

*Leading People  
into Discipleship*

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*All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.*

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## INTRODUCTION

We are part of a work of God that is reaching men and women in the uttermost parts of the world, bringing them the Gospel by every means possible—through radio, television, the Internet, and dramatic presentations.

Of course, nothing is as effective as speaking with people face to face. That is why as a local church we go door to door, sharing the salvation message throughout our city several times a week. As an international ministry, we also send missionary teams into all the world to evangelize people in villages, cities, and entire nations with the good news that Jesus Christ paid the price for sin so they can believe on Him as Savior and receive His gift of eternal life.

Still, if that is as far as we go in our outreach, a vital step is lacking: Discipleship. Jesus said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy [Spirit]” (Matthew 28:19).

But that is not all. In the next breath He added: “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20a).

The Holy Spirit convicts men’s hearts of the truth of the Gospel. But God has left the business of making disciples to people like you and me. Though we may convince many to profess that they need salvation, we are to lead people into a life-transforming knowledge of God that includes obedience to the truth. This booklet deals with the importance of making disciples, giving practical steps to help lead people into discipleship.

## *Chapter One*

### A SOLEMN QUESTION

“A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

“And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

“And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

“And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold....He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Luke 8:5-8).

The Bible says in Romans 3:24-25 that we are all justified by grace through the redemption of Jesus Christ and through “faith in his blood.” It means we are saved and hid with Christ in God in the new covenant. Of course, when we go out soul winning, give a clear presentation of the Gospel, and pray with a person, we want to be-

lieve that he became saved—but, did he? Did he get saved, or, was he a disciple that would go back and never follow Jesus? Did he just profess to be a disciple, a learner?

When a person receives us into his house, we clearly present the plan of salvation. If there is no immediate outward response, we always say, “Thank you for letting us in your home,” then we pray a simple prayer: “Thank You, Lord, for this home, and for this person who just made a decision.” Of course, we don’t know what kind of decision they made.

From the account in Luke 8, it is possible that as many as seventy-five percent of people who make professions are not really saved. They don’t go to church, and they do not get baptized. They accept the knowledge of the Gospel but not the gift of repentance through the Holy Spirit (Jeremiah 31:18-19a).

### *Many Are Called, Few Are Chosen*

Second Corinthians 3:6 says, “The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.” The knowledge of the truth is very interesting to some, and they may even tell their best friend about it. But if they really were born again, they would repent through the grace, love, and mercy of God. They



would let God turn them and give them the power to walk in the newness of His life. They would come to the next church service, begin to study the Word, and obey what they hear from the Word of God.

You say, "Isn't salvation with the filling of the Holy Spirit a free gift?"

Yes, it is a free gift. But why does the Bible say, "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14)? They have received a knowledge of grace but not the Holy Spirit of grace through faith. By grace, through faith, it takes the Holy Spirit to convert a person through regeneration and to indwell them, guide them, and reveal the power of the Word of God. Without the Spirit, it is the power of the flesh with knowledge that puffs up (1 Corinthians 8:1).

Regeneration means that a person has a conversion first, and then he becomes a new creature. Yes, salvation is grace plus nothing *if* it includes a willingness to be turned around by God. But if a person who has professed Christ as Savior goes away with only an emotional response, unchanged, and never goes to any church for the rest of his life, he has taken the grace of God in vain.

## *The Evidence of Salvation: A Changed Life*

This is why I fear that some people who make professions are not really getting saved. Every person who is saved should follow it up by attending a Bible-believing church and being baptized. By our fruit we are known. It is not like the thief who was dying the moment he was saved (Luke 23:39-43). He had no opportunity to produce fruits of obedience, yet we are certain that he was regenerated.

To be honest, many are not saved at the time that they make a profession. Some are, but many will never step foot in church, and they bear no evidence that they are saved. There is no change.

When people understand salvation, they go way beyond receiving the knowledge of the truth. But the problem we have to deal with is in Luke 8, where Satan takes the Word out of their hearts before it saves them. They make a profession, and they use it as a security blanket without experiencing the gift of repentance.

