

Module 6



Maturing as a Disciple

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LEARNING OUTCOMES :

On completion of Module 6 you will be able to know how to mature as a disciple

SPECIFIC OUTCOMES :

On completion of this Chapters you will be able to know:

+ Chapter 1

What follows the follower of the Lord

+ Chapter 2

How to learn from Jesus on being a disciple

+ Chapter 3

How to be mentored

+ Chapter 4

That we may make disciples

MODULE 6

CHAPTER 1

M6C1

What follows
the follower of
the Lord

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A disciple follows Jesus.

This in a nutshell is what a disciple is all about. It says in Matthew 4: 19 Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” 20 They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

Thus a disciple is called to follow the Lord, never man, or any other idea, philosophy, religion, mind-set or way. For when we follow the Lord, we follow in His Way, for He is the Way, Truth and Life. This is what it means to be a disciple. To follow. Thus to follow what Jesus says, and does. To follow in His Path.

A disciple does not determine the path or the scope or way of the narrow road, but the disciple follows and listens. It is written in “Psalm 63:8: My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.”

And this is how it should be for the disciple, keeping so close with the Lord that your very soul is close behind Him. Thus your will, your mind and heart must be in step with the Lord, under His shadow, guarded and submitted. Such is the nature of the disciple. This is the reality of “Psalm 119: Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” God is our light, so as we stay close to Him, He shall guide and direct out very steps and our soul.

It also says in “Proverbs 15:9: The way of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, But He loves him who follows righteousness.”

So to follow is really a matter of following and seeking after righteousness, thus remaining in right standing with God by following the path of purity and holiness.

The Lord said in “Matthew 6: 33: But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” What does it mean to be “added”? It implies what “follows”. What follows when we seek His Kingdom and righteousness is “all these things”. Such ‘things’ is what Jesus talked about in Matthew 6 when it comes to provision and God’s hand upon our lives.

And then, as we follow the Lord, treading the narrow path of life, we read in “Psalm 23:6: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.”

So when we follow, then goodness and mercy follows us. Thus, as we follow after the Lord, in such a manner that our soul is close behind Him, then what follow us is goodness and mercy.

And such goodness and mercy speak of the green pastures and quiet rivers to which the Good Shepherd leads us, thus the fulfilment of the Lord’s Promise in Mathew 6.

Let us also consider Proverbs 3: My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands; 2 For length of days and long life and peace they will add to you. 3 Let not mercy and truth forsake you; Bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, 4 And so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man. 5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. 8 It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones.

Solomon teaches in Proverbs 3 about the importance of obeying God and His commandments, thus His Truth and walking in His Way. This is exactly what Jesus said in Matthew 6 of seeking His Kingdom and righteousness. Now remember, Jesus said “all these things” will be added when following after the Kingdom. Solomon writes that “length of days and long life and peace they will add to you.” So, Scripture does not contradict itself.

When we thus follow the Lord, and therefore obey, yield and submit to His ways and truths, then surely mercy, goodness, long life, peace and length of days shall follow us! But then we must abide in the Truth for the truth sets us free (John 8:32), and such truth is the truth as taught by the Spirit of the Lord (John 16).

Take also note of what Solomon writes that we must not let mercy and truth forsake us. David speaks of mercy and goodness following the follower of the Shepherd, so this means that we must guard mercy and goodness by staying true to the path and thus true to the Lord. Thus, guard our heart, guard our mind, and stay true to the path of the Lord. This is the way of the disciple.

Solomon also writes that those who obey and follow the ways of the Lord will find favour and high esteem in the sight of God and man. So, the follower of the Lord will indeed not only find mercy, goodness and long life, but also favour and high esteem in the sight of God and man!

Praise the Lord! But this means that we must trust in the Lord with all our heart, and not to lean on our own understanding and in all our ways acknowledge Him. This implies complete trust in God, and submission, yielding and thus following. For this is what it means to be a disciple of God – to follow His ways, His understanding and His wisdom. And yes, as we follow, He shall direct our paths.

