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KEYNOTE

“MAKE DISCIPLES”
 by Doug Sukhia

growth of souls, to be steadfast and fully committed to this task of “discipling.”

INTRODUCTION

This is a topic upon which so much has been written that I wonder if anything of value can be added. There are 940 books listed at amazon.com under the title “discipleship.” The Navigators ministry has, for twenty years, produced over 140 issues of *Discipleship Journal*, which has included articles covering every conceivable aspect of discipleship from an evangelical perspective. There were more than 1200 different journal entrees listed on the computer files at the Christian college library in our area on this topic!

However, I guess there is a unique perspective that everyone brings to a subject due to experience, temperament, etc. So I trust, by God’s grace, this paper might be helpful.

I’ve been a Christian for 30 years and a Bible Presbyterian pastor for 26. Early on in my ministry I saw the need to challenge people to a personal commitment to spiritual growth. I was preaching, teaching, Sunday School, etc., but it seemed there was not enough “growth in grace” among those under my care. As a result I came to the conclusion that accelerated Christian growth required something more on the part of the people. I saw that to become more fully conformed to Christ, they needed to make a personal commitment to growth and to follow it up with the “disciplines of discipleship.” My prayer is that what is presented here will motivate all elders, pastors, teachers, parents...anyone responsible for the

DISCIPLES: THE GOAL

All Christian leaders must have a picture in their minds of the end results of their work. If we see a fully devoted, mature follower of Christ as the end result we won’t be satisfied with church attenders or lukewarm bodies going through the motions. God’s vision for people must be ours.

The last words of Christ to the church provide a framework for the primary work of believers in this era: “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore, make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Mt. 28:18-20, NKJV).

The main verb in verse 19 is *matheteuo* — “make disciples.” The other activities (going, baptizing and teaching) are subordinate. Disciples are the end product of our going (and proclaiming, Mk. 15:16), baptizing, and teaching. When you’re at the plate at the church picnic softball game, the ultimate goal is to hit the ball (forward!). “With the bat in position, your feet planted, your eyes on the ball, swinging level hit the ball.” Jesus is saying to us (note: “even to the end of the age”): “Going to the people groups of this world, evangelizing them, baptizing converts, teaching them everything I’ve taught you — make them into true disciples.” Making disciples is the bottom line, the target, the end product of all we do.

The Great Commission is not the last direct word from Christ to the churches — that is found in Revelation 1-3. If a disciple is defined as a dedicated follower, a mature, well grounded, Christ-like believer, then the last word of Christ in Revelation is on the same topic. He encourages and admonishes the churches to purity, maturity, and faithfulness (e.g., 2:6,10,19, etc.). In other words — make disciples!

Why should Peter “feed His sheep” (Jn. 21:19)? So they will become genuine disciples who have grown up to maturity through the “milk of the word” (I Pet. 2:2, II Pet. 3:18). What is the purpose of Christ’s gift of pastor-teachers to the church (Eph. 4:8)? For the building up of the body, for the equipping of the saints to serve so that the church will grow to maturity: “...till we all come... to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children” (Eph. 4:11-13). A mature, solid, reproducing follower of Christ is what we should be after! In other words — make disciples!

Are you satisfied with anything less? Then I don’t think you have God’s vision for the people He’s entrusted to you. What is the purpose of your ministry and work? Glorify God corporately? Fine, but how? Everything we do as churches — defend, preach, teach the Scriptures, fellowship, worship, counsel, administer the sacraments, exercise discipline — all of it is to the end of bringing glory to God by producing disciples.

DISCIPLES: CLARIFYING THE VISION

If making disciples is the goal, we have to clarify what a disciple looks like. The word disciple (mathetes) is used over 300 times in the Gospels and Acts to describe

a follower of Christ. Its basic meaning is a pupil or learner in distinction to the teacher. But the disciple is not merely a student of the master’s teaching but also an adherent, a follower of the teacher. Baker Dictionary of Theology explains disciple “as a term involving too much personal attachment and commitment to be rendered adequately by ‘pupil.’”¹

John the Baptist had his “disciples” who fasted, were austere and ascetic (Mt. 9:14). The Pharisees had their disciples who were super-separatists with lists of religious duties and an extensive holiness code (Mt. 23:13). The question is, what does a disciple of Christ look like? What are his characteristics?

TOTAL COMMITMENT

One of the most striking aspects to Christ’s call to discipleship is the high level of commitment He expected. In Luke 14 Jesus is teaching on the cost of discipleship. He warns the crowds that following Him would be costly (vs. 25). He warns them to “count the cost” (28) and explains the cost as forsaking all one has. “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” Notice that unless this letting go of relationships and “all that he has” (33) takes place, you can’t be a true follower, a disciple of Christ.

Jesus wants true disciples, not just people who outwardly look like or hang around Him. As salt can look salty but have lost its savor, people can seem to be true followers without this level of commitment (34-35). Jesus often made “extreme” statements like this to make the point that a true disciple must make a total commitment to Him: (e.g., John 6:25-

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others around the world with whom I've shared these principles" (p. 11). There is no appeal to the objective validity of the Scriptural witness, only to the experience of Wilkinson and others who've applied the requisite principles. I should not have to emphasize how fraught with potential danger this kind of subjective hermeneutic can be.

Though the author bobs and weaves his way through much of his book trying to distance himself from any appearance of a "health and wealth" gospel, in the end his disclaimers pack little punch. His own interpretive method and reductionistic theology have no muscle to deliver the author from these charges. In the end, he is doomed by his own appeal to popularity which renders any serious theological discussion of the prayer of Jabez nigh unto impossible. What he ends serving up to the increasingly unthinking and credulous masses of popular evangelicalism is more of the same spiritual "junk food" that increasingly causes the true God and His true Word (when correctly explained) to leave a bitter aftertaste on the popular palate. Is it any wonder why serious theological discourse in this nation is on the wane when a very thin book with a very thin veneer of theology resonates so tellingly in the popular conscience? 

Thoughts or Comments on this issue of the WRS Journal?

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Thank you!

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

2 Timothy 4:3-4

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66, "eat my flesh," "drink my blood;" Lk. 9:59-62, "no place to lay my head;" "let the dead bury their dead;" etc.).

The oft-repeated requirement of self-denial makes the same point of total commitment. "If anyone desires to come to me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23; Mt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; John 12:25). Self-denial is essentially the willingness to let go of all the dreams, ambitions, and plans that you might have formulated as the way to happiness and yield yourself totally to His plans for you. The puritan Thomas Manton writes of the wideness of the word self. It does not only involve our persons, "But whatever is ours, so far as it standeth in opposition to God, or cometh in competition with Him. A man and all his lusts, a man and all his relations; a man and all his interests; life, and all the appendages of life, is one aggregate thing which in Scripture is called self."² But in making this call Jesus assures would-be disciples that this 100% commitment to Him is the way to true happiness: "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it" (Lk. 9:24).

This is the same thing presented as the essence of practical holiness in the epistles. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Ro. 12:1). Alan Nelson writes: "He does not want us to present a sacrifice at the altar; he wants us on the altar."³ To follow Christ in self-sacrifice is the mark of a true disciple. This "whole-souled" commitment is the price of happiness and real joy. We follow Jesus "who for the joy set before Him endured the cross" (He. 12:2 cf. Phil. 2:3-9).

To deny yourself, take up your cross

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and follow Jesus is to "make Him Lord of your life." Jesus is referred to as Lord (kurios) throughout the New Testament. This acknowledgement of His Lordship is essential to salvation "that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Ro. 10:19).

Genuine disciples are not part-timers, casual Christians, or dabblers in religion, but people who are ready to die for Christ. To become a disciple of Christ is to begin to really live. If you don't have anything to die for, you don't have anything to live for and in a sense you never really live. This is the first step on the great adventure of real life — total commitment to Christ. It is also the first mark of a true disciple.

CONSISTENT OBEDIENCE

Another mark of the true disciple of Christ is obedience to the Master. Jesus is the great Teacher of His followers but this involves more than the accumulation of knowledge, theological and ethical. It involves practicing what Jesus teaches.

In another recorded incident of Jesus weeding out the casual followers He says, "If you abide in My word you are My disciples indeed" (Jn. 8:31 in context). Proof of true discipleship, Jesus says, is remaining, continuing, dwelling in His teachings. Remember the disciple making of the Great Commission includes "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." To make disciples therefore you must teach them and get them "to observe," and practice what they have been taught.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus made obedience to His teaching the proof of being a "good tree" planted by God (Mt.

7:18-21) and a building “on a rock” that endures (7:24-27). Someone has said “Faith and obedience are bound up in the same bundle. He that obeys God, trusts God, and he that trusts God, obeys God” (cf. Jms. 2:17). The Pharisees had a lot of knowledge but not much true obedience (Mt. 23:2,3). Alexander Maclaren writes: “There is nothing more impotent than words which lie dormant in our brains and have no influence on our lives.” A disciple of Christ is a consistent obeyer of His teaching. If we profess to love Him we should then obey Him as the proof of that love: “If you love me keep my commandments (Jn. 14:15 cf. 14:23,24; 15:10). If we are His followers we should be like Him in His obedience. “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments” (I Jn. 2:3 cf. 3:24). Because we follow the “Holy One” we should be holy like Him (I Pet. 1:16).

