

## Part Six

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# DISCIPLES AND FRIENDS

## 23

### ANDREW BRINGS MEN TO JESUS

Andrew was one of Jesus' original twelve apostles, and the brother of the well-known Simon Peter. Sometimes we feel as if we knew rather much about all the apostles, because we have a fairly extensive knowledge of the lives of some of them and of the call and commission and authority given to all of them as a group. Perhaps we seldom realize how little definite information we have concerning the lives of some of the men in that group. Andrew is neither among the best known, nor is he the least known of them.

#### *An Early Disciple*

His first association with Jesus was near the Jordan River, as he listened to the preaching of John the Baptist. In fact, Andrew is called a "disciple" of John (John 1:35-37), which seems to imply that he was more than a casual listener. Certainly he was an interested and believing hearer of John's predictions of the coming Messiah. He was one of those who were waiting for the appearance of the Hope of Israel.

Andrew and Peter were working men who made their living by fishing in the sea of Galilee. But they were also the kind of men who would leave their work to go more than a day's journey from their home (at Bethsaida on the northwestern shore of the sea of Galilee) down the Jordan valley to where John the prophet of God was announcing the immediate approach of the kingdom of God.

Andrew had the privilege of being one of the first to hear and see Jesus pointed out as the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. He and one companion were the first two men to follow Jesus. The other man is not named, but it was almost certainly the apostle John, the son of Zebedee. It was about ten o'clock in the forenoon when John the Baptist pointed out Jesus, and Andrew and John followed Him. Jesus asked what they sought, and by their answer they indicated that they really wanted to know Jesus and to be associated with Him. "They abode with him that day." We would like to know what discussions took place that day; but we only know that

Andrew came back with the conviction that he had found the Messiah indeed, and with the desire to tell his brother Peter (John 1:37-42).

*Ready To Do the Will of God*

Andrew was a man ready to do the will of God; he believed in the Christ at the first testimony he received; he followed Jesus the first time he saw Him; and he brought his brother to Jesus at the first opportunity. Thus he attained the distinction of being the first man to believe in Jesus as the Christ and to bear witness of that faith to others (aside from the inspired, prophetic witness of John the Baptist).

When Jesus went from the Jordan to Cana of Galilee, to the marriage feast, the disciples went with Him (John 2:1, 2). With His disciples He moved to Capernaum and abode not many days (John 2:12). His disciples were with Him (at least intermittently) in an extended ministry in Judea, from Passover until four months before the harvest—a period of eight or nine months (John 2:17, 22; 3:22; 4:2, 8, 27-38). Surely, John intends for us to understand that these were, or at least included, the same disciples he had introduced in his first chapter. Often it is overlooked or forgotten that Peter and Andrew had known Jesus and traveled with Him for some months before the day when Jesus called them by the seashore to leave their nets and follow Him. When Jesus and His disciples returned to Galilee through Samaria just after the imprisonment of John the Baptist (Mark 1:14; John 4:1-45), the group probably included Peter, Andrew, James, and John, who seem to have returned to their homes and their work of fishing for a time, while Jesus visited again Cana and Nazareth (John 4:46-54; Luke 4:16-30), and perhaps other places.

*Called to Be An Apostle*

Jesus came again to Capernaum. As He taught a multitude by the sea He borrowed Peter's boat from which to teach the people. Then He caused the fishermen to cast their nets and gave them a great, miraculous catch of fish. Then He called them to become fishers of men, and they left all and followed Him (Luke 5:1-11; Mark 1:16-20).

Still a greater stage of responsibility and intimacy with Christ was attained a few months later when out of a large body of disciples the twelve were chosen to be "apostles" (Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16). A disciple was any learner, especially a believing and faithful follower. An apostle was an ambassador sent out with authority and responsibility. A few months after naming them apostles, Jesus gave them

miraculous powers and a commission to go two by two and preach the coming kingdom (Matt. 10).

It was at the close of that campaign that Jesus took the apostles away from the excited crowds around Capernaum to the other side of the sea of Galilee in a boat. But the people ran around the lake, until there were five thousand men, besides women and children, who spent the day with Him without food (Mark 6:30-38; Matt. 14:13-21; John 6:2-14). When Jesus desired to feed the people He told the apostles to find what food they had. It was Andrew who found and reported to Jesus a lad with five loaves and two fishes. Jesus asked that they be brought, and He fed the multitude with them.

#### *Considerate of Others*

The only other instances of special mention of Andrew are in connection with two incidents in the week of Jesus' crucifixion. The first was when Andrew, with Peter, James, and John, came to Jesus and questioned Him concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world (Mark 13:1-4). The other was when Philip was approached by certain Greeks who had come to the Passover, and wanted to see Jesus. Apparently, Philip was undecided about taking Gentiles to Jesus; hence he first went to Andrew and talked it over with him (John 12:20-22). Philip had sought Nathanael to bring him to Jesus (John 1:45, 46); but bringing a devout Jew like Nathanael was then a very different thing from bringing Gentiles. Philip probably had sympathy for the Greek inquirers and was not displeased that such men should inquire after Jesus; but he knew how completely Jesus concentrated His ministry upon "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (see Matt. 10:5, 6; 15:24, 26), and he naturally would feel what a new and revolutionary thing it would be to bring the Greeks to Jesus, even if they were proselytes to Judaism. He may have feared that the bitter opposition to Jesus among the rulers in Jerusalem would be stirred up to violent action if Jesus should be seen to be friendly with Greeks. Witness what happened to Paul in that same city several years later (see Acts 21:27-36). Therefore, Philip hesitated to act upon his own judgment, and took the matter to his brother-disciple and fellow-townsmen Andrew. Their consultation resulted in both of them taking the matter to Jesus. At least they felt it was safe to tell Him, and leave Him to do as He pleased about it. The record does not tell whether the Greeks were granted an interview with Jesus, but it does tell some of the very significant and far-reaching

statements with which Jesus answered the announcement, showing that He was deeply moved by it.

Andrew must have been habitually unselfish and considerate of others. He lived in the same house with his brother, who was married and had a mother-in-law there (Mark 1:29). He and Peter were partners in the fishing business. When he found the Christ he thought first of bringing Peter to the Lord. In nearly every incident in which he is specially mentioned he is bringing some one to Jesus. Andrew evidently considered the privilege of being a follower of Jesus as a gift from God to be shared with others. He sets a good example under one of the basic principles of Christianity, which is the secret of its growing and leavening power from nation to nation and from generation to generation: that is, that every one who is brought to Christ should bring others. We are saved to serve. When the treasures of the Christ are given to one of us, they are labeled for delivery to every one else, and we become indebted to all men until we make to them the same offer of divine grace which we have received. The educational principle expressed in the slogan, "Each one teach one," is as old as Christianity, and is still the best way to spread the blessing to every one. It is also one of the very best ways to stabilize the faith and to insure the growth of those who receive the word.

*Seeker of the Right Things*

The Lord's first words to Andrew, "What seek ye?" suggest an important key to his character and secret of his success. He *sought* the right things. He did not wait until some one forced such matters upon his attention. He was out there in the wilderness of the Jordan *seeking* the message of God through the prophet John. Many people seem to avoid the company of Christ, but Andrew *sought* the companionship and teaching of the Lord. Having found the object of his yearnings toward God, he *sought* his brother to share it with him. He sought and found the lad and his lunch for Christ to use to feed the multitude. He took the lead in helping other earnest seekers after Christ.

"Seek, and ye shall find," is the Lord's gracious promise; but it is also a kind of threat. For if our yearnings and efforts are expended for the wrong things, what we find will not be good. What we sow we shall also reap. How can we answer the Lord's question, "What seek YE?"

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matt. 6:33)." Having found that for ourselves, then our chief aim in the

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world as Christians is to seek the conversion and salvation of all men by bringing them to believe in Christ and to obey His gospel. If we partake of the Spirit of Christ our Savior, we, too, will be impelled to "seek and to save the lost."

### For Further Study:

Barclay, William. *The Master's Men*. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1959. Pp. 40-46.

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## FOLLOWING JESUS

Jesus calls all men to repentance, to higher living, and to eternal life; He calls some to special fields of service, to works of great importance in His kingdom and to intimate fellowship with Him; but we must respond to His call. His election is not unconditional. He sets before us glorious opportunities the fulfillment of which depends upon our response to them. The greatest invitation is of no benefit if it is not accepted. The vital point in Christianity is what we do about it (James 1:22). Therefore, it is well for us to make the most of this lesson based on the example of men who respond to Jesus' personal invitations and ministrations in the days of His flesh.

*The Fishermen*

Mark gives a brief account of Jesus' call of four of the best known of His disciples (Mark 1:16-20).

And passing along by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea; for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they left the nets, and followed him. And going on a little further, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending the nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after him.

See the parallel accounts in Matthew 4:18-22 and Luke 5:1-11. Mark tells nothing of the earlier association of these same men with Jesus. John 1:29-51 shows that Peter and Andrew had been associated with Jesus as disciples nearly a year before He called them from the boats on the Sea of Galilee. Soon after Jesus' baptism and temptation He was pointed out by John the Baptist as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and two of John's disciples followed Jesus. One of them was Andrew, and it is very likely that the other was either James or John (John's entire narrative never mentions his name or that of any of his family). Andrew found Peter and brought him to Jesus. Philip and Nathanael were added to the group. From that time on Jesus' disciples are usually mentioned with Him—at the wedding feast in Cana (John 2:2); moving to Capernaum (John

2:12); cleansing the temple in Jerusalem at the Passover (John 2:13-22); baptizing multitudes in Judea (John 4:2); journeying through Samaria back to Galilee eight or nine months after the Passover, "four months until the harvest" (John 4:8, 27, 35-37). Matthew, Mark, and Luke begin their accounts with the Galilean ministry of Jesus, omitting nearly all of the first year's events; hence the first thing they tell of these disciples is the call by the sea.

Those earlier experiences of the fishermen with Jesus help to explain why they responded so quickly to such an abrupt call. This, of course, was not the first invitation of Jesus to them to be associated with Him, but it was the significant occasion in which He challenged them to leave all else and to come and commit their whole lives to following Him. Before, they had been with Him as learners and seekers of their own accord. Now Jesus suggests a special work or office to which He will appoint them: "I will make you fishers of men." The *unhesitating, cheerful, and self-sacrificing compliance* with Jesus' call is no less remarkable in this light.

Peter and Andrew showed the deepest respect, even reverence, toward Jesus in all things. *His summons was felt by them to be authoritative and binding upon them.* When He asked for their boat to use in teaching, it was granted (Luke 5:3). That might have been only a courtesy. But when He told them where and when to cast a net after they had fished all night with no result, and had washed the nets, it was no ordinary courtesy which caused Peter to say, "Master, we toiled all night, and took nothing; but at thy word I will let down the nets" (Luke 5:5). In answer to Jesus' call they made no objection, no condition, not even an inquiry; but *in contented obedience they left their equipment, their occupation, their families, readily giving up all that they might follow Jesus. Surely their immediate and definite decision was based upon confidence in Him personally, not upon agreement with His plans and program.*

#### *The Gadarene Demonic*

The Gadarene demoniac's response to Jesus is of quite a different nature (Mark 5:18-20). This man was a lunatic, possessed of many demons, living in the tombs, and no man had strength to tame him or to bind him. Jesus cast out the demons, permitting them to enter a large herd of swine. The swine rushed into the sea and were drowned. The people around were amazed that the man was healed, clothed and in his right mind; but they asked Jesus to leave. As He went, the man who had been possessed wanted to go with Him.

