

NewLife Series
EVANGELISM, DISCIPLESHIP, MISSIONS
English, Tagalog & Cebuano Versions.

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BOOK 10

Parent Right Hand:
Foundations for Ministry

Lesson 1

Parent Right Hand -- Foundations for Ministry
Thumb: The Spirit in Ministry

AS a spiritual *baby* the focus of your Christian life was establishing a secure relationship with God and with other members of God's family.

As a spiritual *youth* your focus was growing strong in order to overcome temptations.

As a spiritual *parent* your focus now is on ministry, on serving the Lord by helping to nurture and train younger Christians. For you to be effective as a spiritual parent you must remember that a lasting and fruitful ministry must be founded on definite, biblical principles. The first principle is that the ministry must always be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

THE ONLY GOD-GIVEN EMPOWERMENT

1. In the Old Testament, the only way to serve God was in the power of the Holy Spirit (Zech. 4:6).
2. Today, the ministry given by the Lord Jesus to us His disciples can only be done with the help of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:48-49; Acts 1:8).
3. Therefore we must always seek to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to do the ministry with the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit. Please review *Youth Left Hand: Palm* (Eph. 5:18; John 14:26; 15:26-27; 16:7-15; Heb. 2:4).

4. Someone has said, "Christ did not come to make bad people good; He came to make dead people live." Today, through the Gospel (*Baby Right Hand: Gospel*), the Holy Spirit causes people to be born again and have new spiritual life, and through the principle of THE EXCHANGED LIFE (*Youth Right Hand: Palm*), the Holy Spirit enables born-again believers to actually live the life of Christ.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF HOLY SPIRIT-EMPOWERED MINISTRY

EVANGELISM

5. Read Acts 2:1-11, 36-41 very carefully and compare it with 1 Corinthians 2:1-5. From these two scripture passages describe some major characteristics of the ministry of evangelism when it is empowered by the Holy Spirit – the content of the message, the effect on the hearers, and the results.

DISCIPLESHIP

6. The ministry of discipleship – living as a disciple and helping others become disciples – is an impossible task without the Holy Spirit.

7. Read Romans 8:1-17 very carefully and compare it with Galatians 5:16-25. From these two scripture passages can you point out several ways and areas that, according to the apostle Paul, the Holy Spirit's power is needed in order for us to live as true disciples of Christ?

MISSIONS

8. At its core, Christian ministry is missions – seeking to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to the ends of the earth. Please read the following scriptures carefully, and then list several ways where you see the absolute importance of the Holy Spirit in the work of missions: Acts 13:1-4; 16:6-15; Romans 15:18-21.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

9. Check yourself: Are you always seeking to live and minister in the power of the Holy Spirit?

MEMORIZE:

2 CORINTHIANS 3:5-6: NOT THAT WE ARE SUFFICIENT OF OURSELVES TO THINK OF ANYTHING AS BEING FROM OURSELVES, BUT OUR SUFFICIENCY IS FROM GOD, WHO ALSO MADE US SUFFICIENT AS MINISTERS OF THE NEW COVENANT, NOT OF THE LETTER BUT OF THE SPIRIT; FOR THE LETTER KILLS, BUT THE SPIRIT GIVES LIFE.

DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

Encourage your disciples to:

- a. Continue their PRAYER PARTNER evangelistic outreach, using Book 1 with their prospects.
- b. Continue their own study of their current NewLife Book.

Lesson 2

**Parent Right Hand -- Foundations for Ministry
Pointing Finger: The Word in Ministry**

AS a spiritual parent, you must make sure that your ministry is founded on the Word of God. Please carefully study the scriptures below.

THE WORD OF GOD IN MINISTRY

1. The ministry we received from Christ is a ministry of the Word of God (John 12:49-50; 17:8; Acts 6:4).

2. The Word is important because...

- (a) The Word gives new birth (1 Peter 1:23);
- (b) The Word is the Christian's food (Matt. 4:4; 2 Peter 2:2; Heb. 5:12-14);
- (c) The Word builds up Christians (Acts 20:32);
- (d) The Word is the Christian's sword (Eph. 6:17);
- (e) The Word will judge everyone at the last day (John 12:47-48).

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE

3. During the time of Jeremiah, there were other prophets who claimed to proclaim the Word of God. But God exposed the difference between His true prophet and the false prophets. Please read carefully Jeremiah 23:18-32.

- (a) What did God require prophets to do in order to receive the Word of God? (Jeremiah 23:18, 22)
- (b) What was one sin of the false prophets? (Jeremiah 23:21)

(c) Where did the false prophets get their messages? (Jeremiah 23:25-26)

(d) What was a common wrong practice by the false prophets? (Jeremiah 23:30)

Note: Stealing God's Word from another prophet means for us today, stealing other preachers' sermons. The essence of this wrong practice is preaching someone else's sermon **WITHOUT THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE** of what it is all about. It is not wrong to study sermons by other preachers, but you have to understand the truth for yourself and make the truth your own by discovering how the truth applies in your own life. And then, when you preach the same or similar truth, you must preach it using your own words and communicating to others how God used the truth to change your own life.

(e) What was the effect on the people of the preaching of false prophets? (Jeremiah 23:27,31-32)

(f) What was God's command to His true prophets? (Jeremiah 23:28)

(g) What was the result when God's Word is faithfully preached? (Jeremiah 23:29)

NEW TESTAMENT EXAMPLE

4. The apostle Paul gave his spiritual son Timothy very practical instructions on how to have a ministry that was founded on God's Word. We need to follow these same instructions if we, too, want to have a Word-grounded ministry. Read carefully 2 Timothy 3:14-4:8.

(a) What did Paul remind Timothy regarding the connection between the Word of God (Scriptures) and the message of salvation? (2 Timothy 3:14-15)

(b) What did Paul emphasize to Timothy regarding the uses of the Word of God (Scriptures) in living as a disciple, and training others to be disciples? (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

(c) What did Paul command Timothy to preach? (2 Timothy 4:2)

(d) What moral and spiritual conditions did Paul warn Timothy about, which made it absolutely necessary for Timothy to preach God's Word? (2 Timothy 4:3-4)

5. Paul was a model minister of God's Word. What qualities in the life and ministry of Paul should we also strive to develop in our own lives? (2 Timothy 4:5-8)

WORD-CENTERED MUST BE CHRIST-CENTERED

6. Word-centered ministry must not focus on the Bible itself as the end. Rather, it must constantly focus on Christ as the theme of the whole Bible. We teach the Bible

not in order for our listeners to master the Bible, but in order that they may come to know Christ and receive salvation through Him and develop a meaningful relationship with Him.

7. Let's follow the example of Christ Himself in Luke 24:44-47:

⁴⁴ Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me." ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise^[h] from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

8. We must teach and preach the Word in such a way that the full Gospel of Christ's salvation is in some way proclaimed and offered to our hearers. By full Gospel we mean not only the narrow message of "going to heaven and avoiding hell". We mean the full range of the Shalom that Christ came to bring for the past, the present and the future, for the individual and for all of society, for humanity and for all of creation, for time and for eternity.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

9. Evaluate yourself as a minister of God's Word. Based on the examples above from the Old Testament and the New Testament:

- What NEGATIVE attitudes and habits do you have as a teacher/preacher that you need to get rid of?
- What POSITIVE attitudes and habits do you need to nurture and develop more and more?

MEMORIZE:

ACTS 20:27, 32: FOR I HAVE NOT SHUNNED TO DECLARE TO YOU THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD.... SO NOW, BRETHREN, I COMMEND YOU TO GOD AND TO THE WORD OF HIS GRACE, WHICH IS ABLE TO BUILD YOU UP AND GIVE YOU AN INHERITANCE AMONG ALL THOSE WHO ARE SANCTIFIED.

DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

Encourage your disciples to:

- a. Continue their PRAYER PARTNER evangelistic outreach, using Book 1 with their prospects.

- b. Continue their own study of their current NewLife Book.

Lesson 3

Parent Right Hand -- Foundations for Ministry Middle Finger: Prayer in Ministry

AS spiritual parents we should always remember that all our efforts in ministry will produce little or no fruit without the blessing of God. The only way to guarantee the blessing of God is to spend much time in prayer – to worship, to intercede, and to do spiritual warfare.

PRAYER IN MINISTRY

1. Christ's work of redemption is in two parts:
 - (a) First, He accomplished redemption through His death on the cross;
 - (b) Second, He applies the fruits of redemption through His ministry as High Priest who always lives to pray for all Christians (Heb. 7:24-25).
2. We should follow the example of Christ who spent much time in prayer to fellowship with the Father and to pray for his disciples (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; John 17).
3. Like the apostles, we should learn to keep a healthy balance between ministry of the word and prayer (Acts 6:4).

THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST

4. Christ is our Ultimate Example in the ministry of prayer. Let's meditatively read through John 17 and write down things that we should pray for on behalf of those we are training in discipleship.

THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL

5. Next to Christ, the apostle Paul provides us with prayers that seek to build up disciples. In practically all of his letters he writes down his prayers for the Christians to whom he was writing. Read each prayer carefully and write down things that you also could be praying in behalf of those you are training.

Romans 1:9-12

Ephesians 1:15-19

Ephesians 3:14-21

Philippians 1:8-11

Colossians 1:9-11

PERSONAL APPLICATION

6. Evaluate your Prayer List. Update your prayer list; based on the prayers of Christ and Paul, write down one or two specific request regarding spiritual growth under each name of person that you are training in discipleship.

MEMORIZE:

JOHN 17:9-11 – I PRAY FOR THEM. I DO NOT PRAY FOR THE WORLD BUT FOR THOSE WHOM YOU HAVE GIVEN ME, FOR THEY ARE YOURS. AND ALL MINE ARE YOURS, AND YOURS ARE MINE, AND I AM GLORIFIED IN THEM. NOW I AM NO LONGER IN THE WORLD, BUT THESE ARE IN THE WORLD, AND I COME TO YOU, HOLY FATHER, KEEP THROUGH YOUR NAME THOSE WHOM YOU HAVE GIVEN ME, THAT THEY MAY BE ONE AS WE ARE. – JOHN 17:9-11

DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

Encourage your disciples to:

- a. Continue their PRAYER PARTNER evangelistic outreach, using Book 1 with their prospects.
- b. Continue their own study of their current NewLife Book.

Lesson 4

**Parent Right Hand -- Foundations for Ministry
Ring Finger: Modeling in Ministry**

HAVE you heard this saying, "Do what I say, but do not do what I do"? Some leaders have this wrong idea. According to the Bible, as a spiritual parent you need to remember that to have an effective ministry it is not enough to tell people what to do; you also have to demonstrate to the people that you yourself are actually doing what you are teaching them. This is called "Modeling in Ministry".

MODELING IN MINISTRY

1. Christ trained His disciples by using the "With Him" principle. Christ called them to follow first before they would become fishers of men (Matt. 4:19). First, He let them observe the way He lived and ministered before He finally sent them out to do as He did. Let's read Mark 3:14-15.

2. The apostle Paul used the same principle. Let's read 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 4:9; 2 Tim. 3:10-11.

3. If we want to be effective in ministry, we also need to teach primarily through our example, not like the Pharisees who teach but do not do (Matt. 23:1-3).

4. One effective way to apply the "With Him" Principle is to take your disciple with you when you do the ministry. In Lesson 6 you will learn the six steps involved in training a disciple using the "With Him" Principle.

CHRIST'S EXAMPLE

5. One incident in the ministry of Jesus demonstrates clearly how He used the principle of modeling. Please read carefully John 13:1-17.

- (a) What was the motivation of Jesus' ministry to His disciples? (John 13:1)
- (b) What was Jesus secure about Himself, His position, and His mission? (John 13:3)
- (c) Because Jesus was secure about Himself, what was He able to do? (John 13:4-5)
- (d) In Jesus' interaction with Peter, what did Jesus clarify to him?
 - Did a disciple always understand immediately what his Master was doing to him? Therefore, should this lack of understanding on the part of the disciple prevent the Master from ministering to the disciple? (John 13:6-7)
 - If a disciple refused to be ministered to by the Master, what did this indicate about his relationship to his Master? Therefore, how important was the Master's ministry to the disciple in building a close relationship with His disciple? (John 13:8)

6. Please read again John 13:9-10. How very quickly Peter changed his attitude. One moment he refused his feet to be washed; the next moment he wanted to be given a complete bath! But Jesus explained to Peter that they (the disciples) had already been bathed (symbolizing their initial experience of faith in Jesus). But after a complete bath, the feet got dirty because of contact with the road and therefore there was the need for regular washing of feet (symbolizing that in daily life and relationship problems arise that require continual fixing).

