



DISCIPLINING the Heart

A Study Guide for Training
Believers into Knowing, Loving,
and Serving the Lord:
Father—Son—Spirit

“In learning to relate to and serve the Living God, we look for and follow the biblical guidelines for relating to Father, as Jesus Himself relates to Father. We seek to avoid the extremes of legalistic pharisaism (knowing the Scriptures without knowing Father), and emotion-based relationship (attempting to know Father without knowing the Scriptures).”

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Insights...

Into Jesus' Mindset As Disciple To His Father

*Jesus said, "Come, follow Me,
and I will make you fishers of men.
And they immediately left their fishing boats
with their father
and they followed him. John 1:35, Mt. 4:21 (paraphrase)*

*"You have not chosen me
but I have chosen you..." John 15:15*

*"The Son can do nothing of Himself,
unless it is something He sees the Father doing;
for whatever the Father does,
these things the Son also does in like manner..." John 5:19, ASV*

*I have called you friends...
For everything I learned from my Father
I have made known to you... John 15:15*

*If you hold to my teaching,
you are truly my disciples.
Then you will know the truth
and the truth will set you free... John 8:31*

*A student is not above his teacher,
but everyone who is fully trained
will be like his teacher. Luke 6:40*

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Section One

PREFACE

The rationale for this volume grows out of 45 years of ministry with God's people. After seminary, we lived and worked for some 25 years among Aztec Indians in east-central Mexico as translation personnel with the Wycliffe Bible Translators. Later, we pastored various communities of God's people in Oklahoma and Kentucky. Then in the late '80s we moved our focus into the teaching and preparation of young men and women for serving God in the marketplace and various ministries within and outside the USA.



The conviction grows that the 'Jesus' model for training focuses on one's relationship to Father. That is, Jesus spent His three-year ministry forming twelve men who would embody His own mindset and attitudes about how to relate to Father by the Spirit. After Pentecost, Jesus released them to the entire earth population. They, in turn, began to form young men and women to walk in their apostolic ways. Therefore, the issue of preparing young people to know, love and serve Jesus lies in the discipling process. Do we disciple men and women to Jesus, to His attitudes and relationship with Father? Or do we disciple men and women to the traditions of the Church, to the accumulated teachings and practices of our various church traditions?

PURPOSE

The purpose for this volume is to lead new Christians into a deeper relational walk with God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Centuries ago, some of the first Christians expressed their life commitment this way: To know, to love, and to serve God with my entire life.



Resoundingly, we join our ancestors in the Spirit and affirm our own commitment to know, love, and serve God with all our lives.

And we assume that our reader already works with less experienced believers and wants to increase the skills necessary for training men and women into the ways of Jesus. Or, that our reader desires to find out how to 'disciple,' to train, to form, to mold, to coach new believers in the ways of Jesus. For the Holy Spirit Himself strives within our own spirits and minds, impelling us to find ways of equipping God's people so they can engage the 'work of ministry.'

STRATEGY



The strategy for this study has three aspects:

First, from the Scripture, discern the attitudes in which Jesus of Nazareth lived and worked, especially during the more than three years of His earthly ministry. I refer not only to the attitudes towards His disciples, the crowds, or the religious leaders. Rather, the attitudes in which Jesus lives and relates with His own Father. Let us focus with a question: During Jesus' life and ministry on earth, just how does He relate with Father?

Second, from the Scripture, ascertain the attitudes in which Jesus of Nazareth lived and worked as He related with His disciples and imparted His own mindset to them by the Spirit.

Third, take this same set of attitudes that Jesus practices towards Father and the disciples, and impart them to those with whom we work.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE



Section one covers three chapters of various backgrounds for the discipling process: One: "Apprenticing to the Master," the biblical goal of training the followers of Jesus how to work in and administrate the spheres of responsibility delegated to them by Jesus. Two: "Training Believers to Follow Jesus Christ," the cultural and semantic background for the various biblical terms used in equipping God's people for the work of service. Three: "Biblical Foundations for Apprenticing to Jesus," a brief survey of the biblical teachings that most undergird the training process. These chapters provide background for the major part of the book, Section Two. They do not need to be read before engaging the twelve Profiles, but can be used as encyclopedic materials for the Profiles.

Section two covers the twelve profiles that identify and expound Jesus' relationship with Father, the same attitudes that He imparted to the twelve disciples.



Apprenticing to the Master

*Preparation for Managing
Father's Estate*

INTRODUCTION

God calls all of us, as His 'pastoral' leaders, to lay down our lives for His people that they might come to forgiveness and healing and then grow up into productive maturity as 'the sheep of His pasture.' Productive maturity is our pastoral goal. But, above all things, productive maturity depends first on the trainee's living relationship with Father. For all ministry is but the overflow of one's relationship with Father.



INSIGHT

We are dealing with two distinct issues. First, the level of intimacy with Father that the trainee walks in. Second, the productivity goal for the trainee. Prepare him only to be a faithful attender of morning services? Or, prepare him for release to serve God?

Both Ezekiel and Jesus address the issue of false shepherds or pastors who feed themselves instead of God's people (See Ezekiel 34 and John 10). Rarely does a pastor set out to manipulate the people of God for his own ends. But pressures from expectations—both personal and organizational—can gradually turn a pastor's purpose from maturing the saints to using the saints to accomplish his own vision. At this point, when a pastor becomes a hireling for his own purposes, Jesus jealously intervenes in behalf of His sheep. (See the Letters to the Seven Churches for illustrations of Jesus' jealous intervention in behalf of His churches.) Jesus then strives with the pastoral leader to bring him to acknowledge the real goal. For Jesus has clearly identified for us His priorities—"equipping the saints for the work of ministry."

PAULINE PERSPECTIVE

This apostolic goal, given by St. Paul in Ephesians 4:10, points pastoral leaders towards equipping God's people to become involved in doing the work of serving God. In other words, the goal of pastoral work is that

Ephesians 4:10

He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.

Romans 12:4-8

4 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his [b] faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

I Corinthians 12:4-11; 28-31

4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men.

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, [a] and to still another the interpretation of tongues. [b] 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

28 And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues [d]? Do all interpret? 31 But eagerly desire [e] the greater gifts.

Ephesians 4:7-13

7 But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it [a] says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." [b] 9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions [c]? 10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) 11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, 12 to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Ephesians 2:18

For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

the leaders train God's people so that the people do the work—the work traditionally given to the 'professional, paid clergy.' God's Spirit distributes the gifts (Romans 12:4-8; I Corinthians 12:4-11; 28-31; Ephesians 4:7-13) upon the believers, according to His own plans and purposes. The pastoral team, by recognizing and identifying gifts on God's people, trains the believers in the use of the Spirit's gifts.

Now this training process takes for granted the believer's knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. But one's walk with Father depends upon the degree of intimacy between the two, not just the amount of biblical knowledge in the trainee. For our country is full of people who have lots of biblical knowledge but give little evidence of knowing and serving God.



INSIGHT

This is the crucial issue: Does the trainee walk in a productive relationship with Father? That is, has the trainee found the secret place of rest in Father's Presence through the mediating work of Jesus Christ? Nothing is more fundamental in the discipling process of God's servants. The second issue is the training process.

The discipling process is Jesus' method for preparing His workers. Our purpose for this book is to establish the Pauline (apostolic) perspective of equipping and releasing God's people into serving God, His Church, and the person's society.

ASSUMPTION

The thesis of this discussion is that the equipping process for God's people can best be accomplished by training them first in their relationship to Jesus, or knowing Jesus, and then, secondly, for their work in serving Jesus. The first we will call: 'Discipleship to Jesus,' or equipping. The second we call, 'Discipleship to Paul,' or releasing.

DISCIPLESHIP TO JESUS

This consists of training the believer to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ; and to know intimacy with Father as Jesus reveals Father to the believer. As Jesus teaches in the Scriptures, so also the early Church lived and practiced. For the most ancient confessions consistently express God's revelation to an individual in these terms: in the power of the Spirit; through the effective work of Jesus Christ; to the Father, Ephesians 2:18. The Spirit's ministry draws us to know and receive Jesus Christ and His finished work represented in the cross and the resurrection. Jesus, in turn, then takes us into Father's Presence.

For the ultimate goal of all salvation history is the re-establishment (reconciliation) of the fellowship Adam and Eve originally enjoyed with

Father. To this end, with indescribable love, Father gave of Himself in His Unique Son to bring us once again into a cordial, life-giving, and long-term relationship with Himself. Only Jesus Christ, John 14:6, is the “Way, the Truth and the Life.” He alone takes us into Father’s presence.



INSIGHT

To know Jesus is the halfway point of biblical revelation. Jesus’ purpose is that we know Father, John 17:3. In the biblical process, Jesus first calls His followers to Himself, i.e., to know His heart and ways, to walk in His attitudes and lifestyle of servanthood to Father. Then Jesus begins the process of showing us how to engage His mission of displaying Father’s Word and works to the shattered peoples of earth.

DISCIPLESHIP TO PAUL

This consists of training the believer to know the mindset, devotion, and servanthood of Paul and the other apostles as he expends his life over ten years in four Gentile provinces. We need to impart to God’s servants the Pauline mindset, his perspective and methods as gleaned from the church-planting epistles, particularly the churches in Thessalonica, Philippi, Corinth, and Ephesus. Paul received Jesus’ revelation on the road to Damascus, engaged Jesus’ original disciples in Jerusalem and spent many years in reflection and ministry in Arabia and Tarsus before the Spirit’s release to work among Gentiles.



INSIGHT

We use the term ‘Pauline’ to represent the apostolic mindset of the first century, i.e., that band of disciples-apostles personally trained by Jesus in attitude towards Father and servanthood for Father. Paul experienced a dramatic encounter with and impartation from Jesus. The other apostles absorbed Jesus’ mindset and lifestyle through the more than three years together in the Palestine region.

Paul’s flexibility and determination, his multi-cultural, multi-lingual approach, his tenderness and fatherly guidance for believers and elders, his self-employment and full-time ministry, his extraordinary self-giving towards Gentiles and his willingness to endure suffering—all this for the privilege of serving Jesus and walking in His kingdom. Pauline doctrine takes second place to the Pauline mindset. For Paul’s energetic, and self-giving work depends upon his own mindset towards Jesus, who He is and what He wants. It is far more important to impart the set of

John 14:6

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 17:3

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

attitudes, the mindset. Then the 'doctrinal teaching' will represent a living person saturated with the Spirit, filled with Jesus' Living Word, focused on expending his own life in fulfilling Father's purposes here on earth.

HEART OF THE ISSUE

We seek to make contrasts within three major concepts. First: To know God means to know Father. We come to Father through Jesus. But it is Jesus' avowed purpose to bring us into a lifestyle of fellowshiping with Father. We come to know Jesus as the starting point. We then mature into embracing our eternal journey of living with Father.

Second: The apostolic method for training God's people lies in the team giftings with which the Holy Spirit endows His servants. Our western church traditions emphasize a one-man pastoral team. The Scriptures demonstrate a multi-member apostolic team for establishing and maturing churches.

Third: Pastoral team goals can best be summarized by the expression: "equipping God's people for the work of ministry," Ephesians 4:10. Lesser goals result in a pastor-dependent church with no idea how to share faith and little initiative to engage the process.

PHARISEE STYLE EQUIPPING

On the one hand, let us imagine the process of equipping some believers by discipling them to Paul (apostolic mindset), without first coaching, tutoring or forming them in their relationship to Jesus and Father. We would produce workers who are well trained in the teaching content and work methods of Paul, but have little or no capacity to fellowship with Father. Therefore they have little capacity to identify with people, their needs and gifts. Such workers display great learning, perhaps even great zeal for God, but face the prospect of becoming those who are only 'religious.'



INSIGHT

To be religious or legalistic means to be professional in skill, perfectionist in standards, and pharisaical in attitude towards people. Great skill in biblical teaching without great piety of heart is a formula for professional pharisaism.

Knowledge of biblical revelation (Judeo-Christian Scriptures) without the mercy-love of God's eternal covenant produces workers who impart biblical standards as though they were the fulfillment of God's mercy-love. Workers who seek to teach their organizational standards in lieu of knowing Father run the risk of hiding behind the mask of church authority and often masquerade as workers of light.

Ephesians 4:10

He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.



INSIGHT

Physical beauty without morality is like a rose without fragrance. So also, biblical learning without heart-piety is the difference between Jesus and Pharisees. They carry no fragrance of Father's Presence.

Jesus addressed the pharisaical workers in His day with confrontation, rebuke and denunciation, not with mercy. He reserved His most vitriolic discourse for such public figures. Jesus declares that the very disciples the Pharisees produce deserve hell twice as much as their teachers ("twice the sons of hell"). For this reason, Jesus removed from the religious leaders of His day the mandate to rule Israel—the mandate originally given at Mt. Sinai through Moses (Matthew 23:35-39). And the Roman armies came in 66-70 AD to complete the destruction of Israel as a nation that God had called previously to know and serve by exemplifying His revelation.

RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT HEALTHY TEACHING

On the other hand, let us imagine the process of equipping some believers by disciplining them to Jesus and Father, without also coaching, tutoring, and forming them to develop and practice the Pauline (apostolic) mindset in attitude and servanthood. This would push the worker to depend on his daily relationship with Father, but who cannot link Father's loving Presence with Father's command to work. We would produce a worker who knows Father but has no capacity to fulfill Jesus' command, "As You (Father) sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world," John 17:18. Such workers display great devotion to Jesus and Father, but cannot relate to or even associate with non-believers.

RELATIONSHIP WITHOUT OUTREACH

The Apostle Peter, when confronted with the Gentile believers in Caesarea, withdrew from those of different races and cultures. Peter was convinced that God approved only of people like him (and the rest of the Jewish race). And God spoke three times in a vision to Peter instructing him to release Jesus and His revelation to all peoples. Then God prompted the apostle Paul to confront Peter, to expose his hypocrisy, to rebuke him openly for pretense of piety. For devotion to Jesus and Father without a heart yearning for the non-believing world amounts to a false faith, a pretense of knowing God, and a pretext for avoiding the suffering of the Cross as the doorway for following Christ in His servanthood to Father. The western church has led the way in teaching God's people to sit in the presence of the local priest/pastor

Matthew 23:35-39

35 And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 I tell you the truth, all this will come upon this generation.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. 38 Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39 For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' [e]"

John 17:18

As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

Colossians 2:18

Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.

Philippians 2:7-11

7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature [b] of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Galatians 3:24

So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ [h] that we might be justified by faith.

while he makes contact with God on their behalf. This removes responsibility of work from parishioners and leaves them as mere spectators in God's great endeavor of salvation.

Furthermore, the personal knowledge of and daily relationship with God without apostolic training can well lead a person to separate himself from others based on 'private' revelations or visions about God. As Paul says, Colossians 2:18, "They delight in false humility: or engage the worship of angels. They go into great detail about what they have seen and become puffed up with idle notions." For their mindset is basically non-Spiritual, i.e., not generated by the Spirit of God and not from the apostolic teachings that Jesus has shared with all His children.

A BIBLICAL MODEL

In conclusion, the discipling process is a 'seamless garment,' much like that which Jesus wore. But we have chosen to emphasize two distinct aspects: That of Jesus and that of the apostolic leaders represented by Paul. Father intends that we walk the entire gamut, the whole process, by starting with knowing Jesus and His Father. Then His purpose is that we move quite normally into the skills of biblical teaching and the application to the lives of God's people. Obviously, Jesus both knew Father and served Him by expending His life on behalf of Jew and Gentile alike. Likewise, Paul proclaims that his own knowledge of Jesus far exceeds any value on earth, Philippians 2:7-11, yet expended his life selflessly in four Gentile provinces over ten years. This study then seeks a balance between the experiential or relational knowledge of Father in Christ Jesus, and the knowledge of biblical teaching and methodology as exemplified by Paul and his fellow apostles from Jerusalem.

CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

Cultural Norms: The child-training process in first century Graeco-Roman cultures, called *paideia*, formed the basis for a similar training process among new believers in the Early Church. The term *paideia* has its source in the Mid-Eastern cultures well before the time of Jesus of Nazareth. The term signifies the child training process into which an earthly father enrolls his child for training. The purpose: Prepare the child to administrate or rule in his father's place at the appropriate time. Let us look at the cultural backgrounds for this training concept as it influenced training within the Church.

Paidagogos: (Greek), a New Testament term signifying an instructor, tutor or guide, (English: *pedagog*) from Galatians 3:24. St. Paul explains that the Mosaic Law was placed in charge of us in order to lead us to faith in Jesus Christ, i.e., the function of the Mosaic Law was that of a guide or tutor, an instructor. In the Graeco-Roman culture of Jesus' times, a child (ages seven to fourteen) of wealthy parents, went to the

school of letters appropriate to his place in society, led by a special slave, the paidagogos. Far more than being a guide that protects a child, this special slave educated the child in conduct, good manners and morals. He coached the child in his daily lessons as well.

