

SEMINAR PROGRAM SAMPLE SCHEDULE

9:00 - 9:30 AM - Arrival and Sign-In (Coffee)

9:30 - 10:20 AM - 1st SESSION: Speaker: XXXX

10:20- 10:30 AM - Break

10:30 AM - 11:20 - 2nd SESSION: Speaker: XXXX

11:20- 11:30 AM - Break

11:30 - 12:20 PM - 3rd SESSION: Speaker: XXXX

12:20 - 1:00 PM - Lunch Provided

1:00 - 1:50 PM - 4th SESSION: Speaker: XXXX

1:50- 2:00 PM - Break

2:00 - 2:50 PM - 5th SESSION: Speaker XXXX

2:50- 3:00 PM - Break

3:00 - 4:00 PM - 6th SESSION: Speaker XXXX

SESSION ONE

9:30 to 10:20 AM

Introduction

Welcome to the Discipleship Seminar! There are many reasons people have enrolled in this seminar. Some are taking the seminar because they recently made a decision to surrender their life to Christ. Others may have attended church for a long time, but have stagnated in their spiritual growth. Still there are others who are mature in the Lord but want to grow even stronger. But whatever the reason, everyone has one thing in common: The hope that their life will be made different...changed...improved.

There are many causes why people fail to change and grow spiritually, but most are due to a lack of proper training and knowledge. The Bible says: *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge..."* Hosea 4:6a

Another reason some people fail to mature is that the devil "picks people off" when they are still too young in the Lord to defend themselves. This is why the Apostle Paul said: *"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,"* Galatians 4:19

There are still others who wanted to grow strong in the Lord but were hurt by false doctrines. Paul warned about this: *"Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."* Acts 20:30-31

The training we need to become victorious Christians is a process called *Discipleship*. Our development is determined by what kind of discipleship we have had or will receive.

Shortly after 1900, Christian groups and churches began to form organizations that understood bringing disciples to full maturity was central to the Christian mission. They wanted to be channels of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the Image of His Son (Ephesians 4:11-16; I Corinthians 12:28; 14:12).

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and

carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:" Ephesians 4:11-15

It is clear from scripture that it is God's will for all believers to grow and mature "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ".

When people who want to become mature disciples come together with churches willing and able to make mature disciples, the results are earth shaking. The Bible reveals in Acts 17:6 that disciples in the early church "turned the world upside down". The Lord will accomplish the same thing in our day as more and more disciples grow to full maturity.

Discipleship is very important because we are commanded by Jesus Himself to make them.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," Matthew 28:19

So what exactly are we making? What are the powers and capabilities of a disciple? What knowledge do they need to have? What is the mission of a disciple? Just what kind of person are we producing?

Disciples are likened to soldiers in the Bible. Imagine you were called to make soldiers. You would need to know what a soldier was to become like, the training and skills they should have and how to impart that training.

After thousands of years, governments have a pretty good idea what qualities they want to produce in a soldier and how to create those qualities. But what if they said to the new recruits: "OK...you are in the Army now. Please come for training once a week... (That is if you feel like it!). This week we learn how to salute. Next week we will talk for an hour on how to make your bed. I think we may do a series next month on the 'Importance of the Gas Mask.' For you more radical and committed soldiers, we have some optional training on Wednesday nights... did I mention there will be pizza?" With this kind of approach, how long do you think it would take to make a soldier? 20 years? 30 years? Would they ever become soldiers?

This is the main reason many believers fail to mature today. They lack two key elements in their discipleship: Intentionality and Accountability. The training program you are going to learn about today includes these 2 key elements.

It is *intentional* in that a clear goal is established. You will see what the finished product (a mature disciple) looks like. It is also intentional in that you will know God's Biblical plan for making disciples, where you fit into that plan and your present level of development. The church leadership

will also help you develop your personal plan and recommend the next steps you should take. You will be offered the help, training and encouragement you need along the way.

It has *accountability* in that mature members and leaders of this church will help hold you accountable. By God's grace, we will try our best to insure you grow spiritually, but the final responsibility lies with you. We can point you in the right direction and give you the support you need; but you must have the willingness, desire, and attitudes to serve and follow God. You must be fully engaged and enlist in the process.

Are you ready to enlist?

ANANIAS: A PROTOTYPE DISCIPLE

PROTOTYPE [pro'to-tīp]

Etymology: Gk, *protos*, first, *typos*, mark

The original type or form that is typical of later individuals or species.

Your journey to answer the question "What is a disciple?" will begin with studying the disciple Ananias who the Bible talks about in Acts chapters 9 and 22. The Word of God does not talk about him by accident. As we study what Ananias was like and his abilities, we see a *mature prototypical disciple* that can be used to produce other disciples.

This is not to negate the fact that Christ Himself is the original pattern, of whom we are to grow up into His likeness in all things (Eph. 4:15). When pastors teach people that they can become like Christ-they usually run into a brick wall of unbelief. People often respond: "What? Me? Become like Jesus!?" Using the account of Ananias proves these qualities can and should be obtained by believers. It also exposes the misconception that the abilities demonstrated by Ananias are only for clergy called to full-time ministry as a profession.

As we study Ananias' gifting and relationship with the Lord, we can see that he was an example of what God expects each of us to become in our day.

Let us begin by reading the scriptures concerning this first century disciple.

ACTS CHAPTER 9

"¹⁰ And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.

¹¹ And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,

¹² And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

¹³ Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem:

¹⁴ And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name.

¹⁵ But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel:

¹⁶ For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

¹⁷ And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

¹⁸ And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized."

ACTS CHAPTER 22 (PAUL'S ACCOUNT)

"¹¹ And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

¹² And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,

¹³ Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

¹⁴ And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.

¹⁵ For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.

¹⁶ And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Let us now begin a detailed analysis of Ananias in Acts chapter 9 beginning at verse 10.

*“And there was a certain **disciple** at Damascus named Ananias.”*

First we notice the Bible specifically calls Ananias a “disciple.” He was not an elder, deacon or one of the “five-fold” ministers listed in the book of Ephesians. He was a disciple.

Of significance here is the Greek pronoun translated “certain” that precedes the noun disciple. “There was a **certain** disciple.” This word is used many times in the New Testament. According to Thayers Greek Lexicon, when this word is joined to a noun, (disciple) *“it indicates that the thing with which it is connected belongs to a certain class and resembles it.”* In other words, this is saying Ananias was a disciple, and he was what a disciple resembles or looks like.

It is important to note that the Lord did not send an Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor or Teacher on this assignment to minister to Paul. He sent one of the disciples... a believer.

You may ask: “If disciples can do those things, then why do we have pastors?” The reason why God gave the church ordained ministers is found in the book of Ephesians Chapter 4:11-12

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:”

Other translations clarify that the *“perfecting of the saints”* is the equipping of Christians so that they can do the *“work of the ministry.”*

Here is verse 12 of Ephesians again in the Amplified Bible:

“His intention was the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints (His consecrated people), [that they should do] the work of ministering toward building up Christ’s body (the church),”

God did not call ordained clergy to do this work, but their job is to **train and equip others** to do the work of Gospel ministry. In other words, the function of clergy is: **To Make Disciples**. Disciples like Ananias who could be used by God to do ministry work like we see him doing with Paul.

QUALITIES OF A DISCIPLE:

A DISCIPLE CAN HEAR CLEARLY FROM GOD

Continuing in verse 10 of Acts Chapter 9: *“...and to him said the Lord in a vision.”* The Lord spoke to Ananias in a vision. We know from this that disciples can have visions. The Lord speaks to His children in many ways such as visions, in dreams, in His Word, through other people, etc. Ananias’ ability to hear from God is actually a fulfillment of Biblical prophecy:

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:” Joel 2:28

We know this was fulfilled for our day because Peter quotes this verse on the day of Pentecost:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:” Acts 2:17

Even though Peter said this was a prophetic word for the *“last days,”* some teach that God speaking to His people in these ways ceased with the death of the original 12 Apostles. This is plainly false teaching.

Many pastors and denominations teach: “God doesn’t speak to people like that any more.” We should feel deep concern for pastors that are not able to hear from God today, but even more so for their parishioners. What kind of disciples are they making? Not only do they fail to teach them *how* to hear from God, but that they *cannot* hear from God. Is not the blind leading the blind?

Still I would not judge these pastors too harshly. Most are sincere and only repeat what they were taught in seminaries. The error all gets back to not knowing what a disciple is and how to make one. Because most pastors are not disciplined correctly, they in turn can’t make disciples, and so the errors are passed on.

