

A Layman's Look
at
Disciples
and
Discipleship

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By C. O. Bishop

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Epilogue E

Acknowledgements

This Book is dedicated to the One who called us to BE Disciples ***and*** to Go into all the World and MAKE Disciples. To Him Be all honor and Thanksgiving.

I want to extend special thanks as well, to my beloved wife, Ann Marie, whose patience and longsuffering has permitted me to take the time to write.

Thanks, as well to Dan Beaty, who insisted that this book was necessary! ☺

Finally, thanks to Brian, my youngest Son, who carefully proofreads my work, before I release it.

My Prayer is that the book will be a help to those who desire to follow the Lord Jesus as Disciples...not just interested observers.

Chet Bishop May 6th, 2025

Foreword:

(Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:7-9)

One of the commands Jesus gave (Matthew 28:18-20) just before His ascension, was that *His disciples* were to go throughout all the world, and, *as* they went, *they* were to *make disciples in all nations*. (KJV simply says “*teach* all nations,” but the original language makes it clear that the issue is *discipleship*.) We call this “The Great Commission.”

If the Great Commission includes the “Concept of Discipleship,” then it is incumbent upon us to *know* what it means, to *understand* how to *go about* doing it...and, ultimately, to *do it!*

The Modern Church has wandered far from the Word of God, in its understanding of the *Concept* of Discipleship, and especially in its understanding of the pressing *Priority* of Discipleship.

We seem to think that some sort of “Catechism” will produce discipleship...or maybe verbal agreement to a specific creed. But neither of those patterns will even produce *salvation*, let alone *discipleship!*

Salvation is by Grace through Faith (Ephesians 2:8, 9): *Discipleship* is a pattern of behavior with the *only motive* being the desire to “Follow Jesus.”

The “Thief on the Cross” received Salvation as a gift, by God’s Grace, through *Faith*, just as each of us does today. But, 1800 years *before* that thief was saved, a man named Abram was offered a promise from God. Genesis 15:6 tells us that Abram (later called Abraham) “believed God” and God credited it to him as Righteousness. That concept: “Being *declared righteous* on the basis of *faith in God’s*

offered promise” (See **Romans 5:1**) is the *only* way God has ever saved anyone in history. (Yes, that is how Adam was saved, too!) The thief on the Cross never got to become a *disciple*, in the usual sense: He could only “*follow Jesus*” into the place of the dead. But, Abram followed Jesus the rest of his life. He was a disciple.

In the Gospels, (see **Mark 1:17; 2:14**, etc.) Jesus told His various disciples, “*Follow Me!*” In **John 21:19-22** Jesus told Peter, “Follow Me!” In **Ephesians 5:1**, Paul reiterates that concept, saying “Be *ye* therefore followers of God, as dear children.”

If you have *already believed* Jesus’s promise for Salvation, so that you are now a child of God, through the new birth; *and if* your desire is to “*Follow Jesus*,” and, *in so doing*, to draw others to do the same: Then, *this study is for you*, as well as for anyone else with those motives.

However: If you are trying to circumvent the Cross, hoping that *by self-effort* you can *transform yourself*, then, I must sadly inform you that *you don’t have the power to do that*: (Sorry!)

God says *He* has to transform *us* by the renewing of our minds. (**Romans 12:2; Philippians 2:13**) He is the One who *gives us a new nature* at Salvation, and then *empowers* that new nature both to *will* (desire) and to *do* what pleases Him.

That is the underlying principle of how Discipleship works. All *we* do is *follow*, by Faith. *He* does the transformation!

Please take the time, as you read, to look up every scripture reference, and make sure the connections are clear in your mind. (Don’t believe *anything* “because Chet Bishop says so!” Either *God* says it, or it is not trustworthy.)

Blessings upon you all as you *press on*, to Follow Jesus!

The Follower

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Jesus...make me your servant;
Let me follow you all of my days!
I ...would walk in your footsteps;
Let me hear your voice and obey!
Let me kneel in your shadow;
Let me learn at your feet!
Let me hear your voice in silence;
Let your service be my meat!
Lord, let me see... the way that you see!
Lord, let me see... the way that you see!

Jesus... let me come with you;
Let me learn to be just like you!
Let me... be your disciple;
Let me do the things that you do!
Let your spirit overshadow me;
Let Him fill me with your power!
Let me feel your Grace surround me,
Let me trust in you each hour!
I want to see... your blessing on me.
I want to see... your blessing on me!

Jesus...make me your vessel;
Let me be the tool in your hand!
Let me ... speak as your mouthpiece;
Let me preach the Good News to Man!
Let me cast aside convenience;
Put conviction in its place!
Turn my preference to priority,
Let me see you face to face!
Won't you permeate my being
With the fragrance of your Grace!

I want to see...your image in me!
I want to see...your image in me!

Lord, let me see...the way that you see!
Lord, let me see...your image in me!

Make Me Thy Fuel

By Amy Carmichael (1867-1951)

From prayer that asks that I may be
Sheltered from winds that beat on Thee,
From fearing when I should aspire,
From faltering when I should climb higher,
From silken self, O Captain, free
Thy soldier who would follow Thee.

From subtle love of softening things,
From easy choices, weakenings,
Not thus are spirits fortified,
Not this way went the Crucified;
From all that dims Thy Calvary,
O Lamb of God, deliver me.

Give me the love that leads the way,
The faith that nothing can dismay,
The hope no disappointments tire,
The passion that will burn like fire;
Let me not sink to be a clod;
Make me Thy fuel, Flame of God!

Chapter One

Discipleship—God’s Plan of Evangelism

Introduction: What *about* Discipleship?

When someone talks about discipleship, the first question I want to ask them is. “Are we talking about *making* disciples, or *being* one?” The answer *should* be, “Both!”

If you are *not* interested in *being* a disciple, you cannot and should not be involved in *making* them. On the other hand, if you are not interested in *making* disciples (including evangelism) then you are *not* one yourself.

Does that sound harsh? Let’s talk about it a bit—

“Except a Man be Born Again...”

To begin with, unless you have been born again by God’s Grace, through placing *your* trust in Jesus’s shed blood as full payment for your sins...you *can’t* be a disciple, because you are not even saved! In **John 3:3**, Jesus said, *“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.”*

Jesus came to save sinners: He *said* so! (**John 3:17**) *“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”*

He *promised* that those who place their faith in Him will have eternal life, *immediately*. (See **John 3:16**; **John 5:24**, below:)

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the World that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

John 5:24 *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation;*

but is passed from death unto life.” (Notice that “*hath everlasting life*” is present tense! You do **not** have to wait until you die to find out if you “made the team!”)

