

In Spirit and in Truth: Rooted and Established Freedom Church of Denton

- **Forward to This Next Section: Discipleship and the Move from Milk to Meat**

Having completed the 12 Essentials of New Life in Christ from Acts 2:36-47, we will now turn our attention to a chapter by chapter study of God's Word. The previous lessons were designed to help spoon-feed the new believer the foundational truths of regeneration and short-term discipleship. In this next section, we will take up the task of training the young believer in the skills that he will need to begin to feed himself on a steady diet of solid spiritual food, as he learns to study, meditate, and pray the Word of God, verse by verse, chapter by chapter, and book by book. By this, he will mature in sound doctrine, godly character, and the disciplines of the faith.

God has indeed given competent teachers to the church for the building up the body of Christ, but every believer needs to learn to develop their own study habits, presenting himself to God as one that is approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15). We need to learn the truth that we have already been given everything that pertains to life and godliness, and in an ultimate sense, that we have no need of anyone to teach us anything, because we have an anointing (the Holy Spirit) that abides within, that teaches us all things (1 Jo. 2:27). We cannot live on another man's revelation or wisdom alone. We must appropriate and digest the Word of God for ourselves as maturing disciples. Our personal devotion should be primary and the consultation of others and their resources secondary.

Toward this end, in each lesson, new study, meditation, prayer, and various other discipleship skills will be introduced to help grow the worshiper. We will also introduce different spiritual enrichment goals, outreach goals, and training goals to help provide motivation, accountability, and exercise for the developing believer. Just as physical growth and development depends on routine exercise and resistance training, so does spiritual growth. So, Paul exhorts to discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness (1 Tim. 4:7). Furthermore, just as every great athlete has a personal trainer, every spiritual trainee needs a spiritual trainer. Every Timothy needs a Paul. And every Paul needs a Timothy. By this time, every reader ought to have a Paul in his life, and every reader ought to have identified a Timothy that he can begin to teach and train the things that he has so graciously received. So, may I ask you directly, who is your Paul? Who is your Timothy? Remember, God has called us to bear fruit in our lives!

So, over the course of the remainder of these lessons, what will our curriculum be? Nothing less than the Word of God. Remember the title of this discipleship curriculum – **In Spirit and in Truth**. These are the types of worshipers that God is seeking. Those who worship and serve Him in Spirit and in Truth. Consequently, the books that we have selected to work through over the remaining months have been chosen with great intentionality. We are going to study and meditate through the books of John, Acts, and Romans before turning our

attention to the pastoral epistles of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.

John is a perennial starting point of study for many young believers because of its simple yet sublime presentation and portrait of the source, object, and hope of our great salvation, namely Jesus Christ. It is here that some of the most beautiful discourses of Christ and His person and work are found, not the least being Jesus' preview of the coming Holy Spirit in chapter 14 and His high priestly prayer in chapter 17. Christ's glorification is complete and the advent of the era of the Holy Spirit begins in the next book, the book of Acts. It is here that we see the truths that were revealed in seminal form in the book of John begin to be embodied in the practice, preaching, and processes of the lives of the apostolic fathers and the early apostolic church. And then we see the truths find their final and fullest form in the most majestic treatise that has ever been written in the annals of all literature. This, of course, none other than Paul's "gospel" that is enshrined in his letter to the Romans.

Upon the completion of these three books (John, Acts, Romans), the maturing believer ought to be in a position to begin to truly lead others. Therefore, we will turn our attention at that point to the study of the remaining three epistles that Paul wrote to train his burgeoning leaders, Timothy and Titus. We will employ 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus as our field training manuals for the preparation and training of the growing disciple that they might become "good soldiers" of Jesus Christ, enlisted in the servitude of God's army!

So what are we waiting for? Let's get started!

John 1

Volume 1, Lesson 14

- **In Devotion** (feel free to highlight, underline, and scribble notes. Take your time, working through the following material over the course of the next week...it would be better for you to get through one sentence with understanding than the whole lesson with no understanding!)

