

FOLLOWING JESUS

If any man serve me, let him follow me... (Jn 12:26)

Lesson 2

The Three Keys of True Discipleship

Outline

An Introduction to the Three Keys of Discipleship

The Three Keys of Discipleship

I. Depending

II. Asking... in Faith

A. Clarifying the difference between Key 1: **Depending** and Key 2: **Asking**?

B. Asking honors God in at least four ways...

C. The critical life principle of **ASKING**

III. Sanctification (Separating)

A. What is sanctification?

B. Sanctification, like a coin, has two sides (senses)

1. Positional Sanctification

2. Personal Sanctification

IV. Summary

Thank you for joining us for the final part of Lesson 2, The Three Keys of Discipleship. Key 1 is Depending. Key 2 is Asking. And Key 3 is Sanctification or separating. And we are in the middle of learning about this third key. Sanctification has two senses: Positional and Personal. At salvation God cleanses us, gifts us, and put us into a “position” to serve Him. He makes service possible. This is Positional Sanctification. It is a divine work of God. But we have a part also; we have to carry through with our separation and service. At salvation we don’t go into hibernation, and God doesn’t put us up on a shelf like a fine piece of china or silver. We are to get to work, living out the “work” that God has for us to do. This is Personal Sanctification or separation; it’s our part.

And now, in this last part we pick up with our very practical “to do” list. How do we practically accomplish our personal sanctification? What do we do, and not do?

PART 5

c. Our to-do list!

The first check-off on our personal sanctification “to do” list is...

1) **Get a divorce from the world!** — Carnal Christians can’t be disciples!

- We have to make deliberate life-choices!

We must make deliberate life choices that will separate us from the World system, that is, choices that will keep us from conforming to the way “worldlings” think and live, because these mindsets and lifestyles are toxic and debilitating to the Christian life! And then we have to follow through with those choices.

And so one might honestly ask, “Well, how separated from the World do I need to be?”, and perhaps a good response to that question would be another question, “Well, how separated was Jesus?”

A good question to ask when faced with a suspect decision, is the famous, WWJD: “What Would Jesus Do?” If there is doubt about whether or not you as a born-again child of God ought to be involved in something, then it is wise to refrain!

Paul and Peter label this separating-behavior as becoming *peculiar*.

- **Titus 2:13, 14** *Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; 14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a **peculiar** people, zealous of good works.*

- **I Pet 2:9, 10** *But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a **peculiar** people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

The Hebrew word translated *peculiar* connotes something closely guarded or shut up. In the Old Testament it is also translated *treasure, special, good, and jewels*. The Greek word literally means “an acquisition”, carrying forth the idea of something very special that is to be guarded or preserved.

We become “peculiar”, i.e., a special treasure or acquisition, by living in this World but being separated emotionally, mentally, and physically from its influence! We don’t accomplish this by secluding ourselves in a monastery, or in some religious commune, or even in a local church. Physical seclusion is anathema to the Great Commission. You can’t “Go!” if you are always sequestered in your spiritual safe-house! Jesus prayed for us in this manner, *I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil* (Jn 17:15).]

Then, the second part of getting a divorce from the World is...

- We can’t aid and abet the enemy!

We must “divorce” or separate ourselves from those things, behaviors, and people that aid and abet our enemy Satan. We must—as much as possible—divorce ourselves from the Devil’s World system... and not just in an outward, physical, and legalistic way, but more importantly, in our loves, emotions and desires, i.e., in our MINDS! Separating only physically, but not mentally and emotionally, makes us legalistic hypocrites. God looks inside, at our hearts. We might fool some people, but we won’t fool God.

We must quit giving the Devil strongholds in our minds. We give the Devil strongholds by feeding and arming our sin nature. The most common stronghold sins are addictions. But other strongholds can come through listening to the wrong kinds of music or watching the wrong programming on TV or on the Internet.

In other words, we must cease being spiritual adulterers and adulteresses. God says through James, *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God* (Js 4:4). And John writes, *Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world* (I Jn 2:15).

You see... here’s the deal: we can’t live in both camps. We can’t live with and foster Worldly mindsets, indulge in Worldly behaviors, practices and entertainment... and then be a friend of God at the same time. Personal sanctification is choosing to be on the Lord’s side! Joshua challenged his people, *...choose you this day whom ye will serve...* (Josh 24:15).

Then, the final part of getting a divorce from the World is...

- Decide what to eliminate from, or add to, your life!

How do we determine what we should eliminate from our lives? Well, here is a very practical guide: if the World is doing it or praising it, then the chances are high that we should not be involved. If the World is listening to it or watching it, and then talking about it at work... then the odds are pretty good that we should NOT be. If the World is wearing it, prizing it, and coveting it... then chances are we should be shunning it.

