive to what I say.4

The Psalmist explains our goal in meditation, "My soul, wait only upon God; for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation" (Ps. 62:5, 6). We are to wait "only upon God." God is the focus of all our meditation. Our efforts in Bible study and prayer are to glorify God.

On the next page are several questions to help you reflect on the importance of developing a regular Bible study and prayer time. A list of Bible verses are also provided that explain the Scriptural plan of salvation.

4For a comprehensive study of the inductive Bible study method see Robert A. Traina, Methodical Bible Study (New York: The Biblical Seminary, 1952), pp. 27-221.
Questions for Discussion and Interaction

1. Share some of the hindrances you have experienced in developing a regular time for Bible study and prayer.

2. Why is it important to have a regular time to study the Bible?

3. What are some practical things you have found to help you in your personal Bible study?

4. Bible memorization is developing the ability to recall from memory verses in the Bible. Meditation is developing the ability to apply the verses to daily living. What are some benefits a person could enjoy from developing a consistent program of Bible memorization and meditation?

Verses to Memorize

The following verses on salvation are good verses to memorize. The verses can be used to share the plan of salvation and help lead a person to confess their faith in Jesus Christ.

God's Word
   Tit. 1:2; II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:21.

The New Birth
   John 3:3, 5.

The Fact of Sin
   Rom. 3:23.

The Penalty of Sin
   Rom. 6:23; Heb. 9:27.

The Insufficiency of Works
   Eph. 2:8-9.

The Provision for Sin
   Rom. 5:8; John 14:6; Acts 4:12.

Personal Commitment
   Rev. 3:30
Confession of Sin
   I John 1:9.

Repentence of Sin

Belief in Christ
   Rom. 10:9.

Receive Christ
   John 1:12.

Assurance of Salvation
   II Cor. 5:17; I John 5:11-13.
Chapter 11

GROWING THROUGH THE WORD—CASE STUDY

The following case study describes some of the factors which motivated a young couple to rededicate their lives to Christ and begin to grow in their faith. This study serves as a springboard for discussion and interaction regarding factors that motivate people toward spiritual growth.

Focus of the Study

This study focuses on the dynamics which motivated a young couple, John and Mary White (fictitious names), to grow and mature in their Christian life and witness. Five years ago they dedicated their lives to Christ and began following Jesus. They are now involved as leaders in the Taylor Free Methodist Church.

Background

John and Mary both attended Sunday school and church as children. During their college years they dropped out of church. After graduation from college they were married. For three years of their married life they did not attend church; then when their first child was born they became concerned about establishing a Christian home. They visited the Taylor Free Methodist Church in 1975 and started attending regularly. This was about the same time I began

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to get interested in helping new Christians to become established in the Word and grow in the Christian faith. My sermons and class for new members covered the topics of Bible study, prayer, church history, Christian fellowship, and witnessing. John and Mary both attended my Pastor's Class and eventually joined the church as full adult members.

Description of Factors Relating to Spiritual Growth

Several factors in the lives of John and Mary influenced them to commit their lives to the Lord and become involved in our local church. The first factor was the birth of their first child, Tasha. Tasha's birth motivated them to renew their faith in God. Mary said, "After we were married we talked about going to church, but for three years that's all it was, talk. Then when Tasha was born we realized our inadequacy to bring up our little girl by ourselves. We needed God's guidance and help." John and Mary both believed in God, but were not living a Christ-honoring life. Tasha's birth caused them to rethink their goals in life.

A second factor was the influence of the local church. As they came to Sunday morning worship their hearts were open to the preaching of the Word. They started taking notes and would look up Scripture passages quoted in order to later discuss the content of the message.

A third factor in their growth toward spiritual maturity was their commitment to prayer. When they started praying together they gained insight into areas of mutual concern. They both said that praying together greatly enhanced their communication as husband and wife. God answered their prayers and their faith was increased. Prayer became a regular part of their lives.
A fourth factor was their commitment to Bible study and memorization of Scripture. Mary said that she found I John 2:15-17, I Pet. 5:7, II Pet. 3:12, and Isa. 40:29 strengthened her. John said, "Through reading the Bible, I stay close to God." He memorizes his favorite Scriptures by using a tape recorder, and plays the verses over and over until they "sink in." He noted, "One of my favorite verses to combat discouragement is Jas. 1:12, "Blessed is the man who endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him" (KJV).

A fifth factor in their spiritual growth was their involvement in team-teaching the young teen Sunday School class. They have been teaching the Junior High class for seven months. They testify that working with the teens gives them the opportunity to serve the Lord. They experience spiritual growth from their study and preparation as they prepare for the week-to-week class sessions.

Analysis

The above study reveals that many factors influenced spiritual growth in the lives of John and Mary. Their commitment to the Lord and subsequent growth was initiated in the matrix of personal, family, and church ministry. They started to seek the Lord in earnest after the arrival of their first child. Their responsibility of parenting motivated them to find God's guidance and will for their family. They had both attended church as children and knew the value of Christian virtues. Their background encouraged them to become actively involved in the life of the local church. Their desire to have a Christian home was translated into action.
When John and Mary started coming to church no one had to encourage them to participate in worship. They were ready to learn and allow God's Word, as it was preached, to redirect their lives. They responded in obedience to God's Word and began praying together. They began participating in Christian fellowship. They became involved in the various ministries of the church and their life-style gradually changed because they applied the teachings of Scripture to all areas of their lives. All the experiences, worship, Bible study, preaching, fellowship, and felt needs were vital to their growth and maturity.

Evaluation

The foundational authority for spiritual growth is the revealed Word of God. The inspired Word gives authority to prayer, preaching, Christian fellowship, and witnessing to the unchurched. The incarnate Word, Jesus, gives supernatural life to all the factors that influence spiritual growth and change. Vital experiences are needed to produce balanced growth in a believer's life. The believer needs the teaching of God's Word and personal Bible study. He needs private prayer times as well as prayer with other believers to give him satisfying relationships both with Jesus Christ and others. He needs to experience people being helped through his efforts in ministry. The believer's involvement in many experiences works together to help him grow and become strong.

Spiritual growth and maturity result from the cooperative work of the individual and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin and the desire for change (John 16:7-13). It is up to the individual to translate that desire into action.
Reflection on the dynamics that produced commitment and spiritual growth in the lives of John and Mary White reveals that spiritual growth is an inclusive process. Spiritual growth goes beyond the mere dissemination of Scriptural content. Growth is part of the total process of maturity a person experiences as he responds in obedience to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Questions for Discussion and Interaction

1. Preaching, Bible study, prayer, and the responsibility of parenting were all factors in motivating the couple cited in our study toward spiritual growth. Which of these areas best describe your present needs or concerns? Explain.

2. John shared that the best memorization technique he had found was using a cassette recorder. He would listen to helpful verses over and over until they would "sink in." Why do you think Scriptural memorization is a helpful way to grow spiritually? Comment on any techniques you have found helpful in memorizing Scripture.

3. Certain crises or changes in our life make us more receptive to spiritual growth. What events in your life have been factors that have made you ready for spiritual growth? Explain.
SECTION III

GROWING THROUGH PRAYER

Chapter 12  JESUS AND PRAYER
Chapter 13  NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON PRAYER
Chapter 14  A BASIC THEOLOGY OF PRAYER
Chapter 15  TOWARD A MEANINGFUL PRAYER LIFE
Chapter 16  PROJECT STUDY ON PRAYER
Chapter 12

JESUS AND PRAYER

Jesus is our model in all areas of our Christian life and witness. Jesus did not debate the topic of prayer, he took for granted that prayer would be a vital part of the believer's life. In response to the disciples' inquiry concerning prayer, Jesus did not say, "If you pray." He said, "When you pray." Jesus expected his followers to pray.

Occasions When Jesus Prayed

As a member of the Jewish community Jesus probably observed the custom of praying in the morning at the time of the burnt offering in the temple, in the afternoon when the daily sacrifice was offered, and in the evening at sunset when the temple gates were closed. Jesus did not limit his praying to three times a day, he made prayer a regular practice of his devotional life.¹

Jesus taught the importance of prayer by his example. He prayed before significant events in his life and ministry. At the beginning of his public ministry Jesus prayed. Luke's gospel records the account, "When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he was praying, heaven opened..." (Luke 3:21).

Jesus prayed all night before choosing his disciples (Luke 6:12).

Jesus prayed before he revealed that he was the Messiah (Luke 9:18-21).


Jesus often prayed alone in the early morning hours (Luke 5-16). Mark 1:35 reports, "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." Jesus prayed alone at night, "One of those days Jesus went out into the hills to pray, and spent the night praying to God" (Luke 6:12). Jesus also prayed with his disciples and requested them to meet with him in prayer (Mark 14:32-34).

Jesus prayed alone, in small groups, and before the multitudes. By his life and example Jesus taught his disciples to pray at all times of the day and night. Jesus gave specific instructions concerning both private and group praying. Jesus said, "When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen of men" (Matt. 6:5). Prayer is not a matter of mere performance. It is a personal commitment between God and the person praying. Jesus taught, "When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Matt. 6:6).

Jesus taught that his presence and power were a vital part of any group where two or three gathered together in his name. Jesus gives the promise, "I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about
anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matt. 18:19-20).

When Jesus prayed before larger groups of people he prayed prayers of thanksgiving and praise. Jesus offered thanks to God before multiplying five loaves and two fishes in order to feed five thousand men plus women and children. At the grave of Lazarus, Jesus prayed, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me" (John 11:41). When the seventy-two disciples returned from their preaching mission in cities and towns Jesus was going to visit, Jesus prayed a prayer of thanksgiving for their reports of victory. Jesus prayed, "I praise you Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure" (Luke 10:21).

S. D. Gordon in his book, *Quiet Talks on Prayer*, describes the importance of prayer in the life and ministry of Jesus. He writes:

> It was not only His regular habit, but His resort in every emergency, however slight or serious. When perplexed He prayed. When hard pressed by work He prayed. When hungry for fellowship He found it in prayer. He chose His associates and received His messages upon His knees. If tempted, He prayed. If criticized, He prayed. If fatigued in body or wearied in spirit, He had recourse to His unfailing habit of prayer.²

### Why Jesus Prayed

A common question asked by new Christians is, "Why did Jesus pray? Wasn't he the Son of God, equal with God?" Yes, Jesus was equal

with God the Father. During his earthly life and ministry Jesus limited his spiritual power to the realm of human nature. There is no indication in the Gospels that Jesus ever used his divine powers to gain victory over temptation or work miracles. Jesus was tempted as a man (Heb. 4:15). Jesus did not manifest supernatural powers, (Phil. 2:6-8) he turned to the Word of Scripture for his authority. Jesus knew he could not live by human power alone, he relied upon God for his strength. It was in prayer that Jesus found his strength to live a life of victory over the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Robert Coleman describes the prayer life of Jesus as follows:

Prayer was our Lord's way of expressing His total dependence upon God. He realized that He did not work alone, nor did He speak in His own wisdom. All that He did and said was in the power of Him who sent Him. Prayer was an affirmation of this confidence; the assurance that His soul was in absolute alignment with the mind of the Father, not by passive resignation but in active conformity to His purpose.  

Jesus, the Son of man, was God incarnate (John 1:14). As a man Jesus received His strength from the Word and prayer to the Father. We also must be quick to learn we cannot get along without the spiritual power found only in prayer. Prayer is the Christian's vital breath.

Summary of the Prayer Life of Jesus

The prayer life of Jesus can be summarized with the following statements:

Jesus prayed regularly, usually in a quiet place.

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3Coleman, Mind, p. 39.
Jesus prayed in the great crises of his life.

Jesus manifested a constant spirit of prayer, in a dense crowd, or in solitude.

Jesus prayed for others by name and continues to do so.

Jesus prayed with others.

When Jesus prayed in public his prayers were prayers of thanksgiving and praise.

Jesus experienced great blessings in his life as a result of prayer.

Questions for Discussion and Interaction

1. Is it a valid argument to say, "I cannot pray like Jesus or get the results Jesus received from prayer? Why?

2. What are the dynamics that give praying with two or three other believers greater power than praying alone? Explain.

3. Jesus prayed before all significant events in his life and ministry. What are some of the significant events in your life that you are praying about?
Chapter 13

NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON PRAYER

The New Testament is filled with God's promises to answer the prayer of believers. It is crucial for the new believer to understand what the New Testament teaches concerning prayer. When the Christian's prayer life is based upon the teaching of Scripture he will not give up on prayer when answers do not come quickly, rather he will make prayer a vital part of his life.

There are some who look at prayer like a little boy who was asked why and when he prayed. He said he prayed, "When I want something and when I do not think there is any other way of getting it."

In prayer we do not bring God down to our level. Nor is prayer an attempt to change God's mind. Through prayer we bring ourselves to God and humble ourselves in his presence. When we pray we grasp the hand of one who controls the universe.

Prayer is simply defined as communion with God. It is not a monologue, but a dialogue. Prayer is talking to God and listening to him speak through his Word. Through prayer we express our love and trust in God, we seek to know his will, and submit to his will in all things.

Conditions of Answered Prayer

The New Testament gives several conditions that must be met before prayer is answered. This study examines three conditions for
answered prayer: first, the condition of faith; second, the condition of abiding in the Word; and third, the condition of God's will.

The Condition of Faith.

Jesus declared the condition of faith in Matt. 21:21-22, "I tell the truth, if you have faith and do not doubt, ... you can say to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and it will be done. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer."

The prayer of faith takes God at his word and acts accordingly. Faith is acting and believing that God has fulfilled his promise before the act is completed. The writer of Hebrews defines faith as "being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Heb. 11:1). By faith Abraham took God at his word and declared he was the father of nations. Joshua obeyed God's command and marched around Jericho. He shouted praise to God for victory before the walls fell to the ground.

The prayer of faith comes as a result of our total commitment to act upon the promises of God as recorded in his Word. The Apostle Paul declares the value of the Bible in giving faith when he says, "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word of Christ" (Rom. 10:17). Essential to faith is our willingness to step out in advance of an answer.

