

CHRISTIANS
AND
DISCIPLES

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Bracketed comments following some scriptures assist the reader in understanding the intended meaning of these verses

We acknowledge the additional works of the various Scholars and Bible Commentaries used in conjunction with the College material. This is not to say that we agree with all their theology, but we certainly value their contribution to the Body of Christ.

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CHRISTIANS AND DISCIPLES

Background Reading: Philippians 3:7-14

Jesus often used the term “disciple” in referring to His followers.

JOHN 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, “If you continue in My Word, then are you My disciples indeed”

Today, however, the word “disciple” and the word “Christian” can have quite different meanings. If a person is identified as a Christian, it does not necessarily mean that the person concerned is a disciple of Christ - for just being Christians does not automatically make us disciples.

At one time, the words “Christian” and “disciple” were almost synonymous. Years ago, many a person who was a Christian, would also have been a disciple - to some extent. This applied especially at a moral level, in bringing Christian standards to the home, the school and the community in general. This would have been evidenced by people’s commitment to Christ and general approach to life - for usually there would have been a genuine, wholehearted, Godly approach to much of what these people did. At least they would have tried to live the Christian life in these areas. Sadly, many would have tried to do this by the willpower of the flesh, and so they would have failed - but at least they would have kept trying.

The term “Christian” is supposed to mean a “follower of Christ.” Today, however, this term has been watered down to such an extent that in the world’s eyes, it has become a mere mockery of its original meaning. Therefore people profess to be Christians, but many show no real commitment to the Lord, preferring to take Christ only on their own terms, and to mix the teachings of God’s Word with the many and varied philosophies of men. They live their lives by what they feel, and by what appeals to their senses rather than by the solid foundation of the Word. They also block the Spirit from leading them out of their comfort zone, into a place where they can become, as we have said, vessels fit for their Master’s use.

We need to live as disciples. We need to raise the term “Christian” to the same level as the term “disciple,” so that people will recognize Christians as disciples of Christ. The term “Christian” needs to be equated with people of faith and commitment, people who can be relied upon and who have a genuineness of heart, people who will put themselves out for others and tell others about God’s saving grace through Jesus Christ. Then the world will see what Jesus meant when He taught that we are to go in His Name and because we believe, others will know that He lives.

JOHN 15:8 Herein is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples.

The Lord is saying that because we believe and do righteous works (“*bear much fruit*”) by His power, others will know that He lives. We will be a true witness to the world of Christ, as we continue to live truly in His Gospel. Our witness will be effective, and people will see that God is alive and is indeed with us. The Word commands us accordingly:

MATTHEW 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works (of faith), and glorify your Father Who is in heaven.

JOHN 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

JOHN 13:35 By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love (the God-type love) one to (for) another.

People in the world see Christians who do not live Godly lives as hypocrites, for most can see whether or not a Christian is living and acting as a true Christian should. Indeed the unsaved often know more about how Christians should act in regard to their fellow man than do Christians themselves. Strangely enough, the heathen often instinctively perceive the moral boundaries of Christianity more accurately than many Christians seem to do.

The Word of God tells us clearly that we should be separate from the world and abstain from all forms of evil.

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked up with unbelievers - do not make mismatched alliances with them, or come under a different yoke with them [inconsistent with your faith]. For what partnership have right living and right standing with God with iniquity and lawlessness? Or how can light fellowship with darkness? (Amp.)

2 CORINTHIANS 6:17 So, come out from among (unbelievers), and separate (sever) yourselves from them, says the Lord, and touch not [any] unclean thing; then I will receive you kindly and treat you with favour [Isaiah 52:11] (Amp.)

1 PETER 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech (urge) you, as strangers and pilgrims (in this world), abstain from fleshly lusts (sinful desires), which war against the soul.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:22 Abstain from all appearance (all forms) of evil.

1 PETER 2:12 Live such good lives among the pagans (the heathen) that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day He visits us. (N.I.V.)