As much as possible we must **guard our minds** from this fallen World’s influences. This means we must zealously guard and judiciously and strictly regulate our intake of the World’s television, radio, movies, videos, books, magazines, and websites. Yes... there are morally neutral programs on TV and radio, and there are morally neutral things to do on the World

Wide Web. But even with these we must ask ourselves this question: “Is this the best use of my limited time on this Earth?” Remember, there was nothing wrong with Martha busying herself in the kitchen to feed Jesus and His disciples, but Mary chose the BEST. She chose to take advantage of hearing the Master teach; she chose spiritual food over physical food.

And please, Please, PLEASE don’t become duped by the World and start justifying your choices with this kind of rationalization:

“Oh, that gratuitous sex scene in that movie doesn’t bother me... I’m mature enough to just ignore it.”

“Oh those scenes containing sadistic violence and vulgar speech don’t phase me; I’m mature. I just ignore them. After all it is such a good movie. It has such a good story and ending!”

Because when we start justifying our indulgences with the “it doesn’t bother me” excuses, we have just admitted that we have become desensitized to sin and our conscience has been numbed! Friends that kind of stuff SHOULD bother us! Immorality, lewdness, and sadistic violence on screen SHOULD bother us. We need to keep our consciences tender so they can quickly respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit. **We must not allow our consciences to become calloused and hardened to sin.** And if they already are... we need to remove those numbing influences and allow it to become sensitive and responsive again.

Again, the World WILL label us *peculiar* (in the sense of strange or radical) when we start living separated lives. But if they do, then we know we are on the right track!

The second check off on our personal sanctification “to do” list is...

2) **Re-affirm our passionate vows to Jesus Christ**

- As just discussed, Step 1 of our part, our duty, in personal sanctification was divorcing ourselves from the World system. Then we must refocus our passions.
- Believers are espoused (engaged) to Christ! Paul told the wayward Corinthians, *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* And when spouses get wayward, they need to re-affirm their vows!

Think of the analogy of an adulterer. He is married to a spouse, but he let another person capture his passions. To reconcile with his spouse he must call it quits with the other woman and refocus his passions upon his spouse. James uses that physical analogy and calls believers who flirt with the world spiritual adulterers and adulteresses (James 4:4). And in James 1:22 he commanded, *But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* So what does James 1:22 have to do with refocusing our passions upon Christ and avoiding spiritual adultery?

Well, the word *doers* is quite interesting. It is from the Greek word *poy-ay-tace*. Does that word remind you of any English words? Perhaps POET? From Strong’s Concordance we discover that *poy-ay-tace* literally means “a performer”, i.e., an actor, and especially a **poet**. God is essentially saying, be “poets of the word”. What special truth is God trying to convey by inspiring James to use this interesting word? I believe God’s intent can be described in one word—**passion!** Let me explain.

- What separates convincing actors and performers from unconvincing actors and performers? It is their genuine passion for their art and for their role... right? And think about it; one of the most-passionate-of-all performers is the poet. Why do Jr. High boys act as though they loathe poetry? It is because poetry can get “touchy-feely” really fast!
- So, what is so emotionally powerful about poetry? Well, a documentary is designed to convey facts but **poetry is designed to convey and evoke emotion**, even if it is humor. Poetry condenses intense feelings into a small package and its performance, if it is to be successful and convincing, must convey those intense feelings.

Therefore, a successful poet is driven and motivated by passion. According to James then, a **doer is defined as a believer who condenses the principles of God's Word into a passionate performance called "life"**. Are we *poy-ay-tace* for God? Are we passionate about God, about pleasing Him, about living separated lives for Him and about honoring Him?

- But did you know that there was another kind of performer mentioned in the New Testament? Jesus identified the Pharisees as actors, literally "stage-players", from the Greek word pronounced *hoop-ok-ree-tace*'. Does that remind you of another English word?

Our KJV translates this word as *hypocrites*. The *hoop-ok-ree-tace*', or stage-player, was simply a role player; he pretended to be something he was not. The matter of passion was not the issue here at all. Jesus' point was that the Pharisees were simply going through the motions. They were only acting out roles, parts, in an obligatory play called Law Keeping.

- So these questions must be asked. Which one of those "performers" are we? Because, we are, by scriptural definition, one or the other.

- Are we the *poy-ay-tace*' (*doers*)—the poets—of God's Word, passionately condensing its principles and practices into a performance called "life"? Are we "espoused" to Jesus and passionately involved with him?

