

All honor to the King- Lordship

By Ed Thompson
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Introduction:

Section 1 presents some of what God has done in my life to provide a perspective of my observations. Sadly, genuine love and community have been hard to find. Some may disagree with my assessments, but this is the truest testimony that I can offer.

Section 2 defines discipleship. *Effective* discipleship is the solution for most of the issues that the modern Church has struggled with for well over the last 100 years. The product of effective discipleship is believers who have made Jesus Christ Lord of their lives. The importance of family discipleship is also presented.

Section 3 presents solutions through believers embracing their positions of being Representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ in the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King.

Hopefully, the result will be a call to repentance.

Notes:

The definition for the term "Church" is intended to mean Bible-teaching Churches that embrace salvation only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The term "modern Church" refers to the Church in America from about 1880 until the present.

The term "Christian" or "Believer" does not just mean anyone who holds to the tenants of the Christian faith through believing and making the Lord Jesus Christ Lord of their lives. Then when God's Spirit enters into and regenerates their spirit, they are truly born again.

Section 1, 50 years in the modern Church:

You must be born again:

My parents divorced when I was 4 years old. At the young age of 4-1/2, I found myself living mostly by myself in an apartment. My mom worked nights and weekends so there were long periods of time when I didn't see her. The landlady of our apartment was paid to care for me but she offered as little time and effort as possible. Even at my young age, I never expected much from her and I felt no love from her at all. Other than very poor meals, from about 4 and a half to 7 years old, I basically lived in the apartment by myself. The food was minimal and I remember being hungry most of the time. But my biggest challenge was loneliness.

My birthday is close to the starting day of most public schools so about a day after turning 5, the landlady took me down so I could start the first grade. I was a very immature 5 years old. With very little adult supervision, I did poorly in school and my only goal was to play. I didn't handle conflicts very well and I turned into a mean, grungy little kid, who frequently got into fights. As I was very disruptive in class, it is safe to say that I was not the teacher's pet. With so little help it was impossible for me to learn to sight-read (a system of memorizing the shapes of words). My mom trusted the "professionals", and they recommended that I repeat the 1st grade.

When I was about 6 years old, while loitering in the park one day, a fellow sitting under a tree got my attention and presented the Gospel. Even at that young age, I had no argument that I was a sinner and needed God's gift of forgiveness and salvation. So, I prayed and asked Jesus into my heart.

I knew nothing about anything, especially the Bible or about God. I was a dark little soul but God's Spirit was very real in my life. As time went on, God prompted me to pray. I did not know how to pray but remembered the prayer books from the doctor's waiting room. I couldn't read so I asked the landlady but she absolutely refused to read them to me. My only choice was to tell God that I was just going to have to "talk" and share my thoughts with Him. I invited God to listen in to my every thought.

In the early years, there were many long periods when I would forget God. Then it was like He was tapping me on the shoulder, "do you remember Me?" I would tell Him that I was sorry and was more determined to be a faithful friend.

I didn't hear audible voices but as I would share my thoughts with Him it was very common for, ideas, questions, and later verses to come into my mind. Of course, I also had my own thoughts and ideas, most of them bad, but over the years I began to be able to tell the difference between my thoughts and God's voice. My friendship with God continued to grow, even to the point that I was able to conquer my tremendous loneliness.

I am very thankful for the fellow that shared the Gospel with me. But I can only imagine what God would have done in my life if he had given me a little guidance.

When I was going into the 4th grade my mom married a fellow that later became my little brother's father. We moved into a rural community with a small school. This was a new school environment for me and my brother was born during our first year there.

God's love and truth had entered into a very dark little heart, but as time went on the light continued to grow and I began to become a Christian from the inside out. My social behavior improved, sadly the new teacher, who had been hired from the Portland Public School, continued to let me get away with not doing most of the school work. I didn't bother her, and she didn't bother me. At the end of the year, I expected another "social" promotion. However, the farmers on the rural school board demanded answers to several questions: Like, what was my problem? What had she done to help me? The decision was made for me to repeat the 4th grade. I believe that the teacher was "invited" to find a different job if she didn't teach me how to read during our second year together. At the end of that year, I still couldn't read, she left the school, and I never saw her again.

During my second 4th grade year I met my first friend, Jim. Jim regularly attended Sunday school at a local Community Church so I started attending with him. Looking back, I learned very little about God or the Bible but I loved the Sunday School songs because they praised God.

