

# HABITS for a HOLY PEOPLE



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## Being and Begetting

True disciples of Jesus will make other disciples. That, after all, is the greater business of the Church of Jesus Christ in the world. One could argue it has always been the 'Father's business.'

Consider the great work of creation in Genesis 1. There, we see God doing two primary things. The first was to create a universe and a world for people to live in, culminating in the making of people after His own image. This He did entirely through His own power and authority.

The second thing he did, after creating the first man and woman, was to co-opt them into His plan to fill the earth with his image-bearing creation. They were to be stewards under Him to rule the earth. They were to pro-create and spread out across the face of the earth. Thus, the first command in the Bible is to 'be fruitful and multiply.' (This is repeated in Genesis 9:1 to Noah and his 3 sons.)

Being and Begetting were thus the two prerequisites for the populating of the earth with people after God's image.

History, of course, is the story of how the devil with human sin and wickedness colluded to frustrate the purpose of God and to deface the image of God in humanity through the abuse of the gift of free-will.

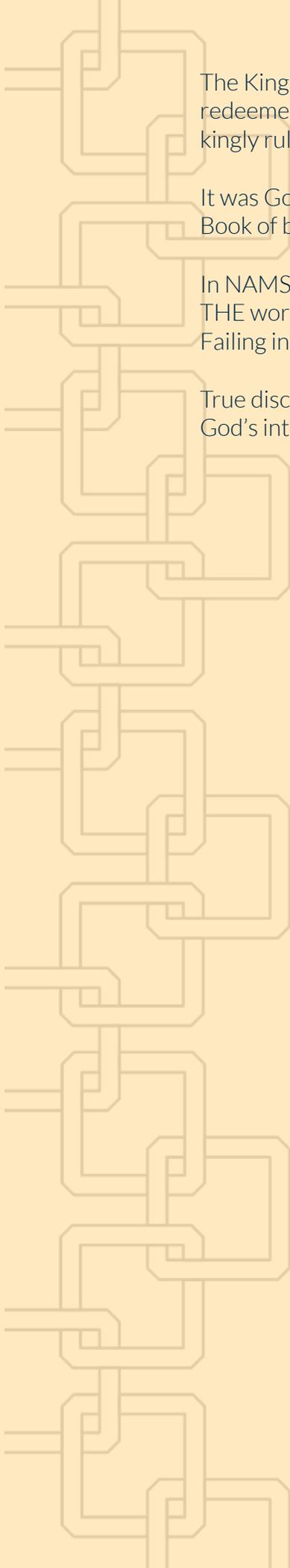
But God was not finished with us – and so He sent His son to bridge the justice and mercy of God by being both a perfect sacrifice and a willing gracious substitute for us. By His blood poured out and His dying breath, He brought about God's new creation and order.

And so we see when the risen Jesus' called together and commissioned His disciples with the final command of Matthew 28:19-20, He calls them anew to the divine pattern of being and begetting. In new covenant/new creation terms, this translates into re-generation and multiplication.

He calls us to trust Him as Savior and follow Him as Lord, and then sends us out on mission to fill the earth with disciples of Jesus.

The finished saving work of the cross is a work of God, by his power and authority.

But the work of taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth is given to us. It requires us to co-operate and work under Him to help others likewise be saved and transformed. We have a part to play once more in God's plan to fill His kingdom with people from all sides and corners of the world.



The Kingdom of God will truly come on earth as it is in heaven when God's redeemed people spread and multiply the knowledge of God's saving grace and kingly rule over all the earth.

It was God's plan all along. He has covenant that it will happen in both halves of his Book of books (Genesis 12:3; Habakkuk 2:14; Matthews 24:14; Revelation 7:9).

In NAMS, we take this Gospel work to be our work. But we believe that it is to be THE work of whole church – in all her diversity, local and global, small and large. Failing in this work, we fail in all other works of God.

True disciples of Jesus will seek to make other disciples. Being and begetting was God's intention all along.

# The Life Cycle of Discipleship

How do we make and multiply disciples? Jesus gave us in the final command a simple 3-step process that involves going to all peoples, baptizing them into the triune God and teaching obedience to all He taught us.

It is a feature of fallen human nature to complicate the simple clear teaching of God.

On the other hand, we cannot afford to be reductionist or simplistic in our approach to being and making disciples.

Here's the thing: discipleship is not just something we *do*, it's also who we *are* and are *becoming* in Christ. It starts from the inside out, so discipleship must never be reduced to a program or a method from the outside in. It is about relationship with Jesus, becoming like Him, through Him, for Him. This is born out in the Gospels.

Matthew 10 for example is extended teaching by Jesus for disciples on mission. In verses 24-25a, Jesus said, 'A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant to be like his master.'