Paideia: A system of education and training in classical Greek and Hellenistic cultures that included such subjects as grammar, history, music, math, and philosophy. In the early Christian era, the Greek paideia, called the humanities, served as a model for Christian institutions of higher learning, such as the Christian school of Alexandria, which offered theology as the highest and culminating science of their curriculum. (See the Encyclopedia Britannica, VII-677, for more detail.) We see this cultural notion of paideia gave room for Jesus' discipling methods to merge into the church culture through the 'Didache' and 'Spiritual Fatherhood.'

Didache: "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles," a written manual for teaching in the Christian churches used during the post-apostolic age. The tract details the values and goals of Jesus' followers as seen from the viewpoint of training and guiding the various people in ministry. Latourette and Pelikan date the document at late first century or first half of the second century (80-150 AD).* This document assumes an itinerant group of prophets, apostles, and teachers working widely. Apostles are still establishing churches; prophets are still speaking utterances by the Holy Spirit; teachers are still moving freely among the Body of disciples.

Spiritual Fatherhood: The ministry of the "spiritual father or mother" in Eastern monastic life from the early 4th century (310 A D). See Irene Hausherr's classic study, "Spiritual direction in the early Eastern Orthodox Church." (Cistercian Publications, Kalamazoo, MI, 1990). St. Paul's care of the Elders within the churches provides the background for the roots for Hausherr's study.

*Kenneth Scott Latourette, A HISTORY OF THE EXPANSION OF CHRISTIANITY. Vol. 1, p 113.

Jaroslav Pelikan, THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION, Vol. 1, see index, p. 384.

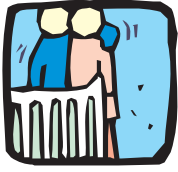
See Everett Ferguson, Editor: ENCYCLOPEDIA OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY, page 262 for the Didache .



REVIEW

Let us draw together the effective ideas that flow in this chapter.

- The goal of discipling to Jesus is the living relationship with Father, practiced in community life, in daily work and in times of prayer, reflection, study, or meditation.
- The goal of discipling to Paul is the equipping of God's servants to serve Him effectively in their families, workplace and local church, using the tools for evangelism and church planting as given in the Biblical revelation of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures.
- The goal of pastoral (team) leadership is to equip God's people so they can carry out their work of serving Him in evangelism, pastoring, teaching and the other gifts listed in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12.
- Cultural and linguistic terms:
 - The system of teaching: Paideia
 - The teacher-guide: Paidagogos
 - The outline of biblical teaching: Didache
 - The methodology for training workers: Spiritual Fatherhood
- Early Church perspective:
 - Discipling servants to the knowledge of Father through Jesus
 - Discipling servants to comprehend and proclaim God's revelation



Training Believers to Follow Jesus Christ

As pastoral workers, our work consists of forming or molding the inner lives of believers such that they can:

- Respond to Father as Jesus responded.
- Hear the word Father wants them to speak.
- See the work that Father wants them to accomplish.
- Delight Father by their lives of yieldedness and obedience.
- Live in the fear of the Lord all their days.

Our primary goal is to direct the believer into an ever-deepening and ever-expanding relationship with Father, that is to know Father through Jesus Christ whom He has sent, and to love and serve Him all our days

We base this work on the instruction of Scripture, by the power of the Spirit, melded with the desire and commitment of individual believers to know God, to walk in His ways, and to serve Him all their days on earth.

In the Gospels, the words associated with training believers are applied chiefly to those who follow Jesus in a lifestyle of faith. Three major terms express the process of Jesus' training His disciples to walk with Him, to know the Father, and to live in His Kingdom:

1. *Akoloutheo*: (follow), the action of people answering the call of Jesus, whose entire lives are to be re-directed in obedience to Him.
2. *Mathetes*: (disciple), one who has heard the call to follow Jesus and responds willingly and fully to join Him in this process.
3. *Mimeomai*: (imitate), the action of modeling one's lifestyle on someone else.

See Colin Brown, Editor: "Dictionary of New Testament Theology," Vol. 1, p. 480.

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*Denotes selections recommended for purchase.

1. To form, develop, or shape the believer in the attitudes and motives that prevailed in Jesus' life.
2. To teach, instruct, or educate the believer in the principles and concepts that guided Jesus as he followed Father.
3. To train, discipline, or tutor the believer in the skill and methodology that Jesus practiced.
4. To coach, guide, or mentor the believer in the daily activities and projects that Jesus engaged as Father's work.
5. To authorize, empower, and commission the believer to practice and accomplish Father's instructions to Jesus.
6. Summary: Preparation of believers for serving Jesus includes forming, teaching, training, coaching, and commissioning.



Biblical Foundations for Apprenticing to Jesus

Before moving into an investigation of the profiles that best illustrate Jesus' relationship with Father, let us look at the biblical convictions that underlie this analysis. We select only those major biblical doctrines that are relevant to our study.

SCRIPTURES

We believe that the Scriptures are indeed Father's written revelation of Himself, expressed through writers and prophets, kings and teachers, field workers and businessmen, culminating in Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God. We assert that our Judeo-Christian Scriptures are 'breathed out' by the Holy Spirit, yet written through very human, selected, apostolic men from 1500 BC to 100 AD. We focus on their old and new treasures in the New Testament, specifically targeting the Gospels, and John's Gospel in particular for this study. We rest in the accuracy and dependability of these Scriptures. They bear in human format the Living God, His ways and purposes.

FATHER–SON–SPIRIT

We believe that God revealed Himself as the Triune One. Not just a theistic, passionless, intellectual concept, but a vibrant and energetic, creative and productive, holy and loving Lord, relational and involved in human history. Our Lord stepped into this space-time continuum that He fashioned for His own purposes, that explicitly reveals His own person and reputation. And He disclosed Himself as complex and diverse, as One who lives in terms of three centers of identity but one underlying substance. And He named Himself as Father-Son-Spirit, the Triune Lord who is a fellowship of persons, living in a dynamic unity

and radiating the splendor of out-going love and revealing Himself as inviolate purity to all who will receive Him.

Above all, through Jesus of Nazareth, we see the Lord as Father-Son-Spirit. He shows Himself as unquenchable Love and majestic Holiness. We see Jesus, living by the power of the Spirit, verbalizing and embodying in exact detail the Father who cannot be seen—but who is fully declared in Jesus of Nazareth. We watch Jesus as He lives among His disciples, articulates His Father and lovingly welcomes all the shattered in heart, the blind, oppressed, and dead. Jesus relishes life from Father with moral purity, consistent power of holiness, and outgoing, tender-hearted embrace of the unlovely. And we, like the first disciples, marvel at this Person and long to hear and watch Him in our spirits, and, one day, to touch Him with our hands.

JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ, eternally Son of God, set aside His privileges as Deity to take upon Himself human form, a servant to fulfill His Father's purposes. Jesus chose to take this action in response to Father's request. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus entered into life on earth as the God-Man, the Man-God, both God and human at the same time. And as God's Son, the Son of Man, Jesus spoke His Father's words and accomplished His Father's works, culminating in His sacrificial and covenantal death at Calvary's cross. Father accepted His life sacrifice and raised Him from the dead. For Jesus had developed more than sufficient righteousness to merit His own entrance into Father's Presence on behalf of a humanity totally immersed in self-centeredness and deserving of eternal separation from Father. His eternal transaction: His human life for ours; His righteousness for our unrighteousness. And, as propitiatory in death, Father raised Him from the dead by the power of the Spirit, bestowing on Jesus the Name and authority above any in the universe. And as reigning Sovereign, Jesus Christ now administrates His Father's rulership here on earth.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

We believe that Father's rulership on earth today, as revealed in Scripture, covers all people in all nations at all times and in all places. And, just prior to ascending to Heaven and assuming His well-earned place at Father's right hand, Jesus instructed us through His first apostles to cover the earth with His knowledge by discipling people from every nation. In fulfillment of Father's covenant with Abraham, we carry the blessing—Jesus Christ—into the lives of all Gentile nations on earth. We make disciples by baptizing these new believers into the triune Name and teaching them to live in terms of everything that Jesus Himself taught His own disciples while in Galilee, Perea, Judea and

Jerusalem. And we equip God's people to fulfill Christ's command by training them to engage the Gentiles of the earth (pre-Christians) in the arena of life and activity in the marketplace, the world of commerce, education, medicine, home, and recreation.

Jesus purposes to relate with and serve people in the marketplace in such a way that :

- All can perceive clearly His attitudes and motives of Himself and Father.
- He can reveal and embody the heart and purposes of His Father to us.
- He can embrace, redeem, renew, and capacitate all who would follow Him.
- He can build a society of God-oriented followers in the midst of a world system that is given over to the god of this world.
- He can train us in the skills of living and expressing Father's heart and purposes in the midst of a pagan and self-centered population.

THE CHURCH'S MISSION

We believe that Jesus told the apostles to invest their lives in teaching the new Followers of the Way to understand and obey everything that the apostles had been taught by Jesus, Matthew 28:19-20. This mandate we seek to obey by presenting the basic model for discipling as exemplified by Jesus of Nazareth in the Gospels. In the daily life of Jesus we encounter His love for Father, how He thought of Father, and how He related to Him. Especially in John's Gospel do we see the terse and poignant statements that Jesus makes to His disciples, to the crowds, or to religious leaders. These statements abound with attitudes, actions, and commitment that characterize the Son of God. We seek to disclose and impart these same attitudes, actions, and commitment to those who are new in faith or who wish to be equipped for serving the Master. We seek to exhibit and communicate the basic relationship that Jesus enjoyed with His Father while on earth.

THEREFORE, OUR PURPOSE IS:

To lead a new believer to know, relate, and serve Father the way Jesus did, John 17:3.

Remember our previous statement: In the power of the Spirit, by the accomplished work of Jesus, to the Father. Our goal is always that of reaching Father's Presence to live in familial and constant association with Him all our days on earth—the lifestyle that Jesus embodied while on earth, the way that Adam and Eve originally walked in the Garden of Eden.

Matthew 28:19-20

19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in [a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

John 17:3

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

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REVIEW AND RESEARCH

- A. **Scriptures:** Please formulate your own statement about the Word of God, as to its origin, authority, function, accuracy and trustworthiness. See the Scriptures given in 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; John 10:35; Psalm 19:7-11. Check their cross-references.
- B. **God as Triune:** Discuss the necessity of portraying the Lord as triune, not simply a theistic god who is above all others. Use the trinitarian formulations from Scripture as given in the Baptism, Matthew 3:13-17; the Ascension, Matthew 28:19-20; Apostle Paul, I Corinthians 1:12:13; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 13:14; Romans 1:4; 8:11; Ephesians 2:18; Hebrews 9:14
- C. **Jesus Christ:** In your own words, build a mosaic about the Person of Jesus Christ from John 1:1-4; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 1:19-23; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-4; Hebrews 4:14-5:10; Revelation 1:12-16.
- D. **Kingdom of God:** From your own concordance, find the references to the phrase 'Kingdom of God.' Or use a Software Program that has a search routine for this phrase. From the many references, select the fifteen basic characteristics of Father's Rulership (Kingdom) on earth today. See also the textbook: George Ladd, "Theology of the New Testament," Eerdmans, 1995.
- E. **Discipleship:** Write a one page description of the discipling process, using the linguistic and cultural backgrounds given in the previous section.

Section Two

INTRODUCTION

Jesus shows us His heart attitudes and convictions about His Father as He dialogues and works with a variety of people in Galilee and Jerusalem, occasionally with Gentiles, mostly with covenant people of Abraham. We see Jesus' basic attitude in the point that He expresses with Phillip, that is, that Jesus and Father live and work in exactly the same way. "If you really knew Me, you would know my Father as well; any one who has seen Me has seen the Father," John 14:7-10. The writer to the Hebrews describes Jesus Christ as the "exact representation of the Father," 1:3. So our working premise is this: To know and study Jesus is the same activity as knowing and studying Father.



PROCEDURE

Therefore, we study Jesus of Nazareth so that we might also know who Father is. Following the Gospel of John, we will look at a variety of Jesus' encounters. Particularly, we will choose those encounters in which Jesus expresses His relationship with Father as the reason or goal for what He is presently doing on earth. For we want to focus on those moments in which Jesus is most aware and expressive of just how He is revealing Father in the midst of what He is doing.

From these encounters we will extract a series of profiles. They form a mosaic of attitudes and convictions that express Jesus of Nazareth in His devotion and service to Father, as well as His revelation of Father. This mosaic of standards we wish, as teachers, to impart to the disciples God gives us to tutor and mentor in God's ways.

We will follow Jesus in four major literary units within John's Gospel. First, chapters 3-5, starting with Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus, teacher in Israel, through the healing of the invalid at the Temple pool by Jesus on the Sabbath.

Next, we explore chapter 6, the extensive discourse from the Capernaum area about Jesus as the Bread of Life.

Then, we look at chapters 7-9, Jesus' teaching at the Festival of Tabernacles, resulting in the healing of the blind man, again on the Sabbath.

Finally, we pick up a few new concepts from Jesus' teaching, including the Upper Room discourses, chapters 12-16. Each profile exemplifies Jesus' relationship with Father, and is now listed as a separate chapter.

John 14:7-10

7 If you really knew me, you would know [b] my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work."

John 1:3

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.



Profile One

To Live in Father's Rulership, a Person Must Repent and Be Born of God

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

After relating Jesus' first miracle, that of changing water to wine, and after the first cleansing of the Temple in Jerusalem, John lets us observe Jesus as He encounters Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the Jewish Ruling Council. Nicodemus visits Jesus at night, presumably so that others will not see his personal attitude towards Jesus. Yet Nicodemus affirms his own trust in Jesus as 'One sent from God,' because of the miraculous signs that he has seen or heard about.

Jesus responds to Nicodemus by insisting that he must be born from above, or born from God. Nicodemus, in his reply, demonstrates that his own understanding is limited by human and physical realities. But Jesus presses him further by reproving him for not understanding what a teacher in Israel should understand, namely that one must be born of God, by the Spirit, and water. Without this new birth, one cannot see, much less enter, God's Kingdom or rulership on earth. Then, in quick succession, Jesus asserts that He has come from Heaven, that He speaks of heavenly things, that He faces death as a sacrifice, and that whoever trusts in Him will have eternal life.

Jesus confronts this teacher in Israel, one skilled in Mosaic Law, the Prophets, History and the Writings, with an expectation. In effect Jesus is saying that, "You should have known this, that one can not see or enter God's Kingdom unless that person is born of God." This principle that Nicodemus should have known was also missed (or ignored) by most of the Jewish leadership of his day. Yet Jesus insists that their sources, the Old Testament revelation, contained this teaching and they were responsible to have known it.

We, from a New Testament perspective, look at Abraham's and David's justification by faith (Genesis 15:6; Psalm 32:1-2) and the eloquent testimony of innumerable Psalmists about knowing God. Many within the commonwealth of Israel showed clearly that they knew God, fellowshiped with Him and walked in His grace. They became the faithful remnant, those who looked forward to Messiah, the Hope of Israel. They, along with Paul, understood that the Mosaic Law cannot impart life, i.e., keeping the Law does not confer a right relationship to God, Galatians 3:21. Only God can grant life. And He confers life, freeing us from guilt, as our daily faith works out in obedience to Him.

Genesis 15:6

Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Psalms 32:1-2

1 Of David. A maskil. [a] Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. 2 Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.

Galatians 3:21

Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.

Jesus takes this most ancient principle, imbedded within Old Testament life and teaching, and makes it the cornerstone of His discipling work.

APPLY THIS TO TODAY'S DISCIPLE



INSIGHT

To see and enter and function within Father's rulership, one must continue to repent and be born from above. This becomes a prevailing attitude for our daily lifestyle.

Romans 1:18-32

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen.

26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.

28 Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

THE NEW BIRTH

During the three or four years of demonstrating personal discipleship, Jesus reiterated innumerable times this basic perspective. One must be born from above! Jesus allowed no other beginning for one's relationship with Father. Human self-improvement can never produce the 'new birth.' Without this new birth, the person remains a prisoner, chained to selfishness and self-seeking and turned over to the progressive judgments of those who reject God's ways. (See Romans 1:18-32.) Further, the apostolic message articulated and proclaimed from Pentecost derives directly from Jesus' teaching, practice, and discipling process.

REPENTANCE

At a certain point, the new believer begins the process of life-long repentance. We may start with a list of sins that the Spirit pinpoints as pertinent to our lives. These we acknowledge and for these we express our contriteness before the loving and forgiving Father. But as the reality of the 'new birth' takes over our conscious lives, we find ourselves wanting to bow our heart and will before God and acknowledge hardcore self-centeredness. For this new relational component of knowing God brings us in touch with the Person who is Life Eternal. For He is the life-source who transforms and reformulates our very spirit and soul. In tandem, we learn to walk with contriteness and the need for on-going 'new birth' or new life from God. Like walking with two feet, these two basic ideas (repentance and new birth) enable us for the journey ahead.