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Naturally, he would be grateful to Jesus and would feel that the company of Christ and the apostles was safer and more congenial than that of the people of his own town. But Jesus had a work for him to do: "Go to thy house unto thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee" (Mark 5:19). The fine thing is that the man *willingly obeyed* and did a good and fruitful work in bearing the testimony which Jesus commanded him. *His response was obedience to what Jesus wanted, whether it was what he himself wanted or not.*

### *The Blind Beggar*

A close comparison of Mark 10:46-52 and Luke 18:35-43 reveals that blind Bartimaeus heard a multitude with Jesus pass by as Jesus went into Jericho. He followed after them crying for help and healing. He must have had difficulty reaching Jesus then, and he went around the little town to be directly on Jesus' way as He came out of Jericho going on to Jerusalem. Again with loud and persistent cries he called for mercy that he might receive his sight. Jesus gave him sight. He received his heart's desire, but he did not go away and use it selfishly. He continued to follow Jesus, "glorifying God." We do not know how long he followed Jesus or what later service he may have rendered to the Lord; but it is good to see that he not only sought after Jesus in need and desire to receive his sight, but he also followed Jesus in gratitude and devotion to give glory to God.

### *The Taxgatherer*

Matthew was sitting at "the place of toll"—small shelters were placed on the roads entering a city and attended night and day by men who collected a tax on the produce brought into the city. Mark seems to connect it with the seaside (Mark 2:13, 14). Anyway, it would be on a public thoroughfare and it was at Capernaum, affording every likelihood that Matthew had often seen and heard Jesus, and had begun to have faith in Him. Jesus knew men's hearts. He knew what kind of man Matthew was and when to call him.

Matthew was a busy man; moreover, he was busy in a work of collaboration with the hated Roman rule, and in a work that tended to the evils of greed and extortion. Nevertheless, Jesus' words and works were sufficient to produce faith and transformation in the heart of any who would sincerely heed them. When the call of Jesus came: "Follow me," Matthew was ready without delay to leave all and follow Jesus. "He forsook all, and rose up and followed him"



(Luke 5:28). Again it was a case of personal confidence in and attraction to Jesus, of obedience to His commands above everything else.

*Our Response to Christ's Call*

The essence of Christianity is to follow Jesus. No amount of social science and institutionalism can in any wise equal the Christianity which is simple faith and devotion toward Jesus, who causes all who abide in Him to "bear much fruit." We must recognize Him as the Son of God, duly honor Him, and yield ourselves to His commanding leadership. He is the only hope of redemption of lost sinners. He is the last word on the ways of righteousness. He is the greatest source of security—the surest insurance in calamity. He is the truest teacher, the strongest helper, the kindest friend, the most challenging leader in noble and worthwhile things—the Alpha and Omega, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily—the end of man's search for the highest, the best, and the permanent—he that comes to Him shall not hunger, and he that believes on Him shall never thirst.

For sake all for Jesus, certainly, instantly, and completely. When He teaches, it is ours to learn. When He calls, it is ours to respond. When He commands, it is ours to obey. No boats, no business, no associates, no aims and ambitions must stand in the way of complete consecration to Christ and His cause. No other life is worth living. Leave all at Christ's call.

(1) *Await specific instructions from the Lord.* 'Come ye after me.' (2) *Start where you are.* 'By the sea . . . casting a net . . .' (3) *Begin the moment the call comes.* 'Straightway . . . straightway.' (4) *Abandon the good for the best.* 'They were fishers . . . to become fishers of men.' (5) *Make any sacrifice Christ requires.* 'They forsook their nets . . . they left their father.' (6) *Win family and neighbors to Christ.* 'Go home to thy friends, and tell them.' (7) *Believe and receive sight and strength for service.* 'Thy faith hath made thee whole.' (8) *Follow Jesus wherever He leads.* (9) *Do the nearest duty without delay.* (10) *Aim for Christ and attain with Christ.*<sup>1</sup>

Must one "leave all" to follow Jesus? Let Jesus answer: "If any

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<sup>1</sup> Hight C. Moore, *Points of Emphasis*.

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man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. 16:24). See also, Luke 14:33.

*Did any one ever turn down Jesus' invitation: "Come follow me"?* Yes, the rich young ruler (Mark 10:21, 22). He was moral, legally religious, seeking eternal life, and seeking it from Jesus; still he refused to follow Him, because he was not willing to deny himself.

*How can we follow Jesus?* He is not here in the flesh for us to follow as Matthew did, but we can give ourselves and all that we have to Jesus. We can forsake all selfish purposes and purely worldly pursuits. We can receive His words of instruction. We can give unquestioning and unhesitating obedience to His commandments.

### For Further Study:

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JESUS AND THE TWELVE  
(Matthew 10)

In Matthew 10 we find the first mention of the Twelve in Matthew. Matthew has told of the calling of the four fishermen (Matt. 4:18-22) and of himself (Matt. 9:9); also of the offers some men made to follow Jesus, in response to which Jesus' words seem to indicate that something was lacking in their courage or resolve (Matt. 8:19-22). Luke 6:12-16 tells us that, before the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus had "continued all night in prayer," and in the morning called His *disciples*; and he chose from them twelve, whom he also named *apostles*." A disciple (Greek: *mathetes* from *mathein*—to learn) is a learner. Jesus had many of them. An apostle (*apostolos* from *apostello*—send away with commission) means one sent forth with orders.

*Compassion*

We might suppose that Jesus sent the Twelve on this first and limited mission primarily to train them and to try them, or as a step to an over-all plan to establish His kingdom's organization, but Matthew 9:36-38 shows that uppermost in Jesus' mind was the need of the common people to know the supreme goal of life and to be guided to that goal. With so many straying sheep, the good Shepherd needed more shepherds. Lest they should think of themselves and of dignity of position, etc., and serve like hirelings (see John 10:11-13) He taught them to see the need and to pray for laborers. Jesus wanted them to have a true shepherd's compassion for the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." Preachers and pastors (a New Testament word for elders, which means shepherds; I Pet. 5:1-4; Acts 20:28-35) who pity themselves had better learn to pity the multitudes. Were men all over the world ever more like "sheep without a shepherd" than they are today?

Before Jesus sent His disciples to preach, He taught them to pray for God to send leaders to the people. A church that does not pray for missions does not raise up missionaries. Blessed is that community whose preachers really earnestly pray that God will gather His flock, and then feel called to be used by God in the work that has become their heart's expressed desire. Some one has said: "You can do *more* than pray *after* you have prayed, but you *can not* do

more than pray *until* you have prayed.”

#### *A Limited Mission*

This commission must be clearly distinguished from the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:47-49; John 20:21-23) given after the resurrection. The first mission of the Twelve (like another special mission of seventy disciples, Luke 10) was carried to completion under Jesus' personal direction during the preparations for the crucifixion, resurrection and Great Commission. Consequently, it had suitable limitations which do not apply to the universal commission now in force. It was to be only temporary, and only to the Jews. The time would come when the preparatory covenant would have fulfilled its mission, the law would be nailed to the cross, the distinction between Jew and Gentile blotted out, and the gospel preached to "every creature" in "all the world." Now they are still laying foundations in Israel alone. The kingdom was still future but drawing near. It actually came somewhat over a year later on the day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 1 and 2; Col. 1:13).

The burden of the apostles' preaching was the simple announcement, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," but probably more than this was to be said about the kingdom in carrying out Jesus' words: "What I tell you in the darkness, speak ye in the light; and what ye hear in the ear, proclaim upon the housetops" (Matt. 10:27).

Most of the instructions given the apostles at this time concern their use of the power to work miracles and their methods and manners among the people.

#### *He Gave Them Authority*

It seems that Jesus had imparted no miraculous powers to any one before this. Even John the Baptist "did no sign" (John 10:41). Notice that the apostles did not reach a degree of faith that produced miraculous powers, but it was given to them, all of them, at one sudden pronouncement. It included even power to raise the dead, and was to be freely exercised. At one occasion (at least) after this, nine of them failed in an attempt to cast out a demon. They asked Jesus why they had failed, and He told them that they lacked faith and prayer to use the power which had been formerly given to them and exercised by them (Matt. 17:16, 19, 20; Mark 9:29).

Some good people doubt that the apostles worked miracles at this time, because they were not baptized in the Spirit, but Jesus would not have told them they could and should if they could not. Mark

6:13 says they did, and Luke 10:17 plainly states that the seventy on a similar mission did. Miracles, then, are not necessarily dependent upon baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus gave them the powers needed to do the work assigned. For the work He has given us to do, He has also given "the power of God unto salvation" which is the gospel (Rom. 1:16). The original announcement of a supernatural message required supernatural evidences. The miracles the messengers worked were to be the signs of the divine authority of their announcement of the coming kingdom. Therefore whoever received them and their word received Christ and God (Matt. 10:40). And whoever did not receive them shall fare worse in the judgment than will Sodom and Gomorrah (Matt. 10:15). Even so it is today with all who receive or reject God's authorized apostles. Would you accept Jesus' word if He preached His kingdom and His salvation to you in person? Then accept His word as preached by the apostles in the New Testament!

#### *The "Wise" and the "Babes"*

When Jesus had received from the imprisoned John a question of doubt, when He had discussed the perversity of the people who rejected both John's and His own call to repentance of the cities in which He had done most of His miracles, judging them in the light of their great opportunity Jesus' reaction was an outpouring of thanksgiving to God for the fact that the ways of life are hid from the wise and prudent and revealed unto babes.

In our own generation and nation with all its learning and "wisdom" the genuine worth of Jesus Christ and His kingdom are not perceived and received. The truth is not accepted because we have too much confidence in our own progress, and in our own ability to apply wisely certain things we learn from Jesus' teachings mixed with our own folly. The majority of Americans believe in God (some way or other), rationalize their conduct, make shrewd explanations, and think they are "pretty smart." *But they do not recognize the most important fact ever revealed*—that God has delivered all things unto His Son Jesus, and no one can know or serve or honor God without accepting Jesus as first and supreme in everything.

Who can say he knows life when he knows not God, the author and sustainer, the source and goal of life? Who can say he lives wisely and well, apart from Jesus who alone can supply the real necessities?

"These things"—truth, righteousness, life and fellowship with God—were "revealed unto babes" (the simple and unsophisticated;

the lowly and least honored of men, Matt. 10:25) in that they received Jesus and believed what He said. The whole nation was expecting a kingdom, deliverance from foreign oppression, and establishment of a great age of divine glory. The whole nation was seeking some favor with God by keeping the forms of the law. But then, when the kingdom was announced the sinners and publicans, who had made no show of faith in expectation, recognized their sinfulness, appreciated the mercy of Jesus and loved Him and followed Him; on the other hand, those who were most certain they understood the kingdom and most confident of their getting what they expected, rejected Jesus in disbelief. Thereby they threw away the key to understanding, and "these things" were hidden.

God's method of revealing is through His Son, Jesus Christ. All who are too proud or too "wise" to accept Him have the wisdom of life hid from them. All who are babes enough to lean on Him and learn from Him and follow Him have the eternal truth.

God said, "This is my Son. Hear ye him!" God appointed Him to lead us and to save us. God gave Him all authority and power to do it. (Read Matt. 28:18; John 3:35; 13:3; 17:2; I Cor. 15:7; Eph. 1:20-23.) What could be plainer? These claims are either true or false! He is either the door to heaven and the only door, or He is the world's worst imposter and most unconscionable liar. But God approved Him and attested His appointment by voice at the baptism and the transfiguration (Matt. 3:17 and Matt. 17:5); by "mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you as ye yourselves know" (Acts 2:22; cf. John 5:36; 10:37, 38; 14:10-12); by prophecies (John 5:39, 46); by the resurrection from the dead (His own and others—Rom. 1:4). "No one cometh unto the Father but by me," (John 14:6) and "no one knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal him" (Matt. 11:27). Either we take Jesus for our God or we make our own god and trust in an idol of our own creation!

How marvelous is the patience and the mercy of God! How gentle and personal is the appeal of Christ! He had preached the kingdom, exalted its blessedness, its purity, its unspeakable riches, and urged all to enter in by the strait gate. But in spite of all He can say, these things are hid from them. Their hearts are hard. But He does not rant; He does not continue to upbraid. He opens His heart of love to them. He forgets everything but their misery and woe, and tenderly entreats His beloved: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Christ

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says His yoke is easy, and no one ever tried it and found it otherwise.