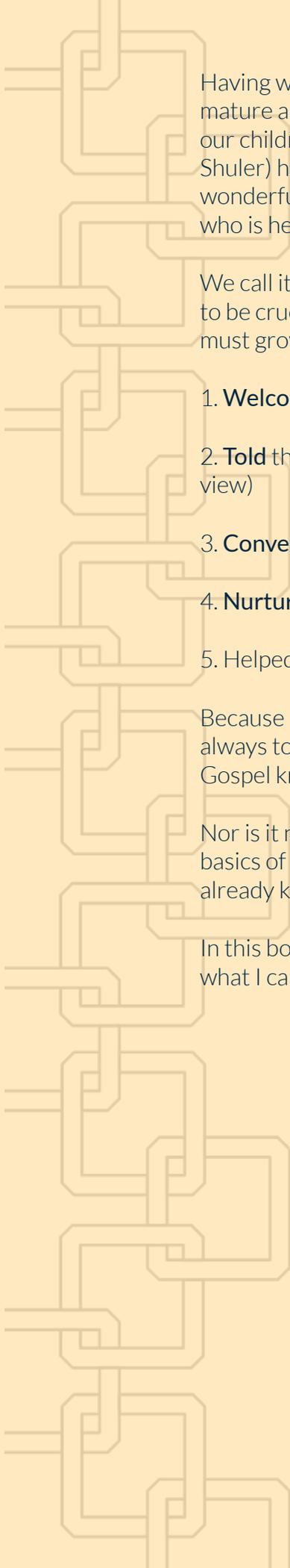
Discipleship is about becoming like our Lord. It is less about mastering a skill as being mastered by the King.

The Greek word that is used of disciple in the New Testament - 'mathetes' (used about 266 times) carries the meaning of a learner or apprentice. Apprentices after the great work of God, to win for himself a people from every tribe and people. In this, we become fellow-workers with God.

The great goal of discipleship is ultimate transformation into Christ-likeness. The pathway of discipleship is transformation into His image through the obedience of faith, empowered and directed by the Holy Spirit so that we abide in Jesus' word, love each other and bear fruit by consistently seeking after the Father's glory and kingdom.

It is no easy work, and it will take a lifetime to learn to follow Jesus. "One does not surrender a life in an instant. That which is lifelong can only be surrendered in a lifetime." (Elizabeth Elliot).

It requires humility (lots of it!) for us to learn to depend and trust in God's will and ways. We need the Holy Spirit to lead, guide and fill us. We need His word to correct, train and encourage us. We need each other to help and hold accountable, and to pray for. We need His forgiveness and faithfulness.



Having written all that, there are discernible steps in the journey of becoming mature and multiplying disciples of Jesus. Like growth-charts that help tell how well our children are growing, we at NAMS (credit NAMS founder Canon Rev. Dr. Jon Shuler) have for years used the following schema to capture the milestones in the wonderful movement of a person from pre-believer to maturing disciple of Jesus who is helping to make other disciples.

We call it the Life-cycle of Discipleship. Our experience has shown these 5 steps to be crucial in making disciples. So we teach that a disciple that is being well made must grow through these 5 steps to maturity in Christ. They must be:

1. **Welcomed** (by another Christian or group of Christians)
2. **Told** the whole **Gospel** (in a way that is intelligible and contextual to their world-view)
3. **Converted** to faith in Jesus Christ
4. **Nurtured** in the basics of the Christian life
5. Helped to make and **multiply** other disciples.

Because it is a cycle (not linear), the process of multiplying disciples returns back always to the start – welcoming (indeed seeking for) non-believers to make the Gospel known to.

Nor is it necessarily always consecutive, i.e. a new disciples being nurtured in the basics of the faith can already be making other disciples, by teaching what he/ she already knows of the Gospel.

In this book, I want to focus on the ‘nurture’ part of the cycle, i.e. the development of what I call holy habits of discipleship.

## Developing Holy Habits - Pray

Discipleship is a life-long journey of becoming like Jesus is every way.

A clear outcome of discipleship is the forming of holy habits which are means of grace by which the Spirit of God brings inner transformation of hearts and minds. These habits must become like well trodden pathways in our walk with Christ.

What are these holy habits and how can we grow in them and at the same time, seek to encourage and share the same to those we are discipling?

Before I continue, let me first provide a disclaimer - the life of faith and these habits are not a matter of religious performances in order to win something from God, but a response to undeserved riches bestowed upon us in Christ. We work, not to be saved, but because we are saved. Our work and holy living follows on completely from what God has done in us – the consequences of the finished work of Christ in saving and redeeming us on the cross.

And because He did, we can do. Consequently, we work out what God works into us – with obedience, diligence and not a little fear of God (as Paul exhorts us in Philippians 2:12,13). We do the works that have been prepared for us to walk in (Ephesians 2:10). Nevertheless, the rhythms and habits of our outward lives can affect our inward lives.

In teaching holy habits in the life of discipleship, the expectation is that their regular practice will help us stay connected or to abide daily with Christ and to walk with one another as God's holy people in mission to a lost world.

