

LESSON 02

Foundations Curriculum

Learning, Growing, and Serving

By Marcos Moraes

Introduction

The Counsel of God

In this second lesson, we present to the church the proper way to use the Foundations Curriculum to learn, grow, and serve. All the content of this and future lessons should be reviewed in House Churches and discipleship relationships.

*Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard,
lest we drift away.*

Hebrews 2:1 (NKJV)

Consider several aspects of the counsel of God that need to be reviewed for a better understanding of this teaching:

- 01** The scope of the counsel of God: it is everything God wants us to know about His attributes and character, and also about our relationship with others. The counsel of God is not limited to what He wants us to do or obey, but encompasses what we can know about Him and His relationship with us.
- 02** This counsel is not an infinite thing: the person of God is infinite and we will spend eternity coming to know Him, but the counsel He wants us to know here has a beginning, a middle, and an end. It is contained in the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation.
- 03** The counsel of God is absolute: for Him it is yes, yes; no, no; darkness, light; good and evil. God is not subject to the relativism that hovers over humanity. We must judge all the philosophy and wisdom that exists in the world today by the counsel of God — what He thinks about this or that matter — so that we may judge each thing rightly.
- 04** God is unchanging. He does not change; He does not lie. His counsel is the same from the beginning and will remain so forever.
- 05** What God has for us stands in clear opposition to the counsel of the ungodly. There is no harmony between the two, which is why it is important that we be grounded in the counsel of God.
- 06** There is a contrast between the way God thinks and the way the world thinks, and this produces a war in our own minds. Jesus called Satan the prince of this world. What the world thinks affects our minds. The war will be decided by the choices we make.

07 We are responsible for seeking the counsel of the Creator. Although God offers His counsel to us in the Holy Scriptures, we must renew our minds, as Romans 12:2 says, filling ourselves with His thoughts — for He will not do this for us.

1) Being a Doer of the Word

How can we assimilate the teaching we are receiving, put it into practice, and reach the point of growing and being able to help others?

The answer to this question is the main theme of James 1:19–25: “being a doer of the Word and not a hearer only.”

*But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it,
and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work,
this one will be blessed in what he does.*

James 1:25 (NKJV)

When James exhorts the brethren not to be hearers only but doers of the Word, he gives an important clue: “The one who looks carefully, perseveres, not being a forgetful hearer but a diligent doer.” Here is the key we must use in our lives.

Some brethren “stuff themselves” with messages of every kind available on the Internet, and this can hinder more than help — because what we must do is simple: “consider carefully.”

In Ephesians 4:11–12 the text says, “And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers...”

For what purpose did God call these men?

The text explains: “...for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edification of the body of Christ.”

Important note:

The word “equipping” translates the Greek word katartismos, which appears only once in the Bible. It involves equipping, connecting, and mobilizing the saints for their priesthood.

This service to which Paul refers is not that of the pastors, teachers, or apostles themselves, but of all the saints. The church is a nation of priests and everyone must fulfill this role.

The text of Ephesians 4:13–14 clarifies:

*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;
that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about
with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness
of deceitful plotting.*

Ephesians 4:13–14 (NKJV)

CHART 1 — Parallel Between the Two Texts

TARGET (VERSE 13)	DEVIATION (VERSE 14)
UNITY OF THE FAITH	CARRIED ABOUT BY EVERY WIND OF DOCTRINE
FULL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD	CARRIED ABOUT BY THE TRICKERY OF MEN
PERFECT MANHOOD	CHILDREN TOSSED TO AND FRO
THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST	LED INTO ERROR

He presents two situations that stand in opposition to each other. Take a moment to consider: which side are you on?

2) The Practical Solution

How can we be mature in Christ Jesus so as to draw closer to verse 13?

The apostle gives us very simple guidance for reaching verse 13.

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 (NKJV)

CHART 2 — Comparing the Two Texts

GROWING IN THE HEAD, CHRIST	IN CHRIST IN THE BODY
FELLOWSHIP WITH THE PERSON OF CHRIST	IN A WELL-FITTED BODY
EVALUATE BEFORE GOD	RELATIONSHIPS IN THE BODY
	CONVERSE WITH THOSE WHO ARE NEAR

He presents two truths that complement each other. Here we will see two very practical proposals that will help us to “consider carefully.”