Being able to hear clearly from God like Ananias is not a rare exception, but the *birthright of every believer*. Jesus said:

“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:” John 10:27

Observe the clarity of direction Ananias receives from the Lord:

“And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.” Acts 9:11-12

Ananias knew the NAME OF THE STREET where he was to go (Straight). He knew the HOUSE and the NAME OF THE OWNER (Judas). He knew the NAME OF THE PERSON who he was to pray for (Saul). He knew WHERE THE PERSON WAS FROM (Tarsus). He knew WHAT THE PERSON WAS DOING RIGHT THEN (Praying). He knew that THE PERSON HAD A VISION. He knew that THE PERSON KNEW HIS NAME. He knew WHAT TO DO WHEN HE ARRIVED (Lay his hands

on Saul to receive his sight). He knew WHAT WAS WRONG WITH THE PERSON (Blind). He also knew that SAUL ALREADY KNEW that he was coming to pray for him.

I would say Ananias was hearing clearly about this assignment wouldn't you? What if every disciple was able to hear from God this clearly? Bible scholars say there were 50,000 disciples just in Jerusalem at that time. What if God sent each of them on a similar mission about once a month? Do you think that would have made a difference in the community? Could this have something to do with how they "turned the world upside down?"

QUALITIES OF A DISCIPLE:

A DISCIPLE HAS A FRIEND RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

"And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord." Acts 9:10

Notice that the Lord called him by his name: "Ananias, and he said, 'behold I am here Lord'." Observe how there is a two-way conversation going on here. Jesus said:

"I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." John 10:14

The mark of the mature believer is that the Lord not only knows us, but we also know Him. Ananias did not need to ask if it was the Lord speaking to him. He knew. I think this was far from the first conversation Ananias had with the Lord. The following exchange is a testimony of the nature of their relationship:

"Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake." Acts 9:13-16

Ananias had concerns about going to pray for Saul. Saul had authority to put him in prison. Ananias knew that Saul had been doing "much evil." The Lord did not just dismiss Ananias' feelings out of hand. Neither did He deal with Ananias as a servant and say "You heard me... I said GO!" Instead he explains the situation to Ananias as a friend would.

Jesus said in John 15:15 *"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."*

A servant doesn't know what the master does or why He does it. A servant is told to go and he goes. In a master-servant relationship, the master doesn't explain the reasons why. A boss need not tell

his employees why. If the boss tells someone to do something, they better do it. But Jesus said *"I have not called you servants but I have called you friends."* He lets his disciples know what He is doing. Here we see Jesus explaining the situation to Ananias: *"Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."* Acts 9:15-16

God is not looking to make robots out of us who must obey Him without feeling and emotion.

The Bible says:

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Hebrews 4:15

The Lord knows just how we feel." He knows what it is like to be lied about and to have His character attacked. Jesus understood the fears that Ananias had because He faced these things Himself. He is touched by our feelings and can guide and comfort us as only a friend can. We have a *"friend that sticketh closer than a brother."* Proverbs 18:24

In the subject of making disciples, producing people who know God for themselves should be the objective. You can see this in the ministry of John the Baptist. John had many disciples that followed him. He had led a major revival and had a large ministry. As Jesus began his ministry, John's disciples left him to follow Jesus. John said:

"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:29-30

As ministers of the Gospel and "friends of the bridegroom," it is *"our joy"* to lead people into a deep relationship with the Lord. Part of making disciples is leading people into intimacy with the Lord and taking a lesser role as they mature. *"He must increase and I must decrease."*

SESSION TWO

10:30 to 11:20 AM

QUALITIES OF A DISCIPLE:

A DISCIPLE KNOWS HOW TO “LAY HANDS”

“And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.” Acts 9:12

“And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as if it had been scales and he received his sight forthwith and arose and was baptized.” Acts 9:17-18

A disciple is authorized by God to lay hands on people and to pray for the sick. Ananias said: *“The Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou cameth* (Observe that Ananias is operating in the Word of Knowledge) *has sent me that thou might receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.”* So not only has this disciple been trained and equipped to heal, but also gets Paul filled with the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. *Disciples* can do these things. The ministry we see Ananias doing here falls under the *“work of the ministry”* that clergy are to train all of God’s people to do. (Eph. 4:11-12)

You can see confirmation to this in Mark chapter 16:

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” Mark 16:18-20

Does Jesus say here that these signs shall follow only those that are pastors? Does He say that the supernatural shall follow only professional clergy? No...It says *“these signs shall follow believers”*... those who have been saved.

These signs have not been relegated to some other church age. The signs and gifts of the Holy Spirit are not something for “showing off.” We desperately need them to help people. These are tools needed to do the work of the ministry. Imagine if Ananias went to Saul and did not know about laying hands on the sick. Suppose he had been taught that only professional clergy could do those things or that the gifts were not “for his day?” What if he could not operate in the Word of

Knowledge or he knew nothing of how to administer the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Could God have used him to help Paul? Could God have even sent Ananias in the first place?

Some think that this doctrine about laying on of hands is for a select few at best, but the Bible calls this a foundational doctrine, or one of the “first principles” that should be taught to every believer.

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” Hebrews Chapter 5:12-14 and 6:1-2

Not only does the Bible clearly teach that every believer should function in the laying on of hands, but just plain common sense dictates this is so.

A believer’s body is called the *“temple of the Holy Ghost.”* (I Cor. 6:19) To think that Spirit-filled believers are powerless is ludicrous. The doctrine of the laying on of hands teaches God’s people how to release the power within them to heal and bless others.

If believers do not want to learn how to lay hands on people for the sake of the Gospel and the work of Christ, they should at least learn for the sake of their own families. Every believer should be taught this doctrine because they or someone they know will need to be healed. Often there is no time or opportunity to “call for the elders” or to call a pastor.

QUALITIES OF A DISCIPLE:

A DISCIPLE HAS BEEN BAPTIZED IN WATER

In Acts chapter 22 where Paul shares his experience, he says that Ananias took him out and baptized him in water.

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

Ananias was discipled or taught correctly about water baptism. The “Doctrine of Baptisms” is one of the foundational doctrines of Christ listed in Hebrews chapter six. Ananias understood what baptism accomplishes and its importance, and so took Saul out immediately to be baptized after his conversion. In the Bible, we see baptism performed as *soon as possible after salvation* such as in Acts 8:36-38:

“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.”

Some have been baptized as infants, but this does not meet the requirement of water baptism as told by Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch. Philip ascertained that the eunuch had been saved before permitting him to be water baptized. The eunuch “confessed with his mouth” and “believed with all his heart.” (See Romans 10:9) An infant cannot meet these requirements. We again see the immediacy of water baptism in Acts 10:44-48a when the Gentiles began to be converted.

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.”

We see the same truth confirmed in Acts 16:30-33 in the account of Paul and Silas and the Jailer of Philippi:

“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.”

Water baptism is not necessary for our spirits to be saved. When we die, our born-again spirits leave our body and go to be with the Lord. The thief on the cross went to be with Jesus when he died. The thief was not able to be baptized in water, but if you are going to be staying on earth and using your body you should be baptized. This is because water baptism does a work in our body. It prepares the temple of our body to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a physical act and does a work in the physical realm. This is why Ananias said after Paul had been born again: *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”* (Acts 22:16) Why did Ananias say “wash away thy sins?” Was not the blood of Jesus enough to cleanse Paul from sin? Yes, Paul was saved... but water baptism does a cleansing in our body. Our

body that was used by Satan to do evil works is now free to be filled with the Spirit of God to do His good works.

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4

Take note that Ananias said to Paul concerning his being baptized: “why tarriest thou?” This is one of the many confirmations in scripture that baptism is to be performed as soon as possible after salvation. It is not right for a new creature in Christ Jesus to walk around in a body that was used by Satan. That old man is now dead, crucified with Christ, and must be buried quickly for it “stinketh.”

There are also legal claims that the former master has on the body. The New Testament teaches the Crossing of the Red Sea is a type of water baptism. (Read I Cor. 10:2) If you recall, the Egyptians were chasing after the Israelites. They wanted to bring them back to Egypt to be slaves again. They owned them and had a legal claim. (We were also slaves to sin and of our father the devil.) But when the Israelites were “baptized in the sea,” all the Egyptians drowned. In like manner water baptism frees us to serve God. Our bodies are “baptized into Christ’s death.” If a slave dies they are free from the former owner. Our bodies are also buried with Christ by baptism and raised from the dead by the Glory of God.