I have found it immensely helpful to use the acronym PROMISE to capture the main seven habits that I believe we must practice before and teach those we are discipling to do. And so we will look at briefly each of them in these blogs.

I like the word 'promise' because a promise requires trust and commitment. At baptism and confirmation, we make promises to God to reject the way of the world, the devil and sin, and to submit to Jesus as Lord and Savior. And if the Christian life is to bear fruit in the promises we have made, then it must show forth consistently in the particular things we say and do, to the glory of God.

The first habit that we must nurture in ourselves, and the disciples we make, by teaching and modeling is:

**P – prayer.** What a gift this holy habit is. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we have access by faith into the very presence of God, ushered in as we are by His unmerited grace and favor. Prayer is more than mere talking to God, but real relationship with Him.

It has been said that 'Prayer is like breathing – people who don't are dead!' And like breathing, it needs to be an automatic, regular and moment-by-moment feature of the life of discipleship. How often do we pray, in private and with other believers?

Jesus modeled a life of constant prayer (Mark 1:25, Luke 5:16, Matthew 14:23). He taught that He only did what He saw His Father doing and spoke what He heard His Father saying (John 5:19 & 8:28)

In this, as in the other habits, we have a lot to learn off our master discipler Jesus who showed and taught often on the importance of all aspects of prayer – for example of:

1) prayer as effectual: Mathew 7:7-11; Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:24; John 14:13-14;15:16; 16:23-24

2) prayer as secret and private: Matt. 6:6, Mark 1:35, Matt. 14:23, Luke 5:16, Luke 6:12, Luke 9:18, Luke 22:39-41

3) prayer as communal: Matt. 18:19, Luke 9:28, Matt. 17:1, Mark 9:2, and

4) prayer as intercession for others: John 17:9-26

The model prayer that Jesus left us, the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), teaches us to bring the ingredients of worship, confession, petition and prayers for guidance and protection, as necessary ingredients of our daily conversation with God, recognizing first and foremost that because of Jesus, we can call him 'our father'. Pray is the language of intimacy in God's family.

As a baby grows up, it learns both to listen and to speak. So, we who are born again into God's family, must grow and learn the holy habit of speaking and listening to God daily.

## Developing Holy Habits - Read

The second letter in the acronym PROMISE is 'R' which stands for 'read God's word.'

The famed St Augustine heard a child's voice bid him 'take up and read'. He took up the Bible and read from the book of Romans and was providentially changed.

Today, it is harder than ever for many Christians to take up the word of God and read.

Biblical illiteracy is a modern plague affecting many parts of the global church. In an increasingly narcissistic and experientially driven age, making time to read and/or listen from any book, let alone an ancient book the length of the Bible is a great challenge.

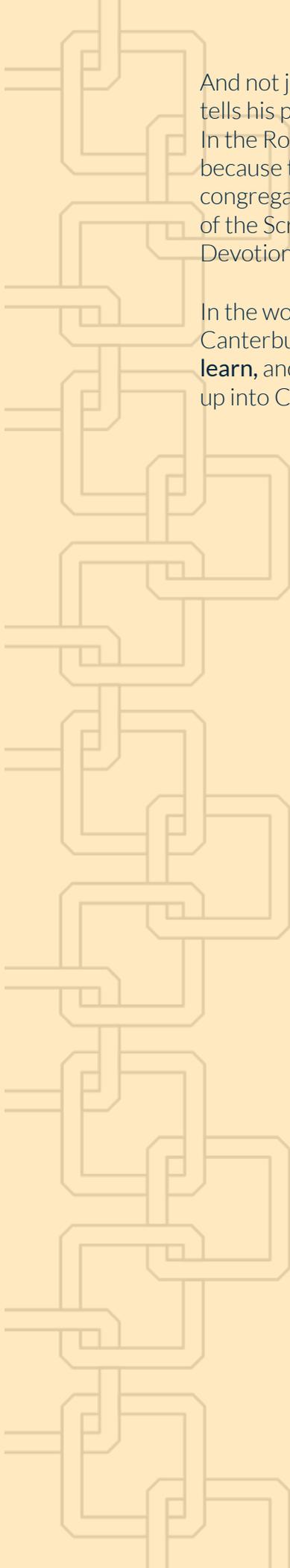
In the push and shove of modern living, time with God assumes a low priority. Harried and hassled as we are by myriad demands and stresses, we are easy prey to escapism, addictions and endless distractions. The ubiquitous devices we carry become bright-screened monsters that stalk, steal and devour our time.

But the faithful disciple of Jesus cannot afford not to read and hear from God's word. No matter how busy they are, people will make time in their lives for the things that are most important or that matter most to them. How much more hearing the very words of God?