When Jesus gave the Great Commission, He meant: as Believers genuinely continue in the Word of God, people will see the reality of Christ living within them as they become CHILDREN OF FAITH. The convicting presence of the Holy Spirit will then also be strong in their witnessing because the precious Anointing of God accompanies them. This Anointing can push back, to some degree, the darkness of hell and the darkness impacting on the minds of unbelievers as Christians share with them, as led by the Spirit, the truths of God's Word. Then the truth will be like a beam of light piercing through the pervading darkness of the mind so that the

unbeliever may feel the presence of God. In this situation they can then open their heart to God and His love.

Christ is looking for people who will be committed to Him totally, who will not put loyalty to family or friends, financial interests or fear of man (reverence for man's opinion) above His will for their lives. God can do much with such a person and that person will make a difference to those whose lives he touches, and to the world in which he lives.

PHILIPPIANS 2:14 Do all things without murmurings (mutterings of discontent) and disputings (questioning the Word of God, which is brought on by "murmurings"):
(E.S.B.)

PHILIPPIANS 2:15 That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke (fault), in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world;

PHILIPPIANS 2:16 Holding forth (so as to offer) the Word of Life . . .

If we are to serve Christ effectively, we cannot place anything above Him - the price is the full surrender of ourselves. This is discipleship, this is the life to which He calls us. This is what Jesus meant when He said:

LUKE 14:26 If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his (own) father and mother [that is, in the sense of indifference to or relative disregard for them in comparison with his attitude toward God] and even his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. (Amp.)

LUKE 14:27 Whoever does not persevere and carry his own cross and come after (follow) Me, cannot be My disciple. (Amp.)

Are you one of those who wants to truly be a disciple? Do you want to serve Jesus as Lord of your whole life? Then seek His will for your life with all your heart and do not allow circumstances,

people or possessions to come between you and your Lord (as the rich young ruler did - Luke 18:18-24).

This should be our goal, to be disciples of Christ, a light to a lost and fallen world. The scriptures tell us, however, that when we live this kind of life, we will suffer persecution. Nevertheless, through the grace of God at work in our daily lives, we can, directly or indirectly, help bring many precious souls into the Kingdom, even snatching men and women at the 11th hour as brands from hell's fire:

JUDE 23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

PROVERBS 11:30 The fruit of the [uncompromisingly] righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise captures human lives for God [as a fisher of men] - He gathers and receives them for eternity. [Matthew 4:19; I Corinthians 9:19; James 5:20.] (Amp.)

Let us always, therefore, remember that “*he who wins souls is wise*” (Proverbs 11:30: K.J.V.), and be about our Father's business.

DYING TO SELF

The greatest problem faced by the Christian will, however, always be concerned with “self” - self-desire, self-rule, self-consciousness, self-gratification, etc., etc. If we are governed by self, then we are governed by the sin nature. It is only as we yield to the Spirit that the Divine Nature is enthroned, and we are given the power to do the will of God through His energies and graces. The Word clearly shows us what is required to live a true Christian life:

MATTHEW 16:24 Then said Jesus unto His disciples, “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross (of self-denial), and follow Me.

MATTHEW 16:25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.

MATTHEW 16:26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world (the things of the world are temporary), and lose his own soul (which is eternal)? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

To take up the cross begins with identifying with Christ on the cross so that one can be identified in His Resurrection. But to know the promises of the Kingdom at an experiential and not just a positional level, the Christian must deny himself - his dictates, wants and desires - and seek God's plan and desire for his life, daily. This is to "take up one's cross" daily in the power of the "new life."

Christ's Cross was our cross so that we can, after His Resurrection (and ours - Romans 6:3-5), be empowered to serve God and to love Him as we were created to do. Only in this way and with this focus can we reach our potential each day and please Him Who loved us first.

The truth is that we must purpose to die to self. In fact the crucifixion of self must take place each and every day. However it is only at Calvary we can find the place to be crucified (i.e. the old man and all sin), and this is with Christ at His death. Only in going through Calvary do we become eligible to receive resurrection power, the power of the new nature - so that we too can believe as Christ did and so act like Him Who died for us for this very purpose.