All of this truth is supported by Psalm 1: Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; 2 But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

Solomon also reminds us not to be wise in our own eyes, to fear the Lord and depart from evil. If we do so, we shall enjoy health to our flesh, and strength to our bones. Remember, according to Job 28:28, to fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. So we must revere and fear the Lord for His greatness, and thus walk in mercy and wisdom. And yes, healing also follows the disciple of the Lord! And so it is also written in “Proverbs 21:21: He who follows righteousness and mercy finds life, righteousness, and honor.” Want long life, mercy, goodness, health, strength and favour to follow you? Then be a true disciple. Follow the Shepherd (John 10) and thus shall things will follow.

The Lord also said the following in Mark 16: 14 Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. 15 And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; 18 they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Take note of verse 17: And these signs will FOLLOW those who believe

So signs will FOLLOW who? Yes, those who believe in Jesus, therefore who are a follower of the Lord. Thus a true disciple. And what are these signs according to the Lord? It says: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; 18 they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Take note thus the Lord said what WILL follow is the following:

- a) Cast out demons
- b) Speak in new tongues
- c) Take up serpents and not be hurt by anything deadly
- d) Lay hands on the sick and they will recover

This was of course all put in action through the manifested and indwelling power of the Holy Spirit when the Church was birthed on Pentecost. Mark 16 is precisely the instruction God gave to the 12 disciples in “Matthew 10: 10 And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.”

Take note, the disciples first were instructed to deliver and secondly to heal. This same order of priority you also find in Mark 16, because most healings first begin with deliverance.

When the seventy returned (Luke 10) after being send out as lambs among the wolves, the read the following: 17 Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.” 18 And He said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

So yes, as we follow the Lord, we are empowered to walk in the authority of the Lord, and by such authority to deliver, to heal and to make disciples.

Take also note of how what the Lord said in Mark 16 ties in with Proverbs 3, and how it also aligns for example with Psalm 91: *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.” 3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. 4 He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. 5 You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day, 6 Nor of the pestilence that walks in darkness, Nor of the destruction that lays waste at noonday.*

We can all agree the Apostle Paul was a true disciple of God. We read in “Acts 28: 1 Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. 2 And the natives showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold. 3 But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. 4 So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, “No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live.” 5 But he shook off the creature into the fire and suffered no harm. 6 However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.” So why did the Lord allow Paul to be bitten?

So that we may know what Jesus said in Mark 16 is true, and that the entire Scriptures, including Psalm 23, Psalm 91 and Proverbs 3 is true. For in Mark 16 Jesus said these signs will FOLLOW those who believe that they will take up serpents and not be hurt by anything deadly. This is what happened to Paul. God allowed this to happen so that we can see God is not a liar.

So if this is true, then all of Mark 16 is true that those who follow then these signs will follow:

- a) Cast out demons
- b) Speak in new tongues
- c) Take up serpents and not be hurt by anything deadly
- d) Lay hands on the sick and they will recover

Yes, for the disciple, healing and deliverance are not separate and exclusive ministries. They are part and parcel of the ministry and the duty of all and every disciple. To speak in new tongues is a reality for anyone who believes, it is not a gift but the indwelling manifestation of God living within the follower.

And when it comes to serpents, on a spiritual level this refers to any demonic attack by the Serpent himself - the devil. For it is written in “Colossians 2:15 Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.” Moses after all dealt with the sorcerers of Egypt with their snakes, thus he dealt with the occult in the power of God.

It should also be noted of great interest according to Mark 16, that signs will FOLLOW the disciple.

Thus, disciples are not supposed to be running after signs, wonders and miracles. For such manifested power of the Kingdom must follow the disciple, for such work of the Lord is not for the sake and the benefit of the disciple, but the for the sake of the lost, the unbeliever and the broken.

After all, the true disciple has denied himself and has taken up the cross, so the true disciple lives only for Christ and Christ alone. He seeks for the lost to be found and the broken healed and the oppressed to be delivered.