A touching story is told that illustrates this step of faith. John Bisagno's five-year-old daughter came to him one day requesting a doll house. Mr. Bisagno promised to build her one and then continued to read an engrossing book. Soon he glanced out the study window and saw his daughter with her arms filled with dishes, toys, and dolls, making her pilgrimage to the corner of the yard, where by now she had
gathered a great pile of playthings. He asked his wife what the purpose of his daughter's pile of playthings could be. "Oh, you promised her a doll house," his wife replied, "and she believes you. She's just getting ready for it." John Bisagno in recalling the event said, "I threw the book aside, raced to the lumber yard for supplies, and quickly built the little girl a doll house."¹

God honors the prayers of his children when prayed in faith. Virginia Whitman shares a remarkable account that illustrates the prayer of faith and trust for God's guidance and provision. A lady from the small village of LaMancha, Spain was visiting her invalid brother in Madrid. During her stay she desired to find an evangelical church where she could nurture her Christian experience. She was unable to locate a church, or find anyone to direct her, she prayed for guidance. While praying, the thought occurred to take a bus to the center of the town and wait upon God to do the rest. Her brother, not being sympathetic with her faith, was certain his sister was crazy to look for a small church in a city of millions, especially since his sister was blind.

With great expectation she boarded a bus, trusting God to lead her a step at a time. Another woman walked down the aisle and occupied the seat beside her. Sensing someone beside her, the blind Christian reached into her purse and found a gospel booklet to give the woman beside her. Through their conversation the Christian visitor was happy to learn that the Madrid resident beside her was also on her way to

church. The blind lady quickly asked, "Could you possibly tell me where the First Baptist Church is located?" To her utter amazement the woman answered, "Why, that's exactly where I'm going. You can go with me."^2

Jesus taught that answers to prayer are conditioned by faith. In Mark's Gospel he says, "All things whatsoever you pray and ask for, believe that you have received them, and you shall have them" (Mark 11:24). Andrew Murray, a great man of prayer of his day, says, "Faith is so wholly the work of God's Spirit through His Word in the prepared heart of the believing disciple, that it is impossible that the fulfillment should not come."^3 Faith means taking God at his word in spite of insurmountable odds and when no one else seems to believe.

The Condition of Abiding.

Coupled to the condition of faith is the condition of abiding in Christ and his Word. We cannot expect God to hear and answer our prayers if we are living in direct violation of God's commandments. Jesus promised, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you" (John 15:7).

The word "abide" means to continue obeying the teachings of Jesus. "Abide" means to draw from something to sustain life. The plant is abiding in the ground when it is so related to its environment, the ground, that the plant gets its very life from the ground. A fish

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^3 Andrew Murray, With Christ in the School of Prayer (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1885), p. 79.
is said to abide in the sea, not when it is dead floating upside down, but when it is so related to the water that it gets sustenance for life. A believer is abiding in Christ and continuing in the Word when he responds to Christ and the Word in total obedience and permits the Word to guide his thinking, his actions, his habits and goals in life. As we obey the commands of Christ and abide in him, we can expect God to answer our prayers when they are prayed according to God's ultimate plan and will.

The Condition of God's Will.

A third condition to answered prayer is recorded in I John 5:14-15, "If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that he hears us whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of Him."

Prayer is discovering God's will in his Word and surrendering to that will by affirming in prayer that this is what is most desired in our life. Jesus prayed in his model prayer, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done" (Matt. 6:9-10). Our attitude in prayer is to be one of surrender to God's will, "Not my will but your will be done."

We have the assurance that God always hears our prayers when prayed according to his will. The answer may be "yes," "no," or "wait." God, our heavenly Father, knows what is best for us. We can trust him to take care of us. He guides and provides for all our needs (Matt. 6:33 and Phil. 4:19).

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When God's answer to our prayer is "no," we can be confident God has a better plan in mind. Paul prayed three times for the Lord to deliver him of a certain affliction. Paul received a "no" answer. The Lord said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (II Cor. 12:9). Because Paul surrendered to God's will he could testify:

Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weakness, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong (II Cor. 12:9-10).

Delays or refusals in prayer have an eternal reason. In God's divine providence he never makes any mistakes. God's way is always superior to our way. The following prayer describes the ways God answers prayer:

I asked for strength that I might achieve;  
He made me weak that I might obey.  
I asked for health that I might do greater things;  
I was given grace that I might do better things.  
I asked for riches that I might be happy;  
I was given poverty that I might be wise.  
I asked for power that I might have the praise of men;  
I was given weakness that I might feel the need of God.  
I asked for all things that I might enjoy life;  
I was given life that I might enjoy all things.  
I received nothing that I asked for, all that I hoped for,  
My prayer was answered.⁵

When our prayers are not answered as we want them to be, we don't stop praying. God may want to do something different, even better for us, something other than that for which we prayed in the first place.

I remember an occasion when my disappointment turned into a spiritual blessing. I was scheduled to fly from Kansas City to Salina, Kansas, to conduct a seven-day evangelistic crusade. Stormy weather with dense fog set in, therefore, I could not take the planned flight. I prayed, "Lord, if it is your will for me to lead the crusade in Salina, 200 miles away, may the transportation problem work out." In a flash the thought came to me, "Why not take the bus?" "What a come down," I thought, "from a twenty minute flight to five hours of travel by bus." I hurriedly made the arrangements to take the bus.

The first stop the bus made was forty miles west of Kansas City in Lawrence, Kansas. A young man got on the bus at Lawrence and sat down beside me. From our conversation I learned he was a student from Iraq attending the University of Kansas. I also discovered he had never seen a New Testament. I had my pocket New Testament with me and was able to share several passages dealing with the life and ministry of Jesus.

My contact with the student from Iraq didn't end when he left the bus. I invited him to visit our family in Kansas City and he graciously accepted. He came on a Sunday, visited our church, and stayed for dinner. My disappointment was turned into an opportunity to be a friend to that foreign student and show him God's love.

When we meet the conditions of prayer as outlined in God's Word, we have the assurance of God's answer to our prayer. He knows what the best answer should be. The distinctive feature of early Christian prayer is the certainty of being heard. God's answer may be "yes," "no," or "wait." We accept God's answer because He knows what is best for us.
In Everything Give Thanks

Our primary focus in prayer is on praise and thanksgiving. Paul instructs us to, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (I Thess. 5:16-18). Whatever happens we must not stop praying and praising God.

We don't ignore tragedy and suffering. We lift our eyes above the tragedy to the One who knows the end from the beginning. Praising God reminds us that God is in charge.

A vital part of praying is listening to God speak through the Holy Scriptures. God does not guide us contrary to his will as revealed in his Word.

When our life is filled with problems and times of discouragements we should try praising God. Luke reports Paul and Silas were singing at midnight while in the dark, damp Philippian jail (Acts 16:25). The word for praise, hymnos, is translated, "sang praises to God." When the going gets tough, those tough in faith praise the Lord.

Several words in the Bible are used to describe praise. Hallelujah is a universal word meaning "praise the Lord." Another word for praise is baracha which means to "bless or adore." The Hebrew concept of baracha is that everything belongs to God. "Since all belongs to God, nothing should be taken without a baracha or blessing."6

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Prayer is an important part of a growing Christian's life. When all three conditions of prayer (faith, abiding, and God's will) are met the believer has the assurance of God's answer. The answer may be "yes," "no," or "later." Praise is also a vital experience of prayer. Praise declares the sovereignty of God that He alone is worthy of our adoration and worship.

Questions for Discussion and Interaction

1. Three conditions for effective prayer were discussed: the condition of faith, the condition of abiding, and the condition of God's will. Which of the three conditions of prayer speaks best to you now? Tell why.

2. Share an experience you have had when a disappointment was turned into an opportunity for spiritual growth and blessing.

3. Why do we find it so hard to "give thanks in all circumstances?"
Chapter 14

A BASIC THEOLOGY OF PRAYER

The previous chapter on the "New Testament Teaching on Prayer," laid the foundation for this chapter entitled "A Basic Theology of Prayer." This chapter looks at how our concept of God affects our prayer life and how we pray.

The Meaning of Prayer

Three words commonly used in the New Testament for prayer are proseuche, deesis and enteuxis.

Proseuche is a word of sacred character, limited to prayer directed to God, but unrestricted in respect to its contents. "They all joined together constantly in prayer (proseuche)" (Acts 1:14).

Deesis is the word used for seeking, asking, entreating, and making requests addressed to God. Eph. 6:18 uses the word deesis for requests: "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests (deesis)."

Enteuxis expresses confident access to God in prayers of intercession and thanksgiving.¹ Entheuxis is translated intercession in I Tim. 2:1: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests (deesis),

prayers (proseuche), intercession (entheuxis), and thanksgiving be made for everyone."

Presuppositions of Prayer

Prayer is communication and communion with God. Therefore, prayer presupposes a response. To communicate with God assumes the personality of God and that God is accessible to us. When we communicate with God we believe that God loves us and has a purpose and destiny for our lives.

Concept of God

An adequate concept of God is a prerequisite to meaningful prayer. Prayer is not an attempt to bring God down to our level or change God's mind. Neither is prayer an attempt to get God to do what we want him to do. God is not a genie waiting to carry out our every command. God acts according to his eternal will.

True prayer is accomplished when we humble and align ourselves with God's ultimate will. We open our heart to receive God's instruction and commit ourselves to obey. God can be represented as an anchor and we are like the boat. Prayer is pulling the rope in an effort to draw the anchor to the boat, but in reality we are drawing the boat in line with the anchor.

God created us and desires to have fellowship with us. The writer to the Hebrews teaches us to "approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, it is laying hold of God's willingness. Myron Augsburger reminds us, "Prayer is not
talking God into doing something He doesn't want to do; it is rather giving Him the moral right to do what He has been wanting to do for a long time."²

Intercessory prayer is wrestling against the spiritual powers of darkness and by the power of God overcoming the hostile forces of "spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Eph. 6:12). Getting through to God in prayer requires moving beyond all the obstacles, both internal and external, that hinder the working of God's Spirit in a life. It means taking God at his word and acting accordingly.

Pray in Jesus' Name

When we pray, we are to pray in Jesus' name. Jesus promised, "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it ... If you ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13-14). To pray in Jesus' name is to acknowledge that Jesus is God, and the only access to our heavenly Father. Jesus declared that he is the only way to God, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes unto the Father, except through me" (John 14:6). Jesus is the only mediator between God and man. When we pray in Jesus' name we declare that we have no merits of our own which give us access to God. Jesus alone gives us the right to call upon the name of the Lord.

R. A. Torrey compares praying in "Jesus' name" with going to a bank. If you present a check endorsed by you to the bank, the check is worthless unless you have money on deposit. But if you take a check signed by a large depositor to the bank, the check is honored at once.

We do not come to God in our name, we have done nothing in our own merit to give us access to a Holy God. Prayer in Jesus' name means we approach God on the claims of Christ's atoning blood.\(^3\)

When we pray in Jesus' name we cannot expect God to honor any "petition that is not in keeping with the mind and spirit of Christ. God will do nothing that is contrary to His nature, and His nature has been clearly revealed in Christ."\(^4\)

There is power in the name of Jesus. The Acts of the Apostles is full of evidence that in Jesus' name there is: power, salvation, baptism, divine healing, teaching, preaching, suffering, missionary outreach, boldness, all in the wonderful name of Jesus.\(^5\)

God is our heavenly Father. He loves us and wants to care for us. Our idea and concept of God directly affects our prayer life. We can come to God in prayer in Jesus' name with the assurance God is for us and not against us.

Questions for Discussion and Interaction

1. How can we know God wants us to communicate with him? Read Heb. 4:14-16 and comment.

2. If we do not change the ultimate will of God in prayer, then why should we pray? Consult the following verses for your answer: John 14:13, I Thess. 5:17, and John 16:24.


Chapter 15

TOWARD A MEANINGFUL PRAYER LIFE

Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray and not faint" (Luke 18:1). When you pray you are to "go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Matt. 6:6). By his life and message Jesus taught the importance of daily prayer. Chapter Eleven entitled "Jesus and Prayer" tells that Jesus made it his practice to seek out places for private prayer and solitude. Mark recorded the private prayer life of Jesus: "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place to pray" (Mark 1:35).

The Discipline of Prayer

As a disciple of Jesus we desire to follow the example of Jesus and develop the discipline for regular prayer times. Without a definite time and place for prayer it is easy to drift into a life of prayerlessness. Jesus prayed in the morning, during the day, and at night. More important than terminology, "or the mention of places, times and postures for prayer, is the fact that Jesus Christ by His own example has taught us the duty of prayer."¹ There is value in studying techniques and styles of prayer, but it is more valuable to take time

to pray. William Law in his classic, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*, believed the best time to pray is early in the morning. Law writes, "It is much more reasonable to suppose a person is up early, because he is a Christian, than because he is a labourer, or a tradesman, or a servant, or has business that wants him." The Psalmist prayed in Ps. 5:3, "Morning by morning, O Lord, you hear my voice: morning by morning, I lay requests before you and wait in expectation." Whether we pray in the morning or evening, we need to develop the discipline of having a planned time for personal prayer.

Private prayer gives you the opportunity to talk to God and listen to God as he speaks to you in "a still small voice." Impressions and thoughts that come to your mind may be God talking to you giving you insight into his will. You must be careful however, because all thoughts and impressions may not be from God. Thoughts from God will always agree with the revealed Word of God.

Much of your private praying will possibly be silent prayer. You will think your thoughts to God in prayer. You may also find it helpful to verbalize your prayers and pray out loud. Another helpful tool to use is to write out your prayers and keep a journal with the record of your prayers and answers. As you go through your prayer journal your faith will be greatly enhanced by noting all the answers

**Focus of Prayer**

The focus of prayer is sharpened by giving adoration and praise to God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Prayer is not a
"give me" attitude. It is a time of fellowship, a spiritual exercise, intended to be as much a part of the Christian life as breathing is to the physical life.

The primary focus of prayer according to Thomas A. Kempis is to meditate on the life of Jesus Christ. Meditation on Jesus and the Word brings prayer into its proper focus. Several passages of Scripture describe the spiritual rewards of meditation:

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful (Josh. 1:8).

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers (Ps. 1:2-3).

The solitude of meditation gives us time away from the pressures of life so we can listen to our Creator. God brings restoration to our soul and refreshes our life so we can face life with optimism and faith.

