

# *The Eternal Purpose of God*

*and how to achieve it*





***The Eternal  
Purpose of  
God***

*and how to achieve it*

*Series Council of God*

Framingham, 2017

**1<sup>st</sup> Edition, September 2017**  
**Church in Framingham**

**Translated from original:**  
**O Propósito Eterno de Deus**  
©2013 *by* Church in Salvador.

**10<sup>th</sup> Edition, December 2013**

**Cover**

Alana Martins e Roberto Carrilho

**Graphic Design**

Alana Gonçalves de Carvalho Martins

**Desktop Publishing**

Acesso Tecnologia

**Review**

Valdice Monção 2012

**Translation**

Marcus Giotto

Giotto Copywriting

The content of this work may be quoted or copied without written permission of the brothers in Framingham, unless the reference is provided. It may not, however, be used for commercial purposes.



# Summary

Introduction	6
How should we teach in the Church	7
How to work with this material	9

## Part 1 | **The Eternal Purpose of God**

Lesson 1	God's purpose of creating man	13
Lesson 2	What happened when man sinned?	17
Lesson 3	What did God do to accomplish His purpose?	20
Lesson 4	What is the purpose of God today?	23
Lesson 5	We must be like Jesus	28

## Part 2 | **The Service of the Church to Fulfill God's Purpose**

Lesson 6	Who are the priests?	35
Lesson 7	Who edifies the Church?	39
Lesson 8	The ministry of witnesses (part 1)	44
Lesson 9	The ministry of witnesses (part 2)	49
Lesson 10	The ministry of joints and ligaments	54
Lesson 11	Joints and ligaments of discipleship (part 1)	58
Lesson 12	Joints and ligaments of discipleship (part 2)	62
Lesson 13	Joints and ligaments of companionship (part 1)	67
Lesson 14	Joints and ligaments of companionship (part 2)	72
Lesson 15	The need to bear fruit	76
Lesson 16	The work in homes	80

# Introduction

It has been a great pleasure to see that the first booklet, *The Elementary Principles*, has been of real usefulness, not only for the brothers in Salvador, as well as for the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ worldwide.

We also hope that this booklet, *The Eternal Purpose of God and How to Achieve it*, now at the disposal of the brothers, will cooperate with the edification of those who seek to understand the heart of the Father and carry out his will.

We want to honor our brother Ivan Baker from Buenos Aires, Argentina. His patience and love were a clear instrument of God by cooperating with the Lord in teaching the truths contained herein.

Everything we do will only have eternal value as long as it cooperates with God's purpose. We pray that our precious Lord Jesus may be glorified in the lives of those who, leaving the present century and denying traditions of men, became prisoners of the holy vocation: to participate and cooperate with the purpose of the Lord.

The basic content of the first booklet is the door to the Kingdom of God. This second booklet focuses on, basically, the objective for those who are in the Kingdom. All the booklets that follow will treat the various aspects of the path to reach the objective.

Salvador, October 1991

*Presbytery in Salvador*

# How should we teach in the Church

The disciples who both learn and teach must be prepared to handle simple studies. Jesus said: “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes” (Matthew 11:25). The church does not need an academic and intellectualized teaching (1 Corinthians 1:18-31; 2:1-16) to please the Lord.

It is good to remember the example of the first church in Jerusalem. That church is the model for everything throughout the ages. The brothers from that time were simple, and many of them did not know how to read nor write. They did not have a printing press, nor paper. They also did not have Bibles. However, the church was holy and glorious; a model for us.

Looking at the way they lived, we noticed that the apostles used the method of constant repetition (catechism). Those who learned could assimilate and keep the Word in their minds and hearts. They were not looking for novelties nor wanted to invent things. The important things that they taught were repeated multiple times until everyone had learned them well (Philippians 3:1, 2 Peter 1:12-15).

The apostles were well aware of the need to convey the entire counsel of God and not mere biblical or theological studies. Each disciple had to be shaped into the image of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:26-27; Philippians 4:9; 2 Timothy 2:2). The teaching of the apostles pointed essentially to three things:

- Revealing Christ: His person, His power, His promises;
- Teaching all the commandments of Jesus;
- Establishing all the principles for the functioning of the Church.

It is necessary to return to simplicity so that the whole counsel of God may be received and absorbed by all brothers, in particular by the simpler ones.

God will not examine our knowledge concerning the contents of the Bible. He will ask us how we lived it. Doctrine consists of practical commandments for the life of the disciples (Titus 2:1-15).

# How to work with this material

This booklet is divided into lessons, to be studied by the disciples alone or with their disciplers.

Since we want you to benefit from searching the scriptures and meditation each lesson has two sections: **Seeking Insight** and **Understanding More**.

## Seeking Insight

In this section, we want the disciple to have contact with God and with His Word, as well as to gain insight and knowledge of God and His Word through prayer and meditation.

He or she should read each of the texts listed in **Bible Reading**, praying to the Lord to gain insight.

You should also try to answer in your notebook the questions listed in **Meditation**, writing everything you have learned in addition to your questions.

In each lesson, there are also some phrases and Bible verses for **Catechism** (teaching by repetition). They must be repeated in the same way that they are written in the booklet so that all disciples will work with the same verses.

## Understanding More

In this section, disciples will have teachings to deepen and enrich their understanding of the subject that they meditated on by themselves.

However, disciples should only proceed to this section after carefully completing the previous section - **Seeking Insight** - and having shown their meditations and notes to their discipler. Then they should read and study together the content that is in the second section - **Understanding more**. In case the disciple has difficulties going through the first section alone, the discipler must help him.

# Part 1 | **The Eternal Purpose of God**

We know that all things work together for good to those that love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:28-29





# Lesson 1 | God's purpose for creating man

## Seeking Insight

### Bible Reading

- Genesis 1:26-27; Ephesians 1:4-5, 11.

### Meditation

- What did God want when He created man? What was His desire and purpose?
- What was man like when he was created? What were his characteristics?

### Catechism

---

**What was God's purpose when He created man?**

*God wanted a family of men and women in His image.*

Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.  
Genesis 1:26

---

## **Understanding More**

### **God's purpose for creating man**

This is a key issue. This should take over our minds; we must open our hearts to let God speak to us about His purpose. We cannot understand this just by studying a booklet. The knowledge of the glory that is in God's purpose must take over our whole being. His purpose and goal should guide our lives.

Everything in our lives, our way of life, our behavior, work, and effort, is guided by our goal. Therefore, God's purpose must become our purpose and our objective.