SELF-IMPROVEMENT OR REPENTANCE?

The 'new birth' without repentance is like trying to paint a badly rusted auto fender just to make it look like new. As rust destroys metal, so sin causes the human to self-destruct. Repentance without the 'new birth' leads to a black hole of despair. Awareness of sin without hope of change pushes one into desperate efforts at self-improvement. But the changes that one by self-effort heroically attempts never really take hold because God's principle of Life has not yet entered into the seeker.

As teachers, we watch those who wish to be disciplined to see if indeed God's new Life operates in them. One's sense of moral dirtiness, self-confessed, contritely placed at the Master's feet—this will show us if God's new Life works in their soul and spirit. All forms of religious activity may well be counterfeited by Satan's legions. Great zeal in worship, preaching, or good works have a hollow ring, unless accompanied by a contrite spirit that is quick to self-accusation and desperate to feed on God's Life.

SELF-REALIZATION OR NEW BIRTH?

Our national culture today places the greatest value on self-realization and attainment of money, beauty and power. This idolatrous triumvirate drives the unsuspecting citizen to see one's self as the focal point of all evolutionary development. They feel we live in an eternal universe, without goal or morality, and only the diligent individual can make one's self into the desired image stipulated by culture. Yet these pre-Christians come to us, thirsting for some palpable evidence of the Living God. But their very soul lies in prison, chained to this self-centered perspective, darkened by divine judgment for self-indulgence. Jesus' eternal words carry the same Life and Power that Nicodemus (John 3:3) experienced almost 2000 years ago. And this is our beginning.

As teachers we lead Jesus' new disciples to acquire the habit of repenting for our hardened self-centeredness and then appealing to our loving, forgiving Father for His life, life from above, for an on-going renewal into His family and rulership.

At this point, the reader may be thinking that Jesus Himself never had to repent for sin, simply because He never sinned! Indeed that is true! But within this profound and basic teaching of Jesus lies the reality that Jesus Himself, as Son of God, derives His own life from that of the Father. Jesus' own words in John 5:26 show His perspective: "As the Father has life in Himself, so also He has granted the Son to have life in Himself." Jesus openly glories in Father as the source of His own life. As Jesus derives life from Father, so also each believer comes to the point of being "born from above," the point of deriving life, eternal life, from Father. And we desire that all those we attempt to lead into God's ways come to walk in the daily reality that life derives from Father.

John 3:3

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. [a]"

John 5:26

For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.



REVIEW

2 Peter 1:4

Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

Ephesians 3:6

This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 1:30

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

Genesis 15:6

Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Father's rulership begins in our lives at the point of His causing us to be born anew, or born from above, or born again, we receive a new life through our new birth. Father, through the Spirit, creates within us a new and living spirit to replace the old one that died in bondage to the law of sin and death. Now that our spirits are alive, we can begin to relate to Father in a familial way. Father has forgiven all our sins, filled us with His Spirit and grafted us into the True Vine, His son. We are sharers of the divine nature, 2 Peter 1:4; we are fellow heirs, fellow members of Christ's Body and fellow sharers in the promises in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 3:6. Moreover, Father has justified us by faith in Jesus Christ and Jesus has become for us wisdom from God, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, I Corinthians 1:30.

Now let us tie together Jesus' teaching with Pauline (apostolic) proclamation. Consider the relationship between the new birth and justification by faith. Notice that we are asserting that Jesus' teaching about being born from above, of God, has a meaning that parallels that of Abraham's justification by faith (Genesis 15:6) and Paul's parallel teachings in Galatians and Romans. Let us sharpen the issue this way: How can one be born from above without being justified by faith? Or, how can one be justified by faith without being born from above?

Both experiences happen to us, initiated by God's mercy-love. For God declares us legally justified, that is, cleared of all guilt. And God regenerates us. He infuses His Life into us by vivifying our spirit that has long been dead. Entrapped in self-centeredness, our spirit remains mired in the muck of self-awareness, with no window of release that draws Life. Into our lives flow uncreated and inexhaustible Life. Eternal and Spirit-given Life. Renewing and renovating Life. Without the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, we remain only human, imprisoned in our natural desires, limits and culturally defined goals.



RESEARCH

- A. Study the Scriptures, Genesis 15:6 and Psalm 32:1-2, to establish within yourself that these Old Testament leaders were indeed justified by God's grace. Look for cross-references or events in the lives of Old Testament covenant people that demonstrated their primary relationship to God was based on faith, not by keeping the Mosaic Law.
- B. Study Galatians 3:1-14, and cross references in the New Testament. Combine this with a study of Romans 4:1-25, noting particularly Paul's argument that the coming of the Law, 430 years later, does not nullify God's covenant with Abraham which is based on justification by faith. See Romans 5:20-21.
- C. Finally, write a descriptive essay showing the similarity between the Old Testament and New Testament people as to how they come to know and walk with God.



Profile wTo

Jesus Leads Us to Worship Father in Spirit and Truth

Jesus engages the Samaritan woman, John 4, in an on-going discussion about issues vital to her. Jesus sees her as a pre-Christian, one who has more than enough religion, but has missed the basic issues of life. She reacts with amazement to His request for water, after all “Jews do not use dishes that Samaritans have used.” For her, the cultural barrier is real and she knows that no self-respecting Jew would ever use a cup that Samaritans drank from. Jesus presents Himself as Living Water. She appeals to her traditional authority based in the patriarch Jacob who established this well. Jesus reiterates His position that the water He gives, unlike natural water, becomes a “spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

Of course she would like this type of water so she would not have to return daily to draw water for her household. Jesus asks her to call her husband. She balks at this request because she knows she has had five husbands and her present ‘companion’ is certainly not her husband. Remarkably, she now brings up the issue of worship and the dispute about where people ought to worship. Here at Mt. Gerizim, sanctified by Abraham, Jacob, and Moses, or in Jerusalem at the great temple originally built by Solomon. Since the Samaritans accepted only the Pentateuch as biblical revelation, they knew little about the rest of God’s revelatory process.

Notice the process: First, she brings up cultural barriers that deal with His drinking water from a Samaritan cup. Then she appeals to her own religious traditions from Jacob as authoritative. Then she wants ‘Living Water’ so she won’t have to work as hard by coming for water every day. The issue about her ‘husbands’ is too thorny to face. So she brings up the dispute about place of worship. But Jesus emphasizes the crucial issue: Worship. This Gentile represents the mixture of authentic (but incomplete) revelation with cultural ideas and customs. And instead of trying to correct her background, Jesus leaves her final question unanswered and leads her to this vital teaching.

Jesus takes her beyond the issues of cultural barriers or one’s earthly ancestry (Jacob). The focus is not saving time and work nor her real husband, and not even the place where one worships. The only important issue is *how* one approaches the Living God to worship Him. Once that is established, then all other issues of life can be addressed

successfully. Jesus even moves her focus from the temple in nationalistic Jerusalem to the critical point: God our Father looks for worshipers who approach Him in spirit and truth. For since He is Spirit, not corporeal with body and blood, then our approach to worship must flow from our spirits or hearts. And since He by nature is True, then we must approach Him through the One whom Father sent to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life. At this point she probably feels overwhelmed by Jesus' teaching and appeals to one last reality. She professes her faith, "When Messiah comes, He will straighten out all these issues." Jesus replies very simply, with no criticism, no rebuke, no put-down. And in effect He says: "The one you are talking to is the Messiah. And I am here to show you how to worship Father in spirit and truth."

So for this new believer, Jesus shows that the issues are not correct doctrine, parentage, or culture. Rather, the fundamental issue is to worship Father in spirit and truth. Repentance and the new birth lead to worshipping Father in spirit and truth.

APPLY THIS PROFILE TO TODAY'S DISCIPLE



INSIGHT

Our purpose is to impart an on-going perspective of repentance and new birth that leads normally to worshipping Father in Spirit and Truth.

LIFE AS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

Jesus understood life as an act of worship to Father. His Spirit inspired Paul to fashion this grand purpose statement, Ephesians 1:12, "...we were chosen...predestined ...that we might be for the praise of his glory." To worship Father in spirit and truth is to live for the praise of His glory. The Spirit transforms our human existence, defined by God's original image in us and enabled by the new birth, into an on-going activity of worship. That is, all that I am, all that I think and feel, all that I engage as lifestyle and work—everything focuses on God's Person and purposes as revealed in Jesus of Nazareth.

The life breath of personal living is worship in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit, as God's resident Presence, maintains us in contact with the Living God. The Spirit is the link between one's own spirit and Father. The Spirit teaches us how to worship the Lord. The Spirit leads us in constant adoration of Jesus and Father. The Spirit leads us to participate (share) in the very life of God Himself through worship. And we learn to worship by focusing on Jesus of Nazareth, His activities, His words, and His quotes.

Ephesians 1:12

...in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

Hebrews 2:12

He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises." [c]

Psalm 22:22

I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you.

Luke 10:21

At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.

Psalm 16:8

I have set the LORD always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

Psalm 45:6

Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.

Hebrews 1:9

You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." [f]

LEARNING TO DELIGHT IN THE LORD

Jesus sings Father's praises in the midst of the congregation, Hebrews 2:12; Psalm 22:22. Jesus, full of joy and through the Holy Spirit, praises His Father, Lord of heaven and earth, Luke 10:21. David, Psalm 16:8, speaking for Messiah, "...my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices...you fill me with joy in your presence." Jesus lived in an attitude of delight with Father, a spontaneous up-surfing of joy, rooted in the flow of Life He received from Father. In fact, Father anoints Him with the "oil of joy" even above that of His companions, Psalm 45:6; Hebrews 1:9.

From this delight with Father flows our speaking in tongues and prophetic words. Our posture changes from hands raised to bowed head, to bowed body, to prostration before Father. Jesus took these various postures as expression of His own deep devotion to Father and His purposes on earth. Jesus focused His thinking to speak the words that Father had taught Him before He left Heaven to come to earth. Jesus focused His activities to accomplish the deeds which the Father showed Him in Heaven before He came down to please His Father. And Father repeatedly and audibly spoke of His own delight with His Chosen, the Servant, the Son of Man, His only Son.

As teachers, we lead Jesus' new disciples to acquire the daily and moment-by-moment habit of delighting in Father. This worshipful attitude sanctifies our lifestyle and work and insures the fulfillment of our destiny in God.



REVIEW

To worship Father in spirit and truth involves the entire person. Much more than corporate worship, this activity brings together all facets of a person's life to focus on honoring the Lord. Every aspect of our daily life looks to exalting Christ by making Him the reason and goal for everything we are and do. The result is that we accomplish or fulfill Father's purposes. Jesus' disciples had already learned to worship in the style of first-century Galilean synagogues. They already understood the 'first and greatest' commandment. But they struggled with Jesus' teachings that He has come to earth to lead us into Father's rulership and show us how to bring all things in our lives under that rulership in one exalted worship scene.



RESEARCH

We assert that worship is our life breath in God, the destiny to which God has called all His children. Such a broad statement must be rooted in the total revelation of God in the Old and New Testaments.

I. Research biblical worship within these sections of the Old Testament:

- A. Forms of worship from Eden to Noah
- B. Abrahamic worship
- C. Mosaic worship—before the Law at Mt. Sinai
- D. Worship provided by the Mosaic Law in:
 - 1. The Sacrificial System
 - 2. The Festival System
- E. The worship inherent in the Davidic Tabernacle
- F. Worship in the Psalms
- G. Worship in Isaiah

II. Study Psalm 95 which gives to us ‘the worship protocol’

- A. Thanksgiving, making mention of specific gifts of God
 - 1. Come, let us sing...shout aloud
 - 2. Let us come before Him with thanksgiving
- B. Praise, making mention of God’s attributes:
 - 1. For the Lord is the Great God, the Great King
 - 2. The earth...mountain...sea are His
 - 3. He made all that is
- C. Worship
 - 1. Come, let us bow down in worship
 - 2. Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker
- D. His Presence or Glory
 - 1. Wait in silence before the Lord
 - 2. He then speaks into our silence
- E. Release of the Word
 - 1. Today, if you will hear His voice
 - 2. Do not harden your hearts

III. Focus on Various Aspects of Worship:

- A. Worship and joy
- B. To be alive means to praise God
- C. All of life is an act of worship to God



Profile The

Jesus' Food is to Engage the Work of Father's Purposes

Just as Jesus finished talking with the Samaritan woman and her townspeople of Sychar, His disciples returned from purchasing food in town, 4:4-6; 27-38. They showed amazement that Jesus would even speak to a Samaritan (Gentile) woman, but declined to enter the conversation. After she left, the disciples started to urge Jesus to eat something, obviously content with themselves for finding food. Jesus responded that He had food to eat that they knew nothing about. Typically, they engaged each other in ardent discussion, trying to answer their own questions about why He would not eat their food. They concluded that someone else must have brought Jesus some food. That's why He's refusing the food that they spent their time and money acquiring.

But Jesus presents to His disciples this new idea: That His food, His source of physical nourishment, does not depend on eating bread or meat, as they think. Rather, He receives nourishment by engaging the work that Father sent Him to accomplish. At that moment the food that His disciples brought had no attraction for Him. Jesus drew strength from Father (in the Spirit) by talking to the woman at the well of Sychar—strength that human food could not have provided. For Jesus had perceived that Father, with purpose and power, arranged that meeting in order to accomplish something within His own plans.

STRENGTH FROM SERVING FATHER

By applying Himself to this situation which Father had prepared, Jesus drew His strength from Father. For Jesus had committed passionately to the goal of accomplishing Father's purposes on earth. Jesus expresses this in two phases: To engage the purpose of Father who sent Me; to finish or to complete Father's work, 4:34. In Jesus' thinking, He sees the opportunity in Sychar as 'finishing' a certain phase of work that Father designed for Him. And Jesus' time for the Cross could not occur until He had finished other phases of work Father had designed for Him. So Jesus engages in conversation with the woman who by nationality and lifestyle offended the cultural sensibilities of Jewish people. Jesus wanted His disciples to know that He considers Father's purposes as priority in His own life, priority over culture, gender, and tradition. He wants nothing more than to complete all that Father planned for Him. And in

John 4:4-6

4 Now he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6 Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

John 4:27-38

27 Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ [b]?" 30 They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

31 Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something."

32 But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

33 Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"

34 My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. 35 Do you not say, 'Four months more and then the harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. 36 Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. 37 Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. 38 I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."

John 4:34

My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

Matthew 4:1-11

1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham: 2 Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, 3 Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez the father of Hezron, Hezron the father of Ram, 4 Ram the father of Amminadab, Amminadab the father of Nahshon, Nahshon the father of Salmon, 5 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, 6 and Jesse the father of King David. David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife, 7 Solomon the father of Rehoboam, Rehoboam the father of Abijah, Abijah the father of Asa, 8 Asa the father of Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram, Jehoram the father of Uzziah, 9 Uzziah the father of Jotham, Jotham the father of Ahaz, Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, 10 Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, Manasseh the father of Amon, Amon the father of Josiah, 11 and Josiah the father of Jeconiah [a] and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

Mark 1:12-13

12 At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, 13 and he was in the desert forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

Luke 4:1-13

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, 2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

3 The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.' [a]"

5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.

6 And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. 7 So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

8 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.' [b]"

9 The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. 10 For it is written: 'He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; 11 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.' [c]"

12 Jesus answered, "It says: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.' [d]"

13 When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

the process of achieving Father's work, Jesus draws a strength that food can not supply. The conversation with the woman led to several days of visiting with the townspeople. The result: Many Samaritans of Sychar committed themselves to Messiah.

We know of at least one similar incident in the Gospels. Jesus refrained from eating food and taking water for forty days during the time of the Testing in the Desert, Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-13. Father, by the Spirit, had pushed Jesus to that place, situation, and time span. The angels of God came and gave Jesus sustenance not derived from foodstuffs. In the act of serving Father or pleasing Father, Jesus derived nourishment. This is the point Jesus wants to impart to His Disciples. Go and engage Father's purposes with all your heart and strength and you will find nourishment from Father that human diet cannot provide.

APPLY THIS PROFILE TO TODAY'S DISCIPLE



INSIGHT

Our purpose is to impart this on-going perspective that repentance, new birth, and worship leads normally to engaging Father's purposes from which we derive God's strength, like food, for accomplishing His purposes.

FOODSTUFFS AND THE AMERICAN SCENE

Of all the disciplines of life, this perhaps looms largest in the eyes of a developing disciple. For the body acquires its own habits of hunger. The family customs of food choice and preparation conspire to mold us from our earliest days. Then we encounter the cravings that our society fosters in us. Or, our own psychological needs harass us until we assuage them with certain foods. The advertisement environment that we watch or read focuses us on eating to satisfy cravings. Of the ten companies that advertise their products most on T.V., eight of the companies specialize in fast-foods, the other two promote automobiles. The resulting obesity has sparked an exercise revolution because obesity threatens our very lives with disease and jeopardizes the amount of time on earth Father gives us to accomplish His purposes. Jesus challenges this cultural preoccupation with eating to satisfy cravings. Jesus holds out to us the expectation that if we walk by the power of His Spirit, then He will so fill and change our lives that His purposes can begin to feed and satisfy us, like food feeds and satisfies our bodies.