The gift of repentance brings about a change in the heart, mind, and soul. You were going one way, and you turned right around—180 degrees. And now, you are going God's way. You let God turn you right around. Your attitudes toward

church attendance, the Bible, and priorities change because you have a new life, new light, and a new perspective.

If, however, you only believe in the knowledge of the Gospel, that does not save you. According to Acts 5:32, obedience is the evidence of the initial act of salvation, which is when we were filled with the Holy Spirit. “And we are witnesses of these things: and so is also the Holy [Spirit], whom [the Lord] hath given to them that obey him.”

God has to take away what many seem to have, because the best they ever did was receive the knowledge of salvation (Luke 8:18). They never became regenerated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).

That can be hard to hear when you consider that we are saved by grace alone—and we are. The problem is with the condition and preparation of the soil that receives the seed of the Word of God. That is why Luke 8:18 is in the Bible.

In Matthew 7:21-23, God said to the evangelist who preached Christ, cast out demons, and did many wonderful works, “Depart from Me; I never knew you.” That man was not regenerated, and he never received the Holy Spirit. He was preaching *about* the Holy Spirit, but he had

never received Christ as Savior and had never been born again, though he went forward to serve God and the ministry! That is what concerns me.

Everyone who is saved should have the fruit of God's love. "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren" (1 John 3:14). We let love cast out fear; we love ourselves, others, and our enemies. That love is the evidence of eternal security.

### *Grace Leads to Repentance*

To whom does God give the gift of the Holy Spirit? He gives it to those who obey. Where does obedience start? It is revealed in our mental attitude when we accept Christ.

So, someone may say, "I've been looking for this all my life, and I finally found it!" and appear to have been saved. But if he is saved, his hunger for God and the Word will lead him to church somewhere in the future weeks. More than that, he will be led of the Spirit.

Many sincere Christians misunderstand grace. You see, we are saved by grace through faith and not of works. But grace will always produce a desire to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and power to live quietly with

doctrine in this present world (Titus 2:12). So if the Holy Spirit of grace comes in, He comes to indwell, teach, guide, lead, and reveal the truth.

We need to teach people that Satan's mission is to take away the knowledge before the Holy Spirit comes in. In the parable of the sower in Luke 8, Satan takes away the knowledge before obedience comes into the mind. As a result, many hear but are unable to receive the Spirit for transformation.

Now do you see why I am concerned? Many will say, "I knew You," and God will say, "I didn't know you."

Many Christians lack precise doctrine, and that makes the difference. Doctrine means how to think with God in the Spirit—not how to think with God in knowledge, but how to think in God with the knowledge of the Spirit in the spirit of knowledge.

What I am afraid of is that many people have a form of godliness—they make a profession of knowledge—but deny the power thereof (2 Timothy 3:5), so they don't come to church. They refuse to submit to a pastor-teacher; they don't receive doctrine; and they don't grow in grace and knowledge.

Imagine a child coming into this world as a

little baby, and ten years later the child never grew at all! He remained as a little baby, unable to speak or do anything on his own. That is what we face with people who have not been fed Bible doctrine.

### *An Outward Response to an Inward Call*

Regarding soul winning, I always consider that when I lead people to Christ, I impart knowledge. But when they will come out to church services, I know that they obeyed something they heard and the Holy Spirit took over, imparting new life.

It is so easy for children of Christian parents to believe the knowledge of their parents' doctrine but never to receive and obey the Spirit of truth. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. We receive the truth of the Word of God, which says that Jesus was crucified, through the eternal Spirit of God.

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63). If the words we speak are not Spirit-filled, then our knowledge doesn't have life. Knowledge without the Spirit puffs up and makes people rebellious.

The only way we can live in retroactive truth (which includes our death, burial, and resurrection in Christ), is through the eternal Holy Spirit.

## *Chapter Two*

# SOUL WINNING IS JUST THE BEGINNING

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

“And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

“*But they have not all obeyed the gospel.* For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath *believed* our report?

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

“But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world” (Romans 10:13-18).