7. Please read John 13:12-17 again. Based on His example, what lesson did Jesus teach the disciples?

8. By washing the disciples' feet Jesus MODELED (demonstrated) the privilege and responsibility of maintaining good relationship among disciples. Jesus used this principle of modeling in teaching all other truths. The apostles followed Jesus in using this principle. And to be effective in our own ministry, we also need to use this principle of modeling today.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

9. Evaluate your ministry. How much of your activity intentionally provides a model that your trainees can easily follow?

MEMORIZE:

MARK 3:14-15: THEN HE APPOINTED TWELVE, THAT THEY MIGHT BE WITH HIM AND THAT HE MIGHT SEND THEM OUT TO PREACH, AND TO HAVE POWER TO HEAL SICKNESSES AND TO CAST OUT DEMONS.

DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

Encourage your disciples to:

- a. Continue their PRAYER PARTNER evangelistic outreach, using Book 1 with their prospects.
- b. Continue their own study of their current NewLife Book.

Lesson 5

**Parent Right Hand -- Foundations for Ministry
Little Finger: Trials in Ministry**

AS a spiritual parent, you need to realize that trials (which include persecution) are part of the Christian life, and you need to prepare Christians you are training in discipleship to be ready for these.

TRIALS IN MINISTRY

- 1. In ministry we have a part and God has a part. Our part includes faithful prayer, teaching, shepherding, and leading those entrusted to us.
- 2. God's part includes the Holy Spirit's work in changing and transforming Christians through the trials and tests that God allows into their lives.

3. There is no way for Christians to avoid trials and tests. Our part as spiritual parents is to teach and prepare our disciples for the coming trials. And when the trials do come we must pray for, encourage and stand by our disciples.

WARNINGS ABOUT TRIALS

4. Summarize the teachings and warnings of Christ about trials.

- Matthew 10:17-25
- John 15:18-25
- John 16:1-4

5. Summarize the teachings and warnings of the apostle Paul about trials.

- Acts 14:21-22
- 1 Thessalonians 3:1-4
- 2 Timothy 3:12

6. Gospel workers (evangelists, pastors, missionaries, etc.) experience their own share of trials and sufferings. What can we learn from the apostle Paul about the right attitude toward trials and sufferings that come as a result of doing ministry for God.

- 2 Timothy 1:11-12
- 2 Timothy 2:9-10
- 2 Timothy 4:14-18
- Acts 14:21-22

BLESSINGS OF TRIALS

7. What are the blessings of trials?

- According to the apostle James? (James 1:2-4)
- According to the apostle Peter? (1 Peter 1:6-7)

8. According to the apostle Paul, what blessing did he receive as a result of a very personal trial that the Lord did not take away from him? (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

PERSONAL APPLICATION

9. Evaluate yourself: In your own life, can you point to one or two major trials that contributed to your spiritual growth? What blessing would you have missed if you did not go through this trial?

MEMORIZE:

1 PETER 1:6-7 – IN THIS YOU GREATLY REJOICE, THOUGH NOW FOR A LITTLE WHILE, IF NEED BE, YOU HAVE BEEN GRIEVED BY VARIOUS TRIALS, THAT THE GENUINENESS OF YOUR FAITH, BEING MUCH MORE PRECIOUS THAN GOLD THAT PERISHES, THOUGH IT IS TESTED BY FIRE, MAY BE FOUND TO PRAISE, HONOR, AND GLORY AT THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST. – 1 PETER 1:6-7

DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

Encourage your disciples to:

- a. Continue their PRAYER PARTNER evangelistic outreach, using Book 1 with their prospects.
- b. Continue their own study of their current NewLife Book.

Lesson 6

Parent Right Hand -- Foundations for Ministry Palm: Goal and Process of Ministry

GOAL

The **GOAL** of ministry is to make disciples (Matt. 28:19), who have knowledge and skills in serving the Lord and who are developing a Christ-like character.

PROCESS

The **PROCESS** includes six steps in training, following Christ's "With Him" Principle in Mark 3:14:

- STEP 1: Information - "Tell him what"
- STEP 2: Motivation - "Tell him why"
- STEP 3: Demonstration - "Show him how"
- STEP 4: Duplication - "Get him started"
- STEP 5: Supervision - "Keep him going"
- STEP 6: Multiplication - "Let him teach someone else"

3. How do we actually put these steps into practice? We may put the six steps in what we call *Training Hand*. Please study the example below.

LITTLE FINGER

STEP 1: INFORMATION: TELL HIM WHAT.

The first step in training your disciple to do any of the discipleship skills is INFORMATION: tell him WHAT he needs to know about what you are teaching him/her. We place this on your little finger.

For example, I want to train Mario to witness by using the Gospel Hand. I tell him, "Mario, as a Christian you need to witness for Christ. One method you may use is the Gospel Hand."

This step, INFORMATION, is placed on the little finger because when you use only this step of telling the student what to do, he/she will never learn to do it. Though INFORMATION is a necessary step, like the little finger, it is the weakest step.

RING FINGER

STEP 2: MOTIVATION: TELL HIM WHY.

People learn when they are motivated; they are motivated when they see a compelling reason why they should do something. Hence, the second step in training is MOTIVATION: tell him WHY he/she should learn to do something. We place this step on the ring finger.

I motivate Mario by giving him reasons why. I may say something like this, "Mario, do you know why you need to witness for Christ? Let's look at three reasons from the Bible.

- First, God commands you to do it; let's read Matthew 28:18-20.
- Second, your experience should motivate you to do it; let's read Acts 4:20.
- Third, the need of others demand that you do it; let's read Revelation 20:15.

Note: Steps 1 and 2 may be done in one session with your disciple. In addition, during this first session, you may spend time making a prospect list of your disciple's friends and relatives, and setting up a tentative schedule when to visit these prospects.

MIDDLE FINGER

STEP 3: DEMONSTRATION: SHOW HIM HOW.

Real training begins with the third step, DEMONSTRATION, whereby you actually show your disciple HOW to witness, using the Gospel Hand presentation (or any equivalent presentation). This was Christ's principle of training His disciples, and some have called this the WITH HIM PRINCIPLE (Mark 3:14-15). Before Christ sent His disciples to do the work, He first trained them by keeping them with Him to observe how He did the work.

This step of DEMONSTRATION is done in two phases:

- PHASE ONE: I will take Mario with me when I go witnessing. He will do nothing except to be with me and observe me while I do the witnessing. I will take him with me at least two or three times as an observer.
- PHASE TWO: After I have taken him at least two or three times as an observer, I will set a day when we will use the technique called *Role Playing*. I train Mario to witness through role playing, in which, first, I play the role of the Christian and he plays the role of the non-Christian; and then we reverse roles.

For example, I tell Mario, "Let's practice witnessing, using the Gospel Hand. I am the Christian; you pretend to be the non-Christian." I go ahead and present the Gospel Hand as simply and as clearly as Mario can understand it, making sure that he gets the main points and the transitions between the points. Then we reverse roles; he will play the Christian, I play the non-Christian. He will present the Gospel Hand step by step, and I will make suggestions or corrections as he goes along. We will practice role-playing until he is able to present the Gospel Hand to me with a measure of confidence. Then we are ready to go on to the fourth step.

POINTING FINGER

STEP 4: DUPLICATION: GET HIM STARTED.

The fourth step on your pointing finger is DUPLICATION: get him started. Getting started is the most difficult of all, so you need to make it as easy and pleasant as possible. Train your disciple to witness one portion at a time.

For example, during our first outing, I may say to Mario, "When we witness to your friend Ed, I will begin the conversation and I will present the first point, God's Love; then I will turn over the conversation to you by telling Ed that you will explain the second point, Man's Problem. Then I will pick up the conversation again and finish the entire presentation." Before the actual day of witnessing, I will rehearse Mario to make sure he knows his part of the presentation.

During our second outing, I will still do the introduction and the first point, Mario will take the second and third points, and I finish the presentation.

During the succeeding outings, Mario will take more and more points of the presentation until I am doing only the introduction and the conclusion. Then the day will come when Mario will do the whole thing from beginning to end, with me as a silent prayer partner.

With some disciples you may not need to take as many outings; they may already be ready and able to present the Gospel hand at the first try. The important thing is to train a disciple according to his readiness and ability.

- One reminder: When you assign a part of the presentation, let your disciple do it without your assistance; allow him to "sink or swim", even if he has to struggle through it. The only exception is, if he becomes suddenly dumb or confused.
- Another reminder: Always commend your disciple for his job when you are already by yourselves. Then, after the commendation, give him the necessary suggestions on how to improve his presentation. Always give encouragement to your disciple.

THUMB**STEP 5: SUPERVISION: KEEP HIM GOING.**

On your thumb we put the fifth step: SUPERVISION: keep him going. How do you keep your disciple to go on in the practice of a skill he has learned?

1. You yourself must keep on going, and he/she must see and know that a certain skill, like witnessing, is part of your daily lifestyle. This is called *pacesetting* on your part.
2. Give opportunity for testimony time when the group gets together. Ask for testimonies of their experiences in the practice of the discipleship skills (not only witnessing but other skills as well, such as Scripture Memory, prayer, etc.)
3. Regularly schedule projects in which certain skills will be exercised. For example, witnessing days; or day in prayer; or Scripture Memory review contest.
4. The greatest motivation to keep going is provided by the final step in training.

PALM**STEP 6 - MULTIPLICATION: "LET HIM TEACH SOMEONE ELSE".**

We place this step on your palm. When you get this far, training your disciple to train another, you may be sure that he has grasped the skill you have taught him. To accomplish this step, you will have to assist and equip him to repeat the process of training someone else following the Training Hand. At this stage you help your disciple most by being an equipper, encourager, and co-laborer with him.

The challenge for you, when you begin to train a disciple, is not to stop until you have accomplished Step 6.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

Evaluate yourself: How much have you been applying the steps of the Training Hand?

MEMORIZE:

2 TIMOTHY 2:2: AND THE THINGS THAT YOU HAVE HEARD FROM ME AMONG MANY WITNESSES, COMMIT THESE TO FAITHFUL MEN WHO WILL BE ABLE TO TEACH OTHERS ALSO.

DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING

Encourage your disciples to:

- a. Continue their PRAYER PARTNER evangelistic outreach, using Book 1 with their prospects.
- b. Continue their own study of their current NewLife Book.

LESSON 7:

**INTRODUCTION
TO SERMON & BIBLE LESSON PREPARATION**

NOTE: This lesson is best taught at a seminar, workshop, week-end retreat, or a lecture series.

PART ONE

A “SHORT CUT” TO SERMON & BIBLE LESSON PREPARATION

INTRODUCTION

No, there is no “short cut”.

However, learning the FOUR BASIC ELEMENTS of effective communication will give you a jump start on preparing Bible lessons and sermons. All effective communication uses four basic elements -- written or spoken, in whatever form -- magazine article, report, Bible lesson, or sermon. At a writers’ workshop I learned how a famous journalist described these four elements in four powerful words: HEY! YOU... SEE? SO. Let’s apply these to sermon preparation.

FOUR ELEMENTS

1. HEY!

CATCH THE ATTENTION of your audience.

- (a) It is usually effective to start your sermon with a HEY!

(b) Imagine yourself in the park. You stand on a park bench and shout HEY! You can be sure that everyone within hearing distance will turn their eyes toward you and look at you for at least two or three seconds to find out whether you're just a crazy guy, or you've got something important to say.

(c) How do you catch the attention of your audience? There are a lot of ways, including the following: Direct address, mentioning a significant current news, telling a story, giving a dramatic statement, quoting a proverb or wise saying. For example, in his sermon recorded in Acts 17:22-31, note how Paul caught the attention of his audience.

The method he used was DIRECT ADDRESS; he opened with these words:
“Men of Athens...”

2. YOU...

HOLD THE ATTENTION of your audience.

(a) You must quickly follow up with a YOU...

(b) Back to our park illustration: After shouting HEY! you say: “Everybody wearing a red shirt or red dress, I’ve got a special message for you.” So the people look at their shirt or dress, and those wearing red will continue to give you their attention. The others wearing the wrong color will go back to what they were doing; your message has no relevance to them.