These days, too many believers are running after signs, wonders and miracles for own sake and benefit, instead of such manifested work following them. It is written in John 3: 3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

A true disciple is born again. There can be no argument or debate over this. To be born again means born in the Spirit, thus led by the Spirit. And for those led by the Spirit, it applies “seeing the Kingdom”.

We “see” the manifested work of the Kingdom when such signs follow the disciple. Again, a disciple is not called to run or chase after such things as if in the need of exaltation of want, but as the disciple follows and obeys, then the work of the Lord manifests to the glory of the Lord and to the the captives free and to bind up the broken hearted.

It says in Acts 2: 22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know

So signs and wonders and miracles attested to who Jesus is – the Son of God. It thus attested to the Word, and the Truth of such Word, for Jesus is the Word (John 1). Thus signs and wonders and miracles attests to the validity, authenticity, reality and truth of the Kingdom of God. Thus, it serves as a witness and thus serves as a means and a way for the unbeliever to know the truth of God, and the truth of the Word and the Kingdom.

Signs and wonders and miracles is not for self-exaltation and enjoyment, but for the preaching of the Word, and of making true disciples and leading the lost to the Lord. For this reason signs FOLLOW the disciple who is Christ-centred, Chris-focused and Christ-conscience.

Take note of what happened in Acts 3: Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; 3 who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. 4 And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." 5 So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6 Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." 7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God. 10 Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

In Acts 3, we find healing and the power of God followed Peter, because Peter followed God. And once the lame man was healed by the power of God, it served as a mighty testimony of God's goodness, mercy, kindness and grace to all those who sat begging alms. Signs and wonders was therefore not for the benefit of Peter or for the sake of his reputation, but to bring glory to God and to serve as a witness unto all those who were present that God is real and alive. Thus, it is means to an end, and the end of salvation and redemption.

And as we as disciples are led by the Spirit, we shall also walk in God's ways and truth. It is written of the Spirit in Isaiah 11: There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

So for the true disciple who follows the Lord, you will find goodness, mercy, strength, power, long life, high esteem and favour follows. But also the disciple will walk in wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and might.

This is because a true disciple follows where the Spirit leads to the glory of the Lord, and thus as the disciple follows, the disciple will walk in such the glory and might of the Spirit. All to the glory of the Kingdom, thus the disciple is empowered to first seek His Kingdom and righteousness so that the rest may follow.

Thus, is the way of the disciple. As he follows, then “all these things” follow ... all to the glory of the Lord!

MODULE 6

CHAPTER 2

M6C2

Learning from Jesus

Layout by E Cloete

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Jesus grew up and lived the life of the perfect Son. He came to show us how to live as the perfect Son or Daughter. He lived in pure relationship with the Father just as Adam had done. Jesus being the second Adam. Where did Jesus learn to be the perfect Son, or in our logical thinking, the perfect Christian? Was he trained or taught? Did He attend any services?

No. He learned it before the foundation of the earth was laid.

Before mankind, there was perfect fellowship in heaven between Father and the Son and the Spirit. Jesus was the Perfect Son in heaven before Adam was born and when He came to earth He kept on being the perfect Son. He just lived the way He did in heaven!

What did this Christian Jesus do? He walked in fellowship and relationship with the Father. He showed others the way to the Father through Him. He showed Himself so that we can see the Father. He was the perfect Son so that we could find the perfect Father. It is time we looked more closely at what Jesus did and also what He didn't do. His external works were to glorify the Father through Him.

He died so that we can be sons and daughters of the Father. Jesus did all those miraculous things because of His perfect sonship. He never betrayed the King of the Kingdom. He was full of power as God and human because He knew what it meant to be a son. Jesus showed his perfect sonship in His relationship with His earthly mother. He showed His perfect sonship to us all so that we could all become that because He wants to be our brother, serving the Father together.

What is then Sonship?