During times of solitude and meditation, God changes and equips men for his service. Moses fled into the land of Midian after he had killed an Egyptian taskmaster. While Moses was in the desert God spoke to him from a burning bush and revealed himself to Moses. The solitude of the desert gave God the opportunity to reach out to Moses and Moses met God.

God often reveals his will through the experience of meditation. True meditation results in spiritual renewal and a burning desire to

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carry out God's will. Isaiah encountered God and cried out: "Here am I, send me." The Apostle Paul met Christ on the road to Damascus and responded: "Lord, what will you have me to do."

Spiritual meditation is beneficial both to the person's spiritual health and physical well-being. Studies by Dr. R. Keith Wallace, physiologist, and Dr. Herbert Benson, cardiologist, show that the meditation state is different from sleep, dreaming, or wakefulness. Meditation produces a state of deep relaxation, though the person remains awake and alert. Persons in the meditative state showed lower body metabolism and decreases in heart and respiratory rates. During meditation, oxygen consumption decreased, and the lactate ion concentration in the blood decreased (indicating less stress); skin resistance increased markedly (indicating a decrease in anxiety), and there was an increase in intensity of "slow" alpha waves (indicating a relaxed, comfortable state of mind and body).  

God created us to have fellowship and communion with Him. Through prayer and meditation we draw upon the spiritual resources of heaven. A priority for the disciple of Jesus is to develop a daily time of prayer and meditation on Jesus and his Word.

Value of Prayer

When we consider developing a meaningful prayer life we must remember God, our heavenly Father, wants us to take time alone in prayer with him. God created us to have communion with him. In prayer

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we worship God and listen to God. Prayer should not be a daily duty intended to put in our time so that we can mark a chart recording how many minutes we spent in prayer. Prayer is a time of sharing with our loving heavenly Father. The prayer written by A. W. Tozer, explains the value of praying:

Lord, teach me to listen. The times are noisy and my ears are weary with the thousand raucous sounds which continually assault them. Give me the spirit of the boy Samuel when he said to Thee, 'Speak, for thy servant heareth.' Let me hear thee speaking in my heart. Let me get used to the sound of Thy voice, that its tones may be familiar when the sounds of earth die away and the only sound will be the music of Thy speaking Voice.5

The purpose of prayer is to glorify Christ. Jesus describes the purpose of prayer in the Gospel of John: "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father" (John 14:13).

Prayer is our source of spiritual power. To fail to pray is to have our power line to heaven disconnected. One day a pastor walked through the church sanctuary and noticed the church custodian, who was hard of hearing, pulling the vacuum cleaner from pew to pew. He was dripping with perspiration. The pastor noticed the electrical cord of the vacuum cleaner was dragging along on the floor unplugged. The janitor had "vacuumed" the entire church sanctuary without having the plug in the electrical outlet.

Through prayer we plug into the power of heaven. James says, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Ja. 5:16). The word "effectual" means "the effect produced in the

praying person, bringing him into line with the will of God. Through prayer we are in connection with the creative power of the universe.

How to Pray

The letters spelling the word "acts" can be used to illustrate the four parts of a simple prayer plan. The four parts of this prayer plan can be listed as follows: adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication.

A-Adoration.

Prayers of adoration give praise to God. We give adoration to God when we pray: "Lord you are wonderful. I praise you for being the God you are." Psalms of adoration and praise include the following: Ps. 34:1-3, 1, 23, 46, 51, 85, 91, 100, 119, and 150.

C-Confession.

Sin separates us from God. Isa. 59:2 says, "But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear." All known sin must be confessed. As you study God's Word the Holy Spirit will reveal any attitudes of unconfessed sin in your life. God can only forgive sins that are confessed (I John 1:9).

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Thanksgiving.

You are to "give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (I Thess. 5:18). Thank God for health, home, children, books, friends, music and nature. Thank God for all the opportunities you have to enjoy life and serve him.

Supplication.

Pray for specific needs. Paul encourages you to pray and not worry, when he says, "Do not be anxious about anything but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Phil. 4:6).

Prayer is a spiritual discipline. When we least feel like praying we need to pray. The following story is told about the world famous pianist, Ignace Paderewski. Mr. Paderewski was preparing to give a performance at a stylish London concert hall. The hall was packed and the people were patiently waiting for the appearance of the master. The electricity of excitement had everyone talking and looking to see the other celebrities in attendance. White ties and long elegant gowns were everywhere. The only item on the bare platform was one very large grand piano. Spotlights were already focused on the piano awaiting Paderewski. One admiring mother had paid the full adult ticket price for her seven-year-old son. She knew he would practice with much more interest if only he could hear the master pianist.

While the young boy's mother was engrossed by the surroundings, her son slipped out of his concert hall chair and was gone. The mother
soon noticed he was missing and began looking frantically about the packed auditorium. Then she heard a very strange sound drift out over the immediately hushed crowd.

Her eyes darted to the piano where she spotted her seven-year-old son. He was sitting on the bench prepared for the master. The spotlights were on him. He started playing, of all things, "Chopsticks."

"Chopsticks!" someone called from the angered crowd, "Get that kid down!"

Terribly embarrassed, the mother started into the crowded aisle, pleading apologetically, "Please, let me through--that's my son up there playing the piano." She was so busy working her way through the crowd she did not see the internationally famous pianist slip onto the stage and sit beside her son.

"Chopsticks" remained very clear in the music that followed. Everyone could hear "Chopsticks." But, the master started to fill in all around the simple tune. He played tear-producing, spine-tingling runs and made the make-shift piano duet into a masterpiece.

By that time the mother was close enough to the stage to hear the master encouraging her son, "Keep going, boy, don't stop now. I'll help you. Don't stop now. Keep going!"

As we pray we often feel like we are playing "Chopsticks." But our Heavenly Father comes to us--in our feeble human effort--and encourages us, saying, "Keep going. Don't stop now. I'll help you. Don't stop! Keep going!"
Questions for Discussion and Interaction

1. How can we make our prayer and devotional time more meaningful?

2. A biblical principle is that God does not do for us what we are capable of doing for ourselves. What are some ideas found in the Bible to verify this principle? (See Acts 12).

3. Meaningful prayer includes adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication. Tell of areas you need to expand in your prayer life.
Chapter 16

PROJECT STUDY ON PRAYER

Introduction


Focus

The focus of the project study on prayer is the crisis Jesus faced while in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. The major issue is the inner struggle Jesus faced concerning his impending death on the cross.

Project Assignment

Read the account of Jesus in Gethsemane over several times (Matt. 26:36-46). Get together with two or three other believers and share your evaluations of the biblical passages cited. Go over the
stated analysis and then give your own analysis of the passage. End your sharing time with prayer focusing on the areas learned from your study.

Description of the Event

They went to a place called Gethsemane and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took Peter, James, and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. "Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!" (Mark 14:32-42).

Analysis

The prayer time of Jesus described in Gethsemane is prayer at its deepest level. Jesus literally wrestled in prayer. There are several observations we can make from the written record.

First, we see the intensity of prayer as Jesus prayed. Jesus agonized in prayer wrestling against the spiritual powers of darkness. The Gospel of Luke gives this record: "And being in an agony he
prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:44).

Second, we see the loneliness of Jesus as he has to bear the burden of the crisis alone. Peter, James, and John were all too exhausted to stay awake.

Third, we see the intimate relationship between Jesus and God the Father. Jesus prayed, "Abba, Father, everything is possible for you . . ." (Mark 4:36). Barclay notes that "Abba" was "an everyday family word, which no one had ventured to use in addressing God."¹ Jesus prayed "Abba, Father," as a child might speak to his earthly father. By using the word "Abba," Jesus showed he had complete trust in his heavenly Father. He was willing to submit totally to his Father's will.

Fourth, we see the humanity of Jesus. Jesus prayed that if possible he wanted the coming judgment removed. Jesus knew that with God all things are possible. Three times Jesus prayed for another way to complete his mission on earth. Finally, Jesus, in his humanity, surrendered himself into God's hand and prayed, "Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

Finally, we see the courage of Jesus as he says, "Rise, let us be going, my betrayer is at hand" (Mark 14:42). Jesus did not leave the garden to escape the accusing mob. He knew ridicule and pain lay ahead, but faced the future with resolute courage.

Evaluation

The following questions will help you reflect on the events surrounding Jesus' experience in the Garden of Gethsemane. Each person in the small group project should share his views on each question and add other questions he would like to discuss.

1. Why do you think the disciples were unable to stay awake and pray with Jesus?

2. Why was Jesus struggling so in prayer?

3. Where is the turning point in the Gethsemane experience?

4. What is the ultimate purpose of prayer according to the event?

5. What practical applications can you make to your own life from the Gethsemane event?
SECTION IV

GROWING THROUGH CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Chapter 17  JESUS AND FELLOWSHIP
Chapter 18  FELLOWSHIP IN THE BODY OF CHRIST
Chapter 19  SMALL GROUP FELLOWSHIP
Chapter 20  FELLOWSHIP IN THE HOLY SPIRIT
Chapter 21  GROWING THROUGH CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP—CASE STUDY
Chapter 17

JESUS AND FELLOWSHIP

Jesus addressed two levels of fellowship during his earthly ministry: fellowship with the Father and fellowship with man. The Apostle John reflects the teaching of Jesus when he writes, "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3).

This section titled "Growing Through Christian Fellowship," discusses "Jesus and Fellowship," "Fellowship in the Local Church," "Small Group Fellowship," and "Fellowship of the Holy Spirit." The biblical basis for this section is found in the pattern of ministry in the early church. Believers in the early church "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:47).

New Testament Fellowship

The New Testament word koinonia is translated to mean both "fellowship" and "communion." Koinonia means to "have communion, fellowship, partnership, or sharing in a common concern." Believers in the early church participated together in eating meals, prayer, and

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fellowship (Acts 2:42). Koinonia is also used to describe communion in the Lord's Supper. The Apostle Paul writes, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion (koinonia) of the body of Christ" (I Cor. 10:16)? Fellowship and communion indicate a personal identity with the object of fellowship or communion. Fellowship in the New Testament is a very intimate relationship.

Fellowship described in the New Testament portrays a loving and caring relationship. True fellowship is only possible among disciples who have become participants in the Body of Christ. John defines true fellowship for those meeting the condition of obedience to Christ. He writes, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from every sin" (I John 1:7). Only then is fellowship experienced. Kraemer in his classic volume, A Theology of the Laity, says the fellowship enjoyed by believers is coupled to their relationship to Christ. Kraemer writes, "The fellowship (koinonia) with and in Jesus Christ and the Spirit is the creative ground and sustainer of the fellowship (koinonia) of the believers with each other."²

Jesus and the Twelve

Jesus demonstrated by his life and ministry the universal need for people to have fellowship with other believers. Jesus chose twelve disciples and spent a large portion of his time associating with them. From the twelve Jesus chose Peter, James, and John to relate to him on

a closer and more intimate level of relationship. Peter, James, and John were privileged to accompany Jesus into the sick room of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:37); they traveled with Jesus to the Mount of Transfiguration (Mark 9:2); and observed Jesus while he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37).

Jesus did not neglect large crowds of people, but he gave most of his time to the twelve in training and fellowship. Robert Coleman points out that Jesus had a definite plan and strategy in selecting and associating with the twelve disciples. Coleman says Jesus "spent more time with His disciples than with everybody else in the world put together. He ate with them, slept with them, and talked with them for the most part of His entire active ministry."³

Training Through Fellowship

Small group fellowship was the principal method Jesus used in training laymen for ministry. The followers of Jesus received on-the-job training. The disciples learned how to pray by observing Jesus as he prayed. They learned how to witness by watching Jesus witness. Jesus did not organize a formal school, but the disciples spent three years with Jesus in his practical school of evangelism.

The disciples learned the truths of God through instruction and observation. Jesus taught that he was the "light of the world" (John 9:7), and then Jesus healed a blind man by giving him sight. On another occasion Jesus said he was the "resurrection and the life"

(John 11:25). Jesus demonstrated the truth by raising Lazarus from the dead. Jesus also taught that the greatest in the Kingdom of God are those who serve. He demonstrated the teaching by washing the feet of his disciples (John 13:4-5).

**Growth Through Fellowship**

The life and ministry of Jesus is a model for new Christians. Jesus turned to the Scriptures for his authority. He prayed to his Heavenly Father for spiritual power. He found strength in communion and fellowship with his disciples. As new believers share in fellowship with other believers and observe the lives of other Christians they learn how to become true followers of Jesus. Priorities for the growing Christian include Bible study, prayer and Christian fellowship.

**Questions for Discussion and Interaction**

1. Kraemer says, "The fellowship with and in Jesus Christ and the Spirit is the creative ground and sustainer of the fellowship of the believer with each other." Why do you agree or disagree with Kraemer's statement?

2. Jesus said love is a vital experience for believers to witness to the world (John 13:34-35). What does Jesus mean by his statement?

3. What are some ways the church can provide for the fellowship needs for new Christians?
Chapter 18

FELLOWSHIP IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

We believe the church is created by God; it is the people of God. Christ Jesus is its Lord and Head; the Holy Spirit is its life and power. It is both divine and human, heavenly and earthly, ideal and imperfect. It is an organism, not an unchanging institution. It exists to fulfill the purposes of God in Christ. It redemptively ministers to persons. Christ loved the church and gave himself for it that it should be holy and without blemish. The church is a fellowship of the redeemed and the redeeming, preaching the Word of God and administering the sacraments according to Christ's instruction.1

Christian fellowship in the church offers new believers the opportunity to learn how to serve the Lord and participate in showing Christ's love to the world. The Apostle Paul compares the local church fellowship to a human body. Each member of the human body has an important part in the function of the whole body. Paul taught: "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ" (I Cor. 12:12). The local church incorporates people with various personalities and abilities, but all persons work together in harmony (I Cor. 12:14-26).

Love is the guiding principle for the church. Christlikeness is promoted when each member of the fellowship shares openly and

honestly in love. The fellowship grows as each person allows love to guide him in doing his part to build up other members of the body (Eph. 4:14-16).