So, there I was, literally a "spiritual" orphan, living in a non-Christian home, regularly attending Church but instead of love and community, the best that I could find was some Sunday School stories. Later on, I did learn a few doctrinal teachings. At the time, I didn't expect anything from the Church so I never felt disappointed. However, looking back, it would have been really nice to have found some genuine Christian love and even some guidance. I still wonder how God would have used someone in my life if anyone had taken a little interest in me.

God continued to transform my life, but changes, especially character were slow. Outwardly, my life looked like a disaster, but inwardly, my relationship with God continued to grow stronger. Sadly, I didn't always pay close attention to God and as I grew older, various sins crept into my life; lying, stealing, cheating, and the list went on.

One day when I was in the 7th grade, I was walking along; minding my own business and the Lord Jesus Christ confronted me. It is hard to explain but I felt that I was in His very presence and every fiber of my being was permeated with God's unconditional love. I knew that God is Holy and my sins flooded into my mind, not in the context of judgment but an opportunity to confess and forsake them. I don't know how long it took but as each of my sins flowed through my mind; I repented and asked God to forgive me. From that time, I strove to resist temptations and to bring every area of my inner life under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

The Church was a very common Bible teaching community Church. I had attended Sunday School for about 3 years but, other than a few Bible stories, I still learned very little about the Bible. Thankfully, God's law is written on each of our hearts, so a few truths were absolutely obvious to me. First, that God "is" and He loves His children unconditionally. Also, God is Holy and He desires me/us to be holy. Since those years, as I have gained some grasp of God's Word, these truths are unquestionable.

As the truth of the Great "I am" that God declared to Moses, it just doesn't take much of a Bible scholar to understand that God is the author and He will ultimately judge all with His moral laws. But, my understanding of God's unconditional love, honoring Him is an expression of love. But instead of embracing His love by faith, it appears that many continue to strive to earn His love and acceptance. All Believers receive God's love and acceptance when He revealed the love that God demonstrated to us through the sacrifice that the Lord Jesus Christ made on the cross. I had many sins in my life when God contorted me and yet His love was indescribable. My repentance has no effect on His love for me. They were reflections of my love back to Him. God didn't change but my perspective was transformed.

Church:

As I entered the 8th grade, God prompted me to begin to attend, not just Sunday School but also Church. The new Pastor had a tremendous desire for youth work. Since I met his "target" ministry goals, he was excited to spend time and encourage me. It was his first Pastor position and he told me that his messages were from his seminary class on Systematic Theology. It took 4 years of Sunday messages to finish, but they were valuable for me. They were my first significant Biblical teaching about God.

During my high school years, the contrast between my inner and outer life continued to widen. Within my person, my relationship with God continued to grow stronger. In my home life, the stress escalated because of the consequences of alcohol abuse. To escape some of the conflicts, I spent as much time away from home as possible. I was not bitter about my mom or my new stepfather or their enslavement to alcohol. I always felt that they, especially this new stepfather had my best interest at heart. But, as "wine is a mocker and strong drink is a brawler" there were many times when it just wasn't much fun to be at home.

Living in a rural area, there was no opportunity to escape home by hanging out at the mall. The next best option was to spend time with some of the families in the Church or with some of the families of my school peers. Many times, I would volunteer to help with chores as kind of a "payment" for my time at their house. However, as Proverbs warns us not to spend too much time in our neighbor's house, lest they come to hate you, in most cases I wore out my welcome. I would then need to move on to a different family. As I cycled through many of the Christian families, I was forced to seek opportunities with some of the non-Christian families in the community.

I was desperate but the last thing that I wanted was to be intrusive into the lives of others. My departures were usually sudden. Only one family ever checked back with me to see if there were any hard feelings, and that was a non-Christian family. The primary reason why I stopped spending time with that family was that I was packing and getting ready to go to college. I greatly valued their friendship and appreciated their extra effort.

Looking back, there were a few families who offered exceptional hospitality. I always felt very welcomed and I greatly appreciated whatever hospitality that I found. However, even I thought that hospitality and love should be the hallmark of Christian families so I was often surprised how fast I wore out my welcome with some of those families. The hospitable families were about evenly divided between the Christian and the non-Christian homes.

My family life:

While the stress was high at my house, it wasn't all bad. My parents had a circle of drinking buddies that encompassed about 100 people with a core group of about 25. Within this group of 25, there were about three or four key houses, and our house was one of these key gathering places. With a potential party every Friday and Saturday night, there were at least 8 gatherings per month. The group would often meet at a local tavern or a bar, but there were usually one or two parties at our house every month.