Here it is possible to see the body of Christ, with Christ as the Head, acting in the life of each member and bringing each one to grow IN CHRIST:

Growing in the knowledge of the person of Christ, and in faith in His “unsearchable riches” — His deity, His power as Creator, His conception in the womb of a virgin, His self-emptying, His relationship with the Father, His humility, His service, His doctrine, His desire for a pure bride. Also His surrender unto death, His descent into Hades, His resurrection, ascension, enthronement and glory, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, His empowering work, the fact that He is not ashamed to call us brethren, His work of interceding for us, what He requires of His church today, and His future promises.

Verse 16 of Ephesians chapter 4 teaches us that this happens within the relationships that exist in the body of Christ — joints and ligaments. That is to say, it is far more than social companionship; there will be mutual responsibility in and for edification.

This relationship must point toward forming Christ in us.

3) Christ Being Formed in Us

Often, to understand how to do something, one must first learn how not to do it. What are the three possible errors when we hear the Word?

1. Making no effort to retain what we have heard or read

Some have the habit of jumping from one teaching to another, from one sermon to the next, without ever examining the Scriptures or the lives of the preachers. This leads nowhere. At most, this bad habit produces “know-it-all” filled with random content.

2. Praying and reading the Word, but never measuring our own lives before others

Others think they have some kind of infallible direct line to heaven. God does speak, but you may hear Him poorly. These people exude independence and immaturity. They are the “perfect” ones and those who reject church life. They claim to have “fellowship with God,” but no one may correct them. They detest confessing their sins and revealing their weaknesses.

The text of Ephesians 5, which teaches us how to “be filled with the Holy Spirit,” culminates with “submitting to one another in the fear of Christ.” The instructions are: psalms, praise, singing, giving thanks, and submitting to one another.

3. Submitting to the brethren, but doing so without seeking God

This situation is the opposite of the one cited above. These people do not pray and do not review the teachings in the Scriptures. They always want someone to tell them what to do. They become disciples centered on the person of the discipler.

Often the discipler himself errs by failing to lead the person to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and in a personal relationship with Him.

If these errors exist, what then is the solution for avoiding all of them? The answer is: consider carefully the teaching before God and in dependence on the brethren nearest to you.

CONCLUSION

In this second lesson we learned about the importance and seriousness of considering carefully all teaching before God — not being a hearer only, but a diligent doer. It is equally important to walk in dependence on the brethren nearest to us so that we do not drift from the truths we have learned. Growing in the Head, Christ, will keep us from being carried away or entangled by false doctrines, as we maintain a transparent relationship with the body of Christ, the church. Persevering in the doctrine of Jesus and the apostles must be our pursuit — and no one can persevere in what has not been preserved.

CONSIDER CAREFULLY

Our confidence must rest in Jesus! We must never trust in our own understanding.

01 Reread the texts of James 1:25 and Ephesians 4:11–16 on your own. Allow God to speak to your heart through the Scriptures.

02 Speak with God. Ask Him how He sees you. Mature? A child? Stable? Tossed about by winds of doctrine?

03 Answer for yourself: Am I considering carefully the teaching I receive, or am I jumping from topic to topic without ever measuring my life in the light of the Scriptures?

04 Open up to the brethren and/or sisters nearest to you. Confess your difficulties. Ask whoever is responsible for caring for you whether they see you as someone who is open to correction and direction.

05 Do this with every topic you learn in these lessons. Make each teaching both an evaluation before God and a conversation with the brethren closest to you.

SUPPLEMENTAL READING:

Phil 1:6 | Eph 4:12 | Eph 4:11–16 | Matt 22:29 | 1 Tim 5:17 | Heb 12:1–2
2 Tim 1:13–14 | 2 Tim 3:15 | 2 Tim 4:4 | Matt 7:24 | Ezek 33:31 | Col 3:16

Heb 3:12–13 | John 14:26 | Acts 10 | 1 Cor 8:3 | 1 Cor 15:10 | Matt 5, 6 & 7

*having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.*

Ephesians 2:20 (NKJV)

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contato@fundamentos.me | fundamentos.me