

Tools for Christian Growth

*An Explanation and
Reason for
Personal Discipleship*

All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Bible.

My Soul-winning pursuit is that of disciples, not merely converts. As the Holy Spirit will allow, I will work to lead as many people to Jesus in search for those who are hungry to be a disciple of Christ.

Tools for Christian Growth

An Explanation and Reason for Personal Discipleship

1 Balanced Discipleship

2 What is Biblical Discipleship?

3 Jigsaw Puzzle Analogy

**4 Church Growth through Spiritual multiplication
(instead of “addition”)**

5 Physical and Spiritual Multiplication

6 Guidelines for Discipling

7 3 Target Groups for Potential Disciples

8 Biblical Discipleship: A Discipler’s Bible Study

**9 Five Important Concepts Every New Believer Needs to
Know: A high-level overview of Discipleship**

10 The Discipler’s Prayer

Each local assembly of believers should seek to practice

Balanced Discipleship

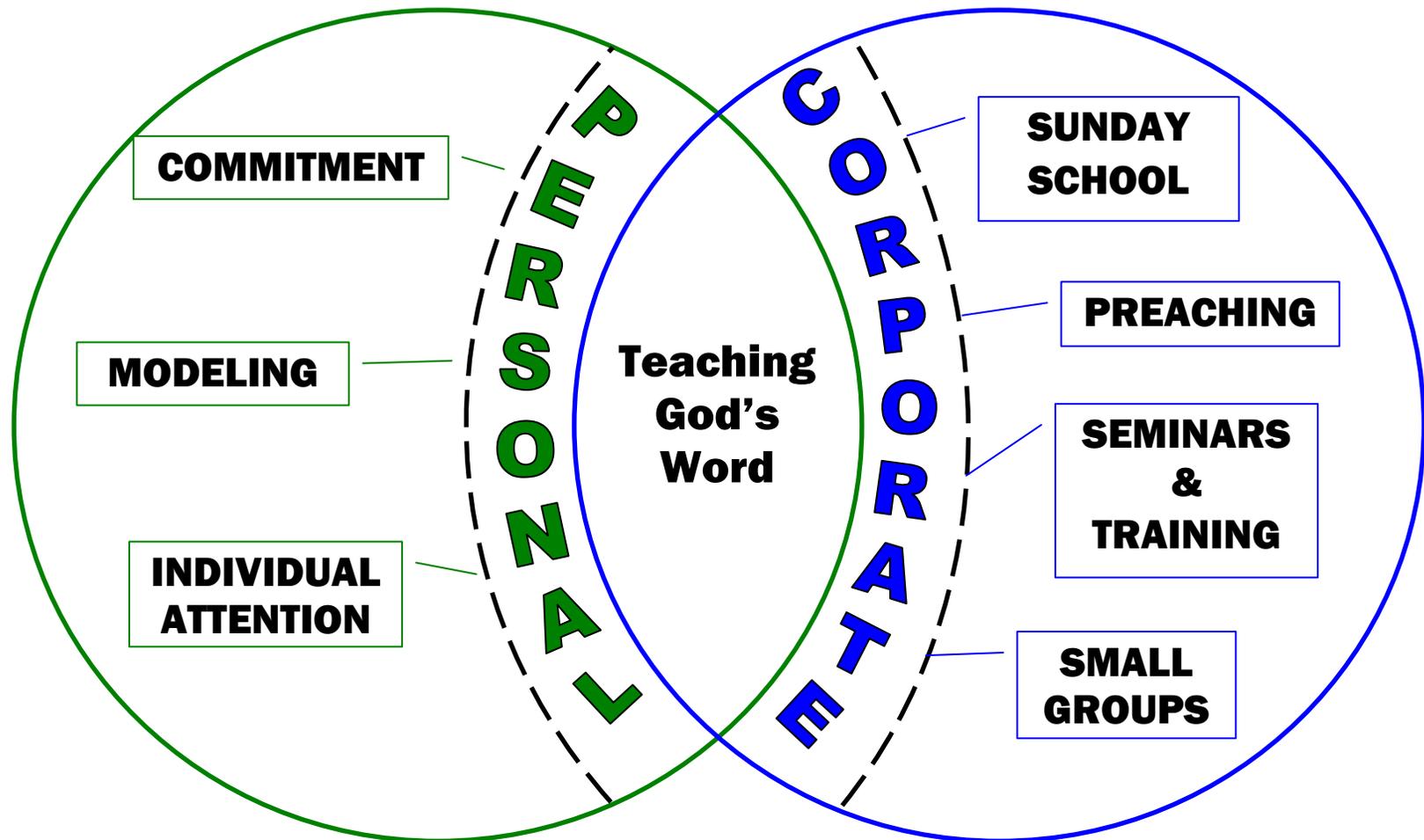
(BOTH **Personal** & **Corporate** discipleship are needed for healthy spiritual growth)

PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP

(Vitaly needed, but largely neglected)

CORPORATE DISCIPLESHIP

(Needed, but typically insufficient by itself to produce the best results)