If we want to cooperate with God, we must know His desires and His heart. Everything we do will only have eternal value if we cooperate with God's purpose.

### **A very common mistake**

Many of us lived without knowing what was God's purpose in our lives. We mistakenly believed that our goal as Christians was to reach heaven. We looked at the Bible with a humanistic perspective (man in the center of everything) and concluded that the purpose was the salvation of man – everything revolving around man and his needs.

This mistaken perspective occurred because we always considered God's purpose as having started with the fall of man. Therefore, as man is lost, his salvation became the center of that purpose. This was the error and this is where it should be corrected.

God wants to save all mankind. We can see this clearly in the text of 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9 and John 3:16.

However, we should not confuse what God desires with what is His purpose. God's purpose did not emerge from the fall of man. It is something that was already in His heart before the foundation of the world.

... just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Ephesians 1:4, 11

Let us think for a moment about the following argument: If, before the foundation of the world, God had the purpose of saving man, then He would be complicit with sin requiring man to sin to fulfill His purpose.

God never wanted man to sin! Salvation was not the purpose of God's heart. Redemption was necessary because of the fall. The fall was not "planned" so there might be a salvation. We need to know what was the primary intention of God, what was the purpose that God had in his heart when He created man.



*The purpose of God did not begin  
with the fall of man.  
It is something that was already in  
His heart before the foundation of  
the world.*

### **What was God's purpose for creating man?**

Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image,  
according to Our likeness. Genesis 1:26



# Lesson 2 | What happened when man sinned?

## Seeking Insight

### Bible Reading

- Romans 3:12; 5:12; Genesis 5:3.
- Hebrews 6:17; Isaiah 46:10.

### Meditation

- What happened to man because of sin (Romans 3:12)?
- What kind of children did Adam beget after losing God's spirit (Genesis 5:3)?
- If Adam became spiritually dead, in what condition were his children born?
- Did God give up on His purpose because of sin?

### Catechism

---

**What happened when man sinned?**

*Man became unprofitable (worthless) for God's purpose.*

They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable. Romans 3:12

**Did God give up on His purpose because of sin?**

*No. God did not give up on His purpose.*

## Understanding More

### What happened when man sinned?

They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable. Romans 3:12

### How did sin interfere with God's purpose?

We all know the sad story. Adam's sin was a violent and diabolical intrusion in the purpose of God. Because of sin, man became guilty, the target of God's wrath, worthy of eternal punishment, cast out from the presence of the Lord and without communion with Him. "For the wages of sin is death" Romans 6:23.

However, the problem was not only that man became guilty before God, but also that his own nature was corrupted. Man lost God's life and became a fallen creation, unprofitable for His purpose.

*With sin,  
man became a  
worthless  
creature for  
God's purpose.*

Moreover, it was not only Adam who became unprofitable. After he had corrupted himself, he had children in his own image and likeness (Genesis 5:3). Now, all Adam's descendants are useless for God's purpose. The word affirms that sin and death came to all men.

Therefore, just as through one man, sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. Romans 5:12

## **Did God give up or change His purpose because of sin?**

Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath. Hebrews 6:17

God never changed His original purpose. He does not have multiple plans, did not create a new goal, nor give up on what He wanted since the beginning. The purpose of God is immutable. Hallelujah!

... And from ancient times the *things* that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,' Isaiah 46:10



*God did not give up on His  
purpose  
because of sin.  
He is immutable.*



### **Notes**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Lesson 3 | What has God done to accomplish His purpose?

## Seeking Insight

### Bible reading

- 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 1:27.
- 1 Corinthians 15:45-48.

### Meditation

- If man became unprofitable, what has God done to accomplish His purpose?
- Meditate on and explain the writings of 1 Corinthians 15:45-48.

### Catechism

---

**If man has become unprofitable, how does God hope to accomplish His purpose?**

*He gives us a new life in Christ. God's hope is the life of Christ in us.*

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Christ in you, the hope of glory.  
Colossians 1:27

---



## Understanding More



### **If man was corrupted, what was the solution provided by God?**

*God gives us a new life in Christ. The hope of God is the life of Christ in us.*

God has created a new race.

And so it is written: The first man, Adam, became a living being. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.

1 Corinthians 15:45-48

God had to create a new race of men. How did He do this? Through the new birth that every man has to experience. By natural birth (of flesh and blood), we belong to the race of Adam, broken and unprofitable. By the new birth, of water and of the Spirit, we become participants of a heavenly race.

Adam lost the life of God because he was rebellious (Genesis 3:1-7). Jesus always did the will of the Father (John 4:34), pleased Him in everything (John 8:29) and was obedient to the point of death (Philippians 2:8).

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17



# Lesson 4 | What is the purpose of God today?

## Seeking Insight

### Bible Reading

- Romans 8:28–29; Ephesians 4:13.

### Meditation

- What is the family of God? Who is the firstborn?
- How many families does God have? What does this mean?
- How many children are in this family?
- What are the characteristics of these children? To whom are they like? What should we seek for?

### Catechism

---

**What is God's purpose today?**

*God wants a family of many children like Jesus.*

We know that all things work together for good to those that love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.  
Romans 8:28–29

**Why a family?**

*Because God wants unity.*

**Why many children?**

*Because God wants quantity.*

**Why like Jesus?**

*Because God wants quality.*

---

Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:13

## Understanding More

### What is God's purpose today?

We know that all things work together for good to those that love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:28-29

### How do we define God's purpose today?

The text above shows us very clearly God's purpose. We can define it as follows: A family of many children like Jesus.



*God wants a family of many children like  
Jesus.*

Let us see this step by step:

**A family:** This tells us about unity. This is an essential requirement for the fulfillment of God's purpose. Although unity is not emphasized in the text above, we know that children in the image of Jesus cannot be troublemakers, contentious or stubborn. The unity of God's family is very well emphasized in passages such as John 17:20-22; 2 Corinthians 1:10-12; 3:1-4; 10:16-17; Ephesians 2:14-16; 3:15; 4:1-6; 4:12-16; Philippians 1:27; 2:1-4 among others.

**Of many children:** This tells us about multiplication. Disciples who make disciples, who make disciples, etc... Matthew 28:18-20. Where there is life, there is always multiplication. Spiritual life must also be like this. He who has the life of Christ, bears fruit and reproduces this life in others. God wants many children.

**Like Jesus:** This tells us about edification. God is not content with quantity alone, nor is He satisfied with just numbers. It is necessary that His children have quality of life, live like Jesus, and walk as Jesus walked.