### For Further Study:

Bruce, A. B. *The Training of the Twelve*, 3rd ed. New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d. A study of the disciples, their personalities, their progress in the kingdom of God, and the teachings they received from Jesus, based on a study of the gospel records.

Coleman, Robert E. *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 2nd ed. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1964. Sets forth in plain language the principles of evangelism Jesus used in teaching the disciples.

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Stewart, John David. *The 12*. Austin, Texas: R. B. Sweet, 1963. Convenient summary of N.T. information on each of the apostles and an assessment of the traditions about each.

## WORKING WITH CHRIST

In the growing Christian life there must be at least three departments steadily developed in the right relation to each other: 1. worship. 2. separation. 3. active service for the Master.

We are very much inclined to neglect one or another and to be satisfied if we can point to one or two of them in our lives.

The Christian life is not only in what we *do not* do, but what we *do* do. We are not very good if we are good for nothing. When we accept Jesus as our Savior we also accept Him as Lord. We receive from Him the magnificent gifts of pardon for sin, eternal life, light for darkness, peace within, etc.; but we also surrender to Him all that we are and have and are able to do. He said, "Come unto me and I will give . . . . Come learn of me . . . . Take my yoke upon you" (Matt. 11:28-30). Let us "be not idle nor unfruitful unto the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ," but rather give diligence to make our calling and election sure (II Pet. 1:8-10); for "every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away" (John 15:2).

In this essay we study, as an example and a challenge to us, the early service of the twelve apostles and seventy other disciples whom Jesus sent out campaigning for Him, two by two. The twelve were sent out at one time and the seventy at another time (Mark 6:7-13; Luke 10:1-20). Another and fuller account of the mission of the twelve is to be found in Matthew 10:1-42. The only record of the seventy and their work is in Luke 10:1-20. These passages should be read carefully and in full in order to gain a proper understanding of this study.

*Points in Which the Twelve Apostles and  
Seventy Disciples Are Examples for Us*

1. They first followed Jesus to learn and receive for themselves. The most vital thing they had to learn was loyalty and obedience to Jesus, submission of personal desires, ambitions and opinions to His divine plans and purposes. They had to learn to deny themselves and to be willing to take up the cross and follow Jesus:

2. They went when and where Jesus told them to. We are told to go into all the world, and we ought to do as commanded.

3. They preached what He told them to. This mission was before the cross; they were to preach a message somewhat different from



that given to us, but we should obey as they did, and not devise our own message.

4. They had faith in His authority and promises, and did not devise their own methods and powers for casting out demons, etc. They knew that they were not able and were not expected to do all His work by their own power and wisdom. While we have not exactly the same assignment of work to do, we should realize that God furnishes the power for our work (that which is necessary beyond our faithful work and testimony), and we are not expected to regenerate men, to redeem and transform them, by our own skill and influence alone. The power of God to save is in His word of the gospel (Rom. 1:16) which is alive and working (Heb. 4:12), and which is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11), through which we are begotten by the Spirit (I Cor. 4:15; I Pet. 1:23; John 3:5). His words are Spirit, and they are life (John 6:63). The life and power of God in the words of the gospel believed and witnessed in a faithful life may seem mysterious and unreal to some; but I say it is not so incomprehensible and incredible as the vitality and productivity of vegetable life hidden in the little dry seed that holds it while waiting for suitable soil in which to germinate.

#### *Points of Difference To Be Observed Between Their Work and Ours*

1. This was preparatory work, before the cross and before the origin of the church. They themselves were given a later commission with different terms by Jesus in person (Matt. 28:18-20).

2. Their message was different on this first mission; it was not the full gospel, but only "Repent; for the kingdom is at hand."

3. Their chief assignment was to work miracles, while that is not an essential part of the Great Commission and our work today.

4. They were to go only "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:5, 6), while we are commanded to "go into all the world" (Mark 16:15).

When we carefully note such elements in which the Scripture indicates that these early commissions were essentially different from ours, we may draw comparisons between those disciples' work and ours which are instructive for us.

#### *Two Other Points of Comparison*

1. When the seventy returned they were rejoicing in the great work they were enabled to do for Christ. Yes, there is joy in Christian

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service—but Jesus said to them, “Nevertheless in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven” (Luke 10:20). When we have done all, we are still unprofitable servants (Luke 17:10). We can not brag on what we do for the Lord, because He has done so much more for us. We are still liabilities to Him, not assets, when all is reckoned. Hence the fact that He saves us is more wonderful than all the special or miraculous works we may perform by His grace.

2. Some time after the twelve had received their endowment with power to work miracles and their first commission, nine of them tried to cast out a demon and failed (Matt. 17:14-20; Mark 9:14-29). They suffered embarrassment before the heckling scribes, before the multitude, and before Jesus Himself. When they asked Jesus why they could not cast out the demon, Jesus answered: “Because of your little faith.” Christ had given them the divine power to command diseases and demons, but they needed faith to use it. Faith alone will not in itself create miracle-working power; the power to work miracles is one thing (given by God), and the faith to use it is another (in men). Now Christ did not give to us of all generations the commandment to work miracles, and did not give us the power for that purpose; but He did command us to make disciples of all the nations. The power of God to save men through Christ, and to transform them through faith, has been given to us (Rom. 1:16). *We must have faith to use it!* If we were to ask Christ the reason for our failure to win much more of the world than we have, would He not say, “Because of your little faith”?

### *Working for Christ Today*

Working for Christ is:

1. Commanded by God, a strict obligation.
2. Necessary for the salvation of the world.
3. Necessary in order to save ourselves.
4. Most rewarding, both in present benefits and in hope for the future (I Cor. 15:58; Mark 10:29, 30; I Tim. 4:8).
5. Work that is challenging, important, ennobling, and glorious in its results. *Let's do it with diligence and endurance!*

Work for Christ may take several different forms; for in the body of Christ we are many members and not all have the same office; i.e., not the same abilities and duties (Rom. 12:4-8; I Cor. 12:12-30). Our own share of the work will be determined by: (1) The need we

see; (2) the commands of Christ we realize and acknowledge; (3) the ability we have to fill the need and obey the command, and (4) to some extent by the common consent of the brethren in Christ (that things may be done decently and in order). Work for Christ may include: preaching, teaching, or oversight (Eph. 4:11-16); responsible office in church or mission; benevolence and hospitality, etc. (Matt. 25:31-46; Gal. 6:6-10; II Cor. 9); financial support of the preaching (I Cor. 9:11, 14); blameless living and faithfulness to every duty in whatever condition we find ourselves (Eph. 5:22—6:9; Tit. 2:1-15), etc. But regardless of how our talents and opportunities may vary and cause the specific forms of our service to vary, Christian service must involve the surrender of our lives and energies to Christ in such a manner that it is "not I that live, but Christ that liveth in me" to do His will (Gal. 2:20).

#### *Wholehearted Surrender Involved*

We must renounce allegiance to family and personal interests, that Christ and His interests may have the unrivaled devotion of our hearts and absolute command of our services—just as a foreigner seeking citizenship in the United States of America must not only swear allegiance to the United States, but must also renounce allegiance to his former homeland.

Now there went with him great multitudes: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:25-27)

Hating loved ones is very drastic. It was an Oriental way of expressing complete renunciation of all things, including the tenderest ties, for Christ. Sometimes this is required in a literal way, but the basic idea of making Christ absolutely first is meant. Our love for relatives will actually deepen through primary devotion to Christ. . . . Jesus was not interested in superficial discipleship. Multitudes were following Him. He deliberately discouraged them by making exacting demands and predicting the high cost of discipleship. Men were to despise any tie or possession in favor of unconditional surrender to the will of God. Of course, no real value or legitimate tie would suffer, but would gain in the long run by complete discipleship. There is no real

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Christianity without a cross.<sup>1</sup>

### *Help Wanted!*

Jesus still calls for laborers. The fields are still white unto the harvest—as much or more than ever. He points out the challenge of the field, and calls to all who are willing to do what He wants done. The laborers are few. Pray the Lord of the harvest that He send forth laborers into His harvest (Matt. 9:38). Then accept the call yourself and help that much to answer your prayer.

For Further Study:

Foster, R. C. *Studies in the Life of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971. Pp. 615-622; 842-849. Studies on sending out of twelve (Matt. 10) and the sending out of the seventy (Luke 10).  
Fowler, Harold. *The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol. II. Joplin: Collge Press, 1972. Pp. 262-429.  
Geldenhuis, Norval. *New Testament Commentary: The Gospel of Luke*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951. Pp. 298-305. Comment on the mission of the seventy disciples.

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<sup>1</sup> W. R. White, *Broadman Comments* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1945).

## JAMES AND JOHN LEARN GOOD WILL FROM JESUS

James and John were Galilean fishermen and partners of Peter and Andrew (Luke 5:10). Their father, Zebedee, was in business with them and had hired servants (Mark 1:20). A comparison of Matthew 27:56; Mark 15:40, and John 19:25 seems to indicate that their mother was named Salome, and that she was a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. From their father's activity in fishing, and the long life that John lived after the ministry of Jesus, we may infer that James and John were young men when they were called by Jesus. James and John with Peter became the three apostles most closely associated with Jesus—the only ones permitted to be with Him at the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51), at the transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8), and at the agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42).

In John's account of the life of Jesus he never mentions by name himself or any of his family; hence we can not tell for sure whether James and John were associated with Jesus and John the Baptist at the Jordan River as Peter and Andrew were. But in telling how Andrew found his "own" brother, John uses an emphatic and unnecessary word which may indicate that the man with Andrew (John 1:40, 41) was either James or John, who likewise found his brother.

In view of the rebukes given John by Jesus in Mark 3:14-17; Luke 9:49-56, it is interesting to note that John always called himself the disciple whom Jesus loved. James and John thought that they stood especially close to Jesus, and even presumed upon their intimacy with Him to the extent of asking for the chief seats on either side of Jesus in His kingdom (Mark 10:35-45). According to Matthew, their mother joined with them in this request (Matt. 20:20-28).

The title "Boanerges," meaning Sons of Thunder, which Jesus applied to these young men is not explained anywhere in the Scriptures; but it is usually considered to be an indication of the stormy, intolerant attitude of which we have two examples recorded in Luke 9:49-56. In our attempt to fill in from reason and imagination what is lacking in the account, it is well for us to remember that Jesus chose them, not that they chose Him, and that in giving them the name "Boanerges," He gave no sign of disapproval of them or any traits implied in the name.

*Unknown Miracle Worker*

Jesus sent His apostles out two by two into all the cities and villages where He Himself was about to come. He gave them power and authority to heal all manner of sickness and to cast out demons. (See Matt. 10:1-8). At a later time He sent out seventy disciples with similar powers and a similar commission (Luke 10:1-20). But at some time between those two campaigns, when the disciples knew of no one authorized to do mighty works in Jesus' name except themselves, they came upon a man casting out demons in Jesus' name who followed not with them. When they saw this man, Jesus was not with them, and they took it upon themselves to forbid him. John later told Jesus about the incident, but he does not say what other apostles were with him at the time it happened. Sometimes John alone is accused of the exclusive and jealous attitude shown in forbidding the unknown miracle-worker, but it may be that John told Jesus about it because he perceived the force of Jesus' teaching about humility and really questioned the rightness of the action of the group.

How did this independent worker come to be casting out demons? We can not be sure. Jesus could have commissioned him at some time when He was campaigning separate from the Twelve. Some expositors assume that the man had observed the power of Jesus' name and simply appropriated it in the place of the Jewish rituals of exorcism. But that kind of thing did not work so well for the seven sons of Sceva, at Ephesus (Acts 19:13-19). J. W. McGarvey observes:

If the man had been an enemy of Christ, using his power in opposition to the truth, it would have been right to forbid him; but, according to John's own statement, he was casting out demons in the name of Jesus, and this proved him to be a friend. Moreover, John should have known that no man could cast out demons in the name of Jesus unless Jesus had given him the power to do so; and if Jesus had given him the power it was his privilege to exercise it.<sup>1</sup>

The apostles probably thought that they had good reasons for silencing the man that companied not with them; this is surely indicated in the fact that they told the Master what they had done and were willing to receive His instruction. John, at least, seemed to

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<sup>1</sup> J. W. McGarvey, *A Commentary on Matthew and Mark* (Delight, Arkansas: Gospel Light Publishing Co., n.d.), p. 321.

want to know whether it was right or wrong. Still, no doubt, it was partly jealousy of their official relationship to Jesus that made them test a man simply by whether or not he was with them.