What we obey, of course, is the Word of God, just as Jesus did. Disciples follow and conform to their Master (Mt. 10:23,25). He was the obedient Servant always doing those things that please the Father (Jn. 8:29). His mind and ministry were permeated with Scripture. He came as the fulfiller, not the destroyer, of the Word (Mt. 5:17-19). He constantly quotes the Word in His teaching ministry (Mt. 4:4; 5:17-20). For Jesus, Scripture (in contradistinction to tradition) was the authoritative standard for faith and practice, theology and ethics (Mt. 15:3-9; 22:29). A true disciple, therefore, must be a student of the Word.

All disciples are learners. Christ’s disciples are learners of His Word. To make disciples we must teach them to observe what’s been commanded. This involves the systematic communication of Biblical truth. The veins of a true disciple run

“bible.” His heart, mind, and soul are saturated with the Word. He is filled with Christ by His Spirit and His Spirit fills the heart saturated with the Word (Eph.5:18-20 cf. Col. 16,17).

DISCIPLINED

Discipline is implied in the word “disciple.” Pupils grow and learn through the process of disciplined study, practice and training. Jesus’ disciples are called to a disciplined life. They are expected to exercise their renewed wills to learn and apply Christ’s teaching. This involves the personal utilization of the “means of grace” (Scripture, prayer, worship, sacraments, fellowship, etc.) on a regular and a consistent basis.

This aspect of discipleship comes out in the similes for the Christian found in Scripture (i.e. soldier, farmer, student, athlete, II Tim. 2:3-15). In all of these endeavors discipline is required in order to “obtain the prize” (I Cor. 9:24,25). Paul urges Timothy to “exercise” himself toward godliness (I Tim. 4:7). The word used is *gymnazo*, which means to train vigorously. Godliness, Christ-like, maturity, comes through such training. A form of the word is used in Hebrews 5:14 where mature Christians are described as those “who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” This “discipline of godliness” is expected in the admonitions to “not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin” (Ro. 6:13) and “that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man” (Eph. 4:22). Discipline is certainly implied in the commands to “flee” fornication, idolatry, the evil desires of youth, and the love of money (I Cor. 6:18; 10:14; II Tim. 2:22; I Tim. 6:11). It is also a part of the admonitions to “endeavor” (*spoudazo* — make

Wilkinson are done with Him. Perhaps this is why they must resort to someone else’s prayer uttered in a time and setting when men really knew Him and walked with Him!

The author also gives us within the pages of *The Prayer of Jabez* a dose of the self-esteem gospel! According to Mr. Wilkinson, Jabez’s real problem wasn’t his sin nature inherited from Adam — a truth glaringly absent from the book — even though a mere three chapters earlier in 1 Chronicles, the very genealogy in which we later find the subject of this book begins with Adam (1 Chr. 1:1)! No, Jabez’s real problem, according to the author, is traced to a “curve ball” thrown by his mother when she saddled him with a bad name. The name Jabez means, “He causes pain,” undoubtedly a not-so-pleasant reminder of the mother’s birth experience. As the author himself puts it, “He (Jabez) grew up with a name any boy would love to hate. Imagine if you had to go through childhood enduring the teasing of bullies, the daily reminders of your unwelcome arrival, and mocking questions like, ‘So, young man, what was your mother thinking?’” (p. 21).

This not only drips with self-esteem theology, it is drenched with a faulty hermeneutic. The author clearly reads back from our own time and setting into a 3,500 year old context, and clothes Jabez in the thin-skinned mantle of a contemporary, milquetoast, American adolescent. But men, even young men, in Jabez’s day were made of sterner stuff! And, worst of all, it fails once again to deal with the most pressing of issues, the issue of human sin that could have been accomplished by linking the pain of Jabez’s birth to the curse of the fall (Gen. 3:16).

Hermeneutical deficiencies are else-

where apparent in this book, most notably in the violence the author’s interpretive approach does to the principle of proportion. This sadly neglected principle represents that great bastion of restraint against building interpretive castles on a foundation of thin air. It is summed up in a simple question: Just how much ink did the Holy Spirit deem necessary for the human authors of the Scriptures to spill on any given topic? Those topics concerning which the Word is silent or virtually so, must not be turned into grist for a doctrine mill, because in doing so, the interpreter must indulge in a potentially dangerous eisegesis, or a “reading between the lines” of the text due to the sheer paucity of evidence. This leads to hermeneutical license, and, in the words of one of my seminary professors, runs the risk of turning the Word of God into a “ventriloquist’s dummy.” Wilkinson verges breathlessly close to this practice on page 20 of his book: “Perhaps the baby was born breech,” he writes. “Or perhaps the mother’s pain was emotional — maybe the child’s father abandoned her during pregnancy; maybe he had died; maybe the family had fallen into such financial straits that the prospect of another mouth to feed brought only fear and worry” (p. 20; emphasis mine). Not only is the author reading speculatively between the lines of the text, but he does so utterly heedless of clear biblical teaching elsewhere (i.e., Deut. 15:1-6; Psalms 127 and 128). That invalidates every one of these theories!

But perhaps Wilkinson’s gravest error is his appeal to pragmatic and subjective arguments to defend his thesis. “How do I know that it [his book] will significantly impact you?” Wilkinson asks rhetorically. “Because of *my experience* (emphasis mine) and the testimony of hundreds of

BOOKS

The Prayer of Jabez: Breaking Through to the Blessed Life

by Bruce H. Wilkinson.

Published by Multnomah Publishers, 2000; 96 pages.

Reviewed by Pastor Bryan Pollock.

“Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, ‘I gave birth to him in pain.’ Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, ‘Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.’ And God granted his request.” (1 Chronicles 4:9-10)

Big things often come in small packages. But the slender volume on the one-sentence prayer of an obscure member of the tribe of Judah currently captivating the nation, is thin not only in size but substance.

The Prayer of Jabez, based on the text of 1 Chronicles 4:9,10, indulges in all of the popular new-evangelical nostrums while turning biblical hermeneutics on its head. It is for starters dangerously reductionistic in its approach. The author blatantly suggests in rhetoric reminiscent of the hype of a used-car salesman, or the “can-do” cant of a motivational pitch man that “through a simple, believing prayer, you can change your future. You can change what happens one minute from now” (p. 29). In this popular approach to Christianity that reduces the faith down to the mere application of principles, sinful man, prideful man, capable man becomes the measure of success. He can do

it! And all he has to do is to learn the secrets of success and apply them accordingly. This is the kind of Christianity that even unbelievers may practice with impunity!

Man stands too tall in the author’s esteem, as a result, and God assumes a frighteningly reduced dimension. He is reduced to the “watching and waiting” God of popular evangelicalism Who is virtually powerless until man makes the first and right move. On page 60, Wilkinson writes, “...God is watching and waiting for you to ask for the supernatural power He offers.” After quoting 2 Chronicles 16:9 to “prove” this passive divine posture, the author then states, “He eagerly seeks those who are loyal to Him. Your loyal heart is the only part of His expansion plan that He will not provide.” But how can I provide loyalty to God when the Bible explicitly says that such loyalty is a human impossibility and must come to me by grace? Indeed if God waits for my loyalty, He waits for a “morning cloud” and for the “dew which goes away early” (Hos. 6:4). God Himself must storm the heart of the soul He determines to make strong for Himself and bestow upon it the grace of loyalty and prayerful dependence (Prov. 21:1; Zech. 12:10).

Just how far the author goes in his reductionistic theology becomes painfully obvious on page 49. Wilkinson talks like a process theologian when he states that God “becomes great” through the person who surrenders his need to the Lord! And when theology goes out the window, so does a proper understanding of man’s relationship to the Almighty. One wonders why any one would want to pray to such a God once authors like Mr.

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effort, be diligent, labor) to “do what leads to peace,” “keep the unity of the Spirit,” “be found spotless,” etc. (Rom. 14:9; Eph. 4:3; II Pet. 1:5;3:14).

The disciple of Christ is disciplined unto godliness. This is not the self-effort of the unregenerate trying to merit salvation (Gal. 3:3-11). Rather it is the God given “sound mind” (*sophronismos* — self-control, moderation); it is the “self-control” that the Spirit produces (II Tim. 1:7; Gal. 5:23).

Every disciple of Christ lives a disciplined life. He regularly reads, studies, and listens to the Word being preached. He fellowships and worships with the people of God. He’s involved in ministries where his gifts can be exercised. He prays privately and corporately with God’s people. Disciples continue “steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

CONCLUSION

It is obvious from this description of true disciples that there is a progressive aspect to this. In one sense every Christian is a disciple. These qualities of commitment, obedience and discipline are in every believer to some degree. But in another sense “disciples are made not born.” People grow to maturity, they progress in holiness, sanctification is a work in progress. It is the responsibility of pastors, elders, teachers and all those entrusted with the nurture of souls to be facilitating this process by feeding, building, and watering (I Cor. 3:6-10). The questions of how best to do this will have to be answered elsewhere. But from what has been said here I trust you see God’s vision for each person He brings to you — a Disciple of Christ. 