Till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.  
Ephesians 4:13

## **What is our position within God's purpose?**

When we understand and embrace God's purpose, it becomes our vocation (2 Timothy 1:8-9; Romans 8:28-29). Simply, we can define our vocation as a calling to be participants in the purpose of God and helpers of His fulfillment.



*When we understand  
and embrace God's purpose,  
it becomes our calling  
and our vocation.*



## Lesson 5 | We must be like Jesus

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- 1 John 2:6; Colossians 1:28.
- Matthew 11:29; 1 Peter 1:15; John 13:14; 17:18; Colossians 3:13; John 13:34.

#### Meditation

- What should be our goal?
- Meditate on the verses above and describe in what ways we should be like Jesus?

#### Catechism

---

**But isn't the purpose of God man's salvation?**

*No, salvation is the means to achieve the purpose. His purpose is that we be like Jesus.*

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. 1 John 2:6

**In what ways should we be like Jesus?**

*Be gentle and humble like Jesus.*

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matthew 11:29



*Be holy as Jesus is holy.*

As He who called you is holy,  
you also be holy in all your  
conduct. 1 Peter 1:15

*Serve, as Jesus served.*

If I then, your Lord and Teacher,  
have washed your feet, you also  
ought to wash one another's  
feet. John 13:14

*Preach to the world, as Jesus did.*

As You sent Me into  
the world, I also have sent them  
into the world. John 17:18

*Forgive, as Jesus did.*

As Christ forgave you, so you  
also must do. Colossians 3:13

*Love, as Jesus loved.*

A new commandment I give to  
you, that you love one another;  
as I have loved you, that you  
also love one another.  
John 13:34

---

# Understanding More

## We must be like Jesus

Salvation is a means and not an end.

The redemptive work of Christ Jesus is something so tremendous and wonderful, that we run the risk of looking at it as if it were everything. Salvation is so great that we tend to confuse it with the very purpose of God, but this is not so. We must not think that God's purpose is simply to save man from hell and take him to heaven.

Jesus Christ, the admirable Son of God, with His redeeming work, gave new life to man, restoring him to communion with the Father. The redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ and carried out through His body, the Church, is the means of God to restore all things, and thus accomplish His purpose.

Redemption could never be an end in itself, but only a means of grace to fix the fall of man. For Paul, redemption has never been the purpose of God. He understood that God's purpose was the eternal family (Ephesians 1:4-5; Romans 8:28-29) – a perfect family in Christ (Philippians 3:12-14). His work for the Lord was not to seek only the redemption of man but to present man to God, restored to the image of Jesus Christ.

(...) Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.  
Colossians 1:28

## God wants us to be like Jesus

He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. 1 John 2:6



*The purpose of God is that we be like Jesus. Salvation is not the goal, it is the means to achieve the purpose.*

### In what ways should we be like Jesus?

- Be gentle and humble like Jesus

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Matthew 11:29

- Be holy as Jesus is holy.

As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 1 Peter 1:15

- Serve, as Jesus served.

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. John 13:14



# Part 2 | **The service of the Church to fulfill God's purpose.**

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13



## Lesson 6 | Who are the priests?

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- Exodus 19:5-6; 20:18-21.
- 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 5:10.

#### Meditation

- In the beginning, what was the desire of God for His people? (Exodus 19:6)? What was the people's response? (Exodus 20:18-21)?
- To whom are written the words in 1 Peter 2:9? Who are the priests in the church today?
- Is there anyone in the church who is not a priest and proclaimer?

#### Catechism

---

**Who are the priests in the church?**

*All the saints are priests.*

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9

---

## **Understanding More**

### **Who are the priests?**

When someone has in mind a purpose or a goal to achieve, he should also plan the necessary steps to achieve it. He cannot act without a clear strategy or direction. He must have a specific strategy and seek the coherent means to take steps that will lead him to achieve his intended goal.

It is the same with God. He elaborated the purpose and defined the resources, the strategy, and what steps should be taken to fulfill it. The Church is the incarnation of God's purpose and is full of resources from God for the development of this purpose. On this topic, we will seek to understand some key points of this divine strategy.

### **The people of God are all priests**

Since the beginning of the nation of Israel, God wanted everyone to be priests (Exodus 19:6). The people rejected their priesthood because they were afraid to come into the presence of God (Exodus 20:18-20). Then the Lord established, through the sons of Levi, a tribe of priests. Moses, who knew the heart of God, also wanted all to have the Spirit of the Lord and to be prophets (Numbers 11:26-30). Later, God promised to pour out His Spirit upon all mankind (Joel 2:28-29). Jesus said that this would come to enable everyone to serve God (Acts 1:8). With the coming of the Holy Spirit and the establishment of the Church, the desire of God to have a nation of priests was fulfilled.



But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.  
1 Peter 2:9

The words above broke with centuries of Jewish tradition: a "priestly caste" where only some could be priests. This was a limitation of the times of the old covenant that could only change with the coming of Jesus and the descent of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the tone of exultation can be noticed in Peter's words. The Holy Spirit had been waiting a long time to bring about this revelation. Notice the words: race, nation, people. All are priests. Hallelujah!

Unfortunately, the church could not prevent this revelation from falling into the error of embracing concepts from the Old Testament. As much as the priesthood of all saints is talked about, in practice, the church holds on to the idea of a divided people into two types. Catholics are divided between the clergy and the laity. Evangelicals divide themselves among the servants of God and the sheep, between the "anointed" and the others. In the gospel tradition, the "servants of God" must meet great requirements; they should deny themselves, renounce everything and devote themselves completely to the Lord, dedicating themselves entirely to His work. Others only need to attend some meetings, read the Bible and pray a little. If a few of those, among the people, do more than this, they will be considered very devoted people. All of this is a big disease that hinders the development of God's purpose.

These days, we must recover the lost revelation. We should receive the word that God gives us through Peter and believe,



## Lesson 7 | Who edifies the Church?

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.

#### Meditation

- What are the specific ministries in the church (Ephesians 4:11)?
- According to Ephesians 4:11-12, how does the edification of the Church happen? Are the apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors the only ones that edify the church? Who edifies the church?
- What does 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 say? Are there any common ministries that all brothers should fulfill in the church?

#### Catechism

---

**Who edifies the body of Christ?**

*The body of Christ edifies the body of Christ.*

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-12

---

# Understanding More

## Who edifies the Church?

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-12

## How should the edification of the church be?

The problem seen in the previous lesson, of the church being divided among the "servants of God" and the rest, produced a distortion of the biblical pattern for the edification of the body of Christ. Thereby, the tradition of edification only through the pastors was formed.