The offense of the stranger, if it were an offense, was not against Jesus, but against the disciples, whose rights and privileges were presumably infringed upon.<sup>2</sup>

This passage hits hard at officialism, which has been one of the curses of Christianity. Someone secures a place of power by politics or violence; an organization is formed and worshiped as the center of their entire religious life. Everyone is outlawed who does not bow to the human authority or work through the human organization. But Christ pointed out that no one person has a monopoly on Christian service. We should all seek to serve humbly and rejoice in the success of all who are true to Christ and His Word.<sup>3</sup>

This incident reminds one of the similar one recorded in Numbers 11:24-30. There, Moses' correction of the attitude of Joshua clearly shows the fault in the attitude of Jesus' disciples. Read it as part of this study.

Jesus' appraisal of the apostles' action is unmistakable; He said, "Forbid him not." Luke 9:50 records one reason given by Jesus—"for he that is not against you is for you." Mark 9:39-42, records also other reasons:

for there is no man who shall do a mighty work in my name, and be able to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink, because ye are Christ's, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. And whosoever shall cause one of these little ones that believe on me to stumble, it were better for him if a great millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

Reflect on all of these.

Notice that Jesus did not rebuke the disciples for forbidding the stranger on the ground that they should have fellowship with and

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<sup>2</sup> H. D. M. Spence, *The Pulpit Commentary: Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962 reprint), p. 243.

<sup>3</sup> R. C. Foster, *Studies In the Life of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), p. 763.

give encouragement to any and every kind of person and religion, but rather on the ground that he was not a denier of Jesus, but was really with the apostles in the work. We are not to forbid a good work merely because it is not "authorized" by us or contributing to our pride; but, on the other hand, this lesson should not be perverted into advocating that we should give consent and fellowship to every one regardless of his relation to Jesus. A man's relation to us may not matter, but his relation to Jesus certainly does. See Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me." God has sent His Son into the world as both Lord and Christ, has commanded all men everywhere to hear and obey Him, and will judge us according to what we do with Jesus. To be righteous before God a man must accept Jesus as Lord, must join his life and heart to Jesus; but all men are not under any similar obligation to accept me and join my company.

The same John, aged, mellowed, fully *inspired and enlightened* by the Holy Spirit, who wrote, "Let us love one another," also wrote, "If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting," (II John 9-11). We need to give heed to both. The same apostle and the same Spirit that wrote I Corinthians 13 also wrote I Corinthians 16:22; 5:4-11; II Corinthians 6:14-18; Romans 14:1-4; 16:17; Galatians 1:8-10; 5:22—6:5; Ephesians 4:31, 32; 5:6-11.

#### *Unfriendly Samaritan Village*

When James and John suggested calling down fire from heaven, doubtless they supposed themselves to be moved by pure and righteous indignation and to be exalting the Christ. But Jesus "turned and rebuked them." It is all too likely that they really were guilty of unholy irritation against men who would not receive *them* and *their* Master. No matter how evil men vex the righteous heart, our hearts' desire should be for their repentance and pardon rather than for their punishment.

W. Clarkson wisely comments:

Not extinction, but reformation; not the infliction of death which is due, but the conferring of the life which is undeserved; not the rigorous exaction, but patient pity; not the folded fist of law, but the open hand of helpfulness, is the Christian thing. When we find ourselves giving way to wrath and proposing punishment, we do well to ask ourselves whether we are sure we know the



'spirit we are of,' and whether there is not a 'more excellent way' for Christian feet to tread.<sup>4</sup>

The following phrases in the King James Version, in Luke 9:54-56; "as Elijah did," "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," and "For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them," are omitted from enough of the oldest and best manuscripts and versions of Luke that it is probable that they were not part of the original book, but have been added. However, they are true and fitting remarks in these places, and are based on passages elsewhere which are unquestionable parts of the inspired Scriptures. Truly, Jesus did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Oh, that we might have the greatest zeal for truth and righteousness; that we might abhor evil even as God hates it (Prov. 6:16-19; Amos 5:21; Zech. 8:17; Rev. 2:6, 15, etc.); and still so love and long to save the souls of men that, while we could never compromise with or condone evil, we would work always in all ways not to destroy men, but to heal them and to save them, overcoming evil by the blood of Christ and by forgiveness, both divine and human, rightly conditioned!

For Further Study:

Bruce, A. B. *The Training of the Twelve*, 3rd ed. New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d. Pp. 29-40, 230-249. Shows the growth in character of James and John.

Robertson, A. T. *Epochs in the Life of the Apostle John*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974. Brings together the information we have on the Apostle John.

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<sup>4</sup> W. Clarkson, *The Gospel of Luke (The Pulpit Commentary)* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962 reprint), p. 263.

## SIMON BECOMES A ROCK (PETER)

The study of Peter's life and development is profitable for both the noble examples and the warnings it contains, and especially because of its outcome through the victory of faith.

We do not have any extended biography of Peter (except the ones by men discussing the few facts recorded in the New Testament). Although only a few incidents in his life are mentioned in the Bible, they are more than are told of any other apostle except Paul, and enough to give a very interesting picture of his character.

*New Testament Facts About Peter*

Peter and Andrew were disciples of John the Baptist, and among the very first to follow Jesus. They heard John's testimony, and from the very first considered Jesus as the Messiah (John 1:35-42).

Although not named in the accounts, they were probably in the company of disciples that went with Jesus to Cana (John 2:1-11), to Capernaum (2:12), to the passover at Jerusalem (2:13-25), baptizing in Judea (3:22-30) till they returned to Galilee through Samaria about eight months later (4:4, 35).

It seems that on returning to Galilee, Jesus went alone to Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30), and the disciples revisited their homes. In a short time Jesus came to the sea where they were fishing and called them to leave all and follow Him. A miraculous catch of fish in Peter's boat caused him to worship Jesus in reverential fear (Luke 5:1-11).

Peter was chosen as one of the twelve apostles and is the first named in every list of them. With James and John he was permitted to be near Jesus at such times as the raising of Jairus' daughter (Mark 5:37), the transfiguration (Matt. 17:1ff), and in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37-45). With all the apostles he received miracle-working power and a part in preaching the coming kingdom (Matt. 10:1-7; Mark 6:7-13).

One night Jesus came walking on the water near the disciples' boat, and Peter said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee upon the waters." He did walk on the water, but began to doubt and to sink; the Lord lifted him up and said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" In the boat all the disciples worshiped Jesus, saying, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God" (Matt. 14:22-33).

The next day Jesus preached the sermon on the Bread of Life.

The great crowd forsook Him and many disciples walked no more with Him. Jesus said to the twelve, "Would ye also go away?" Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God" (John 6:60-69).

A few months later, Jesus sought to prove the faith of the twelve and to prepare them for His crucifixion, and he asked: "Who say ye that I am?" Peter spoke for them: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus pronounced His blessing upon this confession, and declared that He would build His church upon its truth, promising the keys of the kingdom to Peter (Matt. 16:13-20; Mark, 8:27-30; Luke 9:18-21).

Jesus spoke plainly of His coming death, and Peter dared to rebuke Jesus, but received a severe rebuke himself: "Get thee behind me, Satan." From the time he first heard of it, Peter tried to stop the crucifixion, but he continued to believe and follow Jesus until he came to say, "We must obey God rather than men," in spite of pain and death (Matt. 16:21-23; Mark 8:31-33; Acts 5:29). The transfiguration of Jesus was to help the disciples believe that Jesus' predicted death was in keeping with the Old Testament, the good pleasure of God and the glory of Christ. Peter was thrilled at the scene and spoke up to suggest building dwelling places there. He was rebuked by God's voice telling him to listen to Jesus (Mark 9:2-7).

Other situations in which Peter spoke up are found in Matthew 17:24-27; 18:21; Luke 12:41; Matthew 19:27-30; Mark 10:28-30; 11:21; John 13:2-11.

Especially in the night before Jesus' death, Peter was expressing both his devotion to the Lord and his self-confidence: "Lord, whither goest thou? . . . Lord, why cannot I follow thee even now? I will lay down my life for thee" (John 13:36-38). Jesus then predicted that Peter would deny Him thrice before morning, but pointed hopefully to his repentance (Luke 22:31-34). Peter said that others might forsake Jesus, but he would never (Matt. 26:30-35; Mark 14:26-31). When the mob came to arrest Jesus, Peter drew a sword and cut off a man's ear, but Jesus rebuked him. Jesus had to submit to suffering and death, though He could have called legions of angels (John 18:10, 11; Matt. 26:52-54). Peter followed at a distance, and with John even entered the open courtyard around which the high priest's house was built. While he was there, three different persons charged him with being one of Jesus' disciples, but he denied persistently and vehemently. The cock crew and Jesus looked at him, and Peter

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realized how untrue and cowardly his supposed bravery and devotion had been, and he went out and wept bitterly (Matt. 26:58, 69-75; Mark 14:54, 66-72).

In the exciting events of the resurrection day Peter shared an important part. Read these Scriptures in this order: John 20:1, 2; Mark 16:5-8; John 20:3-10; Luke 24:12; 24:34; I Cor. 15:5; Luke 24:36-49, and John 20:19-23.

After the ascension, Peter was spokesman and leader of the apostles (Acts 1 and 2). He and John became outstanding leaders in the church. They suffered imprisonment, scourgings and the threat of worse things; but they rejoiced to suffer for Christ, and obeyed God rather than men.

These are almost all the facts given about Peter. Consider them fully. Students of the character of Peter need to study the facts in the New Testament rather than the traditional theories about him, which are largely imaginary. Surely so much more is told of him than of others because of the value of these things as examples for our admonition. Peter was often not so different from the other disciples as we assume. He reacted first and most expressively to Jesus' words and deeds; and he was the one to speak up first in almost every situation, but that the others shared his attitudes the accounts often state.

### *The Character of Peter*

The characteristic reactions of Peter indicate his impulsiveness—not that he lacked fundamental stability of conviction or constancy of character, but that he made decisions quickly, said what he thought immediately, often before he thought it over much.

Peter is often called weak and vacillating in character, as if he were a man of little conviction, determination, and devotion. I think some accounts have been badly misinterpreted, and others ignored, in order to sustain this supposition. It is charged that Peter had given up all hope and faith in Jesus and deserted the apostleship to go back to fishing, or, what is worse, that having seen and accepted the risen Lord, Peter still loved fishnets and boats more than he loved Christ and the kingdom. It is certain that Peter had seen and talked with the risen Christ at least twice, and very probably a third time, before that night in Galilee (John 21). He had the testimony of more than a dozen others who had seen Him also—the women, the two who walked to Emmaus, the other apostles and still others (Luke 24:33). After the first day of Jesus' resurrection appearances

there is never any suggestion that Peter disbelieved in the resurrection of Jesus; and Peter believed that Jesus was the Christ from the first.

Jesus had commanded the apostles to go to Galilee to meet Him there; Peter and the others were on the shore of the lake by appointment! How long they were to wait was uncertain. There was no demand for *idle* waiting. They probably needed food; why beg when they could work for it themselves? It seemed good to all seven of them to fish; and when Jesus appeared He certainly did not rebuke their fishing, but rather aided it miraculously! Peter, instead of loving fishing more than the Lord, dropped the net full of fish and jumped into the lake to swim and wade a hundred yards to Jesus.

Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him more than the rest of the apostles did, because Peter had stoutly professed that he did. Jesus' questions now were to humble Peter and to prepare him for the prediction of the martyrdom which he must yet suffer for Christ. The fact is, Peter was willing to accept the assignment of suffering and death for his Lord; but he still thought in terms of comparing his service and devotion with that of John and the rest. He still had to learn—"What is that to thee? follow thou me."

