

November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012

## Discipleship, the Key to Spiritual Growth

### Part 2

#### *Selected Scripture*

Series: Life on Life Discipleship

#### Introduction:

As a church, it is my desire to lead us to live out the truth of the gospel and the Great Commission. The fundamental reason that Clements exists is to make disciples. God's goal for us is not simply salvation, but that once we are saved that we would become disciples.

#### Food for thought...

A church that is deficient in making disciples is deficient in its fundamental reason for existence. When an organization is careless in its core reason for existence, it doesn't matter if the organization excels at other things.

If Apple is deficient in designing computers, iPADS, and iPHONES, it doesn't matter if they excel in decorating their store.

If Starbucks is deficient in making good tasting coffee, it doesn't matter how cool their cups and signs look.

To be deficient in your core reason for existence is unacceptable.

As the pastor of this great church, I cannot approach the discipleship ministry of this church as merely informational and base it on repentance. To do so would be to devalue true discipleship and deny the power of the gospel.

#### Dietrich Bonhoeffer:

"Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline; communion without confession...cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, and grace without Jesus Christ."

#### **Three fold goal in "Life on Life" discipleship:**

1. To get people into the *Word* of God.
2. To get people into the *Church* of God.
3. To get people into *fellowship* with the people of God.

It's not the truth we know that changes us; it's the truth we obey.

Jeremiah 17:7-8 (NLT) <sup>7</sup> *But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence.* <sup>8</sup> *They are like trees planted along a riverbank, with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit.*

### Definition of discipleship:

Discipleship is the developmental process of the local church that develops spiritually immature Christians into mature saints that, in turn, reproduce themselves into someone else.

- A disciple is a 'student' or 'learner' of the things of God. Discipleship is a process of the local church that brings people from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity. The local church is God's school for making disciples.

## **I. The Meaning of Discipleship**

**Matthew 10:24-25 (NKJV)** <sup>24</sup> *A disciple is not above his teacher (I thank God for my spiritual teachers), nor a servant above his master.* <sup>25</sup> *It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!*

### Jonathan Edwards:

"During my ministry many people made professions of faith in Jesus Christ, but many years later those same people showed no fruit of genuine salvation. There was no change and no transformation in many of these people's lives."

- In response, Edwards wrote his sermon, "Treatise on Religious Affections," to address the issue of deficient discipleship, of authentic faith. In his writing, he coined the phrase, "holy affections" as the distinguishing mark of true discipleship.

### Jonathan Edwards:

"The supreme proof of true conversion is holy affection, zeal for holy things, longing after God, longing after holiness, and desire for purity."

- The defining mark in a Christian's life is a transformed heart. True biblical discipleship brings with it a radical change of tastes and appetites.

### **Ten spiritual disciplines for every leader or teacher:** (Thom Rainer)

1. Bible engagement.
2. Obedience to our God.
3. Self denial.
4. Service and ministry to God and to others.
5. Sharing our faith.
6. Exercising faith in everyday life.
7. Personal stewardship.
8. Hungering and thirsting after God.
9. Building relationships.
10. Unashamed transparency.