This is not what we see in the scriptures. In Ephesians 4:11-12, we see how the edification of the church must be.

Let's look first at verse 11:

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.

First, we must observe that Jesus did not establish just pastors and evangelists, as some practice today. In the beginning, there were also apostles and prophets, and the church should be like this in the present day.

Secondly, we must ask ourselves: why did Jesus institute these ministries? What is their function? The traditional answer would be: They have been created to edify the church. But when we look at verse 12, we see something very different.

We learn what the true function of these ministries is.

Verse 12 develops in three distinct stages:

1. For the equipping of the saints...
2. For the work of ministry...
3. For the edifying of the body of Christ.

The third and last step, described above, is the edifying of the body of Christ. When we say that the shepherds are those who edify the Church, we are jumping straight from verse 11 to the last part of verse 12. We are thus nullifying the first two steps.

In fact, in order for the edification of the body of Christ to happen, it is necessary that the second step happens before: The fulfillment of the service of the saints. The edification should not be the result of the work of some pastors, but the fruit of the service of all saints. Only when every member of the body performs his service will there be edification of the body of Christ. As much as the pastors and some leaders work and make an effort, if there is no fulfillment of the service of the other saints, there will be no edification of the body according to the level found in verse 13 (perfect man).

Thus, we can understand what the role of the ministries of verse 11 is. They must first work for the equipping of the saints.

By doing this, the saints will carry out their service. Then, there will be the edification of the body of Christ. So, we can say:



*The body of Christ  
is what edifies the body of Christ.*

To practice this, it is necessary to break our traditions. Unfortunately, the structure of the church today is focused on the functioning of the ministry of few. Everything revolves around the pulpits and some "superstars" of preaching. Most of the time, energy and resources are focused on large meetings and major events where only a few work hard to edify a "mass" that sits and listens.

The early church did not have any of that and did not miss it. However, they revolutionized the world. All because they understood that each one of them was a priest, pastor and had a service to fulfill.

Now we have to respond to the next question: What service should the saints fulfill?

### **Specific ministries and common ministries.**

Although there are many services and practical tasks to be accomplished (such as cleaning, finding places for meetings, hosting, preparing the Communion, playing instruments, etc.), the service of the saints is much more than that. These simple tasks are very important but are certainly not a ministry or priesthood.



# Lesson 8 | The ministry of witnesses

## (Part 1)

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 2:9.

#### Meditation

- Why was the Holy Spirit poured out (Acts 1:8)?
- What is one of the main roles of the priest (1 Peter 2:9)?
- What is proclaiming the virtues of Jesus?
- To whom is given this service of witness and proclaimer?

#### Catechism

---

**How do we start the service of making disciples?**

*Being witnesses and proclaimers.*

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

---



# Understanding More

## The ministry of witnesses (part 1)

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

In the above text, Jesus tells us the real reason for the descent of the Holy Spirit. To give us power to be witnesses. As the Holy Spirit was poured out upon everyone, this power is for everyone. It is one of the common services that all saints must fulfill.

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9

Here, Peter also speaks that our role as priests is to proclaim the praises of Him who called us. This is the same as being witnesses.

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 2 Corinthians 5:20

In this text, Paul tells us that we are ambassadors for Christ, i.e., representatives of Christ before the world. This also involves the ministry of being witnesses.

Jesus came and spoke to them, saying: All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them

in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.

Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus commanded us to make disciples. But how does the ministry of making disciples start? It starts when we are witnesses; and as people are baptized, then we must teach them to keep what Jesus commanded.

But how is the ministry of witnesses developed? Let us look at some principles that will help the disciple in developing his ministry.

## **How to approach people**

We must address people naturally and with simplicity. To do this, we need to understand something very important: we cannot convert anyone. This is the responsibility of the Holy Spirit (see John 16:7-8). We are only helpers. Our role is not to convert people, but to cooperate with the Holy Spirit.

Let's look at an example: We cannot make a chick. Only God can. But we can put the egg under the hen. Thus, we are combining two elements of nature: the egg and hen. This task is very simple, however indispensable, because, without it, the chick is not born.



*We are only helpers.*

Producing a new life in Christ is the same thing. We cannot do it ourselves. Only God can. But we have the indispensable

task to harmonizing two spiritual elements: The Word of God with spiritual hunger. We cannot produce hunger. This is a task from God. We are just helpers.

Therefore, we have a very important service: searching for people who have hunger and thirst for justice. People in whom the Spirit is already working. In this way, we can cooperate with Him.

## **The "Hook"**

Our first contact with people is to look for those who are interested to hear. It is as if we throw the fishhook in the water to see if any fish nibbles on it. This acts as a radar that detects planes behind the clouds. It emits a wave and, if there is no plane, the wave is lost. Otherwise, the wave comes back. Jesus said clearly that people will show different reactions when they hear the Word of the Kingdom. Matthew 13:1-23



*The "hook" is used to find out who is interested in hearing.*

The initial approach should be as follows: We cast the Word and hope it returns. We should not talk the whole time, push, insist or argue. It is not the time to preach, but to seek. We must give a portion of the Word of the Lord and expect a reaction. We must be careful not to "produce" a reaction. If someone shows interest, then we continue. For these, we must give everything: our time, our dedication, our friendship, and our life. We need to see these people as very precious lives.



# Lesson 9 | The ministry of witnesses

## (Part 2)

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- Acts 1:8; 1 Peter 2:9.
- 2 Corinthians 5:20; Matthew 28:18-20.

#### Meditation

- In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus tells us to make disciples. How do you start this task?
- What does it mean to be a witness?
- Meditate and write a personal testimony of your conversion and what God has done with you.
- In summary, what should everyone in the church be?

#### Catechism

---

**How do we start the service of making disciples?**

*Being witnesses and proclaimers.*

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

---

# Understanding More

## The ministry of witnesses (part 2)

But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. Acts 1:8

## Giving a personal testimony

However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him: Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you. Mark 5:19

A witness is named so because he or she can recall concrete facts, either by taking part in them or because they saw them. The simplest and most concrete thing we can say is our personal witness. In Mark 5:19, we see how even that man recently released from demons could bear witness to Jesus. When we find someone who has heard the word and shown some positive reaction, then we should tell them our personal testimony.



