

DISCIPLESHIP

LESSON SEVEN: IDENTIFYING MYSELF WITH CHRIST – MY TESTIMONY

INTRODUCTION: The Lord Jesus Christ wants His followers to identify themselves with Him. In medieval times, when kings and their armies lived in castles and wore steel armor, they could be identified by the emblems or symbols on their shields or banners. Today, gangs are identified by colors they wear or by special signals given at certain times.

Followers of Jesus are identified in several ways. But the thing that really identifies us as disciples of Christ is our "testimony" or "witness." When we speak of our testimony, we are talking about the way we act in different situations. The world is constantly looking at us, trying to see if we live according to the things our Divine Teacher taught us during His personal ministry here on earth. If we practice his teachings, then the world can identify us with Him. Otherwise, they will see no resemblance.

Because your friends and relatives who do not know Jesus cannot understand spiritual matters, your testimony is important. 1 CORINTHIANS 2:14 tells us that spiritual matters are just foolishness to unbelievers. They cannot understand spiritual matters because they have no spiritual nature. They have not been born of the Holy Spirit of God. This is where your testimony becomes important. With your testimony, you can demonstrate to the world spiritual matters in a physical and personal way. You can use your physical body to show what you have become spiritually and the difference between knowing and not knowing Jesus. However, if you choose not to live a spiritual, Godly life before the world, they will not be able to see a difference in you and will not understand their need for Jesus in their life.

I. THE ONLY THING YOU HAVE TO OFFER GOD

Remember, you have been bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) and your life no longer belongs to yourself. God does not need money, so what can you give to the one who owns you?

The only thing that you can offer God that has any value is your testimony or witness. You must protect it and nurture it so that you do not lose it. If you lose your good witness, it will be very hard for you to give back to God for all the wonderful things He has done for you. Jesus taught us in MATTHEW 5:13-16 that we are like "salt" and "light" to the world. Jesus has called you to bring some *flavor* into this world and to shine the light of the gospel upon everyone who comes into contact with you. If you do not carry out

this task, what hope do your friends and relatives have in finding salvation?

The believer who has no testimony is like salt that has lost its seasoning power. The Bible says that it no longer has any worth and will be thrown onto the ground and stomped on by men. The disciple with no testimony will soon become the laughing stock of all nonbelievers. Unless he "gets his act together," he will only be a hindrance to the growth of our Lord's kingdom, unless he gets his act together.

II. BAPTISM, TRAINING, AND DISOBEDIENCE

There are several things you can do to strengthen your testimony. In MATTHEW 28:19-20, our Lord gave us three things to do to "build up" our witness and be healthy Christians who can be *identified* with Him. As you study these verses, you will realize that Jesus wants his disciples to be baptized, receive training, and be obedient to Him.

Baptism identifies you with Jesus because it represents His death, burial, and resurrection. ROMANS 6:3-6 explains that when you are baptized, you are showing the world what happened to you when you received Jesus as your Savior. When you accepted Christ, you *died* to sin, were *buried* in His blood, and *arose* to a new life in Him. The world cannot see what happened in your heart, but by way of baptism, you can physically demonstrate to them what happened to you. You must always remember that the world cannot understand anything other than visible, physical, and materialistic things. By being baptized, you can show them that you are serious about your decision to follow Jesus and that it is not a game for you.

After being baptized, you enter a life of continual education which will last until you go to be with the Lord in heaven. You have many things to learn about the Savior and what He expects from you as His disciple. To get the training you need, there is only one place you can go: *the Bible*. The Word of God is our only source of *authorized* information. You must always be sure that what you are taught lines up with its teachings.

There are many institutions within your church where you can learn: Sunday school, home Bible studies, and sermons in addition to your own personal study that you have alone with the Lord. In all of these events, you can learn more about what is expected of you as a disciple. But remember, all of your study must be backed up by the Word of God.

No amount of teaching will be beneficial to your life if you do not practice it. It will do you no good to know about Jesus if you are not going to be obedient to him. You cannot be a true disciple of Jesus if you are not going to follow his teachings.

JAMES 1:22-25 tells us that if we are only going to be *hearers* of the Word, and not "*do-ers*" of the Word, then we are only fooling ourselves. We are not blessed only by knowing what the Bible says. We are

blessed by practicing the principles it teaches.

CONCLUSION: As a disciple of Christ, you must fight to not abuse the freedom you have in Jesus. Because you are saved, you are no longer Condemned as a sinner. You have passed from the death of sin to a life with Jesus. But what you must remember is that thousands of people are living under that condemnation, and it is your responsibility to present the Savior to them. Your salvation does not depend on presenting Jesus to others, but it sure would be a shame to abuse the freedom you have in Christ! GALATIANS 5:13 tells us that we have been called to freedom, but that we must not abuse that freedom by using it as an occasion to sin. That freedom was given to us by Jesus. And it cost Jesus his life!



SPIRITUAL NOTEBOOK

BIBLE STUDY:

1. Titus 2:7-8...In how many things should we be a good example? How should our enemies feel when they cannot find anything to accuse us of? What do these verses have to do with our testimony?

2. Romans 14:8...Who do we (Jesus' disciples) live for? Should we be willing to die for the cause of Christ? Do we have the right to say how we are going to live? Why?

3. 1 Samuel 15:22...Which does God prefer: offerings or obedience? Do you think there are Christians who think they can buy God's favor? Why do you think God prefers obedience?

4. John 13:17...Are we blessed by knowing what God wants us to do, or by doing what God wants us to do? If we know Jesus wants us to be baptized, to prepare ourselves and be obedient, what should we do? Do you think the person who does not do these things will be blessed? Why?

5. REVIEW: Go over your Scripture studies this week and write down what you learned from them.

PRAYER: Write down the person or things for which you prayed for today.

FELLOWSHIP: Write down the name of the believer you had fellowship with and what you did.

WITNESSING: Write down the name of the non-believer you witnessed to and how you did it.

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