

## Discipleship 101      Chapter 12      Maturity

Opening prayer and insights from last week.

1 Corinthians 2:9-14 However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him” – but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man’s spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but words taught us by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

1 Corinthians 2:6 We do however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

Maturity doesn’t come in a short time and not without some pain – apparently it takes pain for us to let go of things. A pattern has been laid here to take you to maturity as you seek him in this manner. How does God encourage us to carry on growing in him? Discuss how you have been encouraged so far.

Matthew 13:18-23 (Jesus) Listen, then, to what the parable of the sower means: When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

Do these passages have more meaning now than in the beginning of the study? This growing spiritually is a difficult process and cannot be done on your own. God’s Spirit brings it about on our faith and trust.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15 No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

Only that what you do by God’s Spirit builds his kingdom and will be rewarded for eternity. Anything else done, even using valuable stones, will come to nothing on judgement day. Discuss this concept.

Romans 12:1 (memory) Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.

Matthew 18:18-20 (Jesus) I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them.

John 14:20, 21 (Jesus) On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.

Luke 24:45 (Jesus) Then he opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures.

- a) What is involved as offering your body as a “living sacrifice”?
- b) Do you believe that as you agree here in prayer, God is bringing about what you ask for?
- c) What do you imagine are some possibilities if you continued consistently seeking God in prayer?
- d) If Jesus comes to see you as a trusted friend under his authority, will he show himself to you?
- e) What are possibilities if he opens your mind to deeper understanding of his will?
- f) Do you believe he wants to take you further? Discuss

Hebrews 11:1, 2 (memory) Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for.

Hebrews 11:6 (memory) And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

John 15:1-8 (Jesus) I am the true vine, and my father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

You are rewarded for everything you do by faith in him, you walk by grace in forgiveness of all your sins. This is the Way of the Spirit that he has put in place. He is not making you do that which isn’t in your heart to do, but will push you out of your comfort zone to grow in faith. The relationship of the Spirit can be thought of as his Spirit in you and his covering of righteousness over you, cleansing of sin. You are in him and he is in you. If you turn from him, he withdraws his Spirit and grace, you are not in him and he is not in you. The good news is that you can turn back to him on your initiative. He wants to grow you. Comment on these statements above and concept shown.

If your group continues to meet in prayer and rely on him to give you what you need in insight. He will take you on to maturity and reveal his will to you. Discuss your next step in your journey in the Lord.

May you be richly blessed in the Lord. Robert Dow

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