We so desperately need to be daily converted to the will and the ways of our Lord our God. Peter tells us to crave milk as newborn babes so that we may grow up in our salvation (1 Peter 2:2). And as we grow up, we find God's word is also the meat and drink of the mature. It is the water that washes away the grime and dirt of unholy living (Ephesians 5:26), the mirror that shows out faults in the light of Jesus' truth and grace (James 1:23).

Paul declared that faith comes by hearing the word of Christ (Romans 10:17) and that all of Scripture is useful to teaching, correcting, discipline and training. (2 Tim 3:16).

And so the obedient disciple of Jesus will be faithful to practice the daily regular habit of private reading and reflecting on God's word. He will teach the same to those he is discipling. There are many bible reading plans, including the daily lectionary readings, that are great tools for helping us in systematically and regularly read God's word. Journal what you read, learn to ask the right questions of the text in context, ask the more mature among us if you have question. But by all means read!



And not just for and by yourself. In 1 Timothy 4:13-15, one of the things Paul tells his protégé Timothy is to ‘devote himself to the public reading of Scripture.’ In the Roman world of Paul’s day, communal reading of the Scriptures took place because there were undoubtedly many illiterate slaves and the less educated in congregations. But all the same, we do well to make the reading and discussion of the Scriptures a common feature of our communal gatherings, small and large. Devotion requires determination, commitment and practice.

In the words of the much-loved prayer of the reformed-minded Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer , may God ‘grant that we may so **hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest**’ all His holy Scripture, old and new. In this, we will grow up into Christ, who is our head, the very Word made life.

## Developing Holy Habits - Obey

The first two words we considered in the acronym 'PROMISE' were **Pray** and **Read**. Today's word is a corollary of the previous one – for you cannot **read** God's word without seeking then to **obey** it.

### **O – Obey**

My late father had green fingers. Growing up, we lived in a 2nd floor apartment with a balcony, and my dad filled it with plants of various kinds that he gently and often tended to. However, among his pots, he once placed a genuine-looking plastic plant complete with colorful flowers and real soil. It was very life-like.

One day, one of my aunts came to visit and looking around the garden, she was very much taken in by the beautiful colors of the artificial flowers. So deceived, she requested of my dad the seeds of the plant in question.

My brothers and I so wished our dad had actually given my dear aunt some plastic seeds!

But filling a garden with lots of wonderfully looking plastic flower plants is the same as acting like a Christian without being one. No matter how life-like, those flowers can neither be fragrant nor their buds fruitful - they are all a mere pretense.

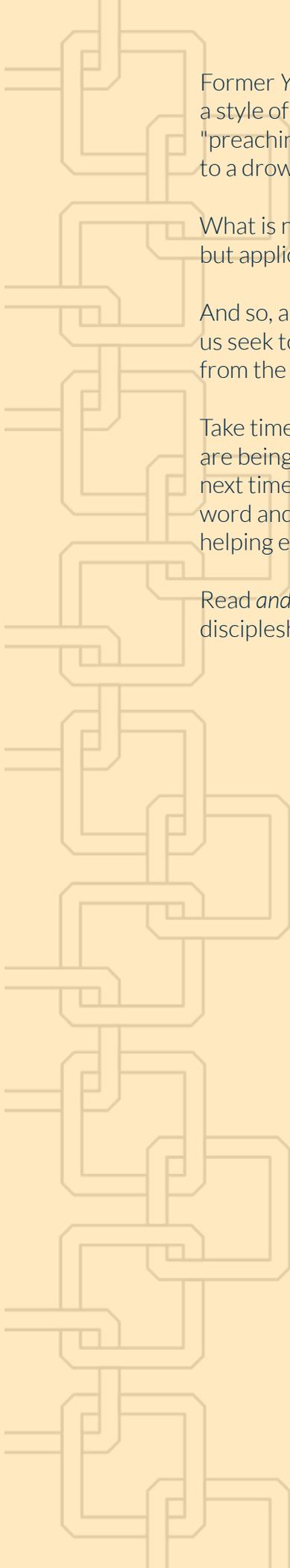
The one thing that distinguishes true discipleship from the false is a readiness to hear and do what God says. Obedience is always God's preferred response of us, more than all the juicy sacrifices the disobedient could bring (1 Samuel 15:22).

'If you love me, then keep my commandments' Jesus stated in John 14:15. Obedience then is the premier test and proof of genuine discipleship and relationship to Jesus (see Luke 6:46-49, Matthew 12:50).

For God's word is more easily discussed than obeyed. This is most acutely a problem for those of us who are the theological descendants of Protestant churches which their rightful emphasis on the Scriptures alone ('Sola Scriptura' or the 'Scriptures Alone' was one of the clarion calls of the Reformers) as the sole rule and plumb line of truth for us.

But one of the dangers of making God's word primal to faith and order is that we have the tendency to put an unwarranted emphasis on abstract creeds rather than rightful deeds. Knowledge about the Scriptures so easily comes to be equated with its practice. Many evangelical Christians today are therefore more apt to speak of faith as a matter of what they believe, know and hold to, as opposed to how they live.

