



John's Schedule

Subscribe to Living Hope daily devotionals

Please try our daily Living Hope devotional message in both print and audio link. Start your day or add to your day a moment in God's Word!



- Current Broadcast
- Previous Broadcasts
- Podcasts
- All Series
- This Week's Sermon
- All Sermons

Sermons in this series
(click to see details):

- Part: 31 Focus on God
- Part: 30 Grace Energized Men Maintain a Pure Life
- Part: 29 Learning to Follow Jesus
- Part: 28 Following Christ is Living in Him
- Part: 27 Followers of Christ in a Christ-less World
- Part: 19 Grace Energized Men: Healthy Faith vs. Demon Faith
- Part: 18 Vital Signs of Living Faith
- Part: 17 Grace Energized Men: Healthy Faith vs. Unhealthy Faith
- Part: 16 Grace Energized Men: God, Gifts, and God's Building Project
- Part: 15 Grace Energized Men are Built Up by the Truth
- Part: 14 Grace Energized Men are Mended by the Truth
- Part: 13 Grace Energized Men are Grounded in the Truth
- Part: 12 The Biblical Convictions of Grace Energized Men
- Part: 11 Guarding Healthy Faith by Biblical Discipleship
- Part: 10 Guarding Healthy Faith in a Sick World
- Part: 9 Grace-Energized Men Cling to the Promises of God
- Part: 8 Living Wisely in a Foolish World
- Part: 7 Reversing the Erosion of A Reverent Mind
- Part: 6 Renewing a Spirit-Filled Mind
- Part: 5 Getting Serious About God in an Amused World
- Part: 4 Living the Un-intoxicated Life
- Part: 3 Grace Energized Men of Balance in an Obsessive/Compulsive World
- Part: 2 Grace Energized Men—Don't Waste Your Life
- Part: 1 Grace Energized Men in a Sin-Energized World

Guarding Healthy Faith by Biblical Discipleship



Part 11 (080113PM)

[Return to previous Page](#) | [Print](#)

Listen:

(To download [Right-click here](#) and choose "Save As")

[Purchase this single sermon on CD](#) 

We are living through days so much like those when the aged Paul sat to write his young disciple named Titus. His days like ours are increasingly filled with false teachings about God, and false doctrines.

For times just like those in which we live Paul writes, Christ's church is to be filled with...

Men Sound in "The" Faith

Our look at the 4th element of a grace-energized disciple of Christ as described in Titus 2—men who are sound in faith, could never be more timely.

*Titus 2:1-2 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: 2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, **sound in faith**, in love, in patience; NKJV*

And how does Christ's church find men sound in the faith? They are nurtured, and personally disciplined by older men, who are already sound in the faith.

God's discipleship program for men was laid down for Christ's church right from the earliest days. It was focused upon guarding healthy faith—in this crooked and perverse world. There is nothing more timely for us as we enter the end of days, because, as the end of the physical world approaches, so does earth's darkest spiritual hour.

Nothing can more clearly be seen as the marching orders for Christ's church than this discipleship flow. Paul told Titus as he tells us today: each believer needs to be disciplined into becoming a discipler. What is discipleship? As we turn to Colossians 1 we will find what may be the missing key to Biblical discipleship today. Paul explains that...

Discipleship is for All of our Life

As we read Paul's description of the goal of discipleship in [Colossians 1:9-12](#)—let God speak to your heart. Be sure that all of your life is open to His working so that every part may please Him, bear fruit for Him, and produce good works for His glory.

Please look closely as v. 10.

"So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please [Him] in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." Colossians 1:10 (NASB)

Paul considered every area of life to be on the pathway to becoming pleasing to Christ. Discipleship produces a mature Christian disciple, who has been deeply touched by Christ in every aspect of his life. Mature disciples bear fruit and overflow with good works.

Just as Robert Boyd Munger describes in his book, "My Heart Christ's Home"—It is only when Jesus can move through every room of our house that we see our lives become conformed to His likeness. This evening if your spiritual life has stagnated, or if you are longing to grow and just keep hitting brick walls, ask yourself if Christ has all of your life.

How do we know He has all of us?