The church as the Body of Christ is universal. It embodies believers around the world. All who are born into the family of God through faith in Jesus Christ become members of the church universal--the Body of Christ. The church is both visible and invisible. The visible church is the local body of believers who gather together for worship in Jesus' name. The invisible church includes both living members of the Body of Christ plus those who have died in the faith and are now with the Lord.

The Church in Scripture

Two words in the Bible help us understand the meaning of the word "church." The Old Testament word, kahal, denotes an assembly or congregation assembled for religious worship. Ecclesia is the New Testament word translated church--an assembly or body of "called out ones." The word, ecclesia appears one hundred and fourteen times in the New Testament. Members of Christ's body are called out of the world into a personal relationship with Jesus (John 15:1-15) to live a life of holiness (I Tim. 1:9).

The church is both apostolic and confessional. Apostolic in the sense that it is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:20).
The church is confessional in that it requires for membership a confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord (Rom. 10:9-10).  

Fellowship in the Early Church

Christian fellowship in the early church was dynamic and alive. This fellowship grew out of common sharing in problems, responsibilities, physical needs for food, care for widows, and proclaiming the Gospel to the world.

The early Christians looked at each other in the light of Christ's love. Jesus had loved them without discrimination. Marion Jacobsen summarizes the relationship in the early church when he says, "If the perfect, sinless Son of God could love them in all their imperfection and unloveliness, how could they refuse to love each other."^3

Fellowship in the early church was characterized by a loving, caring fellowship: as they prayed for one another, bore one another's burdens, confessed their faults one to another, admonished one another, and ministered to one another through the written Word of God. The total relationship can be compared to a family. When one person in the body hurts all in the body feel pain with the person. When one person rejoices in the body, the entire body of believers rejoices (I Cor. 12:24-26).


Fellowship in the Local Church

The local church, as the visible Body of Christ, experiences New Testament koinonia fellowship when Christ's love permeates every heart. True fellowship accepts people at their present spiritual level and encourages them to grow into Christlikeness through the "body life" of the church. The risen Christ wants our fellowship to be characterized by love and acceptance, a place where people from sinful backgrounds can come and find refuge and healing for their hurts. Sara Little in her book, Learning Together in the Christian Fellowship, reminds us that new believers bring their own "hidden agendas" stemming from their fears and failures. New Christians desperately need acceptance and security. The local fellowship of believers can assist new Christians in their progress toward intellectual, spiritual and emotional growth.  

When the church fails to experience a warm, loving, caring fellowship; people go other places to find it. Possibly the best counterfeit to the fellowship Christ wants to give his church is the neighborhood bar. The bar dispenses liquor instead of grace, escape rather than reality. It is a place where you can talk without intimidation. You can tell your inner most secrets and people will listen without making value judgments. Bruce Larson shares in his book, Dare to Live Now, that "God has put into the human heart the

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desire to know and be known, to love and be loved, and so many seek a counterfeit at the price of a few beers.\footnote{Bruce Larson, \textit{Dare to Live Now} (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 1967), p. 110.}

Fellowship in the local church can be a haven of rest for people who are searching for a sense of belonging. Christians can become involved with people who are hurting and let them know that someone cares for them as persons.

\textit{Koinonia} fellowship goes beyond attending church or sitting together in a pew. True fellowship is characterized by love and unity. Paul's instruction to Christians describes the relationships evident in a loving/caring fellowship of believers. Paul writes:

\begin{quote}
Speaking the truth in love, we grow and build each other up as each does his part (Eph. 4:15-16).

So we who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another (Rom. 12:5).

Minister to one another in brotherly love (Rom. 12:10).
\end{quote}

When love is practiced in the local fellowship of believers minor irritations are overlooked. Persons in the fellowship are patient with each other's weaknesses. Enthusiasm in the body comes through building up one another in brotherly love. Paul urged the Christians in Thessalonica to "encourage one another and build each other up" (I Thess. 5:11). Critical remarks and negative attitudes are out of order in a loving/caring fellowship.

Members in a church experiencing Christ's love work together in harmony and unsaved people are added to the fellowship on a regular basis (Acts 2:46).

Questions for Discussion and Interaction


2. What does it mean when we say the "church is both apostolic and confessional?"

3. Describe different ways love might be demonstrated in your local church fellowship.

SMALL GROUP FELLOWSHIP

A congregational survey taken in May of 1978 showed that over one-third of the Taylor Free Methodist Church congregation felt a need to participate in some type of small group fellowship. The survey covered six areas: worship, Christian fellowship, involvement in service, communication, Christian growth, and Christian education. The Sunday the survey was taken, there were two hundred twenty-seven in attendance. Seventy-six surveys were filled out and returned. See Appendix G for a sample of the questionnaire and tabulation of the survey.

The third of the congregation that felt a need for more fellowship opportunities stated they would like to be involved in the following ways: home Bible study groups, church retreats, church fellowship dinners, and small fellowship groups. Thirty-two of the seventy-six adults surveyed said they felt the need to develop a few close friends with whom they could share on a personal level. Twenty-nine said they would like to be invited to someone's home.

To more adequately minister to the fellowship needs of the congregation, programs were provided to help members of the congregation get better acquainted. The entire congregation was divided into small prayer-partner groups of four or five families. The family units were encouraged to pray regularly for one another and to get together as a group to share. An all church retreat was held on the
campus of Spring Arbor College. The day was spent in fellowship and recreation. Three small group Bible studies were started in different geographical locations. After one new Christian became involved in a small Bible study and prayer group he said to me, "Pastor, of all the things you have started in the church; this is the best thing you have ever done." He said he looked forward to getting together with his small group that was meeting on a weekly basis.

Fellowship in the Early Church

Spiritual growth for believers in the early church came from participation both in the larger body of believers and through involvement in smaller group fellowship. The believers in Jerusalem ate together and met for worship and praise in their homes. The home became the focal meeting place for believers in the early church. Paul in writing to Philemon makes reference to the group of believers meeting in home worship. Paul writes, "To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home" (Phlm. 1-2). Luke reports that believers in the early church "broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts" (Acts 2:46). Small group fellowship was a vital part of the life and ministry of the early church.

Small Groups Historically

Early Methodism was a small group movement. John Wesley organized the Class Meeting for new believers to experience mutual encouragement and sharing of faith and love. Wesley organized the
Class Meeting to meet weekly to give the new believer guidance in prayer, Bible study and Christian growth. Six years after the Class Meeting was organized Wesley commented:

It can scarce be conceived what advantages have been reaped . . . . Many now happily experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to "bear one another's burdens," and naturally to "care for each other." As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with, so they had a more endeared affection for, each other. And "speaking the truth in love, they grew up into him in all things."1

From the example of Jesus, the teaching of the New Testament church, and history we can conclude that small groups are to have a vital part in the ongoing life and ministry of the local church. Small group fellowship needs a specific plan and purpose for meeting. The small group can become a catalyst for spiritual growth and renewal.

**Purpose of Small Groups**

A small group of twelve or less provides an opportunity for believers to interact with others. The small group atmosphere of love and understanding serves as an excellent environment for learning to take place.

The small group fellowship has a two-fold aim: to relate to God and to relate to each other. Small group fellowship is more than a mutual admiration society. It exists as a training and equipping class to help move people out into the world as Christ's witnesses. The emphasis is not on having a good meeting; but on what is happening

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in the lives of individuals. Openness and honesty are primary goals for any small group. All pretenses and masks should be taken off. Members of a small group, as a part of the Body of Christ, come together as equals. People who come together in Jesus' name take seriously the promise of Jesus, "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them" (Matt. 18:20). The Apostle Paul also gives helpful advice for those who lead or participate in small groups when he says, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Eph. 4:2-3).

Members of a small group fellowship must guard against the temptation to discuss nonessentials and become critical of others or weaknesses they see in the church. Findley Edge suggests that members of a small group refuse to discuss problems unless their statement is started with either the personal pronoun "I" or "my." He says the pronoun "I" or "my" "helps keep the discussion personal, as it ought to be, rather than letting it become conceptual."  

Product of Small Groups

Small groups can become catalysts for spiritual renewal in the church. Earlier in this chapter it was noted that the Methodist Church emerged from a small group of believers. Four men on the campus of Oxford University, two of whom were John and Charles Wesley, began meeting together several evenings a week in 1729 to read from the New Testament in Greek. Their number increased until by 1735 there were

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about fourteen who met regularly for study and prayer. The small group was known around the University as "Methodists," because they were methodical in their study and meeting together. 3

Revival and spiritual renewal are often the product of believers who meet for Bible study and prayer. The lives of people have been transformed through small groups. Through small group fellowship, individuals have gained a whole new outlook on life. Robert Raines says that more conversions took place in the Class Meetings than in the Methodist preaching service. 4

The New Testament pattern for sustained growth is found in small group fellowship. The early Christians met regularly to share together in prayer, study, fellowship, and meals (Acts 2:42-46). The growing Christian will take advantage of involving himself in the experiences of church worship and small group fellowship.

Questions for Discussion and Interaction

1. What reasons can you give for belonging to a small group fellowship?

2. What are some dangers of a small group fellowship?

3. What are some positive things that can come from small groups?

4. What should characterize a small group?


Chapter 20

FELLOWSHIP IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Fellowship in the church is "in" and "of" the Holy Spirit. This chapter looks first at the dynamics of fellowship as a ministry of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, the gifts of the Holy Spirit will be examined in light of their relationship to the entire Body of Christ. Finally, we will study how the early church grew through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Fellowship—A Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Dynamic fellowship in the early church was a natural by-product of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul spoke of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit at the close of his second letter to the Christians in Corinth. Paul finished his letter by saying: "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (II Cor. 13:14).

Before Jesus ascended into heaven he told his disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they had been clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49). The disciples obeyed the command of Christ and waited in Jerusalem for ten days. Then on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came and radically changed their lives. The Holy Spirit cleansed their heart by faith (Acts 15:9) and brought them into a new relationship to the risen Saviour and to one another. At the U. S. Congress on Evangelism held in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1969, I heard Richard
Halverson share his view on the new relationship that took place among the disciples following Pentecost. Halverson said in his plenary address:

A new, absolutely unique social entity was born. Those individual disciples were magnetized into a supernatural unity by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They became one indivisible, inseparable organism, the body of Christ, the Church.¹

The Holy Spirit transforms selfish, conditional, love into selfless, unconditional, love. Paul declares that self-forgetting love is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul says, "God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us" (Rom. 5:5). The ministry of the Holy Spirit makes Christ real in our lives. The Holy Spirit brings to our mind the teachings of Christ (John 16:13). The key word to living the Spirit-filled life is "obedience." When we are in total obedience to the will and Word of Christ we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit. Peter preached this truth when he declared: "We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him" (Acts 5:32).

Fellowship "in" and "of" the Holy Spirit is a fellowship of perfect love. The quality of that fellowship is characterized by the fruits of the Holy Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23).

Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are given to all believers who participate in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The gifts are given to enable the total body to be built up in love (Eph. 4:11-16). The Bible clearly states that all who are born again are born of the Holy Spirit and possess the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

The primary focus of the New Testament is on the "gift" of the Holy Spirit, rather than on the "gifts" of the Spirit. The gift of the Spirit is greater than any of His gifts. An analogue to this truth is to be seen in the gifts a bridegroom gives his bride before their marriage. The groom may give his bride perfume, candy, flowers and clothes. But at the altar of the church the groom gives the ultimate gift—himself. Without the giving of himself all the other gifts would be meaningless.

Every disciple of Jesus is, in this sense, then, a charismatic Christian. The word translated "gifts" in the New Testament is charismata. All disciples of Jesus possess the gift of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 6:9). Paul teaches: "There are different kinds of gifts (charismata); but the same Spirit (I Cor. 12:5). The gifts of the Spirit are given to all believers; therefore, the gifts are not a measure of a person's spiritual maturity. Possession of certain gifts compared to other gifts does not give proof that a person is filled with the Spirit. Gifts of the Spirit are distributed according to the divine will of God for the common good of the body (I Cor. 12:7, 11).
God has given gifts so:

Christians might be properly equipped for their service, that the whole body might be built up until the time comes when, in the unity of common faith and common knowledge of the Son of God, we arrive at real maturity—the measure of development which is meant by 'the fulness of Christ.'

Instead of flamboyant manifestations, true spiritual gifts result in dedicated service (I Cor. 12:7). Spiritual gifts are needed because our human talents and abilities are inadequate to do God's work. Unless the Spirit of God directs, guides, and builds the church our labor is in vain.

Kenneth Kinghorn in his book, Gifts of the Spirit, gives a helpful summary of the biblical teaching on gifts:

1. God imparts spiritual gifts according to his divine grace; they cannot be earned through human merit (Eph. 4:7-11).

2. God gives spiritual gifts according to his own discretion; he is not bound by man's wishes (I Cor. 12:11, 18, 28).

3. God wills that every Christian experience spiritual gifts; these divine enablings are not limited to a few believers (I Cor. 12:7-11).

4. God provides gifts for the purpose of ministry and service; they are not given in order to draw attention to man or to satisfy his ego (I Cor. 12:7 and I Pet. 4:10).

5. God intends that the ministry of the church be accomplished through spiritual gifts; human talents are not adequate for spiritual ministry (Matt. 25:15-30).

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God never guides contrary to his Word. Any instructions that go beyond the scriptural teaching on gifts must be rejected. A true gift of God is something you don't have to beg for or learn. God freely gives his gifts and whatever gifts we receive should be used for his glory.

A Growing Fellowship

True fellowship in the Holy Spirit produces spontaneous growth. The book of Acts records spontaneous growth in the early church that took place under the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. The following passages from Acts show how the early church grew following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost:

And the Lord added to their number daily (Acts 2:47).

But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand (Acts 4:4).

Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number (Acts 5:14).

So the Word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7).

Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord (Acts 9:31).

But the Word of God continued to increase and spread (Acts 12:24).

So the churches were strengthened in faith and grew daily in numbers (Acts 16:5).

Gentiles and Jewish unbelievers could reject the preaching of the apostles as simply another "teaching" among many; but they found it much more difficult to reject the fellowship of love evident in the
relationships among believers in the early church. Ray Stedman notes that the "concern of Christians for each other and their evident awareness of sharing life in the same great family of God as brother and sister, left the pagan world drooling with envy." What the message could not do, the demonstration of love could do. When the church experiences authentic fellowship of the Holy Spirit, the church gets the attention of the world.