Peter appears vacillating simply because he was a man of two convictions to which he was determinedly devoted, and the two were contrary. One was that Jesus was the Son of God and Messiah of the Old Testament who would bring in the promised kingdom; the other was Peter's own preconceived notion of what the kingdom would be and how the Messiah must triumph. The latter conviction had to yield to the other, but before it did it caused Peter to rebuke Jesus for predicting His death. It caused him to refuse the plain meaning of many of Jesus' statements. It caused him, with great determination, to try to stop the crucifixion by fighting in the garden, by following into the court of the high priest and denying knowledge of Jesus in order to stay in there and to keep himself from arrest.

Every time Peter got ahead of the Lord's leading, he went in the wrong direction; every time he spoke or acted on his own judgment with reference to Christ and the kingdom, he did the wrong thing, because he minded "not the things of God, but the things of men." But it is to Peter's everlasting credit that every time he made such a mistake he yielded to Jesus, humbled himself in faith, and continued to follow and to learn.

SIMON BECOMES A ROCK

For Further Study:

Griffith-Thomas, W. H. *The Apostle Peter*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1946.

Lockyer, Herbert. *All the Apostles of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972. Pp. 126-152.

Robertson, A. T. *Epochs in the Life of Peter*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974 reprint. Extensive study of the life of Peter by a noted New Testament scholar.

## THOMAS LEARNS IN THE SCHOOL OF FAITH

Thomas was one of the twelve apostles whom Jesus chose from among His disciples after a night of prayer in the first half of the second year of His public ministry (Luke 6:12ff). Nothing is told of Thomas' former association with Jesus, but he may have been among the disciples from the beginning. Nothing is known of his origin, occupation, age, or background. In most of the lists of the apostles, he is mentioned with Matthew in the fourth pair (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15). This might suggest that he and Matthew worked together when the twelve went two by two. He was one of the seven apostles who were fishing on the Sea of Galilee one night after the resurrection and Jesus appeared on the shore (John 21:2). From this it is guessed that he was a Galilean, but such conclusions are very uncertain.

In fact, Matthew, Mark, and Luke merely name Thomas; all that we know of him is from the Gospel according to John. The full extent of John's record is to mention that he was called "Didymus," or "Twin," and to quote four short sentences which Thomas spoke on four different occasions.

Of course, any judgment of his character upon such slight information is highly speculative, especially since men do not always speak or act characteristically. But Thomas' four utterances have a noticeable conformity and consistency with one another, and are all serious commitments of himself regarding his attitude toward Jesus. Nothing shows a man's character like his attitude toward Jesus, especially under trying circumstances.

*Willing to Die With Jesus (John 11:1-16)*

It was only a month or two before the crucifixion that Mary and Martha sent word to Jesus in Perea that Lazarus, His friend, was very sick in Bethany. Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and Jesus had recently left Jerusalem because of the efforts of the rulers to seize Him. For as long as two years some had been seeking to kill Him (John 5:18). At the two most recent feasts Jesus had attended they had become more determined and definite in their plots (John 7:1, 13, 19, 25, 30, 32, 44, 45-52; 8:20, 40, 59; 10:31, 39), even sending officers to arrest Him and openly taking up stones to stone Him.

When Jesus prepared to go to Bethany to raise Lazarus, the disciples sought to dissuade Him because of the danger there. He told

them that when one travels by the light of day he need not stumble, but that a man walking at night would stumble. He meant that if He walked in the will and plan of God no harm could befall Him, but if He forsook the pathway of duty marked out for Him, He would surely fall into trouble. Jesus told them Lazarus was dead, and He was going to raise him for the glory of God and that they might believe. Thomas saw that Jesus was determined to go to Bethany, and he knew that the rulers were determined to kill Jesus, so he spoke a challenge to his fellow-disciples: "*Let us also go, that we may die with him,*" (John 11:16).

Thomas certainly was devoted to Jesus in this. He had followed Jesus this far; he would follow Him even in death. From this statement of Thomas' it is often inferred that he was naturally gloomy and melancholy, looking for the worst to happen. But all the disciples feared and expected the same thing. They knew how old and how fierce the opposition at Jerusalem was. If they were at fault, it was in considering only the human plans and forces involved while failing to trust fully enough that God will provide for and protect those who are doing His will. Their calm boldness in the face of persecution at a later time shows how they learned even this lesson. (See Acts 4:5-31 and 5:17-33, 41, 42.) As someone has said, "Resistance and rocks did not deter Jesus. He followed the line of duty regardless of what might be before Him. Stephen and Paul caught the same spirit."

*Asking About the Way* (John 14:5)

At the last supper, Jesus said He was going to the Father to prepare a place for the disciples. "And whither I go, ye know the way. Thomas saith unto him, *Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?*" Isn't such a question natural enough? It shows that Thomas was interested, if, perhaps, he was not as sharp a listener as he should have been. Jesus was going to the Father by the way of His cross and death; the same way is the way we all must go if we come to the Father—*He is the way*—we must go by *His* cross and follow on, bearing our cross daily!

Some think Thomas was despondent here again, not asking for information, but excusing ignorance and belittling the evidence they had received, in the attitude of "How in the world could anybody be expected to know?" But I object that this interpretation is imposed upon the account out of the imagination of men who have a theory about Thomas' "gloomy skepticism."



*Refusing to Believe the Report of the  
Resurrection (John 20:25)*

On the day of His resurrection, Jesus appeared to Mary (John 20:11-18), to other women (Matt. 28:1-10), to Peter (Luke 24:34), to two going to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-22), and that night to the apostles and some others who were with them (Luke 24:33; John 20:19-24), but Thomas was not with them. When the other apostles told Thomas they had seen the Lord, he said, "*Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.*" That was a very strong demand for evidence to come from a man who had heard Jesus predict plainly His own death and resurrection, and in the face of the testimony of his fellow-disciples. For it we have called him Thomas, the Doubter.

But remember that when the other ten apostles were told by the women that the risen Christ had been seen, they regarded it as an idle tale (Mark 16:11; Luke 24:11). Moreover, when they had heard the whole story of the two who went to Emmaus and the report of the appearance to Peter, they still disbelieved (Mark 16:13, 14; Luke 24:34, 35, 41); and even when Jesus Himself appeared among them they were frightened, believing Him to be a spirit, disbelieving their eyes until He ate fish before them to prove that He was there in a body. Thomas did doubt the word of the apostles, but he believed as soon as he saw Jesus. Jesus did not rebuke Thomas for unbelief as He did the others (Mark 16:14). Yet we call Thomas "*the Doubter.*"

Many kinds of accusations have been thrown at Thomas for being absent when Jesus first appeared to the company of apostles, but they are gratuitous. No one can possibly know why he was not with them. The Lord left us no suggestion that Thomas was blamable for that fact, or that it in itself indicated any doubt or disinterest. There is no real indication that Thomas was inclined to doubt the supernatural, to be a rationalist, or to demand direct evidence of his own senses before he would believe *anything*. In fact, it does not seem that the Gospel accounts mean to represent that his doubt of the resurrection was any greater or essentially different from that of the other apostles. They all had to learn in the school of faith. They all were severely disturbed in mind by the crucifixion, having had their hopes set on something entirely different, and not realizing the place that sacrifice must have in the divine plan of redemption and in the ministry of the Christ.

*Worshipping In Full Faith* (John 20:26-29)

When Jesus appeared a second time to the company of apostles, Thomas was with them. Jesus, of course, knew what Thomas had said. The others were now believing. Hence, when Jesus had greeted them He immediately addressed Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."

Will Thomas still insist on applying his rigorous test? No, no! His doubts vanish at the very sight of Jesus, like morning mists at sunrise. Even *before* the Risen One had laid bare His wounds, and uttered those half-reproachful, yet kind, sympathetic words, which evince intimate knowledge of all that had been passing through His doubting disciple's mind, Thomas is virtually a believer; and *after* he has seen the ugly wounds and heard the generous word, he is ashamed of his rash, reckless speech to his brethren, and, overcome with joy and with tears, exclaims, 'My Lord and My God!'<sup>1</sup>

Don't mistake these words, "My Lord and my God!" They were not a startled, ejaculatory cry to the Father in heaven, but they were "said to him," to Jesus, in recognition of Him. In this confession, Thomas made the most complete expression of the deity of Christ which any of His apostles made in the days of His flesh.

We must learn that the blessings of Christianity—redemption, revelation, and fellowship with Christ—come by *believing* Jesus, not by *agreeing* with Him. He brings a revelation of things foreign to our natural mind. His supernatural pronouncements must be believed upon demonstration of supernatural credentials. He has worked all the signs necessary to show His authority and establish faith in every one who "willeth to do the will of God" (John 7:17). We do not need to see them done over again. "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29). Blessed are they who receive the testimony of those through whom these things are confirmed unto us.

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<sup>1</sup> A. B. Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, n.d.), p. 510.

For Further Study:

Bruce, A. B. *The Training of the Twelve*, 3rd ed. New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d. Pp. 33, 391-392, 506-510.

Butler, Paul T. *The Gospel of John*, Vol. II. Joplin, MO: College Press, 1965. Pp. 140-143, 243, 426-435.

Westcott, B. F. *The Gospel According to John*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1881. Pp. 165-167, 293-297.

## WORKING FOR A CHRISTIAN WORLD

Why had Christ condescended to live on earth, to fulfill a ministry of humiliation, to endure grief and woe, to die a death of agony and shame? Surely it was not that after His departure all things might go on exactly the same as before!

Jesus saw the multitudes ill-housed, ill-fed, and oppressed by poverty. He saw them bound by prejudice and superstition, poisoned by hate and envy, ridden by disease. Surely He saw and He cared for all those things, but He saw them chiefly as "sheep without a shepherd" (Matt. 9:36), as children of God who knew not their Father, sitting in spiritual darkness. Jesus would be their light. I'm sure He could have introduced the products of our modern technology.

No one knows what He may have been tempted to do with systems of education and of government. But all that Jesus would do to improve the political, social, and cultural conditions of the world He left to be accomplished through the transforming effect of the gospel preached and believed. His was not a mere social gospel of soup, soap, and suffrage, but the divine gospel of salvation from sin, of eternal life through His own redeeming death and eternal priesthood, with power to regenerate the heart.

It is a very significant revelation of divine wisdom that, in view of all Jesus knew and saw and could do, still He concentrated all His interests and all His powers upon converting the individual. He would change society by changing the individual. He would transform the individual by the regeneration of the heart. He would reach the springs of action, desire, and will by presenting to the mind convincing testimony of those facts about Himself that would make men accept Him and lovingly submit to all that He commanded. It does make a difference what a man believes! It makes more difference than anything else does. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he."

*The Great Commission*

It would be very worth while if every Christian would memorize the four statements of the commission given by Jesus, as found in Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:47, 48; John 20:21-23. This commission is a great climax in the revelation of God to man. With it begins the application to all the world of the salvation and

light and blessing which had been in preparation in all former ages, and especially in Christ's personal ministry. All the preciousness of the redemption which Christ purchased with His own blood was hereby entrusted to His friends and consigned to His needy beneficiaries the world over. During the forty days after Christ's resurrection in which He appeared to the apostles at least five or six times (Cf. Acts 1:3), He spoke repeatedly of the work which they were to do. The four different statements in the accounts probably present His words to them on four different occasions, and they combine to make a remarkably complete statement of the plan of salvation and the mission of the church.

1. *The authority by which they were sent is stated— "all authority in heaven and earth."* The apostles knew by whom they were sent, and refused to heed rulers who commanded them not to preach in Christ's name (Acts 4:19; 5:29). We should realize that this work is commanded by the highest authority; it is not for us to question whether we agree with His plan, but to obey His order.

2. *The field of the service commanded is "all nations," "all the world," "the whole creation."* The command is not obeyed as long as we discriminate against some or neglect any. His gospel is to be preached at home as well as abroad, and in far countries as well as at home, "beginning in Jerusalem," but not waiting for complete success there before going elsewhere.