1. When God is the center of our lives, we live to please Him.

The supreme desire of a believer's life is to please Christ by all the aspects of our lives. When one sector of life is displeasing Him that impacts all we are and do for Him. Look at [1 Thessalonians 4:1](#).

Nothing is off limits to Christ's Supremacy when we understand that it is idolatry to treat anything or anyone with more respect than God.

2. When we please God, we want Him to influence each area of our lives. This is discipleship.

Discipleship must touch all parts of our life to be truly effective. We must daily shine the lamp of God's Word into every corner of our hearts and minds.

The Great Commission thrusts each believer into the calling of helping to develop the believers God places around us. How far into our hearts and lives have we allowed God's Word to penetrate by His Spirit?

Five Misconceptions about Biblical Discipleship

- **Discipleship only can take place when people attend a program at church.**

Although so much wonderful training takes place at church, only a small group can focus on individual changes and growth that is needed. Jesus took the twelve away to be with Him ([Mark 3:14](#)), just as Paul had to go off to the Arabian wilderness, and himself always had a group tagging along. Discipleship is not information, it is lifestyle. Students get just facts, disciples get patterns of obedience and conviction.

No, New Testament Discipleship is a life-long process by which we become servants and friends of our Lord Jesus Christ ([John 15:14,15](#)); and we find others along the way that either lead us closer to God, or whom we lead closer to Him ([Titus 2:1-8](#)).

- **Discipleship just happens over time.**

Unless someone closer to the Lord gets near enough to see how you really are walking through life, no real discipleship can take place. Disciple makers live out the Christian life before those we are nurturing. We show them not just tell them.

New Testament Discipleship is always presented as having stages and taking time. Jesus trained the 12 for a number of years before they were qualified and released by Him to carry on His work; Paul spent years in preparation also ([Galatians 1:15-18](#)) being taught by the Lord and then being in his hometown; finally John even describes three levels of spiritual maturity ([I John 2:13-14](#)).

- **Discipleship is just for baby Christians.**

Paul wanted everyone to follow him as he followed the Lord. We all need to be involved in a life long walk down what is called "The Way" in Acts. Once a disciple, we should always be a disciple.

New Testament Discipleship focuses all believers of all level of spiritual maturity, upon ever deepening obedience to God's Word, not just head knowledge ([John 15:14](#)).

New Testament Discipleship recognizes that one is to be qualified as a teacher to nurture a student; but both must be mutually submitted to one another, both must be on the journey—learning to walk as Jesus walked ([Phil. 3:17](#)).

- **Discipleship is just another program.**

No, discipleship is to become our lifestyle. Every true believer becomes Christ's disciple, and their Christian life is a lifelong calling to learn and live like Him. We are going to need growth and change as long as we live this side of Heaven. New Testament Discipleship can only start with a genuine relationship with God and always grows into a vital relationship with others ([Matthew 22:37-40](#)); discipleship must be both vertical and horizontal ([II Timothy 2:2](#); [Titus 2:1-8](#)).

- **Discipleship is only for some parts of our lives.**

No, Christ wants us to learn His Supremacy over everything from attitudes to appetites; He wants to be seen through both our parenting skills and our handling of finances. Unlike false cults which make your decisions for you, God wants you know how to make your own decisions!

New Testament Discipleship recognizes that learning involves transparency, confidentiality, content, experiences and relationships ([I John 1:7](#)). An effective discipleship process is built upon strong foundational principles taught from the Word ([I Tim. 4:6](#)). This type of life-sharing discipleship creates an environment where no one stands alone, struggles alone, serves alone, develops alone, seeks alone, or grows up alone ([I Cor. 12:12](#)).

So where do we begin?

The Process of Christian Growth ([1 John 2:12-14](#))

[1 John 2:12-14](#) uses the analogy of physical growth to describe three stages of Christian development.

Child	Young	Adult
12) I am writing to you, little children ,	13) I am writing to you, young men , because you have	13) I am writing to you, fathers , because

because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake. 13) I have written to you, children , because you know the Father.	overcome the evil one. 14) I have written to you, young men , because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.	you know Him who has been from the beginning. 14) I have written to you, fathers , because you know Him who has been from the beginning.
Children are unstable and need security.	Young men face special temptations that must be overcome.	Fathers step closer and closer to God in order to find life solutions.
The new Christian learns about what the Christian life is and how to live it.	The young Christians master the fight over the world, Satan and flesh by God's Word.	The mature Christian develops a deep and strong faith to carry out God's work.