The early church grew through the power of love. Neither training classes on soul winning or mass evangelistic campaigns were conducted. Wherever believers went, people were saved and added to their fellowship. Richard Halverson describes the growth possibilities in the local church. He says: "When people are in the right relationship with God and one another, evangelism happens spontaneously, consistently and almost effortlessly."

God's plan according to the New Testament pattern is spontaneous expansion. Discipleship and outreach evangelism are carried out in the context of the local fellowship of believers who are unified in love and empowered for service through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

**Questions for Discussion and Interaction**

1. What changes are evident in the disciples after their experience on the day of Pentecost?

2. What is the primary ministry of the Holy Spirit?

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3. Why does the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers precede growth and expansion of the church?

4. What is the purpose of the "gifts of the Holy Spirit"?
Chapter 21

GROWING THROUGH FELLOWSHIP--CASE STUDY

Dynamic fellowship directs the Christian life toward balance. The ministry of the local church as the Body of Christ provides a loving and caring fellowship for all members of the body. Conflicts and crises in personal relationships present the church an opportunity to reach out in love to those in the "body life" of the church who are hurting. The following case study illustrates how one church ministered to one member of the "body" who felt rejected.

Assignment

Carefully read the description, background, analysis and evaluation of the event described. After reading the case study give your own reflection, analysis and evaluation. Meet with two or three other members of your disciples' class to discuss your findings.

Description

"I want to withdraw my membership from the church!" The slender woman spoke calmly into the microphone, and from the platform behind her and the pews shocked responses came over the people. Her parents' faces reflected quiet suffering as Janet's words rang through the sound system. "I have been living a lie, and I can't continue to hide it." A slight tremor in her voice betrayed her emotion. "Please understand that I appreciate your friendship; and I want to continue as
a visitor here. But I have discovered that I don't believe in Christianity as a valid philosophy of life. Therefore, I can't remain a member of this church."

**Background**

Janet Landis had grown up in the church. Her father was a lay leader in the congregation. Janet was the seventh of nine children. She had attended Bible college and married Bob while still in college. She dropped out of college to have a baby. After her fourth child, she returned to college. Janet and Bob only occasionally attended church.

Before getting married Janet had been actively involved in her church. She was active in the missions program, taught Sunday school in a black inner-city church, and made straight "A's" in Bible college.

Janet told her Pastor that she had many doubts about Christianity. She said: "Christianity is too narrow. I must find a philosophy of life by which I can live honestly with my imperfections and strive to be a better person on my own terms." In one of the counseling sessions with the Pastor she shared her frustration: "I have made some free choices, but I can't rid myself of the idea that some of the things I've done are morally wrong. It doesn't make sense to feel guilt when I don't believe there are any real objective standards of right and wrong . . . yet I am not finding freedom from guilt."

Janet's face showed the despair she was feeling. There were dark circles under her eyes, and new lines of pain etched around her sensitive mouth. Janet shared her frustration: "I am beginning to see that even though I think there is no right and wrong, I still feel condemned."
I am finding it more and more difficult to live with myself, I even feel alienated from my family."

Janet moved to Alaska several months later when her husband's job was transferred. Following the public announcement concerning her withdrawal of membership several members of the church took a special interest in her. One young lady, a new Christian, introduced herself to Janet and told Janet she would be praying for her. When Janet moved, her new friend continued to keep in contact with her by writing letters periodically.¹

Analysis

Janet had grown up in the church, but she did not feel totally accepted by the congregation. She felt accepted only when she was actively involved in various programs of the church. Her public statement, "I don't believe in Christianity as a valid philosophy of life. Therefore, I can't remain a member of this church," was a cry for help.

Janet's remark, "I want to continue here as a visitor," showed she continued to have warm feelings toward the church.

Janet, age 35, could have been an attractive woman. She seldom smiled and dressed in a manner that gave the impression she really didn't like herself. Her low self-image affected all other areas of her life. As a child growing up in a large family Janet's parents failed to give her love and appreciation. As an adult she continued to

feel and think negatively about herself, the world, and the future. Unable to adequately love herself, she found it difficult to accept God's love. She felt unworthy of God's love. She had a difficult time believing God would accept and love her in her present condition. Walter Trobisch graphically describes the vicious cycle caused by an inadequate self-image:

We are unable to love others because we have not learned to love ourselves. We cannot learn to love ourselves because we are not loved by others or are unable to accept their love. We are not loved by others because we are unable to love them or we love them 'out of duty.' We are unable to love them because we have not learned to love ourselves. And thus it begins all over again.²

The function of the church is to provide a redemptive fellowship where people can experience God's love, accept themselves as God made them, give encouragement, and support one another. Hurting people in the fellowship of God's church can find healing and be made whole as they are forgiven by God and learn to forgive one another. Norman Wright reminds us that personal wholeness comes when we remember we have been loved unconditionally and voluntarily by God. God demonstrated his unconditional love on the cross of Calvary. Norman Wright states: "God declares who we are and what we are and asks us to agree with Him."³

As a child Janet Landis evidently developed a negative view of herself and life through her relationships at home. Her negative views resulted in an identity crisis. She felt isolated from God and others.


She interpreted everything that happened to her at home and in the fellowship of the church in a negative way. Her negative interpretation of her relationships reinforced her negative views. Her public statement was a desperate attempt on her part to find herself.

**Evaluation**

The public statement and withdrawal from membership in the church served as a challenge to the church to practice *koinonia* fellowship. The many cards and letters Janet received from members of the church illustrated God's love in action. Members were not critical of Janet's actions. They showed by their continued interest that they cared. Janet was important to the body.

More attention could have been given to ministering to the entire family unit. The main focus of help was directed to Janet, the wife, while the husband was given little attention by the church.

True *koinonia* fellowship serves as a support system to the local body of believers. Relationships in the "body life" of the church either prove or disprove the teaching of Scripture. New Testament fellowship builds up one another through love. Fellowship in the Holy Spirit reaches out to those in the body who are hurting and brings healing in Jesus' name.

**Questions for Discussion and Interaction**

1. What are some possible emotional and spiritual dynamics going on in the life of Janet Landis?

2. What alternatives might the pastor and church congregation have tried in ministering to Janet?
3. What unspoken feelings and hurts should members of a Christian fellowship consider in helping one another?

4. Why are inner feelings and attitudes so important to a healthy Christian life?

5. What can the local fellowship do to build up the self esteem of each member?
SECTION V

GROWING THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

Chapter 22  JESUS AND DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING
Chapter 23  THE EARLY CHURCH AND DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING
Chapter 24  THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP
Chapter 25  THE DISCIPLE AS A WITNESS
Chapter 26  GROWING THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING—CASE STUDY
Chapter 27  SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
Chapter 22

JESUS AND DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

This section presents various ways to grow through discipleship training. First, we will look at the different methods Jesus used to make disciples and see how Jesus communicated the gospel to the world. Second, we will examine the teachings of the early church in the area of making disciples. Third, we will study the cost of discipleship and the ministry of the Holy Spirit as the disciples were empowered and became witnesses. Fourth, we will discuss the fact that disciples of Jesus are instructed to give their witness in the world today. This section will close with a case study on discipleship. It will serve as a springboard for reflection, analysis, and evaluation of discipleship training.

The basis for a ministry of discipleship training is found in the great commission given by Jesus. Jesus said, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20). Two primary functions of ministry are given emphasis by Jesus, evangelism ("go and make disciples") and edification ("teaching them to obey"). Evangelism and edification are vital to the ongoing ministry of Jesus in the world. They are wedded together for disciple building in order to continue the ministry started by Jesus.
Who Is a Disciple?

Mathetes is the most common Greek word used in the New Testament which is translated disciple. Mathetes is used 250 times in the Gospels and Acts.¹ A "disciple" is a learner and imitator of his teacher. In the New Testament a "disciple" is one who follows Jesus.

Becoming a New Testament disciple of Jesus involves making a total commitment to the authority of Jesus. Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Luke 9:23). The call of Jesus was a demanding call. He asked his followers to leave all and follow him until death. His followers could expect hardships and suffering. Self-denial was at the very crux of the call for discipleship. The call of Jesus was unique. Other religious leaders, the rabbis and Greek philosophers, represented a specific cause. Jesus offered himself. Dwight Pentecost describes a disciple as one who willingly accepts God's will as God makes it known and one who identifies himself with Jesus Christ in the discharge of that will.²

A contemporary disciple is one who receives training from Jesus. Those who follow Jesus and yield to his training are called "disciples." Jesus devoted most of his ministry to training the twelve disciples. For three years Jesus associated with them. They learned

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by listening to Jesus as he taught by the Sea of Galilee and observed him as he practiced the truths he had taught them. Their training was primarily on-the-job training. Robert Coleman declares that Jesus used his own life as an object lesson for training others. He says, "Jesus practiced before His men what He wanted them to learn, thereby proving both its workability and its relevance."

**Model for Discipleship Training**

Jesus is our model for discipleship training. Jesus spoke to crowds of people, but he spent much of his time contacting individuals. Jesus met people in their daily walk of life. Most of his contacts were made during daylight hours when people were active. He was sensitive to people who were spiritually hungry and went out of his way to minister to people who were searching for reality.

Zacchaeus is an example of how Jesus demonstrated love and friendship to those who were seeking for spiritual truth (Luke 19:1-9). Zacchaeus was a lonely man. As a tax collector he had an important job. He had wealth, but Zacchaeus was an unhappy man. In his house he probably enjoyed the finest furniture and well-trained servants; but, personal friends never gathered around his table. Zacchaeus was a man hungry for a friendly word. He heard that Jesus was going to pass by Jericho. He had heard about Jesus and was intensely curious to see him. He was a short man, therefore, he had to climb a sycamore tree in order to see above the crowd of people gathered to watch Jesus

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pass by. When Jesus came near the tree, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today" (Luke 19:5). Zacchaeus became a transformed man—not so much in respect to what Jesus said so much as what Jesus did—because in Jesus, Zacchaeus found a friend who genuinely cared for him.

On another occasion Jesus passed through Samaria (John 4:1-26). He stopped outside the city of Sychar and waited at Jacob's well while the disciples traveled into the city for food. He met a woman at the well who was despised by all who were classified as decent people. She had no true friends. Everyone she knew used or abused her. When Jesus met her he spoke kindly to her and asked her for a drink. He shared the way to eternal life with her and her life was radically changed. In Jesus the woman found an authentic friend.

People in all social-economic levels found Jesus to be their friend. Jesus met people on their level and gently persuaded them to move to higher levels of ethics and spiritual understanding. Jesus always combined his message with a caring relationship:

To the sinner Jesus offered forgiveness;
To the lonely he offered fellowship;
To those in conflict he offered peace;
To the bewildered he offered satisfaction.

Communicating the Gospel

Jesus communicated the Gospel through love and friendship. He challenged and confronted people, but used the indirect approach to those who were living openly in sin. He did not "button-hole" people
with his message or manipulate them into following him. He presented the conditions for discipleship and let every person decide whether or not he would meet the conditions and follow. Engel and Norton suggest it is the responsibility of the Christian communicator to approach people in terms of their present spiritual condition and through an appropriate message help them "progress in their decision process toward initial commitment and subsequent growth."  

Jesus varied his approach to people according to their particular needs. When the person had physical needs Jesus ministered to their physical need before he presented truths to them about the Kingdom of God.

When we communicate spiritual truths to people we must remember that people have filters through which they screen all messages they hear. Each person's background, culture, and experience affect his response to the message. Communication research shows, according to James Engel, that we listen to what we want to hear; we get what we want of what we hear, and we remember what we want.  

Jesus did not use any set method to train his disciples or communicate his message to people around him. He was flexible in his approach to people and varied his message according to the needs of the person to whom he was talking. He taught with spontaneity and freedom. Even so the Gospel today is not communicated with rigid

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methods or harsh words. It is communicated by people who authenticate their message through lives that display Christlike love.

Questions for Discussion and Interaction

1. Evangelism ("go make disciples") and edification ("teaching them to obey") are included in the great commission given by Jesus in Matt. 28:19-20. How do you see the two ministries working together to fulfill the commission?

2. Jesus challenged four fishermen to follow him. Jesus said to Peter, James, Andrew and John, "Come, follow, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). The four fishermen practiced net fishing from their boats in the Sea of Galilee. Sharing our faith today is often compared to angling rather than net fishing. What difference does a person's interpretation of the command of Jesus make in fishing for men?

3. The call of Jesus to discipleship is a demanding call. He said, "If any of you will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Are there areas in your life that you find difficult to deny and follow Jesus? Tell about those areas that are challenging for you to give up or deny.
Chapter 23

THE EARLY CHURCH AND DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

The process of discipleship training is analogous to physical life. First, there is the birth (evangelizing), of the child. Second, there is the rearing (edifying) of the child. Finally, there is the sending out of the person (equipping) who is now mature enough to bear and nurture others.¹ All three stages of development—evangelism, edification, and an equipping ministry—were evident in the early church.

Paul and Discipleship Training

The Apostle Paul outlined the strategy for discipleship training when he instructed his disciple Timothy. "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (II Tim. 2:2). The New Testament model for making disciples was carried out in small groups or on a one-on-one basis. Paul, himself, received on-the-job training from Barnabas during their team ministry in Antioch (Acts 11:23-26). Then Paul gave field training to Silas, Luke, and Timothy.

Paul considered himself a spiritual parent to those he won to Christ. He called Timothy and Titus his "sons" in the faith. He treated new believers as his own children. He wrote to the believers in Thessalonica, "For you know that we dealt with each of you as a

father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God" (I Thess. 2:11-12).

**Lay Ministry**

Discipleship training in the early church concentrated on laymen. Laymen were trained by the apostles and then were sent out to witness to the world. Luke records that when persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem "all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went" (Acts 8:1, 4). Expansion in the early church was directly related to aggressive witnessing by laymen. Acts 6 reports that six laymen were appointed to help in the daily distribution of food. Shortly after their appointment two of the laymen, Stephen and Philip, became involved in preaching and witnessing.