3. *The work to be done is definitely stated in summary.* They were not to do any work that was "nice" or popular, cultural or calculated to promote their institutions. *The command is to preach the facts about the death and resurrection of Christ, the fulfillment of the prophets, that men might receive Him as Saviour and yield to Him as Lord,* and to teach them to do all things that Christ commanded.

4. *The workers to whom this commission was first given were the eleven apostles.* To them only was promised the power from on high by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Only with reference to their inspired pronouncements was it said: "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:23). Christ gave the commission only to the chosen agents, and commanded them to wait until they received divine power of inspiration, in order to make known the "faith once for all delivered unto the saints" and to give full assurance not only that the hope of pardon and eternal life through Christ's death and

resurrection are authorized to us, but also that the terms of salvation preached by the apostles are absolutely infallible and final.

However the work of carrying this message into all the world and to all generations has passed to the church as a whole. To all of us who consent to serve Christ, this commission gives instruction as to what service He wants performed. This is the work which He left for His friends. If we would be His friends we must do our part of it.

5. *The power for accomplishing so tremendous a task certainly did not appear to be in the apostles themselves; still the command is not futile.* A special endowment of power from on high was given (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5, 8; John 16:13, 14; Acts 2:1-4). The words which the Spirit spoke through them are preserved unto us, and are still "living and active" (Heb. 4:12), "seed" of the kingdom (Luke 8:11), "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16), "the sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17).

#### *The Apostles' Faithfulness and Success*

The success with which the apostles preached and converted men is really remarkable, especially in comparison with results we are achieving today. (See Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:1, 7; 8:6, etc.). The effectiveness of their preaching is seen, not only in the number of converts, but even more in the character and conduct of the converts. (See Acts 2:42, 44-47; 4:32-37; 8:4, etc.) The work of the apostles furnishes us an excellent and challenging example of the kind of Christian work that pleases God and blesses many men. Remember that almost everything that we today consider necessary to success in the work was completely lacking when they started out to tell the world of Christ—they had no large company, no managing organization, no adequate funds or treasury, no prestige or political influence, no show of learning, no printing or publicity program, no mechanical aids. However, there were real reasons for their power and success, some of which are just as available to us today:

1. *Obedience.* "They went forth, and preached everywhere." They did not understand all about Jesus' plans and the coming kingdom, but they did just what He told them to do, and trusted God for results. They did not even turn aside from their preaching and teaching to manage organizations and treasuries when these became necessary (Acts 6:1-7).

2. *Zeal and diligence.* At every opportunity, to one or many, to

friendly or hostile hearers, they preached. "And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:42). James and John had once asked for chief seats next to Jesus in the kingdom—they learned that no one sits in honor and ease simply watching the kingdom grow and prosper, but all must participate in the labors and sufferings of Christ.

3. *Knowledge and faith.* They knew what they had seen and whom they had believed. They preached with profound conviction, and acted in perfect harmony with the absolute truth and tremendous significance of their testimony.

4. *Their manner of preaching.* They knew and *emphasized* the *authority of the message*, that it was not theirs, but direct from God, and concerning the authority of God's Son. They preached with authority in tones that rang with it on every occasion. Theirs was the *witnessing of facts*. They knew whereof they spoke, not by reason or by guess, but by the most vivid and recent experience. They did not argue, or speculate, or ponder—they testified to things certain and tremendously important, adding also the testimony of the Old Testament. Their *purpose was to save*. They seemed to have no thought of consequences to themselves, but only bringing men to repentance. They knew all men needed to repent, and were not ashamed to preach it. They were completely surrendered to Jesus and expected every one else to be the same.

5. *A message definite and clear.* They promised pardon upon definite terms which all could fulfill; the same terms Christ specified in the Great Commission—faith, repentance, baptism, submitting to all that Jesus commands.

6. *Their unity in teaching, practice, spirit and fellowship.* All preached the same warnings of damnation, the same promises of salvation, the same commandments and conditions of favor. Their practice of unity and brotherhood had much influence upon the people.

7. *Their special qualifications.* They had complete understanding of the Scriptures (Luke 24:27, 45), the experience of eyewitnessing, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These gave great power in witnessing. The miracles wrought through them confirmed the word (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3, 4). This was the primary purpose of all Bible miracles in general. Such supernatural evidences were, in the

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nature of the case, necessary to attest a supernatural message. When the message from God was once completely revealed and fully confirmed, the miracles were not needed.

For Further Study:

Foster, R. C. *Studies in the Life of Christ*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1962. Pp. 1353-1367.

Stott, J. R. W. "The Great Commission," *Christianity Today* (April 26, 1968), Pp. 723-725; (May 10, 1968), Pp. 778-782; (May 24, 1968), Pp. 826-829. Helpful article on the interpretation and application of the great commission.



## FRIENDS OF JESUS

The Scripture passages selected for this study are from various places in Mark, Luke, and John, recording the personal dealings or conversations of Jesus with persons of various ages, ranks, and nationalities. They are selected in order to show Jesus' customary attitudes toward all types of people. These incidents, as they are listed, are not in chronological order, and are not associated with one another. They simply are given in the order in which they occur in the New Testament as sample incidents from which we may study some general traits of the personality of Jesus. Each incident cited should be looked up and studied together with its context so that its story can be told briefly and clearly.

*Some of Jesus' Personal Relationships*

1. *The little children brought* (Mark 10:13, 14, 16). Some loving parents sought that Jesus might lay His hands on their children and pray over them (Cf. Matt. 19:13, 14). Even some of Jesus' disciples thought He would not care to take time for the children, and they rebuked the parents. Jesus' life was very busy; He was continually dealing with the most important things of adult responsibilities, and the disciples thought the children would be an unnecessary annoyance, not worthy of His attention. But Jesus was indignant at seeing children despised. He loved the children, and He recommended some of their traits as good examples for adults; "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein" (Mark 10:15; Matt. 18:1-6, 10).

Not content with merely laying His hand on them, He took them up in His arms to do so, and blessed them. The tenderness which He manifested toward the little children should cause parents to more highly appreciate them, and to labor more assiduously to bring them up in the doctrine and discipline of the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

2. *The honorable councillor honoring Him in death* (Mark 15:43). Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the Sanhedrin or high court of the nation, but was a "good and righteous man . . . looking for

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<sup>1</sup> J. W. McGarvey, *Matthew and Mark* (Delight, Arkansas: Gospel Light Publishing Company, 1875), p. 237.

the kingdom of God" (Luke 23:50-53). He was "a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews" (John 19:38). The crucifixion of Jesus awakened his courage and revealed his true faith. When many formerly bold disciples had become timid and had fled, this formerly timid one "boldly went in unto Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus." He used his high position to minister to his Lord in the hour of humiliation. He used the fruits of his wealth to furnish a fine new tomb for his Lord, who in death, as in life, had "not where to lay his head."

3. *The Twelve chosen* (Luke 6:13-16). After more than a year of public ministry Jesus had many disciples (i.e., more or less regular listeners and learners). From among them He chose twelve "whom also he named apostles." An apostle is *one sent* as a responsible messenger and representative. Before selecting them, Jesus had spent the night in prayer. They were indeed to be His friends, to whom He would entrust His message and His work on earth. Although He was the Master and they were servants, He was divine, they were human, and they honored Him as such; still He honored them as friends (John 15:15, 16), and loved them (John 13:1, 34; 14:1-3; 15:9-13). It is truly remarkable that Jesus was such an impartial friend to this group of men which included a traitor when He knew it would be so from the beginning (John 6:64).

4. *The women ministering* (Luke 8:1-3). Although Jesus always chose men for the responsible positions of public ministry, yet His personal regard and compassion and gracious ministry were as much for women and children as for men. He didn't judge men by the accidents of birth, and outward circumstances. He cared for all mankind; and every soul was and is precious in His sight for what it is and what it may be as a human soul (Gal. 3:28). Jesus' impartial friendship for all believers in every earthly condition often caused some unusual fellowship among them in serving Him. Among His apostles it brought together Matthew the publican (collaborator with Rome) and Simon the Zealot (advocate of violence against Rome) until all their differences were overshadowed in their common loyalty to Jesus. Among the women who helped support Jesus' ministry there was Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, in fellowship with Mary, who had had seven demons.

5. *The publicans and sinners listening to Him* (Luke 15:1, 2). The common people heard Him gladly, and those who realized their

sinfulness and knew their needs sought Him with hope and were not disappointed. They did not seek Him as an associate in sinful or even frivolous pastimes, But they, with special reverence for His holiness, drew near to be pardoned and made clean. They found Him a willing and encouraging friend seeking to do good to them and to put away their sins and the memory of them. Jesus did not make Himself a sinner among sinners; neither did He keep Himself out of reach of sinners who could be brought to repentance. He actually sought them out, made them feel the convicting power of His righteous life and earnest words and the constraining power of His genuine love and helpful spirit.

6. *The fishermen seeking* (John 1:35-51). This happened before the beginning of Jesus' public ministry when Andrew and Peter first saw Jesus, and when John the Baptist bore his faithful testimony. Hearing John point out the Lamb of God, Andrew and a companion dared to follow Him. They found in Jesus' practice what He later said in His preaching: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

7. *The ruler inquiring* (John 3:1, 2a). Nicodemus was a Pharisee and, although not as prejudiced against Jesus as other Pharisees, he was weak in faith and resolution. He seemed to lack the courage of his convictions, fearing the Jews and hiding his sympathies for Jesus. Nevertheless, he found Jesus ready to receive him and to teach him patiently.

8. *The woman of Samaria at the well* (John 4:6, 7). Jesus broke all the hidebound customs of hate and scorn to make way for the love of God. His love for souls was able to overcome great barriers in order to seek and to save the lost.

#### *No Respector of Persons*

A very practical way in which Jesus shows His deity is in the impartiality with which He invites, receives, and deals with all men on the same terms. Not only was He able to show Himself interested in all men during His earthly ministry, but the record of His life makes us all feel His interest in us centuries later. No one of us feels himself excluded from Jesus' circle of interest and friendship, unless it be by our limitation rather than His. He is accessible to all. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden" (Matt. 11:28), He says. And whosoever will may come. He is the true friend who loves

at all times. His love is the boundless love of God who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). It seems hard for us to realize how much and how truly He loves us and loves all men, worthy or unworthy. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). He is indeed a friend to sinners—the best friend a sinner could ever have!

We need to understand and make quite clear the kind of friendship Jesus had for sinners. His practice was in perfect accord with James 4:4: "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God." It is the Spirit of Jesus in the apostles which teaches us thus: "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (I Cor. 15:33); "What fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? . . . Wherefore, come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you" (II Cor. 6:14-17). Jesus Himself was "holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners" (Heb. 7:26). We must not become partakers of other men's sins. We must keep ourselves unspotted from the world. Yet we must love all and serve all, and be not only willing, but working, to uplift all that will look up to God for pardon and for purification.

Jesus tries to teach us true love and friendship for all men: "See that ye despise not one of these little ones" (Matt. 18:10). "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; . . . For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?" (Matt. 5:44-47). Compare James 2:1-9. The story of the good Samaritan illustrates perfectly how we are to try to be a friend, not just try to have friends. It is one thing to be a friend and another to have friends, although they usually go together; and many people want to have friends who are not willing to be friends.

Jesus was ready to be a friend to every one, but not every one was a friend to Him. Judas appeared to be a friend but proved untrue. Others were avowed enemies all the while. But don't overlook the fact that the great majority of the people who received the blessings of Jesus' teachings and miracles did not measure up to His standards for friendship to Him. "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you" (John 15:14).

Thank God, it remains forever true that He loves us—greater love there can not be. But it also remains forever true that if we love

## DISCIPLES AND FRIENDS

Him we will keep His commandments. His commands are not grievous; but they are the way of life and the richest blessings. He has first loved us. He has sought us out and made a way for us to know Him, and serve Him, and love Him. If we are not His friend it is altogether our own fault.