If you have seen yourself as a sinner, needing forgiveness, and if you have *embraced those promises, by faith*, then the “Next Step” is to embrace *Discipleship*.

What Is Our Assignment?

Jesus gave the command to “*go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature*” (Mark 16:15). He also reiterated the command, saying, “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations* (the word “teach” there, means “make disciples of”), *baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you*” (Matthew 28:18-20)

Does the “whatsoever” mean “*whatsoever*,” or does it just mean “*most everything*”? Are we to “go and make disciples,” or did that “chain-reaction” somehow get broken?

There is a “**spiritual chain-reaction**,” here, beginning with Jesus, passing to the apostles, and the rest of the disciples, and on to whomever *they* reached, and on through *them* to *us*... unless that chain *has* been broken. But the pattern is laid out by Jesus Himself, and *even if* whoever taught *me* failed to teach me this; *I have the Word of God*, and therefore I have no excuse.

I have the Holy Spirit of God, and He teaches me faithfully! So, again, *I have no excuse*. And the truth is, those who taught me *were* mostly faithful to teach the whole counsel of God, and they *did* teach me this, so, ultimately, *I really have no excuse* for not following through with this command.

And...if I'm not interested, or not willing, then *I'm not a disciple*.

So, What Does it Take to BE a Disciple?

We hear a lot about “what it takes to be a disciple.” But it can't be *too* complicated, or Jesus wouldn't have deliberately chosen uneducated, simple people to carry the message. It has to be something we *all* can grasp, and put into practice.

How does the *dictionary* define a disciple? One of the broadest definitions, but quite usable, is that a disciple is “a **pupil, or adherent of another; a follower.**” This definition could be applied to disciples of any sort, not just Christians. A narrower definition, (actually the first, in Webster's), is “any *professed* follower of Christ during his lifetime, especially the twelve apostles”—notice that this includes Judas, as well as others who eventually fell away. Therefore, it *is possible* for someone to be a “follower” of Jesus, and not even be saved. (According to **John 13:10, 11; cp. John 15:3**, Judas was never saved.)

Now, that raises an interesting contrast: Is it possible to be a believer, and *not* be a disciple?

Well... apparently it actually *is* possible. Jesus gave repeated warnings about what it takes to be His disciple. Paul warns that those who walk in the flesh are essentially “dead men walking”—and although Jesus said that His sheep are characterized by *knowing His voice* and *following Him*, (**John 10:27, 28**) He also did a fair bit of teaching about “going and *bringing back*” sheep that have wandered away, or have been driven away. (**Ezekiel 34:1-10; Mt 18:11-14**)

Also, consider the story of the Prodigal Son—he was *already* a Son, *before* he wandered off. He *still* was a *Son* while he was with the pigs. And had he *died* there, he'd

have been a dead *Son*, not a dead pig! (This idea is not mine: J. Vernon McGee taught it years ago.)

If it were automatic that all true Christians *always* walked with Jesus, then the majority of the New Testament would have been unnecessary, since most of it is *telling* us “*how* to live as Christians,” and *correcting* us when we don’t.

So, our goal is to be *genuine*, (not just professed) pupils, adherents, and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Right?

Pupils

Let’s start with “Pupil:” What *is* a pupil? It’s a student—a learner... one who is *teachable*, and one who is *taught*. So, in that limited sense, at least, *all* of us are trying to be disciples, as we are sitting under the teaching of God’s Word. That doesn’t guarantee all of us genuinely know the Lord—remember Judas—he sat under Jesus’ direct teaching for three years, and was not a believer. He was never washed. So, the *genuine* disciple has to start with being “washed.”

Let’s look at **John 13:1-11**. Jesus insisted that the disciples *must* be washed by him, and that if they did not submit to His washing, they *had no part with Him*. Peter then wanted his head and hands washed as well, apparently because he realized what kind of man he really was. But Jesus responded, kindly, that *that* washing had already occurred, but not for all of them. (The scripture specifically tells who was not washed). Later, in **John 15:3**, he says *how* that washing occurred. (By His Word.)

Now, *all* of them *heard* the words he had preached, Judas included. Why was the Word not effective in washing Judas? (Compare **Romans 10:16, 17**; **Hebrews 4:2**) He failed to *believe* the teaching Jesus offered.

So, then, if I have *heard* the good news that Jesus' shed blood at the Cross is full payment for my sins, and if I have personally put my faith, my trust, my dependence on that perfect sacrifice, then **God says I have eternal life: I am redeemed, born again, washed, sanctified, and justified. (John 5:24; 1 Peter 1:17-25; 1 Corinthians 6:11)** Are these good enough reasons to *want* to walk with Jesus? **YES!**

Adherents and Followers

What *is* an *Adherent*? It's someone who *follows*, or "*sticks to*" a leader or teacher. Jesus told us to "abide in Him." (**John 15:4**) We are to "stick to" our relationship with Him, and our obedience to His teaching.

And that's pretty much **what a follower is**, too. It's someone who follows, and *accepts the leadership and authority* of whomever it is they are following. Jesus *requires* all these things of His disciples.

You want to remember that the Person calling is not some cult-leader, or a guru, or swami, or something. This is the genuine, only-begotten Son of God, calling *you*. In fact, not to press the point too hard, this is the God of the universe, the *Creator*, who is *calling you* to serve Him in a clean, wholesome, living, loving relationship.

Maintaining the Walk

Back to **John 13**—why was Jesus insisting on washing the *feet* of the disciples? And actually, he told Peter, effectively, "If I can't wash your feet, you can't walk with me!" Why did Jesus make such an issue of such a thing? If Peter had such dirty feet, why couldn't he just wash them himself?

Peter initially missed the point—he didn't want Jesus to act as a servant toward him. But even when he *did* understand the issue of washing, he went clear over into the "other

ditch,” thinking he needed to be fully cleansed all over again.

I’m glad Peter asked this, because it allowed *me* to more clearly see the real issues. The issue was *spiritual*, not physical. And it was *conditional*, not positional. Peter was *positionally* clean (see **John 15:3**), but *conditionally* soiled.