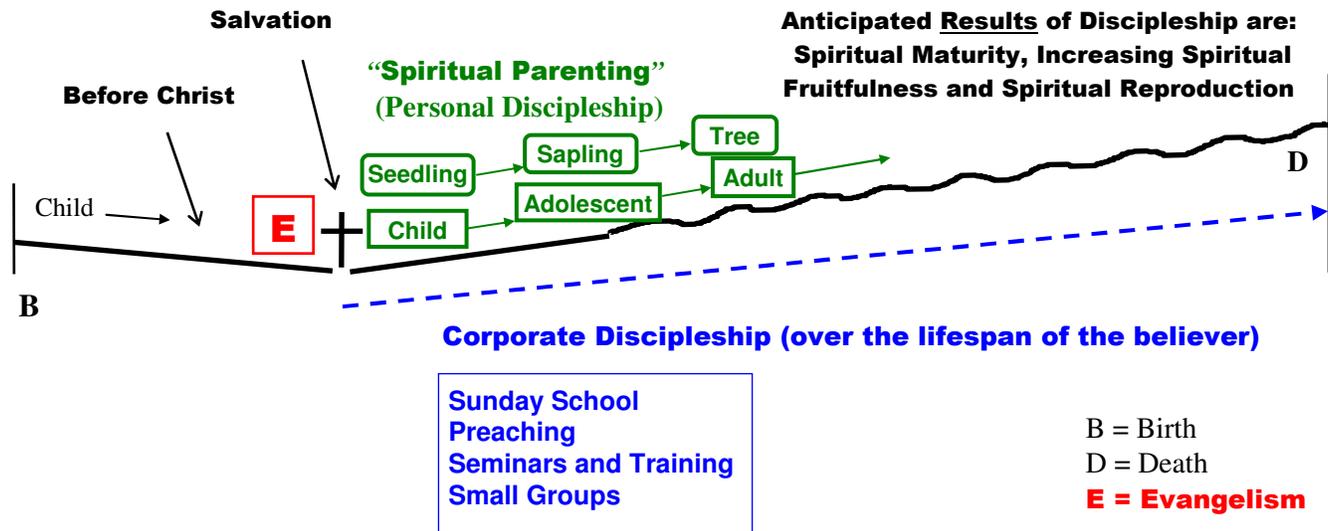
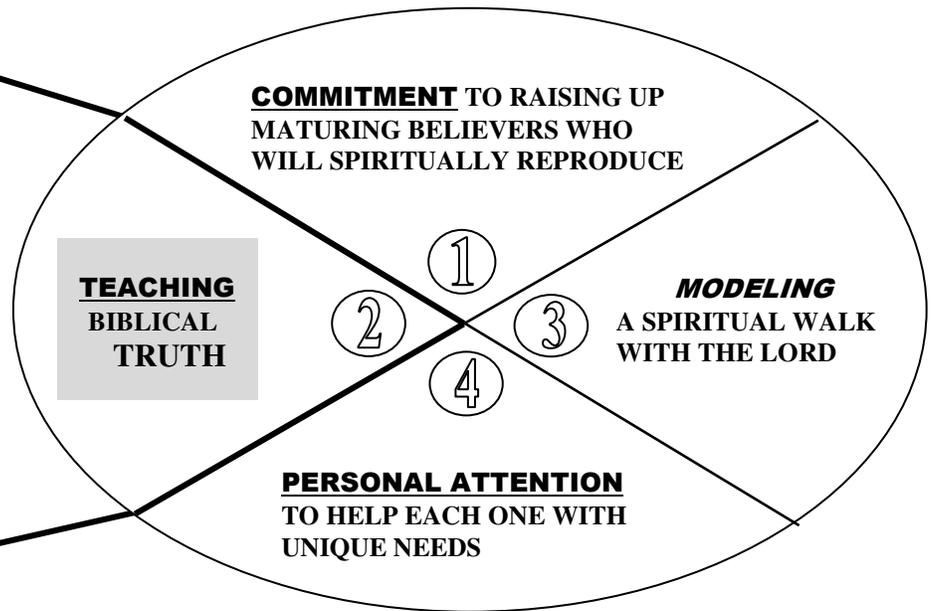
WHAT IS BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP?

PARTIAL TRUTH:

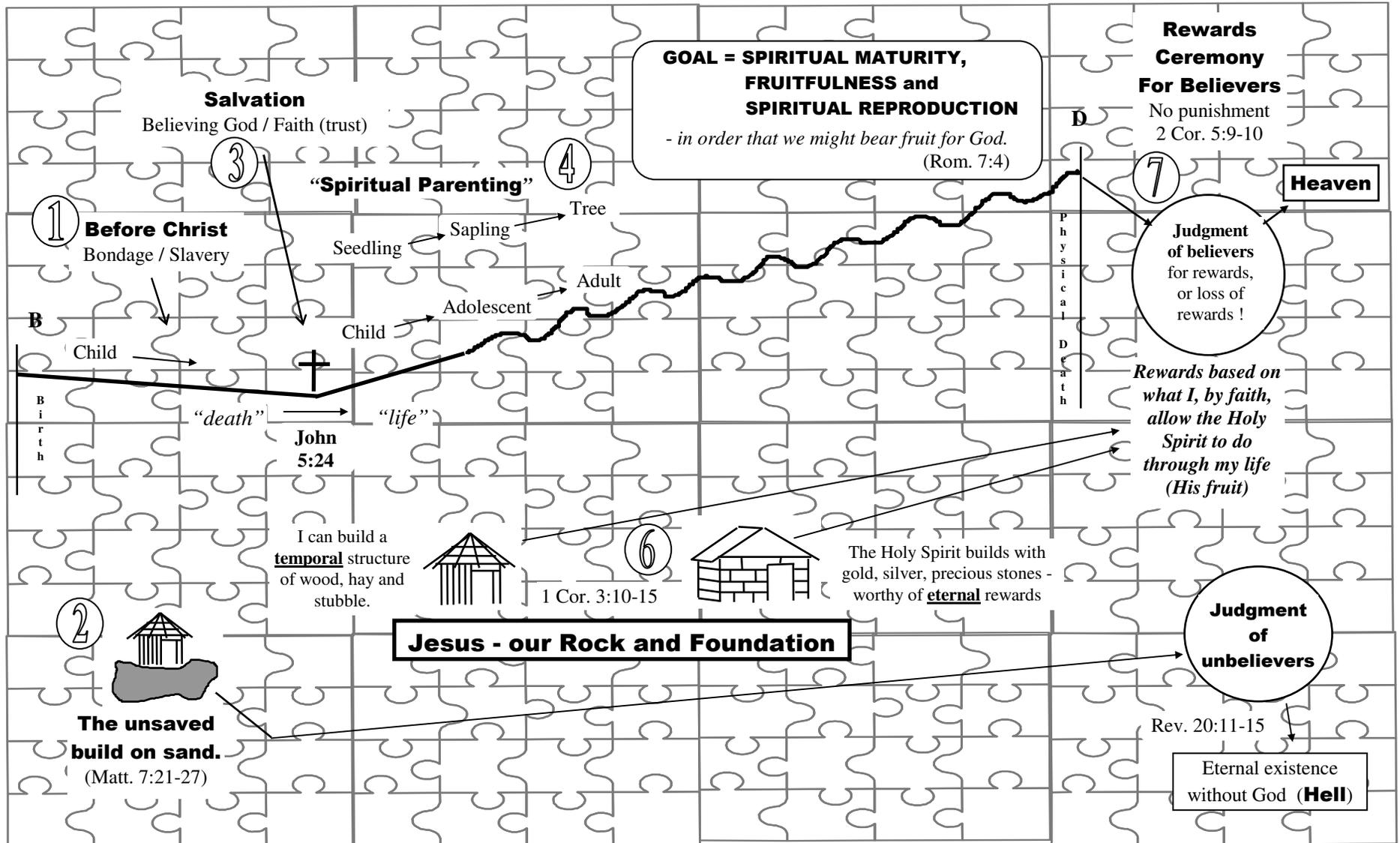
To most Christians the term “Discipleship” simply equates to “Presenting Biblical Truth”.

MORE ACCURATELY:

The concept of “Spiritual Parenting” more accurately reflects the Biblical meaning.



IN THIS DIAGRAM THE CHRISTIAN OVERVIEW IS PRESENTED AS THE “BOXTOP” OF A JIGSAW PUZZLE ... IT IS THE “BIG PICTURE”. PORTIONS OF BIBLICAL TRUTH ARE REPRESENTED AS “PIECES OF THE PUZZLE”.



Section 3

HELPING TO PUT THE PIECES TOGETHER

When a believer (newly converted or not) is seeking to grow closer to God they get hungry for the knowledge of God (2 Peter 1:2; 3:18). Ideally, new converts should come to church and hopefully even participate in Sunday school. However, without a coach or spiritual “parent,” it is easy for the “big picture” to get cloudy with fragmented information.

Note for discipler: The main purpose of the “OVERVIEW” handout in the first lesson is to give the disciple a practical overview of the Christian life, so that as he acquires Biblical concepts and knowledge he will be able to **mentally connect** them to God’s overall plan for his life.

If we can use the illustration of a **jigsaw puzzle**, the Overview would be like the **puzzle boxtop**, while the **pieces** would represent bits of Biblical knowledge. Imagine trying to fit together the pieces of a puzzle without being able to refer to the boxtop. It is much less frustrating when the boxtop is available **for reference**. That is very similar to the Christian experience. Typically a new Christian will begin to accumulate information from the Bible, friends, books, sermons, conversations, etc., but will have difficulty in knowing how this acquired knowledge fits into his everyday life here on earth, or worse yet he may arrive at wrong conclusions which can distort his understanding of God and the Christian life. Many newer Christians become frustrated and try to return to their secular life, while others will **compartmentalize** their life, resulting in a perceived “spiritual life” and a “secular life”. They will often then attempt to live an acceptable spiritual life before others, while at the same time concluding that Biblical principles somehow don’t apply to their secular life. We need to help the disciple to view the various components of his everyday life as a **unit**, and God’s involvement in every aspect of that life.

A goal is to help the disciple to understand how to integrate Biblical knowledge into his daily relationship with God and others, and protect him from falling into the common practice of simply archiving Biblical information.

A growing Christian will become increasingly more aware of his need to continually walk before the Lord (24/7), seeking His approval, and less dependent on the need for approval from others.