For Further Study:

Lewis, C. S. *The Four Loves*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1960. Pp. 87-127. Insights into the nature of friendship and love.

## EXPRESSING OUR FRIENDSHIP FOR CHRIST

A look at three incidents will reveal a beautiful friendship between Jesus and the sisters, Mary and Martha, and their brother, Lazarus. Their home was in Bethany, which was only about two miles from Jerusalem. There Jesus was received and entertained with great respect, but also with a naturalness and freedom of conversation and action that indicate familiarity and genuine mutual understanding and affection. Although the Gospel accounts are so brief that they tell only these three incidents, they clearly imply that Jesus had other associations with His Bethany friends. At the time of His first recorded visit with them, they were already disciples and full of faith. These events will be more easily associated and understood by us if we consider them in the order in which they happened (Luke 10:38-42; John 11; Mark 14:3-9. Cf. Matt. 26:6-13 and John 12:1-11).

*"One Thing is Needful"*

Jesus was received in the home of Martha, Luke tells us. Nothing is ever said of the parents of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, or of any husband to Martha, unless the guess is correct that Simon the leper was one or the other. Martha seems to be the mistress of the house and is called by Luke a "lady" ("Kuria," the feminine form of lord). Even Lazarus is not mentioned at this visit.

Her sister Mary "also sat at his feet and heard his word." The word "also" may be meant to indicate that that was not all she did. When Martha became so perplexed about much serving that she complained to Jesus that Mary did not help her, she said that Mary had "left" her to serve alone. Perhaps Mary had completed what she thought it her duty to do. It is suggestive to observe that at another feast for Jesus, (John 12:2) Martha served and Mary apparently did not. It appears that Martha was a good cook and "server," probably taking pleasure in her skill for preparing fine dinners. This time she seems to be overdoing it, to be bothered about unexpected guests, or something of the kind, for she becomes "cumbered with much serving," "anxious and troubled." She comes to Jesus and says, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? Bid her therefore to help me." That Mary was not to be blamed for shirking is evident from Jesus' answer. Jesus' judgment of the merits in the case can certainly be relied upon; and

He defended Mary's "choice." However, His reproof of Martha was gentle and kindly: "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: for Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." It is easy to see where Jesus thought correction should be made. While Martha's service was probably unselfish and was intended to please Him, she had misjudged His interests and tastes. She had not realized *the one thing* that is always more needful in the Lord's sight than anything so temporal as food for the body. Martha was fretting and vexing herself over "many things" which were simply not worth it in themselves, but which especially were not worthy to interfere with the higher things of the Spirit—the hearing and heeding of the words of the Lord, the feeding of the soul.

Jesus' attitude here was just the same that He had tried to teach in Matthew 6:19-34 and Luke 12:22-34: "Seek ye his kingdom, and these things shall be added unto you." This was Mary's choice. While Jesus showed sympathy and love for Martha, He pitied and chided her, but for Mary He had only words of approval.

*"He Whom Thou Lovest Is Sick"*

The first mention of Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, was when he was sick with the sickness that caused his death. Although we do not know how much Lazarus had been with Jesus before, still his sisters knew that Jesus loved him, and John (11:5) reassures us that Jesus loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Jesus' friends knew His interest enough to send messengers to tell Him of Lazarus' sickness, even though Jesus was a long distance away—two of three days' journey, at least. Notice that the sisters did not ask Jesus to come heal Lazarus. They knew the danger that it would be to Jesus for Him to come near to Jerusalem. They probably knew well that Jesus could heal him with a word, without coming. They simply stated the facts in such a manner as to express their confidence in Jesus' love for Lazarus, and left it to Him to do what He would.

Jesus was certainly master of the situation. He announced to those with Him, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby." He deliberately abode two days more where He was, then set out for Bethany. When He arrived, Lazarus had been dead four days. Jesus had known of his death, and had told His disciples of His purpose to come to awake him. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet Him, and said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother

had not died. And even now I know that whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee." Even when Jesus said, "Thy brother shall rise again," Martha did not doubt, but confessed her faith in Him as the Son of God. Mary, too, was believing, but when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping who came with her, He groaned in the Spirit and was troubled, and shed tears Himself. The people said, "Behold how he loved him!" Together they went to the tomb, and Jesus called Lazarus from the dead.

After these experiences and expressions of great faith and of strong mutual affection, is it any wonder that when Jesus came again to Bethany for the Passover feast they made a feast for Him? Or that during those last trying days of storm and strife He spent the nights in Bethany?

*"She Hath Done What She Could"*

After raising Lazarus, Jesus went away from Bethany to avoid the Pharisees, who were now more than ever determined to kill Him. But it was only a few weeks until the Passover, and six days before the Passover He came to Bethany. A supper was prepared for Him at which Martha served, Lazarus sat at meat, and Mary anointed Him (John 12:1-3). But the supper was in the home of Simon the leper (Matt. 26:6; Mark 14:3). Nothing else is known of this man Simon, but he must have been a close friend or relative of Lazarus and his sisters, possibly even their father or the husband of Martha. Surely he was not now a leper, but had been healed, if the text means that he was present at the feast. Perhaps his home was the same as Martha's house, and she was, or had been, mistress of it because he was away in a leper colony.

Here at supper together these friends who owed so much to Jesus, who believed so firmly in Him, who had felt so much of His love, were drawn to Him with many of the closest ties of spiritual affection. Now they even shared His danger, for the rulers in Jerusalem were seeking to put to death both Lazarus and Jesus (John 12:10). It is evident that the twelve disciples were at the supper, but we can not tell whether the local guests were many or few. Even if they were many, still in spite of their presence Mary carried out her expression of deep devotion.

While Jesus reclined upon a couch (as the custom was) before the table, Mary came with a sealed jar of very precious perfume. Breaking the jar, she poured the ointment on Jesus' head and also on His feet. And she wiped His feet with her hair.



This token of affection took the company by surprise. Lazarus and his sisters may have been in sufficiently good circumstances to admit of their making a substantial acknowledgment of their indebtedness to Jesus; and although this alabaster box of ointment had cost as much as would keep a laboring man's family for a year, this could not seem an excessive return to make for service so valuable as Jesus had rendered. It was the manner of the acknowledgment which took the company by surprise. Jesus was a poor man, and His very appearance may have suggested that there were other things He needed more urgently than such a gift as this. Had the family provided a home for Him or given Him the price of this ointment, no one would have uttered a remark. But this was the kind of demonstration reserved for princes or persons of great distinction; and when paid to one so conspicuously humble in His dress and habits, there seemed to the uninstructed eye something incongruous and bordering on the grotesque. When the fragrance of the ointment disclosed its value, there was therefore an instantaneous exclamation of surprise, and at any rate in one instance of blunt disapproval, Judas instinctively putting a money value on this display of affection, roundly and with coarse indelicacy declared it had better have been sold and given to the poor.<sup>1</sup>

When objection was made to the extravagance of Mary's act, Jesus said, "Let her alone . . . . She hath wrought a good work on me . . . . She hath done what she could. She hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying." It is hard to tell whether Mary, more than any other disciple, realized that Jesus would give up His life on the cross, and hence purposely anointed Him with reference to His death. It may be that Jesus made that application of her act beyond her conscious intention. But she ought to give her best in one unreserved act of devotion and honor to Him. *Nothing is too good for the Lord!* He desires and deserves our heart's fullest overflowing adoration.

We, too, may be friends of Jesus. He is as ready to love us as He was to love these friends at Bethany.

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<sup>1</sup> Marcus Dods, *The Expositor's Bible: The Gospel of John*, Vol. II, (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1903), pp. 4-5.

EXPRESSING OUR FRIENDSHIP FOR CHRIST

For Further Study:

Edersheim, Alfred. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Vol. II. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1956 reprint. Pp. 145-147, 312-325, 358-360. Comment on narratives involving Lazarus, Mary and Martha.

LaSor, William. *Great Personalities of the New Testament*. Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming Revell Company, 1961, Pp. 60-69. Discusses Lazarus, Mary and Martha and their relationship with Jesus.

## CHRIST AND WOMEN

This outline is prepared to assist you in reading what Christ in the Gospels and through the apostles says about the place of women in salvation, in Christ's ministry, in the church, and in service for Christ.

I. JESUS FREELY ASSOCIATED WITH WOMEN, MINISTERED TO THEM AND WAS HELPED BY THEM.

John 4:7-9, Jesus talked to the woman at the well. In 4:27, the disciples marvelled that He was speaking with a woman.

John 4:28-30, 41, 42, This woman had success in interesting the people of her village in Jesus.

Luke 7:37-50, A notorious sinner washed and kissed His feet. He said that she was forgiven and she loved much.

Matt. 15:21-28, In a foreign land, He granted a request for a Gentile woman and praised her faith. (Mark 7:25-30).

Matt. 19:13-15, He received little children when they were brought to Him, probably by their mothers, and taught, "See that ye despise not one of these little ones" (18:3-14).

Matt. 20:20-28, The mother of James and John dared come to Him and ask for her sons to sit in the chief seats in His kingdom.

Luke 10:38-42, He upheld Mary for sitting to hear His teaching when Martha wanted her to help with serving.

Luke 8:1-3, Some women traveled about with Him and provided for His entourage out of their own means.

Matt. 21:31, Jesus said the harlots would go into the kingdom ahead of the Pharisees, because they were willing to repent.

Matt. 14:21; 15:38, There were women and children in the crowds (5,000 and 4,000 men) which He fed miraculously.

Luke 11:27, 28, A woman dared to speak up in public to praise the blessedness of His mother. Jesus answered

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- her, offering the same blessedness to anyone who would hear the word of God and keep it.
- Mark 12:41-44, He pointed out the humble woman who had only two mites to give, and said she had given more than the rich men, for it was all she had. (Luke 21:1-4).
- Matt. 26:6-13, He let Mary of Bethany anoint Him with precious ointment at a public feast and upheld her as doing a good deed which would always be remembered to her credit. (John 12:1-8; Mark 14:3-9).
- Matt. 27:55, 56, There were women at the cross who had followed Him from Galilee and ministered to him. (Mark 15:40, 41; Luke 23:49; John 19:25).
- John 19:26, 27, From the cross He assigned to John the care of His mother.
- Luke 23:27-29, On the way to the cross He tried to comfort and warn the women who wept and mourned for Him in His sufferings.

## II. JESUS ACCEPTED WOMEN INTO THE FAVOR OF GOD AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE FAITHFUL.

- A. In His teaching, he showed sympathy and kindness for them. Sometimes He made them examples in His teaching.

- Matt. 12:42, "The queen of the South will rise up in judgment with this generation and condemn it." (Luke 11:31).
- Matt. 12:46-50, He offered to all women the privilege of being as important in His sight as His mother or sisters, if only they would do the will of His Father in heaven. (Mark 3:32-45; Luke 8:20, 21).
- Matt. 24:16-21, In predicting the extreme hardships of the days of the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus told the Christians to flee from the city; at the same time He expressed deep sorrow for the mothers with young babies and those about to be delivered. (Mark 13:14-17; Luke 21:20-23).
- Matt. 24:40, 41, He speaks of women being chosen for rescue before the world's destruction in the same

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manner as men. (Luke 17:34, 35).  
Matt. 19:4-6, Jesus emphasized the unity of man and wife, and the obligation of a husband to his wife as above that to his father. (Mark 10:6-9).

B. Later women received salvation in the same manner as men.

Gal. 3:25-28, All become children of God by faith and baptism into Christ, regardless of race, slavery, or sex.

Rom. 3:23-26, There is no distinction. All have sinned and are saved through the death of Christ and faith in the gospel.

Acts 5:14, Crowds of both men and women believed the gospel and were added to the Lord.

Acts 6:1-6, Foreign-born widows were numerous in the church very early.

Acts 8:12, Both men and women at Samaria believed and were baptized.

Acts 8:3; 9:2, Both men and women were persecuted and imprisoned for their faith.

Acts 16:14, 15, Lydia, a businesswoman, obeyed the gospel and furnished lodging to the preachers.