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And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Matthew 28:18-20

EXEGESIS

JESUS THE DISCIPLER

by Leonard Pine

Discipleship, or as it is often referred to today, mentoring, is trendy and popular. It often is seen as a replacement for confrontational preaching and doctrinal instruction. Mentoring is a good thing, but it must be more than merely praying with someone, patting him on the back, or giving him tips for success in the Christian life. Jesus gave the perfect example of what discipleship should be. His discipling activity was not aimed at being popular or sugarcoated (John 6:60). It was aimed at changing hearts for eternity.

Three related terms need to be defined before proceeding further. The first is the term disciple, a person who makes another's teachings a way of life. When discipleship is mentioned, it is commonly understood to refer to being and growing as a disciple. Discipleship, however, also means making and encouraging disciples. I will focus upon this second meaning here.

The second term is discipline. Sharing the same root with disciple, discipline refers to any reactive activity on the part of authority to prevent or correct deviant behavior or thinking on the part of a disciple. This type of activity is not wrong and often necessary. It is commanded many times in Scripture. Full-orbed discipleship must include discipline to produce disciples that please the Lord.

The third aspect of discipleship is what I call discipling. Discipling rounds out the biblical concept of discipleship. Discipling is proactive, constructive be-

havior on the part of authority to ensure adherence to the teachings of that authority. This is the aspect of discipleship primarily in view in Matthew 28:19 and John 21:15-19. As I mentioned a moment ago, Jesus demonstrated perfectly how to be an effective discipler. Nowhere is his discipling more apparent than in John 17. Jesus describes there his own activities among the disciples as he prays to the Father.

A REVEALER OF GOD'S CHARACTER AND GLORY

Jesus' words in verse four set the standard for all discipleship. "I have glorified you on the earth. I have finished the work which you have given me to do." What kind of disciples do you think Jesus would have turned out had he not been able to say this? The answer is obvious — the kind of disciples we all too often turn out! A discipler manifests the character of God to his disciples to one degree or another. If by God's grace we display God's glories (perfections) in our conduct, speech, attitudes, and wisdom, then those whom we teach and guide will have a righteous guide. Paul was able to say, "The things you have seen in me, do!" Can you say this to your pupils, your children, your spouse, your neighbor?

In verse six, Jesus declares to the Father that he "manifested your name to the men whom you have given me out of the world." This means far more than simply telling the disciples what God's name is. Jesus showed in his life (and especially in his death) that the Father's name was to be trusted, since that wonderful name reveals a God who is able to keep his own

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ing, that is to say, these two things: the immensity of the task before you, the infinitude of the resources at your disposal. If we face the tremendous difficulty of the work before us, it will certainly throw us back upon our knees; and if we worthily gauge the power of the gospel committed to us, that will certainly keep us on our knees. In a time like this, careful observers of the life of our Theological Seminaries tell us that the most noticeable thing about it is a certain falling off from the intense seriousness of outlook by which students of theology were formerly characterized. If it were true, it would be a great evil; so far as it is true, it is a great evil. I would call you back to this seriousness of outlook, and bid you cultivate it, if you would be men of God now, and ministers who need not be ashamed hereafter. Think of the greatness of the minister's calling; the greatness of the issues which hang on your worthiness or your unworthiness for its high functions; and determine once for all that with God's help you will be worthy. "God had but one Son," says Thomas Goodwin, "and he made him a minister." "None but he who made the world," says John Newton, "can make a minister" —that is, a minister who is worthy.

You can, of course, be a minister of a sort, and not be God-made. You can go through the motions of the work, and I shall not say that your work will be in vain—for God is good and who knows by what instruments he may work his will of good for men?

What does Paul mean when he utters that terrible warning: "Lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway?" And there is an even more dreadful contingency. It is our Savior himself who tells us that it is possible to compass sea and land to make one pros-

elyte, and when we have made him to make him twofold more a child of hell than we are ourselves. And will we not be in awful peril of making our proselytes children of hell if we are not ourselves children of heaven? There is no mistake more terrible than to suppose that activity in Christian work can take the place of depth of Christian affections.

Activity, of course, is good: surely in the cause of the Lord we should run and not be weary. But not when it is substituted for inner religious strength. In the tendencies of our modern life, which all make for ceaseless activity, have a care that it does not become your case; or that your case—even now—may not have at least some resemblance to it. Do you pray? How much do you pray? How much do you love to pray?

I am sure that if you once get a true glimpse of what the ministry of the cross is, and of what you, as men preparing for this ministry, should be, you will pray, "Lord, who is sufficient for these things?" Your heart will cry, "Lord, make me sufficient for these things." Old Cotton Mather wrote a great little book once, to serve as a guide to students for the ministry. The not very happy title which he gave it is *Manductio ad Ministerium*. But by a stroke of genius he added a sub-title which is more significant: The angels preparing to sound the trumpets! That is what Cotton Mather calls you students for the ministry: the angels, preparing to sound the trumpets! Take the name to yourselves, and live up to it. Give your days and nights to living up to it! And then, perhaps, when you come to sound the trumpets the note will be pure and clear and strong, and perchance may pierce even to the grave and wake the dead. 

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much too tired at the close of a hard day's work to pray, and therefore do not find it profitable to attend prayers in the late afternoon; who think the preaching at the regular service on Sabbath morning dull and uninteresting, and who do not find Christ at the Sabbath afternoon conference. Such things I seem to have heard before; and yours will be an exceptional pastorate, if you do not hear something very like them, before you have been in a pastorate six months. Such things meet you every day on the street; they are the ordinary expression of the heart which is dulled or is dulling to the religious appeal. No doubt, those who minister to you in spiritual things should take them to heart. And you who are ministered to must take them to heart, too. And let me tell you straight-out that the preaching you find dull will no more seem dull to you if you faithfully obey the Master's precept: "Take heed how ye hear." If there is no fire in the pulpit it falls to you to kindle it in the pews. No man can fail to meet with God in the sanctuary if he takes God there with him.

How easy it is to roll the blame of our cold hearts over upon the shoulders of our religious leaders! It is refreshing to observe how Luther, with his breezy good sense, dealt with complaints of lack of attractiveness in his evangelical preachers. He had not sent them out to please people, he said, and their function was not to interest or to entertain; their function was to teach the saving truth of God, and, if they did that, it was frivolous for people in danger of perishing for want of the truth to object to the vessel in which it was offered to them. "People cannot have their ministers exactly as they wish," he declares; "they should thank God for the pure word," and not demand St. Augustines and St. Ambroses to preach

it to them. If a pastor pleases the Lord Jesus and is faithful to him — there is none so great and mighty but he ought to be pleased with him, too.

But why should we appeal to Luther? Have we not the example of our Lord Jesus Christ? Are we better than he? Surely, if ever there was one who might justly plead that the common worship of the community had nothing to offer him it was the Lord Jesus Christ. But every Sabbath found him seated in his place among the worshiping people, and there was no act of stated worship which he felt himself entitled to discard. Returning from that great baptismal scene, when the heavens themselves were rent to bear him witness that he was well pleasing to God; from the searching trials of the wilderness, and from that first great tour in Galilee, prosecuted, as we are expressly told, "in the power of the Spirit"; he came back, as the record tells, "to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and"—so proceeds the amazing narrative—"he entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue, on the Sabbath day." "As his custom was!" Jesus Christ made it his habitual practice to be found in his place on the Sabbath day at the stated place of worship to which he belonged. Is it necessary for me to exhort those who would fain be like Christ, to see to it that they are imitators of him in this?

But not even with the most assiduous use of the corporate expressions of the religious life of the community have you reached the foundation-stone of your piety. This is to be found in your closets, or rather in your hearts, in your private religious exercises, and in your intimate religious aspirations. One hint I may give you, particularly adapted to you as students for the ministry: Keep always before your mind the greatness of your call-

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(11), who unites his own (22), and who loves his own (26).

Furthermore, it's not enough to simply pray that God's children will be set apart unto God: you must show the way (18-19) just as Jesus did! Jesus "sanctified" himself to complete his task before the Father. How focused are you upon the discipling duties to which God has called you? Or are those duties just one of any number of other things that you may or may not get to?

A FAITHFUL STEWARD OF GOD'S WORD

Jesus was also the perfect discipler in the way he handled the heavenly message entrusted to him. He declares in verse eight, "For I have given to them the words which You have given Me." The same thought is found in verse fourteen. He also links the declaration of God's Word with the declaration of God's name. Verse twenty-six reads, "I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it*, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them." Notice that the key to unity and mutual love is the presence of God's self-revelation. Those that would try to hold that doctrine is divisive have to argue with Jesus on that score!

Our Lord states here that he has not been an innovator. He has not taught anything that has not already been revealed by God. He has said only what God has given him to say, nothing more, and nothing less. If you are to be an effective discipler, you must resist the temptation to preach your illustrations, your experiences, your analysis, your opinions. You must preach God's Word. Period. Man's "wisdom" has nothing to offer the soul, so avoid pop psychology and cleverness like the plague. By all means, use illus-

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trations and the rest to help your listener understand. But the tail must not wag the dog. Teach your disciples the whole counsel of God, nothing more and nothing less.