Without a proper focus on the Cross (the Atonement) and how it relates to us, we will never be able to obey the commandment that Jesus gave to us about "taking up our cross." This is to be the beginning of our focus and the end of our focus - for all the promises are Yea and Amen only through the Cross. So we need to know this truth, then daily refresh our minds in it. Only as we stand on this solid ground can we face the battles ahead and receive of heaven's grace. Then we can say, "To Him be all the glory, praise and honour," every day - Amen.

Self must die so that Christ and His power can live in and through us. When self lives, self-rule and unbelief ascend to the throne of our hearts again, to shut God out. Then we return to the experience of the garden, saved yes, if Christ is Saviour, but He is not Lord of our lives in these areas of rebellion (sin). In this situation, law overshadows us again, or should we say the penalty of it - for we either live under law or grace in every area of our lives. If we take up our cross with the empowerment of the Spirit, then we

come under grace. If we do not choose to do this then self-rule places us back under law. Under this system no man can be justified by or through the works that he does, no matter how noble his intentions may be. Indeed pride looks to gain the glory for Christians focused on good deeds rather than the Cross. By doing this, they substitute works for faith. God alone is meant to receive honour and glory for the good things we do in Him. Yes we will be rewarded for following Him, but only He can receive the glory which is His alone for the works we do in His strength.

We were not created to receive that type of praise.

- Satan sought the praise of angels and fell.
- Adam sought to rule his own life and fell into the economy of law.
- You have a choice today: to desire to obey Jesus by taking up your cross and living under grace all the days of your life or to self-rule and do as Adam did, thus coming under an economy outside grace.

LUKE 9:24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it.

Wuest says, “*God has so created man that he does not find complete rest and satisfaction until his entire being is swallowed up in the sweet will of God.*”¹

Our Lord is not here (Luke 9:24) stating the terms by which God will give salvation, for self-denial never saved a soul from sin, only Jesus’ Blood can do that. However to live as we were designed to, our life must be hidden in Christ (Colossians 3:3-4). Only by losing one’s life in Christ can one become truly alive to God. He is the only way to spiritual life. The truth of God’s Word bears this out. Christians are to experience resurrection power by allowing their lives to be ruled by the Holy Spirit. This is the “new life” in which we are raised in Christ, in fact abundant life which is really His will being done in us.

PERSECUTION FOR THE GOSPEL'S SAKE

Background Reading: 1 Peter 4:12-16

The Word of God gives us instruction regarding persecution, something we can expect if we are committed to living “*a godly life in Christ Jesus*” (2 Timothy 3:12).

ROMANS 8:17 *And if (we are) children, then (we are) heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer (are persecuted) with Him, that we may be also glorified together.*

In living a committed Christian life we will, from time to time, receive persecution. Such persecution, in the western world at least, will come in the form of words spoken against us, even by members of our own family (Luke 12:51-53). As a result we can be subjected to rejection or ridicule, simply because we have stood up for our faith. These words can be viewed as “*fiery darts*” (Ephesians 6:16) which emanate from the enemy himself. Indeed Satan and his forces would try to discourage us, dampen our faith and cause us to be ineffective in the Lord’s service. As we stand our ground and hold up the shield of faith, however, all the fiery darts of the enemy can be quenched.

JOHN 15:20 *Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; . . .*

2 TIMOTHY 3:12 *Yes, and all who will live Godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. (It is because of the “offence of the Cross” [Galatians 5:11].) (E.S.B.)*

Another version reads:

2 TIMOTHY 3:12 *Indeed all who delight in piety and are determined to live a devoted and godly life in Christ Jesus will meet with persecution - that is, will be made to suffer because of their religious stand. (Amp.)*

In other words, being persecuted is part of being a Christian, and will come if we live a “*godly life*” in Christ.

Note: If we do not live a committed and Godly Christian life - if we compromise with worldly standards and do not witness to others for fear of offending them - we will probably avoid persecution. But then we will be of no use to the Lord, and will not receive the reward promised in scripture:

MATTHEW 5:10 Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

MATTHEW 5:11 Blessed are you, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake.

MATTHEW 5:12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad (Acts 5:40, 41): for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you.