It is no wonder then that many of our churches are filled with people who may know or hear a lot, but do little.



Former *Youth for Christ* USA president Jay Kesler argues that we have inherited a style of preaching in our churches that is information heavy. He observed that "preaching a sermon strong on information but weak on application is like shouting to a drowning person, 'Swim! Swim!' The message is true, but it's not helpful."

What is needed then is not information and explanation that often leads to inaction, but application of God's revelation that leads to transformation in our lives.

And so, as we read God's word, alone and with other disciples, and as we teach it, let us seek to put the emphasis on application and obedience ("what do we need to do from the passage?") as much as we do on information ("what does it say or mean?").

Take time as we share the word, to challenge each other to articulate what actions are being called to take as a result of reading God's word, then ask one another the next time we meet, whether we did them. Pray with one another to be doers of the word and not merely hearers. This is true accountability as disciples – holding and helping each other to do what God says.

Read *and* obey. They are habits worth having and are the proof of bona fide discipleship.

## Developing Holy Habits - Meet

The letter 'M' denotes the necessity of 'meeting' with other believers.

'It is not good for man to be alone.' (Genesis 2:18). This was the first instance in the creation narrative that God said his creation was in any sense lacking. As Jon Bloom argues well, it was not just that Adam being alone was not good for him, it was in some way of mystery, not good for God either. God knew Adam needed human companions to fully enjoy all the glory of God, but that also He was after, not one, but many companions who would live for and before Him. 'One human would not enjoy God as much as many humans together.'

Therefore, when God intervened into the life of an Aramean from Ur of the Chaldeans and called him to become a pilgrim to a land God would show him, Abraham was told that he would be the father of many nations. He started with one man who obeyed, so that he could ultimately have one people in worship (Genesis 12:1-3, Revelation 7:9). God was looking for a people for his own possession, a holy and peculiar nation manifold in language and culture but joined as one around His praise and purpose. From many, we become one new man through God's Spirit in the perfect image of His Son, our Lord Jesus.

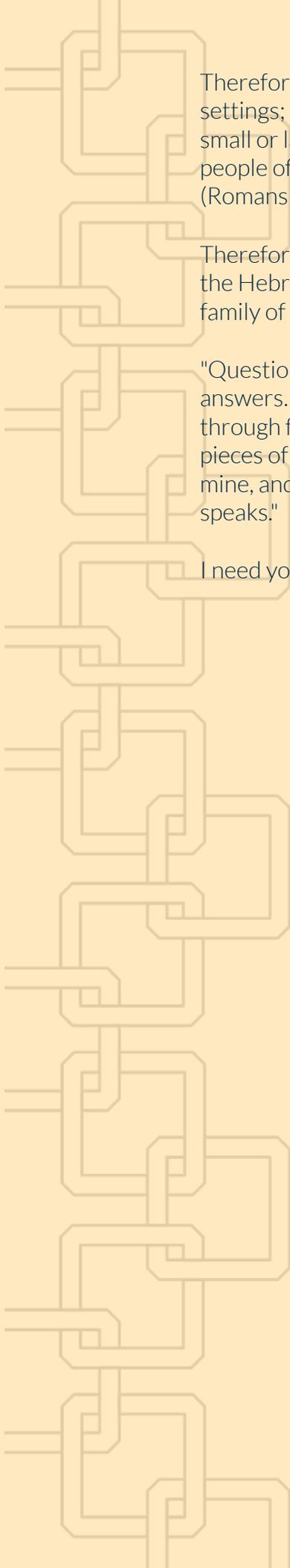
In this light, discipleship is the process of learning to be one in the midst of many by mirroring and seeking the unity in diversity of the Trinitarian God we serve (John 17:21).

We who are born again, are born into the family of God. We are related to one another even as we relate first and foremost to Christ. The Scripture never allows us to privatize our faith to the total exclusion of others. Therefore, meeting with one another must become part of the culture of discipleship.

From the moment a disciple repents of his/her sin and turns in faith to Christ, at least one other disciples must begin to regularly and intentionally help him hear, understand and obey first the basic, then the full teachings of Christ.

We in NAMS have found that the process of discipleship begins when just two or three people meet regularly together to pray and read the Scriptures; with the intention and commitment to obey God's word and bring others to know Him as well.

At the same time, discipleship is larger than the disciple-disciplee relationship or small group. We are part of a bigger church, indeed a world-wide Church, and so meeting with other believers in a larger setting must also be a priority, usually once a week on a Sunday.



Therefore, the early church consisted both of meeting together in homes i.e. small settings; and in public spaces, i.e. larger settings (Acts 2:46, Acts 20:20). Whether small or large, disciples constitute the body of Christ, the bride of Christ and the people of God. Though we are many, we are one body and we belong together (Romans 12:4-5).