As you read the gospels, you will notice that Jesus did not content himself with speaking in generalities, either. He made specific applications and specific directions to his disciples. Take just a few examples from the gospels. In Matthew 10:5-42, as he sent his disciples out to preach, he told them what to do, where to go, what to say, how to act, what to watch out for, what to expect, why to have hope, and why to carry on (see also Matthew 19:27-30). Jesus spoke with openness and honesty (Matthew 17:22-23), even though the message was hard to take. He spoke with authority (Matthew 7:28, 29 cf. 21:23-46), while at the same time exhibiting patience, compassion, and persistence (John 21:15-17). He denounced false religion with vigor (Matthew 23), and offered comfort to his followers (John 14:16 w/Luke 24:36ff.)

In other words, Jesus was not content with clever formulas or platitudes. As a faithful steward of the Word, he distributed it and applied it wherever and whenever necessary.

A LOVING MEDIATOR ON BEHALF OF THE DISCIPLES

I have long thought that what a person prays for reveals the true nature of his walk with God, following the biblical principle that "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks" (Luke 6:45). That a person prays at all says something as well, particularly when those prayers are principally occupied with praying for others. Such is the case with Jesus' prayer

in John 17. His mediatorial work is already begun as he lovingly intercedes for his own before the Father. His own hold a special place in his heart (9). Notice the matters for which Jesus prays.

First of all, he prays for his disciples' righteous unity in himself. (Remember that this unity comes in context of doctrinal instruction.) This unity is to follow the heavenly pattern: "Holy Father, keep through your name those whom you have given me, that they may be one as we are" (11). Jesus develops the basis of heavenly unity in verses twenty through twenty-three. The preaching of the Word is foremost in putting feet to this aspect of Jesus' mediation (20, 21). Then comes the imparting of God's glory (22-24), especially the perfection of mutual love in divine purity, displaying the nature of the unity within the Godhead. There can be no true, godly unity with false teaching or sinful acts in the mix. Remember this principle when you pray for your disciples.

Next, Jesus prays for his disciples' protection from evil (14-16). Persecution is a natural result of receiving the Word and living by it. So disciples may expect to be marked for harassment by the world. Jesus prays fervently that his disciples will be guarded. They had not yet suffered unto death, but most of them would learn what it means to give up their lives for the cause of Christ. Until the Lord takes his disciples home, they need to be prayed for! You should be praying that the Lord will guard the souls of those whom he has entrusted to your oversight.

Third, Jesus prays for his disciples' ministries (17-20). Not only does Jesus pray for the Twelve he has commissioned, he prays for you and me, and all those who would come to Christ as a result of the Twelve's ministering in Judea,

Samaria, and the uttermost part of the earth. You should follow Jesus' example and pray for the labors of the disciples in your care. Pray specifically that those ministries would reap many souls, and that they would be kept safe in the hands of God.

Lastly, Jesus prays for his disciples' perseverance (24). Thankfully, Jesus did not think it enough to pray only for our physical safeguarding. He is interested in our eternal safety. Notice how he prays for our ultimate glorification: "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world." When my children do a special project in school, they are eager to show it to me when they get home. I think it's more than merely a matter of looking for Daddy's approval; they want me to rejoice with them in the glory of their handiwork. This is similar to the thought Jesus expresses. It is as if Jesus was saying, "My disciples haven't seen anything yet! I long for them to see me as I really am, in all my glory. We will rejoice together at the perfect salvation which I have accomplished for their sakes." Pray that the disciples under your guidance will come to see Jesus in all his glory.

In his earthly ministry, Jesus set the perfect example for us to follow if we would be disciplers that please God and benefit the kingdom. He displayed God's glory and character in life and word, faithfully administered the gospel of the kingdom to his flock, and besought the Father earnestly on their behalf. Pray for God's grace as you seek to disciple others. Take to yourself as God's promise to you in this regard Isaiah 40:11, "He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will

the infinite majesty of his Being form their very subject-matter. Put the shoes from off your feet in this holy presence!

We are frequently told, indeed, that the great danger of the theological student lies precisely in his constant contact with divine things. The words which tell you of God's terrible majesty or of his glorious goodness may come to be mere words to you—Hebrew and Greek words, with etymologies, and inflections, and connections in sentences. The reasonings which establish to you the mysteries of his saving activities may come to be to you mere logical paradigms, with no further significance to you than their formal logical conclusiveness. God's stately steppings in his redemptive processes may become to you a mere series of facts of history. It is your great danger. But it is your great danger, only because it is your great privilege. Think of what your privilege is when your greatest danger is that the great things of religion may become common to you! Other men, distracted by the dreadful drag of the world upon them and the awful rush of the world's work, find it hard to get time and opportunity so much as to pause and consider whether there be such things as God, and religion, and salvation from the sin that compasses them about and holds them captive. The very atmosphere of your life is these things; you breathe them in at every pore; they surround you, encompass you, press in upon you from every side. It is all in danger of becoming common to you! God forgive you, you are in danger of becoming weary of God! Let us turn the question—are you alive to what your privileges are? Are you making full use of them? Are you, by this constant contact with divine things, growing in holiness, becoming every day more and more men of God? You will never prosper in your

religious life in the Theological Seminary until your work in the Theological Seminary becomes itself to you a religious exercise out of which you draw every day enlargement of heart, elevation of spirit, and adoring delight in your Maker and your Savior.

Your theological studies are religious exercises of the most rewarding kind. But there are other religious exercises demanding your punctual attention which cannot be neglected. I refer particular now to the stated formal religious meetings of the Seminary. No man can withdraw himself from the stated religious services of the community of which he is a member, without serious injury to his personal religious life. It is not without significance that the apostolic writer couples together the exhortations, "to hold fast the confession of our hope, that it waver not," and "to forsake not the assembling of ourselves together." When he commands us not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together," he has in mind the stated, formal assemblages of the community, and means to lay upon the hearts and consciences of his readers their duty to themselves. And when he adds, "As the custom of some is," he means to put a lash into his command. Who are these people, who are so vastly strong, so supremely holy, that they do not need the assistance of the common worship for themselves; and who, being so strong and holy, will not give their assistance to the common worship?

I trust you will not tell me that the stated religious exercises of the Seminary are too numerous, or are wearying. That would only be to betray the low ebb of your own religious vitality. I am told that there are some students who do not find themselves in a prayerful mood in the early hours of a winter morning; and are

what. And the calls, and therefore also the called, stand on a complete equality with one another. The burgomaster is God's burgomaster; the physician is God's physician; the merchant is God's merchant; the laborer is God's laborer. Every vocation, liberal, as we call it, or manual, the humblest and the vilest in appearance as truly as the noblest and the most glorious, is of divine right.

Talk of the divine right of kings! Here is the divine right of every workman, no one of whom needs to be ashamed, if only he is an honest and good workman. "Only laziness," adds Professor Doumergue, "is ignoble, and while Romanism multiplies its mendicant orders, the Reformation banishes the idle from its towns."

Now, as students of theology your vocation is to study theology; and to study it diligently, in accordance with the apostolic injunction: "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord." It is precisely for this that you are students of theology; this is your "next duty." Dr. Charles Hodge, in his delightful autobiographical notes, tells of Philip Lindsay, the most popular professor in the Princeton College of his day, that "he told our class that we would find that one of the best preparations for death was a thorough knowledge of the Greek grammar." "This," comments Dr. Hodge in his quaint fashion, "was his way of telling us that we ought to do our duty." Certainly, every man who aspires to be a religious man must begin by doing his duty, his obvious duty, his daily task, the particular work which lies before him to do at this particular time and place. If this work happens to be studying, then his religious life depends on nothing more fundamentally than on just studying. You may think of your studies what you please. You may

consider that you are singing precisely of them when you sing of "e'en servile labors," and of "the meanest work." But you must faithfully give yourselves to your studies, if you wish to be religious men. No religious character can be built up on the foundation of neglected duty.

There is certainly something wrong with the religious life of a theological student who does not study. But it does not quite follow that therefore everything is right with his religious life if he does study. It is possible to study—even to study theology—in an entirely secular spirit. In all its branches alike, theology has as its unique end to make God known: the student of theology is brought by his daily task into the presence of God, and is kept there. Can a religious man stand in the presence of God, and not worship? Surely that is possible only for an irreligious man, or at least for an unreligious man. And here I place in your hands at once a touchstone by which you may discern your religious state, and an instrument for the quickening of your religious life. Do you prosecute your daily tasks as students of theology as "religious exercises"? If you do not, look to yourselves: it is surely not all right with the spiritual condition of that man who can busy himself daily with divine things, with a cold and impassive heart. If you do, rejoice. But in any case, see that you do! And that you do it ever more and more abundantly. Whatever you may have done in the past, for the future make all your theological studies "religious exercises." This is the great rule for a rich and wholesome religious life in a theological student. Put your heart into your studies; do not merely occupy your mind with them, but put your heart into them. They bring you daily and hourly into the very presence of God; his ways, his dealing with men,

gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, **and gently lead those who are with young.** 

PAUL'S DISCIPLINE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE by Tom Lyon

"But thanks be to God, that, whereas ye were servants of sin, ye became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching whereunto ye were delivered." (Romans 6:17 ASV)

A most suggestive text, which Dr. Lloyd-Jones called "One of the great striking and outstanding verses in the Bible." Consider the following:

First, God is thanked for the whole complex description. Why? Because there is no one else to thank! What we have become is laid at the door of God's action alone. Neither man's action or some synthesis of co-action is entertained. To congratulate any other, or ourselves, at any point, would be unconscionable.