From [1 John 2:12-14](#) we know that new Christians (the children) need clarification on their belief in Christ. They get confused about three things: sin, forgiveness and their belonging to God's family. Any training that we give new Christians should include discussion on these topics so that they can grow and be strong.

The young Christian's (literally 'young men') greatest challenge is meeting temptations. They can get so discouraged in life through their failures. They will wonder if they have any chance in successfully battling the evil one. They need to be trained (think disciplined) on how they are already winners and how God's Word helps them to be victors in different areas of their lives. (Paul J. Bucknell)

The Purpose of Training (Ephesians 4:11-14)

God's eternal plan is that all believers serve Him. Both Peter and John ([1 Peter 2:9](#) and [Revelations 1:6](#)) call each of us His 'priests.'

The Reformation went far in teaching about the priesthood of the believers but didn't sufficiently train them or utilize them in service. This is not a criticism, just an observation from history. The plan is already laid out in [Ephesians 4:11-14](#).

Ephesians 4:11-14	Comments	Future Action
<i>4:11 And he gave some [to be] apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;</i>	God has a plan and sends those He has gifted to work His plan	God calls and gifts individuals for each generation; seek Him and find His plan that He has for the rest of your life.
<i>4:12 for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ:</i>	God's plan is that every saint be trained in serving other saints—disciplined into discipler makers.	Leaders are responsible to monitor whether the church is raising up discipler makers, or just listeners.
<i>4:13 till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:</i>	We must keep the focus upon our mission, not the bumps along the way. The goal is "all" equipped to disciple.	People need to see God's plan, and be pointed down a path they can follow.
<i>4:14 that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error.</i>	Without personal trainers alongside believers, the work doesn't get done, believers are weakened by sin, and the church stagnates.	We never know everything, but everyone can know enough truth to walk in the Spirit.

[Ephesians 4:11-14](#) then clearly teaches us that the key to keeping believers from being tossed around in life (4:14) is to train them up (4:11-13). Only when believers are in the flow, and growing from disciples to discipler makers, do they fully become all that God designed them to be.

We must be trained to be trainers in spiritual growth. Sadly, most believers never get beyond the baby stage. But God has asked us to all do our part because...

Training Brings Growth (1 John 2:13-14)

"Intermediate discipleship (young men) is for those who have received basic spiritual training. Most Christians, sadly to say, never get beyond this point. This stage of discipleship

is like adolescence, a temporary stage involving tremendous growth. The phrase 'never grew up' can be aptly used to describe many Christians who never received training at the intermediate stage.

"Perhaps one can call them worldly, but one thing is clear. They face all sorts of unneeded difficulties in life. What difficulties? Worry, bad relationships, bitterness, lack of patience, loneliness, sickness, lust, addictions, poor marriages, problems raising children and tempers are just some of these troubling points. These problems can be deep-rooted in our hearts. Sometimes, they manifest themselves in physical symptoms, and we often seek doctors and psychiatrists for healing. God has a clearer way.

"As the Spirit uses God's Word to bring them to victory over their sins, the Christians begin to grow in faith. They learn how to use God's Word to overcome problems which can then be used to help them in other areas of their lives. And, of course, they can share what they have learned with others. Do others want to hear? Sure, they do. Those who have experienced God's powerful Word at work in their lives share personal testimonies on how the Lord led them from defeat to victory. And so with each victory, they are touched more and more by God's love and find freedom and desire to serve others.

"Most Christians, unfortunately, have no clue that they can overcome these things. God makes them aware of their problems that they might seek Him for answers. But all they hear are things like, "What do you expect? You are human aren't you?" And so, they just accept these problems as normal rather than areas needing breakthrough. Many Christians today do not have the stamina or motives to serve. They are fighting too many problems in their own personal lives or at home to 'take on' anything else at church. Or they just lack the faith to step into service. They feel very insecure about their defeated Christian lives. This is, perhaps, all they know and feel. Who can blame them for lack of commitment?