Jesus sensed by the Spirit the appropriate time to eat. And in the Gospels, we encounter the God-Man, Jesus, who follows Father's prompting in reference to food consumption. Jesus endures some periods of time with little or no food (like the Temptation in the

Desert). Other times, Jesus simply withdraws to pray by Himself and remains there the entire night (Luke 6:12). Or again, Jesus becomes so engrossed in His encounter with a needy person, He simply does not respond to His disciples' overtures for eating, as in John 4. And in John 6, Jesus pointedly exhorts His disciples about food, them and the crowds that surround Him. He challenges them not to focus on food that spoils, but to focus on food that He will give to them, a food that endures to eternal life. Of course, the people love this extraordinary thought, that they will not have to raise or buy food anymore. Jesus will give them the physical food (they think) that will produce in them eternal life without the need for eating. So they respond, "...from now on, give us this bread," John 6:34.

DISCIPLINE AS SELF-CONTROL

As disciples, the world system attacks us with incessant advertising. It says, "Eat to satisfy your cravings." Our old nature reminds us constantly of how to satisfy those cravings that give us the most physical pleasure or contentment. But Jesus calls us into this battle, not simply to endure the world and the flesh, but to break their power by the Spirit of God. We know that the laying-on-of-hands can exorcise from us some cravings. But biblical reality for us as disciples lies in the fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22. Notice that the final expression of fruit mentioned is 'self-control.' Jesus started His ministry in the power of the Spirit and spent forty days in the desert without eating or drinking. And Jesus consummated His ministry with twenty-four hours of intense focus on Father's purposes, that resulted in the unimaginable agony of the Cross. For Jesus, life in the Spirit radiated self-control that enabled Him to fully accomplish Father's purposes.

For none of us does self-control come easily. We all start with different points of intensity in our old natures. Some of us do not notice the lack of food. We can focus so intensely that we block images of food intruding into our thinking and pangs of hunger announcing themselves. We will all learn this hunger-control differently. But we will all have to learn it, slowly, deliberately and with patience. We must know our physical needs, as dictated by size, temperament or genetic code. And within these parameters, we ask God to guide us in developing food guidelines, both choice and amount, lest we fall victim to a self-indulgent culture and cut short God's intended time for serving Him and His purposes.

THE CHANGE TO SPIRIT-SOURCED LIVING

On the other hand, the capacity to lose one's self in Father's purposes and not notice the demands of our bodies also develops slowly. We want to learn to live in the strength generated by serving Father, that is, live in

Luke 6:12

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

John 6:34

Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread."

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

the Spirit's power that rises in us as we accomplish Father's purposes. But as the disciple commits to this pathway, God the Spirit will build around us a unique arrangement of life in which we learn to turn aside from the cravings that harass us. Each day we again ask the Lord, our Gracious Father, to show us how to crucify, put to the Cross, our old nature with its cravings. And we implore Father to energize our new nature, causing us to grow in our capacity to choose eating habits which accomplish Father's plans—not just the satisfying of the cravings dictated by flesh-dominated media or the demands of the old nature.

Finally, the constant pursuit of knowing Father through Jesus Christ, this pursuit leads us through repentance, the new birth, and worship into Father's Presence. In this Presence Jesus lived and worked and we see the effect especially when food became an issue. And from Jesus we too learn when to celebrate at a local wedding, how to eat in homes when surrounded by hostile religious critics. For Jesus knew how to eat and drink well. They even accused Him of being a "drunkard and a glutton," Luke 7:33. They said in derision, "He eats with sinners," Matthew 9:11.

Jesus learned how to enjoy the bounty that Father provided for Him among the people He came to serve. And Jesus also shows us the way to live in the Spirit so that at times we can withdraw from human food and live in the strength that arises from serving Father and accomplishing His purposes. For in the act of serving and delighting Father, we derive nourishment, a strength or energy not available to us through mere human food.

Luke 7:33

For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.'

Matthew 9:11

When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"



REVIEW

By the power of the indwelling Spirit, Jesus carried a sense of the appropriate time to eat—and not eat. Food for Him provided the opportunity to enjoy the people that Father had placed around Him—to help or hinder His work. Jesus went to wedding festivals to enjoy the event and the people Father drew to witness His words and work. More than once in the Gospels, we find Jesus in a home and enjoying the hospitality that local culture required of its members. Occasionally, we view Jesus at a meal in the midst of a deep encounter with a needy person, like Mary in Luke 7:36, with hostile Jewish leaders ready to criticize His words and condemn His good works. Above all, we observe Jesus as One who enjoyed the food and drink that Father provided for Him through the local cultural norms.

On the other hand, we walk with Jesus as He refuses all food and drink, even water, to engage Father's purposes, like the forty days of testing in the desert areas, Matthew 4:1. By following His Father's directions, Jesus learned to receive physical food, or refuse it, at Father's discretion. At times, Jesus withdrew from the crowds and His disciples to fellowship with Father, sometimes all night.

Luke 7:36

Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.

Matthew 4:1

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.



RESEARCH

- A. Take a one-hour period of time and make a project of counting the number of television ads that promote the purchase of food for satisfying one's cravings. Pick a 'Prime Time' program or a national sports event. Consider that the average US citizen watches eight hours of television per day. Now calculate the number of food commercials that the average citizen watches per day, per week, per month, and per year. This constant bombardment of our senses, reminding and stimulating us to overeat, results in a national plague of obesity and concomitant illness.
- B. Now follow these passages in the New Testament: Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:14-23; Acts 15:9-28; Romans 14:1-12; I Corinthians 2:16; I Timothy 4:3-5. Prepare a detailed outline that presents the data from these authors about the use of foods that God gives us to enjoy.
- C. Now explore Jesus' ministry and that of the various apostles for their teaching on fasting or self-control. Make a sharp distinction between fasting (which is temporary) and self-control that is the long-term work of Father's Spirit in our lives.
- D. Write an essay that blends the elements given in A, B, C. Draw conclusions that will provide guidelines for eating habits in our society today.



Profile of

Jesus and Father are One

At least five times in the first ten chapters of John, the writer focuses our attention on the oneness of Jesus with His Father. Reference one. Jesus states clearly in 5:17 that the work that He, Jesus, currently carries out is the same work that Father carries out. This statement occurs in reference to the healing at the Sheep Gate (Bethesda). There, the disabled came to beg and wait until the healing presence of God's Angel comes to stir the water. This particular person had waited thirty-eight years, always missing the healing presence, because others more able than he slipped into the water ahead of him to receive the healing virtue.

The Jewish leadership understood well Jesus' meaning. That is, Jesus states that He is the Son of Father, that God (YHWH) is His own Father. John shows us that this affirmation leads directly to the Jewish leaders' attempt to destroy Him. For Jesus not only demonstrated His deity as Father's Son by the healing, but Jesus also exercised that authority by deciding what work could be carried out on the Sabbath. Jewish leadership deeply and bitterly disagreed. They perceived that Jesus was replacing Moses, that Jesus was speaking for the Father, that Jesus, in fact, was deity like Father and One with Father.

WITNESSES TO THIS ONENESS

Reference two. In 8:12-19, Jesus states that Father (YHWH), the Living God, bears witness to who Jesus is and what He does. Previously, the Jewish leaders had criticized Jesus for giving illegal testimony about Himself. Jesus affirms that His own testimony is the same as Father's testimony, 8:16. They are giving the same testimony because they are one in Deity and work.

Reference three. Jesus appeals to the Mosaic Law that stipulates that testimony must be drawn from two witnesses to be valid. And Jesus, with studied self-assurance, states that the two witnesses to His own validity are the Father who sent Him and Himself, 8:18.

Reference four. Again Jesus affirms His own oneness with Father, His status as Father's Son, by insisting with the Jewish leaders that if they know Him (Jesus), that is the same thing as knowing the Lord (YHWH), the Living God, 8:19. Jesus reiterates this, 14:9-11, when Phillip asks to see Father. Jesus persists in this assertion, that to look at Jesus of Nazareth is the same thing as looking at Father. "The Father,

John 5:17

Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

John 8:12-19

12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

13 The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid."

14 Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. 15 You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. 16 But if I do judge, my decisions are right, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me."

17 In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two men is valid. 18 I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me."

19 Then they asked him, "Where is your father?"

John 14:9-11

9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. 11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves."

living in me, is doing His work,” says Jesus, please “believe me when I say that I am in the Father and Father is in me.”

Reference five. Finally, at the epitome of self-revelation, Jesus caps this entire healing discourse in the Temple with the breath-taking affirmation that He, Jesus of Nazareth, is the same One who spoke to Moses on Mt. Sinai through the burning bush, as YHWH. Again, the Jewish leaders showed how deeply they understood and resented this claim to oneness with Father and deity—they picked up stones to kill Him.

ONE IN AUTHORITY, PURPOSE, AND SPIRIT

Jesus insists that He and Father are one in attitude, purpose, and work. Yet Jesus also asserts that He has authority to lay down His life and take it up again, that Father gave Him this authority, 10:18. Within this juxtaposition of seemingly contradictory statements, we begin to understand the process that the early Church passed through in its progressive definition of Jesus, the Spirit, and finally the Trinitarian perspective. John shows us repeatedly that Jesus aligns Himself so closely with Father that we cannot tell the difference between Father’s character or purposes and those of Jesus. But Jesus is His own Person. For Father does not take Jesus’ life from Him by forcing Him to experience His earthly sufferings. Rather, Jesus lays down His own life based on His own decision. Jesus retains His own integrity by choosing to fulfill Father’s purposes because that is exactly what Jesus wants to do. Jesus never states that He Himself is the Father. Jesus always distinguishes Himself from Father, but always aligns Himself with Father’s nature and purposes. In this servanthood we find the source of Father’s continual delight with Jesus, as expressed in the Gospels. See Isaiah 42:1; Matthew 12:18; 17:5; John 12:27. In the same way, Jesus never states that He Himself is the Holy Spirit. On the contrary, Jesus always distinguishes Himself from the Holy Spirit and spends many hours with His disciples, John 14-16, explaining the Person and Work of the Spirit.

THE MYSTERY ELUDES US

Many new believers stumble at this point simply because it is beyond their experience. But in these and similar verses, we find the basis for the Church’s fourth and fifth century explanations of the three Persons of the Trinity in one substance. We, like those of the early centuries, approach God by faith and ask for His Spirit of wisdom and revelation to engage this mystery. Yet by definition, the full description of mystery lies beyond the human capacity or ability to comprehend. So we humbly explore this mystery and carefully make our assertions. But the final resolution eludes us until Resurrection replaces our limited mortality in all senses.

John 10:18

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

Isaiah 42:1

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.

Matthew 12:18

Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations.

Matthew 17:5

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

John 12:27

Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.

APPLY THIS PROFILE TO TODAY'S DISCIPLE



INSIGHT

The Spirit develops in each believer a permeating and satisfying assurance of confidence, that is, the disciple is one with Jesus in the same way that Jesus is one with Father, John 17:22. This relational confidence in Jesus, that the Spirit imparts, both establishes and fortifies the disciples during all their days.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST

Jesus' high priestly prayer assures us that Jesus has given to the believers the glory which Father gave to His Son ...so that all of us might be one with Him even as the Father and Son are one. This process begins as relational confidence, and results in a confidence built on shared work. Paul's first proclamation in Thessalonica, I Thessalonians 1:4-5 carried power and deep confidence or conviction of knowing God and being changed by Him. Concurrent with the Spirit's work of illumining our minds to comprehend the Good News is the work of establishing within us a profound sense of belonging to God.

Paul, in Romans 8:15-17, speaks of the Spirit's witness within us so that we can approach and address Father as 'Abba,' that is, 'Daddy.' The Spirit witnesses and testifies to our spirits that we are indeed beloved children of God. Jesus lived in the reality of this conviction: He is the Son of God, beloved of Father, chosen and sent to fulfill Father's purposes. Now as we teachers express our own relational confidence in Father, the disciples will absorb this same attitude. Our prayer is that God would impart to the individual disciple through us this abiding and over-riding sense of belonging to Father. Here we see discipleship to Jesus maturing. Without the relational confidence in Father, discipleship can easily slip into bland conformity, or worse yet, legalism, that is, the replacing of God's grace by our own flesh-based works.

OUR ONENESS IN SERVICE TO HIM

Our relationship with God is like a coin. On one side of the coin we find relational confidence, deep and secure. Now the other side of the coin we find our work of serving God. From our first conscious breath in the morning to our last worshipping whisper at night, like Jesus, we live to accomplish the works, the purposes that Father has for us. With Jesus as our model, we seek to impart to the disciples this constant goal of hearing what Father is saying and seeing what Father is doing. Some people look at their life-goal as a career choice; they seek God only to make this one decision. Jesus looked at His goal of life as "pleasing Father."

John 17:22

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:

1 Thessalonians 1:4-5

4 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake.

Romans 8:15-17

15 For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. [g] And by him we cry, "Abba, [h] Father!" 16 The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs--heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Some make their career choice and then consider God's further involvement as an imposition on their own creativity. Jesus made His career choices in terms of constantly delighting Father in all that He said and did. Admittedly, this depends largely on the growing maturity of the disciple. The disciple needs to see in the daily life of the teacher this constant reaching towards Father, to please Him in all details of life.

CONFIDENCE, ASSURANCE, PEACE

As teachers, we lead Jesus' new disciples into a profound and all-embracing conviction that they are God's children, chosen, called, born from above, who know how to worship Father in spirit and truth and serve only Him all their days on earth. This conviction expresses itself in a deep, inner peace. This conviction guides the disciple to look for Father's hand in every situation of life—those situations that are comfortable and those that are not. Jesus lived and worked in a tangible and unshakable sense of: His sonship and oneness with Father, His involvement in Father's work, and Father's abiding and irrevocable Presence. This will gradually take place in the disciple by the Spirit, by the Word, and by modeling their lives on our attitudes and lifestyle.



REVIEW

Jesus communicates His own bedrock conviction of relational unity with Father to all those who walk with Him by faith. Jesus' relational unity continued without start or finish, from our human perspective, in the unreachable depths of His pre-universe existence. We cannot talk about a certain situation when the unity of Father-Son began, because there never was a time when He was not relationally united with Father. Our relational unity starts within this time-space continuum and reaches indefinitely into the human and divine future. Jesus' relational unity with Father took on a new dimension when "he took upon Himself human flesh." The Spirit of God generated in Mary's womb the 'seed of David' who was to become the Savior of the world. Our human generation started with our parents' desire for children—sometimes in response to the Spirit's leading. And our relational unity with Father starts at the point when we, by faith, receive Jesus Christ as Savior-Lord of our lives.

Jesus' avowed goal in John 17 is that all believers might enjoy the constant and eternal reality of relational unity that Jesus enjoys with Father. This conviction undergirds and fortifies all disciples in their pursuit of serving God all the days of their lives. As human, Jesus walked in the awareness of that relational unity. It was for Him His life-breath. We, on the other hand, are still learning to walk in the awareness of that relational unity as we seek to follow the spirit each day. But we will never have to experience the incomprehensible awfulness of relational separation that Jesus experiences at the Cross, when His body became the sin-sacrifice that once and for all paid the debt we owed.

Now Jesus simply informs the Jewish leadership that He and His Father are one in person, attitude, and work. Jesus then demonstrates His own Father-sourced deity by healing the invalid who had waited for thirty-eight years. Jesus confounds the leadership by insisting that He and His Father constitute two witnesses for validating truth and so fulfill the requirements of Mosaic Law for confirming truth. Jesus insists that they believe Him, based on this assertion.

Jesus amazes the leadership by stating that if they know Father, they then would know Him also. For to look at Jesus is the same thing as looking at Father. To listen to Jesus is the same as listening to Father. For Jesus is the exact representation of Father. And the leaders need no other demonstration of Father's goodness and loyalty, other than Jesus Himself. Jesus also offends the leadership by affirming that He, Jesus of Nazareth, is YHWH, the One who spoke at the burning bush, the One

who authorized Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt, the One who shared His own nature through the Torah and subsequent writings of the Old Testament. Jesus' message is unequivocal and demanded a decision from the Jewish leadership. For Jesus of Nazareth had no other explanation for who He is, what He says, and what He is doing.



RESEARCH

- A. Expand your understanding of relational confidence by finding other Scriptures using the term 'confidence' or 'assurance,' especially in the Pauline writing. Use an English or Greek concordance.
- B. Expand your understanding of 'oneness,' that is Father's oneness with Jesus and the believer's oneness with His Lord, by finding other Scriptures especially in Johanine writings.
- C. Now bring together in an essay a description of the believer's relational confidence with the Lord based on his own oneness with the Lord. Use other Scriptures that illustrate this point from Old Testament and New Testament.
- D. These five bibliographical suggestions are but an introduction to a vast subject diligently investigated since the beginnings of the Christian Church:

Forte, Bruno: "The Trinity as History," Alba House, New York, 1989.