When we share the Gospel and people make a profession to receive Christ as their Savior, follow-up with a goal of discipleship is crucial. We need to take the time to show people how to begin their new walk. It is not up to us to judge whether a person means business with God when he prays the prayer of salvation. But it is up to us to share with them the richness of the life we have received.

Lovingly, graciously, tenderly, encourage the person you prayed with to read the Scriptures. Using your Bible, turn to the verses, and whenever possible let him read the passages out loud. Mark the pages beforehand so you can easily find the verses.

One of the first things to establish is the fact that the Word of God is pure and divinely inspired, and we must not add to nor take away from the Word of God. Include yourself in the discussion; say “we” instead of “you.” For example, “We are all sinners, that is why we must handle the Word of God with the utmost respect....” Let them read the verses that you know on that subject. You may not need to go into Deuteronomy 4:2; 11:17-18, and 12:32; but you certainly should read Proverbs 30:5, Matthew 4:4, and Revelation 22:18 and 19.

From time to time, stop and ask whether they have any questions. You can refer them to publications such as *What Happened When You Received Christ?* (by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1999). A booklet such as this, which outlines 68 things that happen at the moment of salvation, can provide an excellent outline of the kinds of things to share with a new believer, to build him up in his status as a child and an heir of God.

Also, it is vital to teach new believers about the importance of rebounding when we fail (1 John 1:7-10). When we forgive, we forget. If we tell what somebody did to us a year ago, or about some sin they did, we don't reveal God's love. People who withdraw from church, become negative, and live in sin for a period of time, often question whether or not they are saved. Every believer needs to know that sin cuts off fellowship with God; but when we confess it and isolate it we can forget it and go on because of rebound.

### *The Testimony of Baptism*

It is a good idea to encourage the new believer to be baptized as soon as possible. If they begin by being obedient to baptism (when they

understand what it means), then they will keep a process of obedience, for which they will receive rewards.

Let new converts know why baptism is so crucial. Baptism is a testimony that we have entered into a union with the retroactive truth of Jesus Christ's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. In other words, we give public testimony of the truth of what happened to us from God's viewpoint of our position, "hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3).

Baptism has nothing to do with salvation; it is a testimony of obedience because God said to do it (Acts 2:38; Matthew 28:19). Jesus was baptized by John in obedience to His Father's will (Luke 3:21). Baptism is an outward testimony of our obedience to God, before the angels and the demons of hell. It is a public declaration—before the world, before demons, and before God—that we have changed sides.

We are saved by grace and grace alone (Romans 11:6, Ephesians 2:8, 9), and the only "work" required is that we believe the Gospel. Yet the Scriptures show that when the first believers were saved, they couldn't wait to follow the Lord. They became followers of Jesus—the Light of the world (John 8:12)—in every part of their

lives (Matthew 16:24).

*“Buy the Truth, and Sell It Not”*  
*(Proverbs 23:23a)*

We should never presume that because a person has been exposed to good biblical teaching that they are necessarily saved. Many good people have given mental consent to the truth, but they trust in their own goodness, which is as filthy rags in the sight of God. Let the new believer see the immediate and eternal value of the Scriptures—that God Himself esteems His Word above His name (Psalm 138:2).

It is important to set up a time to meet again with the new believer, either at a restaurant, at his home, or at church. If he is willing, have him give you a date immediately, while the message is fresh. That is God’s “close” to make sure he is serious about what he heard and that the message goes beyond his emotions.

We need to be thorough and take time; do not be in a hurry. This is how we should invest in every person who has made a profession of salvation. Yet, so many Christians fail to follow through when counseling people who just prayed a prayer to be saved.

Satan will do everything he can to take the

Word out of the hearts of new believers. Many have only *professed* to be saved, and time will tell whether a profession is a pre-salvation experience or real salvation.\*

Parents or teachers should have a time when they share the Gospel plainly to the young people in our Christian schools, one-on-one. Ask them, "Has your life ever really been changed? It doesn't matter what you say about believing like your parents do. Has there been a time when your life changed?"

### *Not by Bread Alone*

It is important to show a new believer that the Word of God will evaluate his life and his fruit at the Bema Seat.\*\* Explain that all who are born-again will be accountable before God based on their opportunities on earth to obey God's Word.