Therefore the meeting together of the saints is not to be neglected, as the writer to the Hebrews exhorts in 10:25. We learn, love and grow best in community within the family of faith. Max Lucado waxes lyrical about this:

"Questions can make hermits out of us, driving us into hiding. Yet the cave has no answers. Christ distributes courage through community; he dissipates doubts through fellowship. He never deposits all knowledge in one person but distributes pieces of the jigsaw puzzle to many. When you interlock your understanding with mine, and we share our discoveries, when we mix, mingle, confess and pray, Christ speaks."

I need you as you need me, and together in our meeting, there Jesus will be.

## Developing Holy Habits - Invest

In this series on basic habits every disciple must be taught to live and practice, based on the Acronym **PROMISE**, we look now at the 'I'; which stands for **Invest** or giving to the work of the Kingdom.

*"Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power,  
the glory, the splendor, and the majesty;  
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.  
All things come from you,  
and of your own do we give you."*

This wonderful prayer was said in the Anglican church of my childhood Sunday after Sunday, when the offering was brought to the Lord's Table. It echoes words by King David in 1 Chronicles 29:14 and was a constant reminder that we give back to God what is rightfully His in the first place!

Martin Luther said, 'every Christian needs a conversion of the head, of the heart and of the wallet!' The new disciple in Jesus must soon adopt a new attitude in Christ towards the things we have, own or want. From this, the practice of the giving of our money, resource and time to God must be taught not merely as a matter of duty or due.

Giving is always seen in Scripture as a joyful act of worship where we get to participate in the life and service of God and his mission in the world. Indeed, we are called not just to give from our leftovers, but of our first-fruits, to God.

In the Old Testament, the people of Israel were taught by Moses to give a tenth of everything they owned back to God, because it belonged to Him (see Leviticus 27:30). That tithe was to be in support of the ministry to the Levites who served in the temple (Numbers 18:21) and for the poor, the sojourner, orphans and widows among them (Deuteronomy 14:28-29).

When we come to the New Testament, neither Jesus nor the Apostles gave any command with regards to the tithe.

However, some Christians, including the leaders of NAMS, believe that the 10% tithe of our income (and offerings on top of that) should be the minimum amount we give to the Lord. This we seek to both model and teach to others. It is not a law we are duty-bound to follow but a call to establish healthy habits and standards of giving.

In fact, when we become disciples of Jesus, we gain a new perspective towards money. Jesus certainly challenged us to a new Kingdom-minded attitude towards our possessions and wealth. About 60% of his parables dealt with questions of possessions and money and our attitude towards it.

He would often warn and challenge individuals to be wary of the hold of material possessions and money. In Luke 16:13, he said: "you cannot serve both God and money." In Luke 12:15 (NLT), he warned: "Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own."

He watched a rich, young ruler walk away from discipleship because of his slavery to his wealth (Matthew 19:16-30, though note that Jesus was not saying it was 'impossible' for the rich to enter God's kingdom, but that it was hard. Many are blessed with riches who, seeking God's kingdom first, have used their wealth for godly ends).

Perhaps the most important apostolic teaching on giving towards the work of the kingdom and our local churches can be found in 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9. In his earlier letter in 1 Corinthians 16:2, Paul instructs Christians to set aside money on the first day of the week, according to how much they had or prospered, and to collect it together ready for Paul to take to needy believers in Jerusalem and elsewhere.

Note that in this context of raising funds to support of other Christians, he taught that their giving should be

- 1) **regular** — on the first day of every week (or in today's context when you get your salary),
- 2) **church-wide** — each of them and so all of them were called to it,
- 3) **planned** — the money needed to be set aside, and
- 4) **proportionate** — according to what you earn.

At the end of the day, it is our attitude in giving that matters to God – *how* we give than *how much* we give (Luke 21:1-4).

But we are called, and so we must teach all, to give regularly as a holy habit, out of joy and in faith. 'Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.' (2 Corinthians 9:7).

## Developing Holy Habits - Share

In the last chapter, we considered the 'I' for invest, meaning the giving of our money and resources towards the community of faith we are a part of and for the spread of God's kingdom. This is an essential act of worship that must soon be taught in the life of a new disciple of Jesus. The next habit must likewise be taught early – the letter 'S' stands for **Share**. I am referring specifically to the priority of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with others.

Witnessing is a forgotten command that many Christians today do not give much thought to. We expect those gifted as evangelists and 'professional' Christians workers like pastors and missionaries to be doing the work of making Christ known, while the rest of us are fed, cared for and busy with other ministries of the church. This is such a defective, not to mention unbiblical, view of the witness of the whole Church. We cannot so easily ignore or delegate to a few the evangelistic purpose and responsibility of the whole people of God (1 Peter 2:9; Mark 16:15; 1 Peter 3:15; 2 Corinthians 5:20).