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Moltmann, Jurgen: "The Trinity and the Kingdom," Harper & Row, 1981.

Volf, Miroslav: "After Our Likeness (The Church as the Image of the Trinity)," Eerdmans, 1998.

Weinandy, Thomas G: "The Father's Spirit of Sonship," T & T Clark, 1995.



Profile ~~Life~~

Father has Life in Himself and Gives that Life to His Son

In reference to the healing that just happened at the Temple Pool, Jesus explains to the Jewish leaders that, as they know, Father has Life in Himself, 5:21. That is, Father as the source of all Life can give or remove life from people on earth; Father has decreed that Jesus carry that same authority. That is, Jesus has Father's authority to give life to whom He pleases, or to remove life. And Jesus has just demonstrated this power by giving life to the paralytic who had waited thirty-eight years in the Temple Pool. The Pharisees found it impossible to deny the healing, but they felt their careers and lives threatened if they recognized Jesus as Father's Son, Messiah on earth as human, the Chosen and Anointed One revealing His Father.

Again Jesus refers to the Life that resides in Him in the discussion with Jewish leaders about bread, after He fed the crowd of 5,000 men. Jesus describes Himself as Living Bread, Bread that gives life, Bread that comes down from heaven, John 6:51. And He confronts the rulers with the directive that they must "eat" of this Living Bread or they will die eternally. Jesus bases this life-giving quality of His Bread on the reality that He draws that Life from Father Himself. For Jesus derives Life from Father who sent Him. Jesus has Life because He receives Life from Father.

Further on in the same chapter, 5:26, Jesus re-states the issue. In the same way that Father has Life in Himself, uncreated and eternal, so also Father has given that same Life to Jesus. So now Jesus also has Life in Himself. This forms the basis for the authority that Father has given to Jesus to carry out all judgment. For Jesus carries the authority to declare final judgment. That is, Jesus passes sentence on all humans, to give life for those who know Him, and death for those who hate Him.

AUTHORITY OVER LIFE AND DEATH

In these references, we see the uncreated, eternal Life that Father has placed in His Son. Father's Life in His Son has two applications: Since Jesus has uncreated and eternal Life within Himself, He carries authority and power to give or withhold life in healing and to carry out judgment on all humans, judgment that includes eternal destinies.

John 5:21

For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

John 6:51

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

John 5:26

For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself.

APPLY THIS PROFILE TO TODAY'S DISCIPLE



INSIGHT

YHWH (Jesus) lives in uncreated and eternal life—apart from this space-time creation. He exists outside of creation as we see and experience it. YHWH stepped into his creation in the Person of His Son, empowering Him to share Father's Life with all those who will follow Him. Father's Life creates in us a sense of living in eternity and creates in us the authority to share His Life with others who do not yet know Him.

As teachers, we seek to impart to the disciple the awareness of an eternal order that exists outside of the time-space universe we see and know. For God (YHWH) has always lived in eternity. He created the natural order by His power, for His purposes. Because we had no possible way of making ourselves acceptable (righteous) before Him, and because He is rich in mercy, one day He stepped into this created order in the person of His Son, Jesus of Nazareth.

In contrast to current views and personages, this earth on which we live, this created order, is not eternal, nor the object of worship. Many centuries before Christ, the Psalmist described the work of the Son as He created this universe, how He rules it and how He will bring it to its intended goal or purpose, Psalm 102:25-27; Hebrews 1:10-12. For Jesus Christ's work as Creator, see also John 1:3,10; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2, and cross-references. We want the disciples to worship the Creator, to appreciate His creation and to administrate it appropriately for His purposes.

ETERNITY AS A QUALITY OF LIFE

Christ's work as Creator and Redeemer brings into the lives of every disciple a sense of eternity. For eternal life had already begun for Jesus' disciples, John 5:24. Like every follower of Christ, our lives on earth now have an eternal quality because of God's presence in us. Christ has changed permanently the quality of our lives because He brought into our lives the same eternity in which He lives and works. Among the four evangelists, only John the Beloved features this quality of eternity in our lives, an eternity that has already begun for the believer.

ETERNITY IN THE MIDST OF LIFE

Eternity from John's perspective is not so much a length of time as a quality of life, a quality that is different from the life inherent in mere biologic life. From the humanist's viewpoint, one's pursuit of God arises from one's own need to be fully self-realized. So the humanist chooses

Psalm 102:25-27

25 In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. 26 They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. 27 But you remain the same, and your years will never end.

Hebrews 1:10-12

10 He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. 11 They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. 12 You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end." [g]

John 1:3,10

3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

Colossians 1:16

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Hebrews 1:2

...but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

John 5:24

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

his pathway of religion based on anticipated self-improvement with no anticipation of life outside of this universe. From the Christian viewpoint, the humanist's efforts fall far short of a relational knowledge of God that continues forever. That inherent Life that resides in Father, He gives to His Son, who in turn passes it on to His followers. This inherent Life cannot be cancelled, destroyed, or revised. And we experience God's inherent Life as a relationship with Him. And the new disciple faces a time of adjustment to this new way of encountering life on earth. This relational Life of God in us we call 'eternity in the midst of life.'

Eternity in the midst of life means several things to the new disciple, to those who are in Christ Jesus.

- We live in the present reality that Christ with His eternal life has literally come to live within our lives, John 3:14; 5:24.
- We live in the present reality that Christ shares His Life with us, John 15.
- We live in the present reality that God has forgiven, cleansed, justified, sanctified, and glorified us, Romans 8:28-30.
- We live in the present reality that Christ occupies and rules in our hearts by faith, Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 3:15.
- We live in the present reality that Christ is our wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption, I Corinthians 1:30.
- We live in the present reality that we have tasted the powers of the age to come.

God's power that belongs to the coming age has broken in upon us now. That power is here and at work among us now. From now on, the disciple's entire lifestyle will be experienced from this perspective, that everything the disciple feels, thinks, says, and does brings eternity into the midst of daily life.

EARTHLY LIFE IN THE LIGHT OF ETERNITY

In addition, as teachers, we yearn to impart to the disciple an awareness of how to live in the light of eternity. Since God's eternity permeates us, we view our choices from that perspective. Our heart and conscience are always commenting to us, reproving or approving our moral choices. But Christ will review and evaluate all our choices at the Great Judgment (see the three parables of Matthew 25). This brings our bodies, our training, our careers, our marriage and family, our lifestyle of pleasures and conveniences squarely into the perspective of Jesus Christ. And we gradually learn to choose wisely so that we do not live in the regret and waste that permeates our culture today.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Father desires that we share with other people His eternal life which dwells in us. John 17:3 shows us

John 3:14

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up...

John 5:24

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

Romans 8:28-30

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, [k] who [l] have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

Ephesians 3:17

...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love...

Colossians 3:15

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

I Corinthians 1:30

It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

John 17:3

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

that Father granted His authority to Jesus so that Jesus might give Father's eternal life to believers. Now we view this authority in Jesus from the perspective of His redemptive work through the cross, the resurrection, and ascension. But, also, in the experience of the disciples, we want to see them imparting God's life into others. As Father granted that authority to His Son Jesus, so also Father grants us authority to share His eternal life with others.

Please note that we do not impart life out of our own strength or resources. Clearly, we are the vehicles through which God's Life passes into others' lives. As teachers, we desire to impart to the disciples more than the burden to share our faith, its teaching, and lifestyle. We want them to walk in the reality of sharing Jesus' Life, that quality of life known as eternity in the midst of life.



REVIEW

Jesus demonstrates to all who will listen that He carries within Himself the authority and power to create life—which He abundantly demonstrates in the temple healing of the invalid. Jesus further demonstrates His authority over life by enlarging, with His touch, the food supply from five loaves and two fish to more than sufficient for 5,000 men and families. Father continues to demonstrate this power through Jesus in all the healings and in the occasional restructuring of the laws of physics to accomplish His own purposes. God's life in the midst of our human lives identifies us as Christians and authorizes us to live now in a dimension of reality called eternity, not available to the non-believer. This life in us, Father now wishes us to share with others. For the purpose of Father's authority in us is that we share eternal life with others.



RESEARCH

- A. Review the Scripture references cited in this section.
- B. Take the following ideas from Profile #5, and write a series of one-page essays describing in non-religious language the content of these biblical concepts.
 1. Uncreated, everlasting, eternal Life that resides in Father.
 2. The Son is the source of life because Father gives that Life to His Son.
 3. Awareness of an eternity in the new believer.
 4. Life as a humanist versus life as a Christian.
 5. Eternity in the midst of life.
 6. Judgment for eternity.
 7. Sharing eternal life with others.



Profile Six Six

Father Sends Jesus, the True Bread from Heaven

In unique, exalted and sublime language, John 6 sets forth the elements of Jesus' on-going dialogue about bread, human hunger, and Himself as God's Bread. Jesus leaves Capernaum, crosses over the Sea of Galilee, and disembarks on the eastern shore of Galilee. Great crowds followed Him because they had seen Jesus' healing miracles. And it was the season for Jewish men to prepare themselves to attend the annual Passover in Jerusalem and present themselves before the Lord. Jesus went up on a hillside with His disciples and they sat down to watch the enormous crowds of people as they gathered to watch and hear the Master's teaching.

Philip muses about where they could buy enough bread to feed such a crowd. Andrew volunteers the five barley loaves and two fish that a small boy had brought for his own lunch. Jesus simply instructs His disciples to have the people seat themselves in rows on the grassy area so that His disciples could feed them. From those five loaves and two fish, which Jesus blessed, the disciples fed all the people both bread and fish... "as much as they wanted," 6:11. They gathered the leftovers, so nothing would be wasted, and filled twelve baskets.

THE KING WHO MAKES BREAD

The crowds responded in two ways: First, they acknowledged Jesus as the Messianic Prophet foretold in the Old Testament. But then they began to plan how to take Jesus by force and install Him as King of Israel. His disciples waited till dark to avoid conflict with the crowds and embarked on their return to Capernaum. Against strong headwinds, they rowed about halfway, when they saw Jesus approaching the boat, as He walked on the water. Jesus calmed their terror, entered the boat and immediately they arrived at the shore, 6:21. When the crowds realized that Jesus had returned to Capernaum, they got into their boats and went searching for Jesus.

And when they catch up with Jesus in the Capernaum area, He confronts them and unmask their motives. Apparently, they want to see more miracles just so they can get free food. Jesus admonishes them to spend their time working for food that results in eternal life that only He, the Son of Man, can give them, 6:27. Jesus appeals to Father's validating work in His daily life as the authority for His giving eternal life to people. In effect, Jesus says that since He can heal the sick and

John 6:11

Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

John 6:21

Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

John 6:27

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

multiply bread and fish, He also carries authority to extend eternal life to them. The people respond that they want to know what works they can perform to merit the eternal life that Jesus would give them. Jesus responds that the only 'work' Father desires is that they believe in the One whom Father sent to earth as Messiah. At this point the crowd becomes restless, if not stubborn. They want Jesus to authenticate Himself again by giving them food the way Moses gave food to ancient Israel in the desert wanderings.

FATHER GIVES BREAD TODAY

Jesus re-orientes the crowd's thinking by asserting that Father, not Moses, gave the bread (manna) to Israel. At this point Jesus begins to compare Himself to ordinary human bread. In the same way that human bread gives earthly life to the people, He is the Bread that gives eternal life to people. Father gives this Bread; this Bread comes down from heaven; this Bread is true and unfailing; this Bread imparts eternal life to the eater. Of course the people want this bread, because they would never have to work again to produce their own bread.

Jesus declares Himself to be this Bread of God, sent from Heaven to give eternal, not earthly life. And Jesus will give this bread to anyone who comes and commits to His Person, lifestyle, and teaching, 6:35. Jesus receives everyone whom Father gives to Him. Jesus protects them and will raise them up and vouch for them on Judgment Day. For Jesus has come down from heaven to fulfill Father's purposes, not His own. The Jewish leaders begin to grumble because Jesus identifies Himself as Father's Bread, sent from Heaven. After all, they know this Jesus of Nazareth; they know his father and mother. So they refuse to believe that Jesus has come from Heaven as the Bread of God.

John 6:35

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.

APPLY THIS PROFILE TO TODAY'S DISCIPLE



INSIGHT

Father sent Jesus to earth as True Bread, that is, the unique nourishment that up-wells not from human food, digestion and chemical reactions, but from the power of unquenchable Life—Father's Life eternally shared with His Son the God-Man and with all those who follow Jesus by faith. Whereas Profile #3 deals with the disciple learning how to draw strength from God as temporary substitute for human food, this Profile #6 focuses the disciple on learning to become food, like Jesus, so that the needy can eat and find Life in God.

John 6:32

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.

Jesus re-oriented the crowd's thinking when He commented about Moses and the manna. The people claimed Moses as the source of manna and took ethnic pride in being related to him. In fact, the people wanted Jesus to again validate Himself, like Moses, by giving them more food from heaven. Jesus reprovved their request for more signs from heaven by exposing their own motive of wanting food without working for it. And Jesus corrects their view of Moses by stating that "It is not Moses who has given you bread from Heaven, but it is my Father who (now) gives you the True Bread from Heaven," John 6:32. Please notice that Jesus refers to Moses as one who is living today, though in the past he channeled God's food to the Israelites. Jesus says in effect, "Moses isn't (not, wasn't) the one who gave you food..." For Moses is alive and in Father's Presence.

TRUE BREAD

And Jesus goes on to up-date the people by asserting that Father is giving to them, not manna, but the True Bread in this very moment. And that True Bread is Himself, the One who comes down out of Heaven. And Jesus has just demonstrated this reality by multiplying the slight amount of food and fish into more than enough for 5,000 picnickers. The people can see that Jesus has made Himself like bread for the crowds of people. He has poured His strength into a tiny resource for feeding a large crowd. And in their better moments the crowds acknowledge that no other prophet in the history of Israel has ever produced such miraculous works as Jesus of Nazareth. But they want the Bread for selfish reasons. They want Messiah to meet all their needs without their committing themselves to Him.

BREAD THAT COMES DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN

And Jesus insists that Father is presently giving Bread from heaven, and that He, Jesus of Nazareth, is that Bread. The Jewish leaders understood that Jesus was comparing Himself to food, but began to grumble and argue sharply among themselves with the question, "How can this man give us his body to eat?" They heard the parable, the figure of speech, but could not break through to its meaning. This fits Jesus' statement in Matthew 13:33, that He teaches in parables so that the obedient of heart can see and enter Father's rulership. As for the rebellious, they remain blind, deaf, and callous in heart, unable to penetrate the real meaning of this figurative story.

Matthew 13:33

He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount [b] of flour until it worked all through the dough."

John 6:51

I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

BREAD FOR THE WORLD

Jesus is the Bread from Heaven that Father is presently giving to any and all who will follow Him. And this Bread gives life to the world, the

people of earth, John 6:51. For the tired succession of mighty nations and productive leaders, from Babylon, to Egypt, to Crete and to the cultures of the Yellow and Indus River valleys—all failed to give enduring life to their countrymen and the nations they conquered. And Jesus of Nazareth, the unemployed carpenter and untrained rabbi from rural Galilee places Himself in ascendancy over all previous nations and leaders by stating that He is Father's Life on earth as the God-Man. And in His person, in Himself, He carries unquenchable Life and, as this Life, He is here to give to the world's population. For the world has run out of life.

A WORLD WITHOUT BREAD

The people we disciple to Christ must touch the finality, the horrendous reality that Jesus expresses so poignantly, that the world's societies have run out of life. They have no inherent life in themselves. Nations follow this tiresome cycle of birth, expansion, conquest, and decline. And although Rome appears at that moment to dominate Mediterranean and European worlds, they too will follow the pattern of previous nations. Without God's Life and a population committed to Christ, no nation can possibly survive.

DISCIPLES AS BREAD

Finally, we call the disciples to view themselves as bread, the way that Jesus is Bread. For Father arranges our lives such that the people we meet daily represent His sovereign work of drawing people to know and love Jesus of Nazareth. And these people we meet all bring with them their known and hidden burdens, problems, and agonies of life with the Lord. To use another metaphor, in John 15, Jesus clarifies the issue well, He is the Vine; we are the branches. As we live and relate with Him, then His life flows through us to produce the grapes. And the needy of the earth come to us to consume those grapes and to find God's life for themselves.

We tend to conserve the few grapes we see produced in our lives by God's grace. People want the fruit or bread because they are desperate for life. And we find ourselves being consumed by insatiable needs of the broken-hearted, the unseeing, and the dead of spirit. For this purpose Father sent His Son—to be Bread. And for this purpose, Father called us into vital and life-producing relationship with Himself, so that we might become bread for the people we know and work with daily.