The disciples of Jesus were laymen in that they did not have formal theological or rhetorical training. Michael Green reports that laymen in the early church did not preach formally, but shared informally

in homes and wine shops, on walks, and around market stalls. They went everywhere gossiping the gospel; they did it naturally, enthusiastically, and with the conviction of those who are not paid to say that sort of thing.²

**Discipleship and Follow-up**

A fundamental motivation for discipleship training is the fact that new Christians have an extremely difficult time growing in

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isolation. New believers grow faster when they are nurtured by a loving and caring fellowship of believers. After a new Christian becomes strong and mature in his Christian faith he then shares Christ with others and continues the discipling cycle that was started in him.

Follow-up is a crucial part of the total discipling process. The Apostle Paul used four methods for following up new believers:

1. Person-to-person (Acts 15:36),
2. Through another person (I Thess. 3:1-2),
3. By writing letters (II Cor. 2:9), and
4. By praying (Phil. 1:3-4).

Follow-up is more than merely giving new Christians a pep talk about Bible reading. It is more than loading them down with good Christian books. It is more than getting persons to attend church or getting them involved in church activities.

Jesus and Paul illustrate the importance of follow-up. They invested themselves in the lives of their disciples. According to their example follow-up means investing your life in the life of another. It is teaching the new Christian how to study the Bible, how to pray, the importance of becoming involved in a small Christian growth group, and how to witness. The discipling process includes both verbal instruction and the witness of your life. The discipler becomes a model to the person he is nurturing. He in effect says to the person, "Follow me as I follow Christ." The discipler's life becomes a visual aid to the person he is helping. His life is as important as the instruction he gives. The leader's life serves as a model and reflects his level of commitment and devotion to the Lord. There must be balance
between "being" and "doing." The leader should resist the temptation to "do" rather than take time to "wait" during times of personal prayer, devotion, and fellowship with the Saviour.

Questions for Discussion and Interaction

1. Paul gave the following instruction to Timothy, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others" (II Tim. 2:2). Tell the steps you might take in training someone who in turn would teach others.

2. The Apostle Paul used four different methods in following up new Christians: in person, through another person, by writing letters, and through prayer. Which method would you find most comfortable to use in encouraging new Christians? Why?

3. Three functions of ministry are evident in the early church: evangelism, edification, and equipping. Evangelism involves sharing the gospel with those who have not been born again. Edification gives the new believer instruction on how to grow and become strong in his Christian faith. Then the new Christian is equipped to go out into the world and disciple others. Which of the three functions, evangelism, edification, or equipping appeals to you personally? Why do you feel drawn toward that particular function of ministry?
Chapter 24

THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

The call of Jesus to follow him and become his disciple is a costly and demanding invitation. True Christian discipleship involves responding in obedience and self denial and then living a Spirit-directed life. A disciple according to the New Testament is one who follows Jesus, obeys his commands, denies self, learns, loves others, and lives a Christ-honoring life.

The Call to Obedience

The word "disciple" (Greek, mathetes) occurs only in the Gospels and Acts. The word describes those who have committed themselves to follow Jesus as their Lord and Master. A New Testament disciple was one who unconditionally accepted Jesus as his authority. Gerhard Kittel in his Theological Dictionary of the New Testament states that the disciples accepted the authority of Jesus, "not just inwardly by believing in Him, but also outwardly by obeying Him." Discipleship is not merely a call to believe something about Jesus. It is as Jim Wallis writes, "a willingness to forsake all and follow Him."2

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Jesus gave the invitation to discipleship by saying, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Following Jesus meant obeying all that Jesus taught. Jesus said, "If you hold to my teachings, you are really my disciple" (John 8:31). Jesus demanded total obedience to his message and life.

Following Jesus requires more than agreeing to believe in God or attending church. It is more than a legalistic assent to conform to certain church standards or doctrine. It is more than tithing ten percent of one's income. Discipleship in the New Testament sense means a radical commitment to obey Jesus regardless of the cost. It is a call to a decisive and intimate experience with him. Discipleship involves total commitment to Jesus and identification with him in all our attitudes and actions. It is allowing Jesus' goals, ambitions, and desires to become ours. Dwight Pentecost says, "Discipleship involves setting aside one's own will and one's own rights to his life and acknowledging that Jesus Christ has the right to be obeyed, the right to rule." 3 Our surrender to Christ does not mean that we give up our freedom to make choices. Instead it means we yield all our rights to Jesus. He is our Creator and Lord. He knows what is best for us.

**Call to Self-Denial**

Jesus' call to discipleship is a call to self-denial and sacrifice. Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny

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himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Jesus does not mean that we are to demean or lower our self image. Jesus taught that we are to love ourselves with an adequate self love. We are to love God with all our heart and our neighbor as much as we love ourself. Jesus said he came to give us abundant life (John 10:10). Abundant life is lived with self-confidence and the realization that we are created in God's image as worthwhile persons. The self-denial of following Jesus means we are willing to forget our selfish desires of the flesh, give up worldly self-seeking goals, and yield totally to God's will for our life. Self-denial is the price we willingly pay to follow Jesus. Jesus does not coax people into a glib profession of faith or a shallow half-hearted commitment to follow him. He did not preach a popular message in order to attract a large following. Jesus described the conditions for becoming his disciple in terms of giving him first claim to all areas of our life. Jesus wants us to give him priority over everything in our life. He says, "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:36).

Jesus promises abundant life to all who follow him, but he also spoke of giving up one's securities. He described the cost of discipleship when he taught, "Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). The cost of "everything," all we have and hope to possess. Jesus called Peter and Andrew to come follow him. "At once they left their nets and followed him" (Matt. 4:20). Likewise, when Jesus called James and John, "they left the boat and their father and followed him" (Matt. 4:22). The call of Jesus is a
call to active service. Wherever Jesus leads, the disciple is willing to follow.

**Call to Live in the Spirit**

The invitation to discipleship is a call to follow Jesus and live according to the teachings of Jesus instead of according to the desires of our sinful nature. As a follower of Christ we are given a new nature (II Cor. 5:17). We now allow the Holy Spirit to guide our life. Our old nature has been crucified. Paul testifies how it is possible to live a victorious Christian life. He says, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Christ lives in us so that our hands and feet become the hands and feet of Christ at work in our modern world.

**Questions for Discussion and Interaction**

1. The Gospels reveal three levels of spiritual commitment among the followers of Jesus. Some of the followers were curious (Matt. 5:1), they were interested in hearing what Jesus had to say. Others were convinced of the truth of his Word (John 2:11). Still others became identified with Jesus and willingly committed themselves to his authority. Of the three levels cited which best describes your present spiritual life? Describe your present level and any which preceded it.

2. The word "discipline" is closely related to the word "disciple." List the disciplines for growth which Jesus is helping you to incorporate into your life to become strong in your faith and more like Jesus in your behavior.

3. When we live according to the desires of our human nature we are in bondage to those desires (Rom. 6:9-12). Our nature needs cleansing and transformation from sin. In Gal. 2:20 Paul testifies how it is possible to live a life with victory over the desires of the flesh. Read
Gal. 2:20 and tell about any areas in your life that need Christ's healing and helping touch. Compare the following verses for further insight into how a life honoring Jesus can be lived: Rom. 6:1-4; Rom. 8:1-14; Rom. 12:1-2; Phil. 2:3-5; I Thess. 5:23.
Chapter 25
THE DISCIPLE AS A WITNESS

There is a growing concern among Christians for understanding how to witness to the unsaved world. I taught a course entitled "Evangelism Through Christian Education" during the months of January and February of 1980. I asked the adult students in the class what they hoped to learn from the class. Their responses illustrated interest in becoming effective witnesses for Christ. Several of the responses were as follows:

"I want to learn how to talk to people about the Lord."

"I want to learn how to approach people on the subject of the Bible and Jesus."

"I don't know what to say to people concerning spiritual things. I hope this class on evangelism will teach me."

"I work with teens and would like to know how to witness to them."

In this chapter we will study the New Testament teaching about evangelism, what our message should be, how to receive power to share the message, and several methods we can use to witness.

New Testament Teaching

Jesus is our model for personal evangelism. He expected his followers to do the work of evangelism. He taught that it is the responsibility of every disciple to become personally involved in carrying out the great commission. Jesus said:
Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age (Matt. 28:18-20).

The ministry of evangelism recorded in the New Testament was not confined to certain places or settings. Everywhere Jesus went—by the sea shore, in the temple, at the market place, through the fields, along the road—he was doing the work of evangelism. Evangelism wasn't something to be made seasonal or programmed to occur only during special times of the year.

Before ascending to heaven, Jesus instructed his followers that they were to be his "witness" (Acts 1:8). A witness (martus) denotes one who speaks from personal experience about actions in which he participated and which happened to him. A martus is one who witnesses to facts (Mark 14:26) and testifies to what he has heard and seen (Luke 24:48). He witnesses from first hand experience the story of Jesus and especially the fact of his resurrection (Acts 1:22-26). If needed, a martus (the Greek word from which our English word martyr is derived) is willing to die for Jesus rather than denounce his name (Acts 22:20).

Gospel Is Good News

Paul declares that the gospel is about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul says, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3-4). The Gospel about the resurrection according to the Apostle Paul is good news.
God's nature is the foundation for evangelism. God's nature is love. John writes, "God so loved the world that He gave . . ." (John 3:16). God's very nature is to love the lost. God's love in the believer's heart compels him to share the good news about God's love with others. Through Jesus, God reconciled the world unto Himself. Then He commissioned every believer to share with others the good news through the ministry of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18).

Believers are to share the good news naturally and spontaneously. No one should be coerced to share his faith. New Testament Christians were not compelled to gather in groups for instruction about how to share their faith. Jesus didn't beg people to go out and witness to the unsaved world. The early Christians naturally shared out of their hearts the good news about Jesus. Their hearts overflowed. They could not help but share what they had seen and heard. Peter and John were warned by the Jewish officials to stop speaking about the name of Jesus. They answered, "We cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). Good news is shared spontaneously and with conviction. Roland Allen in his book, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, says that the Christian speaks from personal experience. "He speaks from his heart because he is too eager to be able to refrain from speaking. His subject has gripped him. He speaks of what he knows and knows by experience."¹

The message of the disciples' witness focused upon Jesus. His message was not about doctrines in the Bible, the importance of going

to church, but about Jesus—what he has done, who he is, and what he can and will do for all who follow him.

Power to Witness

The ministry and work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart equips and empowers him to become a bold witness. Jesus did not say, "... you may be my witnesses after the Holy Spirit comes on you." Nor did Jesus force the believer to witness through coercion. He did not say, "... you must be witnesses unto me..." Witnessing was to become a natural expression of the life filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Richard Halverson, pastor of the Fourth Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C., believes that the Spirit-empowered Christians were witnesses, not because they were compelled, but "because the divine Witness indwelt them and worked through them. They did not witness because they had to but because they could not help it."2 The Holy Spirit transformed weak, timid, and fearful men into bold and dynamic witnesses. Everywhere the disciples went they boldly proclaimed that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead. The Holy Spirit purified their hearts (Acts 15:9) and set them free from their sinful nature so that their lives were transformed and gave evidence of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace,

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patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control" (Gal. 5:22).

Witness Through Love

Witnessing is the natural over-flow of a life in love with Jesus Christ. The work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart makes him sensitive to the felt-needs of people with whom he talks. Witnessing through love does not treat "lost" people as cases, but as persons who have feelings. Christ's love in the disciple's heart helps him witness in a gentle and patient manner. Instead of being "driven" to get his witness in for the day or go through a proven plan to win someone to Christ; the disciple seeks to let Christ love the unsaved person through him. Rosalind Rinker in her book, You Can Witness with Confidence, says, "Love is sensitive and seeks to discern when the Spirit is already at work in another." Christ-like witnessing concentrates on building friendships with people and then communicates Christ's love to them through both life and words. Paul encouraged Philemon to witness through his life. He wrote, "And I pray that as you share your faith with others it will grip their lives too, as they see the wealth of good things in you that come from Christ Jesus" (Phlm. 6, Living Bible).

Christ's love is dynamic and reaches out to others. Jesus did not wait for the sinner to come to him, he went out "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). Christ's love compels us to go to people

who are hurting, empty, and searching for meaning in life. We offer them healing in Jesus' name. We offer them Christ's gift of eternal life for all who will believe and follow Jesus as his disciple.

There are some who say, "I don't talk about my faith, I just live it." This view misses the commands of Jesus. Leighton Ford declares that "None of us is good enough to let just our lives speak for Christ. We have to use words to point beyond ourselves." Jesus expected his followers to become his witnesses. He said, "Whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven" (Matt. 10:33). Jesus did not give the command for us to become his witnesses without providing the power for us to carry out his command. He gave the Holy Spirit for empowerment to be his witnesses wherever we go. Our witness is an incarnate witness. The risen Savior lives in a life and gives meaning to all areas of life. He works through a person's personality whether aggressive or shy. Jesus helps the person witness through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Our verbal witness tells others why our life is different. Our witness clarifies that having the assurance of eternal life is not based on a religious system, church, doctrine, or life style. Our salvation is grounded in the person of Jesus Christ, and results from living in obedience to and under the authority of Jesus.

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Questions for Discussion and Interaction

1. A Christian might say, "I don't share my faith verbally because I do not have the gift of evangelism." Yet Jesus declared, "You shall be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8). Should only those who have the gift of evangelism give verbal witness of their faith? Why do you think all disciples of Jesus are to become his witnesses? Can you think of any disciple who might not be able to give a verbal witness?

2. Is it true that evangelism is "caught" more than it is taught? A person who learns to fly an airplane must have both classroom instruction and practical training in an airplane. Explain how learning to fly and learning to become an effective witness are related. Explain how learning to witness and learning to fly are not related.

3. Jesus witnessed to individuals and to larger groups of people. Explain how both personal witnessing and witnessing through group fellowships complement each other in encouraging people to follow Jesus.

4. For additional interaction on the subject of discipleship, divide into groups of two or three. Each person in the smaller group can share briefly his experience in becoming a disciple of Jesus. Tell about the people and events that influenced your decision to follow Jesus. Describe changes that have taken place in your life since you committed your life to Jesus.
Chapter 26

GROWING THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING--
CASE STUDY

Focus

This case study focuses upon the progression of development in learning the true meaning of New Testament discipleship and evangelism in my own life and ministry.