Section 3

Section 3

Church Growth through Spiritual Multiplication

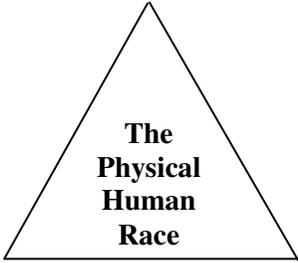
(instead of “addition”)

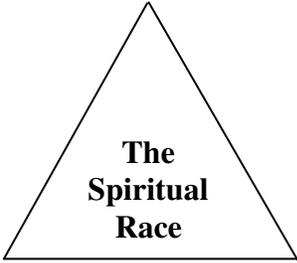
Number of “ CONVERTS ” (1 converted each day)		Number of “ DISCIPLES ” (1 discipled each 6 months)
1	To start	1
183	½ year	2
365	1 year	4
548	1½ years	8
730	2 years	16
913	2½ years	32
1,095	3 years	64
1,278	3½ years	128
1,460	4 years	256
1,643	4½ years	512
1,825	5 years	1,024
2,190	6 years	4,096
2,555	7 years	16,384
2,920	8 years	65,536
3,285	9 years	262,144
3,650	10 years	1,048,576
4,015	11 years	4,194,304
4,380	12 years	16,777,216

The figures in the **left-hand column** represent the number of **converts** that could be attained to if a Christian were able to win one person to Christ each and every day of the year. The figures in the **right-hand column** represent the number of fruitful **disciples** that could be attained to if each Christian would be faithful during each 6 month period to disciple just one other new convert to a level of spiritual maturity whereby the newer Christian could be used by the Lord to in turn disciple another convert. The figures in the right-hand column are less impressive at the beginning, but as can be seen, have a much greater long-term benefit.

*And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses,
the same commit thou to **faithful** men, who shall be **able to teach others also**. (2 Timothy 2:2)*

PHYSICAL & SPIRITUAL MULTIPLICATION

HUMAN RACE
<p>Genesis 1:26-28</p> <p>:26 <i>And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.</i></p> <p>:27 <i>So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.</i></p> <p>:28 <i>And God blessed them, and God said unto them, <u>Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,</u> and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.</i></p>
<p>Adam (1st) & Eve</p> 
<p>A medical doctor stated that about 90% of normal healthy couples should be able to physically reproduce children.</p> <p>We have sympathy for a couple that is unable to have children, because having children is considered <u>normal</u>.</p>
<p>Obstacles to <u>Physical</u> Reproduction:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical Immaturity 2. A Physical Health Problem 3. Lack of Physical Intimacy

SPIRITUAL RACE
<p>Matthew 28:18-20</p> <p>:18 <i>And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.</i></p> <p>:19 <i>Go ye therefore, and <u>teach</u> all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:</i></p> <p>:20 <u>Teaching them</u> to observe all things <u>whatsoever I have commanded you:</u> and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.</p> <p>1 Cor. 15:45-46</p> <p>:45 <i>... The <u>first</u> man <u>Adam</u> was made a living soul; the <u>last Adam</u> was made a quickening spirit.</i></p> <p>:46 <i>Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is <u>natural</u>; and afterward that which is <u>spiritual</u>.</i></p>
<p>Jesus (2nd Adam)</p> 
<p>Should we not expect the <u>majority</u> of normal healthy Christians to be able to reproduce <u>spiritually</u>?</p> <p>Do we have sympathy for the Christian who is not spiritually reproducing? If not, <u>why not?</u></p>
<p>Obstacles to <u>Spiritual</u> Reproduction:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spiritual Immaturity 2. A Spiritual Health Problem 3. Lack of Spiritual Intimacy

Guidelines for Discipling

1. What is the purpose of discipling?

Every person is born with a predisposition toward independence from God. That disposition tends to harden as the child grows into an adult. If the person accepts His gift of salvation, God then begins a process of inward transformation (sanctification). The pace and depth of that transformation process is affected by the understanding and openness of the new Christian. The intent of discipleship (mentoring, “spiritual parenting”) is to help the new Christian to understand **what** God is doing, in order to significantly influence and accelerate that process.

Romans 12:1-2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but **be ye transformed** by the renewing of your **mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Colossians 1:28-29 (Paul wrote) *Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; **that we may present every man perfect [mature] in Christ Jesus**: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

2. Targeting (Seeking God's choices as to whom you should disciple)

A. If you want to be an effective spiritual parent (discipler), you need to prayerfully seek God's wisdom for discernment as to which Christian(s) will benefit from your investment of time, energy and possessions. Jesus let His Father make the decision.

Luke 6:12-16 *... he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles; ...*

Note: Sadly, **many** Christians, especially those who have found a comfortable and acceptable Christian lifestyle, **are not overly interested in being mentored** on toward spiritual maturity and fruitfulness. If you are considering mentoring a Christian, look for the characteristics in Point 3. If they are not evident, then prayerfully look to the Lord for His **confirmation**, or to provide you someone else who does have a hunger to grow spiritually. There are Christians who would love to have someone take them under their wing to help them grow. Trying to disciple a disinterested person will usually lead to frustration! If you spend your limited time with a disinterested person, you may be neglecting someone else who sincerely wants to grow.

Note: **Timing** is very important. Someone not interested today may be interested at a later time.