Acts 17:4, 12, At Thessalonica, many chief women believed and joined with the Christians.

Acts 17:34, At Athens, a woman was among the first few converts.

### III. AFTER JESUS' DEATH AND IN HIS RESURRECTION APPEARANCES, WOMEN WERE MOST FAITHFUL AND HIGHLY FAVORED.

Matt. 27:61, Although two men who were prominent rulers of the Jews took charge of the body of Jesus and buried it, women disciples of His watched how it was done and determined to add their contribution toward completing the care of it. (Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55, 56).

Matt. 28:1, 5-8, Women came early on the first day of the week to the tomb, received from angels the first report of the resurrection, and were told to tell the apostles. (Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-9; John 20:1, 2).

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- John 20:11-18, Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene. (Mark 16:9).  
Matt. 28:9, His second appearance was to the other women as they were obeying the angels' instructions to tell the apostles of His rising.  
Mark 16:10, 11, These women did deliver the message faithfully, although they were disbelieved. (Luke 24:10, 11, 22-25; John 20:18).  
Acts 1:14, The women continued in prayer and expectation with the apostles after Jesus had ascended, before the day of Pentecost.

### IV. JESUS CHOSE MEN, NOT WOMEN, TO BE SPIRITUAL LEADERS.

Jesus did not appoint any woman to be an apostle, or to be one of the seventy other miracle-working witnesses whom He sent out in Judea before His death (Luke 10:1-20). There is no indication that women received directly the great commission, on any of the several occasions when He gave it, or when He promised the divine powers and authority by which they would be empowered to carry it out. (Read John 20:21-23; 21:15-23; Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:45-49; Acts 1:2-11.) There is no indication that any women received the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, by which the apostles' message was attested. Of course, those who obeyed that day in repenting and being baptized in water, did receive the gift of the Holy Spirit which is part of the new birth of every Christian. But all of the following verses indicate that those who were baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues on that occasion were apostles: Acts 1:26; 2:1; 2:7, 14, 37, 42. On Pentecost and following it, it was the apostles who bore the witness, worked the miracles, taught the people, bore the persecution, etc. Acts 3:6; 4:3, 33, 35; 5:12, 13, 18, 29, 40-42; 6:2, 6.

### V. THE PLACE OF WOMEN IN THE EARLY CHURCH

A. N.T. passages which show service by women in the church:

#### 1. Women workers:

Rom. 16:1, 2, Phoebe was a *deaconess* or *minister*.

Rom. 16:3-5, Prisca (Priscilla) and Aquila, Paul's *fellow workers* deserve gratitude of many, and have

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- a church in their home at Rome.
- Acts 18:18, 19, Priscilla and Aquila had worked with Paul at Corinth and at Ephesus (I Cor. 16:19), and had a church in their house.
- Rom. 16:6, "Mary worked hard among you." (R.S.V.)
- I Cor. 11:5-16, Women were expected to pray or prophesy under the right conditions (but not in the main assembly; read I Cor. 14:26, 33-35).
- Phil. 4:2, 3, Euodia and Syntyche "labored side by side with me." (R.S.V.)
- Col. 4:15, Nympha had a church in her home.
- Acts 21:8-10, Philip had four daughters who prophesied, but the message was given to Paul by Agabus.
- Acts 5:1, 7-10, Sapphira shared with her husband in giving property to the church, and shared in the penalty for misrepresenting it.
- Acts 12:12-16, Mary held a prayer meeting in her house, and Rhoda, a maid, kept the door and informed the Christians of Peter's arrival.
- Acts 9:36-41, Dorcas served in good works and *almsdeeds* and was loved for it.

### 2. Instructions concerning women:

I Tim. 5:4-10, Dedicated women were supported by the churches if they had no family to support them and they had served well at home, in hospitality, benevolence, and every good work and continued in prayers day and night (and were at least 60 years old).

I Tim. 5:11-15, Younger widows are not likely to serve as well, but should marry, bear children, rule their household.

*Note: Women are to "rule their household" (I Tim. 5:14) in submission to their husbands (Eph. 5:21-33). God commands their husbands to love and honor them (I Pet. 3:7); and their children to respect and obey them (Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:18-20).*

I Tim. 3:11, Qualifications for women (either wives of elders, or women who serve somewhat as deacons serve).

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- Titus 2:3-5, The preacher is to instruct older women to train younger women in godliness and in exemplary family life, so that the word of God will not be spoken against.
- Acts 2:17, 18, The powers of the Spirit, especially prophecy, are promised to daughters and handmaidens (not necessarily in the same degree or for all the same functions).
- I Cor. 7:34, 35, An unmarried woman may be more careful for the things of the Lord than one who is concerned to please her husband.
- I Cor. 7:39, 40, If a husband dies, the widow is free to marry another in the Lord, but may be happier to remain unmarried, under the circumstances of that time.

In general a Christian woman serves her Lord in serving her husband and children, but in many situations the demands made by her family may conflict with her highest ideals or desire for single-minded devotion to Christ. She can be holy, even with an un-Christian husband, but she could have less conflicts and distress in being holy without him. Yet, if she is married, she must live out her faith in that condition and not desert her family responsibility. (I Cor. 7:10-17).

### B. Passages of the N.T. which direct and limit the area of service by women.

1. I Cor. 14:33b-37, Women are not to speak among the prophets in the public gathering of the whole church (see 14:26-33).
  - a. I Cor. 11:5-10, In the same book, conditions are stated under which they may pray or prophesy, evidently in some kind of private or semi-private situations.
  - b. I Cor. 11:3-12, The explanation for excluding women from speaking revelations for the church is found in the divine order of headship by which God's authority is graciously administered to us.
    - (1) Eph. 5:21-33, As verse 21 says, All of us are to be



subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives are to be subject to the husbands because Christ has so designed for them to live in good order and to help their husbands practice the responsibility which is assigned to them by God and which is good for all the family. This works well when husbands love their wives "as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her." To acknowledge and follow God's wisdom in this divine order (of submission and responsible oversight) brings a blessing to the whole human family.

- (2) Col. 3:18, 19, "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them." (RSV)
- (3) Gen. 3:16, "He shall rule over thee." This was probably what Paul referred to in "as also saith the law" (I Cor. 14:34).
- (4) I Pet. 3:1-6, Women are to be in subjection to their husbands, live chastely, adorning themselves with a meek and quiet spirit.

Note on I Pet. 3:1-6 and Eph. 5:21-33:

When people are doubtful about the rightness of Christian wives being in subjection to ungodly husbands who expect them to participate in sinful deeds, they may be helped by reading Acts 4:19, 20 and 5:29. Notice that Peter taught Christians to be subject to every human institution as a general rule (I Pet. 2:13-17). But Peter himself set a good example of obeying God rather than men, when his rulers commanded him to disobey Christ (Acts 4:18-20; 5:29-32). And God upheld him and the other apostles in this resistance to authority (Acts 4:23-33; 5:17-25). Yet the apostles were submissive to the rulers in taking the punishment which their resistance brought on them. They bore the penalty patiently and without railing or retaliation.

2. I Tim. 2:8-15, Women are not to teach or exercise authority over a man.

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### a. Extent of teaching or leadership done by women.

- (1) Acts 18:26, Priscilla apparently aided Aquila in "expounding the word of the Lord more perfectly" to Apollos, whether she took part in the discussion or just opened her home to him. Either way, it was done privately with no thought of domination over him.
- (2) II Tim. 1:5, 3:14, 15, Timothy's grandmother Lois and mother Eunice were quite probably responsible for teaching him the "sacred writings."

Women certainly have the responsibility to teach and guide their own children, and that does not entirely cease at a certain birthday; yet the propriety and effectiveness of her teaching diminishes as the young man takes on the independence and responsibilities of a man. She should then rely upon her teachings of earlier years (and perhaps indirect or gentle reminders of them) and do her best to respect and use and build up the manhood of young men.

- (3) Titus 2:3-5, "To train younger women to love their husbands and children, to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind, and submissive to their husbands." (R.S.V.)
- (4) I Tim. 2:12-14, It is not wrong for a woman to have information and to give it, but it is not well for her to assume the position of boss or director over men. This is a valid distinction, although either could be called teaching. There is a real difference between sharing knowledge modestly, and assuming authority in leadership, although the word "teaching" might be applied to either one. The women to whom Jesus appeared after His resurrection were told to tell the apostles that good news. But they were not given the position of apostles or leadership in the church. On the whole it seems that the Lord is not

trying so much to limit the rights of anyone as He is trying to teach a better order and to make known the relative duties He wants men and women to perform. It seems that I Tim. 2:12-14 connects the teaching a woman is not to do with serving in authority over a man, and with being a guide who may not always be reliable in times of moral crisis. ("The woman being beguiled hath fallen into transgression.")

- (5) I Tim. 2:12, The meaning of "teach" is more than merely to give information; perhaps it means something more like setting standards for the church, or as in Titus 2:15: "These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one despise you."

The kind of situation which we have in a Sunday School class (or a home Bible study) is not described in the New Testament at all. It is hard to be sure whether or not it should be regarded as the assembly of the church in which a woman is not to speak, even to ask a question. (I Cor. 14:34, 35). Probably it is more like the situations in which Paul expected women to pray or prophesy (I Cor. 11:5), or to be active in training younger women and children. (Titus 2:3-5).

It is not fitting for us to make exact rules about what is permitted and what is not, where the Lord has not made it plain for us. But the principles of modesty, submission, and helpfulness must be put into practice.

In New Testament churches women ministered of their time, substance, hospitality, and labors in a variety of ways. Their part in the service of the church was appreciated and important, but it was not a leading part, not directive or managerial.

Although there is no distinction between Jew or Gentile, slave or slaveowner, woman or man in the matter of being welcomed into the family of God (Gal. 3:22-29), there is in God's sight a difference in the lines of service for which men and women are fitted and in which they make their best

contribution to the whole family of God.

The most important thing to understand is this. The teachings of the Scriptures are not to be made a strict set of rules to set exact limits on a woman's activities, but to give the principles by which each Christian is to be guided in contributing the most to others in any situation.

The Christian woman must accept the fact that God has made her "for the man" (I Cor. 11:9). She was not created to be just like a man, but to be a helper and fill a need (Gen. 2:18-24).

She will be just as important and just as great in God's sight, without being as dominant or as much as public leader as the man. Jesus taught that the one who is servant of all is the greatest of all (Matt. 20:26-28; 23:11, 12; Mark 10:43-45). *Submission does not mean inferiority.* Jesus submitted to God and became a servant to all of us and God exalted Him for it (Phil. 2:5-11). Jesus would not consider a woman inferior because she is subject to her husband and is servant to her family. According to Jesus' teaching and example she will be exalted for it.

She must recognize man's God-given responsibility to lead in the family, in the church, and in society; and she should do her best to help him fulfill that responsibility.

Yet God, who established this order in the family of man and gave to women their greatness in a subordinate position, has shown in His word that women can sometimes serve outside their usual area of subordination. Consider the examples of Miriam (Exodus 15:20, 21); Deborah (Judges 4:4-10); Huldah (II Kings 22:14-20; II Chron. 34:22).

Is there really any need for a struggle between men and women to prove their importance, rights, or superiority? Should the man try to suppress the woman, or the woman resist her special calling and try to prove that she has unlimited rights and powers? Both must submit to the Lord Jesus.

Let both value each other, as God has valued every human being, and serve each other as it is His will for us to do: "in honor preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10). "For ye, brethren, were called for freedom; only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants (slaves) one to another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite

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and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another" (Gal. 5:13-15).

Let us accept the teachings and the challenges in the word of our loving Father that guide and stimulate each of us to fill a place that will richly bless us with the highest fulfillment of our God-given natures.

### For Further Study:

Elliott, Elizabeth. *Let Me Be A Woman*. Wheaton: Tyndale Press, 1976. Response to those advocating a Christian feminism.

Ryrie, C. C. *The Role of Women in the Church*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1958. Basic study on the New Testament teaching concerning women.