QUALITIES OF A DISCIPLE:

A DISCIPLE IS RADICALLY COMMITTED

“And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, “ Acts 22:12

The Greek word that Paul uses to describe Ananias, translated in the KJV as “devout,” is the word *Eusebes* (*yoo-seb-ace*). It is used to describe only two other people in the Bible, *both of them soldiers*.

The Centurion Cornelius in Acts 10:2,

“A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway.”

And a soldier serving under him that Cornelius had sent to bring Peter to his house in Acts 10:7,

“And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

In both cases, the soldiers were described in the context of being totally committed or devoted in their service, in that Cornelius *“gave much alms and prayed to God always”* and the other soldier *“waited on him (Cornelius) continually.”*

The English word *devout* has direct connection to the word *devote* or *devoted*. This is defined as “to commit by a solemn act” (as in devoting oneself to serving God). It means to consecrate, hallow, or set apart for a purpose.

The Apostle Paul described the level of a soldier’s commitment to Timothy:

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." II Tim 2:3-4

Jesus describes the level of commitment required to be His disciple in Luke 14:26-27,

"If any man come to me, and hate not (does not love me more than) his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." (Parenthesis mine)

Paul described Ananias as devout or devoted *according to the law*. What is the law of God concerning devotion?

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deut. 6: 4-5

The Biblical level of commitment required to be a disciple is considered very radical in our day. A person with this quality would be called a "fanatic." In contrast, the level of commitment expected of believers is very low in most United States churches today. Sunday night meetings are rare. Mid-week meetings are usually poorly attended.

How often did the disciples meet in the Bible? *Daily!*

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts 2:46-47

But to solve flagging attendance, some churches today are being more "sensitive" to the people. Reducing preaching to 15 minutes... shortening the worship service....having fewer meetings. Many churches keep the length of all meetings to a maximum of 1 hour. But the answer to low attendance is not to shorten meetings in order to accommodate the flesh, but to have productive meetings that are intentional in making mature disciples. When church meetings have real purpose: giving the right training to the right people at the right time, there is no shortage of people who will attend them.

Jesus did not say: "Go into all the world and build buildings and listen to random lectures." He said: *"Go into all the world and make disciples..."*

QUALITIES OF A DISCIPLE:

A DISCIPLE REACHES OUT TO OTHERS

"And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there," Acts 22:12

Ananias had a good report of all the Jews that lived in the city. He was following the teaching of Christ who said:

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5: 14-16

God has created us for the purpose of doing good works that can be seen by others and so bring glory to God:

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10

The Word of God admonishes that every one should be concerned for others:

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." Phil. 2:4

A mature disciple of Christ has a reputation in the community of doing good works:

"Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did." Acts 9:36

You cannot have a good report in your community and live a life of seclusion. Some believers live a monistic lifestyle, withdrawn and afraid to move among the masses of humanity. Others consider themselves too spiritual to be bothered with reaching out to people. They say, "It is not my calling." Their focus is about their own development and relationship with the Lord... a self-centeredness.

Infants and small children are also self-centered. When a baby cries for food at 2:00 am, the baby is not thinking about anything or anybody else but their own needs. They do not stop to think... "I better not cry. Mom and Dad need their sleep!" But as they get older, they are expected to be considerate of someone else besides themselves. As people grow into adulthood, they should mature to the point of putting others needs ahead of their own. A caring parent will go hungry if needed in order to make sure that their children are fed.

On the other hand, it is perfectly alright for a small child or baby to be self-centered. This is normal. They are dependant upon others and unable to care for anybody else at that stage of development. In like manner, young disciples have a stage where the focus should be on their growth and development and not on others. The problem we see in churches is that many disciples are still too wounded themselves to be able to care for others.

When people come to Christ they have been damaged from living in this fallen world. Wounded feelings, broken relationships, physical abuse and other issues have twisted believers' emotions and personalities. Many people are bound in areas that must be healed before we can expect them to minister to those around them. We are a triune being made up of a soul (intellect, emotions and will) as well as our spirit, and body. God also has emotional healing available for His people.

Making a disciple often involves leading them to a place of emotional health so that the love of Christ can flow through them. This includes healing from toxic relationships, loss of a loved one, tragedies, broken hearts and other wounds. This is part of what Jesus said He came to do for people:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted..." Luke 4:18a

QUALITIES OF A DISCIPLE: A DISCIPLE IS PROPHETIC

Ananias prophesied to Saul:

"And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard." Acts 22:14-15

Every disciple is to be prophetic. This is not to be confused with holding the office of a prophet or having a gift of prophecy. Christians are *"new creatures"* in Christ. (II Cor. 5:17) Part of that new nature, together with the fact that the Spirit of God is dwelling in them, gives believers access to Divine knowledge.

"But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." I Cor. 2:10-12

"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ." I Cor. 2:16

Because we are part of the Body of Christ, we have the mind of Christ. Some translations put this in terms of having access to the "thoughts of Christ."

Revealing secrets is a sign to unbelievers that God is in our midst.

"But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." I Cor. 14:24-25

"We have the mind of Christ." (I Cor. 2:16b) Does Jesus know things? Then so should we.

Disciples need the mind of Christ to live a victorious life. At times there are things we need to know to avoid danger and to handle situations we find ourselves in. As priests of our family and homes, we desperately need prophetic knowledge to lead effectively.

Most importantly we need revelation knowledge to know the Lord Himself. Paul said to the church in Ephesus:

"Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," Eph. 1:16-18

Christians are called *"children of light."* This is part of being a new creature in Christ Jesus. Before we were saved, the Bible called us the *"children of darkness."* Jesus likened that to being blind.

"Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness." I Thes. 5:5

Most believers look at being able to know things from God as strange or unusual, but in Christ this should be the norm. It is part of being a new creation in Christ Jesus. It is part of having the mind of Christ.

Moses prophesied of this day when he said:

"And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" Numbers 11:29

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:" Acts 2:17

Many Bible scholars teach that Jesus message to the seven churches is a time-line of church history. The last one, that of the church of the Laodiceans, being reflective of our day:

"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Rev. 3:17-18

SESSION THREE

11:30 AM to 12:20 PM

THE QUALITIES ALL MATURE DISCIPLES HAVE IN COMMON

The Bible clearly teaches that we are “many members in one body” and that we have different functions.

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us,...”

Romans 12:4-6a

“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” I Cor. 12:4-7

The Holy Spirit has divided the gifts and gives them to every man as He so chooses. While there are clearly gifts of the Holy Spirit that are only for some, there are also qualities that *ALL* disciples are to have.

We liken this to being in the Army. No matter the job or area of service they will ultimately be assigned, all soldiers must complete “Basic Training.” Members of our military have told me if you do not pass Basic Training, you must “go around” and take it over until you have the required knowledge and skills.

If a soldier is being trained to become a clerk typist, he may never fire a rifle in combat, but he still must learn to use a rifle before he leaves Basic Training. There may come a time when the office at the base where he serves is attacked. Even though it is not their main duty in the Army, every clerk typist will be required to take up arms. They are always first and foremost soldiers. In the same way we are always first and foremost disciples, and there are qualities that each of us must possess.

Here is the Bible list of things that all mature disciples are to have:

HAS REPENTED

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth **all men every where** to repent: Acts 17:30

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let **every one that nameth the name of Christ** depart from iniquity. II Tim. 2:19

IS BORN AGAIN

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3:3

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. I Peter 1:23

IS WATER BAPTISED

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized **every one of you** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:38

IS FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT

And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and **they were all filled** with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. Acts 4:31

HAS EVERLASTING LIFE

And this is the will of him that sent me, that **every one** which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. John 6:40

HAS RIGHTEOUSNESS

Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ **unto all and upon all them that believe:** for there is no difference: Romans 3:22

HAS HOLINESS

Follow peace with **all men**, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Hebrews 12:14

HAS WISDOM

If **any of you** lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to **all** men liberally, and upbraideth not; and **it shall be given him.** James 1:5

HAS GRACE (SUPERNATURAL ENABLEMENT)

...and great grace was upon **them all.** Acts 4:33b

But unto **every one of us** is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Eph. 4:7

HAS FAITH

We are bound to thank God always **for you**, brethren, as it is meet, because that **your** faith groweth exceedingly, ... “ II Thes. 1:3a

... according as God hath dealt **to every man** the measure of faith. Romans 12:3b

HAS LOVE

...and the charity (love) of **every one of you all** toward each other aboundeth; II Thes. 1:3b

By this shall all men know that **ye are** my disciples, if **ye have** love one to another. John 13:35

HAS PEACE

Now the God of peace be **with you all**. Amen. Romans 15:33

HAS AN ANNOINTING TO KNOW

But **ye have** an unction from the Holy One, and **ye know** all things.