(c) In preaching, your second task is to HOLD the attention of your audience. All advertising gimmicks use one principle: PEOPLE WILL PAY ATTENTION ONLY TO WHAT CONCERNS THEM OR TO WHAT WILL BENEFIT THEM – TO SOLVE THEIR PROBLEM OR TO MEET A FELT NEED. In the YOU... section of your sermon, your aim is to make people aware that your lesson/sermon will benefit them.

(d) In Paul’s sermon he effectively appealed to the YOU of his audience. Note his complete opening statement:

“Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you.”

3. SEE?

GUIDE THE ATTENTION of your audience.

(a) Once you're sure you have the attention of your audience, proceed quickly to your SEE?

(b) Again, back at the park: You say, "Now, all of you red shirts, let me tell you about the newest detergent that can help your shirt or dress retain its color freshness for a long time. Here's how... point one, point two, point three." In your sermon, the SEE? will go on to explain your message point by point.

(c) Note how Paul went on to give the "points" of his message:

24 "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' 29 Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising."

4. SO.

APPLY THE ATTENTION of your audience.

(a) The conclusion of your talk must present a challenge for the audience to APPLY what they learned, a challenge to do something about the information received.

(b) Back to the park one last time: After I have explained to my red-shirted audience the secret of keeping their red colors perennially fresh looking – of course, the secret is a certain product – then I give them the opportunity to do something about the information. I'll tell them where to obtain the product, and if I brought some along I'll tell them I have these ready for them to look at, at the end of my talk. Then I thank them for listening and end my talk right then and there.

(c) The SO is your conclusion where you explain how your audience may apply the truths you have just shown them. More than any other form of communication, the sermon normally concludes with the preacher providing guidelines and encouragement regarding practical application of the sermon or lesson. In Paul's sermon we see the absolute importance of the application:

30 "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

(d) Remember the old adage? STAND UP, SPEAK UP, SHUT UP. Someone else puts it this way – K-I-S-S: KEEP IT SIMPLE, SWEETHEART.

SOME REMINDERS

1. Traditionally, a written composition has three parts: INTRODUCTION, BODY, CONCLUSION. Introduction includes the HEY! and the YOU... The Body is equivalent to the SEE? And the Conclusion is equivalent to the SO.

2. These four elements will get you started in developing your sermon. There are other elements, of course, that you need to learn from standard textbooks on sermon preparation and delivery, and I strongly encourage you to study them. But based on my experience, when you make sure these four elements are in your sermon, your communication will usually be effective and successful.

3. The four elements provide you with a form or structure for your lesson/sermon. A good question to ask is: How do you actually go about preparing the lesson/sermon using these four elements? Do you start from HEY! then proceed to YOU... followed by the SEE? and ending with the SO? In the actual process of preparation, you always begin with the SEE. You must first work on the BODY of your lesson/sermon; you must be clear about what you are going to say. After you have completed the BODY of your sermon, then you work on an appropriate INTRODUCTION (consisting of your HEY! and YOU...) And then you work on your CONCLUSION (your SO).

4. But regarding APPLICATION, a special reminder: The application does not need to be always at the end of the sermon or lesson. Many times, the application may be more effectively explained after or even together with the exposition of each point. If that's the case, you may just give a recapitulation later of the important application(s) in your conclusion.

5. To improve your skill in preparing sermons/Bible lessons, consciously study other preachers or writers. I suggest that you listen to or read at least one sermon a week by some good preacher. Take note of how he utilizes the four elements in his sermon.

WHAT TO SAY?

1. But what are you going to say in the BODY of your lesson/sermon? Where and how do you get the material to speak on?

2. The prophet Jeremiah gives us a good example. How did Jeremiah get his message? Let's read Jeremiah 1:4-9 (NKJV):

4 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying:

5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

6 Then said I: “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.”

7 But the Lord said to me: “Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.

8 “Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you,” says the Lord.

9 Then the Lord put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me: “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.”

3. From this passage, let’s note:

(a) The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah: God spoke to him.

(b) God put His words in Jeremiah’s mouth: God gave him the specific message to speak.

4. Something similar to Jeremiah’s experience must happen to us today. God must speak to us. And God must give us the specific lesson/sermon to deliver to the people. But, you may ask, exactly HOW do these two things happen to me?

IMPORTANCE OF DAILY QT

1. Have you heard of the discipline called QT or DDT – Quiet Time or Daily Devotional Time? QT is your personal time with God in the Word and Prayer. QT is the time when you ask God to speak to you as you read, study, and meditate on the Word. And QT is the time when you respond to God in prayer, based on what God says to you from His Word.

2. Note: QT is not a time for researching material for your lesson/sermon. QT is spending time in the Word and Prayer to feed your own soul. But as you write down what God is saying to you personally, those thoughts and insights will serve as SEED TRUTHS that, under the Holy Spirit’s nurturing, will someday bear fruit in the form of lessons or sermons.

3. There is one rule for teaching and preaching: YOU CAN ONLY TEACH AND PREACH ON A TRUTH WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS TAUGHT YOU AND WHICH YOU HAVE PERSONALLY APPLIED IN YOUR OWN LIFE. As much as possible, avoid teaching/preaching on a truth that you don’t have an experiential knowledge of. A couple of scriptures will prove this.

1 John 1:3: That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Acts 26:15-16: “So I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you.’”

4. As the Holy Spirit teaches you truths from the Word and as He enables you to put into practice these truths in your daily life, a time will come when the Holy Spirit will impress upon you to teach/preach on specific truths from this reservoir of what we may call EXPERIENCED TRUTHS. You will feel an irresistible compulsion inside your being motivating you to deliver the message God gave you, like Jeremiah and Paul and all true prophets and preachers and teachers experienced.

Jeremiah 20:9: Then I said, "I will not make mention of Him, nor speak anymore in His name." But His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not."

1 Corinthians 9:16: For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!

5. Therefore, it is absolutely important for you to maintain a daily Quiet Time or Daily Devotional Time. Research has shown that one main cause for missionary failure on the mission field is neglect of the QT. As a teacher/preacher this should serve as a warning for you. Below is a sample QT or DDT Guide.

HOW TO USE THE A-C-T-S-S DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

There are many helps and tools for personal devotion available today. But whatever tool you use, your devotional time should include READING THE WORD (God speaking to you) and PRAYER (you speaking to God). You may want to try the Devotional Guide called *A-C-T-S-S*, which combines your Bible reading with your prayer in a natural way; your discoveries in the Word become "fuel" for your prayer. Follow THREE STEPS in using the A-C-T-S-S Devotional Guide (sample form below).

STEP 1: PREPARATION

(1) TIME AND PLACE: Your devotional time is your daily appointment with the most important Person in the whole universe -- God! Therefore, you must pick a time and place (for example, time: 5 a.m.; place: in my bedroom); and before going to bed the night before, already have the things you need (Bible, pen, notebook) on a table by your bed. Determine to be punctual and faithful in your appointment with God. The secret of getting up early is to go to bed early. Watching television late into the night is the worst enemy of consistent devotional time. Note: Some people find it easier to have their devotional time at night, before going to bed. The important thing is to set aside a specific time and place, and DO IT... faithfully, consistently!

(2) SCRIPTURE TO READ: Pick a section of Scripture to read, and decide how much you will read each day. A rule of thumb is to read one chapter a day; but some chapters are long and you may have time to read only half a chapter. For beginners we suggest

that you start with the Book of Psalms or the Gospel of John.

(3) **START WITH SHORT PRAYER:** Begin your devotional time with a brief prayer like this: "Father in heaven, I'm here to meet with you this morning. Please speak to me from Your Word."

STEP 2: READING

(1) **READ THE SCRIPTURE:** Read through the chapter with your normal reading speed.

(2) **FILL OUT THE A-C-T-S-S GUIDE:** After your first reading, meditatively go through the chapter a second time in order to answer the questions in your A-C-T-S-S guide.

STEP 3: PRAYER

(1) After answering your A-C-T-S-S Guide, proceed to prayer, using your answers as the basis of your Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. Note: Your prayer should not be limited by your answers; rather, use your answers as a starting point and inspiration for Spirit-led prayer.

(2) After prayer, write down your chosen Scripture verse on a card or piece of paper; carry this with you in your pocket, and try to read it, or memorize it, and meditate on it whenever you have a break during the day.

Suggestion: You may want to buy yourself a notebook in which to record your A-C-T-S-S discoveries and prayer requests, and in which to write answers to prayer that you receive from God.

A-C-T-S-S
A Daily Devotional Guide
Scripture for Today: _____

ADORATION: *What attribute or quality of God (The Father, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit) stands out from this passage?*

CONFESSION: *As I look into the mirror of God's Word, do I see a sin in my life that I need to confess and forsake? A command to obey? A relationship I need to fix? A person or situation I need to help? Good example to follow? Bad example to avoid?*

THANKSGIVING: *What work or blessing of God (in creation, in past or present world events, in my life or in the life of others) does this Scripture remind me to be thankful for?*

SUPPLICATION: *What needs or situations (in my life, in someone else's, in the world around me) does this Scripture motivate me to pray for? From this Scripture, what promise may I claim for these needs/situations?*

SCRIPTURE: *For memory or for meditation.*

SPIRITUAL JOURNAL

1. Write your thoughts and discoveries during your Quiet Time. In addition to filling out the A_C_T_S_S QUIET TIME GUIDE, also keep a personal spiritual journal. In your journal write about how your day went, about how God worked in your life or how you observed God work in other people’s lives; write down your thoughts, questions; record significant ideas and quotations from your readings.
2. You may want to keep a separate notebook for stories and illustrations. One practical suggestion is to have a small notebook and pen in your pocket all the time so that you can write down thoughts and stories that you find interesting. The story is told about Charles Spurgeon, known in history as the “prince of preachers”, that he even kept pen and paper by his bed so that even at night, if ever he awakened with an idea, he could write it down.
3. Again, this is how you begin to gather material for WHAT TO SAY. In Part Two of our course we will talk more about what to teach and preach.

A BIBLICAL & DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL OF DISCIPLEMAKING <i>By Bien A. Llobrera, based on Gene Tabor's "Focus Chart"</i>								
DISCIPLE	3 STAGES OF GROWTH (1 JOHN 2:12-17)				GOAL			
	SPIRITUAL BABY Focus: <i>Security</i> Key: <i>Faith</i> Arena of Conflict: <i>Basic Needs</i> Major Temptation <i>Lusts of the Flesh</i>	SPIRITUAL YOUTH Focus: <i>Victory</i> Key: <i>Hope</i> Arena of Conflict: <i>Values</i> Major Temptation <i>Lusts of the Eyes</i>	SPIRITUAL PARENT Focus: <i>Quality</i> Key: <i>Love</i> Arena of Conflict: <i>Relationships</i> Major Temptation <i>Pride of Life</i>	MATURE IN CHRIST (Eph. 4:12, 14-16; Col. 2:6,7) IN THIS LIFE		BEYOND THIS LIFE PERFECT LIKE CHRIST (Eph. 4:13; Rom. 8:29-30)		
DISCIPLEMAKER	REPROOF	CORRECTION	TRAINING					EQUIPPING
	DOCTRINE (TEACHING)							
	GOSPEL (SALVATION)							
	WORD OF GOD (BIBLE) – 2 TIMOTHY 3:15-17							

PART TWO
WHAT TO TEACH AND PREACH

FOUNDATION

1. We describe this approach to Christian teaching and preaching as *biblical* and *developmental*.
2. *Biblical* because it takes all Scripture (the Bible) as the source and basis of teaching and preaching (2 Timothy 3:1-17).
 - (a) The Word of God in the Old Testament: Genesis 1; Joshua 1:8; Deuteronomy 11:18-28; Psalm 1:1-3; 19:7-11; 33:6; 119:9-11, 89, 105, 130; Isaiah 55:10-11; Jeremiah 1:4-12; 23:29-29; Ezekiel 37:1-14; Zechariah 1:5-6.
 - (b) The Word of God in the New Testament: Matthew 24:35; Luke 24:44-47; John 1:1, 14; 6:63; 12:47-50; 17:6-8, 17; Acts 8:4; 20:32; Ephesians 6:17; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 4:2; Hebrews 4:12-13; James 1:21-25; 1 Peter 1:23-25; Revelation 19:11-16.
3. *Developmental* because it proposes a teaching and preaching program that aims to meet the developmental needs of a Christian as he/she progresses through the three stages of spiritual growth as described in 1 John 2:12-14.
 - (a) The teacher/preacher's unchanging aim is to help hearers to grow intentionally and consistently from the first stage to the third stage in order to arrive at the ultimate goal of full maturity in Christ.
 - (b) The teacher/preacher must know at what stage of development the hearers are in and know what needs on the part of the hearers the lesson/sermon aims to meet.

