



Volume 1 Issue 2  
May 2008

# A Challenging Word

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## DISCIPLING MEN (PART TWO)

### SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

With all the things I have tried to instill in those I teach, I have found it all boils down to just three simple concepts. I teach my students to be *sound in the Word*, to maintain a *sense of wonder* and to be *sensitive to His will*. When Aquilla and Priscilla met up with Apollos, in Acts 18, he was already well-skilled in the Word, a great teacher, and an eloquent speaker. However, he lacked in some areas that were easily recognizable. Aquilla and Priscilla took him under their wing and gave instruction into the deeper aspects of the Scriptures and honed the gifts he already possessed. In other words, they made him sound in the Word of righteousness. Accurate knowledge in the Word of God is essential and imperative. Men are taught best when the challenge to learn the Word is systematic and comprehensive. Each person, of course, grasps truth differently, but all in all, teaching in an organized fashion leads to understanding in an organized fashion, and that leads to sharing it in the same way. Learning God's Word must have purpose attached to it. Randomness is self-defeating and frustrating. If the concepts we teach cannot be actualized and applied, if they are merely theory and opinion, we perpetuate sloth and inconsistency in the local Body of Christ.

I would suggest a few key words. The first word is **plan**. Develop a realistic teaching structure for each person with whom you work. This must include assignments, research projects, reading, and time spent reviewing what has been learned. The second word is **purpose**. There must be goals attached that the learner can see are possible. Unrealistic goals lead to discouragement and ultimately failure. Know what you want to teach and be thorough. If you want to see growth in a particular area, aim for that area, and don't detour from it. And the last word is **prayer**. I know of no good work for the kingdom that has survived without prayer. Pray deliberately and constantly. Someone's spiritual life is in your hands. Don't victimize them by not praying. Also, I must include that every facet of discipleship is about HIM; it's not about us, or the people we disciple, but HIM.

To understand the need of maintaining *a sense of wonder*, you don't have to look far; just find a child. Children are discovering the world around them at a rapid pace. The universe has so much to tell, and a young one can find the greatest of wonders in things that adults fail to notice. So it should be when we are uncovering the truths of Christ and the majesty of God. His universe is so vastly different and has so much to tell if we would just look. David said in Psalm 119:161, "My heart stands in awe of your Word." Can't you hear the sense of wonder that has overwhelmed him? The wondrous truths of His life and love are too many to know and explore in a million life times, that's why we'll need eternity. The freshness of one's personal walk is predicated on his sense of wonder. Keeping an active meditation time will help us avoid the opportunities to be carnal. All too often I have noticed that many people who have undergone intense discipleship take on an air of superiority. Nothing will taint the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives like arrogance. When we become the object of our worship and lose the wonder of Him and His Word, we become ineffective and stale. Wonder is the parent of true joy. A heart that is truly awed by our Master rarely strays. Knowing and loving Him with a sense of awe and reverence is never to be bored, depressed or discouraged. Teaching men to encourage themselves by knowing God's greatness and His love is the detour from many things that lead to straying. Loving God is the panacea to battles unique to men. When David's family was taken at Ziklag, his discussion with his soul was a reminder of God's delivering power and love (see Psalm 42). His determination not to give in to depression would never have occurred had it not been for possessing a love for God and knowing God's heart.

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Volume I Issue I  
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Have you ever looked into the facet of a flawless diamond? By allowing light to pass through, it will reveal the most wondrous colors and brilliance. But even with all its beauty, it can't hold our attention forever; so, we move on to the next thrill or experience. Sometimes we treat God like a diamond. We are fascinated for awhile with an aspect of His power or His majesty, and with our finite minds try to take in all of His glory, not realizing that we need not leave His presence to remain in awe of Him. We need only to ask Him to adjust the light of revelation, and behold with wonder a newfound view of His divine brilliance. Simply put, to stand in constant wonder of Him, is to decide to love Him. Developing a true love for God in the life of men is probably the single greatest gift you can give. Teach each one you are given, to have the heart of a child, a heart full of wonder and amazement for a Father who constantly romances us to know Him in a brand new way every day. There is *no* greater thrill.

How do you teach someone to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit? How can we give away probably the most valuable commodity (outside of salvation) attainable by mortal man? Sensitivity to God's voice and direction is like a road. One may be able to see where it leads, but cannot enjoy the destination unless he takes the first step and continues the journey. As I have stated so many times, God's will is revealed from the general to the specific. As we obey Him on the simplest of matters, he reveals more of Himself and His plan. Take the life of the patriarch, Abram. Here is a man with whom God had chosen to enter into intimate perpetual covenant; one whom God would identify as friend. But when God comes to Abram for the first time in Genesis 12:1-3, He gives Abram limited information about His divine plan. First, God looks to see if Abram will leave his country, his father and his father's family. Abram does two out of the three; he leaves country and father, but takes his father's family (Lot and Lot's family) with him. When God speaks to him again in verse 7, He gives him a little more of the plan, this time revealing His promise of a land for Abram's descendants. Finally when Lot's desires are made clear and the two men separate, God shows him the Promised Land. Notice, there is as of yet no mention of Isaac. God only adds that his family would be as the sand of the sea. This was implying a human aspect of the promise, "I will make of thee a great nation." Abram could not and did not foresee all of the ramifications of the plan of God, but only as he obeyed God, more and more of God's plan for him was uncovered.

This life is a journey, one that does not carry any advantages for quitters. The Scriptures warn, that, those who are seeking God do not please Him, but rather those who are *diligently* seeking Him. God is not impressed by those who are curious of Him, but those who *crave* Him: Those who want nothing else but to know Him. Spiritual sensitivity is the journey of the desperate. I cannot teach it. You cannot teach it. The Holy Spirit will not just randomly give it. Anyone who is sensitive to the Spirit of God must *want God with everything they are and have*. There is one door God that has provided for those who are hungry: a door that requires two keys to unlock. Key number one: "For the word of God is quick (life-giving) and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of the joints and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. 4:12) Key number two: "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use, have their sense exercised to discern both good and evil." (Heb. 5:14)

The first key is Scripture-driven, forged by exercise *in* the Word; the second is sense-driven, forged by exercise *of* the will. The combination of these two important components will yield a spiritual sensitivity not only to God's will, but to other unseen factors that influence the world in which we live. Knowing God through his Word and using it to determine every facet of life, will produce a sensitivity to spiritual matters and a nearness to God that satisfies. We cannot know God apart from the Spirit. The Spirit apart from his Word cannot lead us. We cannot benefit from his Word unless we obey it. We will not obey what we do not study.

\*(The continuation of this article on **Discipling Men** (Social Disciplines) will continue in the next few issues. This article is taken from a chapter by Melissa Hansen's book, **Discipleship**, which is in prepublication form at this time.)