REVIEW

Let us look at six summary statements that encapsulate Profile #6:

1. Jesus of Nazareth is Father's Bread sent down from Heaven to give life to the world's populations. For the world has run out of life.
2. Jesus, as Father's Bread, brings eternal life to all those who eat of Him freely.
3. Father gave Israel the bread of life in manna. But though they ate it, they still died.
4. We call Jesus' disciples to view themselves as bread—in the same way that Jesus declared Himself as the Bread of God.
5. We call Jesus' disciples to make themselves available as living bread so that others will come to them, eat of their life, and be satisfied in God.
6. We caution Jesus' disciples that to make themselves available as Bread of God means their bread will be consumed by the needy of the earth. And they will need to return to Jesus' Presence to be fed by Him and once again made into Life-giving bread.



RESEARCH

- A. Note the parallel between John 6, Jesus as Bread, and John 15, Jesus as the Vine. In both chapters Jesus portrays Himself as supplying to people what we usually expect from food. Read the sections carefully until you can answer this question: “In what ways is Jesus Bread or Vine to me? How does Jesus supply to me what food usually supplies?”
- B. Now write an essay describing the similarities and contrasts between the metaphors of bread and grapes.
- C. Re-read the verses that deal with bread and the vine, John 6:35; 15:5. Now compare these verses with Jesus’ extended, more developed teaching in John 6:53-58. Study carefully these verses to see our relationship with Jesus as He becomes Bread and Vine to us. How do we feed on Jesus so that we consume His flesh and blood?
- D. Now write an essay that shows the development of Jesus’ teaching as He builds from the simple metaphor of Bread and grapes to this confrontive assertion: “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you,” John 6:53. Let your essay show the progression of our dependency upon Jesus Christ.



Profile Seven

Jesus Comes to Earth on Father's Initiative

The most recurrent phrase that Jesus uses to describe Himself is this: That His Father 'sent Him to earth.' Jesus applies this phrase in a variety of situations. Let us look at how the 'sending of Jesus' expresses Father's Life and affects us as His disciples.

WE TRUST FATHER

The sending of Jesus leads to trusting Father. From 5:24, Jesus gives eternal life to those who fulfill two conditions. First, a person must hear Jesus' words, that is, listen to them and commit to believe and practice what He is saying. Second, one must believe in the Father who sent Jesus to earth. This coin of eternal life has two sides to it: The words of Jesus and the Father who sent Jesus. One cannot be disassociated from the other. Both are indispensable for eternal life to take effect in a person's life.

FATHER CONFIRMS JESUS

The sending of Jesus is confirmed by Father's marvelous works through Him. From John 5:30, Jesus states that "the work He is doing testifies to the fact that Father sent Him." For the very works that Jesus does, these testify that Father sent Him. For Father sent Jesus to express Father's heart, to show His covenant people about His love, patience, and kind intentions towards them and all people on earth. The crowds consistently testified about Jesus as the Prophet, the Messiah, who must have been sent from God. They asked, "If Jesus were not from God, how then could He perform such miracles?" Peter confronts Jerusalem's crowds on Pentecost by insisting that Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to them by miracles, wonders, and signs, Acts 2:22.

JESUS DELIGHTS FATHER

The sending of Jesus delights Father. From 5:30, Jesus states He has come to Earth, not to please Himself, but to please, delight, and satisfy Father who sent Him. Jesus' relationship with His Father can best be described as delightful. Starting in Isaiah 42:1 Father describes His Servant, Messiah, as the One in whom He delights. Again, in both the Baptism and Transfiguration, Father expresses delight in His Son, Matthew 3:17; 17:5.

John 5:24

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

John 5:30

By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

Acts 2:22

Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

Isaiah 42:1

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.

Matthew 3:17

And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Matthew 17:5

While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

FATHER TESTIFIES TO JESUS

The sending of Jesus draws Father's testimony or attestation. From 5:37, "the Father who sent Jesus, He testifies concerning Him." Jesus reproves the Jewish leaders for not hearing Father's voice nor seeing His Person as represented in Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus felt that Father had spoken clearly in the Old Testament Scriptures. And the leaders could see Father's very form by looking at Jesus.

JESUS EXPOSES UNBELIEF

The sending of Jesus exposes the leaders' lack of faith in YHWH, the Living God. From 5:38, "you do not believe in the One who sent Him." Jesus jolts the Jewish leaders by showing them that they really do not trust the God of Moses. For they do not believe what Moses said and what Moses wrote about Jesus. And for this, Moses, not Jesus, will accuse them before Father, 5:45-47.

IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME...

For long ages, Father planned development on earth both socially and culturally for the 'sending of His Son.' For Father sent His Son into the world, in the fullness of time, born of a woman and of the Mosaic Law (Galatians 4:4), not to condemn the world's population, but that they might be redeemed through Jesus, John 3:17. Jesus always credits His Father for His own mission to earth.

APPLY THIS PROFILE TO TODAY'S DISCIPLE



INSIGHT

Father sent Jesus to earth to accomplish Father's purposes. Yet Jesus came on His own initiative, not under duress, based on His profound love for Father, whose impelling mercy will cover the sins of all people with Jesus' life-living sacrifice. As Jesus always credited His Father for His own initiative in sending His Son to earth, so also we want today's disciple to walk in the same profound confidence. Each disciple is here because Father has initiated His own plan for him or her. That is, Father has arranged that each disciple be born, raised, and flourish in the circumstances and purposes that Father has arranged.

"SO SEND I YOU..."

Let us note the parallels between Jesus and the disciple today. First, disciples today rest in the assurance that Father has sent them to serve Him. That is, Father called them into existence through conception,

John 5:37-38

37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, 38 nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.

John 5:45-47

45 But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. 46 If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. 47 But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"

Galatians 4:4

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law...

John 3:17

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

genetic code, parents, and cultural up-bringing in order to accomplish Father's purposes on earth. In no way are we suggesting and hinting of 'pre-existence' of today's disciples. Rather, the parallel lies in Father's call that they be here on earth to serve Him.

As our disciples today share their growing faith with family and colleagues, some pre-Christians will ultimately believe the words of Jesus that the disciples share. But also, the pre-Christians must come to experience for themselves this awareness that Father has called them to Himself. Further, Father has already commissioned them to serve Him all their days.

The disciples today will find that Father's marvelous works on their behalf bear witness to the fact that Father has arranged and supervised the disciples' presence on earth today. Some disciples find this difficult to accept, that Father would validate them on earth today through works that could only come from His Presence. But who of us has not experienced a last minute intervention by Father on our behalf? Who of us has not received funds or healing that demonstrate, because of circumstances, that only our loving Father could have provided? Father delights in providing for us. He delights in healing and counseling through us. For Father's work in us validates us as those prepared and sent of God to accomplish His purposes on earth.

As Father delighted in Jesus of Nazareth as His Chosen, Unique, and Beloved Son, so also Father delights in each one of His children—for no other reason than they are His beloved. Disciples with ingrained fears, insecurities, or poor self-image will struggle with the assertion that anyone could possibly delight in them. As teachers, our role is to model this relational delight to the disciples—that Father enjoys them as His children. As we delight in today's disciples, as they experience our delight in them, Father will impart to them His own delight in them.

Not only did Father bear witness to Jesus by the works Jesus completed, but also Father witnesses to Jesus through the mouths of people on earth who recognized and validated Jesus as Father's Son. This means that for the disciples today, they will unexpectedly encounter fellow believers who bear witness to the work of Father in them as disciples. At times, stunning and moving is the testimony that other Christians will give to us. We do not anticipate these statements. Indeed, we feel we do not merit such assertions. But this is Father's work of bearing witness about His own children, those who are following Him in truth and in Spirit. And when we realize what has just happened, we bow in humility and gratitude before Father for His Fatherly and relational ways with us.



REVIEW

Let us summarize six statements about the sending of Jesus:

1. The sending of Jesus leads to trusting Father.
2. Father's marvelous works confirm the sending of Jesus.
3. The sending of Jesus delights Father.
4. The sending of Jesus draws Father's witness or testimony.
5. The sending of Jesus exposes the leaders' lack of faith.
6. Father planned in detail earth's culture to receive the sending of His Jesus.

These six statements review for you the essence of Profile #7. To enhance this review, please add any thoughts that have occurred to you as you have studied this particular profile. Listen carefully to the voice of the Spirit in your own heart and mind as He makes His own comments and additions to what has already been said here.



RESEARCH

- A. Now write an essay that draws together the six components of thought from Profile #7. Let each of your major points be represented as major sections in the essay. Let each section have its own title and explanation.
- B. Find in John's Gospel all the occurrences of the phrase, "Father (who) sent me." Use a concordance or a software search routine.
- C. For each occurrence of this phrase, then identify the accompanying thought that links Jesus' coming to earth with a particular purpose or result in Father's overall plans for Jesus and humankind.
- D. Now write an essay, or a detailed outline, that presents the results of "B" and "C" given right above.
- E. Identify in your own life the various times or experiences in which Father showed to you the various purposes for which He arranged your life and work on earth.



Profile Eight

Jesus the Son Carries Father's Authority in Father's Name

John 17:6

I have revealed you [a] to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word.

John 17:11-12

11 I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name--the name you gave me--so that they may be one as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

John 17:26

I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

John 10:18

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

Luke 4:36

All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!"

Jesus states that He carries the authority of Father's name. In John 17, Jesus is speaking just before His crucifixion and specifically states four times that Father has placed His own Name on Jesus as Son. And in Hebrew culture, the king's name given to a servant is the same thing as the king's authority. And this name of the Lord, YHWH, carries within itself both power and authority, that is, authority to bear the king's identity and power to carry out whatever the person is authorized to accomplish.

In 17:6, Jesus states that He has worked to reveal Father's Name to the disciples, the very Name that Father had already given to Him as Son. In verses 11-12, Jesus appeals to His Father to protect these disciples by the power or identity inherent in Father's Name. For Jesus Himself has been using the power of Father's Name to protect His disciples during His ministry days. By the authority in Father's name, Jesus protects—without loss—all those whom Father has assigned to Him. Then in verse 26, Jesus assures us that He will continue to make known to us the power of Father's Name so that the love that Father has for His Son will abide in us. After the resurrection and ascension, Jesus received the fullness of Father's Name in that Father designated Him as ruling Sovereign and by giving Him the Name that is above every Name, the Name at which every person on earth and heaven will bow. To call on the Name of Jesus is to call on Father's authority.

AUTHORITY THAT CHOOSES TO SERVE

Jesus received both permission and authority from Father to lay down His life in death or to refrain from doing so, John 10:18. Jesus wanted the Jewish leaders to know that He came on Father's authority with the right to die as Shepherd for the Israel of God. He lived in the grip of Father's authority and carefully exercised Father's authority in healing people, in the various miracles of nature and in His teachings.

Jesus' words and deeds carried an authority that the people of Israel had not seen before. When Jesus expels the unclean spirit from the demonized man in the synagogue, the people react in amazement. They had never seen anybody who could give orders to evil spirits and they would come out, Luke 4:36. In Capernaum, the people exulted in Jesus' teaching for He taught with authority, not like the teachers of the

Mosaic Law, Matthew 7:29; Mark 1:21. This authority that Jesus carried validated His words and actions. Yet Jesus never ascribed this authority to Himself, always referring to Father who sent Him.

AUTHORITY FOR FINAL JUDGMENT

Finally, Jesus states clearly that Father has committed to Him the authority to carry out all judgment. For the Father judges no one; He has given all judgment to the Son so that all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father, 5:22-23. Father has committed His own authority to Jesus of Nazareth so that Israel might recognize and receive the fullness of Father's words through Him. But to those who refuse Father's words, works, and life through Jesus, then Jesus will exercise Father's own authority to carry out appropriate judgment.

APPLY THIS PROFILE TO TODAY'S DISCIPLE



INSIGHT

As Jesus of Nazareth carried Father's authority by or in Father's name, so also the disciple engages the learning process of carrying Father's authority that is contained in Father's Name.

POWER VERSUS AUTHORITY

Please recall the distinction that we made between the words, 'power' and 'authority.' Authority speaks of the delegated right to do something. Power speaks of the strength or means to carry out or apply that authority. Now Jesus of Nazareth walked in the authority of His Father. For Father gave to His Son the right to speak His words and the power to accomplish His works. Let us review some of the rights or opportunities that Father gave to Jesus:

1. To be His only and unique Son
2. To be the Word who expresses Father exactly and fully
3. To be the Savior who brings to us Father's reconciling love for all humanity
4. To be the Creator of the entire universe, all things that are in Heaven and earth
5. To be the Servant chosen and sent as Father's delegated Representative
6. To be the Heir of all things on earth and in Heaven
7. To be the Priest who stands between every human and their Heavenly Father
8. To be the Judge who carries out all judgment without partiality for any human

Matthew 7:29

...because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

Mark 1:21

They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach.

John 5:22-23

22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

Now each of these rights is empty unless Father also gives the power to make them happen. And in the Gospels, we watch Jesus' daily adventures of walking in the power of the Spirit. And at every point of Jesus' obedience to Father, He receives the power through the Spirit to carry out Father's plans.

POWER THAT DEMONSTRATES AUTHORITY

This is the great model for disciples today. As Jesus received the power to implement the rights granted to Him by Father, so also for disciples today. The authority that Father grants to disciples today is seen first in the gifts with which the Spirit endows the individual disciples (see Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12 for gift inventories). The gift is a sphere of responsibility something like a franchise for a business. The franchise carries the right or authority to carry out the particular business represented. Likewise for disciples today, the 'franchise' or sphere of responsibility, the calling, that Father grants carries Father's authority for His disciples to function and prosper.

Now the power to function in the gifts of the Spirit and to make productive the franchise and calling—for this we return to the age-old teaching on sanctification or maturation in the Spirit. The gifts and sphere function best as disciples learn how to take to the cross their old nature and walk in unhesitating obedience to the first promptings of the Holy Spirit. For ministry is the overflow of one's walk with Father. In that love-bond, the Father-child relationship, today's disciples will find the power that makes both the gifts and the franchise function. Father's blessing on us is the power to make our lives productive. But His blessing is tied tightly to our on-going relationship with Him, our nearness and openness to Him, our constant worship of Him, and our careful listening to His promptings.

AUTHORITY THAT OPENS ETERNAL LIFE

A final sober note: From John 17:3, we read that the purpose of the authority that Father grants to Jesus is that Jesus convey eternal life to those who follow Him. So also for disciples today. The purpose of the authority that Father grants to us is to convey to others the eternal life that Father has granted to us. Not that we are ever the source of eternal life. That always remains in Father's hands. But from the creation days of Genesis until now, life reproduces 'after its kind.' And the eternal life we receive, we convey to others that they, in turn, may commit to faithful people, 2 Timothy 2:2.

John 17:3

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

II Timothy 2:2

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.



REVIEW

Let us pick out the major points from the above sections:

1. The King's authority is carried in the King's Name. We, as Jesus' disciples, receive both Father's name and authority.
2. Jesus progressively reveals Father's name to us, including Father's authority.
3. As Jesus lived in the context of Father's name and authority, so also today the Spirit teaches each of us to live in that same Name and authority.
4. As Jesus' words and works carried Father's power and authority, so also today the disciple's words and works are to carry this same power and authority.
5. However, the right to pronounce or execute judgment remains firmly within the hands of the Son of Man, Jesus of Nazareth.
6. The Spirit's gifts carry both power and authority of Father to carry out His purposes.
7. The 'franchise' that Father gives to the disciple also carries Father's name (authority) and power for productivity.
8. The purpose of authority is to grant eternal life. As for Jesus of Nazareth, so also for the disciple today—each within his sphere.



RESEARCH

1. For each of the eight items listed above, search John's Gospel, chapters 2-9 for specific verses which substantiate the individual assertion.
2. Write a paragraph for each of the above eight items that explains the essence of each of the eight points.
3. Now gather these eight paragraphs into an essay of eight sections. Add introductory and concluding comments for each paragraph, as well as connective sentences which join one section to another.
4. Finally, add an introduction for the essay and a conclusion.



ProfileNine

*Jesus Comes to Earth to Fulfill
Father's Purposes and Works*

John 6:38

For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

No matter how the religious leaders of Jesus' day criticized Him, He always came back to this central theme: He has come to earth at Father's request to accomplish Father's plans. The Pharisees' frustration simply increases every time they hear this oft-repeated assertion, John 6:38. Jesus sees Himself as the embodiment of Father's purposes. Father has taught Him the words and the teachings to share while on earth. Father directs Jesus daily and hourly in the use of His time, the people He encounters, the messages He shares, and the audience with whom He shares Father's words.