Second, the change of 'tense' is instructive (i.e., from imperfect to aorist). What they were habitually in the past had been abruptly altered. Conversion is not a gradual change.

Third, the 'voice' of the verb in the last phrase (mistranslated in the KJV) is passive. This life-changing truth was not delivered to them; Paul contends they were delivered to it. Thus, each phrase is carefully constructed so as to ascribe the whole complex of conversion to sovereign grace.

Fourth, for Paul, doctrine was not considerable without form. The mind is not moved to obedience by a random collec-

tion of facts strewn about with no discernable form. Featureless assertions without evident structure fail to reach the mind, and having failed there, cannot possibly penetrate to the heart.

MORE THAN WORDS

So much for the overall thrust of the text. Theological discipline requires more than itemizing the elements of truth; those truths must be weighed in their relative proportions and tension. The great change herein effected was composed of two movements: one of the head, and another of the heart. Obedience, the primary verbal assertion of the text, proceeds from these two faculties. Conversion fully involves the whole man: mind, heart, and will.

While it is granted obedience involves both the head and the heart, not all agree upon the relative emphasis assigned. Nor has the modern mind veiled its bias. Take for instance: Rome's policy of the 'common man' which resigns the mind to the custodial oversight of the 'church;' Pietism's reliance upon 'inner light;' Liberalism's drift towards 'existential encounter;' Neo-Pentecostalism's preoccupation with emotive excitation; Fundamentalism's paranoia which suspects that Modernism was a disease contracted in the classroom; common Evangelicalism's impatience with any complexity whatsoever; and even the Reformed phobia of 'academic pride' and an 'inken -divinity.' The words of Ezekiel Hopkins (writing 300 years ago) sound strange indeed today:

Our age abounds with Speculative Christians, whose religion is but like rickets, that make them grow large in the head, but narrow in the breast; whose brains are replenished with no-

tions, but their hearts straitened towards God; and their lives and actions as black and deformed, as if their light had only tanned and discoloured them.

Clearly the scene has changed. No one would dare accuse modern religion of being too cerebral.

A POOL OF WRONG THINKING

How quickly the heartbeat of one generation becomes the headache of the next! When once the mind is portrayed as a stagnant pond of facts, the heart is soon lauded for its shallow antics. To appraise the devastating effects of such a philosophy is not difficult. In a technological world, religion has retreated into the mist of romantic idealism.

The current disparagement of the mind in religion is abetted by four false affirmations:

1. *False definition*

None would deny the heart its honored seat. The obedience of which Paul speaks was traced to its source, i.e. from the heart (*ex animo*; Proverbs 4:23). But this was surely no mere emotive or mystical response divorced from cognitive activity. Albeit heartfelt, this was still obedience, and obedience requires an objective standard, a form of doctrine. To reduce the heart to the realm of the subjective, as opposed to the objective; or to feeling rather than thinking, is foreign to Biblical usage.

Feelings come and feelings go,
And feelings are deceiving,
Our warrant is the Word of God,
Naught else is worth believing.
(John Flavel)

Blank animation is no part of either the first creation or the new creation.

2. *False compartmentalization (either/or)*

The modern suspicious distrust of academic piety has concurred that a choice must be made. Failing to appreciate the interworkings of mind and heart, a false option is entertained. Exercising that option, the heart is assumed the most direct and immediate point of entry. The motto is “Be warmed and filled;” but withal attempting to warm the affections without filling the mind. This fails. It is forgotten that the first sin was a quest for experience, sans revelation. “(Satan) distinguishes between theology and religion, warmly advocating the latter in order to induce men to abandon the former” (Horatius Bonar).

True religion’s more than notion,
Something must be known and felt.
(Joseph Hart)

3. *False opposite*

Too often the want of heartfelt devotion is blamed upon doctrinal precision. The fervor, it is claimed, has been lost in the form. With such a proposal Paul would have no sympathy. Granted, information without affection is sterile. But affection without information is irrational. The notion that men may deny with the top of their heads what they affirm at the bottom of their hearts is an absurdity unfelt, and in fact applauded, by nowadays religion. Can a mindless religion of the heart survive? In fact, has it ever existed at all? Nothing grows in the heart that a form of doctrine has not first planted there.

4. *False prioritization*

For true religion to exist both the heart and mind must be engaged. To dispute this is to argue with Paul. The question however remains, is this only a matter of presence and balance, or, is there a logi-

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS by B.B. Warfield (Abridged)

I am asked to speak to you on the religious life of the student of theology. I think it the most important subject which can engage our thought. You will not suspect me, in saying this, to be depreciating the importance of the intellectual preparation of the student for the ministry. The importance of the intellectual preparation of the student for the ministry is the reason of the existence of our Theological Seminaries. Say what you will, do what you will, the ministry is a “learned profession”; and the man without learning, no matter with what other gifts he may be endowed, is unfit for its duties. “Apt to teach”—yes, the minister must be “apt to teach.” Not apt merely to exhort, to beseech, to appeal, to entreat; not even merely, to testify, to bear witness; but to teach. And teaching implies knowledge: he who teaches must know. But aptness to teach alone does not make a minister; nor is it his primary qualification. It is only one of a long list of requirements which Paul lays down as necessary to meet in him who aspires to this high office. And all the rest concern, not his intellectual, but his spiritual fitness. A minister must be learned, on pain of being utterly incompetent for his work. But before and above being learned, a minister must be godly.

Nothing could be more fatal, however, than to set these two things over against one another. Recruiting officers do not dispute whether it is better for soldiers to have a right leg or a left leg: soldiers should have both legs. Sometimes we hear it said that ten minutes on your knees

will give you a truer, deeper, more operative knowledge of God than ten hours over your books. “What!” is the appropriate response, “than hours over your books, on your knees?” Why should you turn from God when you turn to your books, or feel that you must turn from your books in order to turn to God? That I am asked to speak to you on the religious life of the student of theology proceeds on the recognition of the absurdity of such antithesis. You are students of theology, it is understood that you are religious men. In your case there can be no “either-or” here—either a student or a man of God. You must be both. Religion does not take a man away from his work; it sends him to his work with an added quality of devotion.

But the doctrine is the same, and it is the doctrine, the fundamental doctrine, of Protestant morality. It is the great doctrine of “vocation,” the doctrine, to wit, that the best service we can offer to God is just to do our duty—our plain, homely duty, whatever that may chance to be. The Middle Ages did not think so; they cut a cleft between the religious and the secular life, and counseled him who wished to be religious to turn his back on what they called “the world,” that is to say, not the wickedness that is in the world—“the world, the flesh and the devil,” as we say—but the work-a-day world, that congeries of occupations which forms the daily task of men and women. Protestantism put an end to all that. As Professor Doumergue eloquently puts it,

Then Luther came, and, with still more consistency, Calvin, proclaiming the great idea of “vocation.” “Vocation”—it is the call of God, addressed to every man, whoever he may be, to lay upon him a particular work, no matter

The Challenge of the Disciplined Life, Prayer, Devotional Classics, Seeking the Kingdom, and Celebrating the Disciplines.

⁵*Celebration of Discipline, The Path to Spiritual Growth* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).

⁶Kelly is cited the most (6 times), Woolman 5 times, and Fox 3 times; Hannah Whitall Smith is not cited at all in the footnotes.

⁷Citations of writers known to me as being Roman Catholic include Merton (17 times), Morton T. Kelsey (5), St. John of the Cross (5), Thomas à Kempis (4), Catherine de Hueck Doherty (3), François Fénelon (3), St. Alphonsus Liguori (3), St. Francis de Sales (2), Brother Ugolino di Monte Santa Maria (2), St. Francis of Assisi (1), Bernard of Clairvaux (1), Brother Lawrence (a seventeenth century Carmelite friar; 1). Many other writers are cited, whose religious affiliations I do not know.

⁸Bonhoeffer (13 times), Bounds (9), Keikegard (4), Wesley (4), Cox (4); all other writers not mentioned were cited fewer than 4 times.

⁹Gordon H. Clark, *Historiography Secular and Religious* (1971; 2nd. ed., Jefferson, Md.: The Trinity Foundation, 1994), p. 106.

¹⁰à Kempis, 1:20:1-6, pp. 31-32.

¹¹Lk. 3:12-14.

¹²Php. 3:14; 2 Tim. 1:9.

¹³1 Cor. 7:20.

¹⁴Eph. 4:1.

¹⁵Much has been written about Luther and his break with monasticism. For an excellent article, see Endel Kallas, "The Spirituality of Luther: A Reappraisal of His Contribution," *Spirituality Today* 34:4 (Winter 1982), 292-302; this article can be read online at

<http://www.spiritualitytoday.org/spir2day/823441kallas.html>.