*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we have
seen his glory, glory as of the only Son, from the Father, full of
grace and truth
John 1:14*

What a glorious beginning to our meditation through the Word of God! What a glorious introduction in a passage of which academia is not worthy, of which the scientific method cannot deduce, and of which the self-righteous find no interest. This is a passage that brings only the true worshiper to his knees and indeed even prostrate before his God in holy awe and in trembling wonder! Behold the Word made flesh!

Christian discipleship begins with us the same way that it began with Jesus' disciples, in

a revelation of who the Son of God is. This is the proper order, this is the proper start. It continues with the response of obedience, surrender, and self-sacrifice, which in the end is no sacrifice at all. A willingness to leave everything behind to follow the One that came from God and who is God. The One that is uncreated, but created all things. The One that is the greater light, but that is witnessed by the lesser light.

This is the One that is rooted in transcendent history, the One of whom the law and prophets testified. He was and is the fulfillment of the Scriptures, the promises and the prophecies, and the telos (the great end and design) of every letter on every page of the Holy Writ.

And he came that he might be received and welcomed! And there are those who did not, but then there were those who did! And he called them, that they would lay aside their agendas to follow him. True disciples they were. They were born not of the flesh nor of the will of man, but born by the revelation of a Shepherd to his sheep. They knew his voice and they responded and followed. And slowly, day by day, they would burn brighter and brighter, much in the same way that a brand glows as it approximates the flame. And just as the brand begins to take on the character of the flame in its heat and light, the disciples would begin to take on the character, nature, and plan and purpose of Jesus as they learned to spend time with him and to be with him uninterrupted. The transformation would become so complete and irrevocable, that in the case of one, the old name would no longer be useful, but a new name was warranted. No longer would he be called Simon, but henceforth he would be known as Cephas (which means Peter, the rock)!

Have you come to the revelation of the Son of God? Have you received him and welcomed him into your life? Have you left your former ways and received your new identity? Let us receive him right now! Lift up your hands in holy surrender and welcome the Son of God and the Word made flesh into your life! Tell him, Lord, I believe in You and I receive and welcome you into my life! Fill the temple of my body with your very life and presence! In Jesus name!

- **In Meditation**

New Study Skill: Read John 1 at least three times slowly and all the way through. It is good to read your selected passage all the way through without interruption before getting into the details. Before you can truly comprehend the individual trees, you need to understand them in the context of the forest!

Study Skill Review: After you have read the passage through at least three times slowly from beginning to end, you can begin to read the passage again with your S.P.E.C.S. on. Record your observations below: _____

In John 1:1-18 what do we learn about the Word of God? What do we learn of the Word's duration, character, nature, and ministry?_____

Is the Word merely an abstract idea or a person? Cite references?_____

If Scripture presents Jesus as fully God and fully man, which aspect of his nature is emphasized here?_____

Specifically, which verse(s) speak to either the humanity or divinity of the Christ? Why is a right view of the nature of Jesus Christ important? Can you think of other verses that may speak to this importance?_____

What is the significance of understanding Jesus as the Word of God? What is communicated by his name or designation as the Word?_____

Compare and contrast the ministry of Moses and the ministry of Jesus Christ in v.17_____

Read John 1:19-34. How was John the Baptist perceived by the multitude? How did John perceive himself? What purpose did the ministry of John the Baptist serve?_____

What are the similarities/differences between the ministries of John and Jesus and baptisms?_____

What did Jesus need to be baptized by John?_____

What is the significance of the dove lighting on Jesus and what does this whole event mean to the believer?_____

Read John 1:35-51. What are the principles of discipleship that we learn in these verses? What do we learn about being a disciple? The conditions of being a disciple? About making a disciple?_____

In Prayer

Thank you God that you haven't left us in this world alone. Thank you that you have spoken to us grace and truth through the revelation of Jesus Christ, your only Son. Thank you that you invite us to welcome and receive the fullness of who you are into our very person. Thank you that invite us to receive a new identity and to learn what it means to be your disciple. Thank you that you provide everything that we need to live the life that you have called us to through your righteousness, virtue, and power. Help us to live our lives in uninterrupted intimacy with you and your presence and peace! In Jesus name.