For example, the Bible tells us to love God and to love one another (Matthew 22:37-39). It tells us to study the Word (2 Timothy 2:15), to trust the Lord for our needs (Proverbs 3:5-6; Luke 12:22-31), and to forsake not the assembling of the church (Hebrews 10:25). God keeps a record of our hearing and living by His Word in the Book of Remembrance (Malachi 3:16), and

based on that record, we will either receive rewards or suffer loss of rewards when we face Christ.

While the subject of the Bema Seat is fresh in his mind, you could turn to John 12:47-48 and have him read it. Then you could say, "Now, according to the Bible, from what you saw with your own eyes, what is going to evaluate us at the Bema Seat?"

If he is following you, he will answer, "The Word of God."

Always keep your words sweet and tender and edifying: "Yes, that's right! It's the Word of God."

### *On Being Hid in the Body of Christ*

Then, take him into Hebrews 10:25, to show the importance of church attendance as members of the Body of Christ. You just turn there, and ask him to read that passage: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Don't say a word until he has finished reading. Then explain that we are learning to live by every word of God, because we have discovered

that God's Word will judge us at the Bema Seat. Therefore, we want to be able to know what it says. You can make a specific appointment to meet him at a church service or even offer to give him a ride.

This would be a good time to teach about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit with the doctrine of the Word of God. Then I would teach the doctrine of having a pastor-teacher. This can be introduced with the category of faith.

### *Steps of Faith: Walk, Don't Run!*

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). Romans 10:13-15 will introduce the new believer to the value God places on His government on earth through the local church ("...how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?...").

Once you have shown him that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God, then you say, "Okay, faith cometh by hearing, hearing by the Word of God. And how shall they hear without a preacher?"

And you pause and you say, "How do they hear?"

"By a preacher."

Don't let your approach be all business or too mechanical. Once in a while, inject words that let him know you thank God for his heart, that he can see the reality of the Scriptures.

Obviously, we can't obey the Word if we don't know it. And we can't enjoy its treasures if we don't know what it says. But remember: Faith comes by *hearing*. We need to hear it. It doesn't say we need to 'read' it. Faith comes by hearing from a pastor who is skillful with the Word, who knows how to exegete Scripture by studying the original language along with the historical frame of reference (isagogics) and correlating precise categories of doctrine. This pastor knows how to share every word of God in the love of God.

Certainly, a Christian who is a disciple can read the Word for himself and do well with it. But we are addressing the new believer. He could read the Bible cover to cover and still not get anything out of it, practically speaking, because he has never categorized truth through the Holy Spirit's power.

In fact, millions have knowledge, traditions, rituals, and even a profession of faith to lean on. But without obedience to faith, there is no Holy Spirit of power. And God gives the Holy Spirit



to them that obey Him.

If a person says, "If it is not of works, how do I obey Him?" you can tell him, "By faith you do what the Bible says, through the grace of God and by the Spirit who dwells in you. The Bible says, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...' (Acts 16:31). So when you believe God's Word, you become saved, and the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in you, to quicken you and convict you of more truth, and you are obedient."

### *The Quickening Power of the Word and the Spirit*

"Many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (John 6:66). Why did Jesus call them "disciples"? A disciple is one who is a learner, a student, a follower of a certain way. Those disciples who turned back started to learn, but then they stopped and decided not to go on with the Cross life, complaining that Jesus' sayings were "too hard." They professed to believe that what Jesus said was the truth. But when it came to obeying that truth, they never followed Him again.

As a pastor, I am concerned when people do not become broken by a fresh truth from the Word. A lack of brokenness reveals that they are

not being quickened—spiritually renewed—in the reality of the breath of God in the moment of that second in time.

Psalm 119:154**b** says, “Quicken me according to thy word.” Psalm 119:25 says, “My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.” Verse 40**b** says, “Quicken me in thy righteousness.” “Quicken me in thy way...after thy lovingkindness” (see verses 37 and 88).