B. Where should we look for Christians to disciple? (See Section 7)

- 1. New believers** Since they are now as **little children** in the kingdom, they tend to be spiritually hungry, and need someone to walk alongside of them.
- 2. Christians who have been living in a desert experience** (often for years), who through a God orchestrated **crisis** have found themselves humbled and finally willing to acknowledge that He can manage their life better than they can.
- 3. Christians who** have obviously accepted His Lordship over their life, want to walk with Him, but have either stagnated (or plateaued) in their Christian growth or **don't understand how to consistently abide in fellowship with the Holy Spirit.**

3. What characteristics should we look for in a disciple-to-be?

- A. **A spiritual hunger.** Are they hungering and seeking after God? Jesus said, "*Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*" (Matthew 5:6)
- B. **A teachable attitude.** Do they have an openness to Him? Do they see themselves as a learner, as an apprentice?
- C. **A reliability (dependability).** Paul told Timothy - *And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.* (2 Tim. 2:2) Do they want to apply His truth to their life? Is spiritual growth a priority?
Caution: It is not good if they think they're doing you a favor.

4. Suggested guidelines for discipling another person.

- A. Arrange to meet together at least once each week for about an hour or so. Plan on spending at least 3 to 9 months with a disciple, meeting regularly. The purpose of the meetings is to explain Biblical truth and principles, and to give the disciple opportunity to ask questions, share spiritual struggles, and discuss related topics. It is important for you to be a thoughtful listener; it's the best way to identify gaps in their spiritual understanding. Be flexible enough to allow the Holy Spirit to change the direction of the study or conversation, yet orderly enough so the time is not squandered on less significant matters. Teach at the disciple's pace.
The disciple should be encouraged to look to the Holy Spirit to apply Biblical principles to his life. A goal is for the disciple to increasingly understand and be able to clearly explain those Biblical principles to others. At some point the disciple should be ready to start mentoring another person, with your assistance.
- B. Seek to teach them Biblical principles to live by, not just Biblical knowledge.
- C. Make sure the disciple understands that you are available through the week. Even after your formal discipleship time is completed, you should plan to continue being available for the disciple, as you regularly monitor their spiritual growth.
- D. Regularly pray for the disciple, and with the disciple.
- E. Remember you are a role model for the disciple. Include the disciple in your spiritual life when appropriate.
- F. Your goal is to lead them into dependence on the Holy Spirit, and independence from you. We should expect the typical Christian, if correctly disciplined, to become a "spiritual reproducer".

***THE DISCIPLE WON'T CARE HOW MUCH YOU KNOW,
UNTIL THEY KNOW HOW MUCH YOU CARE!***

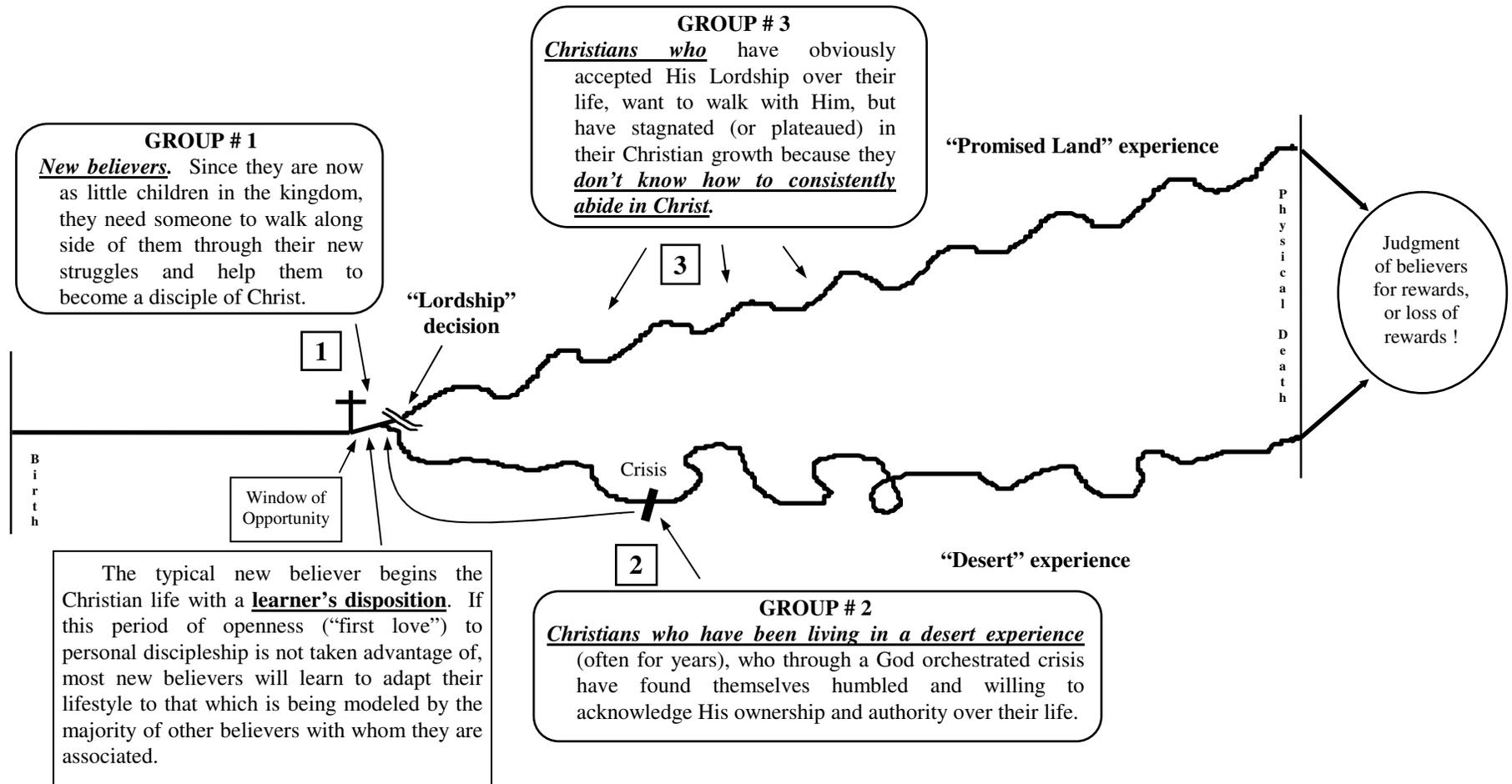
***A MEASURE OF SUCCESS IS INDICATED WHEN THE BELIEVER
YOU ARE DISCIPLING IS FUNCTIONING AS A DISCIPLER.***