FULFILLING & REPLACING MOSES

On the other hand, the religious leaders see themselves as divinely ordained interpreters, as teachers and as guardians of Moses' words, that is, the Law or Torah, which YHWH gave through His angel at Mt. Sinai to the people of Israel. For the Pharisees to trust the words and Person of Jesus means they must permit Him to up-date Moses. For Jesus presents Himself as the One whom Father sends to call the nation of Israel to a new and higher understanding of God Himself. The religious leaders must permit their beloved leader Moses and his teachings to undergo both a vigorous re-statement and an unanticipated fulfillment. Understandably, the religious leaders staunchly resist Jesus—even to the point of engineering Jesus' own death. From their perspective, to trust Jesus, His words and works means that:

1. They must receive Jesus of Nazareth as Messiah, YHWH'S chosen servant.
2. They must become Jesus' disciples, no longer those of Moses.
3. They must apply all of Moses' and Jesus' teachings to their own hearts.
4. Outward conformity to sets of rules which they devise is no longer valid.
5. They must change their leadership model from authoritarian to servant.

Obviously, this set of five statements would apply equally to any people who in Jesus' day, or today, would decide to place their past sins and their future lifestyle in Jesus' hands. But the religious leaders would not pay this price. They felt that Jesus' teachings would lead to the

destruction of their leadership team (Sanhedrin) and their administrative structure. Then the Roman government (army) would come and take over the vacant leadership Jesus' kingdom would produce. Small wonder that the simple teaching of Jesus generated such turmoil and resistance from the Jewish leaders!

SAME PLAN, SAME WORK

In spite of this, Jesus asserts His favorite theme, that He is here on earth to carry out Father's purposes. We find the context for His teaching, John 5, in the miraculous healings of the invalid in Jerusalem at the pool Bethesda. And it was Saturday, the Sabbath, on which Jesus chose to go to this pool and heal this particular invalid, John 5:16. This irritated the religious leaders more than almost anything, that is, Jesus' habit of healing people on the Sabbath in full sight of them. And Jesus would always cite His own responsibility to His Father as priority. For Jesus comes to earth not to accomplish His own will, but to carry out the purposes that Father indicated, John 6:38.

In the setting of the Bethesda healing, Jesus increasingly provokes the Pharisees by pointedly bringing His Father into the scenario. Jesus presses the issue that He and Father are working together in this healing, "My Father is always at His work to this very day and I, too, am working," John 5:17. From impeccable motive and with only Father's perspective in mind, Jesus articulates these thoughts, But to the religious leaders, they experience the weight of His words like a crushing burden. At this point, some critics assume Jesus is naïve, unaware of the import of His words on His audience. Others criticize Him for deliberately provoking the religious leaders with inflammatory teachings, like this one in John 5:17. But for Jesus, the overriding issue is the accomplishment of Father's purposes. He says, "I have come to do my Father's will!"

APPLY THIS PROFILE TO TODAY'S DISCIPLE



INSIGHT

Jesus' very life on earth, His teachings and works, His time and energies, His resources and background, His own vision for life, and His future plans—all these come together in one succinct statement: I am here on earth to carry out the plans and purposes of My Father in Heaven. This underlying attitude we seek to impart to each disciple.

Jesus places the responsibility for the Bethesda healing directly on His Father. For Jesus, this is not an abdication of His own responsibility. Rather, Jesus makes a vision (or mission) statement about His own life. Jesus knew perfectly well that His hand brought the healing to that

John 5:16

So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him.

John 6:38

For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

John 5:17

Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working."

invalid. But Jesus insists on the ultimate perspective in everything He does. Nothing Jesus says falls outside Father's purposes for Him on earth. Jesus is here on earth, only and always, to accomplish His Father's plans and purposes. And the Jewish leaders understood His point. For they became furious. For not only would He heal on Sabbath, thus displacing Moses, but more than that, Jesus is calling YHWH His own Father, thus making Himself equal with YHWH. Jesus' vision statement set all things in perspective for others to understand and, at the same time, criticize.

COMPLETING FATHER'S DESIGNS

For disciples today as in any Church age, this overarching concept must come to supervise our thinking and administrate our activities. Whether teacher or disciple, we are here on earth to fulfill Father's purposes. No other bottom-line teaching is appropriate in the light of Jesus' teachings. This assertion defines our worldview, oversees our training, and administrates our servanthood for Him. For in this focus, Jesus finds the energies and intelligence through the Spirit to discern and carry out Father's plans. Isaiah the Prophet declares that YHWH called and chose His Servant, prepared and arranged His Life, and focused His activities while on earth. Check especially the 'Servant Song' of Isaiah 42 to see the careful preparation that Father made for His Servant. (See Review and Research for the full listing of the Servant Songs of Isaiah.)

As for Jesus, so also for His disciples. For you His disciple, please walk with me through this list of arrangements that Father provides in our behalf—when we did not even know that He existed, loved us, or desired to lead us in life.

1. Starting at the moment of our conception, God the Spirit supervised the arrangement of genes and chromosomes that would guide the development of our body and soul.
2. Father chose the nation and the extended family where we would live.
3. Father chose the parents into whose family we would be born and raised.
4. God the Spirit constantly speaks into our developing soul and spirit to orient us to Father, to His goodness and mercy, His mercy and purposes.
5. God the Spirit regularly energizes our conscience that we might distinguish right from wrong, good from bad, and to prepare us as Servants of the Most High God.
6. We, our parents, or family, may have made poor choices in life and subsequently experienced the consequences of not following

God's ways. But Father designed His preparatory work in our lives so that we might come to know and love Him, to follow and serve Him.

A SACRED LIFE

Now for our society today, these six assertions sound like bad news. They do not want God meddling in their lives. They interpret Father as authoritarian, insensitive to peoples' inner needs, with only His own purposes in mind. But within this life-teaching, this life-message of Jesus, we find a secret that lies buried in the thousands of teachings that Jesus shared on earth. The laying down of Jesus' own life to accomplish Father's purposes, this opened the door for Jesus to come forth into His own full development or self-realization. For the servanthood Jesus displayed, from Baptism to Calvary and the Open Tomb, this prepared Him to reign eternally and universally as unchallenged Sovereign over Heaven and earth, with a Name above any in Heaven or on earth.

As citizens of Western civilizations, we value personal identity or choice and strongly reject any idea of God the Father intruding into our lives. But Jesus demonstrates, with unrivaled success, this concept of laying down one's life in behalf of another. From Jesus' perspective, the only way to come into self-realization, or full development of one's inherent gifts and talents, is to live in behalf of another, namely, God the Father.

FATHER AS SOURCE

Finally, one seemingly small point from Jesus' lips. Twice in John 5 (19,30), Jesus asserts that He does nothing 'of Himself,' that is, out of His own initiative or perspective. Biblical interpreters see this as a source genitive, the use of the Greek genitive case to focus on source, not distance or separation. Jesus always takes responsibility for what He says and does. But again, He states His overall perspective. For Jesus, life and work is sourced in Father. And Jesus is here to fulfill Father's purposes. And as faithful and successful administrator of Father's purposes, He receives Father's reward, that of Ruling Sovereign.

As for Jesus of Nazareth, so also for us. As we walk in Father's purposes, as faithful and diligent administrators of the sphere He grants us, then Father rewards us—both here on earth and later in Heaven. To fulfill Father's purposes releases Father's designs in our lives, prepares us to honor and delight Him all our days, brings us into the fullest possible development of inherent gifts and talents, and rewards us eternally with responsibility in the Heavenly realm. Let us take as our own this Jesus-perspective: I am here on earth to fulfill Father's plans and purposes.

John 5:19,30

19 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

30 By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.



REVIEW

1. The five statements from the first page of Profile #9 (page 66) constitute a crushing demand for the religious leaders of Jesus' day. For He requires them to lay aside their centuries-old traditions and the very Mosaic Law itself. Jesus is saying: I am the sole source and arbiter for Moses, his teachings, and subsequent structure of Israel's life and history. This progressive confrontation leads ultimately to Jesus' arrest, trial, conviction and execution.
2. The six statements made in the application of Profile #9 (page 67) describe for us Father's planning work for us. Jesus, by life and example, calls us into His rest in the midst of His work. A rest based on Father's inimitable planning. Since Father has already planned our days, our work schedules, including our rest-days and vacations, our adventure lies in discerning Father's plans and working into the joyful fullness of all He has for us.
3. The statements on the bottom of the third page of Profile #9 (page 68) show us the meaning of the phrase, 'fulfill Father's purposes.' This operative phrase provides for us the unshakable foundation for encountering and interpreting life, for participating in the life of God while here on earth.



RESEARCH

1. For each of the five statements in the Review section on page 66, go to the Gospels and find various verses that substantiate each numbered concept.
2. Now blend these concepts into an essay that presents a rational for why the Pharisees reacted to Jesus of Nazareth as they did.
3. For each of the six statements on page 67, go to the Gospels and find various verses that substantiate each numbered concept.
4. Now blend these concepts into an essay that describes how Father prepares each one of His children for life and service on earth.
5. For each of the statements at the bottom of page 68, go to the Gospels and find various verses that substantiate these numbered concepts.
6. Now blend these concepts into an essay that describes the results of the disciple's commitment to walk in Father's purposes here on earth.



Profile en

Jesus Speaks the Words that Father Taught Him

Jesus explained repeatedly, and in great detail, to the Jewish leaders and crowds who followed Him exactly what He came to accomplish on earth. Foremost in His explanation is this constant assertion that He came to teach or share the words which Father taught Him. For Father had commissioned Him to come to earth and Father had given Him the teaching which He wanted Jesus to share with the Jewish and Gentile peoples of earth. Father did this before Jesus came.

At the Feast of Tabernacles, John 7:16, Jesus responds to the Jewish leaders. They stand amazed at Jesus' wisdom and insight. They exclaimed, "How did this man get such learning without having studied?" The leadership expected itinerant rabbis to receive the Scriptures and the wisdom of the Jewish traditions through skilled human teachers. But Jesus puts the responsibility and source of His teachings directly on His Father who sent Him, not human family or Jewish traditions. Jesus asserts that His Father gave to Him these ideas, concepts, and teachings; they are not His own. He then challenges the listeners to discern the difference: Does His teaching come from Himself or from His Father in Heaven? Jesus gives two ways to answer the question. First, is the listener willing to commit to Father's purposes and worldview? Commitment precedes understanding. Second, is the Teacher gaining honor for Himself or honor for the One who sent Him? Servanthood also precedes understanding. Jesus affirms that He carries this insight, intelligence, or knowledge as a gift or commission from Father. And that His own understanding has its origin in His commitment and servanthood to His Father's purposes and to His Father's honor, not His own.

Again Jesus makes this point in a brief exchange with Judas (not Judas Iscariot, John 14:24). This disciple does not comprehend Jesus' strategy in revealing His own Messiahship to His disciples and not to everybody. Jesus then describes His perspective. First, if we love Jesus the Son of God, then we will obey His teachings. And as we love and obey Jesus, then His Father comes along with Jesus to live and remain with us. Jesus places the source of this teaching directly at the feet of His Father by avowing that these words belong to the Father who sent Him. (See also 14:10.)

John 7:16

Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me.

John 14:24

He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

John 14:10

Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

FATHER'S HEART REVEALED

It was obvious to Jesus of Nazareth that the ideas and words He shared represent the content of what His Father had taught Him before He came to earth. In John 8:28 and 38, Jesus asserts that the teachings He shares are those which He saw in Father's presence. These teachings are exactly what Father taught Him and sent Him to share. Jesus summarizes His own perspective in 12:49: He has not come to speak or teach based on His own authority or ideas. Rather, He carries a command from His Father about what to say and how to say it. And the greatest joy that Jesus can experience is to accomplish exactly what His Father wishes.

In the great High Priest's prayer of John 17, Jesus shares with Father the level of maturity that He sees in His disciples:

1. They have obeyed Father's word.
2. They know that everything Jesus has really comes from Father.
3. They know that Jesus has come from Father's presence
4. They believe that Father sent Jesus to earth.

And this is what we desire from those whom we disciple to Jesus of Nazareth.

APPLY THIS PROFILE TO TODAY'S DISCIPLE



INSIGHT

Jesus' ideas, words and teachings come from Father's Presence. Father shared them with Jesus before He came to earth. The teachings we learn from Jesus and His apostles have their source in Father's heart and mind. Their purpose is to reveal Father. As Jesus participates in Father's life and receives Father's ideas, words, and teachings, so also our desire is that each disciple today participate in Father's life and hear Father's constant speaking through the Word and the Spirit.

Let us explore just how this applies to today's disciples.

First, Jesus came to reveal His Father, not just Himself. The driving force in Jesus' own vision is to disclose, explain, and describe just who Father really is, first to the Jewish covenant people, then to all the Gentiles on earth. Jesus did not come to earth to reveal Himself. Jesus came that we might know and have constant access to Father.

John 8:28, 38

28 So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [c]the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.

38 I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father. [e]"

John 12:49

For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.

JESUS REVEALS THE FULLNESS OF FATHER'S MINDSET

Next, Father commissioned Jesus to live and speak exactly as Father would have, if He had taken human form on earth. And Jesus carried this awareness as both commission and burden of life. He wanted everybody to know the details, the depth, and breadth of Father's goodness and love. All that Father revealed about Himself to Moses and Israel, Exodus 34:6, Jesus purposed to share and impart to the people who inhabited the hills and plains of Galilee, Judah, Perea, and Jerusalem. Father disclosed Himself to Moses in seven descriptive statements: The One who is compassionate; gracious; slow to anger; abounding in love and faithfulness; maintaining love to thousands; forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin, yet not leaving the guilty unpunished.

Jesus embodied in Himself this set of attitudes and practices. Jesus' teachings, His miracles of healing, His authority over nature, the parables He imparted, the counsel He shared to answer the hard questions of life—all these elements constitute a mosaic of Father's very nature. As we watch Jesus in action, we see Father in action. As we hear Jesus teach, we hear Father share His heart with us. As Jesus participated in Father's life, so also for the disciples today.

Then, Jesus exemplified the servant posture in the midst of His entire life experience. Jesus lived to reveal another Person. This is the key to understanding Jesus' life and ministry. Jesus' role is that of the chosen and covenantal Servant. Jesus came to earth that He might serve Father and us by giving His life to the peoples of the earth. For they had run out of life and did not know it.

FATHER'S SPIRIT-BREATHED TEACHINGS

Finally, like Jesus, our insight and comprehension of Father's words depends directly on the flow of God's Spirit in our lives. John says it very simply, 3:34, "The one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit." Now Jesus received the Spirit without limit. Perhaps we, in our mortal and stained natures, will find it difficult to receive the Spirit "without limit." But Father gives the Spirit to those who ask, Luke 11:13. And Jesus fills and baptizes us in the Spirit that we might receive the power to live as witnesses to the reality of Jesus, that is, in the participation of life with Father, Act 1:8.

Exodus 34:6

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness..."

John 3:34

For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.

Luke 11:13

If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

MY PURPOSE IN LIFE IS...

Our goal is that disciples will reveal and serve Another, not themselves.

1. That they will commit to a lifetime of disclosing, explaining, and describing the reality of Father's person and activity as seen in Jesus of Nazareth.
2. That they will live and act in such a way that people will see and recognize Jesus' work of revealing the Father, with accuracy and truthfulness.
3. That they will exemplify the servant posture in attitudes, words, work, lifestyle, and teachings. Disciples serve Jesus, not themselves.
4. That they will receive and walk in the fullness of God's Spirit all day, every day, thereby receiving the insight necessary to speak accurately for Father.
5. That they will so participate in Father's Life through the Spirit that they will hear and express what Father is speaking to them.



REVIEW

These statements summarize Profile #10:

1. Jesus sees a level of maturity now in His disciples that frees Him to fulfill the ultimate purpose for His earthly visit: Go to the Cross! Jesus characterizes the maturity-level of His disciples in this way:
 - A. They have obeyed Father's Word.
 - B. They know that everything Jesus has really comes from Father.
 - C. They know that Jesus has come from Father's very Presence.
 - D. They believe that Father sent Jesus to earth to reveal Him.
2. The driving force in Jesus' vision is to reveal Father.
3. Father commissioned Jesus to live and speak exactly as He would have—had He taken human form.
4. Jesus exemplified the servant posture in the midst of His entire life experience.
5. Like Jesus, our insight and comprehension of Father's words depends directly on the flow of God's Spirit in our lives.



RESEARCH

1. Review Jesus' High Priestly prayer in John 17. Use the four statements from page 73. In John 17, find the various verses that substantiate these statements.
2. These statements describe a level of maturity in the men which Jesus considers sufficient so that He can now bring to completion His earthly ministry, by going to the Cross. Now write an essay that describes this level of maturity as it applies to disciples today. From Jesus' perspective, when does one release a disciple to his own sphere and ministry?
3. From pages 73-74, follow the paragraphs introduced by the words: First..., Next..., Then..., Finally... Now find some verses in John that demonstrate these assertions.
4. Now write an essay that describes the pattern of how Jesus reveals His Father, and of today's disciples as they reveal Jesus and His Father.
5. Take the five statements on page 75 of the disciples' goal to reveal Another, i.e., Jesus. Find some verses that substantiate this assertion.
6. Now write an essay that summarizes life and work of today's disciples—as they speak the words that Father teaches them.