¹⁶John T. McNeill, "Introduction," *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*; ed. by John T. McNeill, transl. by Ford Lewis Battles; p. lx.

¹⁷*Institutes* 4:13:16, p. 2/1271; Calvin devoted long sections of his work to criticizing monasticism and related vows of the Roman church, e.g., 4:12:19-28, pp. 2/1245-1254, and 4:13:7-21, pp. 2/1260-1276.

¹⁸*Institutes* 4:13:2-3, pp. 2/1255-1257.

¹⁹*Institutes* 4:13:3, p. 2/1257.

²⁰*Institutes* 3:10:6, pp. 1/724-725; footnote 8 on p. 724 contains a lengthy list of writings on Calvin's conception of vocation.

²¹WCF 16:1. The divines cited several Scriptures to justify this statement; that we should obey only commands from God's Word (Mic. 6:8; Rom. 12:2; Heb. 13:21), and that good works are not those devised by men or blind zeal (Mt. 15:9; Isa. 29:13; 1 Pet. 1:18; Rom. 10:2).

²²E.g., WCF 13:1; WLC 75; WSC 35.

²³WLC 91-98; WSC 39-41.

²⁴As it does in WCF 3:8.

²⁵The general truth is in WLC 99, point 8. Removing idolatry is referred to in WLC 108.

²⁶The divines noted that the seventh commandment requires chastity, along with, among other things, "marriage by those that have not the gift of continency," and "diligent labor in our callings" (WLC 138).

²⁷WLC 141-142. To support the necessity of a lawful calling, the divines cited 1 Cor. 7:20 and Gen. 2:15; 3:19.

cal priority? To put it simply, which must come first? Can the heart inform the head? This is to reverse the polarity of the human personality. No wonder it does not work!

The old saying: "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach," is perhaps true. But on a more profound level it is far more important to assert that the way to a man's heart is through his mind. The vacuous lack of content in modern preaching, whilst aimed at the heart, finds it unapproachable. Not only does it lack substance; it has failed procedurally. This backward methodology can neither effect conversion nor sustain a converted life.

Permit a personal illustration. I have for most of my life been fascinated by astronomy. I confess to be more intrigued with optics than observation, but I enjoy to hear my friends "ooh" and "aah" as they see Saturn's rings for the first time. Their affections are engaged. But I notice few pause to inquire about the refractive index of extra-low dispersion glass. I understand. I also observe most lose interest as soon as I point to some 'faint fuzzy' at the threshold of visibility. A real treat for me but not enough to enthrall an audience on a cold night. They retreat. There aren't enough Saturns to hold them.

No amount of existential delight will capture the heart for long without an intellectual appreciation for the subject. The former may induce you to venture out at night, but only the latter will keep you there. Mindless affection will soon dissipate into a cold sentimentalism that has no staying power.

CONCLUSION

The apostle Paul stands for all time as the Christian's template of a disciplined mind and life. His discipline, however, was ever theological: a theology which

prioritized God's initiative over man's responses. But his orthodoxy was not without orthopraxy. He despised both mindless and heartless religion equally. For Paul, the work of God in the soul moved men to think, and in thinking, they were moved.

J.C. Ryle was described by his successor as "a man of granite with the heart of a child," an encomium which reflected a personality molded by a form of doctrine having taken up residence in the heart. But beyond that, this was precisely Paul's disciplined thesis: men's minds must be informed before their hearts can be warmed and reformed. Nothing softens the heart like hard fact. "Thanks be to God...." 

Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* innocent of the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God. Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

APPLICATION & PERSPECTIVE

DISCIPLESHIP
IN AN
UNDISCIPLINED WORLD
by Christopher Lensch

SOCIETY GROWS COARSE

“Discipline” has become a dirty word in Dr. Spock’s brave new world. In the name of naturalness and for the sake of fostering individual creativity, children are reared like weeds with little cultivation or pruning. Free expression to the point of rudeness is encouraged. Society’s intemperance has led to a break-down in common courtesies, ranging from the proliferation of just plain bad manners to open breaches of road rage and indiscriminate murder in school.

True Christians are not surprised by the degeneration of civility in this post-Christian age. When there was a semblance of a universal Christian culture in North America, even non-church goers gave lip service to the value of a Christian ethic.

The last 75 years, however, have seen the demise of mainline churches through outright apostasy. Meanwhile, much of the evangelical church has lost its power and life-changing message through creeping humanism (a.k.a. Arminianism). The result has been that Western Christians have not been salty in stemming the decay of their civilization.

BACKGROUND

Our post-Christian age is reaping the whirlwind of Darwinism. Man no longer has a soul and he faces no future day of

reckoning. Loss of accountability has led to a loss of moral consciousness and self-restraint.

Besides Darwin’s evil influence, we also have been pelted by the rotten fruits of the French Revolution. Our mixed up post-modern era is moving beyond the ultra-rationalism of the French Revolution, yet many of its ingrained dictums still linger. For example, the revolutionary slogan of “egalité” has been carried to its logical conclusion of co-ed bathrooms and women in combat.

Jean Jacques Rousseau was the popular philosopher of the Revolution that challenged the traditions of Christian civilization. He taught that “private property is theft” and that people are happier when not forced to live within the artificial expectations of civilized society. His ideal was “le bon sauvage,” the individual unfettered and exalted in natural impulses above social mores.

Judith Martin, (a.k.a. Miss Manners), outwardly and unwittingly holds a biblical view of human nature when she critiques the socially devastating effects of the Revolution. Decrying Rousseau’s school of etiquette that celebrates the [alleged] “happy savage” in us all, she writes,

Rousseau’s philosophy continues to survive in the pop-psychology and “human potential” movements of today, and in the do-nothing school of child-rearing, which has given us so many little — savages. In point of fact, we are all born rude. No infant has ever

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church: “Good works are only such as God hath commanded in His holy Word, and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men, out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intention.”²¹ In their statements defining and describing sanctification, the Standards emphasize the law of God; the Holy Spirit enables the believer more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness.²² And the only standard of righteousness is the moral law, summarized in the ten commandments.²³ The vows and disciplines of the monastery or the convent have no place in a Christian’s sanctification.

Reformed Christians believed that every Christian is called by God to glorify him in life. The sovereign Lord has prepared a way of life for each Christian, and calls the Christian to follow it. This is normally a life of activity in the world. This life is the “vocation” that Calvin spoke of. Vocation is derived from the Latin word *vocare*, “to call,” and is equivalent to our English word calling. Thus the *Confession* can refer to our effectual calling to salvation as our “effectual vocation.”²⁴ Likewise, our occupation in life is referred to as a “calling;” it is not merely a job, but rather a summons from God to activity for his glory.

A Christian’s calling results in having a measure of influence and authority, to help others and to influence them to honor God and oppose idolatry.²⁵ Diligent pursuit of one’s vocation is an aid in avoiding temptations and sins.²⁶ The eighth commandment in particular, “You shall not steal,” requires as a duty “a lawful calling, and diligence in it.” Likewise, it forbids the sins of “idleness” and “unlawful callings.”²⁷

As the greatest doctrinal statement in the Protestant tradition, the Westminster

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standards clearly declared that God calls his people to serve him in the world. From this Calvinist doctrine came significant Christian involvement in free enterprise, representative government, and social action, which has so much developed and improved the world. God is glorified when we work well.

OUR SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

We need a new appreciation of our Reformation heritage. This heritage is biblical. God tells us to enter the world, serve him there, and be a witness to a society in need. So the next time you enter your Christian bookstore, see if they stock à Kempis’ *The Imitation of Christ*. If they do, ask them to stock also Calvin’s *Golden Booklet of the Christian Life!*

By confessing our sins and seeking to obey God’s law, we develop spiritually. God has given us the means of grace, the Word of God, prayer, and the sacraments. By these means we gain spiritual strength. Then we are empowered to serve God in our families, our churches, our work, and our society. This is true spiritual discipline. As we grow in holiness, daily dying to sin and living unto righteousness, we glorify him and we witness to the world. 

¹1 Cor. 9:27; Php. 3:12-15.

²Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1973).

³Charles M. Sheldon, *In His Steps* (1897; Springdale, Pa.: Whitaker House, 1979).