My Soul-winning pursuit is that of disciples, not merely converts. As the Holy Spirit will allow, I will work to lead as many people to Jesus in search for those who are hungry to be a disciple of Christ.

Section 6

THE 3 TARGET GROUPS IN WHICH TO FIND POTENTIAL DISCIPLES

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses,
the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. (2 Timothy 2:2)



Section 7

BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP: A DISCIPLER'S BIBLE STUDY

1 Thessalonians 2:4-13

A model for “Spiritual Parenting” (a.k.a. “Biblical Discipleship”).

4 ... we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts.

5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness:

6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ.

7 ¶ But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children:

8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.

9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God.

10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe:

11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged EVERY ONE of you, as a FATHER doth his children,

12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

13 ¶ For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

“Biblical Model for Spiritual Parenting” (Discipleship)

1 Thessalonians 2:1-13 includes all the components of spiritual parenting.

(from Paul, with Silas and Timothy)

- 1. THEY WERE SINGLE-MINDED IN PURPOSE** (vv. 3-6)
- 2. THEY CARED FOR THE BELIEVERS AS A MOTHER CARES FOR HER CHILDREN** (vv. 7-8)
- 3. THEY BECAME “ROLE MODELS” TO THE NEW BELIEVERS** (vv. 9-10)
- 4. THEY GAVE INDIVIDUAL ATTENTION AND INSTRUCTION AS A FATHER** vv.11-12
- 5. THE WORD OF GOD WAS AN ESSENTIAL COMPONENT OF DISCIPLESHIP** (v.13)

- 1. Paul's concern for the believers went beyond that of just a “teacher”. He was committed to their spiritual welfare and growth.**

2 Corinthians 11:28-29
2 Corinthians 2:4
2 Corinthians 12:15
Colossians 1:28-29
2 Timothy 2:10

A goal of the discipler should be to help the disciple (apprentice learner) to mature, function, be fruitful, and to spiritually reproduce. The benefits to the discipler are secondary.

2. Biblical truth is an essential component of Biblical discipleship.

A Christian cannot be spiritually mature without Biblical understanding.

Ephesians 4:11-16
Colossians 1:28-29
1 Thessalonians 2:13

B. However, a discipler's goal is not to merely present Biblical knowledge.

1. A Christian teacher or preacher can present “Biblical knowledge” and at the same time be completely **detached** from the person(s) to whom he is ministering.
2. Encouraging “church attendance” and “Bible reading” is a good and right endeavor, but the truth is, a “new-born” believer will fare much better under the initial guidance of a spiritual “parent.”
3. It is better to nourish an infant before sending them to the 1st grade!

Making Disciples is more than a “Transfer of Biblical Knowledge”, it is a “Commitment to Spiritual Parenting”

To Love to Teach is Good, but to Love Those You Teach is Better!

3. A discipler is a “model” (one that is real, transparent) for the disciple. The goal is for the disciple to emulate the convictions and passion of the discipler.

1 Corinthians 4:15-16
1 Corinthians 11:1
Philippians 3:17
Philippians 4:9
1 Thessalonians 1:6-7
2 Thessalonians 3:7-9
1 Timothy 4:12
2 Timothy 3:10-11
Titus 2:7-8

Section 8

Jesus commanded us to make “disciples”, not just converts. In the Christian community there are many immature “converts”, but much fewer disciples.

Matthew 28:18-20
Luke 6:40

- 4. A newborn child requires an extra amount of individual attention. As the child matures, guidance can increasingly take place in a group setting. Since each child is unique, it should be expected that both group and personal attention would be needed on the road to maturity.**

When you bring a newborn baby home from the hospital, you don't just set them down and say, "Welcome to the family, Johnny. Make yourself at home. The towels are in the hall closet upstairs, the pantry is right here, the can opener is in this drawer. No crying after 10 p.m. If you have any questions there are lots of people in the family who would love to help you so don't be afraid to ask." You laugh and say that is ridiculous, but that is what usually happens to new Christians. Someone gets saved and starts going to church services, but never gets much personal attention. We devote 18 years to raising our children, but don't even spend six months helping a new Christian get started in understanding the spiritual world. As a result, many people have been Christians for many years, but have not grown very much. Hebrews 5:12 refers to this phenomenon. So, new believers need someone to give them guidance and help them grow.