But the anointing which **ye have** received of him abideth **in you**, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing **teacheth you** of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath **taught you**, **ye shall** abide in him. I John 2:20, 27

HEARS THE VOICE OF THE LORD

Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. John 18:37b

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: John 10:27

HAS POWER, ARMOUR and WEAPONS

Finally, **my brethren**, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Eph. 6:10-11

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds.) II Cor. 10:4

Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power... Col. 1:11a

HAS SUPERNATURAL SIGNS

And these signs shall follow **them that believe**; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. Mark 16:17-18

SPEAKS IN TONGUES (Not to be confused with the Gift of Tongues)

I would that **ye all** spake with tongues... I Cor. 14:5a

And **they were all** filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2:4

HAS SUPERNATURAL MANIFESTATIONS

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given **to every man** to profit withal. I Cor. 12:7

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, **dividing to every man** severally as he will. I Cor. 12:11

IS LED BY THE SPIRIT

For **as many as are led** by the Spirit of God, they **are the sons of God**. Romans 8:14

HAS BOLDNESS

According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: **In whom we have boldness** and access with confidence by the faith of him. Eph. 3:11-12

IS DISCIPLINED

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth **every son** whom he receiveth. Hebrews 12:6

IS CHRIST-LIKE

Till we **all** come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: Eph. 4:13

The disciple is not above his master: but **every one** that is perfect shall be as his master. Luke 6:40

IS IN UNITY

And the **multitude of them** that believed were of one heart and of one soul: Acts 4:32

That **they all** may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. John 17:21

IS COMMITTED

And he answering said, **Thou** shalt love the Lord thy God with all **thy** heart, and with all **thy** soul, and with all **thy** strength, and with all **thy** mind; and **thy** neighbour as **thyself**. Luke 10:27

So likewise, **whosoever** he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:33

IS FRUITFUL

A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Matt. 7:18-20

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and **every** branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. John 15:2

IS SELFLESS

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. **Let every one of us** please his neighbour for his good to edification. Romans 15:1-2

IS A GENEROUS GIVER

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. II Cor. 9:7

IS PRAYERFUL

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. Phil. 4:6

I will therefore **that men pray every where**, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. I Tim. 2:8

IS A WORSHIPER

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus **concerning you**. I Thes. 5:18

That at the name of Jesus **every knee** should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that **every tongue** should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2:10-11

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE? A POWERFUL NEW KIND OF BEING

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." II Cor. 5:17

What you have learned so far helps provide a clear picture of what a mature disciple looks like. As we are called to make disciples it is imperative that we understand the finished product.

What becomes clear is that disciples are not "normal" in the sense that the world defines normal. Disciples are powerful beings that are "not of this world," even as Jesus said He was not of this world:

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." John 17:16

"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." John 15:19

When we become born again by the Spirit of God, we are no longer of this world. We have a new bloodline. We are new creatures. The Bible declares we are born again, not of Adam's sinful seed, but of Christ the incorruptible seed.

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." I Peter 1:23

The Lord intends Christians to be a totally different race of beings, unlike all other peoples.

'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;' I Peter 2:9

The Lord expects us not to be like other people in the world, but to be transformed into His image.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." Romans 12:2

Jesus did not come to earth to put a whitewash on the rotten wood of humanity. In His victorious death, burial and resurrection, He released everything needed to transform us: Spirit, Soul and Body.

"Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him,..." Hebrews 7:25a

"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places," Eph. 1:19-20

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us," Eph. 3:20

"Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:" Col. 1:26-28

The seed of sin that Adam planted in the human race grew until the world needed to be destroyed by flood. Man had become consumed by evil. Our heavenly Father, by use of the law and the nation of Israel, kept that evil seed from coming to full fruition again until Jesus arrived. Called the "last Adam," Jesus has introduced a new seed...an incorruptible seed into the earth. Just as the seed of sin grew from generation to generation until mankind was consumed by evil, so shall the seed of Christ grow in the earth until a generation arises that has become Christ-like. Both seeds are now active in the peoples of the earth. The Bible declares that both seeds will grow and come to fruition or maturity in the last days.

"Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." Matt. 13:30

"For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Isa. 60:2

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:" Eph. 4:13

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:" Eph. 4:15

In fact all creation is waiting for this:

"Everything God created looks forward to the time when his children will appear in their full and final glory." Romans 8:19 NIRV

WHAT IS A "NORMAL" DISCIPLE?

We have seen the disciple Ananias doing the work of the ministry. He helps lead Paul to salvation, heals him of blindness, lays hands on him to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, prophesies over him, and takes him out and baptizes him in water. A good piece of Gospel work!

Someone may , "That is what we hire a pastor to do". The reply to that is, "A pastor can't be hired to do your job. Their job is to train you to do your job, not do it for you. Pastors are not hirelings."

God gave "some" pastors, "some" evangelists, "some" teachers, etc. as gifts to the Body of Christ to train them to do the work of the ministry. But we are all called to be disciples.

It can be explained it like this. We are all called to be soldiers, but not all soldiers are called to train others. "Some" are called to be God's drill sergeants to train and equip the disciples for the work.

Imagine if the majority of people in this church were functioning as mature disciples, serving as powerful missionaries where they work or live. Every believer should be trained and perceive themselves as the "pastors of where they work" or the "missionaries of their block."

To understand what a church could be like if more disciples were fully mature: Just suppose this church was called to reach the city of Beijing, China. Three hundred bi-vocational missionaries were trained, equipped for the work and sent to Beijing. A "Holy Spirit" strategy was followed to reach the city. Some were assigned to reach certain geographic areas. They took jobs in commerce,

education, government, media and other segments of society. They stayed in close fellowship together. Meetings for the missionaries were held for further training as needed, for worship, to pray for each other and to testify of the exploits they were doing. The missionaries tithed to support the work. Because they were all mature disciples like Ananias, they knew the Lord's voice and were led by the Spirit. People were saved, healed, blessed and added to the church daily. A major revival broke out and the city "turned upside down" for Jesus. Evangelists, pastors and teachers then worked together to make more mature disciples from the new converts.

Now imagine that these three hundred missionaries were not sent to China. These disciples were trained here locally to reach our city. How wonderful it will be when all our churches are full of mature disciples!

DOING EXPLOITS

The disciple Ananias did exploits in his day, but God has promised His disciples will also do exploits in our day:

"And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by flatteries: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits." Daniel 11:32

What are exploits? From the dictionary

Exploit noun (ˈɛksplɔɪt) 1.a notable deed or feat, esp one that is noble or heroic

There are many good books that relate examples of the feats and courageous deeds that have been done by disciples in our day. For example:

- Harold Hill's book: "How to live like a King's Kid".
- Steve Buza's book: "Exploits in the Miraculous".

Testimonies can also be shared of exploits done by mature disciples that attend this church.

SHARE THE MODERN-DAY EXAMPLES YOU MAY HAVE

SESSION FOUR

1:00 to 1:50 PM

THE THREE STAGES OF GROWTH

From the previous lessons you should have a clear vision of what a mature disciple looks like. This is the end result of what we are making.

After walking with the Lord for many years, I eventually reached a certain level of maturity as a disciple. It took me decades to get to my present state.

I developed in the same way most everyone else has: The work of the Holy Spirit; some growth from teaching by various men and women of God; Bible schools and colleges; some from books; Sunday schools; small groups; conferences; Christian media; personal study; prayer; devotional life; fellowship; impartation; life's experiences, etc. While God has used all these things, I now realize I would have gotten so much farther, much faster, if my discipleship training had been done in a more intentional way.

When you compare the present spiritual condition of the church with the Biblical version of a mature disciple. You may say: "How is it possible to take people from where they are now to that?" But God would not call us to make disciples and there not be a way. After all, didn't Jesus take the ignorant fisherman and produce the mighty Apostles?

Like taking a journey to a far off country, the final destination may at first seem difficult or impossible. But if the way and steps are known, the impossible becomes achievable. As the old Chinese adage says, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." When making disciples it is also like taking people on a journey. Not only must the final destination be known, but there must also be knowledge of how to get there.