⁴His books published in recent years include *Spiritual Classics, Streams of Living Water, Celebration of Discipline, Freedom of Simplicity, Money, Sex & Power, Prayers from the Heart,*

Throughout his life Calvin continued to edit and expand his famous *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, the compendium of his theology. The section of the *Institutes* dealing with our life of discipleship was special to him (Book 3, ch. 6-10). He wrote it in a style more simple and direct than the rest of the work. And then in 1550 he had it published separately with the title *The Golden Booklet on the True Christian Life*. This *Golden Booklet* has been in continuous publication in many languages ever since. John T. McNeill, the editor of the modern standard English edition of Calvin's *Institutes*, summarized Calvin's attitude:

While this world is not our home, it is to be taken seriously as our place of pilgrimage and probation, and Calvin will have no morose rejection either of its duties or of its boons. In five chapters, he gives a brief directory for the Christian life that is balanced, penetrating, and practical.¹⁶

Unlike the writings of Thomas à Kempis, this work promotes faithfulness in one's own vocation at the highest path of spiritual discipleship. In fact, Calvin debunked the monastic ideal of à Kempis:

It was a beautiful thing to forsake all their possessions and be without earthly care. But God prefers devoted care in ruling a household, where the devout householder, clear and free of all greed, ambition, and other lusts of the flesh, keeps before him the purpose of serving God in a definite calling. It is a beautiful thing to philosophize in retirement, far from intercourse with men. But it is not the part of Christian meekness, as if in hatred of the human race, to flee to the desert and the wilderness and at the same time to forsake

those duties which the Lord has especially commanded.¹⁷

Calvin warned against rash vows, those not commanded by Scripture and often beyond one's power to fulfill.¹⁸ He also insisted that we never should take a vow that would contradict our vocation given by God.¹⁹ Instead Calvin commended loyalty to our callings or vocations:

Therefore, lest through our stupidity and rashness everything be turned topsy-turvy, he has appointed duties for every man in his particular way of life. And that no one may thoughtlessly transgress his limits, he has named these various kinds of living 'callings.' Therefore each individual has his own kind of living assigned to him by the Lord as a sort of sentry post so that he may not heedlessly wander about throughout life.... The magistrate will discharge his functions more willingly; the head of the household will confine himself to his duty; each man will bear and swallow the discomforts, vexations, weariness, and anxieties in his way of life, when he has been persuaded that the burden was laid upon him by God. From this will arise also a singular consolation: that no task will be so sordid and base, provided you obey your calling in it, that it will not shine and be reckoned very precious in God's sight.²⁰

SPIRITUALITY IN THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS

The Westminster divines stood solidly in the Reformation tradition. They insisted that the only good works acceptable to God were those commanded in Scripture. They denied the spiritual worth of following a monastic life or other such deeds recommended by the medieval

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appeared yet with the grace to understand how inconsiderate it is to disturb others in the middle of the night.

The charge is often made against etiquette that it is artificial. Yes, indeed, it is. Civilization is artificial. When people extol the virtues of naturalness, honesty, informality, intimacy, and creativity — watch out. Honesty has come to mean the privilege of insulting you to your face without expecting redress, and creativity that it is wrong to interfere with a child who is destroying your possessions....¹

A growing social rudeness is getting the attention of etiquette experts like Miss Manners. Rude radio talk show hosts are not only symptomatic, but help fuel the corrosion of our culture. The latest craze in the "brutal honesty" trend is the television quiz show, "The Weakest Link." The title blatantly trumpets its underlying, evolutionary perspective about the human contestants, while the dour show hostess bluntly insults her departing guests who cannot pass the process of natural selection.

Forget about which side of the plate the knife and fork go! Etiquette experts now are reduced to pleading for a return to basic courtesies and old-fashioned manners. Admittedly, manners and civilization are artificial, but they are necessary contrivances for "living more or less harmoniously in a community," say the social commentators.

BIBLICAL SOCIAL CRITIQUE

When the Bible addresses the degeneration of basic human decency, it does not speak in terms of "crassness" nor "rudeness." Rather it gets to the heart of the problem:

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...men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God....²

Outward behavior is an expression of the heart.³ A wicked heart always issues forth in wicked behavior that mere rules of etiquette cannot control. No amount of sophistication can veil the deadly venom that is meant to destroy others.

Men who behave naturally apart from God's grace actually will behave like brute beasts. Their teachers of evolution have taught them they are animals; unrestrained and encouraged, they live out this inclination.

Just one example of this brutish behavior is today's common rebellion against God's ordained authorities and slandering individuals in positions of responsibility. Jude 8-10 expresses the growing spirit of savagery:

Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and speak evil of dignitaries. ...But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves.

Not so strangely, this description comes in the context (vs. 7) of God's condemnation of sodomy, another manifestation of unrestrained brutishness.

BIBLICAL SOCIAL REMEDY: DISCIPLING CHILDREN IN THE NURTURE AND ADMONITION OF THE LORD

The Bible's manual for training individuals in "how to get along" is the book

of Proverbs. Proverbs says much more on horizontal inter-relations than vertical relations or introspective investigations. The underlying basis for all relations, however, is clearly found in this book as a vertical relation to God. The key verse is found in the introduction: “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (1:7). This message is reiterated in later proverbs.

Nothing less than a right relation to God will produce right behavior. God’s people must show lovingkindness, equity, and temperance. While social and parental expectations can exert a powerful influence in shaping proper behavior, these pressures ultimately prove to be only pragmatic in motivation. But a relation to God as Master and Savior leads to obedience from the heart.

The purpose of this collection of ancient wisdom was to subtract from the number of fools and add to the number of the wise within the community. The opening verses of Proverbs set the tone for growing in wisdom to understand life and to navigate its shoals:

- 1 “The proverbs of Solomon ... :
- 2 To know wisdom and instruction,
To perceive the words of understanding,
- 3 To receive the instruction of wisdom,
Justice, judgment, and equity;
- 4 To give prudence to the simple,
To the young man knowledge and discretion—
- 5 A wise *man* will hear and increase learning,
And a man of understanding will attain wise counsel,
- 6 To understand a proverb and an enigma,

The words of the wise and their riddles.

- 7 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.
- 8 My son, hear the instruction of your father,
And do not forsake the law of your mother;
- 9 For they *will be* a graceful ornament on your head,
And chains about your neck.

Failure of society begins as failure in its homes. Children enter the world foolish and simple. They gain wisdom only if they are taught it. The teaching must take place in the home first (vs. 8), and then the church. Very few noble attitudes are learned in the schoolroom, but many baser attitudes are learned in the schoolyard.

The Bible makes plain here that wisdom is as much a heart matter as it is a head matter. Fools who despise wisdom (vs. 7) have a conceit that vaunts themselves over their instructors. Only reverence for God and a natural family affection can overcome such arrogance.

As Christian parents seek to disciple the young souls with which God has entrusted them, the truth of the Proverbs should be a significant portion of their children’s diet. The regular memorization of the Proverbs could revolutionize how covenant parents rear their children.

BIBLICAL SOCIAL REMEDY: DISCIPLESHIP OF LOVE

The true model of social behavior is found in the words, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” This is more than the “love that makes the world go ‘round.” Rather, it is the ideal for which

quaintances and friends, to him will God, with His holy Angels, draw near.... It is praiseworthy for a religious [person] but seldom to go abroad, to shun being seen, and to have no wish to see men.¹⁰

THE REFORMERS’ SOLUTION

The Reformation brought people back from the traditions of the church to the Bible. They soon discovered that the path of piety in the Bible was not that recommended by the Roman Catholic church. The Bible sends us into the world as salt and light; it glorifies our common vocations by shining the light of God’s calling upon them. The ancient patriarchs were men of the world, with families and property, engaged in the events of the times. The prophets were actively involved in their country and culture. John the Baptist instructed people not to give up their occupations, but to carry them out in a godly manner.¹¹ Jesus himself worked as a carpenter, then as a teacher among the people.

The Apostle Paul considered that, for Christians, all our life is a calling from God. “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;” God has “saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”¹² This “called” life means that our ordinary occupation is assigned to us by God as the way we are to spend our time and energy serving others and glorifying him. This might be as a member of a family and household, or as a worker in what we call an occupation or profession. We each have our calling. Thus, when we are saved, we are told to “let every man abide

in the same calling wherein he was called.”¹³ Paul in that command was referring to one’s daily work. By so doing, to paraphrase his words, we will be “walking worthy of the vocation with which we are called.”¹⁴

The Reformers saw these truths, and they set their followers free to serve and glorify God in their callings.

MARTIN LUTHER

As a young man Luther desperately sought God’s forgiveness and favor; he gave himself over entirely to the disciplines of the Augustinian monastery. However, he realized that even his most strict obedience fell far short of God’s demands — he still was condemned. But then, by studying the Bible, he grew to understand the truth of the gospel; he realized that monasticism was not in itself of any spiritual merit. Faith in what Christ had done, not acts of one’s own righteousness, was the instrument to receive God’s favor. One could be more spiritual and pray more effectually than a monk in the eyes of God even while simply doing his daily work and living in his own family. When Luther broke with Rome and then married Katherine von Bora, he led hundreds of men and women out of the cloister and back into the society of the world, to live as Christians in useful vocations.¹⁵

JOHN CALVIN

Calvin as a young man also converted from Roman Catholicism to the Protestant faith. As the leading systematic theologian of the Reformation, Calvin clearly spelled out the way of spiritual growth and discipleship. It was not the works of sacrifice ordered by the Roman church, but rather simple obedience to the commands of Scripture in one’s ordinary life.

istentialist Søren Kierkegaard, John Wesley, and Harvard divinity professor Harvey Cox, author of *The Secular City*.⁸ While Bounds and Wesley would be considered evangelical Protestants, none of these writers would present a Reformed or Calvinistic perspective on Christian discipline. It is notable in this regard, that there are no quotations from Martin Luther or John Calvin, who wrote extensively on these subjects. Likewise, there is no mention of the Catholic-Protestant conflict over personal holiness, nor of the careful formulations worked out in the Protestant creeds. Reading Foster, one would think that the Reformation never occurred.