It is a living, breathing faith relationship. Sonship is not something external, feeding off rituals. It is that all day fusion of your Spirit and His, His blood running in our veins, mind connecting with mind, heart with heart, soul with soul, fibre with fibre, bone with bone and morality and immorality. Sonship is that something alive, something pulsating, something eternal, and something so real. Sonship does not end or begin, it is forever moving and flowing.

It cannot be defined, caged or captured. It begins not on a Sunday or with prayer and neither does it end so. It is continuous, it is birth, it is our blood flowing, and it is our hope and dreams. It is love and endless hope. Sonship and fatherhood mingled and intertwined, every second and every moment. It is not external or temporary. It is not institutional or rationalistic or abstract. It is alive. It is divine.

To be a disciple means to be the adopted son or daughter of the Most High. And then, to follow. And to obey and to first seek His Kingdom and Righteousness above all else. The Word says the Lord has known us in the secret place and has formed us in the secret place before we were born (Psalm 139). Sonship is born in the secret place. Before we had breath, the Lord made us in the secret place to be a son or daughter.

There in the Tent of Meeting or there in the Holy Place and here in His presence the Israelites returned to the secret place and this is where sonship was forged and shaped and rebirthed. When Moses went up the mountain, he sat 40 days in the presence of the Father - Moses was taught sonship and sonship was sealed and rebirthed in his heart. Moses wrote in Psalm 91 how he found refuge under the wing of the Lord - that is the secret place, the meeting place, the place of His presence.

The day we are reborn in spirit, we enter His presence, His secret place where sonship is again rebirthed in us and given full bloom. Sonship flourishes and grows and strengthens and gains power like a mighty flood and like a mighty thunder there in the secret place, there where the Father first created His child, there in His presence where He hears the Blood of His Son Jesus that now covers us.

Sonship gains momentum and grows like a tree when we return as a son and a daughter to that secret place, meaning when we return and walk in the presence of the Lord. For this is how it has always been - the Father teaching His son or daughter, one on one, in His presence, in His way, us covered by His wings and us covered by the Blood.

And as we are true adopted sons and daughters of the Lord, we shall be true disciples. Always following, submitting and obeying.

From the beginning of time ever since Adam and Eve, the Lord showed how to live as a son and daughter and also how to attain it. This is vital for our understanding. The covenants was a way of attainment, yet the Lord's will for how we should live as a son or daughter, epitomized by Jesus, has never changed. His idea of being a Christian has never changed but only the means of attainment.

Yet these covenants in themselves shone bright with the ways of sonship and daughtership, ultimately preparing all mankind, including Israel, to embrace the perfect covenant of grace.

The Blood of Jesus sealed the perfect covenant of Father and Sonship and Daughtership, allowing us to return to the state of Adam and Eve. The entire history of Israel speaks of sonship.

Look at their family structures. Interesting, a man's worth was reckoned to him by who his father and grandfather are. The Jewish people still hold to this belief, citing their worthiness because their lineage can be traced back to Abraham and Adam. Those from the tribe of Judah are proud of their lineage as it is traced back to David. This is why we find all the chronologies in the Bible. It speaks about Sonship and Daughtership.

Similarly, our bloodline can be traced and our forefathers are known. Yet, by the Blood of the Lamb, spiritually, the blood that runs in our veins can only be traced back to the Lord Himself! It is pure, clean and righteous blood! It is blood without a curse or a sickness or anything. It is royal blood. So as sons and daughters our lineage is directly traced back the Father of all heaven.

Look at the relationship between some of the most prominent father and son or father and daughter relationships in the Bible and see God's reaction. We think of Abraham and his sons, Isaac and his sons, David and his sons and so forth.

Throughout the history God has made His intention clear: How to live as that perfect son or daughter. That is what He wants. No rituals. He wants sons and daughters who make Him and His Kingdom proud.

Sonship and Daughtership is a question of being. And this is where the Bride still sadly fails in her understanding. We are called to simply be a son or a daughter. That is Christianity. That is truth. Ultimately, we are not called to be mere Christians, but called to be sons and daughters, thus disciples. And there, in that state of being, lies our strength and security.