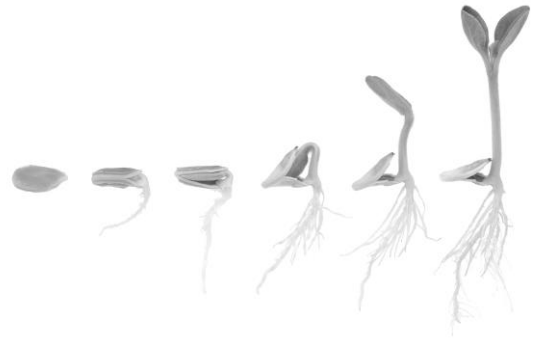
The first thing to understand is the overall process. Our God is a God of order. He is called the Husbandman or Gardener. He does not just hop and skip around His garden without a plan. There is an order of growth in bringing His plants to maturity.

The Bible says we are:... *"trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."* (Isa. 61:3b)

Plants have 3 organs: the root, stem and leaves. When a seed germinates; first the root grows down, then the stem grows up from the root, and the leaves grow from the stem. Once the plant is established, the organs continue to grow together proportionally. Mature plants then bear fruit.

Each different kind of fruit is a strategy to achieve one goal - to reproduce the plant and spread its seed.

The first key to discipleship is to understand that, just as in plants, there are 3 distinct stages of growth in the process. These stages are actually “states of being”. Not just training or classes we attend, but what we actually become.



We will begin by generally describing the three stages in this lesson, and then confirm in further lessons by scripture that these stages of development are clearly God’s Divine order for discipleship.

STAGE ONE: ROOT (FREE AND CLEAN)

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,” Eph. 3:17

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.” Col. 2:6-7

In the first stage we are established or “rooted” in Christ.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached the Gospel to several thousand people. Being “*pricked in their hearts,*” the people asked Peter what they should do. Peter said there were three things that needed to be done first: 1. Repent (turn from sin); 2. Be baptized in water and; 3. Receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Doing these things “roots” us into Christ and Christ in us.

Disciples who have grown in this stage are not in bondage to sin and are free to serve the Lord. They have a testimony of being forgiven and “*translated from darkness to light.*” They are new creatures in Christ Jesus or “Born Again”. I would describe the disciple who has fully experienced this stage as being **FREE AND CLEAN**.

STAGE TWO: STEM (FAITHFUL MEMBER)

“It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.” Luke 13:19

The stem, what becomes the trunk and branches of the tree, is the base that supports the leaves and fruit. If the tree grew without a strong base it would break and be destroyed. This part of the tree

speaks of the stage of growth in a disciple that represents strength of character and stability. Areas such as: commitment, honesty, integrity, dependability and steadfastness. Disciples who have grown in this stage are not easily blown about or moved by circumstances. They are emotionally stable. They are dependable people who are not easily offended.

God has ordained the Local Church be the place where these qualities are developed, practiced and observed.

This faithfulness is characterized by: faithfulness in attendance, tithes and offerings, worship, prayer, Bible study, relationships with others, and devotional life. Disciples who have matured in this stage could be called **FAITHFUL MEMBERS**.

STAGE THREE: LEAVES and FRUIT (FRUITFUL DISCIPLE)

“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” Psalm 1:3

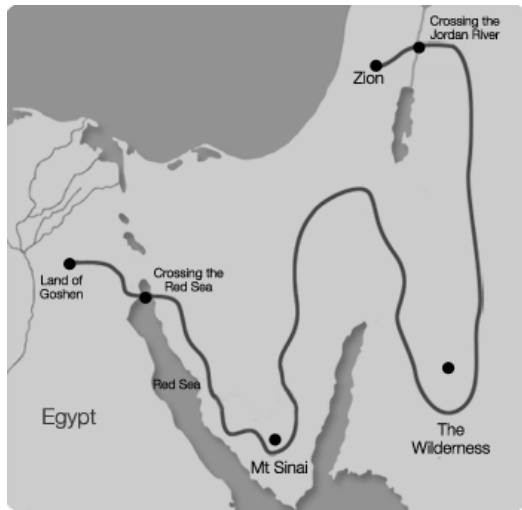
“In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” Rev. 22:2

The third stage of growth is where disciples mature to fruit-bearing. This is the stage where the free and clean, faithful member is trained/empowered to lay hands on the sick, cast out devils, conduct spiritual warfare, be led by the Spirit, lead others to salvation and administer baptisms of water and the Holy Spirit. These are the “work of the ministry” skills that all mature disciples are to possess. A disciple who has attained this level of growth would be called a **FRUITFUL DISCIPLE**.

FUTURE GROWTH

The three stages initially grow in this order, but then all continue to grow together once they are established. As in plants or trees, all three stages continue to grow together proportionately, but each one must first be properly formed, healthy, vibrant and established.

THE THREE STAGES AS SEEN IN THE JOURNEY OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL



The first disciples did not yet have the benefit of the New Testament scriptures. The discipleship growth process was taught through the Old Testament types and shadows. They still help us understand disciple making today. A volume could be written on each of these types to fully develop them, but a quick overview of each will show the three stages as the Biblical pattern of discipleship.

STAGE ONE: OUT OF EGYPT (FREE)

The journey of the children of Israel began when they were in bondage as slaves in Egypt. Pharaoh, a type of Satan, would not let the people go free. God raised up Moses, a type of Christ, to lead the people out of slavery. Even though God did mighty signs and wonders through Moses, Pharaoh would not let the people go. Only when the blood of the firstborn was shed, and the children of God saved from death by the blood of the Passover Lamb, did Pharaoh release the people. The New Testament teaches that this was a type of how the sacrifice of Christ set us free from the power of Satan. Jesus Christ was crucified on the observance of that very same Passover day. We were translated out of the kingdom of darkness (Egypt) into God's kingdom or rule. We are no longer slaves to sin. This coincides with being born again: the first step of discipleship. The first stage of their journey continued with the crossing of the Red Sea and experiencing the manifest presence of God in the cloud. The New Testament reveals that these were types of Water Baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;" I Cor. 10:1-2

STAGE TWO: THE WILDERNESS (FAITHFUL)

In this stage of the journey, God proved the people to see if they had the qualities of faithfulness necessary to go forward into the Promised Land. It was God's intention to bring them all into their inheritance, but that generation died without entering into what God had promised them. Rebellion against God and His leadership, unbelief, being stiff necked, pride and other issues kept them from completing their journey. Of those people only Joshua and Caleb, who the Bible says "wholly followed the Lord," were allowed to proceed to the next stage of the journey and possess the land. The children of Israel's experience in the wilderness teach about the faithful qualities disciples must have before coming into a place of fruitful victory. Today, God has ordained that the Local Church

instill and prove these qualities. The New Testament confirms this stage of discipleship is valid for us today:

“Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)” Hebrews 3:7-11

STAGE THREE: THE PROMISED LAND (FRUITFUL)

“For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;” Deut. 8:7-8

The last stage of the journey of the Children of Israel brought them into a fruitful place. God’s intention was to set them forth as a blessed people: A peculiar or “precious treasure” in the earth.

“For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.” Deut. 14:2

The New Testament teaches that God’s desire to have this nation of people in the earth is now fulfilled in those who have become the people of God through Jesus Christ.

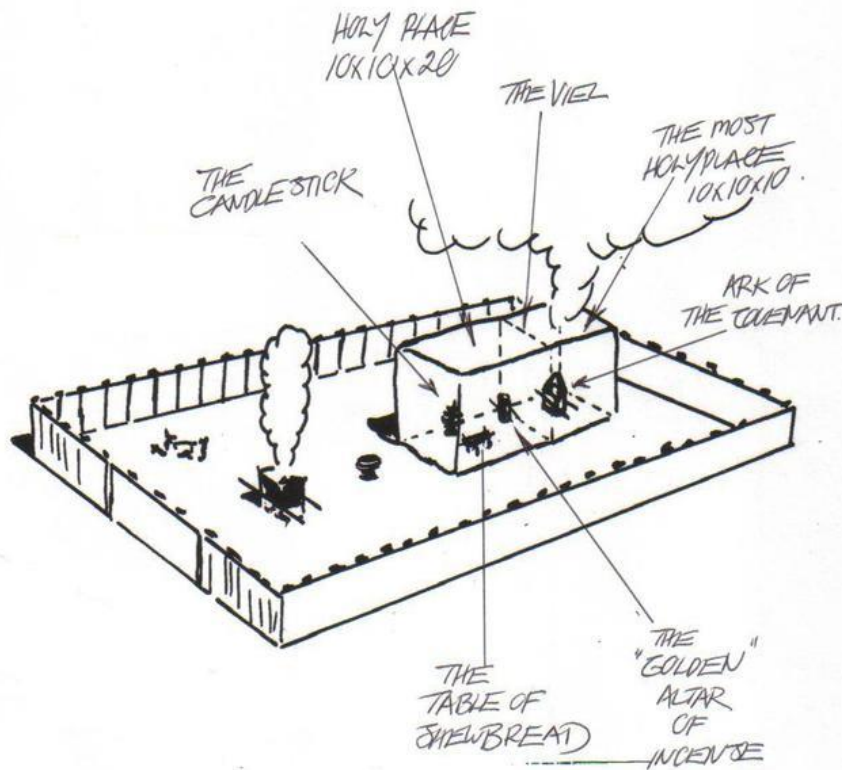
“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” I Peter 2:9-10

God’s purpose for this “peculiar people” has not changed. We are to come into a fruitful place of doing His good works.

