

INTRODUCTION TO THESE DISCIPLESHIP HANDOUTS

We believe it pleases God when we have the attitude of a disciple (an apprentice learner), having more concern about God making us into the most usable instrument possible in this life, and minimal interest in defending our personal viewpoints. We ought to not have any beliefs that are not open for Him to alter. Some of the concepts presented in these materials will conflict with certain beliefs that are prevalent in the Christian community. Our intention is to offer some Scriptural principles that we believe are being neglected and expose some wrong assumptions that are being made by many followers of Christ. We would encourage anyone reading this introduction and following lessons to prayerfully consider the validity of these concepts with an open mind, and to give us any feedback that would help us to present Biblical truth clearly and accurately. Our passion to help believers to grow to spiritual maturity and fruitfulness in Christ is knit together with our fear of presenting error.

There are some foundational **principles** that all believers, especially newer believers, need to understand. Often Biblical “knowledge” is presented to new Christians instead of Biblical “principles” and **personalized** instruction. New believers need to be quickly introduced to a life of walking in **dependence on the Holy Spirit**. (A manual for a car or computer may have the exact specifications and a great description, but to learn to properly drive a vehicle or operate a computer, most people need individual mentoring).

We believe there are some harmful **misconceptions** that are prevalent in the Christian community, which are **assumed** to be Scriptural, primarily because contrasting Biblical principles are often not presented. The **neglect**, or omission, of a particular Biblical concept (for example, the Rewards Ceremony of Christ) can easily convey to a new believer that the concept is really not of any great significance. We believe these misconceptions have resulted in many unhealthy Christians who have not grown from infancy to maturity in Christ so as to become **spiritual reproducers** (disciplers), a goal for which God has made every provision.

Our desire is to give each newer believer (and any spiritually hungry older believer) a clear **overview** of the Christian life and a basic understanding of **God’s objectives**. We believe one of the biggest reasons for the lack of spiritual vitality in the Christian community is the failure of new converts to be taught foundational guidelines and Scriptural goals **initially**. If such principles are presented initially, a new believer will be saved from much unneeded frustration as he seeks to understand what God wants to do in and through his life. For most converts the **first few months** are critical, in order to take advantage of the initial **disposition to learning** that characterizes the normal new believer. Too often new believers are simply placed in the presence of Biblical truth and expected to somehow **assimilate** Biblical understanding. New believers will tend to **adopt** the outlook and value system of those they associate with during the formative first part of their Christian walk. Is it then a surprise if many new believers come to the conclusion that Sunday services are the most important spiritual experience of the week? The spiritual walk with God should be a 24/7 experience.

We believe we can compare bits of Biblical knowledge to pieces of a **jigsaw puzzle**. A person may have many of the pieces, yet without personal instruction, not have a clear understanding of how they sensibly fit together. It is much easier to put together the pieces of a puzzle if the puzzle **box top** is available for reference. Similarly, it is easier for a new believer to make sense of Biblical truths if an **overview** is clearly presented at the very **beginning** of his walk with the Lord.

Caution: Please do not give these lessons to someone without adequate explanation. We usually tend to assume that others understand more than they actually do. If the disciple grasps and applies the concepts presented here, the energy and hours you have invested will be well worth it.

QUICK-START RECOMMENDATIONS

1. IF YOU ARE A LEADER AND PERSONALLY WANT [TO BETTER UNDERSTAND BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP](#) -

We recommend that you carefully go through [PHASE 2](#) of these discipleship materials.

2. IF YOU ARE A LEADER AND WANT [TO TRAIN BELIEVERS TO DISCIPLE OTHERS](#) -

We recommend that you prayerfully select a few believers who you consider to be **faithful**. Up to about 12 believers would probably be best. Meet together with them as a group at least once each week for 1-1/2 hours or so, to carefully go through [PHASE 2](#) of these discipleship materials. **EXPECT AT LEAST A THREE-MONTH COMMITMENT.**

3. IF YOU ARE A BELIEVER WHO HAS NOT BEEN DISCIPLED, AND YOU WANT [TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE](#) -

We recommend that you prayerfully seek an older believer who you respect, and who would be willing to meet with you at least once each week to go through [PHASE 1](#) of these discipleship materials. If you can not find another believer to personally mentor you, first carefully read [LESSON 2-5B](#), then start through [PHASE 1](#) on your own, writing down questions that come to your mind. **PROBABLY A THREE-MONTH COMMITMENT.**

4. IF YOU WANT [TO PERSONALLY DISCIPLE A NEWER BELIEVER](#) -

We believe that every true convert should be personally discipled (“spiritually parented”) as soon as possible after conversion. If you would like to disciple a newer believer, we recommend that you prepare first by reading [LESSON 2-5](#). After reading [LESSON 2-5](#), carefully go through [PHASE 1](#) of these materials individually with each person you're discipling. **PROBABLY AT LEAST A SIX-MONTH COMMITMENT.**

5. IF YOU ONLY HAVE A [ONE-TIME](#) OPPORTUNITY TO SPEND WITH A BELIEVER, FOR EXAMPLE, ON A TRIP OR IN A JAIL MINISTRY, ETC. -

We recommend that you go through [LESSON 2-5B](#) of these discipleship lessons with him/her.

Important: Preference should be given to using these lessons on a one-to-one basis, although they can also be used effectively in a group. For most Christians the lessons will need detailed explanation. These lessons are not designed to be simply read through like a newspaper, but rather to be personalized by the discipler, and to serve as a means to stimulate dialog and address spiritual issues that need to be understood in order for each believer to become an effective and useful tool in His hands.