SIX AREAS OF TEACHING AND PREACHING

4. The Bible is the divinely inspired guide for a Christian disciple's faith, purpose, and practice, especially in five areas: Salvation; Doctrine; Reproof; Correction; Training; Equipping. Our teaching and preaching may emphasize one of the six areas in a particular lesson/sermon, but in the same lesson/sermon all six areas may be touched in some way (2 Timothy 3:15-17).
 - (a) *Gospel: Salvation* – to show non-Christians the way of salvation.

NOTES:

- (1) Later, whatever area of truth you may be teaching/preaching on to believers, always in some way (shorter or longer) bring in the Gospel truth of salvation by grace through faith. Avoid teaching/preaching Bible truth as a moral code

of conduct that believers must do in order to continue to win God's favor in any form. Rather, teach/preach obedience to Bible truth as a believer's love and gratitude response to God's free gift of salvation (1 John 4:19, NKJV). Equally important, teach/preach that obedience to Bible truth is possible only in full dependence upon the enabling grace of God through the power of the Holy Spirit (Philippians 2:14; 1 John 5:2-5).

- (2) You must have a full and firm experiential grasp of the core truths of the Gospel as expounded in Paul's letter to the Romans. The author's DEVOTIONS FOR DISCIPLES FROM ROMANS will help you get started on this journey toward mastery of the Gospel core truths (see below how to obtain a free soft).

(b) *Doctrine* – to show believers truths to believe; to point believers the direction they are to go.

(c) *Reproof* – to warn believers when they go off in the wrong direction; to stop them from continuing in the wrong direction.

(d) *Correction* – to show believers how to get back to the truth and back in the right direction.

(e) *Training* – to train believers to stay on the right road and to keep them going in the right direction.

(e) *Equipping* – to equip believers with the knowledge, skills, character qualities, and resources for life and ministry.

TEACHING AND PREACHING

5. *Teaching* is imparting the TIMELESS WORD or the whole counsel and revelation of God from Genesis to Revelation in a step-by-step systematic manner.

(a) The goal of teaching is complete Bible knowledge and complete obedience to knowledge attained. There must be on-going Bible studies of all kinds at different levels that aim to lead believers toward mastery of the Bible – Bible survey, Old Testament survey, New Testament survey, study on book-groups (for example, Pentateuch; Poetical Books of the OT; Gospels); studies of individual books; doctrinal studies; step-by-step discipleship Bible study course that will lead a believer through the three stages of discipleship (Baby, Youth, Parent).

(b) Illustrations: Teaching is like the maintenance mechanic doing regular maintenance on a car that's in working condition. Or a cook preparing a balanced food program for healthy people.

6. *Preaching* is delivering the TIMELY WORD, the message needed by the present situation.

(a) Whereas the teacher progresses systematically from beginning to end, the preacher may be led by the Holy Spirit to take a scripture or truth from anywhere in the Bible and apply it to the need of the hour. Most often, these are topical or textual sermons. Expository preaching is a combination of teaching and preaching in that it deals with a larger unit of scripture (for example, a key chapter treated verse by verse over a period of time, weeks, months, or even years! Usually, expository preaching deals consecutively with a whole book. In the list of spiritual gifts found in 1 Corinthians 12, preaching falls under the gift of PROPHECY, which means FORTH-TELLING the timely word needed at this CURRENT critical hour, and FORE-TELLING about future events that believers need to know in order to be prepared for that COMING critical hour. Today, the Holy Spirit seems most of the time to give the gift of FORTH-TELLING in preaching, explaining and applying truth already revealed and recorded in the Bible (John 14:26). On the other hand, the gift of FORE-TELLING is almost always the wisdom given by the Holy Spirit to understand and interpret prophecy that is already recorded in the Bible (Daniel 12:9-10). But there may be rare occasions when believers will need the Holy Spirit's guidance through the gift of FORE-TELLING (John 16:13; Acts 11:27-30, note Agabus was not expounding any recorded Biblical prophecy).

(b) Illustrations: Preaching is like the trouble-shooter mechanic diagnosing what's wrong with the car when it breaks down and fixing the problem. Or a dietician prescribing a special food plan for a person with specific health needs.

GOAL

7. The ultimate goal of teaching and preaching is to bring all believers to full maturity in Christ.

(a) All teaching and preaching must aim at helping the hearers to apply the truths learned. Truth must enter in through the eyes and ears, into the brain, down to the heart, and out through the mouth and hands and feet.

(b) Therefore, teaching and preaching must be empowered by the Holy Spirit, bathed in prayer, and supported by the life example of the teacher/preacher.

PROCESS

8. The process of becoming like Christ involves growth in three major stages, as illustrated from the developmental stages of physical growth. (I pause to acknowledge my debt to my mentor, Gene Tabor, former Navigators missionary to the Philippines who, as far as I can tell, pioneered this developmental approach. The treatment below is my version of this approach. My REVISED NEWLIFE DISCIPLESHIP SERIES (12 books) was designed to lead a person through the three stages (see below for overview of the series).

9. 1 John 2:12-14 gives three stages of spiritual growth: baby, youth, parent; implied is the need of every stage:

- (a) BABY needs assurance
- (b) YOUTH needs victory
- (c) PARENT needs quality

10. 1 John 2:15-17 reveals the three areas of temptations; 1 Corinthians 13:13 gives the corresponding Christian virtue to combat each area:

- (a) *Lust of the flesh* deals with the basic human needs; *faith* enables the baby Christian to receive God's provisions for those needs.
- (b) *Lust of the eyes* deals with a person's value system; *hope* provides the youth Christian the realistic basis for lasting values.
- (c) *Pride of life* deals with relationships; *love* equips the parent Christian to relate meaningfully and fruitfully with everybody.

11. NOTE: Faith, hope and love are virtues that a disciple learns and exercises at all stages through the Christian journey, but one specific virtue seems to provide a special resource to meet the root issue of the corresponding stage of development. Hence:

- To gain victory over the lust of the flesh, a spiritual BABY needs to grow in FAITH;
- To gain victory over the lust of the eyes, a spiritual YOUTH needs to grow in HOPE;
- To gain victory over the pride of life, a spiritual PARENT needs to grow in LOVE.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

12. The moral qualities (fruit) of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) are further expressions of the three virtues of faith, hope and love. We may consider the nine-fold fruit of the Holy Spirit as the distinguishing mark of a disciple who has attained close to full maturity at the third stage. The full ripening of the nine-fold fruit will come at the Second Coming at which time perfect maturity in Christ will be attained.

13. One way to look at the nine-fold fruit of the Spirit is to see them in clusters of threes: the first three primarily deal with our relationship with God; the second three, with our relationship to other people; the last three, with our relationship to ourselves. The material below appears in the NewLife Discipleship /Studies Book 5, Lesson 6. We

study this lesson in order to bring out these areas of growth that we must regularly emphasize in different situations with audiences of different levels of maturity.

(a) LOVE, JOY, PEACE: RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- *LOVE. Make love the controlling motivation and emotion of your life. Whatever the situation, whoever the person involved, always remind yourself: I am here to love God; and I am here to become a channel of God's love to other people.*
- *JOY. Joy is enjoying God's abiding presence. Psalm 16:11: "Thou hast made known to me the path of life; in Thy presence is fullness of joy; in Thy right hand there are pleasures forever." Whatever the situation, whoever the person involved, say to yourself: God is here, and I will enjoy His presence; and I will share His fellowship with others in this situation. This is an attitude of genuine enjoyment of life and everything it brings as God's blessings.*
- *PEACE. Peace is resting in God's sovereign goodness, wisdom, and power; it is assured confidence that Romans 8:28 is always true. Whatever the situation, whoever the person involved, say: God is working for His glory and for everybody's good in this situation.*

A Christian who maintains love, joy, and peace in unbroken fellowship with God will have sufficient resource to overcome negative circumstances.

(b) PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS: OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER PEOPLE.

- *PATIENCE or long-suffering, when used of God, usually describes God's attitude in holding back His wrath. God is not quick to punish people; He gives many chances -- people may say, much too many chances -- for sinners to repent. As a Christian emotion, long-suffering means essentially the same thing, an attitude of forbearance that gives to people as many chances as they need to change.*
- *KINDNESS. Whereas long-suffering is withholding the punishment people deserve, kindness is giving them the good they do not deserve. In this sense, kindness is equivalent to grace, which is favor undeserved. People may not deserve your understanding or help or forgiveness or friendship, but you give it anyway, simply because the Holy Spirit's kindness is flowing through you.*
- *GOODNESS, when used of God, refers to His perfect nature that is the source of His good actions and benevolent dealings with people. When used of the Christian, goodness is the moral excellence imparted to him by the Holy Spirit;*

and because of this moral excellence, the Christian will seek to do good to other people and to seek their highest good.

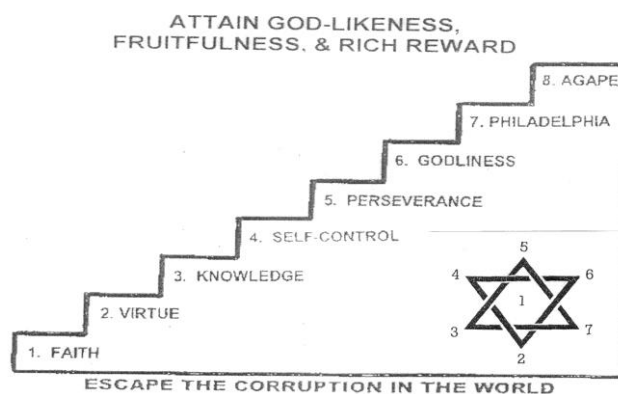
These three attitudes are related to each other. Patience enables the Christian to put up with the trying actions and traits of others; kindness enables him to look at the other person as someone to whom a blessing should be given; goodness enables the Christian to give those blessings, out of the treasures of God's good in him.

(c) FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, SELF-CONTROL: OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OURSELVES

- *FAITHFULNESS is closely tied up with faith. Faith is you resting confidently on the trustworthiness of God's Word; faithfulness is you assuring others that they may rest confidently in your word of promise.*
- *GENTLENESS or meekness was a quality of Christ (Matthew 11:29); it is exercising humility while in possession of power and authority. The gentle Christian knows he is strong in the Lord, but he uses this strength to be a servant to others.*
- *SELF-CONTROL is beautifully illustrated by the self-restraint in all things, which an athlete exercises toward himself while in training (1 Cor. 9:25).*

A Christian who maintains faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in relation to himself will have no difficulty in maintaining positive relationship with himself and others.

PETER'S EIGHT STEPS



14. The 8 Steps to maturity found in 2 Peter 1:5-7 provide further details as to the character qualities that a disciple must develop step-by-step (as in a ladder) in order to become a mature, fruitful disciple.

15. One way to look at the eight character qualities is to view them as being experienced in deepening levels as a Christian matures. The levels provided below are only suggestive not exhaustive, and certainly not dogmatic! You may have gone through this material in another part of this study series, but it is good for you to keep these in your mind when you are searching/researching topics for a sermon or Bible lesson.

(a) FAITH

- Level 1. Faith for salvation.
- Level 2. Faith for material needs.
- Level 3. Faith for victory over sin.
- Level 4. Faith for fruitful service.

(b) VIRTUE

Note: The abridged one-volume Dictionary of Theology of the New Testament comments:

‘In Phil. 4:8 Paul puts it next to “praise” in a series with “what is true” etc., and if the series has mainly a religious ring, what he has in mind is the excellence that the righteous are to main in life and death. The same applies in 2 Peter 1:5 in spirit of a secular parallel that might suggest “virtue”, while the only other verse (1 Peter 2:9) the context suggests either “self-declaration” (e.) or “fame” (f.).’ Putting “excellence” & “self-declaration” together, in discipleship growth this means “genuineness”, “sincerity”, “integrity” of commitment as shown in the consistent, continuing exertion of effort toward maturity.

- Level 1. Commitment to Christ’s absolute Lordship.
- Level 2. Surrender of questionable habits.
- Level 3. Striving for excellence in motives, attitudes, thoughts, actions.
- Level 4. Aspiring to accomplish the most with my gifts and opportunities.

(c) KNOWLEDGE

- Level 1. Saving knowledge of the Gospel.
- Level 2. Discipleship principles, disciplines, methods, skills.
- Level 3. Firm grasp of the main themes of the Bible and of basic Christian doctrines.
- Level 4. Growing experiential knowledge of God.