*Our personal testimony  
is the simplest and most concrete thing we  
can say.  
It is irrefutable.*

We call the account of each person's experience of conversion our personal testimony based on the word we received when hearing the gospel. We were all created by the word of God (1 Peter 1:23). In our personal testimony, we must in a simple way tell about our conversion, announcing the word which transformed us. It must be told with conviction and joy for it to communicate to others the blessing of the word of God in our lives.

## **Proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom**

When a person opens his heart fully to hear the Word of the Lord and is ready to receive us into their own home, we usually call them a "contact." At that point, we must proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom with clarity.

The preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom consists of talking about Jesus and the Door of the Kingdom (repentance, baptism in Christ and the Gift of the Holy Spirit). It is essential to help a person to see the love of God manifested in Jesus Christ. We must emphasize that God wants to give them a new heart, capable of doing all of His wills. Teach them about what sin is, the independence and the need to deny himself and to then submit to God.



*Preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom is to  
talk about Jesus and the Door of the  
Kingdom.*

### **Observations:**

1. There is no fixed rule for evangelism. Each person is different. Some need time to understand, to meditate and to calculate the price of following Jesus. We should not rush them. We must follow the Lord, cooperating and waiting for Him to complete the work. However, other people are ready. These are individuals who have a lot of hunger and thirst. They can be converted soon. Perhaps, on the first day. In this case, we should not delay the work of God. Therefore, we must always be sensitive, trying to discern in the Spirit the real situation of each person and act correctly.
2. When a disciple is preaching the gospel for the first time, he should not work with the "contact" alone, but together with someone more experienced.

### **The Church was always on the street**

How did Jesus train His disciples in the ministry of being witnesses? Jesus was always on the streets with them. He rarely stayed within four walls. They learned to be witnesses by watching Jesus always being in contact with people. They saw Jesus doing the work. The disciples' classroom was the street because people were there.

Even when Jesus was teaching something to the disciples, he did it on the streets, in front of the crowds. Moreover, the crowds also listened to the teachings of Jesus (compare Matthew 5:1-2 with 7:28).



*Jesus was always on the street with the disciples, and it is there that we should be also.*



After Jesus had ascended to the Father, the disciples continued to use His strategy. In Acts 2:46 and 5:12, we see that the brothers would meet daily in the temple in Solomon's court. Now, this place was not a meeting with benches and pulpits like we have today. It was a public place, where there were many people. It was the primary meeting place of the population of the city.

If today we want the brothers to be trained on being witnesses, speaking to men with all boldness, we must be on the street with them as often as possible. We must "go out" in different ways: in small groups, with some disciples but also in larger groups. We should be on the street with the disciples, among the people.



*A disciple*

*has an intense desire to win as many lives as possible.*



**Notes**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Lesson 10 | **The ministry of joints and ligaments**

## **Seeking Insight**

### **Bible Reading**

- Ephesians 4:15–16; Colossians 2:19.

### **Meditation**

- Meditate and explain the writings of Ephesians 4:16.
- What is needed to ensure the edification of the body of Christ?
- According to Colossians 2:19, how is the body united?
- Study and explain what are joints and ligaments?
- According to the scriptures, what is the purpose of joints and ligaments?

### **Catechism**

---

**What are joints and ligaments in the body of Christ?**

*Joints and ligaments in the body of Christ are strong and lasting relationships among its members.*

**What is the purpose of joints and ligaments?**

*To unite, feed and edify the body of Christ.*

But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head – Christ – from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. Ephesians 4:15–16

---

# Understanding More

## The ministry of joints and ligaments

But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head - Christ - from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. Ephesians 4:15-16

This is another ministry that God has given to the Church and entrusted to all saints. Let us look at the writings of Ephesians 4:16, as we did with 4:12. This verse also develops in three different steps:

1. From him, the whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies...
2. As each part does its work...
3. Grows and builds itself up in love.

Here we have a chained sequence for edification. The third step of the verse contains a tremendous affirmation. The Holy Spirit is affirming that it is the body itself that produces its own growth and edification. Once more we can understand that it is not the ministries of verse 11 that produce the edification, but it is the body edifies itself.

However, how does the body produce such edification? Note that, as in verse 12, we also cannot reach the third step without passing through the second one. The body produces this edification when there is the fair cooperation of each part (each member) and not by the cooperation of

a few. Here we have, again, the ministry of the saints as we saw in verse 12.

Now we go to the main question: how to achieve this? How to lead each member to give their cooperation? The answer lies in the first part of the verse. In order for each member of the body do its part, it is necessary that the whole body be well adjusted and connected by the support of every ligament.



*All the members of the body  
must be united and well adjusted  
by means of joints and ligaments.*

This little word - "ligament" - has been forgotten by the Church, but we have to remember that the Holy Spirit did not write poetry about the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit is using human language to speak to us about a spiritual reality. We know very well what members of the human body are, and we can understand from that what is a member of the Body of Christ and how each member is important.

(...) all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. Colossians 2:19

What is a joint? The text of Colossians 2:19 helps a lot because there speaks of joints and ligaments. According to the Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, a ligament is "a tough fibrous band of tissue connecting the articular extremities of bones or supporting an organ in place." Joints are articulations that form connections between the bones.  
Ligaments

pass through the joints and give strength and resistance to these connections. Joints and ligaments, therefore, serve for harmonizing the human body. Each member of the human body needs to be in its correct place to function, supported by the other members and strengthened by a specific, strong and resistant bond.

If the joints and ligaments in the human body are "connections" between our members, likewise, in the body of Christ, the strong, resistant and specific relationships among its members, produces supply, cooperation, growth, and edification. If the church is not well structured in this way, it will be like a "bag of members" and not as a body. A bag can contain all the members of a body, but if they are not bound by joints and ligaments, there will be no harmony or life. What an incredible statement in Colossians 2:19! Whoever is not joined in this way to the body, does not retain the head, because it cannot be controlled by the head! But, of course, how can the head control a "bag of members"?



*Joints and ligaments in the body of Christ are  
strong and resistant  
relationships among its members.*



## Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Lesson 11 | Joints and ligaments of Discipleship (part 1)

## Seeking Insight

### Bible Reading

- Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 3:14; John 1:37–39;  
2 Timothy 2:2.

### Meditation

- Making disciples does not consist only of bringing people and baptizing them. What is necessary to do with them after baptizing them? How does it work?
- What can we notice in the writings of Mark 3:24 and John 1:38–39 in respect to the discipleship of Jesus with His disciples? Use your imagination to describe this relationship briefly.
- Comment on the writing of 2 Timothy 2:2, noting the various "generations" of disciples.