LUKE 6:22 Blessed are you, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company (exclude you), and shall reproach (insult) you, and cast out (reject) your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake.

LUKE 6:23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets (this is how their fathers used to treat the prophets).

Persecution is therefore one of the marks of the life of discipleship. But as the scriptures tell us, we should not be affected in a negative way when we are persecuted for the Gospel's sake.

What then is to be our response to this?

1 PETER 3:13 And who is he who will harm you, if you be followers of that which is good?

1 PETER 3:14 But and if you suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are you (having the Lord's blessing and protection): and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

1 PETER 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts (set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts): and be ready always to give an answer to every man who asks you a reason of the hope (the hope of Christ) that is in you with meekness and fear (gentleness and respect):

1 PETER 3:16 Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed (of their slander) who falsely accuse your good conversation (Godly lifestyle) in Christ.

1 PETER 3:17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that you suffer (unjustly) for well doing (righteousness' sake), than (that you suffer justly) for evil doing.

Thus we are to walk according to the Spirit, keeping our conscience clear and maintaining Godly standards of behaviour and conduct. Then those who slander us may be proven to be wrong and so become ashamed of their slander.

Furthermore, when we are being persecuted by other people, which unfortunately can sometimes include fellow Christians, we should forgive them and pray for them as Jesus instructed. To do this we may need to consciously lay down our burdens and ask for God's grace to give us the power to walk on the road of righteousness. Remember we fight not against flesh and blood - rather we fight a spiritual warfare.

MATTHEW 6:14 For if you forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you:

MATTHEW 6:15 But if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

LUKE 6:27 But I say unto you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to them who hate you.

LUKE 6:28 Bless them who curse you, and pray for them who spitefully use you.

EPHESIANS 6:12 For we wrestle (struggle) not against flesh and blood (man), but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Satan and his forces of evil).

When scripture says to bless those who curse us, etc., it means we should pray that they will be blessed unto the truth. This means we can ask God to send particular circumstances into their lives to lead them to the truth, so that they may see the error of their ways. Only in the power of the Divine Nature can we truly do all these things, for the natural human reaction to persecution is fleshy and carnal.

Also know this, that persecution which comes because of the Gospel is a sign that the enemy has reacted to the truths that have been thrust into his territory. In other words he hates this invasion of light and like a wounded dog, turns to attack whatever or whoever is trying to liberate the poor wretched soul that he, the enemy, has ensnared. So do not take this persecution personally, for it is Satan whom we struggle against (Ephesians 6:12).

THE ROAD TO DISCIPLESHIP

Background Reading: Philippians 3:7-14

JOHN 15:8 Herein is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, so shall you (show yourselves to) be My Disciples.

The statement “so shall you be My Disciples” literally means to show ourselves as being Christ-like. However, as we have learned, without the Baptism in the Holy Spirit we will be limited in the potential that is available to us to truly develop this likeness. This statement points to a wholehearted commitment to following Christ,

which includes being Spirit-baptized. Second Timothy 2:20-21 tells us:

2 TIMOTHY 2:20 *But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour (points to the need for the process of ongoing sanctification in each Saint's life, for there is no sinless perfection in this life).*

2 TIMOTHY 2:21 *If a man therefore purge himself from the latter (separates himself from sin), he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet (fit, qualified) for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work (usable for the Kingdom's sake).*

Second Timothy 2:15 instructs us how we are to do this:

2 TIMOTHY 2:15 *Study to show yourself approved unto God (by acting on the truths of His Word in His power), (being) a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.*

We are also told how to put our knowledge into practice:

JAMES 1:22 *But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only . . .*

ROMANS 6:11 *Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin (the sin nature), but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

ROMANS 6:12 *Let not sin (the sin nature) therefore reign (rule) in your mortal body (shows that the sin nature and not the Divine Nature can rule in the life of the Christian), that you should obey it (the sin nature) in the lusts (its ungodly lusts) thereof.*

These scriptures speak of the application of God's truths. Unfortunately, many people have truths from God's Word revealed to

them, but do not apply these truths to their lives. Thus they receive no benefit and produce no fruit. Those who do implement God's truths by the Spirit's empowerment and apply them to their lives, however, will live in the ensuing benefits and experience the reality of that which Jesus promised when He said ". . . *you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:32).