(d) SELF-CONTROL

- Level 1. Subordinating physical desires to spiritual values.
- Level 2. Denying legitimate pleasures for the sake of discipleship training.
- Level 3. Holy Spirit-controlled appetites – physical, emotional, mental.
- Level 4. Giving up my rights to let God work in His own way and time.

(e) PATIENCE

- Level 1. Not complaining when under temptation, trial and persecution.
- Level 2. Bearing with people's weaknesses, stubbornness, and failures.
- Level 3. Sticking with a job until it is done.
- Level 4. Waiting for God's will and promises to be fulfilled.

(f) GODLINESS

- Level 1. Hating sin.
- Level 2. Fearing God's discipline.
- Level 3. Desiring God's approval and reward.
- Level 4. Loving God for Himself.

(h) BROTHERLY KINDNESS

- Level 1. Not hurting or burdening others.
- Level 2. Giving what I can spare.
- Level 3. Sharing freely all I have.
- Level 4. Building up one another.

(i) LOVE

- Level 1. Giving up precious possessions to help others' needs.
- Level 2. Helping others to advance ahead of me.
- Level 3. Living to serve others.
- Level 4. Dying so others may live.

THE HOLY SPIRIT
-- THE POWER FOR PREACHING & TEACHING

In many places throughout this course, the absolute importance of the Holy Spirit's power has been emphasized. Two key scriptures (one in the Old Testament and another in the New Testament) underline this importance:

Old Testament: Zechariah 4:6 – So he answered and said to me: “This *is* the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ Says the LORD of hosts.

New Testament: Acts 1:8 – “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Therefore, we encourage you, as preacher or teacher, always to make sure that you are continually filled and controlled by the Holy Spirit. We encourage you to review the lesson on the Holy Spirit-filled Life (Book 12, Lesson 1) two or more times a year and prayerfully evaluate your life and ministry with the help of that lesson.

It was reported about the great evangelist Billy Graham that he prayed one day that God would rather take him home to heaven if he ever attempted to preach without the power of the Holy Spirit. May we all maintain a similar attitude of absolute dependence on the Holy Spirit every time we prepare a sermon or Bible lesson and every time we stand up to preach or teach God's Word.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Your next book of study will be *NEWLIFE BOOK 11*.

SPECIAL ARTICLE

NOTE: This article is best discussed during a week-end retreat (or seminar, workshop, or lecture) as needed by the ministry situation.

THE PROBLEM OF FALLING AWAY

PART ONE: PROBLEM STATED

Sooner or later, in the Christian life we must confront the question, if not the problem, of falling away.

Why do many Christians fall away after starting with seemingly sincere and strong commitment to Christ?

Is falling away inevitable? Is there a way minimize, if not avoid altogether, such sad endings?

UNAVOIDABLE?

Scriptures seem to indicate that falling away cannot be avoided. Enough warnings (prospective and retrospective) are recorded in the Bible. Consider the following passages from the Book of Hebrews alone:

PROSPECTIVE: Hebrews 2:1:

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

RETROSPECTIVE: Hebrews 4:1-2, 11:

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. ² For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but

the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it*. ¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES

The Lord Jesus Himself recognized the ever-present danger of falling away, as part of the human condition. He gives, at least, two reasons:

STUMBLING-BLOCKS ARE UNAVOIDABLE:

Matthew 18:7-9:

⁷ Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! ⁸ “If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. ⁹ And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire.

However, we must keep in mind that stumbling-blocks (things that cause people to feel offended and thus to drift or fall away from God) do not always come from the outside. They are as near as our own hands or eyes. Human nature has a centrifugal tendency to stray away from its center in God.

THE TEMPTER IS NEVER FAR AWAY: Luke 22:31-34

³¹ And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. ³² But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren.” ³³ But he said to Him, “Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death.” ³⁴ Then He said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me.”

The pathetic experience of Peter stands as an enduring reminder for all Christians that, ultimately, the life of discipleship is a constant spiritual warfare against a seasoned enemy, whom mere humans, unaided, cannot hope to defeat. This is why all believers, Peter and the rest of us, need the Victorious Deliverer-Redeemer on our side. In his famous hymn, “A Mighty Fortress Is our God”, the Reformer Martin Luther recognized the fierceness of the battle and he knew of the only One who could help a Christian gain victory.

For still our ancient foe
Doth seek to work us woe
His craft and power are great
And armed with cruel and hate
On earth is not his equal

Did we in our own strength confide
Our striving would be losing
We're not the right Man on our side
The Man of God's own choosing
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He
Lord Sabaoth His Name
From age to age, the same
And He must win the battle

THE FOUR SOILS

But much deeper still, the problem of falling away is inherent in the human condition described in what's commonly called the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20). Actually, this parable is more about the four soils than about the sower. The four soils represent the four kinds of people and their respective responses to the Seed of the Word of God. Nothing wrong with the Sower or with the Seed. From the outset, the outcome is already determined by how a person receives the Seed. Only one of the hearers will go on to produce a harvest. The other three are doomed to fail or fall away from the start.

PROACTIVE ACTIONS

Based on this parable of the Soils we will try to give some answers to the question: What can we do proactively to minimize, if not avoid totally, the incidence of falling away. Additional answers will be given in the later portion of this study.

This parable of the four Soils suggests that, to avoid falling away, we need to design our approach or style of communicating (sowing) God's Word (the seed), based on the characteristics of the four soils respectively.

- THE PATHWAY SOIL: NO PREPARATION.

PROBLEM: The pathway soil lacked preparation; it has not been broken up or softened to receive the seed.

SOLUTION: Preparing the heart of people (especially those within our circle of influence) includes developing closer relationship; getting involved in their lives in such a way that we get to know who they really are and what stresses and strains they are laboring under; giving them opportunity to get to know us as well, particularly whether our faith is authentic or not. Most important is spiritual preparation, praying for them that the Holy Spirit will do His work of conviction. Hence, a practical step is to put the names of our non-Christian friends on a prayer list and pray for them regularly and consistently.

Of course, in the normal course of life, we may share the Gospel with complete strangers, whose spiritual preparedness we are not sure of. Nevertheless, we must share the Gospel with them, leaving the results with God.

- ROCKY SOIL: IMPULSIVE DECISION.

PROBLEM: The obvious weakness of the rocky soil person is graphically described as “when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness”. The weakness is impulsive, emotional decision, based on partial or inadequate knowledge of the full implications of such a decision.

We, who present the Gospel, often aggravate this problem when we focus primarily on the “benefits” of the Gospel, and fail to give a more balanced picture of what is involved in the decision of believing in Christ. Our one-shot Gospel presentations (4 Laws, Bridge, etc.), which “sells” the Gospel as a sure and easy “insurance” which guarantees “heaven” and safeguards from “hell” often result in such impulsive decisions.

SOLUTION: We do not mean that an adequate Gospel presentation must include a list of pros and cons. Rather, our presentation must not focus on the “benefits” of the Gospel. We must present the Person of the Savior and Lord, and His invitation to enter into a personal relationship with Him. This means that we will take time to show the non-Christian the difference between the relationship he/she had previously with Satan and sin compared to the new relationship that he/she is now being offered in Christ. The good news is Christ Himself, not His benefits. “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself” (John 12:32).

- THORNY SOIL: CONFUSED PRIORITIES

PROBLEM: The thorny soil kind of hearer has given an initial positive reception for the Word. He/she seems to show signs of spiritual growth over a period of time. The problem is that thorns and weeds come and are allowed to continue in his/her life, resulting in the choking of the Word, such that it falls short of the stage of fruitfulness. It is very instructive that the Lord Jesus specifies three types of “thorns” (weeds) that choke the Word: (a) the cares of this world; (b) the deceitfulness of riches; (c) the desires for other things. The problem is that of confused priorities, of lack of focus, or, as someone has said, “of not making the main thing the main thing”.

- (a) The cares of this world (what to eat, what to drink, what to wear, Matthew 6:25) – nothing wrong with these things in themselves. These are basic needs and functions that must be attended to in order to maintain human life from day to day. The problem is when these cares consume most of our time and energy that we have no time for the Word.

- (b) The deceitfulness of riches. “The LOVE of money is the root of all evil” (1 Timothy 6:10).
- (c) The desires for other things. EPITHUMIA (desires, lusts) come from the sinful nature (James 1:15-16), in three forms (1 John 2:16), lust of the flesh (normal physical desires satisfied outside of God-given boundaries); lust of the eyes (coveting others’ admiration; coveting others’ possessions; coveting all the stuff which bewitches our eyes); pride of life (position and power).

THE SOLUTION. The solution to the problem of confused priorities is to clarify to a convert the necessity of enthroning Christ as absolute Lord of his/her life; the necessity of making a once-for-all life choice to put God’s kingdom and His righteousness first in every area of life (Matthew 6:33); the necessity of committing to live only for the will of God (Romans 12:1-2; 1 Peter 4:1-2); and the necessity of applying the test of eternal values on every decision and action that we take (Matthew 6: 19, 20, 24, 33; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Peter 4:1-2).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION: Is the “thorny soil kind of hearer” (and for that matter, the “stony kind”) saved? The parable doesn’t directly deal with the matter of salvation. But from other words of Jesus regarding the importance of fruit as a proof of genuine faith, He seems to give us an either/or choice.

Matthew 7:17-20:

¹⁷ Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

However, only God will give final judgment. We should never put a period where God is still writing the story of a person’s life. Hence, we should not stop praying for and reaching out to these first three kinds of hearers. We are always privileged to be doing one of three necessary steps in evangelism, sowing, watering, or harvesting the Word. Maybe we should add a fourth: weeding (a necessary part of discipleship training, which includes overcoming wrong habits and building good habits).

- GOOD SOIL: GENUINE DISCIPLE

This parable seems to be the key to all parables. Jesus Himself said so.

And He said to them, “Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?” (Mark 4:13).

This is proven by the fact that all three Synoptic Gospels record the parable (Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15).

Putting together all the qualities mentioned in the three accounts, we get the following picture of the good soil or the genuine disciple:

The Correct Response

The parable emphasizes the need for the correct response to the Word of God. Our response should include the following attitudes and actions. As you study the list below, grade your response on a scale of 1 to 4:

- 1 Very Weak;
- 2 Weak;
- 3 Strong;
- 4 Very Strong.

- 1) Hear God's Word with ***understanding*** (Matthew 13:23). We must understand the truth that the Word of God is communicating, such as a promise to be trusted or a command to be obeyed. We must understand that obedience to the Word of God may bring us troubles and persecutions; but we must also understand that the Lord Jesus will give us the power to overcome all troubles and persecutions.

My Grade _____
Where must I improve _____

- 2) Hear God's Word with an ***honest and good heart*** (Luke 8:15). To be honest means to be sincere; it means you will take the Word seriously. A good heart means that you will obey and practice God's Word fully, promptly, unquestioningly, with no reservations.

My Grade _____
Where must I improve _____

- 3) ***Accept*** God's Word (Mark 4:20). The Word used by Mark is the same word used in Hebrews 12:6 to describe God's acceptance of us as His children; this word also means the welcome and respect shown to royal messengers. To accept God's Word is to believe its truth, obey its authority, and trust its power. There is

enthusiasm in true acceptance of God's Word, but it is enthusiasm coupled with the readiness to sacrifice for it.

My Grade _____

Where must I improve _____

- 4) **Hold fast** God's Word (Luke 8:15). To hold fast God's Word means to be faithful to it in times of troubles and persecutions. It means to consider it more important than the necessities of life, worldly treasures, and earthly pleasures and possessions.

My Grade _____

Where must I improve _____

- 5) We must bear fruit with **patience** (Luke 8:15). Fruit bearing requires time, and time requires patience. Patience means lots of effort with single-hearted devotion. Patience means sticking with Christ and doing His will consistently, continually, completely (Hebrews 10:36).

My Grade _____

Where must I improve _____

- 6) We must bear fruit according to our **God-given capacity** (Matthew 13:23). Why did the Lord Jesus say that some bore fruit thirtyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold? This is to encourage us when we have little fruit as compared with others. This is to challenge us to strive until we bear as much fruit as God has gifted and equipped us to bear. The classic New Testament example of this is Andrew who won one person, his brother Peter; and Peter then went on to win three thousand in one day. Missionary stories abound about some missionaries laboring for years with but little or practically no fruit; years later, often after the missionaries have long gone on to their reward, the one or few who were led to the Lord were used in explosive, exponential ways beyond the prayers of the pioneer missionaries. This quality of fruit-bearing according to our God-given capacity also warns us against putting a limit to what God can do in and through our lives. If I remember correctly, it was William Carey, father of modern missions, who said, "Attempt great things for God; expect great things from God." Rick Warren testified of his

evangelist-pastor father praying, “One more soul, Lord, one more soul,” even when he was nearing death.