In short, a prince in a Kingdom knows he is a prince and acts thus. He is the son of the King. He knows he has security and provision. His Father's Kingdom is his. He knows this and acts in a state of being so, not doubting it nor questioning neither probing the King if this is so. He is a son.

He asks not for these things for he knows it is his. His Father is the King. But what does the son do? As a prince, He upholds the principles, values and morals and ethics of the Kingdom. He is still loyal to the King, His Father. He follows His Father. He obeys Him. Follows Him, serves Him and even fights for Him.

This is what the prodigal son story is all about. A son returning and knowing what is his.

We are sons and daughters. Royalty. By the covenant and by the Blood, His Kingdom is ours. The angels are at our command. All the protection and provision is ours. Seeking the Kingdom is seeking to please the King by upholding all that the Kingdom stands for. Loyalty. Obedience. Serving. Yet we doubt for we walk not as sons and daughters. We are not being a son or daughter, for it should be as normal as breathing and sleeping.

What we do does not define what it means to be a disciple. It is the outflow and the result. Being a a disciple is being a son and daughter, every waking second. It is being that son or daughter in the secret place.

It is being there where the Sprit resides in us and us in the Throne Room. Talking to the Father. Laughing with Him. Walking with Him. Dancing with Him.

Fighting with Him. Relationship. In short - it is what Adam had with the Lord, and so did Moses and the rest. It is not external or theoretical holiness. It is that something internal, eternal and secretive that defines our relationship.

So it comes down to our character, behaviour, attitude, norms, values, priorities, outlooks, perceptions and mind-sets. All internal things. Does this all speak naturally of one being a son or a king? Does it portray the value of the Kingdom? Going to a Sunday service or Bible study has got nothing to do with sonship or daughtership. It is an external ploy. The Father knows who are His. It is those who are and want to be His children in soul and spirit. That is sonship and daughtership. There, in that Secret Place, we are forged, in His presence where logic does not exist.

And there, in His presence, in our sonship and daughtership, we know who we are and act so, thereby caging that inner beast and walking with inner assurance. There our fears and insecurities perish at the hand of the one who made us.

In that perfect walk of being, we know the Father as being true and just and loyal, and we can rest from our labours. Finally, by being and knowing, we trust and have faith. We are His children.

Look at the life of Jesus. Perfectly cared for. Loved. Strengthened. Yet He walked with the Father, and His Kingdom is what he cherishes. If we are true sons and daughters, then our Father and His Kingdom are our delight and soul desire. Sonship and daughtership, thus true disciples, serving and worshipping in spirit and truth. This is what the Lord desires.

Our greatest purpose then in life? To be disciples as adopted sons and daughters.

MODULE 6

CHAPTER 3

M6C3

Be Mentored

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In order to continue growing as a disciple, one needs to be mentored by someone who is more mature in the spirit.

In no way or form does this mean a relationship of blind obedience, but rather having someone who can keep one accountable, who can provide advice, who can pray with the disciple and who can walk the path with the disciple.

After all, this is what true discipleship is all about. It is about making disciples, and then once you have made a disciple, to act as a sort of mentor or spiritual adviser to the one who has been made into a disciple.

The 12 disciples were made into disciples by Jesus, and then followed the Lord for three and a half years, watching every movement and action of Jesus.

It is very dangerous to be a disciple on one's own, without being accountable, or without having any spiritual support. It is true that the Lord is first and foremost our Counsellor, Advisor and spiritual support but we need someone in our lives who can help and aid us on our spiritually journey.

In the Old Testament, for example, you find the priest Jehoiada who served during the reigns of Ahaziah, Athaliah and Joash. Jehoiada became the brother-in-law of King Ahaziah as a result of his marriage with princess Jehosheba. Both Jehosheba and Ahaziah were children of King Jehoram of Judah. Ahaziah died a year after assuming the throne, which was then usurped by his mother Athaliah, who ordered the execution of all members of the royal family.