Amos 3:3 says, “how can two walk together except they be agreed?” Jesus doesn’t need his feet washed—his walk never results in dirt. *Mine* most certainly does.

I constantly have to come back to Jesus *via* **1 John 1:9**, and have my wayward feet set back on the clean path. And that’s where the “foot-washing” comes in. *Jesus* has to clean us, or we can’t walk with Him.

That’s the message of **1 John 1:5-10**...”God is Light: You can’t walk in darkness and walk with Him...if you walk in the light, you can have fellowship with Him, and His blood continually cleanses you. When you sin, confess it, and He will forgive you, so you can continue walking. If you think you don’t *have* any sin problem, you are fooling yourself, and on top of that, you are calling God a liar.”

True Discipleship

So, as a beginning principle, a **True Disciple** *has to be*:

- Born again,
- Teachable,
- Willing to *walk in the light* (obedient), and
- Quick to confess sin.

Anything else? Well... *Yes!*

We are born to reproduce!

Born to Reproduce

Remember that bit about “...teaching them to observe *all things whatsoever I have commanded you...*”? (**Matthew 28:20**) Well, that applies to **all** disciples. We are *born to reproduce*. We are to carry to others the same life-changing message that was delivered to us. Jesus spelled that out in **John 15:8, 16**. The “fruit-bearing” he addressed there, was *not* the “Fruit of the Spirit.” The Fruit of the Spirit is *there* when we are under the control of the Holy Spirit...but it *stops* when we lapse into carnality.

The long-lasting *eternal fruit* He wants is more “baby Christians,” growing into maturity under sound teaching. The “spiritual chain-reaction” involves leading people to Christ, raising them up to spiritual maturity as disciples, and seeing them carry on that task to the next generation of believers.

And when we find hungry hearts, wherever we find them, we are to *feed* them. (**John 21:15-17**) This especially applies to those whom *we* lead to Christ, but it *also* applies to any of those we meet who already are hungry believers...we are to *feed* them. By far, most of the people I have taught were led to the Lord by someone else, before I ever met them. But it has been my task (and my joy) to feed them!

Now, how can I do that?

If I am going to feed others, what must I offer them? (Someone inevitably says, “*Food!*”)

Well, *yes!* But what *kind* of food? And where should I *get* the food to feed God’s hungry lambs? I can *only* get it from God’s written Word, by feeding on it myself, and allowing the Holy Spirit to teach me.

We *learn* by example, and we *lead* by example. If we have little or no desire for God’s Word, we will show it in our

lives, and it will spill over into the lives of others. If we have an insatiable desire to feed on the Word, then *that* will spill over into the lives of others. If we want to feed hungry hearts, we really have to *have* a hungry heart.

Feeding on the Word

So, *I have to be continually feeding on the Word.* How can I do that? I can:

- *Hear* it—this is minimal, but still necessary.
- *Read* it—this is an improvement upon just hearing it.
- *Study* it—this is more intense and more profitable than simply reading.
- *Memorize* it—this puts the Word where it is always accessible.
- *Meditate* upon it—this puts it into *practice*—applies it to your life.

Hearing

You can *Hear the Word* in Church, or on the radio, or by having a friend or family member read it to you. These are all good, and God blesses the public reading of His Word. (1st Timothy 4:13) But if it *stops* there, with *just* hearing it, then it will have less effect on your life than is needed.

Reading

Reading it yourself is somewhat of an improvement—you *saw* it yourself, and know *where* you saw it. Also, as you read, you have the opportunity to stop and re-read passages that you are especially interested in, or which you didn't really understand the first time through. But if your feeding stops there, it is only a little better than just hearing. Reading aloud seems to have even more effect.

Studying

Studying takes more effort, and it *can* produce better results. But even study, if unmixed with faith and obedience, will produce empty “knowledge of facts;” not a changed life. Some of the various cults earnestly study the written Word, but their purpose is to better refute the claims of Christians, or to further support the teaching of their leaders. There must be the inner purpose of applying it to your own heart, and of learning to know the Savior personally.

One of the things you will find, as you study with the intent of *teaching*, is that you learn more in this way than you would ever learn just studying for personal edification. We are called to *feed the lambs*...we have *babies* to feed. We need to be studying with *that* in mind.

Hopefully, we can learn Bible-study methods at Church. Those who want to learn to delve more deeply can usually get the *tools* to do so. But the *drive* to do so has to come from within you. *You* have to decide that this is truly important enough to invest your time and energy.

Memorization

What about *Memorization*? Some people feel that they *can't* do it. I've known people who really struggled with this, at first. But as they were faithful to keep at it, and prayerfully applied themselves to the task of memorizing the Scripture, *with the aim of applying it to their lives*, God was faithful to give them the ability, and their memory actually improved.

The fact is, we all memorize, on a regular basis—we recount conversations we had, and tell how we did certain things, and we tell stories—all of these are examples of memorization. Is it important that we be extremely accurate in memorization? Well, actually, *yes*, it is.

But *is God pleased* with an effort that only masters accurately the *content* of a passage, and not its exact word-for-word sentence structure? *Yes*, He is, and He will take that truth and put it to work. So, choose passages that *you* see as important, and begin to memorize them. Include the reference, so you can show others *where* it says, “thus and so.” (You need to be able to show others that “*God* says so—it is not just my opinion.”)

There are numerous “gimmicks” and tools for memorization...and they all probably work. I’ll share several with you, and you can try them on your own.

Some Suggestions For Memorization Patterns

(Psalm 119:11 “*Thy Word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against Thee.*”)

Arrange various ideas, concerns or concepts by topics, initially:

- Sin:
- Salvation,
- Eternal life,
- Faith,
- Grace,
- Walking with God,
- Maintaining fellowship with God.
- Fellowship with others
- Facing fears and hard times,
- Finding Peace in life
- Etc.