My Grade _____

Where must I improve _____

THE PROBLEM OF FALLING AWAY
PART TWO: OLD TESTAMENT TYPE

Beyond what we have already learned by way of a general view of the problem of falling away, the Bible teaches that this is truly an unavoidable experience in the spiritual journey of all believers both in the Old and the New Testaments.

No less than the apostle Paul stated in very clear terms that the journey of God’s chosen people Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land stands as a type (a spiritual dramatic presentation) of why and how falling away happens. The 40 years of wilderness wandering demonstrate to us the many pitfalls along the spiritual journey. Let’s read 1 Corinthians 10:1-6:

¹ Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, ³ all ate the same spiritual food, ⁴ and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. ⁵ But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* were scattered in the wilderness. ⁶ Now these things became our examples....

Paul then goes on to detail specific examples. Hebrews 2:1-6:8 is a second major passage which deals with this problem of drifting or falling away.

ELEMENTS OF THE TYPE

The core meaning of the type: Journey from Egypt to the Promised.

Four elements of the type:

- ELEMENT #1: BONDAGE IN EGYPT UNDER PHARAOH: This symbolizes the old life under bondage to Satan, sin, self, and the world that sinners need to be delivered from.
- ELEMENT #2: DELIVERANCE FROM EGYPT: This symbolizes the experience of salvation through faith in Christ.

This experience includes the following:

- (1) Passover
 - (2) Crossing the Red Sea
- ELEMENT #3: PROMISED LAND: This symbolizes the goal of discipleship: The Holy Spirit-filled, abundant, victorious, and fruitful Christian life.
 - ELEMENT #4: WILDERNESS JOURNEY: This symbolizes the “great troublesome in-between” of falling away that stands between Egypt and the Promised Land.

Let’s now proceed to a detailed analysis of the type.

A VERY GOOD START

The people of Israel had a very good start, in fact, a perfect start. They experienced genuine deliverance from Egypt. Prophetically, on the very day that God called Moses, he already described to him how He would bring this about:

Exodus 6:6,7: ⁶ Therefore say to the children of Israel: ‘I *am* the LORD; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. ⁷ I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Two symbols are contained in this deliverance:

- THE PASSOVER LAMB. This represents Jesus the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

All those who took shelter under the blood of the Passover Lamb were delivered out of Egypt. In a similar way, a person experiences genuine salvation when he/she puts faith in Jesus as Savior who was offered on cross as the substitutionary atoning sacrifice for sins, and as the risen Lord (Romans 10:9,10).

- CROSSING OF THE RED SEA. This represents water baptism.

For the Israelites the crossing of the Red Sea produced two results: the nation escaped alive, the Egyptian army perished, thus effecting a total cutting off of the old life of bondage, and the entrance to a life of freedom. In New Testament experience, water baptism is a believer’s public declaration of faith in Christ, which symbolizes the death and burial of the old life, and the subsequent rising to

new life in Christ (Romans 6:1-4). The Matthew 28:19 baptismal formula describes the start of a new and permanent relationship with the Triune God: “Baptizing them in (Greek EIS, literally, into) the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 describes this as being incorporated into the Body of Christ:

¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. (ESV)

Note the two-fold action involved in this incorporation:

- (1) The Spirit baptizes (immerses=implants) a believer into the Body of Christ;
- (2) The believer is made to drink of the one Spirit; that is, after becoming a part of the Body, the believer receives the Spirit’s life principle that animates the whole Body. This is the “born again” experience of regeneration (John 1:13; 3:3,5; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 6:19,20). The believer receives a new nature and the Holy Spirit comes to indwell him/her permanently.

We are so used to talking about Jesus as the Lamb of God (His redemptive work on the cross); we usually stop at John 1:29. Actually John the Baptist announced a second aspect of Jesus’ saving work: He baptizes with the Holy Spirit.

John 132-34: ³² And John bore witness, saying, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. ³³ I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.”

- (a) Jesus as Lamb of God takes away the sins of the world (think of the new owner cleansing the house);
- (b) Jesus as Baptizer with the Holy Spirit gives the believer a new born-again spiritual life and comes in to live in him/her through the Holy Spirit (think of the new owner moving in to live in the house after it has been cleansed).

These are both supernatural works of Jesus, which make salvation truly a work of God, something no human effort of any kind can achieve; both works are done to us, not works done by us (Ephesians 2:4-9).

Two proactive actions we can take from these two aspects of Christ ministry are (1) to make sure that our Gospel presentation is clear and adequate and in the power of the Holy Spirit; (2) and to wait and see and look for evidences that the divine work of regeneration and the baptism of the Spirit did happen.

CAUSES OF FALLING AWAY

The whole nation experienced full deliverance OUT of Egypt in one glorious divine action, which we may describe as having been accomplished “in one moment of time”. This was a one-time action never to be repeated. The visible connection to Egypt was cut off with one deadly slash of God’s sword.

Now the journey to the Promised Land lay before them. This journey was going to be a process. Some estimate that, had the people not stumbled into the pitfalls, this journey could have taken from about six months to one year; some say, maybe shorter. But certainly NOT forty years.

It is here that the passages in 1 Corinthians 10 and Hebrews 5-6, help us to discover the pitfalls that resulted in the 40 years of wilderness wandering. These 40 years ultimately resulted in one generation failing to enter the Promised Land.

The root of the problem maybe put in this statement: Yes, Israel was out of EGYPT; but was Egypt out of ISRAEL? Yes, you have been saved from the PENALTY of sin (justification); but are you being delivered from the POWER of sin (sanctification)? Someday, at the Second Coming of Christ, God guarantees all believers deliverance from the PRESENCE of sin.

Let’s look at the pitfalls which the Israelites fell into, preventing one whole generation from entering the Promised Land.

- PITFALL #1: MIXED MULTITUDE.

Exodus 12:37-38 seems to give a passing notice to one curious fact about who consisted the people who actually came out of Egypt: “³⁷ Then the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. ³⁸ A mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of livestock.”

A mixed multitude (an indefinite but big number) of non-Israelites also were part of the company “saved” from Egypt. This mixed multitude would eventually cause a lot of trouble before falling away and taking many with them in their fall.

In the Christian life, this is the number one reality we must acknowledge: there will always be false Christians, and these will sooner or later fall away. Of course, our attitude should always be to rejoice over every sinner who shows outward manifestations of repentance and faith; we are not to second-guess anyone’s profession of faith in Christ. And we must immediately take steps to get every new believer started on their journey of discipleship growth after baptism: “Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19). But back of our minds, we must always look out for signs of genuine conversion as well as be discerning of signs of false conversion. Even Jesus had one false disciple among His twelve.

Jesus told the Parable of the Tares (false wheat) to emphasize this one reality. In God’s sovereign wisdom He allows the enemy to sow his false wheat among the true ones (Matthew 13:36-43). Note that the final sorting out will happen on Judgement Day. Usually, time will expose the false Christians (1 John 2:19). But, in fact, most false Christians will only be exposed probably on Judgement Day, a sobering thought for all professing believers! (1 Timothy 5:24).

- PITFALL #2: IDOLATRY

The second pitfall to look out for is idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:7,21; Exodus 32). An idol is anyone or anything that replaces God as the first place in your life. In Israel’s experience, their idolatry was exposed while Moses was up on the mountain, receiving the Ten Commandments which would serve as God’s covenant with His people.

In the process of disciple-making, we must continually emphasize the danger of idolatry. This goes to the very heart of true commitment and priorities. The issue of Matthew 6:33 must continually be faced and resolved by a disciple in every area of life. When disciples make very passionate public testimonies of commitment, we must rejoice with them as we pray with them over their commitment. But we must not fail to remind them that making a commitment is only the first step; following through on the commitment will require faith and obedience one step at a time for the rest of their life (Luke 9:23; 1 Corinthians 9:26-27; Philippians 3:12-14). During our college days with The Navigators, we used an acronym F-A-T, to test the commitment level of ourselves and our Bible study members: Faithful, Available, Teachable.

- PITFALL #3: SEXUAL IMMORALITY

Closely related to idolatry is sexual immorality. In the Old Testament, idolatry usually went hand in hand with sexual immorality. Israel did not escape this temptation (1 Corinthians 10:8; Numbers 25).

For Christians sexual immorality ultimately arises from an undisciplined thought life. Where the thought life is not submitted to the continual cleansing and control of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, adulterous lust is usually the first sin, which rises out of the depths of an uncleansed heart. Of course, many other sins hide in the mysterious depths of the human heart.

Jeremiah 17:9:

“The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”

Warning: People open advice: follow your heart. The Bible warns us: Don’t trust your heart.

Mark 7:21-23:

²¹ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²² thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”

This is why Jesus clarified the true meaning of the prohibition against adultery in Matthew 5:27-30:

²⁷ “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

To overcome the temptation of adultery and to gain consistent victory over adulterous habits in thought and deed (pornography and sinful sexual practices), three actions must be habitually taken:

- ACTION 1: STOP THE LUSTFUL THOUGHT AT FIRST OCCURRENCE (2 Timothy 2:2).

“You can’t stop birds from flying over your head, but you can stop them from building a nest in your hair.” Lustful thoughts arise from the sinful heart when the five senses are stimulated by sexually seductive things from our surroundings.

Memories of previous lustful experiences are also prolific sources of lustful thoughts. You cannot avoid the FIRST lustful thought; but you must make a firm decision, even before the temptation comes, to resist the SECOND thought. Quickly nip the lustful thought in the bud.

- ACTION 2: AVOID EVERY THING OR SITUATION THAT WILL ENTICE YOU TO ACT ON THE LUSTFUL THOUGHT.

The wisdom of Jesus shows itself in commanding us to remove even the most important bodily parts (right eye, right hand) the instance they become instruments of lustful thoughts.

Principle: Thoughts (good or bad) remain dead if not provided with physical tools to implement them.

These physical tools, as already mentioned, include our bodily parts. But in our present-day sex-crazed environment, sexual tools include pornographic books, magazines, movies, videos, music, sex toys, phone conversations, including flirting through online chats. All these must be thrown out.

- ACTION 3: RENEW THE MIND (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:22-24)

Principle: The mind abhors a vacuum; the mind can accept only one thought at a time. Hence, the most practical and most effective method is INSTANT REPLACEMENT. When a lustful thought first arises, instantly replace it with a verse from the Word of God. Two habits must be developed:

- (1) MEMORIZE SCRIPTURES (Psalm 119:9-11; Colossians 3:16; John 14:26).

We must continually store up verses of Scripture in our minds and heart, so that the Holy Spirit has something to remind us of in the moment of temptation.

- (2) REVIEW & MEDITATE ON SCRIPTURES (Psalm 1:2; Joshua 1:8; Philippians 4:8).

Principle: “A lazy mind is the devil’s workshop.” Vigilantly fight against the idle mind. “The idle mind is the devil’s workshop.” Keep your mind actively reviewing and meditating on your memory verses, as well as by dwelling on lofty truths such as those listed by the apostle Paul in Philippians 4:8. Cultivate the habit of creative thought that may lead to useful inventions or advances in human knowledge and technology.

DEEPER MEANING OF SEXUALITY

But we must be aware of the deeper meaning of sexuality. God created humans male and female. God's plan for a full-orbed humanity is found in the marriage relationship, as Adam and Eve demonstrated it.

Genesis 2:21-25:

²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

²³ And Adam said:

“This *is* now bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called Woman,
Because she was taken out of Man.”

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be^[k] joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

²⁵ And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Male or female alone is incomplete. The expression “better half” captures the fact that man and woman need each other to become a complete human. Marriage results in two halves becoming one.

The question about the status of single people is a serious issue we deal with below. Here we will focus on this fact that in each single person there is a sense of incompleteness which compels him/her to seek for completion.

The powerful desire by people to seek to love and to be loved is a manifestation of this search for completion. This is also described as the desire to be accepted and to belong. In a mysterious way, we may also call this “spiritual magnetism” where the north pole and the south pole naturally attract each other. The experience of “falling in love” seems to be the proof of this magnetism. Many call it infatuation, passing fancy, fleeting attraction. But examples abound of people who testify of falling in love with someone and they never get over that feeling of love; many end up getting married, others end up “in despair” for life. There are stories even of some who pine away and die because their love was never requited.