Jehosheba and Jehoiada rescued Athaliah's one-year-old grandson, Joash, from Athaliah's slaughter. For six years, they hid the sole surviving heir to the throne within Solomon's Temple. Jehoiada was instrumental in the staging of the coup d'état that dethroned and killed Athaliah.

Under Jehoiada's guidance, Baal-worship was renounced and the altar and temple of Baal were destroyed.

Jehoiada is also noteworthy for the national covenant that he made "between him, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the LORD's people" (2 Chronicles 23:16).

What is important is what it says in "2 Chronicles 24:2: Joash did what was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest." So while Jehoiada was priest, mentoring and guiding, the king walked in the ways of the Lord. This is because Joash, even though king, was accountable to the priest.

Therefore, the king did right because Jehoiada acted as a kind of spiritual mentor to the king. And because he allowed himself to be held accountable, he also allowed Jehoiada to keep him on the right path.

Yet, also take note as we read in the same chapter: "15 But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; he was one hundred and thirty years old when he died. 16 And they buried him in the City of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God and His house. 17 Now after the death of Jehoiada the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king. And the king listened to them. 18 Therefore they left the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and served wooden images and idols; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass. 19 Yet He sent prophets to them, to bring them back to the Lord; and they testified against them, but they would not listen. 20 Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, He also has forsaken you.'" 21 So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the Lord. 22 Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but killed his son; and as he died, he said, "The Lord look on it, and repay!"

Once the priest passed away, the people fell into apostasy under the rule of the king. This is a clear sign that we must be careful not trying to be a disciple purely on our strength and wisdom.

We first and foremost need the Lord to guide us at all times, but if we wish to grow in spiritual maturity, we need to have a mentor in our lives. The people fell into apostasy, which at the time was the direct result of the king drifting away from God. And this is simply because the one who had guided the king in the ways of the king had died. Thus, we need someone who is more spiritually mature to help us and guide us on the right path.

You will also find for example a similar relationship where Elijah would mentor Elisha. We read in 1 Kings 19: 19 So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him. 20 And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, “Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you.” And he said to him, “Go back again, for what have I done to you?” 21 So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen’s equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

In the New Testament, you will find Paul would mentor Timothy. Acts 16: Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. 2 He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek.

The pastoral letters to Timothy is well known. We read in 1 Timothy 1: 1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope, 2 To Timothy, a true son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul thus acted as a mentor to Timothy, helping Timothy to become a better disciple. So we read in “1 Timothy 4:12 [Take Heed to Your Ministry] Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity”.

Paul took Timothy under his wing, and the letters as recorded in 1 Timothy and 2 Timothy is evidence of how the apostle would mentor the young disciple.

And then also you will find Barnabas was a kind of mentor to the Apostle Paul. Acts 9: (NKJV): 26 And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. 27 But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

Saul was not trusted by the disciples at Jerusalem (Acts 9:23-26). Running for his life from the Jews at Damascus, He came to Jerusalem. But the church there would not let him join them because they were afraid of him and did not believe he was a true disciple. Barnabas reached out to Saul when no one else would (Acts 9:27-31).

He took a risk and brought Saul to the apostles. He told them how he had seen the Lord in the way, how the Lord had spoken to him, and how he had boldly preached at Damascus in the name of Jesus. The apostles accepted the word of Barnabas, and Saul was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem. Barnabas was already seen as a more mature disciple, and therefore his word was trusted.

It was therefore Barnabas who reached out to this new believer with a past that had been vehemently opposed to Christians. Barnabas acted as the more mature disciple, taking the younger disciple under his wings. The believers at the church in Jerusalem were understandably skeptical, but Barnabas bridged the gap and built relationships not only with Paul himself, but also between Paul and the church family. Barnabas became a mentor for Paul.

Later, in Acts 11, when Barnabas was sent out to check on reports of new believers in other regions, he found a thriving group of believers in Antioch who needed shepherding and a church planted for their support and ministry. Barnabas again reached out to young Paul and asked him to come and assist in this church planting ministry.