Find passages for each idea, to satisfy yourself and answer your own questions:

- **Sin:** Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:4, 5, etc.
- **Salvation:** Acts 4:12; Acts 16:31, Romans 10:13, etc.
- **Eternal life:** John 3:16; John 5:24; John 10:27, 28; Romans 8:38, 39; 1st John 5:11-13, etc.
- **Faith:** John 6:28, 29; Romans 3:25; Romans 5:1, Hebrews 11
- **Grace:** Ephesians 2:8, 9; Romans 4:4; Romans 5:2; Romans 11:6, etc.
- **Walking with God:** Micah 6:8; Colossians 2:6; 1st John 1:7, etc.
- **Maintaining fellowship with God:** 1st John 1:5-10; Psalm 66:18; Amos 3:3, etc.
- **Fellowship with others:** Ephesians 4:1-6; Hebrews 10:25; John 13:34, 35, etc.
- **Facing fears and hard times:** 2nd Timothy 1:7; John 16:33; 1st Peter 4:12-16, etc.

- **Finding Peace in life:** John 14:27; John 16:33; Philippians 4:6-9; John 20:21, etc.
- **And so forth...**

Then *read* them often enough and *meditate* upon them frequently enough that they become part of your thinking. Start by being able to remember *where* a verse can be found, even if it is only “...*someplace in 1st Timothy, left side of the page, toward the bottom...*” But *then*, work on *really knowing* what the passages say and mean, having thought them through, word by word.

Finally, start choosing a passage, one at a time, to truly memorize.

Here are some ways to approach it: Let’s say the verse you wanted to memorize was **John 3:16**, in the KJV.

The Verse: **John 3:16** *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

Three Methods:

File Cards

Write the reference (**John 3:16**, in this example) on one side of a 3” x 5” file card, and the full text of the passage on the other side, exactly as it appears in your Bible. (including punctuation, spelling, capitalization...everything.)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

Keep one or two such cards in your pocket, or somewhere handy, at all times, and make a habit of re-reading the passage, and then attempting to recite it, until you can look at **just the reference** and recite the passage flawlessly.

Missing words

Write out the verses as follows:

John 3:16 “For ____ so ____ the ____, that he ____ his ____
____ ____, that ____ ____ in him ____ ____, but have
____ ____.”

Then practice *reading* the page with the missing words, checking your Bible to see that you are correctly “filling in the missing words,” until you can do it without “peeking” at the Bible. Next, try it without looking at the card, until you can recite the passage reliably without looking at anything but the reference as a reminder.

Missing Letters

John 3:16 “F_ G_ s_ l_ t_ w_, t_ h_ g_ h_ o_ b_ S_, t_
w_ b_ i_ h_ s_ n_ p_, b_ h_ e_ l_.”

In either of the latter two methods, the idea is to read the “memory aid” *with* the help of the Bible, open to that passage. *Then* try to “fill in the blanks” from memory, instead of having to peek at the actual text to remember. When you can consistently read all the way through the memory aid without looking at the Bible, try covering the memory aid and reciting without looking at either. (Note: This will STILL require review!)

I used the first two of the above methods: Both my wife and my mother successfully used the third way. I have also used the fourth method described below. They *all* work: They *all* require diligence and persistence, and review after review.

Do You Have To Use “Tricks?” No!

A very common method is just “reading the verse over and over, then trying to close your eyes and repeat it without looking.” That works for some people, too. But using any of the above memory tools speeds things up and enables

you to memorize **longer passages** as a single context, rather than piecemeal. (Pick a short chapter, and try it! You can memorize whole chapters this way, and feel the flow of the thoughts.) Personally, I find it far more useful to memorize broader contexts, rather than single verse “proof-texts.”

Regardless of what method you choose by which to memorize scripture, it requires frequent review and repetition, and meditation on the Word, to cement it as part of your mind, so that you will not easily lose it.

(Read **Psalm 1** and consider how it could apply.) *Use* one of these ways to memorize some passage: say, **1st John 1:1-10** or another passage that fits your needs.

Meditation

What about **Meditation**? Does this mean sitting cross-legged with your hands in a weird position, and chanting a mantra? *No!* The dictionary defines “meditate” as “to **engage in thought; contemplate; reflect.**” The **119th Psalm** repeatedly calls us to spend time **thinking about** God’s Word—the **Precepts**, not just the verbiage.

If I deliberately think of God’s Word, and how to apply it to my life (**Psalm 119:9**), then it begins to actually have an effect on me, and will affect those around me as well. Meditation on God’s Word can be practiced even by those who have never learned to read. Those who cannot read, or study the written Word, can still, upon hearing it, **meditate** upon the Word as it was read to them, and apply it to their lives.

If I consider “hearing, reading, and studying” to be the “feeding” part of feeding on the Word, then perhaps I can consider “memorization and meditation” to be the “digesting” part.

Do “Hearing, Reading, and Studying” *help* you live as His Disciple? Absolutely! They give you the “food” that your spirit needs to digest! Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would bring to our remembrance all things whatsoever He, Jesus, has taught us. ***How can he bring back that which we’ve never taken the trouble to learn?***

That’s what “Feeding on the Word” is all about. It is taking the truth of God’s written Word, and applying it to our own lives at a practical level. **Knowledge is for the purpose of conduct.**

God isn’t in the business of just having “special stuff to know.” This isn’t some “secret society” with secret handshakes, and codes, and all that sort of nonsense. This is a ***real***, Holy, Loving God, reaching out to a ***real***, dying, sinful World: And He ***really*** wants to use ***YOU!***

That’s what discipleship is all about. Your heavenly Father wants you to join Him in His work. (See **Luke 2:49; John 4:31-34**) We may not even *want* to do the work, initially, but ***if we love the Lord, and desire to walk with Him, then we embrace the Cross, and all it stands for...***the desire of God to redeem a lost World! God will modify our desires if we allow Him to work.

Chapter Two

Discipleship as a Concept and a Priority

Introduction: The Concept and the Priority...

A Disciple is A *Follower*

To begin with, it's important to recognize that “doctrine” is not what determines a disciple.

A disciple of Christ is a *follower* of Christ. A disciple is recognized by *behavior* patterns. So, while doctrine itself does not determine who is (or who is not) a disciple, we must teach doctrine which is designed to *produce* conduct appropriate for a follower of Christ.

We also stress the fact that without being born again as a child of God, (See **John 3:3**) we cannot follow Jesus at all.

The New Birth has to come first.

That does not exclude an unbeliever from sitting under the teaching of God’s Word: it simply means that, until *that* “bridge” is crossed, all of God’s Word will seem confusing and mysterious. (Also, there is an increasing danger of “inoculating” the unbeliever *against* the Gospel, when they hear it so often without responding in faith.)

In **1st Corinthians 2:14**, the Apostle Paul said that the “natural (unregenerate) man” cannot understand the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness to him.”