Just prior to his ascension, Jesus instructed the disciples he had trained and commissioned to wait in Jerusalem, till they were clothed in power from on high. After the Holy Spirit empowered them, he told them that they 'will be His witnesses' from Jerusalem where they were, to the uttermost parts of the world (Acts 1:8). 'You will be witnesses' is an imperative statement, not a 'could be' or even 'should be' but a 'shall be', and this was one of the explicit outcomes of the coming of the Holy Spirit.

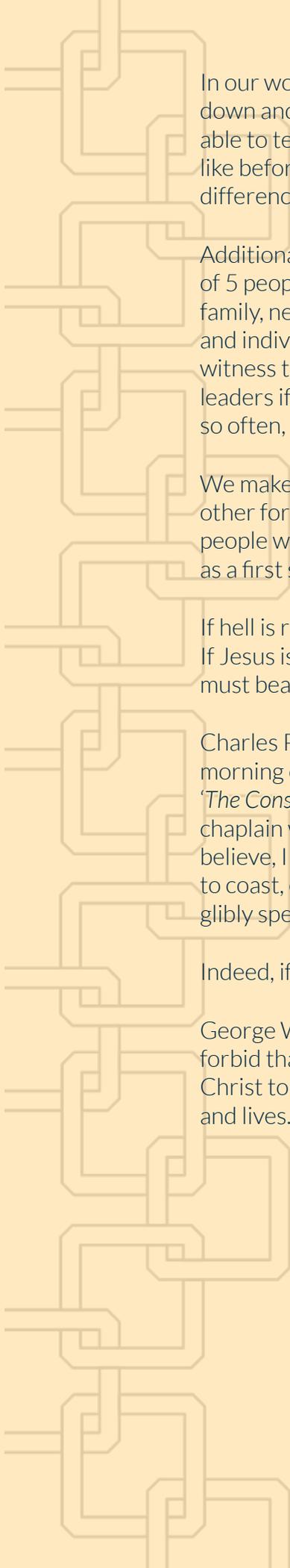
Jesus expected them to be witnesses. He expects us who are the spiritual descendants of the first apostles to do likewise.

We each have our own Jerusalems (those closest to us relationally), our Judeas (those culturally alike to us), our Samarias (those who are geographically near but culturally more distant) and our ends of the earth (those who are geographically and culturally distant to us). No place is to be out of reach of Gospel witness.

What does it mean to 'witness'? A witness is someone who testifies to what he has seen and heard, who is able to recount to friends and strangers or a court of law, his first-hand experience of an incident he observed or participated in.

When a person is born anew by repentance from sin and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, he immediately has a story to tell, of what he now knows, however elementary: that God by his great love and mercy has rescued him from his sin and its eternal consequence of hell and separation.

We need to help new believers to know 1) they are called to be witnesses of their Risen Lord and 2) how to tell their stories.



In our work in Bangkok, Thailand, we have tried to teach those we disciple to write down and memorize their story or testimony of how they came to faith, and to be able to tell it in 3 minutes. Their story would consist of three parts: 1) what life was like before they came to faith in Jesus, 2) how they came to faith in Him, and 3) the difference that has resulted.

Additionally, as part of disciple-making in our groups, we have them make a list of 5 people they know who have not yet become followers of Jesus – whether family, neighbors, colleagues or friends. They then commit to praying as a group and individually for each of the people in their list, asking God for opportunities to witness to them, inviting them to their discipleship group or bringing them to the leaders if they have questions or are interested or responsive to their stories. Every so often, the list is to be updated.

We make it a practice in our disciple-making relationships to regularly ask each other for updates about those on our lists, and to share encouraging testimony of people we've been able to witness to for Christ. In this way, we help disciples witness as a first step to becoming disciple-makers.

If hell is real and lost people without Christ are headed there, we cannot keep silent. If Jesus is Risen Lord, we must tell it home and abroad. If the Gospel is true, then we must bear witness to it.

Charles Peace, the English convict and murderer sentenced to death. On the morning of his execution, on death row, the prison chaplain read to him from a book *'The Consolations of Religion'* about the fires of hell. Peace reportedly silenced the chaplain with these words: 'Sir, if I believed what you and the church of God say you believe, I would walk across England if it were covered with broken glass from coast to coast, even on my hands and knees, just to save one soul from the hell you so glibly speak about!'

Indeed, if today we found the cure to cancer, would you keep it merely to ourselves?

George Whitfield, the great Anglican clergyman and evangelist once said, "God forbid that I should travel with anybody a quarter of an hour without speaking of Christ to them." May God give us the same evangelistic zeal to witness by our words and lives.

# Developing Holy Habits - Exalt and Encourage

The last letter 'E' in the acronym PROMISE stands for a couple of important practices that should characterize the life of every growing disciple. These are 'Exalt God' and 'Encourage each other'.