Every servant of the Lord thus needs a mentor in his life. They need someone that is older than themselves, not also specifically in years, but definitely in ministry who can be a resource of wisdom, knowledge, and experience.

There is little replacement for years of walking with God and learning along the way. Barnabas wisely invested his years of experience into this young man while he benefited from the energy and enthusiasm of the young, zealous, new believer. In Acts 13, we see God calling this duo of servants out of the church at Antioch to send them to mission work in the regions beyond to reproduce what God had done with them in Antioch.

Barnabas was the ideal mentor because he was an encourager. He was part of the multitude of believers who were of one heart and of one soul (Acts 4:32-35).

There was a spirit of sharing among them, but Barnabas was especially noted for his generosity (Acts 4:36-37). His name was Joses, but he was nicknamed “Barnabas” which means “son of consolation.” Consolation means “the act of emboldening another in believe or course of action, encouragement, exhortation.”

From Barnabas, we learn that if we are going to mentor others, we must be willing to encourage others to and motivate them to serve the Lord especially with the Word of God. It says in “Hebrews 13:22: And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.”

A mentor also sets a good example for others to follow, which is really the crux of discipleship. Paul wrote in “1 Corinthians 11:1: Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ”. The first disciples followed Jesus, who encouraged them but in all things showed them the right way of the Kingdom. This is also why Paul wrote about conduct when speaking about Timothy’s ministry.

Thus, we all need someone to mentor us, but once we are being mentored, we must then disciple others and then become their mentor. This is how true discipleship works.

From Barnabas, we also learn that mentors are willing to trust when others won't, mentors are willing to take risks when others are afraid, and mentors believe when others doubt.

If we are going to mentor and disciple leaders, we must be willing to help those that no one else will help, believe in those that others won't believe in, and take risks on people.

In Acts 15, we also see Paul and Barnabas back in Antioch reporting to the church family about their missionary service while they had been gone. During that time, they were sent to Jerusalem to address concerns about some Jewish believers who had come to Antioch and caused some doubt among the Gentile believers in Antioch.

Once those concerns were properly addressed and settled, not only did the church in Jerusalem send a letter of clarification on the church's position, but they also sent two respected leaders as representatives of the church family to personally affirm their position and attitude toward their Gentile brothers in Christ. Silas, also known as Silvanus, was one of those men, and he remained in Antioch to serve with the church when his traveling companion returned to Jerusalem.

At the end of the chapter, Paul and Silas set out on a mission's trip together. At times, we need people who are similar to us in our age and interests who can also sharpen us in life and in ministry.

Paul and Silas went through a lot together, and they helped each other get through many difficult times in the ministry together. Healthy peer relationships are valuable to everyone, because God made us relational beings. We need to spend time with people who can be a friend to us when life is going fine, so they are already in our life when life goes less than fine. Someone we can call and share our heart with who will not judge us nor condone things that are wrong, but will listen to us and try to encourage us in the right direction.

God did not create us to isolate ourselves and live unto ourselves. He intends for us to be relational and to build meaningful relationships with others. He intends for us to be disciples, and who walk the road being disciple and mentored.

Remember that life and ministry is all about relationships, and we will be accountable to the Lord for our stewardship of those relationships.

MODULE 6

CHAPTER 4

M6C4

May we make
Disciples

LIGHTHOUSE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

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A lot has been talked about strategy and what we need to do in order to see revival once again, thus a people waking up to the reality and the truth of the Lord. We talk about the state of the world, and the state of our cities, families, and marriages. The youth is becoming lost in a haze of carnality. There is a lot of darkness in the world, which begs the question, where is the people who are supposed to shine the light and show the love?

Yes, the Church it seems is absent in a world of chaos and darkness, because so many are not active in declaring the Lord and His Kingdom to a world so broken, so confused and lost. Personally, what the Lord has always placed in my spirit is DISCIPLESHIP. This is what is needed once again for the Church to become alive, to become awake, and thus revived.