### Catechism

---

**What is the function of the discipler?**

*Teach to obey all things that Jesus commanded.*

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen. Matthew 28:18–20

---

## Understanding More

### Joins and ligaments of discipleship (part 1)

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all things I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen.  
Matthew 28:18-20

The joints and ligaments of discipleship are the continuation of the ministry of witnesses. After baptism, we need to shape the lives of people who are converted and edify the new disciples. It is necessary to teach them to obey all things that Jesus commanded.

### Shaping is more than informing

A brother once spoke on the theme "Light of the World": "A light is not heard; a light is seen." Jesus, who presented himself as the Light of the World, knew that He could not transmit this light only with preaching.

He was not the sound of the world. Although Jesus spoke as much as He did, Jesus could not transmit all of His glory. His words were spirit and life (John 6:63), but the life that was in Him was the light of men (John 1:4). He knew that the light should be seen and observed closely. Sermons are

necessary and even essential. However, the most they can do is to encourage and inform. They never promote formation. The information is important, but it is only a small part of the work. So, how did Jesus do it?



*Jesus did not  
just preach.  
He gave  
himself.*

## Making disciples is not a "Discipleship Meeting."

Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach.  
Mark 3:14

Let us look at the calling of Jesus to the twelve. He did not call them for a meeting of "discipleship Bible study." He also did not call them to a Bible school. According to Mark 3:14, Jesus called the twelve to be with Him and that He might send them out to preach. The sentence "that they might be with Him," defines the basic strategy of Jesus.



*Discipleship  
is not a meeting,  
it is  
relationship.*

He was establishing the first joints and ligaments in the body between Him and His disciples. He wanted to establish a close relationship to transmit them His life by example. Jesus was not a man of the pulpit. He was not a man of elaborate or enthusiastic

messages. Jesus was a man of relationships. His disciples learned all things by seeing. The disciples saw how Jesus related to the poor, what He said to the rich, how He treated the sick, how He answered the hypocrites, how He cast out demons, what He did when He was tired, how He reacted to a storm at sea, how He treated the prostitutes, how He reacted to lies and slander, how He loved Israel, how He prayed to the Father, when He laughed, when He cried, when He was enraged and overthrew tables, when He was arrested, and even how He died.

What a fascinating experience! John said: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life..." 1 John 1:1 How great! If there were no close relationship between Jesus and his disciples,



the multitudes who came to hear him would certainly not remain many years in His teachings after his death.

## **What did the twelve understand?**

When Jesus sent the twelve to make disciples, it was not difficult for them to understand what He was telling them to do. They had never seen a meeting hall, pulpits, benches or bands. They understood that the task of making disciples doing with others what Jesus had done with them over the course of three years. The same should happen to us. We should look at how Jesus disciplined the twelve and then go out and do the same with those whom we intend to form. The commission of Jesus included preaching to many as He preached, but, primarily referring to relationships of discipleship. This is not a new method.

It is the practice of Jesus. It is what assimilates to the body someone who converts, also sustaining and edifying them. This bond emerges naturally when, after preaching to someone and baptizing them, whoever gained them, starts feeling responsible for his or her life. Then he cares, teaches, oversees, helps, suffers and carries the load. In this way, nobody is alone. Every newborn will have a spiritual "father" or "mother" who will take care of them and feed them. This is vital to the Church. For this reason we should be constantly reviewing and supervising the operation of these relations.

~  
*Discipleship is  
not a new  
method.*

*It is the practice  
of Jesus.*

We also understand that these relationships are not only for caring for new believers. In 2 Timothy 2:2 we see that Paul speaks of several generations of disciples. The writing shows how the relationships lead to the creation of various levels of ministry. It is from this development that there will arise disciples, leader's helpers, leaders and even pastors.

# Lesson 12 | **Joints and ligaments of Discipleship** (part 2)

## **Seeking Insight**

### **Bible reading**

- Matthew 28:18-20;
- 1 Colossians 16:16; Ephesians 5:21; Matthew 11:29; Proverbs 12:15; 1 Samuel 15:23; Hebrews 13:17.

### **Meditation**

- What characteristics do we see in each of the writings above, necessary for one to be discipled?

### **Catechism**

---

**What is necessary to be discipled?**

*Be meek, humble and submissive.*

(...) submitting to one another in the fear of God. Ephesians 5:21

---

# Understanding More

## The shaping of all areas of life

When a person is in the world, his whole life is based on human standards. 1 Peter 1:18 says that we were "ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers." (ESV) Another translation says that we were "redeemed from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers." (ASV) All areas of human life were affected by sin. When the Kingdom of God comes, it is necessary to live by the standard that the Kingdom imposes until we are like Jesus. This transformation must go from our mind (Romans 12:2) to the smallest detail of the behavior (Ephesians 4:22, 6:18). All areas of life (relationship with God, family relationships, work, study, preparation for marriage, leisure, the holiness of our body, use of language, etc), should be conducted by God's standard. In fact, we go through a real process of re-education as it says in Titus 2:12.

## What is necessary in order to be disciplined?

How will God bring order to our lives? How will He advise us? All brothers need to understand that God will not send an angel to our room to give us guidance. That is what relationships in the body are for. It is part of the relationship of discipleship.

Therefore, for someone to be disciplined, they must be:

- Meek and Humble - Matthew 11:29.
- Subject to the brothers - 1 Corinthians 16:16; Ephesians 5:21.
- Submissive to leaders - Hebrews 13:17.

- Someone who renounced rebellion and stubbornness
- 1 Samuel 15:23.
- Someone who listens to advice – Proverbs 12:15.

Nobody can be edified by someone else if he or she keeps an attitude of independence, pride and self-sufficiency. The idea that "I am submissive only to the Lord" is a "spiritual" way to justifying rebellion. It is a characteristic of those who are in darkness. Stubbornness is the worst of all sins (1 Samuel 15:23). Someone who is always right in his own eyes cannot be taught nor corrected (Proverbs 12:15).

(...) submitting to one another in fear of God.  
Ephesians 5:21

Some people are constantly counseled, yet they close their ears and follow their own counsel. Others, when corrected or confronted, justify themselves with many arguments. These end up reaping the fruit of their conduct and still do not see their mistakes. They do not learn because they are stubborn and proud. A disciple is not this way.