"This intermediate stage is a process. But the changing point happens when they can see their faith grow by how God has led them into victory over their sins. God, their Savior, is really alive and personal by rescuing them from the influences of sin in their lives.

"Worship for the new Christian is based on forgiveness of sin through Jesus. But the Christian in this stage will find a fuller sense of worship because they are constantly reminded how their loving Lord led them out of their personal sins that brought pain wherever they turned.

"The confusing part is that there are so many areas in our lives that we need to grow in and learn how to apply the power of God's truth to.

The key is to focus on one area at a time and keep pursuing growth in that area by using God's Word.

Once a man or woman has been brought through this stage, they are not easily defeated by the evil one.

Of course, there are temptations as long as we are on earth, but they are of a different nature.

Those that have seen the powerful work of the 'sword of God' (the Word of God) are not easily cowered into a corner.

They have learned to fight the world, their flesh, and the Devil! (Paul J. Bucknell) And now they know enough to bring someone else along as they continue to grow.

That is what every one of us tonight should want to do and to be.

Sound in the faith and discipling another for the glory of God.

Disciples of Christ Can Spot a False Teacher

These men were making a "most wanted" poster for believers—showing who the enemy was of the truth. So how do we spot these false teachers? What do these signposts pointing people in the wrong direction believe and teach? What is the message promoted by Satan's legion of liars?

Often it is not what they say—but what they don't say that identifies them! What do false teachers deny? How do you spot a false teacher? There are clear signs of an apostate or false teacher:

1. THEY DENY CHRIST IS THE ONLY WAY. **1 Timothy 4:1** Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some **will depart from the faith**, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.
2. THEY DENY OUR LIBERTY IN CHRIST. **1 Timothy 4:3** **forbidding to** marry, and **commanding to abstain** from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.
3. THEY DENY DIVINE POWER. **2 Timothy 3:4-5** traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** having a form of godliness **but denying its power**. And from such people turn away!
4. THEY DENY BIBLICAL TRUTH. **2 Timothy 3:8** *Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also* **resist the truth**: *men of corrupt minds, disapproved concerning the faith;*
5. THEY DENY THE NECESSITY OF SOUND DOCTRINE. **2 Timothy 4:3-4** *For the time will come when* **they will not endure sound doctrine**, *but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*
6. THEY DENY THE DEITY OF CHRIST. **2 Peter 2:1** *But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them – bringing swift destruction on themselves. (NIV)*
7. THEY DENY THE REALITY OF CHRIST COMING AGAIN. **2 Peter 3:3-4** *knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."*

8. THEY DENY THE NECESSITY OF PERSONAL HOLINESS. *Jude 18 how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time **who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.***
9. THEY DENY THE NECESSITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. *Jude 19 These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, **not having the Spirit.***

Another element of Barna's report states, "Christians have increasingly been adopting spiritual views that come from Islam, Wicca, secular humanism, the eastern religions and other sources. Because we remain a largely Bible-illiterate society, few are alarmed or even aware of the slide toward syncretism - a belief system that blindly combines beliefs from many different faith perspectives."

Syncretism is Deadly

This direction of syncretism was seen in the Old Testament as the people of Israel were commingled with pagan they mixed parts of the truth of the Bible with false worship of paganism and came out with a blend that disgusted God. Diluting God's Word and adding error is dangerous and to be avoided at all costs.

Look with me at [Psalm 106:34-36](#).

There has always been the same struggle within the church. A hundred years ago it was seen in what was called liberalism, today it is seen in what is being called the emergent church movement (ECM). Both were syncretistic, both end of denying the truth by mixing it with error. The three biggest dangers of the EC are:

Danger #1: The Cross

A first area of concern with the ECM is the cross. Here we ask questions like "What is the meaning of the atonement?" And "Did Jesus actually pay for or purchase anything on the cross?"

[Matthew 20:28](#)? "...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." Jesus knew why he had to die; and we cannot read the New Testament and conclude otherwise.

But some ECM writers teach that the cross simply serves as a profound demonstration of the love of God. On the cross, Christ "absorbed all the pain, all the suffering caused by the breakdown in our relationship with God and in doing so demonstrated the lengths to which a God who is love will go to restore it." (Chalke)

The doctrine of penal substitution--the understanding that, on the cross, Christ died in our place, bearing the penalty for our sin--is thus rejected.