- Or are we the *hoop-ok-ree-tace*', the stage-player whose job it is to perform, and therefore pretending to be a Christian, but then secretly sharing our passions with the World system?

The Christian life must be more than just going through the motions of obligatory service. If our Christian life is not performed with passion, both God and man will see us not as the *poy-ay-tace*' but as the *hoop-ok-ree-tace*'. We are going to have passion for something; that's just how we are built! So let's direct that passion toward Jesus, His Word, His local church, and His service.

- So, we must refocus or redirect our passion! We must divorce ourselves from our old partner of worldliness and then **replace** it with dedication to Christ and the things of Christ. And the "replacement principle" is key to this reaffirmation process.

You have heard the old saying, "Nature abhors a vacuum." Well think about that reality in the realm of our spiritual lives. If we turn the radio and TV OFF, and we don't read Rolling Stone and People magazines anymore, and we don't spend our hard-earned cash in movie theaters being desensitized with sadistic violence, vulgarity, carnality, the occult and horror... then we are going to discover that we now have a lot of time on our hands (in addition to a lot more money with which we can serve the Lord!). That time, which was once being used to fill our minds with the World's lasciviousness, idolatry, carnality, inanity and life-wasting minutia, can now be put into Christian service and devotion, e.g., study of the Word, prayer, family fun, corporate worship, fellowship, service in a local NT church, and benevolent acts!

And we must also be wise when getting involved with hobbies, clubs, and other time-gobbling activities. Now... I didn't say you could not watch TV, play sports, have a hobby, or just relax. If you need to take a nap, then take a nap! Jesus had to sleep; He had to rest! Don't become obsessive-compulsive and drive yourself into ill health or an early grave! Just remember to exercise the principle of "OK vs. Best". Always be asking yourself, "Are my choices leading to the best and most responsible use of my time for God?" You have no doubt heard the World's mantra: **Life is short! Play hard!** Well, as believers with only a very short life to serve our Master, we can take that mantra and change it a bit to read, "**Life is short! Pray hard!**"

The third and final check off on our personal sanctification "to do" list is...

3) **Maintain a Vista-view!**

- In the pioneer days when men were blazing trails through pristine forests, and across vast, seemingly endless prairies, and over range-after-range of rugged mountains, the scout would do his very best to get to a high vantage point so he could pinpoint his desired destination for

that day's travel. He wanted to see the terrain from God's physical vantage point! He wanted to see the "big picture". He needed a "vista-view". And so let's take this scout analogy into the spiritual realm.

A spiritual vista-view is seeing life from God's spiritual vantage point (God's paradigm or mindset or life-view). It is exercising the spiritual mindset, the mindset that realizes that life is not a game or drill, that we only go around once, and that the souls of men and our eternal rewards are in the balance. The "big picture" mindset keeps us on the right track; it keeps us focused upon eternal things, upon the spiritual goal line. It enables us to look past the problems and the obstacles of life that would derail us and keep us from the finish line.

- We must **never** lose sight of the spiritual "big picture" in life, the **spiritual panorama**. I am speaking of always keeping our destiny and the destinies of those around us in the forefront!

You have heard the saying, "I can't see the forest for the trees!" The idea is that we often allow the individual trees—which represent the minutia of life, the problems of life, the personal desires of life, and the pleasures of life—to take our eyes off of the forest, which represents the overall goal or purpose of life. In other words we get so involved in living life, and all of life's details, that we forget what life is all about!

- The Apostle Paul kept his eyes on the finish line and the prize, and so he kept on running; he stayed in the race! He wrote in Phil 3:14, *I press toward the mark (the finish line) for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*. And in I Cor 9:24 we read, *Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain*.

Paul maintained a spiritual vista-view; consequently at the end of his life, Paul could unashamedly say, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day...* (II Tim 4:7, 8).

Jesus kept the big picture in view when He was suffering on the cross. The Hebrews writer records, *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the **joy** that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame...* (Heb 12:2). Jesus looked beyond the suffering and agony, to the joyous end results of his sacrificial work. This enabled Him to endure it, to go through it, with JOY!

- Friends, we must maintain a vista-view; we must always keep the big picture in mind! The World lives in one constant "knee-jerk" reaction to life. They are always "reacting" to the detours and obstacles thrown at them by our sinful, fallen world. Successful believers, on the other hand, keep their eyes on the goal line, they keep their eyes on the prize, and subsequently they don't get lost in the trees, the vines, and the underbrush of life.
- This is so critical because one day you and I will personally stand before the LORD Jesus Christ and we will give an account of OUR disciplo-stewardship of THIS life. And then we will live for all eternity with the level of reward that we earned in this life! What regret we will have if we allow this World to get us tangled up in the trees, the vines, and the underbrush of life!