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Titus 2:14

THE THREE STAGES IN THE TABERNACLE OF MOSES

When Jesus died on the cross, the veil that hid the room in the temple called the "Holy of Holies" was torn. The Bible says this signified that a way had been made for us to enter into that place.



Before this, only once each year could the Jewish high priest enter there with a blood offering for his sins and the sins of the people. Now by the precious blood of Jesus we can have access to the Holy of Holies. But while the veil has been torn, there still remains a straight and narrow way to enter that place. There are other areas in the tabernacle that one must pass through on the way in: The Outer Court, Holy Place and then the Holy of Holies.

STAGE ONE: OUTER COURT

The first thing encountered when entering the outer court of the tabernacle was the Brazen Altar. This is where the blood sacrifices were made. This is a type of the Cross of Jesus where our sins are forgiven and we are Born Again. The next thing encountered on the way was the Laver. The priests had to wash themselves in this before they could proceed. This speaks of Water Baptism. Also in the outer court, covering the tent containing the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies, was a cloud of God's Glory. This was a type of the Holy Spirit. These things coincide with the journey of the Christian disciple. First being born again, baptized in water and baptized in the Holy Spirit. These prepare us to go forward and are also the things Peter told the new believers to do in the book of Acts:

"Then Peter said unto them, 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost'." Acts 2:38

STAGE TWO: HOLY PLACE

There were three pieces of furniture in this room that stood before the veil and the Holy of Holies: The Lampstand, Table of Shewbread, and the Altar of Incense. The Holy Place was a place of faithful service unto the Lord. The lamps in the Lampstand could not be allowed to go out. The oil had to be replenished and the wicks trimmed daily. The Table of Shewbread required that fresh bread constantly be prepared. Incense had to be prepared and offered at certain times. These things speak of a disciple's faithfulness in worship, giving, prayer, devotional life and service in the House of the Lord. All of these things needed to be done exactly as the Lord instructed. This took obedience and consecration. The Lord was looking for wholehearted dedication and a Spirit of excellence.

"His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Matt. 25:21

STAGE THREE: HOLY OF HOLIES

"And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony,"
Exodus 25:22a

The Holy of Holies within the veil contained the Ark of the Covenant. Above the Ark was the mercy seat. God Himself communed with Moses there. No one else was permitted to go there except the High Priest and that was only once per year under very strict guidelines. To think we now have access into this place of intimate communion with God by the blood of Jesus is too wonderful to comprehend.

As we mature and commune with the Lord we see His love and concern for people. If anyone tells you they love the Lord but they show no love for others or have no concern for their souls, you know they do not know Him. The fruit of our knowing God is manifest by our love for others.

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." I John 4:7-8

This is also confirmed by the Words of our Lord Jesus:

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Matt. 22:37-40

The fruit of a mature disciple will manifest in love for God, others and in good works. We do not do these good works to earn a relationship with God, rather these works come forth from our relationship.

The New Testament confirms the Tabernacle is a map for the journey of a disciple:

HEBREWS 10:19-24: *"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God;*

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. (STAGE ONE - FREE and CLEAN)

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) (STAGE TWO - FAITHFUL)

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:" (STAGE THREE- FRUITFUL) parenthesis mine.

SESSION FIVE

2:00 to 2:50 PM

STAGE ONE DISCIPLE: FREE AND CLEAN

Now we will take a deeper look at the first stage of growth of a disciple. This first stage of development in the making of disciples includes: repentance from sin, faith in the Blood, (being spiritually reborn), baptism in water and receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit. All this could take place in a short time as in the cases of Paul and Cornelius. The process may be spread out over weeks and months (or years) depending on what and if teaching is received.

To repeat from a previous lesson, after Peter preached the Gospel on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2:

"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Vs. 37

Peter then instructed them in the first steps of becoming disciples:

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
Vs. 38

STEP ONE: REPENT

Repentance is the act of turning away from sin and our own way and yielding fully to God and His way. Jesus and His sacrifice is the way that God has provided for salvation... *the only way*. Repentance must be done wholeheartedly and unreservedly. God said: *"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."* (Jer. 29:13) The New Testament declares: *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."* (Rom. 10:9) Heart belief is not just mental assent. A full repentance has a result: It is "unto life":

*"...Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted **repentance unto life**."* Acts 11:18b

When we fully turn from sin and believe with all our heart God does a great miracle. He takes away our "heart of stone" and gives us a "heart of flesh."

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."
Ezekiel 36:26

We are spiritually reborn. This is the New Covenant that God promised: *"... After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.* Jer. 31:33b

Jesus said we *must* experience this or we cannot enter into the kingdom of God. *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”* John 3:6-7

REPENTANCE AND THE RESULTING NEW BIRTH DOES A WORK IN OUR SPIRIT STEP TWO: WATER BAPTISM

Water Baptism by immersion subsequent to being born again is the next step in disciple making. Some have been baptized as infants, but this does not meet the requirement of water baptism as told by Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts chapter 8:36-37:

“And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”

Philip ascertained that the eunuch had completed step one before permitting him to be water baptized. The eunuch *“confessed with his mouth”* and *“believed with all his heart.”* (Romans 10:9) Philip knew from this that the eunuch was saved and could be baptized. An infant cannot meet these requirements.

Water baptism is not necessary for our spirits to be saved. When we die, our born-again spirits leave our body and go to be with the Lord. The thief on the cross went to be with Jesus when he died. The thief was not able to be baptized in water, but if you are going to be staying on earth and using your body you should be baptized. This is because water baptism does a work in our body. It prepares the temple of our body to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a physical act and does a work in the physical realm. This is why Ananias said after Paul had been born again: *“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”* (Acts 22:16) Why did Ananias say “wash away thy sins?” Was not the blood of Jesus enough to cleanse Paul from sin? Yes, Paul was saved... but water baptism does a cleansing in our body. Our body that was used by Satan to do evil works is now free to be filled with the Spirit of God to do His good works.

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Romans 6:4

Take note that Ananias said to Paul concerning his being baptized: *“why tarriest thou?”* This is one of the many confirmations in scripture that baptism is to be performed as soon as possible after salvation. It is not right for a new creature in Christ Jesus to walk around in a body that was used by Satan. That old man is now dead, crucified with Christ, and must be buried quickly for it “stinketh.” There are also legal claims that the former master has on the body. The New Testament teaches the Crossing of the Red Sea is a type of water baptism. (I Cor. 10:2) If you recall, the Egyptians were chasing after the Israelites. They wanted to bring them back to Egypt to be slaves again. They owned them and had a legal claim. (We were also slaves to sin and of our father the devil.) But when the Israelites were “baptized in the sea,” all the Egyptians drowned. In like manner water baptism frees us to serve God. Our bodies are “baptized into Christ’s death.” If a slave dies they are free from the former owner. Our bodies are then buried with Christ by baptism and raised from the dead by the

Glory of God. We are free to walk in a new life. Much more can be said on this subject, but let us end here with this point:

WATER BAPTISM DOES A WORK IN OUR BODY

STEP THREE: RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST

The three steps in the first stage of discipleship: born again, water baptism and the baptism of the Holy Spirit are to be done in that order. There was one exception to this in scripture, that of Cornelius and his household in Acts Chapter 10. This was a special case because the Jewish Christians at that time did not believe salvation was also for the Gentiles. When Cornelius and the others Gentiles began to speak in tongues, Peter knew they had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He also knew they could not have received the baptism of the Spirit unless they had been born again. Because of this Peter then *"commanded them"* to be immediately taken out and baptized in water. Baptism was not optional at that point because the Holy Spirit could not continue to dwell in an unholy body. So the order seen in Cornelius of baptism of the Holy Spirit followed by water baptism was possible, but an exception to the rule.

More times than I can count I have prayed for someone to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and felt a blockage. I would be led to ask about their water baptism experience and they had either not been baptized or baptized as infants. After receiving water baptism by immersion, they would have no problem receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in other tongues.