So, we go ahead and offer the Word, to anyone who hungers for it, but we make clear the priority of the New Birth, as a prerequisite for everything else God has to offer. As we teach, however, a foundational idea to keep in mind is that “knowledge is for the purpose of conduct.”

Knowledge is for the Purpose of Conduct.

The *knowledge* that I am a sinner, and that Jesus shed His Blood for the salvation of my soul, calls for me to *do*

something with that knowledge: As sinners, we know that He calls us to *believe* Him! He calls us to *place our trust* in His completed work at the Cross. In **John 6:28**, the people asked Jesus, “*What must we do that we might work the works of God?*” Jesus replied, in the next verse, “*This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him who He hath sent!*”

So, *that* “knowledge” required a response: faith was (and is) the only acceptable response to that specific “knowledge.” But what about *other* areas of “knowledge” that God has freely given us? What kind of responses should we hope to see?

Some of the practices we would *like* to see happening spontaneously on the basis of the new birth, are:

- Consistent *Prayer*
- Living *Faith*
- Practical *Obedience*
- Persistent *Bible Study*
- *Scripture Memorization*
- Sincere *Worship*
- Spontaneous *Witness*
- *Agapé Love* for others.

Increasingly, I have come to believe that one should not waste much time trying to *feed* people who simply *aren't hungry*. So, first assuming that the individual we are teaching *genuinely desires to know* the Lord in a deeper, growing relationship, the best place to begin is often at “The Beginning.”

The Priority of Discipleship: What Did The Lord Jesus Teach?

Jesus called quite a few men to “*follow*” him...to *be his disciples*. Some responded by dropping everything and following Him immediately (e.g. **Matthew 4:19, 20.**) Some declined, claiming other priorities, and saying, in effect, “...Maybe later!” (See **Matthew 8:21, 22**)

But Jesus made some pretty strong remarks concerning discipleship. It seems good that we should begin there, even though some things He said were difficult for us to grasp. In keeping with what the scripture teaches about “comparing scripture with scripture, we need to examine what He said during His Earthly ministry in light of what He taught and demonstrated in the Old Testament and elsewhere.

Mathew 10:37, 38 *“³⁷ He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸ And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”*

This is a matter of priorities: if your “family honor” is more important than honoring the **Lord** with your words and life choices, then you are not a disciple.

In some cultures, this is a serious issue, as “family honor” is sometimes literally a matter of “life-or-death.” People who claimed Jesus as their Lord were completely rejected by their families, and in some cases, ***murdered*** by their own relatives, to clear the family name of the dishonor implied by someone leaving (Islam, Hinduism, etc.) to publicly proclaim the Name of Jesus.

We recognize that we are dead to the world and the world is dead to us. We see that truth in scripture, but sometimes we attempt to hang onto both worlds...and abandon the honor of God in the process. Demas is called out for having done exactly this, in **2nd Timothy 4:10**. *“Demas hath forsaken me having loved this present world...”*

Jesus warned in **Matthew 6:24**, that *“No man can serve two masters...”*

Matthew 10:24, 25 “²⁴ *The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.* ²⁵ *It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?*”

If I could be like Jesus in every respect, I would be thrilled beyond measure. He is the Master...I am a very inconsistent, “up-and-down” *servant*. I would love to grow into **His** holiness and **His** stability to the extent that when people look at me they would only see Him.

2nd Corinthians 2:14-17 says we are supposed to “smell like Jesus.” God is pleased by the “sweet savor” of Jesus’s service. And we are to emulate Him! God says the result will be that we “smell like Jesus,” and people will either *love* it, because they love Jesus, or find it repulsive because they hate Him.

People who *malign the Name of Jesus* will malign *you* as well. Accept it! *Embrace* it! It means you are doing what He called you to do.

Mark 8:34-38; “³⁴ *And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* ³⁵ *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.* ³⁶ *For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* ³⁷ *Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* ³⁸ *Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.*”

(Compare **Luke 9:23-26**... the passages are nearly identical)

This has the same message as the one in **Matthew 10:38**, and **John 12:24-26**. If we *know* that we have been crucified to the World, and the world to us (See **Galatians 6:14**) then we have to make a choice: Do I *embrace* that concept and *agree* that “*I am crucified with Christ, therefore I no longer live: Jesus Christ now lives in me...*?”

Or do I attempt to be a “part-time disciple,” and only act like a follower of Jesus when I feel like it?

One thing to note here: This passage (and others like it) is tribulation (pre-kingdom) teaching: When the Lord returns with all His holy angels, as in this passage, the **Church-age** believers will already be *with* Him. This specific “sorting out” by how your faith manifested itself is spelled out in **Matthew 25:31-46**, in the passage describing the Judgment of the Living Nations, just prior to the Kingdom Age, *after* the Lord’s return to Earth as the Immortal King.

Luke 14:26, 27, 33 “*If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.*”²⁷ *And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple....*³³ *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”*

There is no passage in scripture that suggests that we should literally despise our parents: quite the opposite, all through scripture, God commands us to *honor* our Father and Mother. Evidently this is similar to what we read in **Matthew 10:37, 38**, though more strongly worded. **Priority** seems to be the issue.

John 8:12; *“^{d2} Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

Compare this passage to **1st John 1:7** *“But, if we walk in the light as He is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.”*

If we are walking with Jesus, in fellowship, then we are walking in *light*, right along with Him, and **John 8:12** is being fulfilled, day by day! Remember that He is also called *“The Word”* in **John 1:1**, and *“The Word of God,”* in **Revelation 19:13**. If you are “abiding in his Word” (See **John 8:31, 32**) Then you are also “walking with Him in the Light.”...and *He* says that makes you a *disciple*.

John 10:4, 5 *“⁴ And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. ⁵ And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”*

On two separate occasions, I have had friends tell me of a trip to the Holy Land, and they related how their taxi was delayed by two flocks of sheep simultaneously crossing the road in opposite directions, on the same crossroad. Both told me that they despaired of getting on their way anytime soon, as the melee of sheep looked like total chaos...how would they ever get them sorted out?

But, as they watched, they saw the two shepherds cordially greet one another: But both shepherds kept walking at the same pace, continually calling their sheep. And the two flocks simply *flowed through* one another, *following the voice of their respective shepherds*. There was no confusion at all, from their perspective. They *knew the voice of their shepherd* and followed him only!