That is exactly what the Word of God does for the believer who receives it in faith. It quickens us. Sharper than a two-edged sword, it pierces “even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow.” It becomes a critic of the motives of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

### *Learning How to Walk*

Within every person who is truly saved is the power of creation, the power of redemption, the power of the resurrection, the power of the ascension. Within us is the power of eternal life. It is a gift of life residing inside a body of death that is constantly being quickened. It comes from letting the Word abide in us as we abide in the Word (John 15:7). So, whatever we do for

work, all the time we are working, we can be automatically quickened by Jesus Christ in us, just the way we automatically breathe without stopping to think about it.

Ephesians 5:14 says, "Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." The light is the Word of God (Psalm 119:130). We learn to walk circumspectly, with wisdom and discernment. It is not at first an outward walk but an inward thought that produces an outward step. Then, one thought becomes many inward thoughts, which produce steps in a walk with God. We redeem the time, and we are wise, not "non-thinkers" (Ephesians 5:15-17).

*\*For more about this question, read Salvation: Profession or Possession? by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1997.*

*\*\*For more about the time in heaven when Christ will evaluate believers, read The Bema Seat: Presented in Joy or Grief?, Grace Publications, 1996, and also The Morning Star Order by Pastor Carl H. Stevens, Grace Publications, 1998.*

### *Chapter Three*

## THE RESULT OF DISCIPLESHIP: LIVELY STONES, KNIT TOGETHER

New believers have to be discipled. It is not just saying a prayer, "Father, come into my heart." Certainly, people need to know they are saved by grace plus nothing. But they need to be discipled, and it takes a believer who *is* a disciple to teach another to become a disciple. That is the whole purpose of the Christian life (Matthew 28:18-20).

When I was saved, men of God discipled me thoroughly. They stayed with me until I could begin to fathom the height, breadth, and depth of God's love. Then I discipled others, and those disciples discipled others. It takes at least four or five months of staying with someone, being available to the questions that come up, helping them to understand something about angelic warfare, and showing them how to trust their own vertical relationship with God.

One person may be able to disciple two or three people at a time. Someone who is hungry for the Word, hid in the Body of Christ, and goes all the way with God will see the same kind of fruit in the lives of the people in whom he invests.

Occasionally we meet with people who seem to be spiritually dead. They may have been associated with a dynamic church for years. Still, it is possible that they never grew, spiritually, and there ought to be a way for us to disciple them. It is vital that they understand the importance of not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the Body of Christ, to hear the Word of God—to draw near instead of withdrawing.

In Acts 2, when three thousand were saved in one day, they met together daily. Of course, few can do this today because of work schedules, and that is understandable. Our church makes it available, however, with Bible college classes, rap sessions, and a variety of outreach opportunities that include times of prayer and fellowship around the Word. Stress the importance of *hearing* the Word of God daily—even if it is by getting to a class one day a week and listening to tapes or radio, besides the church services.

Remember, true salvation is “plus nothing.” It is the gift of grace through faith, and that comes by hearing (Ephesians 2:8-10). But true believing changes a person. Show James 2:19 to the person you are discipling. It says, “The devils believe and tremble.” They tremble because they know the truth *about* God but they never had a personal faith *in* God. Make sure you go this far at first. The devils had faith in all the Scriptures as being true, but never had a personal relationship with Christ, so they never were saved. They can’t be saved, and they know they will spend eternity in hell.

### *Encourage a Prayer Life*

Be sure to address the importance of prayer and developing a personal vertical relationship with God. Let people know that even if it is brief, they can develop a prayer life with God. Suggest that they have a little book to write down prayer requests as they come up. You could encourage them by saying something like, “A prayer life is not works. If you don’t feel like doing it at first, at least start speaking to God in prayer. You don’t have to, but it would be wonderful if you do, because the more you participate with God in obedience, the more you want

to obey, and the more you grow by obedience.”

Recently someone wrote me a short but very encouraging note, and in it they wrote, “I love you.” I began thinking that if we will listen to Him, God takes time every single morning to tell us that He loves us. His mercies are new every morning (Lamentations 3:22-23). And when He said, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3), that is God’s way of initiating love through mercy to you and me every single morning.