One of the great fundamental truths of the Bible (and the Assemblies of God) is that speaking with other tongues is the initial physical evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit. (See #8 of the "Sixteen Fundamental Truths.")

The purpose of a disciple receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit is to receive power to become something.

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" John 1:12

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Acts 1:8

This is not just power to do witnessing, but to "be witnesses." Our witnessing comes from who and what we are...what we have become. The Holy Spirit is given to comfort us, to teach us, to guide us...in order to CHANGE us.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." II Cor. 3:18

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Romans 8:29

We cannot go forward in the discipleship process and be conformed into His image without the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit works in us to change our soul (mind, intellect, emotions and will) to conform us to be Christ-like. This work is on-going in the discipleship process.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DOES A WORK IN OUR SOUL

IN SUMMARY

The baptism of the Holy Spirit does a work in our **SOUL**

Baptism in **Water** does a work in our **BODY**

Repentance and Faith in the **Blood** of Jesus does a work in our **SPIRIT**

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word (Son), and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." I John 5:7-8

PAUL DETERMINES IF DISCIPLES AT EPHEBUS HAVE COMPLETED STAGE ONE

"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied." Acts 19:1-6

Paul was checking on these disciples to see what stage they were at in their spiritual growth. First he asked if they had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost since they came to believe in Christ. When they said they had not even heard of the Holy Ghost, Paul then checked to see if they had been baptized in water yet. They said they had, but by John's Baptism. (see Acts 13:24) When Paul heard that, he baptized them in the name of Jesus. Then Paul prayed for them to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The proof they received the Holy Ghost is evidenced in that they spoke in tongues. Paul made sure the steps of STAGE ONE were done properly and in the correct order.

STAGE TWO DISCIPLE: FAITHFUL MEMBER

Once a disciple has become free and clean, they are ready to proceed to the next stage of development. This second stage of growth comes from becoming a member of a local church and the spiritual maturity that develops from that membership and training.

The transition from stage one: FREE and CLEAN to stage two: FAITHFUL MEMBER also required in most church organization's bylaws as reflected in this sample from the Assemblies of God:

ARTICLE VI. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership Eligibility

Active voting membership in this assembly shall be open to all those who possess the following qualifications:

- a. A testimony to an experience of the "new birth."
- b. Having been baptized in water by immersion.
- c. Evidence of a consistent Christian life (Romans 6:4; 8:1-4; 13:13, 14
Ephesians 4:17-32; 5:1, 2, 15; 1 John 1:6,7).
- d. An indication of a willingness to contribute regularly to the financial support of the church of which he is to become a member.
- e. Acceptance of the Tenets of Faith as set forth in Article IV of these bylaws.
- f. Having reached at least 16 years of age.
- g. Having regularly attended services of, and supported, this assembly for a period of at least three consecutive months prior to the date of application for membership.
- h. Agreement to being governed by the bylaws of this assembly, and of the _____ District Council of the Assemblies of God, as both may be amended from time to time.

This second stage is very important because this is where the disciple is matured to handle the power and authority that will be instilled in the third stage.

There is a principle that you can't exercise authority unless you first know how to come under authority. A minister gave a wonderful analogy on this topic. In paraphrase:

There was a man who owned a large successful factory. He wanted his son to inherit his business someday. A father that has any wisdom at all knows it is folly to start his son's training by giving him a position of authority. He assigned him to work in the warehouse under the strictest foreman in the place. Soon the son demanded a meeting in his father's office. "Why should I have to come to work so early?" he shouted. "Why must I obey this lowly foreman? After all, you own the factory...it will all be mine one day." The father called the foreman into the office. He said to his son: "Do you see this man? You will obey him and do exactly everything he tells you to do in every detail! You will arrive on time. You will perform your duties. Now get back to work!" The son submitted and over time advanced to become president of the company.

We also have a wise father. He requires a level of maturity before He gives responsibility. If not we will destroy ourselves and others. Pride and arrogance can have no place in the heart of a disciple. God is looking for qualities of stability, humility, dependability, steadfastness, honesty and integrity. These qualities can be summed up in one word: FAITHFUL

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." I Cor. 4:2

God has ordained the local church as the place where faithfulness is instilled and proven. As we submit ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit and the overseers set in the church for this purpose, He removes pride within us and imparts a faithful heart.

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth

grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:" I Peter 5:5-6

Our faithfulness is tested and proven by measurable standards:

- By tithes and offerings:

If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? Luke 16:11

- By attendance:

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. Hebrews 10:25

- By submission to Church authority:

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Hebrews 13:17

- By respect and love for other disciples:

Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Romans 12:10

- By prayer and Worship:

I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. I Tim. 2:8

- By consecration and service:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Romans 12:1

There has been some resistance by believers against the role of the local church in discipleship. Nevertheless the Word of God is clear on this subject. We must be "faithful in little" before God will allow us to advance. God has ordained the church be the proving grounds where faithful disciples are tested.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much." Luke 16:10

"And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" Luke 16:12

Some resistance to church authority may stem from leaders that are guilty of “lording over the flock.” (I Peter 5:3) Nevertheless, God has created the church to make disciples. This part of disciple training cannot be bypassed or obtained any other way. I have seen people who have tried to bypass this stage and the role of the local church. They always end up unstable and unable to be harnessed for the Master’s use.

Being a local church member should not be confused with membership in the Body of Christ. We become part of the family of God when we are born again. For example, we become citizens of a country by birth, but if we are to serve in the army of that nation, we must enlist. We must agree to come under authority of the Army leadership and know our responsibilities. “Membership,” as pertaining to discipleship, is the commitment and act of joining the local church.

Enlisting to serve the Lord in a local church is like entering into marriage. The marriage commitment keeps people from running off when there is disagreement. Many people want to go to church without becoming official members. This is much like two people living together. They want the benefits of marriage without the commitment. People living together without being married may say they are committed, but there is nothing there to bind them to the relationship. Marriage is the commitment. Without it there is no binding basis for the relationship.

In many places the Bible likens a Christian to being a soldier who is part of an Army. The local church where God has placed you is much like a base where a soldier has been stationed. When you meet a soldier, one of the first things you find out about them is what branch of the military they serve in and where they are stationed. A Christian without a local church is like a soldier serving alone without an assignment. Imagine having a conversation with a soldier that goes like this:

YOU: Glad to meet you...so...I hear you are in the military!

SOLDIER: That’s right...I have been serving for a few years now.

YOU: That’s great...what branch are you in?

SOLDIER: I’m not a member of any particular branch or outfit...I just go where I feel led and fight the enemy by myself as best I can.

YOU: Oh...Don’t you have a base where you are stationed or others you can serve with?

SOLDIER: Well...yes and no. Last year I was hanging around an airbase and I made close friends with some people stationed there. Right now I am going to the base at Fort Bethany once a week. I hope the commander there will acknowledge me for who I am and give me a leadership position.

YOU: Who do you take orders from now?

SOLDIER: I take all my orders directly from the Commander in Chief...the President of the United States himself.

YOU: Wow...and the President hasn’t assigned you anywhere? He just lets you float around without any mission or oversight?

SOLDIER: I just don’t believe you need to officially join with other soldiers to serve in the military. I am a citizen of the United States under the leadership of the President. That is membership enough.

YOU: I sure am glad the rest of the Army doesn’t feel that way! Good luck with that!

It seems funny, but this is similar to reasoning of those who do not think membership in a local church is necessary. The reality is we must serve with others to accomplish anything of significance. We must be physically *and* spiritually connected to other members to make up the body of Christ.

When joining a church, before this commitment can be entered into, there must be an agreement and understanding of the responsibilities, duties, and nature of the commitment.

"Can two walk together, except they agree?" Amos 3:3

There should be agreement on:

- The Church Statement of Faith, By-Laws and Church Governance
- Procedures of discipline and conflict resolution
- Level of financial support expected such as Tithes and Offerings
- Commitment to training
- Attendance requirements
- Love and support of other members

Church Membership is an important part of this stage of development in a disciple. It should not be entered into lightly or without proper recognition by all parties. This is why we require Membership classes to join this local church, and why there is also an application process and induction ceremony. This is also reflected in many church bylaws, as reflected in Article VI, of the Assemblies of God:

Section 2. Procedure for Membership Recognition

Those individuals eligible for membership who shall desire to become members of this church shall make written application to the pastor or church board. The church board shall have the right and authority to determine the eligibility and acceptability of all applicants for membership by majority vote. Those approved for membership by the church board shall be received into the church publicly at any of its regular services, and their names thereupon added to the church membership roll. No applicant for membership shall be accepted as a member within 30 days before an annual business meeting or within 10 days before a special business meeting.