(Above excerpt from <http://www.bible.org/reg/toc.htm> - 3/16/96)

Hebrews 5:12 - *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

Notice again what Paul states in 1 Thessalonians 2:7 “*But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children.*” However, some believe that a new Christian is not in need of individual special attention.

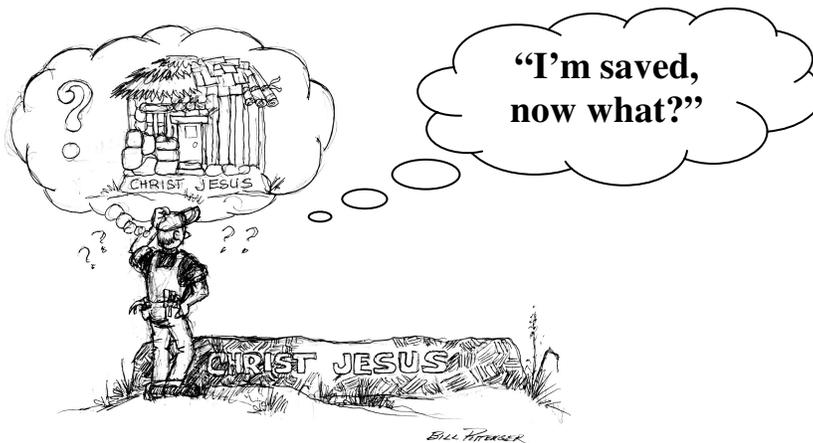
- If the Holy Spirit had not led Paul to include the idea of *nursing* it could be argued that this Scripture was referring to spiritual toddlers or even older spiritual children.
- But one must honestly ask, “How soon after birth does a typical baby need to be nursed?”
- When a baby nurses, it is drawing nourishment through its mother. This would normally be expected to continue until which time it is weaned.

Paul recognized that each believer is unique and needs individual attention.

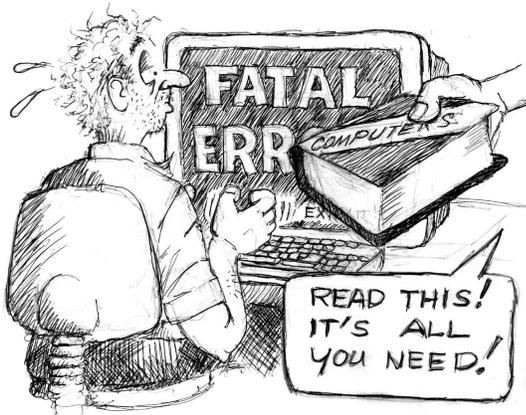
- Notice the repeated theme: “Every [each] one” in the following scripture.

Acts 20:31
Colossians 1:28-29
1 Thessalonians 2:11

The new believer understands the foundational doctrine of salvation by grace through Christ. Now he wants to build on that truth, but isn't quite sure how to go about it. Is it reasonable to simply give him a Bible and expect him to effectively grow to spiritual maturity?



Does the Holy Spirit not expect older Christians to be **available** for His use in the process of spiritual parenting, just as He wants them to be available as witnesses when He chooses to convict an unbeliever?



If a computer illiterate person were just handed a computer manual without personal tutoring, how well would most people do?



Yet many Christians are told, "here's a Bible, just read it, it has all the answers."

FIVE IMPORTANT CONCEPTS EVERY NEW BELIEVER NEEDS TO KNOW

(TO HELP MAXIMIZE SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND HELP MINIMIZE FRUSTRATION!)

(Important – Take time where certain words or phrases may need further explanation.)

- 1. AS YOUR SAVIOR – JESUS WANTS YOU TO KNOW THAT ALL YOUR SINS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND YOU NOW HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.**

John 5:24
Rom. 4:7-8
Rom. 8:1
Rom. 8:16
Rom. 8:31
Rom. 10:13
1 John 3:24
1 John 5:11-13

- 2. AS YOUR LORD – JESUS WANTS YOU TO KNOW THAT YOU HAVE BEEN BOUGHT WITH A PRICE, AND YOU ARE NO LONGER YOUR OWN.**

1 Cor. 6:19-20
1 Cor. 7:23
Rom. 14:7-8

NOTE: This could be threatening, if it were not for the absolute truth that God loves you and will always do what is in your best interest.