*It is impossible to edify those who do not submit.*

A disciple is like a sheep and not a goat. He accepts rebuke and loves correction. The disciples must seek teaching and counsel, listening and practicing. We are members of the Body of Christ; we are keepers of one another. We have a

mutual commitment of edification. God wants to bless us through our brothers.

## **Dangers of discipleship**

There is a great danger in this ministry: The abuse of authority. The discipler must understand that he is the servant of the disciple and not the master. He should teach the disciple the whole Counsel of God and not his likes and preferences. He should preserve the initiative and personal qualifications of the disciple.

We must bear in mind the vision of God about authority. In the world, authority is a sign of position and dominion. In the kingdom of God, it is the other way around. Jesus taught that our authority is confirmed by how much we know how to serve (Mark 10:43). He was our example. He was the one who humbled himself and served the most. That is why the Father gave Him all authority (Philippians 2:5-11).

In order to have perfect balance, we must distinguish three levels of authority:

- **The Word of God.** To the Word, the disciple must have an absolute submission. When we give the Word of God to a disciple, and he does not receive it, he is rebellious. In this case, we should follow the guidance given by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-20. Not just the discipler, but everyone in the body of Christ has the authority to correct and rebuke another brother within the teaching of the Word. (The teaching of Galatians 6:1 and Matthew 7:1-5 should be noted before).
- **Our advice.** The submission here is relative. Example: when we tell a disciple that he cannot marry an unbelieving girl, we are giving the Word of the Lord. This is absolute. But when we say that it is not good for him to marry a “certain sister,” we are giving advice. It may be that the advice we give is based on the knowledge that we have about the word of God but, even so, it is only advice. It is relative.

If the disciple rejects advice, he is not necessarily a rebel. However, if someone who never accepts any advice, he is proud and self-sufficient. He cannot be edified.

- **Our Opinions.** There is no need for any kind of submission to the personal opinions and tastes of the discipler.

## **What should the discipler give to the disciple?**

Finally, we need to understand that the discipler must provide three essential things to the disciple:

- **He should give himself.** Jesus did not give meetings and sermons; He gave himself. (John 1:38-39; Mark 2:15). Giving yourself is giving your time, your interest, your friendship. Allow yourself be involved, have a burden, watch over, and pray. We need to give our home, our love, our life.
- **Set an example.** Jesus was an example (John 13:15). He said: "Come and see." We must also say "come and see." We must say: "Be imitators of me as I am of Christ." This is not conceit. Jesus was not conceited, neither was Paul. God is the one that makes us examples through the life of Christ in us.
- **Giving the Word of God.** Jesus instructed with the Word (John 15:3). He was constantly showing the will of the Father. He taught and mentored everywhere and at all times. In the temple, at home, on the road, on the boat (Mark 10:1). Jesus gave teachings in all areas of life. We have to teach the disciples to obey all things that Jesus commanded.

# Lesson 13 | Joints and ligaments of companionship (part 1)

## Seeking Insight

### Bible Reading

- Mark 6:7-12; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.
- Ephesians 5:21; James 5:16; John 13:34; Romans 12:10; Colossians 3:12-14.

### Meditation

- Why did Jesus always send the disciples two by two?
- According to the writings above, what are the main attitudes in the relationship of companionship?
- What kind of commitment should there be in this relationship?

### Catechism

---

**Why are discipleship and companionship so important?**

*Because they unite the body by joints and ligaments.*

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.  
John 13:34

**What are the main attitudes in the companionship?**

*Love, submission, transparency and forgiveness.*

---

# Understanding More

## Joints and ligaments of companionship (part 1)

And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. Mark 6:7

Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up.[...] Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10,12

Jesus did not establish strong ties only between Him and his disciples. He also promoted the relationship of the disciples among themselves. Many times Jesus sent the disciples two by two. They went out also without the Master. Certainly, they had to develop a deep relationship between themselves. The Holy Spirit worked in them as they were together through prayer, counsel, patience, forgiveness, mindfulness, and so many other ways.

The relationship between Jesus and the disciples was a relationship of discipleship, something vertical. Whereas this horizontal relationship among the disciples themselves, we call companionship. In discipleship, someone more mature watches over someone younger. In companionship, both are responsible for edifying each other.





*In companionship  
there is a commitment to edification and  
mutual care.*

Companionship will only work if there is a mutual covenant before the Lord. If there is no commitment, there will be no edification of each other. This means that this relationship must be specific and distinct. When this is the case, each one knows whom he is responsible for. Otherwise, the church will be left with the thought that everyone is responsible for all (which is true), but nobody takes responsibility for anybody else.

### **How should this relationship be like?**

- Subjection

(...) submitting to one another in fear of God.  
Ephesians 5:21

The great proof of humility is submission to your companion, for it is often easier to submit to the discipler, whom we consider to be more mature.

- Transparency

Confess your trespasses[a] to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. James 5:16

Confessing sins to one another produce healing. We should not hide anything. Learn how to put the life before others without barriers. It is necessary to expose ourselves and lose individualism.

- Love

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. John 13:34

This love starts with friendship. And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” Genesis 2:18 Because of this He created a helper. The relationship exists not only to form the character. It serves the purpose of bringing complete fulfillment to each one, so that we may have pleasure and joy in each other.



*In companionship there must be  
loyalty, care, and protection.*

Love is also loyalty and fidelity. When we make an alliance, it is not only for moments of joy but also a commitment to trials. It is precisely in those hours that the commitment will be tested and challenged. Love also involves care and protection. We must take responsibility for the well being of one's companion and his family.

- Honor

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another. Romans 12:10

Always seek the interest of another, even if it involves losses. Always be prepared to give first place to another and remain in the position of a servant.

- Patience and Forgiveness

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. Colossians 3:12-13

It is in this relationship that several areas of life will reveal themselves and receive treatment. This is where companionship must work in depth. In the face of the character shortcomings of each other, we must not be discouraged, but learn to forgive and support. When this happens, the character of Christ is being formed in us, because we need to forgive and support each other in practice.



*The character weaknesses of each other  
should not discourage us, but  
rather teach us to forgive and to love.*



## Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Lesson 14 | Joints and ligaments of companionship (part 2)

## Seeking Insight

### Bible Reading

- Luke 10:1; Acts 13:2-3.
- Colossians 3:16; Matthew 18:19-20; Mark 6:7-12; Galatians 5:13; Hebrews 10:24.

### Meditation

- What should happen in a relationship of companionship that works?
- Why is it important to pray together? What should they pray for?
- Why should a disciple do the work together with the companion? What kind of work should they do together?

