

## **"Discipleship"**

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Handout 4

Chapter 4: "To All Who Receive Him"

*He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him. Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believe in His name, He gave the right to become children of God--children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (John 1:11-13)*

### **Total Personality vs. Passive Acceptance**

"Receiving Christ savingly is an act of the total personality. It is an act of the mind and of the will and of the affections." (page 57)

"We have been taught that passive acceptance is the equivalent of faith when it is not. In Greek, the word used for receiving salvation is active, not passive."

"That is why the meaning of the word received is so important here. "As many as received him"--actively and aggressively took Him. This means a determined exercise of the will. It means to not deny any condition that the Lord lays down."

"You are getting radical," you protest. Maybe so, but did you ever read the words of Jesus, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26)? Jesus is asking us to place our love for Him, our Savior, before that of wife, husband, children. And if we do not, He will not have us. That is the sum of the teaching of Jesus on this subject.

"It is cruel--terribly cruel," you object. The living God demands our love and our loyalty, and we call that demand cruel?

Let us get it straight. Jesus Christ does not just offer us salvation as though it is a decoration or a bouquet or some addition to our garb. He says plainly, "Throw off your old rags, strip to the skin! Let Me dress you in the fine clean robes of My righteousness-all Mine.

Then, if it means loss of money, lose it! If it means loss of job, lose it! If it means persecution, take it! If it brings the stiff winds of opposition, bow your head into the wind and take it—for My sake!"

## **Religious Activity vs. Intimate Relationship**

### Nicodemus (John 3:1-21) Approaches Jesus by Night

- Pharisee - meant he was religious, legalistic--a misinterpreter of Jesus. Pharisees gave Jesus a difficult time.
- Was a member of the Jewish ruling council.
- Was intrigued by Jesus. (Episodes about him in "The Chosen")
- Visited Jesus by night
  - Theories: Afraid for others to see him approaching Jesus. His group was conflicted in their response to Jesus. Ironic considering they were the group awaiting the Messiah.
  - He was going to Jesus to ask a few more questions in hopes of determining if he was the Messiah.
- John 3:2: "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with Him."
- Jesus tells Nicodemus he must be born again (v. 3)
- Nicodemus was perplexed (v. 4)

### Nicodemus (John 19:38-40) Takes Jesus's body by day

- Following the crucifixion, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for Jesus's body. This would have been risky.
- Prepared his body.
- Given the Pharisees put Jesus on the cross, this was bold of Nicodemus.

## **Conditions of Discipleship**

- Loving Jesus above all others.
- Keeping His commands.
- Seek His Face--spiritual thirst and hunger

## **Terms of Jesus:**

"If you have other relationships in life which are more important and more exclusive than your spiritual relationship to the eternal Savior, then you are not my disciple." (page 46)

## **Whose disciple are we?**