

# **INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLESHIP**

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## INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLINES

### Learning and Experiencing The Essentials of the Christian Life

#### Introduction

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## PURPOSE OF THE MANUAL

The life of a Christian is one of learning and growing. Those who have Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord begin a new life, comprised of new priorities, values, and goals. As we find out who we are as Christians, we also find out how we are to live. *The purpose of this manual is to provide an understanding of the basics of Christian living.* These areas are the heart of the abundant joyful life that God wants us to have. As we understand and apply them to our everyday situations, we will mature first in our relationship with God, and second in our relationship and outlook toward people and the world around us.

To aid in the process of understanding the basics of the Christian life, the manual is divided into five parts:

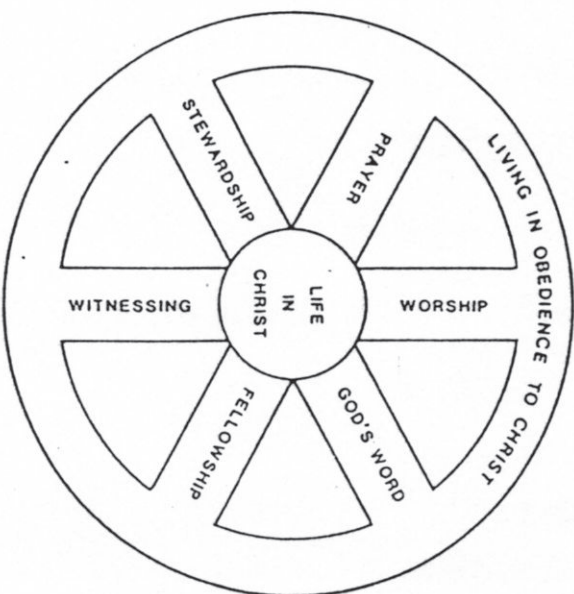
- I. The New Life in Christ
- II. The Inner Disciplines of the Disciple
- III. The Outer Disciplines of the Disciple
- IV. Living in Obedience to Christ
- V. What now? - The Continuing Disciple

Parts I - IV can be illustrated by the wheel diagram. The wheel has three basic components: The hub, the spokes, and the rim. Note that the wheel is perfectly round and balanced. All the weight of the wheel is on the hub, and all the power for the wheel comes from the hub. Just so, the weight of the believers life is on Christ and the power for that life comes from Christ. *The key to living a successful and meaningful Christian life is to allow Christ to be the Center and Lord of all we do.* With Christ in control, life has direction and power.

The spokes of the wheel provide contact between the rim and the hub. All spokes need to be present to provide

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balance for the wheel and support to the rim. So are the Inner Disciplines (Word, Prayer, Worship) and Outer Disciplines (Fellowship, Witnessing, Stewardship) in the Christians life. *Each discipline is a vital part of the Christian experience.* With all present in the believer's life, there will be balance and effectiveness. With missing or weak spokes, the Christians life becomes distorted and will not produce the proper results. The balanced life should be the desire of every Christian.



The rim represents the life of obedience to God. The rim is the part of the wheel that comes in contact with the surface of the ground. It is where the "rubber meets the road". *The bottom line of the Christian life is living out that which we know and are called to do. As we obey we demonstrate our love to God.* It is important to recognize that we should be motivated to serve and obey God because we love Him and owe our lives to Him.

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Part V relates to the wheel as a whole and how we are to continue to grow and mature in all the areas that are a part of the wheel.

### IMPORTANCE OF THE BIBLE

As new believers or mature saints, the input of God's Word must be incorporated into our daily lives. This manual gives the opportunity to receive input from the Bible in four different ways:

1. Studying the scriptures contained in each chapter.
2. Reading the Bible from the weekly assignments.
3. Memorizing the verses for each chapter.
4. Hearing the Sunday sermon each week.

We should also be meditating on that which we have studied, read, memorized, and heard (these principles will be talked about in more detail in Chapter 4 on God's Word). This manual will help develop the habits of getting input from God's Word in these areas that should be carried on for the rest of our lives.

Finally, this manual is to be used in conjunction with the Bible. It is meant to act only as a guide to see the truths found in the Bible. God's Word has to be our primary source of truth and knowledge. Man's wisdom, tradition, or cultural bias should not be confused with Biblical truth.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, the faith and correcting error, for resetting the direction of man's life, and training him in good living. The Scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God, and fit him fully for all branches of his work" (2 Timothy 3:16, 17 Phillips).

It is important for us as growing Christians to use the Bible as our key to unfolding the secrets of the successful and balanced Christian life. "The unfolding of Thy words gives light; it gives understanding..." (Psalm 119:130 NASB).

Becoming a disciple of Christ is a learning process. Through God's help and our understanding of the Bible, our maturity as a disciple will be greatly enhanced.

## BEFORE YOU START

This manual has been designed to help anyone who wants to grow as a disciple of Christ. The manual will focus on several basic concepts of the Christian life. These are to be learned, but also applied during the course of this manual.

Your discipler or the person who will lead you through this manual will assist you in learning and applying the Biblical life style as a disciple. But the key to getting the most out of this manual is your commitment of being:

**Available:** taking time during the week to work on the assignments and meet with your discipler.

**Faithful:** finishing assignments on time and living up to your commitments to meet with your discipler.

**Teachable:** being open to biblical concepts and ideas that are expressed in this manual and by your discipler.

**Accountable:** allowing your discipler to help you develop Christian character. This means you should be open and honest with them regarding how you are doing in being Available, Faithful, and Teachable.

If you are committed to working through this manual with the AFTA concept in mind, much can be gained in your relationship with God and your growth as as a disciple.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CHAPTERS

Each chapter has several distinct parts. The following is a brief explanation to help you understand how to work

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through each part and gain the most from the chapter.

## ASSIGNMENT PAGE

The assignment page is designed to help you incorporate the different ways we can put God's Word into our lives.

The reading assignments are small portions of scripture that are to be read one chapter each day. Though the ideas found in the scripture reading may not completely relate to the chapter content, the purpose for them is to help you build a habit of reading the Bible on a regular basis.

Going through the material in the chapter will help you study God's Word for yourself and see how it is relevant to you.

The memory verses directly relate to the ideas of the chapter. They are key verses to meditate on and use. Some chapters have an additional verse that should be memorized if scripture memory is easy for you, or if your discipler thinks that you have the ability to do so.

Taking notes during the Sunday sermon will help you to be more effective in hearing to God's Word as the pastor preaches. You should discuss what you learned from the pastors' sermon with your discipler.

Use the "Daily Progress Chart" to mark when you worked on the different areas of the assignment page.

## THE BODY OF THE CHAPTER

The study of the material in each chapter should be completed during the week between your meetings with your discipler. Read the material and study the scriptures

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carefully. If problems arise or questions come up regarding the material in the chapter, it may be necessary to meet with your discipler more than once to work through the material. It is more important that you have an understanding of the existing chapter's concepts than to begin a new chapter.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS

At the end of each chapter there is a section called "Thought Questions". Pay special attention to these questions, because they summarize the main points of the chapter. They are designed to promote discussion during the meeting with your discipler.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The books listed at the end of each chapter may provide you with supplementary information regarding the area of discipleship discussed in the chapter. These books contain excellent insights and are of great value if you want to learn more or have questions about an area of discipleship.

The church tape library may also be of great value to you. It contains a wide variety of sermons and messages that also relate to the areas of discipleship covered in this manual. You may pick up a tape catalog to assist you in finding any tape you need.