### Catechism

---

**What are the main activities in the companionship?**

*Pray, advise, serve and make disciples.*

**What is the fruit of all this?**

*The edification of the body in love.*

---

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Colossians 3:16

# Understanding More

## Joins and ligaments of companionship (part 2)

What should happen in this relationship? What should the companions do when they are together?

a. Edify themselves with the Word

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Colossians 3:16

Review the writings and lessons taught, advise one another, encourage one another, console one another, etc.

b. Pray Together

Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them. Matthew 18:19-20

It is good that they have a prayer list.

c. Go out to preach to unbelievers

And He called the twelve to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. Mark 6:7

They should visit contacts together.

d. Take care of disciples together.

e. Serve one another

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh,

but through love serve one another. Galatians 5:13

f. Encourage each other to love and do good works

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works. Hebrews 10:24

### **How to start the relationship?**

- It is not necessary to seek affinity. We should not idealize a relationship without problems.
- There is no need for a long period of observation. It is not marriage.
- People of different ages can be companions.
- It can be a relationship of three people.
- It can be between newer (or older) disciples in faith.
- It must be functional, so all should live as close as possible.
- They need to be of the same sex.
- They should pray and seek counsel before starting the relationship.

### **Hazards that destroy the companionship:**

a. Selfishness.

Selfishness is the cancer of any relationship. Someone that has strong tendencies to manipulate and exploit others must be monitored and corrected by disciplers and leaders.

b. Differences in personality.

We will never find identical people, nor would there be an advantage in it. It is natural that the disciples have some difficulties to adjust. The blessing of the relationship

is the possibility of growth through differences. So the companions have the opportunity to deal with their differences biblically, and may apply principles that would otherwise be only theoretical (Proverbs 27:17).

c. Attacks of the Devil

The devil will rise against any alliance of edification between brothers. He will use lies, misunderstandings, discouragements and false suspicious, trying to put one against the other. The companions must overcome together in prayer, as well as clarify every issue that arises.

d. Gossip

A relationship of edification can not allow harmful comments about the lives of other disciples, not even on the pretext of "praying for the brother." Gossip and discord between brothers are the devil's most terrible weapons to destroy the unity of the Body (Proverbs 6:16-19).

e. Judging motivations

To judge the intentions and motivations of others and act from these impressions without exposing to the other their distrust destroys any relationship. (Leviticus 19:17; Proverbs 27:5-6).



## Notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Lesson 15 | The need to bear fruit

### Seeking Insight

#### Bible Reading

- John 15:1-8,16; Matthew 13:23; 21:18-20; 25:14-30.
- Galatians 5:22-23.

#### Meditation

- What does Jesus say in John 15 about the fruit that the vine should give?
- What is this fruit that Jesus is talking about?
- Compare this fruit which Jesus is talking about in John 15:16 with the fruit to which Paul refers in Galatians 5:22-23. Is it the same?
- What is one of the characteristics of a disciple (John 15:8)?

#### Catechism

---

**What does the vinedresser require from the vine?**

*Every branch must bear fruit.*

**What fruit should the vine bear?**

*The multiplication of Christ's life.*

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain.

John 15:16

---



# Understanding More

## The need to bear fruit

I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you; abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear the fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine; you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will[a] ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples. [...] You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. John 15:1-8,16

What tremendous words of Jesus! What a warning! Bearing fruit is not an option. It is an inevitable consequence when someone remains in Christ. However, what fruit shall we bear? Certainly, it is not the fruit of the Spirit that we see in Galatians 5:22-23. To prove this, let's look at three considerations:

1. The language. There is a clear distinction: In John 15, Jesus talks about the fruit of the disciple, in Galatians, Paul talks about the fruit of the Spirit.

2. If we look at the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), we noticed that the Lord does not come to seek what he gave to the servant, but the profit that the servant obtained by applying that which he received from the Lord. Now, the fruit of the Spirit is what God gives us through Christ's life in us. Love, joy, peace, etc. are the talents that God has placed in our lives. He does not seek what He gave (the fruit of the Spirit). He seeks the profit (the fruit of the disciple).

But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Matthew 13:23

3. The text of Matthew 13:23 is clear and definitive. It says that bearing fruit is producing: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Thus, bearing fruit has to do with reproduction.

So the conclusion is that the fruit that Jesus talks about in John 15 is the reproduction and multiplication of His life. And how does a disciple bear fruit? When the disciple remains in Christ, walking in Christ and manifesting His life, people who live with him are influenced. Some are converted to Christ. Others, who are already in Christ, are edified and grow. Thus, the life of Christ is reproduced through the disciple. This is the fruit thereof.



*The fruit of a disciple is the  
multiplication  
of the life of Christ in other lives.*



## Lesson 16 | **The work in the homes**

### **Seeking Insight**

#### **Bible Reading**

- Acts 2:46; 5:42.
- Romans 16:5,10,11,14,15; 1 Corinthians 16:15,19; Philippians 4:22; Colossians 4:15.

#### **Meditation**

- Where did the early church meet?
- Why did the Holy Spirit direct the church to meet in this way? Was it because of a lack of other places?
- What is the purpose of the work in the house churches? Why does each disciple go to the meeting in the house?

#### **Catechism**

---

**What is the reason for the home group meeting?**

The work of the home group is the development of the service of the saints.

---

## Understanding More

The early church was not “templist.” The only mention of a temple in the New Testament is referring to the temple in Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, all the brothers were Jews, accustomed to attending the temple. Therefore, they continued going there as a church as a matter of custom and, also, to be in the middle of the people (as we saw in the third topic). Nevertheless, in Jerusalem, the church began to meet in homes (Acts 2:46; 5:42). With the numeric growth, this practice became increasingly indispensable.

The churches that arose in the gentile world met only in houses. The entire structure of the church was established in the homes (Romans 16:5,10,11,14,15; 1 Corinthians 16:15,19; Philippians 4:22; Colossians 4:15). There is no mention about temples. The only reference to a meeting hall is the school of Tyrannus, used by Paul for only two years.

Why did the Holy Spirit direct the church in this way? It seems obvious. Everything that the Lord has revealed about the correct ordering of saints, the fulfillment of their service, joints, etc., cannot be practiced in large meetings with many people. It is only possible in small groups.



*All the disciples  
are soldiers of Christ who come  
to the homegroup meeting for training and  
sharpening their blades.*



*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be  
steadfast, immovable, always abounding in  
the work of the Lord, knowing that your  
labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

*1 Colossians 15:58*

