

Maturing Toward Wholeness in the Inner Life

Chapter Two

Discipleship

Becoming Able to Live the Way Jesus Said Was Best

1 – Wholeness in the inner life is Christlikeness in the inner life. It develops as we learn to allow Jesus to teach us how to live.

2 – God did not give commandments because he enjoys making us do things we don't want to do. They inform us how human life is designed to work.

3 – Jesus: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another (John 13:34). Anger, hatred, envy, contempt—these don't fulfill us. Love does!

4 – Jesus and the apostles spoke of a life lived in personal relationship with God, characterized by fulfillment, joy, meaning, and wholeness.

5 – The life Jesus offers us is one lived each moment in God's Presence. There he teaches us how to actually do what he said was best.

6 – As we allow Jesus to teach us how to do life, moral victory (not perfection) develops. We learn how to respond well to whatever life brings.

7 – Many seem to feel wholeness in life is unattainable. Even ones who self-identify as Christians often abandon hope of personal victory. Why?

8 – Having been created by God to be like him and to live in his Presence, each of us made the disastrous decision to go away from him.

9 – We pushed back from God and sought a life of our own making. We went our own way. We thought we knew better how to find pleasure—happiness.

10 – My choice to break with God resulted not only in guilt, but also in extensive damage to my thoughts, emotions, will, body, and relationships.

11 – My inner life has been deeply shaped by a world of wrongness—dysfunction both within me and in those around me. It now must be re-formed.

12 – Re-forming the inner life corresponds to the biblical processes of salvation and sanctification. It takes place in apprenticeship to Jesus.

13 – Jesus came to restore to us the life God originally created for us. This is salvation in its fullest sense. It involves four processes.

14 – New life from God grows in me as

- guilt is removed
- impurity is cleansed
- inner wounds are healed

- each part of my being is re-made.

15 – Parts of me needing to be re-made:

- heart (will)
- soul
- mind (thoughts, emotions)
- strength (body)
- relationships (neighbor).

16 – Jesus outlined the parts/components of a human person in responding to the scribe who asked which commandment was most important (Mark 12:28-31).

17 – As healing, and then newness, invade my heart, soul, mind, body and relationships, I become able from the heart to love God and my neighbor.

18 – These terms all refer in different ways to the same reality

- salvation (deliverance)
- re-formation
- transformation
- restoration.

19 – In the Bible salvation means deliverance. Delivered from what? Guilt? Yes! Is that all? No! Also from bondage to the practice of sin (Romans 6:6).

20 – Israel's salvation mirrors the Christian life. God

- delivered them from slavery
- formed them in the desert
- gave them the good land.

21 – Christ

- by his cross saves us from all sin's effects
- in discipleship trains us how to access this gift
- by grace gives us a new life.

22 – This all comes to us by grace. We can never earn it, but we must choose it. Faith is a daily condition we choose, expressed by our actions.

23 – God is a gentleman. He does not force his will on us. He respects our decisions. He offers us newness of life—then awaits our response.

24 – Being remade into Christlikeness is a lifelong process. It has a beginning. It may have spiritual highs. But they cannot bypass the process.

25 – I am remade into a new person as I allow Jesus to teach me how to live. He is the wisest Teacher in all of history—no one else comes close.

26 – I gradually learn to rely on Jesus. His cross removes my guilt. His Presence cleanses me. His teachings instruct me. His Spirit re-forms me.

27 – My will must be fully engaged. I must choose God’s way each moment. The Holy Spirit will not do this “to” me or “for” me—only “with” me.

28 – I must distinguish “will” (choice) from “will-power” (trying harder). Willpower cannot change me. It is self-reliance. Its end is defeat.

29 – I cannot just decide by willpower to run a marathon. But I can choose to train, and in time become the kind of person who can run one.

30 – The Christian life is about the person I am becoming. I must choose it, but I don’t do it. The Spirit does it in apprenticeship to Jesus.

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