It is quite a thing that Almighty God, who has created billions of people, takes time to spend with us from the Word of God individually, to tell us He loves us. Jesus met with His Father very early every morning. Jesus ministered grace to the backslidden disciples in the morning (John 21), and He offers us mercies for each day, along with compassions that never fail.

### *God Does Not Want Any to Perish*

So there it is. That is what has to be done with every single convert—spiritually and professionally. It is my opinion that if a person raises his hand to be saved but never goes to church and never goes on with God, he may only have had a pre-salvation experience, tem-

porarily convinced of the truth but not convicted to be converted.

We are not to drive a person into making a profession of faith, and we are not to antagonize people. With quietness, kindness, creativity, and spirituality, we can be professional yet very personal and sincere as we make disciples of men.

There is nothing wrong with being professional. Some think that just because they are Christians, that they can't become professionals at soul winning and discipleship. But a Spirit-filled person is relaxed and skillful in righteousness (Hebrews 5:13-14)—resting in faith, creatively discipling another person with the creative inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the wisdom of the Word of God with the grace provision of a divine premise. Still, whatever we do must be done in grace and in divine love.

If we do this properly, many of the people who get saved will end up attending church regularly. That is why thorough, personal, doctrinal discipleship is so crucial.

Paul was a prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1). He was willing to be afflicted for their consolation and salvation (2 Corinthians 1:6) “your servants for Jesus’ sake” (2 Corinthians 4:5). Paul said, “I will very



gladly spend and be spent for you..." (2 Corinthians 12:15a). Paul took discipleship very seriously.

### *Predestined in Christ*

God is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9). Jesus Christ has never predestinated anybody to go to hell. He has never predestinated anyone to be lost. He is not a respecter of persons (Romans 2:11, Acts 10:34). He would have all men "come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

Jesus died for the sins of the entire world (1 John 2:2, John 3:16, and 2 Corinthians 5:19), not imputing our trespasses to us. That is the unlimited atonement. We will never have to pay for personal sins, because, through the unlimited atonement, Christ paid for them all with His blood.

So, whosoever will call on the Lord Jesus Christ, believing, shall be saved (Romans 10:13, John 6:37, John 3:17-18, 3:36, 2 Thessalonians 2:13). It is not whosoever was elected by God's preference and God's choice. *Whosoever will* may come, according to those verses.

Obviously, God loves everybody equally, in terms of subjective love. That love is based on

who He is as the Giver, not on who we are as the objects of His love. When He died on the Cross, He died for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2; 1 Peter 2:24).

“But as many as received [Christ], to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12). Having been saved, we have been called with a holy calling—not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began (see 2 Timothy 1:9).

## CONCLUSION

A saved man is a transformed man and will be conformed to the image of Christ more and more. His portion will not be with those who are satisfied with only this life. Rather, his portion is the Lord (Lamentations 3:24). We must not presume that because someone has prayed the prayer of salvation that he is born again. The Bible says we must *believe in our heart* as well as confess with our mouth (Romans 10:9). If a person professes to be saved but neither reveals the fruit of the Holy Spirit nor attends a church where the whole counsel of the Word is taught by a servant of God, something is not right.

When God gives the gift of salvation, it comes with the gift of repentance. The Holy Spirit moves in the hearts of men and women who truly believe and have received Christ as their Savior. He reveals the Father's heart toward us and leads us in the paths of righteousness (Psalm 23), using the Word as it is ministered by

other believers.

Peter had been severely backslidden when Jesus commissioned him to make disciples of men, saying, “Feed my sheep” (John 21:15-17). Why would God depend on people—sinners—to lead others into discipleship? We are the Lord’s Body on this earth. He speaks through those who yield themselves to live by precise doctrine, who are willing to invest time in rightly dividing the Word of truth, sharing what they know about God with others.

*Heavenly Father, give us your heart for people. We desire to have Your thoughts with wisdom, boldness, and discernment as we minister to those who have made a profession of salvation. Teach us how to have compassion without compromise and the ability to confront issues without unnecessary conflict. We pray for every soul we share with to be convicted by the truth and truly converted by grace through faith. In Jesus’ precious name, Amen.*