Profile Eleven

*Father Draws People to Jesus
for Him to Keep*

JESUS: THE GOAL OF FATHER'S WORK

This principle contains two separate ideas. First, Father draws all people towards Jesus His Son. Then, Father gives Jesus the task of caring for those believers. Now in John 5, the Jewish leaders still harass Jesus for healing the invalid at Bethsaida Pool on the Sabbath. But with extraordinary poise and without a trace of self-seeking, Jesus announces to them this standard or self-test: Those who hear Jesus' words and believe Father who sent Him, those people will avoid judgment, pass from death into life, and enter into eternal life, John 5:24.

Later on Jesus defines eternal life as knowing Father, the only true God and knowing Jesus Christ, the One whom Father sent to earth, John 17:3. Jesus responds to those who saw the great sign of feeding 5,000 men. These miracle-watchers wanted to know how they might also perform God's works. Jesus replies that Father's current work is "that you might believe on Jesus whom Father has sent to earth," 6:29. This means that today Father focuses His own energies and work on drawing people to know and trust in His Son. Jesus sharpens this point in 6:45, by asserting that everyone who hears and learns from Father, those people will come to know Jesus. From these verses, we see that Father works to direct to Jesus of Nazareth all those who seek Him, the Father.

Further, we see that Father purposes that people behold or contemplate His Son and entrust themselves to Him. Father grants them eternal life and Jesus obligates Himself to raise them up on the Great Day of Judgment, 6:40. Then Jesus promises that He will receive everyone whom Father sends His way. He will reject no one whom Father sends to Him, 6:37. Within a few verses Jesus pledges four times to resurrect those who are placed in His care by Father, 6:39,40,44,54. Then Jesus declares that Father has purposed or covenanted that Jesus would care for His people right through to the resurrection, 6:39. Let us summarize this section by these eight observations:

1. Father draws people to know and trust His Son.
2. Father's work is for us to hear Jesus' words and believe in Him.
3. Those who want to come directly to Father, He directs to His Son.
4. We avoid judgment, pass from death to life, and receive eternal life.

John 5:24

I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

John 17:3

Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

John 6:29

Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

John 6:45

It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.

John 6:40

For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 6:37

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

John 6:39,40,44,54

39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. 40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.

54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

5. Eternal life means to know both Father and Son, i.e. to participate in Their life.
6. Father gives people to His Son to keep or protect.
7. Jesus promises to receive all that Father directs to Him.
8. Jesus promises to resurrect all those who belong to Him.

WE CONCLUDE THEN:

- That Father places within Jesus' watch-care all believers.
- That Jesus' work is to keep, guard, or protect all who belong to Father.
- That of these, Jesus will lose none, but resurrect them on Judgment Day.

APPLY THIS PROFILE TO TODAY'S DISCIPLE



INSIGHT

The disciple's work is to care for God's people, particularly those whom the disciple has brought to a saving knowledge of Christ. Keeping God's people means laying down my life for them, not only in the birthing-process, but especially in the maturation process. We want each new believer to come to the point of being able to impart to others the saving knowledge he has experienced and the maturation process in which he currently finds himself.

As teachers we seek to impart to the disciple a love for the Church, the Bride of God's Son. We focus on equipping disciples to learn how to lay down their own lives for Father's sheep, as Jesus demonstrated how He laid down His own life for them, John 10:14-18. Since Father's Prized Possession is the Church, the Bride of His Son, then we want disciples to value Father's sheep from that same perspective. For Father appointed Christ as Head over the universe, all history, and every thing in heaven and on earth—for the sake of the Church. For the Church is Christ's Body, the focal point of all activity of the Triune God, the ultimate purpose of Christ's redeeming activity.

BIRTHING LEADS TO PARENTING

We desire that the disciple love people, inside and outside the Church, in terms of individuals, not just an abstract ultimate concept of 'people.' We labor to form in the disciple an openness to the non-Christian, to see neighbors and fellow workers as pre-Christians. For the Spirit of God works to enlighten their minds and wills that they might yield to the saving grace of Jesus. And we anticipate that disciples replicate

John 10:14-18

14 I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-- 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father--and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. 17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life--only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

themselves by sharing Jesus' words and power with pre-Christians. More than that, we purpose to equip disciples to care for those whom they lead to the Lord. For the birth process leads to parenting. We share the Word and grace of Christ with the intention of seeing men and women come to maturity in Christ, not just experience birth.

THE FOUR-GENERATIONAL MODEL

Paul expresses this process to Timothy in a four-generation model, 2 Timothy 2:2. Paul wants Timothy to take the grace he received from Paul and commit it to faithful people. They, in turn, will pass it on to others. Four generations: Paul, Timothy, Faithful People, Others. We seek to train the disciple in this process of entrusting the Gospel, the saving grace of Christ, to people of faith who, in turn, will share it with others. The 'faithful people' represent those whom Timothy has brought into maturity of faith. Perhaps Timothy led them into their initial confession of knowing Christ, and perhaps not. But they are people of faith in Christ, people who are faithful to the Person and teachings of Christ. We want the disciple to practice with others the love-care process that the teacher practices with the disciple.

|| Timothy 2:2

And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.



REVIEW

Let us review the eight observations about Jesus' watch-care over believers.

- 1-2. We want the disciples to walk in the conviction that through them Father is presently at work to draw people to hear, know, and trust in Jesus Christ.
3. Many may wish to come directly to Father, like the Old Testament saints with their limited awareness of Triune activity, or like the non-Christian religions with their emphasis on an abstract, theistic god who embodies all human efforts to know deity. But Father, YHWH, directs all those who wish to know Him to His own Son who is the fullness of Father in human form.
- 4-5. Eternal life means participating in God's life, starting now and forever.
6. The disciple is God's instrument for bringing pre-Christians to know both Father and Son and enter into eternal life now. Father gives to Jesus (and His representatives) all those who belong to Father. Our work is to protect and guard them from evil.
7. As Jesus promises to receive (guard, protect) all those whom Father sends His way, so also the disciple today receives all those whom Father directs to his care.
8. Only Jesus can resurrect those who belong to Father. Our work is to care for the new believers, equip them for service, and trust Jesus to resurrect them.



RESEARCH

1. Take the eight observations from page 77-78 and from Profile #11 Review, and review the Scriptures that stand behind each assertion. Search through the cross-references to find other verses that deliver the same message.
2. Now write a one-page description or explanation for these observations as listed below. Project as your audience (readership) some pre-Christians who have showed interest in knowing more about Jesus of Nazareth.
 - a. Number 1 and 2 together
 - b. Number 3
 - c. Numbers 4 and 5 together
 - d. Number 6
 - e. Number 7
 - f. Number 8
3. Now draw together these six sections into a larger essay. Begin the essay with an 'Introduction.' Then write a 'Conclusion' to summarize the materials you have brought together.



Profile Twelve

Father Provides Witnesses to Validate His Son

John 5:19-47

19 Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. 21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. 22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.

24 I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. 25 I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. 27 And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

28 Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice 29 and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned. 30 By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

31 If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. 32 There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid. 33 You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. 34 Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. 35 John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chEphesians 4:10

This is why it [a] says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men." [b]

John 12:29

The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

The Jewish leadership incessantly harasses Jesus about His personal authority or source of power that would explain and justify both His words and spectacular deeds. In John 5:19-47, Jesus explains that His source for authority and power is YHWH, the One True God, His own Father. This explanation the Pharisees reject out-of-hand because it sounds like Jesus is making Himself God by claiming to be God's own Son. And the Pharisees have committed to the One True God and will have nothing to do with Greek-like, pagan practices of multiple deities.

THE FOUR WITNESSES

Rather than argue in a Greek-like, logical manner, Jesus presents to the Jewish leadership four types of witnesses who verify His own claim as God's only Son. First, in John 5:31, Jesus appeals to John the Baptist, his ministry, proclamation, and especially his public attestation to Jesus as the Lamb of God, John 1:29. Look to the One, says John the Baptist, who baptizes with the Spirit and with fire, Matthew 3:13; Mark 1:9, the Messiah, the One who was to come, Luke 7:18, the One on whom the Spirit of God descended and remained.

Second, Jesus goes on to say that He has another verifying witness, one that out-weighs John's testimony. Jesus boldly asserts to the Jewish leaders that the miraculous works they see Him doing, these works are the ones which Father Himself gave to Jesus to complete, John 5:36. Furthermore, these miraculous deeds attest to the fact that Father sent Him to earth as Representative, Servant, and Redeemer.

Third, Jesus appeals to the several times that Father audibly and publically witnessed to Jesus, at the Baptism, the Transfiguration and in John 12:29, when Jesus describes His coming crucifixion to His disciples. On these occasions, Father verbally spoke a blessing on His Son that others could hear. But, says Jesus to the leaders: "You have never heard His voice...nor seen His form," John 5:38.

Fourth, Jesus openly lays claim to the Word of God, the Old Testament Scriptures that define and guide the Jewish nation. Jesus declares that these Scriptures testify about Him, that He is the focus of all these writings, not Moses. In effect, Jesus turns the leaders' worldview upside-down. For they had committed to Moses. They regularly appeal to Moses for authorization; they trust Moses for salvation. Jesus asserts that Moses will be their accuser in Father's presence, because they have

set their hope on Moses, not Himself, who has openly demonstrated that He is Messiah. Jesus concludes that if they really believed Moses and his writings, then they would believe Jesus as Messiah, the One who fulfills all that Moses declared.

SUMMARY

Jesus appeals to four kinds of witnesses that individually and collectively attest to His status as Messiah and Son of God, sent from Father's presence to fulfill Father's words and deeds. John the Baptist attests to Jesus' identity. Jesus affirms that the miraculous works He does are the ones which Father gave to Him to accomplish. Father Himself, YHWH, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, breaks into human history three times and declares that Jesus is His Beloved Son, that people need to listen to Him. Then Jesus opens this new perspective that the very Scriptures themselves, the Sacred Writings that have formed and sustained Israel for 1,450 years, that He Himself is the cohesive focus of these Writings. The Old Testament Scriptures witness to Him! Jesus is the center, the content, and the goal of all the Old Testament Law, Prophets, and Writings.

APPLY THIS PROFILE TO TODAY'S DISCIPLE



INSIGHT

As Father validated his Son, Jesus of Nazareth, in the midst of His lifestyle and work, so also today. Father breaks into the lives of His individual disciples and openly—if not publically—attests to the fact that they belong to Him, that they are His disciples, and that since Father trusts them, others should listen to their life and message.

FATHER WITNESSES TO HIS CHILDREN

We are asserting that Father will provide for us, His disciples, the appropriate witnesses to validate the following:

1. Our relational tie with Father, as sons and daughters.
2. Our gifts and talents that Father will train for use in His own Kingdom.
3. Our calling and placement in life, whether:
 - In small business or corporate
 - In university or hospital
 - In pulpit or classroom
 - In the home or neighborhood
 - In cross-cultural or hometown settings

John 5:31-40

31 If I testify about myself, my testimony is not valid. 32 There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is valid.

33 You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. 34 Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. 35 John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

36 I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me. 37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, 38 nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. 39 You diligently study [d] the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

As we looked to the source Scriptures in the other applications, let us look at the four biblical witnesses for Jesus' life and work as a model for our own, John 5:31-40.

THOSE WHO WITNESS TO US

As Father prepared and sent John the Baptist to validate Jesus of Nazareth, so also Father prepares and sends a succession of people, sometimes pastors or fellow Christians, sometimes prophetic types, sometimes secular prophets. These witnesses come to validate in us the conviction that Father prepared and sent us to serve Him. They look at us and make comments about our person or work or lifestyle, comments that are beyond their human ability to know, comments that reinforce our confidence in Father's love-care over us. We look for these 'witnesses' among our family and pastoral leadership, our classmates and teachers, our managers and fellow workers, our colleagues or employees. For Father is well able to raise up from inanimate stones a credible witness to help substantiate us as His servants. For Father desires that we operate in the deep and powerful conviction that:

1. He is our beloved Father who lovingly embraces us as His sons.
2. He chose us to follow and serve Him as trusted and faithful friends.
3. He will provide guidance and resources appropriate for every venture in life.
4. He will make His Presence known by the Spirit anytime of day or night.

THE WORKS AS WITNESSES

From Jesus' perspective, the projects He engages are those that His Father indicates. And since these projects work out successfully, often miraculously, they witness to the fact that Father sent Him to accomplish them. For us as teachers and disciples, the works we engage—the career or calling, the position or function, the pay or benefits—all these provide a witness to the world that Father has prepared and sent us to accomplish His purposes. And as for Jesus, so also for us today. In the midst of our projects, we often encounter what we call disappointments at the results. Please recall the reality-scene at the crucifixion. His closest friends and disciples all abandoned Him. Even Peter, the designated team leader, denied Him with a curse. But Jesus did not view earthly success of a project as the only indication of Father's Presence. Jesus sought to be faithful to Father's plans in the midst of all His own earthly projects, irrespective of the personal cost to Himself. Though our projects may witness to Father's Person and power in our lives, our faithfulness to Father in the midst of our projects is what delights Father above everything else on earth.

THE WITNESS OF THE SPOKEN WORD

Father audibly and verbally bore testimony about His Son Jesus. At the baptism, the transfiguration, and just before the triumphant entry, Father crossed the boundary of eternity into time and declared His own delight in Jesus. Some thought it thundered, John 12:29; others thought an angel spoke. But Jesus, and at least John the writer, heard Father's voice. And Father's voice must have delighted Jesus even more than we can imagine. Now we are not suggesting that God speak from Heaven verbally and audibly to each disciple. Rather, we look to the work of God's Spirit who constantly witnesses to our spirits that we are indeed Father's children. And this same Spirit spoke to Elijah in the cave with that quiet, gentle voice, or that gentle whisper, I Kings 16:12, that no one but Elijah could know and recognize. Far more powerful than the great wind, the earthquake, and the fire comes this 'voice' of YHWH to us. For this 'voice' addresses us in the depths of our identity, the core of our humanity, in a way that only Father can lovingly share with His child. And we as teachers and disciples must be trained to recognize and follow this 'voice.' We often retain yesterday's sharing from Father in our memory and try to impose it as the final guideline for life. But Father continues speaking to us regularly, often deeply and closely in us, so that we receive the maximum of His love care for us, as well as the guidance for today.

THE SCRIPTURES WITNESS

As the Scriptures witnessed to and validated the Person and work of Jesus the Messiah, so also the Word of God witness to us about our person and work. The entire Law, Prophets, and Writings—these project an intricate and comprehensive witness to YHWH'S Son and Servant, Jesus the Messiah. He is the One who ties the thirty-nine books into a meaningful and consistent message. For us, both the Old Testament and the New Testament form the Sacred Scriptures. And as we walk in the Spirit, with our goal of pleasing Father, we will consistently find in the Scriptures a witness to our person and work. For the Spirit of God illuminates for us certain words and verses, paragraphs and sections, ideas and concepts. They resonate deeply within our spirits and we realize that God is speaking. Or, the Spirit catches our attention with an attitude of Jesus or some other character, and that attitude remains clear in our spirit all day. For God speaks with us as lovingly and carefully as any human parent.

John 12:29

The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

I Kings 16:12

So Zimri destroyed the whole family of Baasha, in accordance with the word of the LORD spoken against Baasha through the prophet Jehu--



REVIEW

Our desire and focus as teachers is that each disciple come to recognize and appreciate the infinite care of our loving Father as He provides four types of confirmation in our lives—confirmations similar to those He provided for Jesus, His son.

1. Father will actively attest to the fact that we are His beloved. He will stir up people to recognize us as His child, one called to serve Him.
2. Father will actively work in our behalf, changing people's lives through our words, our activities, our attitudes, and, sometimes, miraculous healings through our hands. Father attests to our identity and call by meeting people's needs through us.
3. Father will actively witness to His Presence in our lives through the in-dwelling Holy Spirit. As we mature, we come to recognize, with more sensitivity, more awareness, the immediacy of Father's Presence and His intense and persistent attention to us as His beloved ones.
4. Father will actively use the Word of God to confirm that He has called us to know and serve Him. As the entire Scriptures witness to the Person and work of Jesus Christ, so also does Father use the entire Scripture to speak to us in our frailty or our victory, in our sufferings or our blessings, in our encounters or our withdrawals.



RESEARCH

1. Take the four major points for Profile #12 from page 82 and find the Scriptures that support these premises. Use the Scriptures mentioned in our text to find the cross-references in the rest of Scripture.
2. Now write an essay for each one of these four points:
 - a. The witness of others to us
 - b. The witness of our works
 - c. The witness of Father in our lives
 - d. The witness of Scriptures to us
3. Develop an essay based for each of these four points, including 'Introduction' and 'Conclusion.' Use as your audience a set of 'Christianized teenagers,' those brought up in traditional church life.