One of the most visible leaders and ECM writers says, "The Christian faith should become a welcome friend to other religions of the world, and not a threat." He goes on to write that not all people need to be Christians to follow Jesus. Some may be able to be "Buddhist or Hindu followers of Jesus." (Brian McLaren)

But a true disciple of Jesus Christ who knows God's Word sees the reality of sin, and the necessity of personal salvation, and doesn't lose the simplicity of the gospel which is in Christ; and all that is rooted in a proper, high view of Holy Scripture. When the Bible is lost, and when sin and salvation through Christ is no longer important, that there becomes a loss of witness, a loss of conviction--and a shipwrecked faith.

Danger #2: The Authority of the Bible

ECM error centers upon a rejection of the absolute authority of the Bible. Here we ask questions like "Is the Bible inerrant?" And "In what sense the Bible is God's communication to us?"

Examples of this total loss of holding onto God's Word as authoritative can be seen in some of the ECM's leaders irreverence which includes referring to God as a chick, and as a Cosmic Child Abuser (describing the crucifixion of the Son at the Father's will). The negation of the authority of God's Word causes ECM writers to question God's sovereignty over and knowledge of the future, as well as a denial of the substitutionary atonement at the cross, a denial of the sin of homosexuality, and a denial of [hell](#).

Danger #3: The Nature of Truth

A third concern with the ECM is concerning the very nature of truth. Here we ask questions like "What is truth?" and "Does Christianity give us an accurate picture of the way the world really is, and can we know it?"

Carson explains that the fundamental issue is epistemology--i.e., how we know things or think we know things. EC leaders say that we can't be dogmatic, authoritative, or even sure about doctrines that have always been believed by evangelicals throughout all of Church History.

Should we Reject Everything Coming Out of the ECM?

Our answer is a resounding no. Indeed, we should share their dissatisfaction with certain abuses or deficiencies within Evangelicalism. We should resonate with their criticisms of consumerism, their emphasis on an authentic lived-out faith, a move toward decentralized leadership within the church, and with what many consider the heartbeat of the movement, their passion to be missional.

"The church should stop mimicking the surrounding culture and become an alternative community, with a different set of beliefs, values and behaviors.

Ministers would no longer engage in marketing; churches would no longer place primary emphasis on programs to serve members.

The traditional ways of evaluating 'successful churches' – bigger buildings, more people, bigger budgets, larger ministerial staff, new and more programs to serve members – would be rejected.

New yardsticks would be the norm: To what extent is our church a 'sent' community in which each believer is reaching out to his community?

To what extent is our church impacting the community with a Christian message that challenges the values of our secular society?" [1][1]

One writer describes the missional church "as a body of people sent on a mission who gather in community for worship, encouragement, and teaching from the Word that supplements what they are feeding themselves throughout the week." [2][2]

Detached from Truth—People Shipwreck

So how do we stay safe as these dark days cast their shadow across society, media, culture, and every other realm of daily life? Only one way—check the anchor of your soul.

When the *world darkens*, *culture crumbles*, and *truth dies*—***you know the end of the world is near.***

It is then that Jesus warned that the church would fill up with fruitless counterfeits.

When that happens it is time for believers to brace for the storm that we know is coming. The waves will only increase. Spiritual darkness will only deepen as deceptions grow.

These are days when we who know and love the Lord Jesus should reach into our hearts and grab onto our anchor line and feel it strongly holding us securely—tugging us homeward.

Jesus is our Anchor

Hebrews 6:11-12, 18-20 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance (plerophoreo – to overflowing wear or hold or possess or have) of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have **fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.** 19 **This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,** 20 where **the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.** NKJV

[1][1] In an article titled, "The 'Missional Church': A Model for Canadian Churches?" David Horrox writes,

[2][2] Dan Kimball in "The Emerging Church" (Zondervan, 2003).

[Send this page to a friend](#)

Site hosting by FamilyNet | Site development by Brent Riggs

[Home](#) | [About Us](#) | [We Believe](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Tulsa Bible Church](#) | [Grace To You](#)
© 2007 - Discover the Book Ministries. All Rights Reserved.

Comments, suggestions, concerns about this page?
[Contact the Web Manager](#)