“. . .The statement “so shall you be My Disciples” literally means to show ourselves as being Christ-like. . .”

Jesus also stated that those who, being empowered, obey His teaching, will become more than just servants. Jesus considers His Disciples to be His friends - and therefore worthy to be partakers of His Divine knowledge (John 8:31-32; 14:21). Jesus said:

JOHN 15:14 “You are My friends, if you do whatsoever I command you (obey - allow Jesus to be Lord in every area).

JOHN 15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knows not what his lord does: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you (reveals Himself and the Father's plans: John 14:21).

JOHN 15:16 You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever you shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it you (as we “abide in the vine”: John 15:7).”

How do we attain that position of friendship rather than just servanthood? It is through discipleship.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13 . . . for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you (those who allow Him) - energizing and creating in you the power and desire -

both to will and to work for His good pleasure . . .
(Amp.)

It is not a matter of “let go and let God” as Wuest describes it, but rather a matter of “take hold with God” to produce strength and character. Let’s study what else he has written in regard to this principle. Kenneth Wuest speaks of the Christian’s responsibility in their walk with the Lord to develop “moral stamina and spiritual power.” He does not advocate “jelly-fish Christians” but “spiritual giants” who can work effectively for the Kingdom of God:

“But this desire for the control of the Holy Spirit, and this trust in the Lord Jesus for that control, is but part of the believer’s obligation in the premises. One cannot say, “Just to realize with joy the Spirit’s passionate longing to control my thoughts, words, and deeds for the glory of the Lord Jesus, and to rest quietly in His energizing and supervising ministry, is all that is necessary.” The Christian life is not a mere “let go and let God” affair. It is a “take hold with God” business. It is not a mere rest in God, an existence somewhat like that of a jelly-fish floating in the warm currents of the Gulf Stream. God is not developing jelly-fish Christians. God wants to develop heroes, Christian men and women of moral stamina and spiritual power. In the physical realm, no one becomes strong by merely eating wholesome food and resting. Exercise is what is needed to change the food-energy into bone and muscle. In like manner, the Christian must exercise himself spiritually if he is to grow strong in his Christian life. That demands the exercise of his free will, the making of choices, the deciding between right and wrong, the saying of a point blank NO to temptation, the constant striving to improve one’s spiritual life, grow in the Christian graces and in Christlikeness. It involves not only the desire to be loving, but the definite endeavor to be loving. It is not merely a trustful rest in the Holy Spirit to make us loving, but a positive exertion of our own will to be loving. It is like bending one’s arm. The strength to bend one’s arm is in that member of the body, but the strength is only potential and not active unless the will power is exerted which will cause that strength to function. Just so, the power of the Holy Spirit is potentially resident in the saint by virtue of His indwelling presence, but it is only operative in that believer when he is yielded to and dependent upon the ministry of the Spirit, and then steps out

in faith in the performance of the action contemplated. For instance, when the believer is confronted with a temptation, it is not enough to rest in the Holy Spirit's ministry to overcome that temptation for us. We must by an act of our own free will say a bold, positive, and fearless NO to it. The instant we move in that direction, the Spirit is there with His wonderful energizing power. Indeed, you will say, that the very start of the step taken in the direction of the act of saying NO to that temptation was motivated by the Spirit. And that is true. Yet it is also true that it is the free action of the believer's will, and is his responsibility. Right here lies that mysterious, incomprehensible, and not-to-be-understood interaction and mutual response between the free-will of man and the sovereign grace of God.

“ . . . The Christian must exercise himself spiritually if he is to grow strong in his Christian life. . . ”

This necessary action of the will on the part of the believer, in addition to the trust in and dependence upon the Holy Spirit which the saint must have, is seen clearly in the expression, “a certain fellowship of the Spirit” (Philippians 2:1) which we found referred to “a relation between individuals which involves a common interest and a mutual active participation in that interest and in each other.” It is the obligation of the believer to be supremely interested in the things of God, for the Spirit is constantly exploring the deep things of God (I Corinthians 2:10). The Christian who does not maintain a real interest in and hunger for the Word of God, and satisfy both by a constant study of that Word, is not co-operating with the Spirit, and is not giving the Spirit an opportunity to work in his life and cause him to grow in the Christian graces. The Spirit works through the Word of God that we have stored in our hearts, and not apart from it.