I have divided them into 2 sections accordingly:

## 1. Exalt God

We were made to worship God. It is perhaps no accident that the longest book in the Bible is the Hebrew hymnbook known as the book of Psalms. Heaven echoes eternally with the praises of worshiping creatures, angels and people. We who are saved are called to praise the One who saved us. We find ultimate meaning for our being in the worship of our Creator, Redeemer and King.

Worship not only fulfills who we are truly, but amazingly, God desires it of us, though he is the all-sufficient One. In John 4:23, Jesus told us that 'the Father is seeking those who will worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.' God is seeking a people who would delight totally in Him.

Jesus uses the imperative in John 4:24 - 'Those who worship God must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.' There is no other ground to stand on before Him who is Holy. We must come to God on His terms, for His sake.

Worship in spirit and truth springs from our spirits and must be done with complete integrity, touching our head and heart where we reach out in praise and adoration to our God. 'To "worship in spirit," is to worship spiritually; to "worship in truth," is to worship truly.' (A.W. Pink).

But worship in Scripture is always more than just songs we sing or acts of praise done before God and for God. It has in view the complete devotion, love and obedience of head, heart, hand and being.

William Temple, one-time Archbishop of Canterbury gives a succinct but superlative definition of true worship:

"To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, and to devote the will to the purpose of God."

So we should sing and dance (if so moved) at church on Sundays, and let us do so heartily and with reverence before God. But let us also teach those we disciple to worship God by a genuine attitude of heart the issues into God-exalting words and actions on say, Monday mornings and Friday nights.

## 2. Encourage each other.

As we make disciples, we are calling and training them not simply to obey Christ in every way, but to seek to follow Him by belonging and participating in Christ's community, the Church. If we are to exalt God by our worship, we are similarly to treat each other with respect and to encourage one another out of love.

The epistolary writings of the Apostles take pains to call us to work for the common good of each other. In Ephesians 4:29, Paul instructs believers to 'let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.'

This is echoed in numerous other letters – see Romans 12:10, 15:2; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11; Hebrews 3:13, 10:25; etc.

This has to be worked at as a regular habit, because loving saints today can quickly be bitter, resentful and quarreling sinners come the morrow. If we don't grow in the grace of our Lord, we can easily slip back into our old default mode of sin and selfishness, refusing to consider others better than us or before us (as Philippians 2:3-4 exhorts).

Therefore, Jesus taught us and spoke about it often – if we do not forgive each other, our heavenly Father would not likewise forgive us (Matthew 6:14,15 and 18:21-35). In like manner, if we claim to love God but hate our brother, we prove to be liars (1 John 4:20).

Exalting God and encouraging each other - two more habits of genuine discipleship. The practice of true worship of God and the practice of genuine love for each other are ultimate consequences of a life surrendered at many and frequent points to the Lordship and Rule of Christ.

In becoming like Jesus in every way through the transforming work of His Spirit and through abiding in His word, we will prove to be the kind of worshippers God desires, and the kind of people others love to be with.

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1. see for example <https://www.biblegateway.com/reading-plans/> and <https://www.biblegateway.com/reading-plans/bcp-daily-office/next>

2. <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/why-we-shouldn-t-neglect-to-meet-together>

3. Ibid.

4. Max Lucado, *Fearless: Imagine Your Life Without Fear* (Thomas Nelson, 2009), p. 144

5. A.W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John - Vol. 1*, e-book accessed at [www.grace-ebooks.com](http://www.grace-ebooks.com), page 209

6. William Temple, *Readings in St John's Gospel, First Series* (London: Macmillan and Company, 1940), pg 68.



# NAMS NETWORK

If you have found this booklet helpful, have more questions or would like more help to become a disciple-making disciple of Jesus Christ, write to us at the following address: [info@namsnetwork.com](mailto:info@namsnetwork.com) or directly to the author and GEO of NAMS, Rev Manik Corea: [manikagcorea@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:manikagcorea@yahoo.co.uk).

This booklet is a compilation of a series of blogs that appeared on our website: [www.namsnetwork.com](http://www.namsnetwork.com). You can subscribe to receive weekly helpful blogs from NAMS leaders by clicking the 'contact' tab of the home page of our website.

## What is NAMS?

**NAMS stands for New Anglican Missionary Society. We are a community of pioneering, global church planters engaged in calling the faithful Church of Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to be obedient to the final command of Jesus (Matthew 28:19-20) by making disciple that make disciples, raising leaders that make disciples and planting churches that make disciples.**

We are headquartered in Pawleys Island, South Carolina, USA. NAMS colleagues and associates are making new disciples and planting new communities of faith on 5 continents and are working in or developing work in 42 nations.

You can get more information about us at our website: [www.namsnetwork.com](http://www.namsnetwork.com) or by writing to us at [info@namsnetwork.com](mailto:info@namsnetwork.com)

Check out our Youtube channel 'NAMS Network' for more disciple-making resources that we have produced to help Christians obey Jesus' final command.

Thank you.  
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