You see, we speak a lot about revival, but it first needs to happen in churches. We need to wake up to the reality that churches have not been fulfilling the Great Commission of Matthew 28, which is to make disciples. The problem is, we have a lot of people sitting in churches, but they are not active as disciples, because they have never been discipled or made to understand what it means to be a disciple or how to walk as a disciple. Thus, we have a lot of church members, but hardly disciples of the Lord. We have moved away from the reality of the Book of Acts, which demonstrated how disciples were mentored, and functioned – primarily in small groups as they shared fellowship all the while facing danger and threats.

If we had plenty of disciples, then things will be different. The 12 disciples of the Lord made a massive impact. Why? Because they were disciple and walked as disciples. The disciples in the days of Acts shook systems and beliefs, all because they sought God above all. And they were making disciples of others! Yet the Church is not making much of an impact anymore because there are not enough disciples worshipping in spirit and truth. Thus, the harvest is great but the labourers, thus the disciples, are few.

We need to remember, we are all called to be disciples, which means to follow the Lord. Yes, not to follow man or our own ideas or man-made programmes, but God and God alone. He is the one we need to follow.

And a disciple is someone who is active in the Kingdom of God. Even if we have been called to be a shepherd (pastor), or a prophet, or to feed the hungry, we are all disciples. We are all called to be active in fulfilling the Great Commission. There is no weight in importance when it comes to our calling or mandate, for we are disciples, thus all followers of the one and only true Lord Jesus.

Yet if you were to ask most believers when is the last time they baptized someone in water or Spirit, or when they evangelized, or laid hands on the sick or the oppressed or taught the Word of God, so often you will be told it has hardly happened or rarely. Yet this is the duty of all disciples – to fulfil the Great Commission. Mark 16 also applies to all disciples, for signs of God's power will follow those who seek first His Kingdom and Righteousness.

And so the Word says God's people perish because of a lack of knowledge. And such knowledge pertains also to the ways of the Kingdom, which is about a people following not a religion but who are engaged in a relationship with a living God. And such people are sold out, and consumed by His Presence and Glory.

Remember, before we are even walking in our calling or our mandate, we are all disciples, and before we are disciples, we are adopted sons and daughters of the eternal Kingdom. Yet in churches we forget who we are and what we are supposed to be – disciples as adopted sons and daughters. And from that flows our mandate or calling or ordination by God's hand. We are called to be reborn, led by the Spirit and by the hand of the Almighty, all the while shaking the gates of hell and setting the captives free in the Name of Jesus!

And remember, a disciple has to disciple others. This was the pattern of Jesus. He first disciplined the 12 who then disciplined others and so the entire movement of the Ecclesia was put in motion. It shook the Roman Empire and challenged the wisdom of the Greeks. Why? Because they were disciples, serving a living God, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit and seeking only God's Kingdom.

Yet how many believers are discipling anyone in these days, never mind have been properly disciplined?

And to be a disciple implies being personally mentored, equipped and empowered, all the while being held accountable. We need disciples again full of the Spirit, therefore who have allowed God to take hold of them to the Glory of God.

For this reason so many believers are hardly active in the Kingdom of God on earth. They have not been disciplined as Jesus disciplined the 12, and they are therefore not making any one else a disciple.

This is the duty of all believers – first be disciples and then make disciples. Jesus demonstrated the impact of disciples and how disciples are to operate when He sent out the disciples in Matthew 10 and Luke 10. And so with the aid of the fivefold ministry, which are the ascension gifts of Jesus, the entire Body of Christ moves in the fullness of the knowledge of God and begins to be actively walking in the manifested power of God.

And if this happens, we will see a world flooded with God's light, love and hope. For a disciple cares, serves and helps the needy. A disciple shows the lost the way. A disciples declares the glory of the Lord. A disciple is sold out for the Kingdom, and allows God to receive all the glory.

May we truly begin to make disciples again!