Likewise, the believer who does not actively participate in the activity necessary to the saying of YES to the will of God and of NO to sin, is not co-operating with the Spirit. And the Christian who does not engage in a Holy Spirit directed ministry of some kind in the work of furthering the knowledge of the Word of God, is not co-operating with the Spirit. It is this ideal combination of a moment by moment trust in, submission to, and dependence upon the ministry of

the Holy Spirit, and the constant interest in and participation with the Holy Spirit in the things of God, that produces the best results in the Christian's experience. This combination develops Christian men and women with a sense of responsibility, with moral courage and stamina of a high order, with a balance and poise that weathers the severest storms, with a delicate sense of tact that enables them to move among their fellowmen without riding roughshod over their tender hearts, but rather in a loving way so that their passing leaves a sense of the presence of the Lord Jesus. It develops spiritual giants, men and women who can be trusted in a time of crisis."² (underlines added)

Faith really begins at the Cross, and the realization that we are dead in Christ to sin and self from this point onwards. Every Believer must have this fundamental understanding in regard to their salvation - that the old man is positionally dead and they have been raised with Christ as a new creature, now being a partaker of a brand new Nature, in fact, God's own Divine Nature. With this knowledge as a basis, the Saint needs to think and do all things according to this new Nature. This is the answer to faith - God's gift of grace to the Believer, not just at the Cross where we were born again but every day the Lord's hand is outstretched towards us to give us the grace to take up our cross of self-denial.

As we yield to the Lord, this strength will be given so that we may truly follow Him. In other words, we are to surrender our lives to Him, surrendering our ambitions, desires, wants etc., to be totally led by the Spirit as was Christ.

This process will involve praying about different aspects of our life - a path to take or not to take, who to fellowship with, who to witness to, how much to say, when to say it, etc. But all things that are important should be taken to the Lord for direction, for approval or disapproval. This is surrender. We should come to Him first in all aspects of our life, acknowledging Him in everything, as the Word instructs:

PROVERBS 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not unto your own understanding.

PROVERBS 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Assurance in our heart can then come in regard to God's will. Through the Divine Nature, holy desire and power can then become the order of the day, giving us belief and trust in God's will through the grace that is at work in us called faith.

A king has a "close court" of trusted people who serve him, people who are dedicated, committed and loyal. Through their service they experience an intimate association with their king. This service is highly sought after and highly prized. Likewise, Jesus, our King, our sovereign Lord, has called us into His "close courts" to be His servants and to do His will. In His service, as His Disciples, we too can have an intimate association with Him. But this intimacy can only be experienced by the Disciple - one who has truly surrendered himself to his Lord, with a proper focus for his faith which is the message of the Cross.

Let us therefore move on as Disciples of Christ, so we can realize the full potential that the Spirit Baptism offers. Let us desire to enter into deeper levels of fellowship with our Lord - for He wants to reveal Himself to us and commune with us in a deep and personal way (Revelation 3:20). Let us walk after the Spirit, allowing time to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit as we yield to Him and co-operate with Him, in this way showing ourselves to be His Disciples. Then the world will see and know that we serve a risen Lord Who watches over, protects and provides for His people. Let us goal to be walking epistles of Christ so that our Lord may be glorified in all that we do, knowing that fruitbearing is not an end in itself, but rather a means by which the Father is glorified.

JOHN 15:8 Herein is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My Disciples.

To God be all the glory and may you have the victory in Christ Jesus.

NOTES

- 1 Word Studies in the Greek New Testament
- 2 Wuest K. S., Word Studies from the Greek New Testament, Untranslatable Riches from the New Testament, pg.114.

*"We have a vision
to see people living
in abundant life
by the power of God
through Jesus Christ"*



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