Background

I grew up in Gypsum, Kansas, a small rural town located in central Kansas. During my elementary school years I attended two different churches. The first church I attended was located across the street from our home. My mother, sister, and I attended the church together. My father did not attend church until years later. Average attendance in the church was forty to forty-five people. The church had to close due to lack of financial support and eventually was torn down. I then attended a larger church that averaged between one hundred and one hundred twenty-five people. The church emphasized social issues more than the teachings of the Bible. It was theologically liberal (the pastor did not believe in the virgin birth of Christ, the deity of Christ, or the biblical account of creation). I attended this church for four years.

We moved to Sterling, Kansas, the year I started high school. After visiting several churches in the community we chose the Missionary
Church as our church home. The pastor of this church was evangelistic in his preaching and presented the biblical message of salvation. It was during a special revival crusade at the Missionary Church that I went forward and prayed at the altar to confess my sins and invite Jesus into my heart and life. I was a sophomore in high school, fifteen years of age. Several weeks later my mother, sister, and I were all baptized by immersion.

I graduated from Sterling High School; attended Central College in McPherson, Kansas, for two years; completed my college work at Greenville College in Greenville, Illinois; and then went on to attend and graduate from Asbury Theological Seminary located in Wilmore, Kentucky. After graduating from seminary I was appointed pastor of the Aldersgate Free Methodist Church in Kansas City, Kansas. I served as the Aldersgate pastor for five years. Following that pastorate I moved to Taylor, Michigan, to assume the leadership position during the organization of a new Free Methodist congregation in the city of Taylor.

Description of My Development as a Disciple

Shortly after my conversion experience I attended a Youth for Christ rally in Hutchinson, Kansas. The speaker made it clear that every Christian was to be a witness for Jesus and tell others about him. Following the rally I picked up a handful of gospel tracts and prayed that God would help me become His witness. The next day I placed several tracts in my shirt pocket and again prayed, "Lord, if you want me to witness to anyone at school, have them ask me for a tract," I started to get discouraged about my endeavor, but the second
day I had "success." At the end of my English class, John England asked for a tract. I handed him a couple of the pamphlets and told him that they could change his life. That ended my "aggressive" thrust in trying to witness in high school.

I sensed the call of God upon my life while in my second year at Central College. I made myself available to God to do His will wherever He might lead. Witnessing at Central was confined to "testimony time" in the local Free Methodist Church. I became more involved in Christian service during my senior year at Greenville College. I participated in the field service program and shared my testimony and devotional messages at several local nursing homes and at the Salvation Army mission in St. Louis.

My interest in evangelism was heightened while studying at Asbury Theological Seminary. I became convinced that the master plan of Jesus was for every Christian to give his verbal witness to the lost. I felt guilty and convicted for not telling others about Jesus. I started street witnessing and participated in door-to-door visitation in order to share the biblical plan of salvation with all who would listen. After several months of pounding on doors I became discouraged with the lack of responses and finally gave up on "cold turkey" visitation.

Following my graduation from seminary I accepted the pastorate of the Free Methodist Church in Kansas City, Kansas. The conference superintendent told me they were going to "close the doors" if they could not find a pastor. I visited the church and felt God wanted me to help keep the doors open. The church was located in an older part
of the city, but I was determined to see the church go forward. I defined the ministry area surrounding the church and organized a religious census to try and find prospects for the church. Several laymen went with me door-to-door seeking new families. After several weeks with no visible results we all became discouraged and discontinued the canvass.

I invited the general secretary of evangelism for our denomination to come and advise us concerning the future of the church. He came and surveyed our changing community and recommended that we relocate to a new ministry area. After much prayer, planning, and many frustrations we purchased a three acre site ten miles west of the existing church. Within two years a new church and parsonage were built. The new building and location brought unity and excitement to the church. Attendance grew from sixty to one hundred twenty after two years of ministry in the new area. The church was growing with new people, but I was still frustrated because so few new people were committing their lives to follow Jesus. Many were curious but they were not experiencing conversion. I had read about a new thrust in our denomination sponsored by Light and Life Men International. I wrote to Charles Kingsley the director and scheduled a twelve-day Christian Witness Crusade.

The crusade was held in January of 1967. Five nights were given to training and seven nights were given to evangelistic visitation. The results were outstanding. A total of twenty-one adults made professions of faith to follow Jesus. After this experience I started making evangelistic visitation a regular part of my pastoral ministry.
The summer of 1968, I accepted the appointment to help start a new congregation in Taylor. The new church was built and the first service was held in March 1970. The new congregation grew to an average attendance of over 200 by the third year of ministry. Our emphasis on evangelistic visitation enabled us to see many families make decisions for Christ in their homes.

**Analysis**

The principal thrust of my discipling ministry for the first ten years was on evangelism ("go and make disciples"). I failed to adequately emphasize the ministry of edification ("teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you"). My emphasis in ministry was a carry over from my experiences as a new Christian. I had been taught a limited view of discipleship and evangelism. I would feel guilty if I was not handing out Gospel tracts or confronting people about their sin. My focus was upon the proclamation of the Gospel. Most of my efforts were given to persuading people to follow Jesus. I had much to learn about the biblical teaching on nurture and follow-up.

My focus in ministry gradually changed during my eleventh year of ministry. In 1977, a congregational survey of the Taylor Free Methodist church revealed spiritual needs in the lives of many members of the congregation. Many of the people who were coming to worship services Sunday after Sunday did not understand and were not practicing the basic principles for Christian growth. The survey showed needs in the following areas: prayer, Bible study, fellowship, understanding the ministry of the Holy Spirit, discipleship and evangelism. After
studying the survey and reflecting upon my focus in ministry I realized my need to teach the Bible as well as preach it. I felt that a specific aid of ministry to the spiritual needs stated would be to prepare a <i>Christian Growth Manual</i> for guidance of new believers into balanced Christian growth. I anticipate the manual will undergo several revisions as it is field tested in the local church, and as the needs of new Christians undergo change.

The manual gives guiding principles for growth in the areas of Bible study, prayer, fellowship and discipleship training. The principles serve as a model that new believers can adapt to their particular needs and apply for continued growth throughout their Christian life. The manual is intended to give support to the other ministries of the church to help new Christians grow and become strong and mature in their faith.

**Evaluation**

The teaching of the New Testament gives balance to the ministry of discipleship and evangelism. The command of Jesus to "seek and to save the lost" should be coupled to his instruction to "teach them all that I have commanded you." Evangelism and edification are mutual partners in the ministry. Without evangelism there are no new believers to disciple. A church without an active ministry of evangelism will eventually die. Evangelism brings new life into the church. Edification incorporates and builds up new Christians in the faith. When evangelism is the primary focus of the church there is an initial acceleration of numerical growth, but without edification of the believers they eventually become discouraged and go elsewhere to be
The church patterned after the New Testament will enjoy a balanced ministry with evangelism and edification complementing each other. The balanced ministry is analogous to a gloved hand giving food to the hungry. The hand (evangelism) snugly fit into the glove (edification reaches out with untiring energy (power of the Holy Spirit) to share God's love with the hurting world.

As a disciple (one who follows and obeys) of Jesus, I am daily available to be his witness. As I go about my daily schedule I am ready to show Christ's love through both my life and my verbal witness. My primary concern is to follow Jesus and do his will. Often I have opportunity to build bridges to people and share the good news of the gospel informally with them in their home. Then I encourage them to become involved in a small Christian growth group. I also try to assign another more spiritually mature Christian to help and encourage the new believer on a one-to-one relationship. New believers are also encouraged to attend a three month class for new converts. This Christian Growth Manual is designed to serve as the text for the class. Students in the class will be given a questionnaire to fill out and give their evaluation of the effectiveness of the manual in helping them grow in the areas presented and discussed in the manual. See Appendix H for a sample questionnaire.

Questions for Discussion and Interaction

1. Two functions of ministry commanded by Jesus in the great commission are evangelism ("go and make disciples") and edification ("teaching them to observe all that I
have commanded"). Reflect upon the ministries of the church you attend. Are both functions emphasized equally? Give your evaluation and tell how its ministries could be strengthened.

2. What are some conceptions that have hindered you from giving verbal witness to your faith in Jesus Christ? Tell your story of change.

3. Reflect on events in your background that have shaped your views of discipleship and evangelism. This might best be accomplished in small groups of two or three. After each member of the small group has told his experiences in evangelism, one member of the small group can report to the larger group the common insights gained from the small group sharing time.
Chapter 27

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The thesis of this manual is that new believers need guidance toward maturity. A Christian Growth Manual is designed to guide the believer in developing disciplines for growth. The manual considers and expands the disciplines practiced in the early church. Believers in the early church continued in the apostles' doctrine (Bible study), prayer, fellowship, and sharing meals in their homes (Acts 2:42). The focus has been designed to guide new believers through these New Testament disciplines.

Verification of the Thesis

The validity of the manual to facilitate growth will be tested through the completion of two congregational surveys. Two groups of believers will use the manual for study. The first group will include new Christians who have made recent decisions to follow Jesus. The second group receiving instruction from the manual will be the Wednesday night Bible study group. I will lead the two groups through the manual using an overhead projector to present the material. After the two groups have received three months of instruction they will be given a questionnaire intended to measure spiritual commitment and growth. The questionnaire will be similar to the surveys taken in 1977 and 1978. The rest of the congregation who have not completed the manual will be given the same questionnaire. Results from these surveys will be
tabulated and compared to determine the effectiveness of the manual as a tool to transact meaningful learning. The manual will be revised according to the findings. Then the manual will be printed as a handbook and given out in the future to those who desire to participate in the discipleship class.

Leadership and Motivation

Research for this project-dissertation shows that learning at the highest level transpires when the student transfers newly gained insights and knowledge into action. Materials in the manual encourage students to discuss and interact with the ideas presented. Case studies have been presented at the end of each section to facilitate interaction and relational learning.

This research recognized that life-changing learning cannot be compartmentalized or confined to certain areas of the church's ministry. Facilitators to meaningful learning are inclusive rather than exclusive. Experiences in Sunday school worship, Bible study groups, and the family all work together to produce life-changing learning.

The research reveals that teaching which accomplishes meaningful learning speaks to the whole person: his abilities, knowledge, motivation, conscience and feelings. Teaching in the context of the local church utilizes leaders as "teachers" and "models" to produce life-changing learning.

My research and contextual experience since starting this project have caused me to redefine my concept of how learning is achieved. I now know that Christian education in the local church is challenged to go beyond an hour spent in an age-level Sunday school
class. The total program of the church must become supportive to motivating students toward implementation of truth into action.

**Growing Through God's Word**

The first discipline presented in the manual is the discipline of Bible Study. God's revealed Word stands as our foundational authority for truth. God acted through His Son to reveal both Himself and Truth in the written Scripture. Jesus serves as our model for spiritual growth. He used the Scripture as his authority. This manual has supported the view that Scripture is the foundation for Christian growth and maturity. The manual instructs new Christians to have confidence in the written Word. They are also encouraged to develop meaningful Bible study habits.

**Growing Through Prayer**

The second discipline presented in the manual is the discipline of prayer. Jesus did not debate the topic of prayer, he expected the discipline of prayer to be a vital part of the believer's life. He gave three primary conditions to answered prayer: (1) the condition of faith, (2) the condition of abiding, and (3) the condition of God's will. When all three conditions are met we have the assurance of God's answer to our prayer. The answer may be "yes," "no," or "later."

This study revealed that an adequate concept of God is essential to meaningful prayer. Prayer is not an attempt to bring God down to our level or change God's ultimate will. True prayer is aligning ourselves and surrendering to God's will. We open our hearts to receive God's instruction and commit ourselves to obey.
Growing Through Christian Fellowship

Fellowship in the local church results from members of the body working in harmony and encouraging each other. Gifts of the Spirit are given to each member of the body in order for all to become equipped to minister to one another and reach out in love.

Students studying the manual are encouraged to participate in both the larger body of believers and in smaller group fellowships. Our study showed that koinonia (fellowship) is only possible through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit unites believers and gives them the desire to love one another. He also empowers them to witness to the world.

The function of the local church is to provide redemptive fellowship where people can experience God's love, accept themselves as God made them, and encourage one another through mutual love and forgiveness.

Growing Through Discipleship Training

Discipleship training incorporates two functions of ministry given by Jesus in the great commission: evangelism ("go and make disciples") and edification ("teaching them to obey"). Both functions of ministry are vital to the ongoing ministry of Jesus in the world. They are wedded together in discipleship training in order to continue the mission started by Jesus.

Students receiving instruction from the manual are encouraged to become disciples of Jesus and unconditionally accept Jesus as their
authority. They are to progress from belief about Jesus to acceptance of the invitation to discipleship and obedience to Jesus regardless of the cost. They are instructed to become witnesses for Jesus. A witness denotes one who speaks from personal experience, witnesses to facts, and tells what he has heard and seen.

No one had to persuade the early Christians to witness. Their hearts spontaneously overflowed with love. They could not help but tell what they had heard and seen. Then as today Christ's love is communicated through a person's life and through his words.
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Leypoldt, Martha M. *40 Ways to Teach in Groups.* Valley Forge, Pa.: Judson Press, 1967.


. The Importance and Value of Proper Bible Study. Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Assoc., 1921.


B. Uncited Sources


*_. How to Teach the Bible.* Richmond: John Knox Press, 1949.