I hope you can see *our* lesson here, to follow the Voice of our Shepherd! That means we must *Learn to know the voice of the Great Shepherd*, calling from the pages of Scripture, and in answered prayer, and follow His lead *alone*.

Is there a command to follow our under-shepherds as well? *Yes, there is!*

In 1st Corinthians 11:1 Paul says, *“Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”* And in Hebrews 13:7, *“Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.”* (Way of life. “Conversation,” in this verse (*tropos*), means “lifestyle.” Consider the *result* of the way your church leaders live, and *follow their faith*, as they follow Christ.) But we are *not* to follow the voice of a “stranger:” (Someone whose life, to our knowledge, has *not* demonstrated a living faith.)

John 10:27, 28 ²⁷ *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:* ²⁸ *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

What a wonderful promise! This is worth memorizing and meditating upon it at length! You cannot hope to “put on the helmet of Salvation,” if your mind is not protected by the sure knowledge that you are eternally secure in Christ!

John 12:24-26 ²⁴ *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.* ²⁵ *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.* ²⁶ *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.”*

When we think of a seed falling into the ground, we think of it as “planting.” But the truth is, unless that seed *ceases to exist as a seed*, (thus dying to itself) it cannot bear any fruit. It will simply rot in the ground and produce nothing. But if germination occurs, then the chance for fruit-bearing exists.

If I so strongly desire to “hang onto what and who I am” as a *natural* man that I fail to “germinate” as a *believer*, then my life will truly be wasted, as all that I may “build on the foundation of Christ in my life” (1st Corinthians 3:10-15) would then be of the “wood, hay, or stubble” variety, with *zero* eternal value.

But, if I set aside my prerogatives as a “self-centered human,” and allow the Lord to use my life, then the things that Jesus “builds” will have eternal value. Psalm 37:3-13 talks about this: It encourages us to focus on *God’s* direction in our lives instead of just “doing things our own way.”

John 8:31 “*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*”

How *do* we “continue in His Word?” We *continue* in His Word by *feeding* on His Word, *believing* His Word and *obeying* His Word. That is what it *means* to be a disciple of Jesus.

John 15:8 “⁸ *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*”

We are called to bear fruit *as Jesus did*, as His followers, *imitating* Him. He *made disciples*: He calls us to do the same.

Sometimes “Formal” Teaching Sessions Are In Order:

(*Informal* teaching, one-on-one, or in very small groups, is usually much more relaxed and natural. Seize “teaching moments” whenever they occur!) In a larger group, there needs to be an underlying plan, even if you are the only one who knows what it is.

Beginning With Prayer

It seems important to *open in prayer*, specifically asking the Lord to illuminate His Word, and to open the eyes of our understanding. Pray for individual requests, as well, and give thanks. (Use this as an object lesson in *what prayer is*. People learn by example: The way YOU pray is very likely what you will begin to see in the believers you are feeding.)

Open the Word and Dig In!

Please remember that the *only* “sheep food” God recommends is His Word. Don’t stray off into politics, personal opinions, or constant prating about people you consider to be “false teachers.” Stick with the Word of God.

Isaiah 55:11 says, “So shall *my Word* be that goeth forth out of my mouth: *It* shall not return unto Me void, but *it* shall accomplish *that which I please*, and *it* shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

Notice: Two Truths are Taught in Isaiah 55:11:

First, His Written Word is what brings results, *not* your “extrapolations from” His Word: not your opinions, or well-crafted sermons, however wise they may seem. *His Word alone* is what *He* has ordained to change lives. (Compare **Psalm 119:9** “*Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word!*”)

Second, it accomplishes what *pleases God*, not necessarily what you expected or hoped it might do. It will specifically “prosper in the thing *He* sent it to do!”

Where Should You Start?

I open each formal (i.e. in a church setting) teaching session by asking whether anyone has any Bible questions. I do this on the *theory* that, *if* they are reading on their own, they *probably* will have some questions about what they have read. In doing so, however, I may expose my own lack of understanding. That is *part of being faithful* in teaching. We are not called to “pose” as knowledgeable, but rather to continually *grow* in knowledge.

Because they *will* have questions, YOU need to be studious in the Word, so as to be competent to find answers in God’s Word. If you *don’t know* the answer to their questions, be honest and *say* so: Don’t try to “cover” your own ignorance by lots of talk; “dancing around the question,” and trying to “sound knowledgeable,” when the truth is, *you don’t know*.

But: Write down the question, and *research* it (for them and yourself) so you can have the answer the next time you meet.

Encouraging Note: I have discovered, over the last 40+ years of active teaching, that most believers come up with very similar questions. As you write down the questions, also write down where you found answers in the Bible, and (if possible) begin memorizing those passages, along with their references. In that way, it becomes easier and easier to field questions as they arise.

Be faithful to *listen carefully*: it is far too easy to find yourself “answering the question you *expected* to hear,” rather than understanding and responding to the question they actually are asking.

Genesis: The Foundation For The Whole Bible.

When I begin teaching a new believer, (formally *or* informally) I like to spend some time going through Genesis, pretty early in the relationship, if possible. In fact, when they are first interested, *before* salvation, I like to begin there, so that they immediately begin to see that God's Plan was always the same, and remained unchanged from the start.

In Genesis Chapters One And Two, I Begin With Two Objectives:

The First Objective, obviously, is to understand the Creation as a *factual* account of how our world came into existence. This is an important first step in corrective teaching, and it quietly "draws a line in the dirt" as well, challenging the new believer to step across and *believe God*.

A teacher does not have to look very far to find abundant support for the Creation account, but I think it is better, initially, to simply **state the facts** as the scripture lays them out. It won't be long before questions arise, and *that* is a good time to begin quietly *declaring* the inerrancy of scripture, and *exposing* the folly of trying to "selectively" believe God's Word.

If it isn't *all* true, and *all* the Word of God, then we have a real problem, because then *we* would have to claim to have the wisdom in ourselves, to discern which parts are true, and which are not. (And...we *do not* have that ability!)

After a person accepts (at least grudgingly) that this account is *not* allegorical, metaphorical, or mythological, but that it is meant to be taken seriously, and literally, they will be delighted and relieved to discover that there is a great deal of evidence to support the Genesis account.