IV. Summary

- In summary, God's act of redemption places us in a position to serve, i.e., He gives us the potential, to become successful disciples. He equips us with all that we need—the indwelling Holy Spirit for power, the Written Word for guidance, and the local church for protection and edification—in order that we might live a pure and productive (fruitful) Christ-honoring life. This is **Positional Sanctification**.
- But God does not save us to set us on a shelf. As Christian soldiers we are to engage the **internal** enemy of our own unregenerate flesh and mind and the **external** enemies, Satan and his spiritual wolves, who are purveyors of empty religion and heresy. As Paul charged, we are to, *...fight the good fight of faith* (I Tim 6:12). This requires personal initiative and discipline to be SEPARATED people. Paul writes in II Tim 2:4, *...no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; (AND*

WHY?) *that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.* This is **personal** sanctification, also called practical or progressive.

Believers must rise above involvement in and the subsequent contamination from our World System (*kos'-mos*) because it is Satan's system! We live in the world (i.e., on the planet) but we are not to be a part OF that organized system (*kos'-mos*) over which Satan is prince. When we keep ourselves unspotted from the World as commanded by James in v 1:27, we practice personal sanctification. We should strive to maintain doctrinal purity (Jude 3), physical purity (*flee fornication*, I Cor 6:18), and do all things from a motive of love and esteem for Christ (I Cor 13:1, 2), to the end that we glorify His name. Paul wrote, *...whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God* (I Cor 10:31). We do not practice personal sanctification merely to earn rewards and blessings, but we will be rewarded because we do practice sanctification.

- And so, as we finish up this introduction to discipleship—The Three Keys—I want to emphasize our other-side-of-the-coin responsibility in the sanctification process. As Fundamental Baptists we hold fast to the doctrine of salvation by grace, through faith. And so we should! But in our fastidiousness to correctly teach and uphold that salvation is a work of God's grace, and not by any works of righteousness that we can perform, we can sometimes get the idea that we can now just lay back and enjoy the benefits. I'm sorry to break the news, but nothing could be further from the truth! As eternally saved believers God has set us apart as soldiers of the Cross; when we made Jesus our Lord He set us in battle array!

So... are we **DEPENDING** totally upon the Spirit's empowerment? Are we then **ASKING** Christ to empower us, to complete His work through us? And finally, are we **SEPARATING**, i.e., are we maintaining ourselves as vessels of honor, or have we soiled our once-cleansed vessels with the offscourings of this World system?

We must have a mindset of separation, but not just the idea of a separation FROM sin. We must be separated UNTO something, and that "something" is holy or separated living. In order to become *peculiar* people we must **DIVORCE** ourselves from the World, **REAFFIRM our vows** to CHRIST, and then **MAINTAIN A VISTA-VIEW**. We must have the mindset of the Apostle Paul who wrote these words in Phil. 3:13, *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

I don't know where you have been in your spiritual journey or where you are right now. Regardless, let's be like Paul and if we have wasted some years, then let's not look back, but rather make a new commitment to press on for the prize! With Christ, every day can be, and should be, a new start.

So... have we as born again believers committed to the journey of discipleship? Or are we playing at a game called "Christianity"? Because life is not a drill! We get ONE CHANCE at life... and then we will live eternally with the consequences.

Jesus said,
*Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit;
so shall ye be my disciples (Jn 15:8).*

End - Lesson 2

Assignments:

- Memorize John 15:8, *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*
- Listen to two sermons. The first is by Pastor Waterloo and is entitled, *How Are You Separate from the World?* It was taught on November 1, 2009 in the PM service.

<http://ja600207.us.archive.org/4/items/HowAreYouSeparateFromTheWorld/110109Pm.mp3>

The other was delivered by Evangelist Hal Hightower on December 1, 2009 and is entitled, *Whose Side Are You On?*

<http://ia600203.us.archive.org/10/items/WhoseSideAreYouOn/120109Tue.mp3>

The links are provided on Following Jesus on our CBC Mobile App and on the Following Jesus blog.

<http://followingjesusbyfaith.blogspot.com/>

- Throughout the entire Following Jesus course **return to this “The Three Keys” lesson at least once weekly** and study some part of it. It could be meditating on just one principle, or reading a section, or reading through the entire lesson. It could be reciting or memorizing or meditating on some of the scriptures used within this lesson. In short, these principles need to become literally a part of your everyday mindset. Dwell on them! Pray over them! And don't forget to ASK God to bring these truths into your mind and then to help you implement them!