- 3. YOU ARE VERY SPECIAL AND GOD HAS A MARVELOUS, UNIQUE DESIGN FOR YOUR ENTIRE LIFE, AND HE WANTS TO MANAGE HIS PLANS FOR YOU.**

Psalms 139:16
Jer. 29:11
Prov. 3:5-6

- 4. GOD WANTS YOU TO KNOW THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT ALONE IS CAPABLE OF GUIDING YOU AND REVEALING GOD'S PLANS TO YOU.**

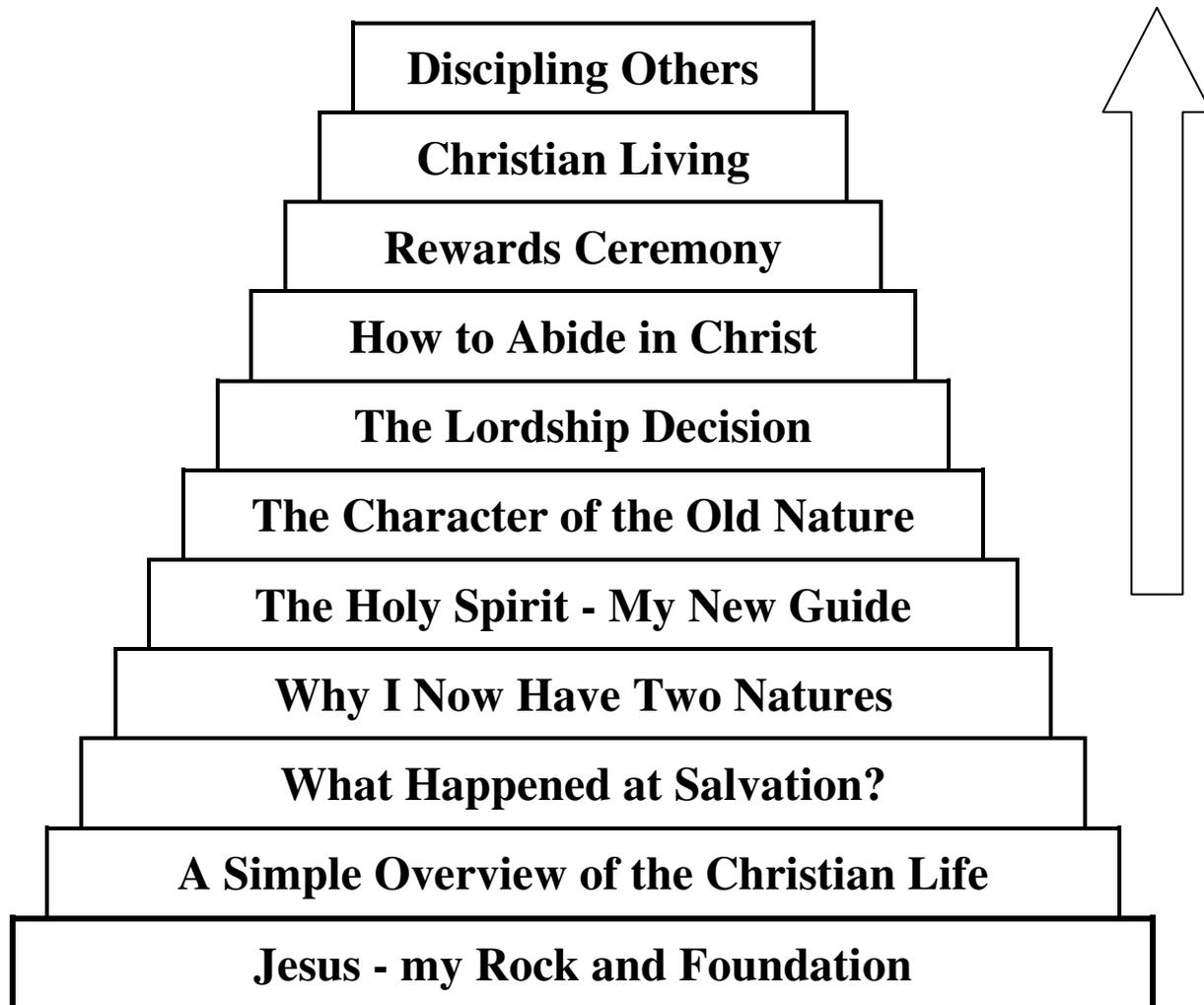
Jer. 10:23
Isa. 55:8-9
1 Cor. 2:9-14
Psa. 32:8
John 14:26 .
John 16:13-15

5. GOD WANTS YOU TO KNOW THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL TRAIN YOU TO RECOGNIZE, FOLLOW AND OBEY HIS GUIDANCE.

Luke 9:23-24
John 10:27
John 12:24-26
Rom. 11:36-12:2

***IT IS HELPFUL TO PROGRESSIVELY PRESENT TRUTHS
IN THE ORDER IN WHICH THEY ARE TYPICALLY
NEEDED BY THE NEW CHRISTIAN***

(Read from bottom to top)



Father, Son and Holy Spirit, I stand before You.

Today is a new day and I am a new creation
through Christ Jesus.

I choose to follow You, while You empower
me to turn away from the sinfulness
of this world and my flesh.

I surrender my life including my dreams &
ambitions, my feelings & emotions, my time
& energy, to You afresh this day.

I know as I follow You today, You will put a
spring in my step, and a fresh joy in my heart.

Give me Divine appointments where I can
share Your Gospel and shine Your light into
this hurting world. I remember that although
most people won't read a Bible today, I have
the opportunity to show them Your love in a
real and tangible way through my life.

Help me to live up to that responsibility as I
go today. Amen!