C. **Versions of the Bible**


APPENDIX A. Church Survey

My age is 12-18, 19-25, 26-35, 36-55, over 55.
I am a member, visitor of this church. I have attended this church: less than 1 year, 1-3 years, more than 3 years.
Single Married.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MARK ONE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Not Really</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I know without a doubt that Christ is in my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I live a life which is generally free from defeat and discouragement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>My church is for the most part utilizing my particular abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Prayer is a regular part of my daily life and schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I know how to explain to a non-Christian how he can know Christ personally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I am participating in a definite plan to reach our community with the gospel of Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I take time to read the Bible, by myself, on a daily schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I have personally trusted Christ to be my Savior and Lord.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I know how to deal with temptation and sin as it occurs in my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Our church is friendly and I enjoy the fellowship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>I am confident in my ability to study the Bible and gain meaningful insight from it for my personal life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>If I should die now, I am certain that I will have eternal life in heaven.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>I pray daily with my family when I am home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Compared to a year ago, I can see real growth in my Christian life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>I communicate openly with all members of my family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>I know how to pray.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I encourage my friends and acquaintances to attend our church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I have shared my faith in Christ with a non-Christian in the last week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>My daily life is consistently controlled by Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>I can truthfully say that I love others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>I get along quite well with everyone in this church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>I like myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>I have introduced at least one person to Christ this year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25. Our church outreach program offers a variety of opportunities for involvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26. I know that my life is yielded to and directed by the Holy Spirit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27. I feel my life has purpose and meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28. I am committed to help reach the world for Christ in my lifetime.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29. God will accept me into heaven because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30. My greatest spiritual need is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MARK ONE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Not Really</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B. Age Grouping and Areas of Need

One hundred sixteen questionnaires were filled out by members of the congregation from age twelve up. Age grouping of those who took the survey is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-18</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-25</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-55</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-up</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>116</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questions covered eleven areas of the Christian Life and Witness and grouped according to the following chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Christian Life</th>
<th>Questions on Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assurance of Salvation</td>
<td>1, 8 &amp; 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confession</td>
<td>2 &amp; 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of the Holy Spirit</td>
<td>12, 20 &amp; 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Bible Study</td>
<td>7 &amp; 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer Life</td>
<td>4 &amp; 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Maturity</td>
<td>14, 21 &amp; 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Image</td>
<td>23 &amp; 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Relationships</td>
<td>13 &amp; 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Relationships</td>
<td>10, 18 &amp; 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Evangelism</td>
<td>5, 19 &amp; 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Involvement with Evangelism</td>
<td>3, 6 &amp; 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TOPIC & NOT REALLY %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic and Not Really %</th>
<th>AGE 12-18</th>
<th>19-25</th>
<th>26-35</th>
<th>36-55</th>
<th>55-up</th>
<th>Average Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salvation and Assurance</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confession</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of the Holy Spirit</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Bible Study</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prayer Life</td>
<td>18.75%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual Maturity</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Image</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Relationships</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Relationships</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16.14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Evangelism</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Involvement with Evangelism</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>46.35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX D. Topic and Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>NEEDS INDICATED BY &quot;NOT REALLY&quot; RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SALVATION AND ASSURANCE</td>
<td>Needs to understand the basis for salvation—how one becomes a Christian. Needs assurance of his salvation and the promise of eternal life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFESSION</td>
<td>Needs to know how to deal with sin—the basics of confession and thanksgiving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT</td>
<td>Needs to understand how to be filled with the Spirit—how to let Christ control his life on a continual basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY</td>
<td>Needs to understand the benefit of personal Bible study and to learn how to study the Bible and gain personal daily guidance from it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRAYER LIFE</td>
<td>Needs to understand the benefit and power of personal prayer, and how to pray personally and conversationally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIRITUAL MATURITY</td>
<td>Needs to be involved in personal spiritual growth with definable and obtainable goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELF-IMAGE</td>
<td>Needs to realize own uniqueness and self-worth as a child of God and to understand how, through Christ, to turn attention from self to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS</td>
<td>Needs to understand and establish spiritual relationships with his family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHURCH RELATIONSHIPS</td>
<td>Needs to feel an integral part of the Body of Christ (the church) through involvement, interaction and fellowship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERSONAL EVANGELISM</td>
<td>Needs to understand how to talk with another person about Christ and how to show another person the way to receive Christ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOPIC</td>
<td>NEEDS INDICATED BY &quot;NOT REALLY&quot; RESPONSES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHURCH INVOLVEMENT WITH EVANGELISM</td>
<td>Needs to be involved in church activities that offer a variety of ways to become proficient and comfortable in sharing his faith. Needs to be involved in out-reach programs with clear objectives with the challenge and opportunity to use personal abilities in meaningful activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

_________________________ has completed
the class on Christian Growth and Discipleship.

All who receive this certificate are

Committed to Prayer
Committed to Bible Study
Committed to Evangelism
Committed to Fellowship

Date_________ Signed__________________________
Instructor

_________________________
Pastor
APPENDIX F. Now That You Believed

What you did --

1. You obeyed the call of Jesus to take up your cross and daily follow him (Luke 9:23).
2. You counted the cost and have forsaken all to follow Jesus (Luke 14:33).
4. You personally received Jesus into your heart (John 1:12).
5. You are now willing to do God's will (Matt. 7:21).

All this you did on the authority of God's Word, the Bible.

What Jesus did --

1. Jesus transformed your life and gave you a spiritual birth (John 3:3).
2. Jesus forgave your sins and gave you a clean heart (I John 1:9).
3. Jesus gave you the gift of eternal life (I John 5:11-13).

What Next?

2. God's Word keeps you growing and informed (Ps. 119:9-11).

What About Temptation?

1. You must expect it (I Cor. 10:13).
2. Temptation is not sin, you sin when you yield to the temptation (Jas. 1:13-14).
3. Jesus will give you victory (Phil. 4:13).
4. Jesus forgives you when you fail (I John 1:9).
5. Jesus promises to give you victory over all temptation (John 16:33) and never leave you or forsake you (Matt. 28:20; Phil. 1:6, Heb. 13:5).

Now Enjoy Balanced Growth

1. Through Bible Study (II Tim. 2:15),

2. Through prayer (Heb. 4:16),

3. Through Christian fellowship (Acts 2:42), and

APPENDIX G. Tabulation of the Congregation Survey

Survey Taken May 14, 1978
76 Surveys Filled Out

I. SUNDAY SERVICES

Rate how each of the services helps you.

A. Morning Worship

A little  A lot
1  2  3  4  5  --- Survey Results: 4.2

B. Sunday School

A little  A lot
1  2  3  4  5  --- Survey Results: 4.1

C. Sunday Evening

A little  A lot
1  2  3  4  5  --- Survey Results: 3.6

D. What do you most/least enjoy about morning worship, Sunday School, Evening Worship.

1. Sunday Morning

(Most Enjoy)                 (Least Enjoy)

35  Preaching               4
22  Prayer                  0
12  Altar Call              1
13  Fellowship              0
10  Attitudes of Worship    6
  7  Openness                1
11  Lay Participation       1
30  Singing                 1
  9  Lay Witness             2
24  Children's Story        0
  5  Discussion              0
  9  Open Sharing in Worship 1
  7  Offering                0
22  Music                   3
  3  Films                   1
Comments on Sunday Morning Worship

"Need more music"
"Too formal"
"More solos/duets"
"More up-lifting"
"More testimonies"
"Make preaching more biblical and sincere"
"Sermons should be good news not scare us out of hell"
"Too much negativeness"

"Too many people talking"
"More piano music"
"Less structure"
"More special music"
"More specials"
"Don't promote L.L.C.S. in Worship"
"Shorter sermons"
"Lack of testimonies"
"Give altar calls for salvation"
"New hymnals"

2. Sunday School
(Most Enjoy) (Least Enjoy)

1 Preaching 1
1 Prayer 1
8 Fellowship 0
2 Attitudes 0
6 Openness 0
1 Lay Participation 0
2 Singing 0
19 Discussion 0
3 Open Sharing 0
2 Offering 0
2 Music 0
1 Films 0

Comments on Sunday School

"More Food"
"Food"
"Combine classes"
"Donuts"
"More mature leaders"

"More emphasis on Bibles - less on issues"
"More members attend"
"Coffee for all"
"More general openings"

3. Evening Worship
(Most Enjoy) (Least Enjoy)

3 Preaching 1
1 Prayer 0
6 Altar Call 0
6 Fellowship 0
1 Attitudes of Worship 0
7 Openness 0
5 Lay Participation 0
1 Singing 1
0 Lay witness 1
2 Open sharing 0
0 Offering 1
Comments on Sunday Evening Worship

"Meet at 7 p.m. rather than 6 p.m."
"Meet in home Bible studies"
"Meet in fellowship room"

"Meet twice a month"
"More love feasts"
"More should attend"
"More informality"

II. FELLOWSHIP

What kind of activity do you need for your own personal growth? Select five in order of importance.

Most important  Least important
1  2  3  4  5

Home Bible Study
Selected by 29 people - accumulative average 1.65

Develop a few close friends I can share with
Selected by 32 people - accumulative average 2.12

Fellowship groups
Selected by 31 people - accumulative average 2.48

Marriage and Family Seminars
Selected by 19 people - accumulative average 2.36

Sports
Selected by 17 people - accumulative average 2.88

Getting invited over to someone's home
Selected by 29 people - accumulative average 3.0

Church Retreats
Selected by 21 people - accumulative average 3.04

Church Work Projects
Selected by 24 people - accumulative average 3.12

Church Suppers
Selected by 22 people - accumulative average 3.13

Game Fun Nights
Selected by 12 people - accumulative average 3.75

Sunday School by age groups
Selected by 4 people - accumulative average 3.0
Other Ideas
Selected by 4 people - accumulative average 3.0
"Lenten Services"
"Special pre-Christmas services"
"Field trips"

III. INVolVEMENT AND SERVICE

1. Do you feel you are using your God-given talents and gifts to the best of your ability in the life and ministry of the local church?
   (Low) 1 2 3 4 5 (High) Survey Results: 2.47

2. Do you feel comfortable in sharing your Christian faith with others?
   (Low) 1 2 3 4 5 (High) Survey Results: 3.3

3. Do you want to share your faith?
   (Low) 1 2 3 4 5 (High) Survey Results: 3.7

4. Do you know how to share your faith?
   (Low) 1 2 3 4 5 (High) Survey Results: 3.29

5a. How involved are you in the life and ministry of the Taylor Free Methodist Church?
   (Low) 1 2 3 4 5 (High) Survey Results: 2.7

b. Reasons you are not more involved:
   No one has asked me.                    Results: 5
   Need more spiritual growth.             Results: 21
   I don't feel qualified.                 Results: 24
   Other: Busy at home Work and school
   No car Lack of time

6. What does "involvement in the church" mean to you?
   Ministering to needs of others to the best of my ability
   Knowing through the leading of the Holy Spirit what Christ would have me do
   Being completely involved
   I love my Sunday School
   Working toward common goal
   Feeling a part of the body of Christ
   Working together to care for
   Teaching
   Building and the people
   Everything
   My commitment to God
7. List a number of service-opportunities you would like to see the church involved.

- More involvement with unmarried adults (single adults)
- Day retreats
- Visits to nursing homes
- Making gifts for hospitals
- Senior citizens activities
- Benevolence Society
- Evangelism
- Churches in Taylor send representatives to school and city meetings. They do not have to take part or get entangled in politics, but their presence is needed.
- Sharing with other Free Methodist churches by age
- Adult socials

Singing
- More youth activities
- Fund raising
- Team sports
- Political action group
- Have neighbor or friend to our home
- Marriage seminar
- Help widows - need to be picked up
- Train young people to witness in Sunday School hour or offer in a special class
- Family Bible study
- Singing for shut-ins

IV. COMMUNICATION

A. Do you feel there is an atmosphere of love and acceptance in our church?

1 2 3 4 5

Survey Results: 3.8

B. Do you feel there is a high level of trust and honesty in our church?

1 2 3 4 5

Survey Results: 3.8

C. Do you feel free to express your ideas to the members and leaders of the church?

1 2 3 4 5

Survey Results: 3.6

D. Do you feel there is good communication between the various committees and organizations in the church?

1 2 3 4 5

Survey Results: 3.04

E. Are you kept informed of the various activities and functions of the church?

1 2 3 4 5

Survey Results: 4.29

V. CHRISTIAN GROWTH RATING

A. How would you rate your prayer life?

1 2 3 4 5

Survey Results: 2.98 (70 responses)
B. How would you rate your Bible study and devotional life?
   1 2 3 4 5  Survey Results: 2.65  (66 responses)
C. How would you rate your present Christian life and witness?
   1 2 3 4 5  Survey Results: 2.95  (69 responses)
D. How would you rate your loyalty to the church?
   1 2 3 4 5  Survey Results: 3.75  (68 responses)
E. How would you rate your willingness to get involved in
   the life of the church by serving on committees, boards,
   teaching in Sunday School or C.Y.C., etc.
   1 2 3 4 5  Survey Results: 3.18  (65 responses)

Comments to E.
"Would get involved with the children"
"According to my abilities"

VI. TRAINING

Check the three areas of training that would be most beneficial
   to you:

A. Teacher training for Sunday School classes  13 responses
B. Bible study methods (How to develop insights
   from God's Word)  31 responses
C. Scripture memory systems  16 responses
D. Bible history  16 responses
E. Topical Bible study  18 responses
F. Personal evangelism  14 responses
G. Communication in personal relationships  37 responses
H. Marriage and home  25 responses
I. Money management  16 responses
J. Other  1 response

Comment: Faith living

Check the type of Bible Study or small group study you favor
   the most:
   (Rate 1 2 3 4 5 most to least)     Average Rating

Leader-teacher - highly structured  35 responses - Results: 2.5
Teacher-discussion - little structure  36 responses - Results: 2.22
Lecture - little discussion  
31 responses - Results: 2.9

Small groups with leader helping discussion  
41 responses - Results: 2.19

Other: Comments:

More discussion on problems of children raising
We do a lot of things, but we lack depth. I need something more.
Fill out the following questionnaire and hand it in or mail it back to the teacher of the class.

1. Read the following statement and circle the answers which apply:

I found the Christian Growth Manual (1) helpful, (2) informative, (3) hard to understand, (4) spoke to my needs, (5) not relevant to my needs.

2. The manual presented four areas of study: "growing through Bible study," "growing through prayer," "growing through Christian fellowship," and "growing through discipleship training." What additional areas do you wish the manual would have presented that were left out?

3. What did you like most about the Christian Growth Manual?

4. What did you dislike about the manual?

5. What insights into the Christian life and witness did you receive from studying the manual?
6. Four case studies were presented in the student manual. Which case study best spoke to you? List the reasons you found the case study meaningful.

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

7. If the manual is revised, what revisions would you recommend to help make the manual more meaningful to new Christians?

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________