All this to say that human sexuality is more than the urge for physical sexual satisfaction and fulfillment or beyond the biological imperative to reproduce the species.

Humans seek for relationship with the opposite sex for completion. This is a basic human need. And, in relation to the problem of falling away from discipleship, the subtle danger lies here.

Once a person says, “I need this, this is a natural and rightful need that must be satisfied”, he/she is not far from the temptation to conclude, “Therefore, it is right for me to go ahead and satisfy it.”

The issue of the temptation then becomes clear when you ask: How then shall I satisfy this need? When? Where? With whom?

The first temptation of Jesus in the wilderness speaks directly to this issue. He was hungry; satisfying hunger was His natural right. Satan comes to Him and says, “Well, then, go ahead and make bread.”

Why, of course. Jesus had that power to make bread; all He had to do was to exercise that power. Surely, when a person is hungry, it’s all right to go ahead and find a way to satisfy that rightful need.

Why would it be a sin for Jesus to make bread in order to satisfy his natural, rightful need?

Jesus’ answer stripped away the deception of the temptation. Satan was telling Him to satisfy His hunger in His own way and in His own time. That’s why He answered, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”

What did He mean?

He meant this: Who brought Me to this place? God. Who told me to fast? God. Now, who will tell Me when to break my fast? The answer: I have come to this place and situation by God’s word (direction), and how I get out of this place and situation must also be according to God’s word (direction). I will satisfy my need of bread in God’s way and in God’s time, and I will wait for His instructions. I will not go ahead of God just to satisfy this crying need to find a solution in My way and in My time.

Back to the issue of human sexuality.

The need for sexual completion (emotionally and physically) is one of many needs that God implanted in our being upon creation. God has made provision for each of those needs. But we must not forget, God has also laid down instructions and boundaries in which those needs will be satisfied. The boundary for sexual needs is within the marriage relationship, with the right person at the right time and the right place.

Discipleship means that we seek “God’s will” about the matter. God’s will means that, like God prepared Eve for Adam, He is also preparing a special person for each of us to become our marriage partner. As disciples, we will wait for His Word (direction)

regarding who that partner is. In the meantime, we will deny ourselves satisfying that sexual desire with just anybody in our own way and time.

REMEMBER

- “Falling in love” (being infatuated) with someone can happen anytime and does happen all the time. Chances are, every new place we go, we will meet someone that we will “fall in love” with.
- But “falling in love” with that person does NOT mean that that’s already the person God’s has prepared for you.
- Hence, you can do one of two things: (1) Swat the feeling away like you swat a mosquito that suddenly bites you; or (2) If for some reason, the feeling persists, then you pray about it and wait for God’s direction. In the meantime, DON’T do any concrete action to pursue the person.

SINGLE PERSONS

Another reality we must accept: Not every person has the opportunity or blessing to get married, for one reason or another. The Lord Jesus gave a very clear teaching about this.

Matthew 19:11-12:

¹¹ But He said to them, “All cannot accept this saying, but only *those* to whom it has been given: ¹² For there are eunuchs who were born thus from *their* mother’s womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He who is able to accept *it*, let him accept *it*.”

Jesus mentions three types of unmarried people, though we may also add a fourth:

- (1) Some are born with characteristics (emotional or physical) that render them incapable of marriage;
- (2) Some are rendered incapable of normal marriage because of some human procedure (castration, for example) or physical injury (accidents that disable sexual ability);
- (3) Some choose to remain unmarried for the sake of a divine calling;

- (4) In God's sovereign working, many normal persons are just denied the opportunity to get married for reasons beyond control (demographics, social status, geographical limitations, etc.).

THE GRACE OF GOD

How then do these unmarried people get to satisfy their sexual needs?

Cruel or unfeeling as this may sound, the simple answer is NO WAY. They must accept it as God's will for their lives not to have this need satisfied. This situation may fall under the category of what the apostle Paul calls a "thorn in the flesh", a trial or a burden laid upon him that God will not take away for a purpose He may not reveal to His servant.

But along with the thorn, God gives a promise: He will give sufficient grace to enable the faithful, obedient disciple to live with the thorn.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10:

⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- PITFALL #4: UNBELIEF & DISOBEDIENCE (Numbers 13:1-14:38)

We will discuss these two sins together because they are really two sides of one coin. Unbelief and disobedience always go together (Hebrews 3:18-19).

The debacle at the border of Canaan that tragically aborted Israel's entrance into the Promised Land and condemned them to spend 40 years wandering in the wilderness came about because of the combination of unbelief and disobedience.

- UNBELIEF. They did not believe God's promise that He would enable them to conquer their enemies;
- DISOBEDIENCE. Therefore, they disobeyed God's clear command for them to go in and possess the land; instead, they decided to turn around and attempt to return to Egypt.

In the life of discipleship, all falling away ultimately goes back to these twin plagues of unbelief and disobedience. When you boil down everything to this, you begin to understand why a Gospel hymn says that the Christian life is really simple; it is simply a life of TRUST & OBEY.

These are the two feet that will carry us to the Promised Land: one foot is TRUST, the other foot is OBEY. And what we do is just to put one foot ahead of the other, and walk one step at a time, until we reach our destination.

Trust, obey, trust, obey, trust, obey.

The life of discipleship is a journey. God has already shown us the destination: PROMISED LAND. Our “promised land” in discipleship is the Holy Spirit-filled, abundant, victorious, and fruitful Christian life (John 15:1-16; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 2:6-7; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

At every step of that journey, as we consistently seek God’s will for our life through study of His Word and prayer along with all the other spiritual habits and disciplines of discipleship, God will confront us with specific commands or directions regarding the next step. Along with the commands or directions, He will give us His promises assuring us of His complete help as we obey Him.

The choice which always confronts is this: Will we trust and obey Him?

It’s that simple. If we truly trust Him, we will obey Him. He tells us to enter the Promised Land. We see that the enemy seems to be stronger than we are. But we also hear God’s promise to help us conquer. So what do we do?

The Israelites yielded to their fear; they responded with unbelief to God’s clear promise. Result, they turned around and disobeyed the clear command to enter the Promised Land.

We repeat: To overcome the falling away, we just have to TRUST & OBEY, one step at a time, one day at a time, putting one foot in front of the other, and keep walking until we reach the Promised Land.

- PITFALL #5: PRESUMPTION

On top of their sin of unbelief and disobedience, the Israelites added the sin of presumption (Numbers 14:39-45; Matthew 4:5-7).

Presumption is counting on God’s protection and help where He does not want us to go. This is the meaning of Satan’s solicitation of Jesus to jump from the pinnacle of the temple because God promised always to protect Him.

God already told the Israelites that the plan to enter the Promised Land had been cancelled because of their unbelief and disobedience. Furthermore, they already received the judgment to wander in the wilderness for the next 40 years. Confronted by that dreadful prospect of extended wandering, they decided, too late, that they would obey God after all. So they got ready to attempt to conquer Canaan. Moses warned them sternly not to go, because now the promise of God's protection had been withdrawn.

Please read Numbers 14:39-45.

In the life of discipleship, times will come when we might be standing still and going nowhere. We are not very sure that the present situation is where need to be or want to be. We are equally unsure where to go or how to proceed. Even when we pray, it seems that God doesn't give any answer or direction.

The temptation is for us to use our human wisdom. We devise our best human plans and proceed to implement those plans, confident in our human resources (natural abilities, knowledge, training, experience, planning, programs, methods, strategies, etc.). And we pray that God will bless our plans.

That's presumption.

"God will never send you where God's grace will not protect you." Conversely, God's grace will never protect you where God does not send you.

The wisest and most godly thing to do is to follow this advice: When you're not sure, don't. Wait.

The Bible, specially in the Psalms, is full of reminders to wait on the Lord. Waiting is part of the seasons that God has ordained for our lives. God is the God of the kairos moment. He always acts exactly at His appointed time.

The timing of Jesus' birth was not a moment early, not a moment late, but exactly on the dot. He was born in the fullness of time.

Galatians 4:4:

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born^[a] of a woman, born under the law.

Jesus exemplified this at every juncture of His earthly life. He was continually reminding people, who were rushing Him or expecting Him to do something. "My time has not yet come." He always knew when it was time. He would say, "Now, the time is here."

To relate this, for example, to the issue of marriage: You can get married to the right person but at the wrong time.

Proverbs 3:5-6 is probably the best advice for those seasons of waiting.

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
⁶ In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.

Isaiah 40:31 is a good companion verse:

But those who wait on the LORD
Shall renew *their* strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint.

Psalms 37:4-8 counsels us about our posture and attitude while waiting, specially when we feel like everybody else is going ahead and we are terribly being left behind.

⁴ Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
⁵ Commit your way to the LORD,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring *it* to pass.
⁶ He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.
⁷ Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.
⁸ Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
Do not fret—*it* only *causes* harm.

- PITFALL #6: REBELLION

This pitfall seems to be more common among leaders.

Moses was God's primary appointed leader. God also provided Him with many able and gifted people to share in the leadership responsibilities, including his own siblings Aaron and Miriam. In addition, there were the natural heads of the tribes and their respective clans.

But human nature being what it is, often there enters into the hearts of lower ranked leaders to feel jealousy and ambition such that they are tempted to question the authority and legitimacy of the designated chief leader. They then mount a rebellion.

Miriam (Numbers 12:1-15) and Korah and his company (Numbers 16) were among those who showed rebellion against the leadership of Moses.

How Moses dealt with this is instructive. He remained meek and humble throughout and he let the Lord make the necessary judgment and vindication (Numbers 16:28-35).

- PITFALL #7: MURMURING AND GRUMBLING

This sin followed immediately after the rebellion of Korah (Numbers 16:41-50).

What is the sin of murmuring and grumbling? It is being unhappy and discontented with the conditions and situations God assigns to us.

The New Testament gives clear warning against murmuring and grumbling as well.

Philippians 2:14: Do all things without murmuring and disputing.

Safeguards against the sin of grumbling include:

- A thankful spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:18; Ephesians 5:20)
- A contented spirit (1 Timothy 6:6-8)
- A humble spirit (James 4:10)
- A patient spirit (James 5:8-9)
- A joyful spirit (Philippians 4:4-5)
- A prayerful spirit (Philippians 4:6-7)
- A positive spirit (Philippians 4:8-9)
- PITFALL #8: UNGUARDED EMOTIONAL OUTBURST

The most unfortunate, if not most tragic, pitfall of all is that which caught Moses off-guard. It's the pitfall of unguarded emotional outburst. Because of his blind anger, he failed to obey God's instruction exactly as directed. For this unguarded emotional outburst, he too was barred from entering the Promised Land.

Please read Numbers 20:7-13; Psalm 106:32-33.

The outburst of Moses was probably understandable. After 40 years, he must have felt he had had enough of the people's provocations beyond more than he deserved. He had reached the limit of his self-control. So in just one little moment of loss of sanity, he lashed out in anger. But before the holy God, there was absolutely no justification for Moses' outburst. Though he was God's most privileged leader, he yet suffered God's most severe discipline. To whom much is given, much is required. Leadership requires total accountability.

We hear about "crimes of passion". These are crimes committed in momentary insane outbursts of blind rage.

The New Testament commands us in many places always to be sober, to stay sane and self-controlled. Interestingly, the apostle Peter emphasizes the need to be sober at least three times in his first letter. All his life, his three-time denial of his Lord must have often stung his memory!

Please read 1 Peter 1:13; 1 Peter 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

We've all heard pieces of advice that are pithy and proverbial:

- "Don't say or do anything at the height of anger."
- "When angry, count from one to ten."
- "When angry, don't shout; lower your voice to a whisper."
- "When you feel you're losing control, walk away and cool off."
- "Don't meet fire with fire."
- Or like Jesus, just don't say a word.

THE PROBLEM OF FALLING AWAY
PART THREE:
OLD GENERATION VERSUS NEW GENERATION
FLESH VERSUS THE SPIRIT

The extent of the tragedy of failing to reach the Promised was drastic and far-reaching, involving the wiping out of the old generation, from 20 years old upwards. Roughly, that number amounted to probably about half of the entire company that experienced deliverance from Egypt. That generation got delivered from Egypt, but they failed to enter the Promised Land.

Please read Numbers 14:26-38.

For the Israelites, salvation involved two aspects:

- Israel must be taken out of Egypt;
- Egypt must be taken out of Israel.

After the debacle at the border, it became apparent that the old generation must die off because Egypt was so deeply ingrained in them that there was no way to take Egypt out of them. The old generation was always looking back to Egypt.