SESSION SIX

3:00 to 4:00 PM

STAGE THREE: FRUITFUL DISCIPLE

At this stage, disciples who are free and clean and proven to be faithful are equipped to do *“the work of the ministry.”*

“His intention was the perfecting and the full equipping of the saints (His consecrated people), [that they should do] the work of ministering toward building up Christ’s body (the church),” Eph. 4:12 AMP

Someone who is properly formed in this stage will be able to function as the disciple Ananias in ministry. (Acts Chapter 9 and 22) Here again are the abilities of the proto-type disciple Ananias:

Can Hear Clearly From God
Has a Friend Relationship with God
Knows How to Lay Hands
Is Baptized in Water (And also knows how to administer)
Is Radically Committed
Reaches Out to Others
Is Prophetic

Disciples who have matured in this stage will be confident in:

- Their close relationship with the Lord
- Knowing God’s voice and leading of the Spirit
- Leading others to Christ
- Baptisms
- Healing the sick
- Casting out devils
- Spiritual warfare

All three stages continue to grow together proportionately, but each one must first be properly formed, healthy, vibrant and established.

When we first come to the Lord He gives us a firm foundation of being Free and Clean. We are born again, baptized in water and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. He delivers us from addictions ...and other major outward sins. But while this “root system” of being “free and clean” is established (stage one), our root system never stops growing. Over the years we become even more “free and clean”, more holy in areas such as motives and ego. We become even freer to love others and set free from sins of omission as well as commission.

In like manner, in stage two of becoming a “faithful member”, God works a basic level of faithfulness in your life at first, but that never stops growing. Over time you can give even more. Your devotional life becomes sweeter. Major trials that would cause you to fall apart no longer cause you to break stride. Like a tree, God creates and establishes your tree-trunk as a “faithful member” (stage two), but as you continue to grow your trunk gets even bigger, more stable, and can handle more stress to hold more leaves and fruit.

You can begin to mature and bear some fruit (stage three) even as a young Christian, but this area also does not stop growing. God prunes your branches and you increase in gifts and skills. You are able to minister and serve more effectively and can be used of the Lord in more ways.

While we mature and grow in stature as trees or “plantings of the Lord”, this does not mean that we are immune from attacks of the enemy. Fully mature trees (while more fruitful, stronger and more resistant to disease and storms) can come under attack in any area at any time. This is why the Apostle Paul said:

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, (stage three) I myself should be a castaway.”(Failed in stage one) I Cor. 9:27 (Parenthesis mine)

THE QUALITIES ALL MATURE DISCIPLES ARE TO POSSESS

- HAS REPENTED
- IS BORN AGAIN
- IS WATER BAPTISED
- IS FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT
- HAS GRACE (SUPERNATURAL ENABLER)
- HAS FAITH
- HAS LOVE
- HAS PEACE
- HAS AN ANOINTING TO KNOW
- HEARS THE VOICE OF THE LORD
- HAS POWER, ARMOUR, and WEAPONS
- HAS SUPERNATURAL SIGNS
- SPEAKS IN TONGUES (Not to be confused with the Gift of Tongues)
- HAS SUPERNATURAL MANIFESTATIONS
- IS LED BY THE SPIRIT
- HAS BOLDNESS
- IS DISCIPLINED
- IS CHRIST-LIKE
- IS IN UNITY
- IS COMMITTED
- IS FRUITFUL
- IS SELFLESS

- IS A GENEROUS GIVER
- IS PRAYERFUL
- IS A WORSHIPER

THE ATTITUDE OF THE DISCIPLE GOING FORWARD FROM STAGE THREE:

“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.” Philip. 3:12-16

Those who have attained to the level of functioning in the work of disciple ministry should not feel they have arrived, but press on to grow in Christ and the knowledge of Him. They should continue to walk in unity along with other disciples functioning at the level they have already attained. They should remain Free and Clean, Faithful and Fruitful disciples.

EVALUATING YOUR PRESENT STAGE OF GROWTH

In every field of education, there is first a process of testing and evaluation of those who are to be trained. For example, in public education, before a student is admitted to a 5th grade class, there must be proof that 4th grade class was completed. If a student has never attended school before, examinations are given to see what grade level they can function in. There are college entrance exams. There are examinations when entering the military. These are done to insure the trainee has the foundation needed to receive training. Without examination, training would be a waste of time and energy for both the student and teacher. In some cases it could even be harmful for the student to receive deeper knowledge on a subject without a proper foundation for that knowledge.

Pre-entrance evaluations are standard in all fields of education; however, some Christian churches do not practice this. Many years ago, my wife and I joined a growing church. We were admitted for membership without question. *The church was making members, but not disciples.* We could have attended for years, without being saved, even serving on the church worship team or in some other ministry, and our discipleship left up to time and chance. This is why we ask the people that we disciple to take part in a “Self Evaluation”.

DETERMINING THE STAGE OF GROWTH: KNOWN BY THEIR FRUITS

“Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” Matt. 7:17-20

There are specific signs of growth evident with each stage of development. We know people by these fruits. By conducting a self-evaluation that asks specific questions, the present state of a disciple's spiritual growth can be determined. If this is known, then a plan for training can be established.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Many of the questions on the self-examination are of necessity private in nature, so it is natural for some people to be hesitant to take part. This is a normal reaction. To address these concerns I will use the example of the medical profession.

When we first go to see our primary care physician, we all fill out a questionnaire that asks us detailed and private health information. Some of the information we give may even be embarrassing to reveal about ourselves, but we reveal it because we know our doctor needs to know. Without the information the doctor could not care for us properly. Operating under professional ethics, the doctor maintains confidentiality and will only give your information to those to who you give him permission.

In like manner, the ordained clergy of this church operate under ministerial ethics. Any information you give will remain confidential and not shared with anyone else. (However, in rare cases, some things that people share to clergy must by law be reported to the authorities.)

NOTE: There are no questions asked on our Self Evaluation form that require mandatory reporting of any information you give!

Our Clergy members are ordained to watch over your spiritual health much like medical doctors have taken an oath to watch over your physical health.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” Hebrews 13:17

We want to assure you that the self-evaluation you are being asked to take will only be seen and used by the clergy of this church who are fully qualified and ordained to the ministry. Even the instructors of this class will not see it if they are not ordained.

This is why it will be given to you in an envelope. It will be used only for the purpose of evaluating your present state of growth and developing your personal training plan. When the other pastors and I have finished doing this work, the original form will be returned to you along with your personal training plan.

Remember, just like the quality of your medical care depends on what symptoms you describe to your doctor, so your spiritual care can also depend on the accuracy of your self-evaluation answers. Answering all the questions on this form will (in most cases) provide the needed information to develop your plan. However, if more details are needed, I will request a private meeting with you.

If you are unsure of any questions or still feel uncomfortable about giving the information, please leave those questions blank.

QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU TAKE THE SELF EXAMINATION

If you have any questions about confidentiality or the need to do a self-evaluation for discipleship, please ask them now before the evaluation form envelopes are passed out.

In Conclusion (After the Self-Examinations)

Now that you have completed the “Self Evaluation” form, in a few weeks you will receive your personal discipleship plan from the pastor(s). It will recommend the next step or steps you should take in your walk with the Lord.

I greatly encourage you to apply yourself whole-heartedly. Be pro-active in your development. If you do not agree or understand your plan or the recommended step(s) you have been advised to take, please set up a meeting with one of the pastors of the church as soon as possible.

Without doubt the local church and its ministers play an indispensable part in your discipleship.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” Hebrews 13:17

While the church is a key element, it is not the sole agent in your training and development. You are actually enrolled full time in the “School of the Spirit.” God Himself is leading and guiding by the Holy Spirit. He is giving “life-lessons” and dealing with you as only a loving Father can. He will never leave you or forsake you and is keenly participating in your discipleship.

God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. You are rare and precious to the Lord. You are the only “you” that He has made in the universe and as such have a unique place in His Kingdom.

“I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope.” Jeremiah 29:11 (CEB)

As you journey forward in your “future filled with hope”, you should know that the pastor(s), elders and members of this local church are here to shower you with love and support. But the statement made in the Introduction to this class is well worth repeating:

“We can point you in the right direction and give you the support you need; but you must have the willingness, desire, and attitudes to serve and follow God. You must be fully engaged and enlist in the process.”

“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” Jude 24,25

CLOSE WITH PRAYER....AMEN!