THE REFORMED CONCEPT

While emphasizing the necessity of personal growth in holiness, the Reformers deepened the understanding of what it means to serve God.

... Middle Ages monasticism fostered an other-worldliness that disparaged the immediate interests of the present. The Reformation, indeed, paid attention to these interests. Self-preservation necessitated attention to matters of politics and government. The rediscovery of the New Testament, in which no support is given to the monastic ideal, altered the prevailing views on marriage and business. Industry and thrift were sanctified, and common occupations came within divine vocation. However, in emphasizing that God was interested in the proper use of worldly goods, the Reformers were not less but possibly more other-worldly. Their morality was much stricter than that of Romanism; and human life all the more stood under the final judgment before God's great throne.⁹

When God brought about the Protestant Reformation, he produced along with it a revolution in our understanding of spiritual discipline.

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE BEFORE THE REFORMATION

The world into which the Reformers came had a well-established teaching and system for those who wished to excel as disciples of Christ. This was the monastic system and mentality. A truly spiritual Christian would forsake the world and live in poverty, chastity (meaning celibacy), and under strict obedience. Monasteries and convents dotted the cities and countryside. Those Christians who chose to remain in the world and pursue a so-called secular life were following an acceptable but second-rate path. They would never reach the heavenly recognition and reward granted to those who had turned aside from the world. The world and its temptations would lure them away from the spiritual excellencies found in the seclusion of the cloister. The door of the monastery was the entrance to the fast track of spiritual acceptance and approval by God. A good illustration of the monastic ideal is that given by Thomas à Kempis in his famous *The Imitation of Christ*. For example, he recommends solitude over interaction with others as the pathway to spirituality:

As often as I have been amongst men, said one, I have returned less a man.... It is easier to keep retired at home than to be enough upon one's guard abroad. He, therefore, who aims at inward and spiritual things, must, with Jesus, turn aside from the crowd.... The cell continually dwelt in, groweth sweet.... For who withdraweth himself from ac-

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mankind was created and to which He calls us to return. When we love our neighbor, we reflect God's attribute of love. Loving our neighbors is one of the ways that we love God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind.

Jesus stressed this dual love for God and for our neighbors. While this ideal sounds radically challenging and new from His lips, it actually is the Bible's old message for true disciples. Jesus conserved and clarified the revelation that had come through Moses.

Leviticus 19 is an interesting chapter that helps reveal the essence of Jesus' teaching. Verses 17 & 18 are the basis of the ethic that Jesus expounds in the sermon on the mount:

You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the LORD.

To avoid any confusion about just whom we are to love, God further says that we are to love the stranger in our midst, as if he were one of our countrymen (19:34). The religious ethicists of Jesus' day missed this truth and were duly convicted by Jesus' teaching about a good Samaritan.

No other ancient religion commanded love for its god as did Jehovah (Deut. 6:5). If we love God, then we can love our neighbor in obedience to our Sovereign. Without God in our lives, it is impossible to love our neighbors fully and to be Jesus' obedient disciples. Any effort apart from God degenerates into a pragmatic ethic instead of one of principle.

The whole book of Leviticus is about holiness, and chapter 19, not surprisingly,

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opens with a call to personal holiness. This call is on the basis of God's own holiness and His covenant claim on His people. Then in the midst of a call to holiness and to worship (vs. 3b, "keep my Sabbaths"), there is immediately a command for children to reverence parents:

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father... (19:1-3a).

Honor to whom honor is due, respect for authority and for the dignity of others, and common courtesies grow out of love for God and our pursuit of holiness in Him. God calls for common courtesies like the young rising in the presence of their elders.⁴ He demands equity and honesty in business dealings (vv. 35, 36). By grace Christ's obedient disciples can be courteous and honest in the midst of a crooked generation. To do the "natural thing" when tempted would be to deny His holy claims and His supernatural power in us.

SPURS TO DISCIPLESHIP

Christ never intended His disciples to be doormats or milquetoasts. But He does call us to holiness and love in our daily walk. He requires Christian parents to be faithful in modeling and teaching the spirit of Christ to His lambs.

How can we be faithful disciples of the Master? Here are three reminders that motivate us.

First, remember the example of Jesus. "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).

Second, we must know our place, not just in the world, but before our Lord and Judge. “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master” (Matt. 10:24). He is watching as He prepares for the day of judgment (Matt. 25:40).

Lastly, true disciples will show the love of Christ out of a regenerated heart. Love gives and seeks the best for others (Phil 2:1-4; I Cor. 13). While most of humanity lives just under the veneer of civilization in order to avoid chaos and to keep from degenerating into open conflicts, Christ’s disciples show courtesies and deference out of genuine concern for others.

CONCLUSION

“Sophisticated” post-moderns are a funny bunch. Many have jettisoned traditional manners in the pursuit of crass expressions of individualism while demanding mutual tolerance.

As western civilization goes to the dogs in a post-Christian era, Jesus’ disciples will shine as lights in a dark world. In the every day market place and in the home, faithful obedience to the Master will draw attention to Him and His message.

“For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day” (Prov. 4:17,18). 

¹ From her Harvard lectures contained in her 1985 book, *Common Courtesy*

² 2 Timothy 3:2-4

³ “And He said, What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts... pride, foolishness” (Mark 7:20,21).

⁴ “You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD” (Lev. 19:32).

MONK OF MERCHANT? THE DIRECTION OF SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

by John Battle

How are we to direct our spiritual growth? Should we concentrate on the personal state of our heart? Should we be more concerned with our daily lives? Paul tells us to discipline our body, to “keep it under,” to strive for perfection.¹ How is this done? Should we enter the world, or flee from it? Should a Christian young man aspire to be a monk, or a merchant? These questions bring us into the study of personal spiritual discipline and discipleship.

Since the time of the apostles the church has faced these questions and has recommended a way of life to the faithful. During the Middle Ages the Roman Catholic church supported asceticism and the monastic movement; during the Reformation Luther and Calvin sent their followers back into the world with the assurance of God’s calling and their sense of vocation. Today this issue has become muddled and confused in evangelical churches. We need a fresh appreciation of our Reformation heritage, which is based on the teachings of Scripture.

TODAY’S COMMON CONCEPT

Most Christian bookstores display a section on Christian growth and devotion, sometimes called “spirituality.” Examin-

ing these books, you would find them written by many popular, well-known authors. Many of these books have sold in the hundreds of thousands, even in the millions. One of these classics is *The Imitation of Christ*, written nearly six hundred years ago by Thomas à Kempis, a monk who lived for sixty-six years in the same monastery; it is said on the back cover of a recent edition that this book “ranks next to the Bible in the influence it has exerted upon Christian spirituality.”² About a hundred years ago Charles M. Sheldon wrote *In His Steps*, with its question, “What would Jesus do?” It has sold nearly ten million copies.³

Since all these books are sold together, you might think that they all generally agree and that any of them would be a good guide. However, closer examination will show that these books diverge. Some lead to the more medieval ideal of isolation from the world and attachment to God and the church, while others advocate active engagement in the world as Christian witnesses. With the new evangelical movement now embracing the Roman Catholic church, many Protestant writers, whom we would expect to follow the path of the Reformers, are now advocating the traditional spirituality of their Catholic opponents.

A current example of this tendency is the modern writer Richard J. Foster. Himself a Quaker, Foster is the executive director of the Milton Center and professor of theology and writer in residence at Friends University. He is the author or editor of numerous books dealing with spirituality, personal discipline, and discipleship.⁴ His books are very popular among evangelicals. Perhaps his most seminal work is his *Celebration of Discipline*, published in 1978.⁵ This book has been republished often and still is a big

seller; it provides an excellent example of modern trends in Protestant thinking. Foster divides Christian growth into three areas: inward disciplines (meditation, prayer, fasting, study), outward disciplines (simplicity, solitude, submission, service), and corporate disciplines (confession, worship, guidance, celebration). While many of these areas can be developed in our Christian lives, yet they do not cover all that we are to do. They do not emphasize obedience to God’s law, or doing one’s duty and working hard at one’s vocation; these were major emphases of the Reformation.

Especially enlightening are the people that Foster looks up to. His book contains many quotations from other writers. In the Forward we are told that he relies heavily on other Quaker writers — George Fox, John Woolman, Hannah Whitall Smith, Thomas Kelly, and others. Foster has provided detailed footnotes showing whom he quotes, and I have checked these to see how often he quotes these different writers. These Quaker writers are cited fourteen times in the book.⁶ So certainly his debt to his own tradition is evident. However, Foster betrays a far greater debt to another tradition, not mentioned in the Forward. This is the tradition of the Roman Catholic church. Whereas he cites his fellow Quakers 14 times, he cites Roman Catholic writers at least 47 times. The person he cites most of all is Thomas Merton. Merton, who died about thirty years ago, was a Trappist monk at Our Lady of Gethsemani Abbey in Trappist, Kentucky; Foster cites Merton 17 times in his book, more than all the Quakers put together.⁷

Richard J. Foster does quote other Protestant writers also. He frequently cites Deitrich Bonhoeffer, E. M. Bounds, ex-