A new generation must be raised up with the totally new perspective of looking forward to the Promised Land.

FLESH VS. THE SPIRIT

From the very beginning of our study, we pointed out that the journey of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land is a type of the Christian life, a type of the life of discipleship.

We have pointed out the many pitfalls that can cause falling away and completely falling short of arriving at our God-ordained destination.

Above and beyond these pitfalls, there is one key truth sharply symbolized by the dying of the old generation and the raising up of a new generation.

In the life of discipleship, the old generation is a type of the OLD LIFE (life controlled by and lived in the lusts of the FLESH). The new generation is a type of the NEW LIFE (life controlled by and lived in the power of the Holy Spirit); please note:

In addition to the reality that some so-called Christians eventually fall away from the faith, there is the more prevalent reality that many genuine Christians seem to go through a period (shorter for some, longer for others) of “wilderness” experience of frustration and fruitlessness in their Christian life. They can never seem to gain consistent victory over sin; they seem always to be taking one step forward and two steps backward. Their experience is described very graphically and pathetically; please read Romans 7:15-24.

What is demonstrated by this experience? We see here the battle between the FLESH (the old generation, the old life) versus the SPIRIT (the new generation, the new life). The FLESH (the old generation) must die; the SPIRIT (the new generation) must arise.

How? Please read Romans 7:4-6.

First of all, a caveat.

These chapters of Romans 6-8 involve a lot of deep interpretative challenges. Nevertheless, in answering the question, how do we “kill” the “old generation” (FLESH) in order for the “new generation” (SPIRIT) to arise, the key two-fold truth is this:

- FLESH represents the old way of living according to the law as an OUTWARD MORAL CODE that we try to follow with our own human wisdom and ability. This is described as “the oldness of the letter”.
- SPIRIT represents the new way of living according to the law as an INNER MORAL CODE that we obey in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is described as “the newness of the Spirit”.

This distinction is described in Hebrews 8:7-12 (please read this scripture).

The old covenant was the LAW WRITTEN ON STONE as an outward moral standard that people can read and then try to follow as best they could with their human strength.

The new covenant is the LAW WRITTEN IN THE HEART as an inner moral impulse from the Holy Spirit, who also gives the power to obey God’s commandments.

This truth is also described in 2 Corinthians 4:2-6 (please read this scripture); here, the context is ministry, but the contrast between “letter” versus “Spirit” is the same:

HOLY SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

It is customary for many older Bible teachers to say that Christians must learn to move from Romans 7 (trying to live for Christ in the power of human flesh) to Romans 8 (living for Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit).

Indeed, the way to get out of the “wilderness” of frustration and fruitlessness in the Christian life is to stop living in the old way of the FLESH and to start living the Holy Spirit-filled, Holy Spirit-controlled Christian life.

- **COMMAND:** This is absolutely commanded. It is God's will that we must be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 5:18: And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit

- **PROMISE:** This is promised by the Father. God promised that He will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

Luke 11:13: If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Luke 24:49: ⁴⁹ Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

- **GUARANTEE:** Gos guarantees to answer every prayer that is according to the will of God.

1 John 5:14-15: ¹⁴ Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

FOUR STEPS TO THE HOLY SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

- **STEP ONE: COMPLETE CLEANSING.** Your life is a container; before the Holy Spirit can fill you, every sin and every questionable attitude, actions and habits must be cleansed out and washed away by the blood of Jesus.
- **STEP TWO: COMPLETE SURRENDER.** Now that your container is clean, you must make a once-for-all surrender of your life and offer your container as a living sacrifice and instrument of God. You may pray, "Lord God, in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, I now completely surrender my life to You, all that I am, all that I have, and all that I will ever be. From this day onward, I am Yours alone and Yours forever. Amen."
- **STEP THREE: ASK IN FAITH TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.** God promised to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (Luke 11:13). God commands you to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). His promise and command mean that it is absolutely His will to fill you with His Holy Spirit. 1 John 5:14-15 guarantees that if you pray according to God's will, you will surely receive what you ask for. Just as you prayed in faith to receive Christ, you may pray in faith to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Pray something like this:

“Father God in heaven, in the name of my Lord Jesus Christ, in obedience to Your command that I must be filled with the Holy Spirit, and trusting Your promise that You will give me the Holy Spirit when I ask, therefore, I now ask You to fill me with Your Holy Spirit by faith in your promise in 1 John 5:14-15 that You will grant me what I ask according to Your will. Thank You, Father, for filling me now. Amen.”

Reminder: The prayer of faith means you stand on the truth of God’s Word alone, not on your feelings. Again, you stand on three truths: God’s promise (Luke 11:13); God’s command (Ephesians 5:18); and God’s guarantee to answer prayer according to His will (1 John 5:14-15). You have confessed all known sin and asked for full forgiveness and cleansing; you have taken the step of full surrender of yourself to God. Now, you ask for the filling of the Holy Spirit in obedience to God’s command and in full faith on His promise to give His Holy Spirit to those who ask; therefore, based on God’s guarantee of answered prayer in 1 John 5:14, 15, feeling or no feeling, you may thank God even now for answering your prayer and for filling you with the Holy Spirit.

- **STEP FOUR: HENCEFORTH, CONTINUALLY LIVE AND WALK UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

To be filled with the Holy Spirit means to be under the continual control of the Holy Spirit. From now on, when you wake up in the morning, and as you go about your daily task, and before you go to sleep at night, maintain your fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will be your Parakletos, someone standing at your side, while at the same time being your indwelling, ever-present Comforter, Teacher, Guide, and Helper and Friend. The Holy Spirit fully represents Jesus; maintain continual communication with Him. When you’re doing a task, count on Him as doing the task with You. When you have free moments, talk to Him (aloud or silently in your heart). Be sensitive to His leading all the time; He will give you a thought, He will remind you of a verse, He will motivate you to do something good, He will restrain you when you are going in the wrong direction.

Another way that the Holy Spirit-filled Life has been described is the EXCHANGED LIFE. (Please review Book 7, Lesson 8, updated version 2025.)

MEMORIZE

Galatians 2:20 - I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

THE PROBLEM OF FALLING AWAY
PART FOUR: RESOURCES FOR THE JOURNEY

To take more than a million people on a journey from Egypt to the Promised Land presented unimaginable problems for logistics. To mention just the basics, how do you provide food, safety, and guidance for them?

Spiritually speaking, the journey of discipleship presents no less stringent logistical challenges.

This aspect of the type of journeying from Egypt to the Promised Land gives us a marvelous appreciation for the wise and powerful providence of God. He provided His people with more than adequate provisions for the journey. These consisted primarily of four powerful resources.

- RESOURCE #1: THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE

1 Corinthians 10:1: Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud.

Read Numbers 9:15-23. The Pillar of Cloud and Fire is actually God's Presence with His people providing shelter from the heat during the day and warmth and protection at night, as well as guidance when to move, when to stop, and where.

- RESOURCE #2: MANNA

1 Corinthians 10:3: All ate the same spiritual food.

Read Exodus 16. Manna was daily bread from heaven.

- RESOURCE #3: THE ROCK

1 Corinthians 10:4: And all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

Read Exodus 17:1-7. The miraculous Rock was a fountain of water.

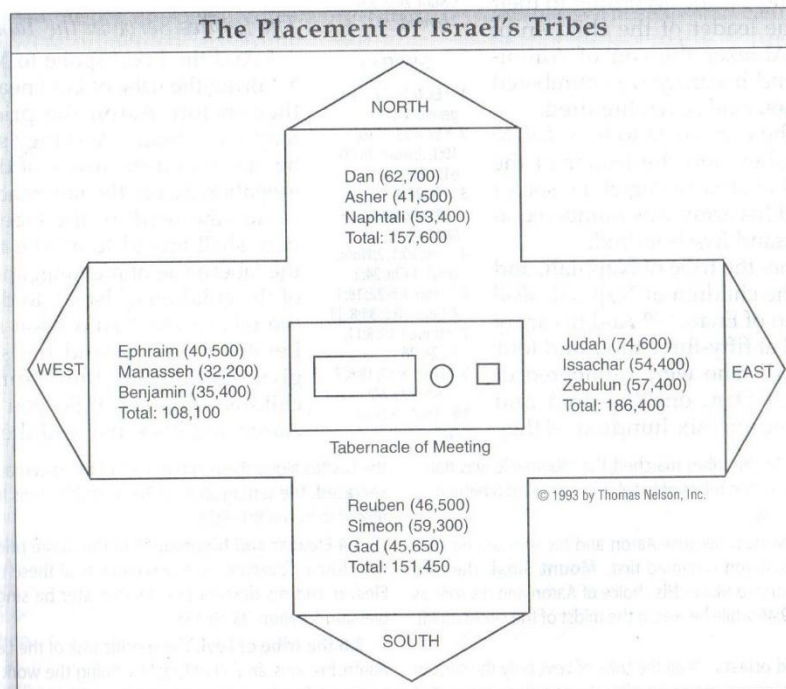
- RESOURCE #4: THE TABERNACLE

The Tabernacle was actually God's own tent in which He resided among His people throughout their journey.

Exodus 25:8-9: ⁸ And let them make Me a sanctuary,^[c] that I may dwell among them. ⁹ According to all that I show you, *that is*, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make *it*.

Exodus 40:34-35:³⁴ Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

Numbers 2: The Tabernacle was at the center of the camp, with all the tribes positioned around it in the four directions (see diagram below, from MacArthur's Study Bible).



SUMMARY OF THE WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE

Deuteronomy 8 summarizes Israel's experience in the wilderness under two truths:

- TRUTH #1: GOD ALONE IS THE SOURCE OF EVERYTHING.
- TRUTH #2: THREE KEYS TO LIFE IN THE PROMISED LAND:
 - (1) COMPLETE FAITH IN GOD'S WORD;
 - (2) COMPLETE OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S WORD;
 - (3) CONTINUAL THANKFULNESS & HUMILITY BEFORE GOD..

RESOURCES FOR THE DISCIPLESHIP JOURNEY

The resources that God gave to the Israelites for their journey to the Promised are a clear type of the resources God provides for our discipleship journey.

- THE HOLY SPIRIT – THE PILLAR OF CLOUD AND FIRE.

The Holy Spirit is the most important resource for the Christian life and for the discipleship journey.

- (1) New birth (John 3:3,5)
- (2) Indwelling Spirit (Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 4:6)
- (3) Power for Holy Living (Romans 8:14; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
- (4) Equipment for Service (Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12-14)
- (5) Multi-faceted Parakletos Ministry to believers (John 14:16, 17, 26; 16:7-14)
- (6) Etc.

- CHRIST THE COMPLETE SAVIOR AND LORD: MANNA & ROCK

Manna represents the Christ the living Word as well as the written Word. The Rock and the water that flowed from it represents Christ as the water of life.

- (1) These two symbols represent Christ in the fullness of His life and work as Savior and Lord, as communicated by His “I AMs” in the Gospel of John.
- (2) Gathering the “daily manna” represents the habit constant abiding and communion with Christ, the Vine (John 15:5), as well as the regular discipline of the daily Quiet Time or Devotional Time.
- (3) We may include here as well the basic disciplines of the Christian life, as illustrated for example by the Wheel Illustration (originally designed by The Navigators).



- LIVING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD: THE TABERNACLE

Of course, the ultimate resource for the Israelites was nothing less than God Himself living in their midst. The very fact that God was at the heart of the nation's camp, with all their tribal encampments duly arranged around the Tabernacle assured them that this journey was not about themselves. This was all of God. This was God's plan and God Himself was going to bring everything to complete fulfillment.

Similarly, in the journey of discipleship, the entire plan and work of redemption must be attributed to God exclusively and inclusively. As Philippians 1:6 assures us: "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

Ultimately, life in the Promised Land is nothing more or less than life lived completely and totally in God, with God, through God, for God. Victory, fruitfulness, purpose and meaning are all blessings that abound to us from God living in us and we living in Him.

Please read 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; Ephesians 2:19-22.

NO REASON TO FALL AWAY

God sent the Israelites on a humanly impossible journey, but He also gave them all-sufficient resources for the journey.

In a similar way, God has called us to go on a journey toward spiritual maturity where we will experience fullness, fruitfulness, and fulfillment. He has also given us more than sufficient resources for the journey. The apostle Peter gloried in the vastness of the divine resources in 2 Peter 1:2-4:

² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

Equipped with all these resources, there is no reason to drift or to fall away. We simply need to TRUST and OBEY.