The Second Objective, and probably *even more important*, is to learn what God reveals about Himself in these chapters. We can read carefully, thinking about what is said, and thereby deduce a great deal about the God of the Bible through the Creation account.

For instance, from **Genesis 1:1, 2**, we can deduce that:

God is Eternal (Before *anything else* existed, God was already there!) We can see that He is **phenomenally powerful**: (*Authoritative*, to the extent that inanimate objects obey his will without hesitation.) He is **intelligent and wise**: He has the right to **preeminence** over all of the creation, and the **authority** to rule it all, by right of creation, if nothing else. (He is the *Creator*, and the *owner* of His creation.)

He is also a *Spirit*, or at least He *has* a spirit. (We can't be sure which it is, in this passage alone, but, in **John 4:24**, Jesus said that God *is* a Spirit.) We can see that *either* He is simply *unaffected* by physical laws, *or* He can *fly*, since He (or His Spirit) was "hovering over the face of the deep." Finally, we get a whiff of His **omnipresence**, since the text *seems* to carry the idea of His hovering (or "brooding") over the face of the *whole* deep; not just some remote corner.

In Genesis 1:3, 4, we see that:

God speaks-- He communicates. His infinite *authority* is reiterated, in that *when* He speaks, *things happen*. He commands something which previously did not exist, and it springs into being. He is the ultimate source of *light*, and He determines what is good. He recognizes differences, and He separates light from dark. This is a tiny glimpse of God's Holiness, since "holiness" *means* "separation, or being *set apart*," and the New Testament confirms that "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." (**1st John 1:5**)

He also set an *eternal principle*, that light and dark are mutually exclusive. We can speculate whether this truth applies *only* to physical light or moral and spiritual light, too, but from this passage, alone, we can't answer that question. However, later in scripture, we find that **ALL** light has this character: *Light dispels darkness!* (Ephesians 5:13-14.)

If time permits, I try to go through *all* of (at least) Genesis chapters one and two in the above manner, verse by verse. I try to elicit observations from my students, so that they *learn to see* what a passage may (or may not) hold, rather than getting it all "pre-chewed" from me. All the way along, I ask questions: Who *is* God? What is He *like*? (What are His attributes?) What was Man *supposed* to be like? What does *this* verse (whichever is in question) tell us about God?

Genesis 3 is Pivotal: It Presents the Fall of Man.

Here, God lays a foundation for understanding God's plan of Salvation. We can learn something about the *enemy*, our own *folly*, and *God's Grace*. We can see that our first response to the awareness of sin and guilt is to try to *cover it with our own works*. (Hence the source of most World religions.) We can also see that as a covering, our works are only effective in a "horizontal" plane: (v. 10) That is, by my works, I can hide my sins from *other people*, but not from God. We can read God's judgment on Sin, and we can see, in a dim form, the Promised Redeemer, the "Seed of the Woman." (Who else in history can be called *only* the Seed of the Woman? *We* are all the Seed of Adam! Jesus had no human father... thus no Sin Nature.)

We can see **Adam's faith**, in verse 20 (he believed God regarding the Seed of the Woman!) and **God's Mercy** in verse 21 (God covered the sin of the whole human race in His chosen sacrifice... He killed animals and covered the

sinner with the skins.) We can see the **Substitutionary death**, and, by inference, the **blood sacrifice for sin**. We can see the *covering atonement* that looks forward to the Cross, and God's Wisdom and Mercy *in moving his people out of harm's way*, so that their eventual physical death would *free* them from their fallen condition. (**Genesis 3:22-24**)

Questions to be asked in class: "Exactly what happened? What was said? Who did *what*, and, *in what order*? What happened when the Woman ate? (Nothing!) What happened when the Man ate? (The eyes of *Both* were opened!) Why? *Can we know for sure* what *would* have happened if *only* the woman had eaten?" (No, we can't: Please remember that speculation is intriguing, but potentially very dangerous.)

"How did the Man and Woman respond to their new condition? What happened when God appeared on the scene? (Notice that Adam does *not* say, "I hid because my fig leaves were starting to wither...") What can we deduce from that?

What did God say to the serpent?" (Notice that some of it appears to be to the *snake*, proper, and some to *Satan*. Compare **Revelation 20:2**)

"What did God say to the Woman? To the Man? What is strange about Adam's immediate response? What about God's response? Why was it that the fig leaf coverings were inadequate to cover their nakedness before God, and the skins were not?"

This is the sort of thing I do when teaching through Genesis. Also, I make frequent applications, using examples from life experience, analogies, or metaphors, as seems appropriate at the time.

Genesis Four Confirms the Lessons in Chapter Three

Adam and Eve begin procreation, and we see two “general responses to God,” in Cain and Abel.

Cain was a farmer, raising vegetables, and Abel was a farmer, keeping flocks. Abel evidently understood the account of the Blood Sacrifice by God, in chapter three, because he emulated it, bringing a blood sacrifice to God. (Cain evidently understood it, too, but rejected it. God tried to reason with him, saying, in effect, “I am not ‘choosing Abel over you:’ I accepted his sacrifice, because it met My requirement for a sin-offering, while yours did not! Bring the correct sacrifice and I will receive you as I did him!” See **Genesis 4:6, 7**)

Hebrews 11:3 says the *sacrifice* was the issue, not some hidden issue such as their heart attitudes, etc. *Did* Cain have a wrong attitude? *Yes*, and he demonstrated it by murdering Abel! But the dividing line was the *sacrifice* itself. Cain was “*Circumventing the Cross*.” People do the same today: We don’t like the imagery of blood sacrifices, and we think that a “reasonable” God would just accept our worship, not requiring “all this gory blood-sacrifice stuff!”

This is why so many people are convinced that “it doesn’t matter what you believe, so long as you are sincere!” (Sorry, if your “faith” is in something that cannot deliver, then your faith will lead you to destruction. “*Sincerely following a bad plan*” will still result in a disaster...regardless of your sincerity. Occasionally we hear of people who trusted in a flawed bridge, and died when it collapsed. Or, they trusted in a poorly made ship, and drowned when it sank. *Sincerity* is not the issue. *Following God’s plan* by faith is the issue.

Additionally, that pattern (circumventing the Cross) ignores the *Holiness* of God. and ignores the enormity of our sin. (When we sin, we say to God, “You are *not God* in my life!

I am the master of my life!) We ignore His position and authority: He is our **Creator!** He created every subatomic particle of our world *and* all the spirits of men and angels too. (What is a spirit even *made* of?? How *could* He create Spirits and Souls? **But He did!**) Finally, we rebel against the truth that *He* is our eternal **Judge**. (**Jesus personally**: go read **John 5:22**) And in so doing, we reject Him as Savior as well.

Primary Themes to Emphasize in Genesis 1-4:

- **God's unique *identity*, and His perfect *character*,**
 - (He is *God*, He is the *Eternal King*, the *Creator*, etc.)
 - (Righteousness, Holiness, Authority, Wisdom, Love, etc.)
- **Man's complete fall**, Which has resulted in his total helplessness and lostness, *needing* a Savior.
- **God's Chosen Sacrifice:** (Jesus, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the World" as noted in **Revelation 13:8**, and in **1st Peter 1:18-20**.)
- **Whosoever** comes to Him with **that Sacrifice** will be accepted by God. Abel and Cain stand as an eternal example of *one who did* and *one who did not*.

Notice that these four themes (along with many others) carry through the entire Bible, Old and New Testaments. In fact, to simplify, we can observe that the **Person and Work of the Messiah**, together, are the *central theme* of the entire Bible, and everything else is related directly or indirectly to **Him**.

From that foundation, it is easy to demonstrate God's Grace and Mercy, and to outline His Redemptive plan, before you finish Genesis chapter four. You want believers to *see Jesus*, as "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the World." (**Revelation 13:8**, **1st Peter 1:18-20**) If you

continue teaching in this manner, verse by verse, then passages like **Genesis 22** (Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac), and **Exodus 12** (The Passover Lamb) ought to connect solidly, and make clear **John 1:29** ("***Behold the Lamb of God....***")

Finally, in the Epistles, we are told *how to live as believers*. This is still not "Law:" rather, this is the "flip-side" of **Grace**. The Grace that *called* me, saying, "***Whosoever will, may come,***" and which *saved* me on the basis of faith alone, is the same Grace that *now* extends itself to me saying, "***Be ye holy as I am Holy,***" and then ***enables*** me to live that way. (**Philippians 2:13**)

Chronological teaching and teaching through whole books of the Bible will provide a firm foundation for a strong, growing faith. "Skipping around," and grabbing "proof-texts" tends to confuse people: They think that, unless they know *where* to "skip" to, they can't understand the Bible.

We want to avoid that trap: the **Whole Bible** is food. All of it is meant to fit together. Sometimes it helps to draw a simple "timeline," reaching from eternity past to Eternity future: point out where major changes occurred, where *we* are on the timeline, and what the future holds for us and others.

I teach Chronologically whenever possible: I teach **Topically** only when it is necessary because of a personal need in someone's life, or when it is appropriate as a supplement to the Chronological teaching. (e.g. when talking about the Flood, the question frequently arose, "What about the dinosaurs?"-- We went to **Job 38-41** to demonstrate the probability that there were dinosaurs on Noah's ark, but that perhaps they didn't prosper *after* the flood, possibly due to climactic changes. This may also explain the many sightings of "impossible" creatures over the years.)

Questions will always abound among hungry students, so be prepared to either **get** some answers, or to kindly set the question aside for the moment, but **write it down so you can find answers later**. If you DO know the answer, already, and where to find it in scripture, sometimes it's good to give your student some clues, by answering with "leading questions," and then let them find the answers in the scripture, themselves, as you have them read aloud the passages that answer their question. But don't pretend to have "secret knowledge." Do your honest best to give proper answers. And, when you really **don't** know, **say** so!

I will address each of the following ideas, in this book, but I usually just teach them as they arise.

Some Topics I Try to Address, as They Come Up in Normal Teaching: (See chapter 10)

- God's Identity (Who God *is*.)
- God's Attributes (His Character)
- The Law of the Harvest, in Genesis.
- The Origin of Man
- The Origin of Angelic beings: What about Satan? Demons?
- Fall of Man
- What *is* Sin? Why is it so destructive?
- What is the **penalty** for sin? Why does God **hate** sin?
- Redemptive Plan of God
- Redeemer (Including the kinsman-redeemer principles)
- The Identity of the Messiah
- The Character of the Messiah
- At least a few Pre-figurings or "foreshadowings" of the Messiah. (Type and antitype)
- Any Prophecies of the Messiah
- Any Pre-incarnate **appearances** of the Messiah.

- His Substitutionary Death
- His Blood Sacrifice
- How do I *Partake* of the Sacrifice? (How do I appropriate it as my own?)
- Efficacy of the Sacrifice (Why is it effective?)

Some Terms and Concepts I Try to Carefully Explain, as They Arise: (See chapter 11)

- | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| • Sin | Death (3 kinds) | Grace |
| Mercy | Faith | |
| • Repentance | Forgiveness | Justification |
| Imputation | Redemption | |
| • Salvation | Propitiation | Sanctification |
| Holiness | Prayer | |
| • Worship | Obedience | Gifts |
| Rewards | Fullness (of the Spirit) | |
| • Fellowship | Witness | Service |
| Testimony | Love | |
| • The Church | The World | The Flesh |
| Heaven | Hell | |

Other Questions that Frequently Arise, and Must be Addressed: (See Chapter 12)

- How can I know I'm Saved?
- How can I know my spiritual gifts?
- What does God want me to do *now*?
- Is Jesus Really Coming Back? How do We Know?
- Where do all these cults and world religions come from?
- How my [country, race, etc.] fits in.
- What about Israel?
- What about the Law?
- What about the Tribulation?
- What about the Second Coming?

- What about The Kingdom?
- What about Eternity?
- What happened to my [loved one, friend, etc.] who died?

The above topics, terms, and questions **WILL** come up, and it is your continuing task to do your research and learn all you can about each of them so that you can give a reasonable, Biblical answer when the questions arise.

Little children ask interesting questions, too, and it has been my never-ending **delight** to discover that the process of discipleship is very much like rearing children, and even **more** rewarding. (I will try to shed some light on each of these in the last three chapters of this book,)

It is hard to describe the joy one feels when one's spiritual "offspring"...someone you are rearing as a disciple... "brings home a friend" whom he or she has just led to the Lord, and **then** begins faithfully teaching them to understand the Word, and to walk with God.

To me, that is one of the things which make all the headaches and heartaches of life worthwhile.