There was no disagreement that the members of the group were slaves to alcohol, but most of those folks were good people and great friends with each other. I was part of the group by association. I wasn't very outspoken about my faith, but most of the group knew that I was a Christian and that I had made commitments to not drink or smoke. I was amazed how many times various ones would encourage me to continue to stick to my convictions and I was never encouraged to do otherwise.

One of the greatest compliments that was often given within the group was the term, "good people". And while they were non-believers, they could always be counted on. There was a sense of "morality" but they did not necessarily follow Biblical principles. Overall love, genuine friendship, and loyalty were strongly held and there was a fair amount of tolerance within the group.

I would typically go to bed long before the party was over. One night a lesbian came into my room, sat on the edge of my bed and we had a long conversation about my relationship with God. She had experienced tremendous heartache in her life and was seriously seeking answers regarding her relationship with God. We had a great conversation but I never saw her or heard anything about her again. I continued to pray for her for several years. However, her girlfriend remained in the group, but she always quietly avoided me.

Our house was not very big and the parties would be loud. Most of the time, I could sleep through the noise. However, sometimes the "tone" of the party would change and I would wake up. I was awakened one Friday and as I listened to what the situation was, one of their drinking buddies had been arrested for DUI. The group did not want their buddy to have to stay in jail through the weekend. As I listened, they made several calls to see who might have enough cash on hand to make bail for their drinking buddy.

It must have been 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning but they continued to call without hesitation. I could only hear half of the conversation but there was never any need for much of an explanation of why they were calling in the middle of the night. The only necessary explanation that was needed was that one of their buddies needed help. There were also no explanations or promises about paying the money back. It was obvious to all that there was an emergency and no questions were asked. The money was finally rounded up and by the time I woke up the next morning their drinking buddy had been rescued. The money was faithfully repaid and never heard any mention of the incident again.

Two key thoughts remained with me about that incident. First, if I was ever in trouble, I knew that I could call any of those folks for help. Sadly, the second thing that has stuck with me over the years is that my list of Christian friends that I would feel comfortable calling on for help has always been extremely short.

Given the years I spent with other families and the relationships of my parent's friends I believe that there is a link between loyalty, friendship, and hospitality. Over the years I had often been in many of the homes of my parent's drinking buddies, to check in with my parents, and inevitably I would be offered some "delicacy" that had been cooked for the party. For many years I just assumed that the common denominator of the group was the drinking but I later came to believe that the cohesiveness of the group was a strong sense of "community". It always seemed that strong communities should be found among Christians but sadly, I have found very few communities that approach the quality of my parent's community.

Many may consider their circle of friends at Church to be "communities", but from my experience they are more circles of friends, many are clicks but not communities. Clicks tend to be self-serving and do not represent the type of genuine love that Paul described in Philippians 2:20, "For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare." Clicks are exclusive and are destructive to genuine communities.

Besides "community", there were also several other contrasts between my Christian and my non-Christian experiences. One of the more concerning issues was the choices that most of my peers were making. By the time I graduated from high school I had attended Church services and activities with many of them for about 8 years. I was one of the few who came from a non-Christian home but I had spent a fair amount of time in many of their homes. I found most of their parents to be genuinely concerned about honoring the Lord Jesus Christ in their lives and families. Sadly, most of those peers rejected God before they graduated from high school.

They had all made professions of faith when they were children and most of them had been baptized. Of course, the parents were not happy with the direction that their young adult children were making but they appeared to be consoled with the doctrine, "once saved always saved". Another common reassurance that they clung to was Proverbs 22:6:

"Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it."

They assumed that since their children had been baptized and had attended Sunday school, Church, and youth groups for years that they had been "trained up in the way that they should go". Sadly, it became obvious that they didn't have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. As a note, as they grew older, many of the Church activities were turned into "the dating game".

After raising children, who have free will, I understand those parents' desperation. But given the parable of Matt 13:3-8, there are a number of doubts if very many of my peers were ever truly born again. We can't see the inner heart of people but I just never saw much evidence of a personal relationship with God.

And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "Behold, the sower went out to sow; and as he sowed, some *seeds* fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. "Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil. "But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. "Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. "And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

In the parable, the good seed was planted and it did sprout. But, the lack of "fruit" raises serious questions about their relationship with God. It is devastating for Christian parents when their child rejects the Lord Jesus Christ. So, it is understandable why parents so desperately cling to any hope that they can find. However, the truth in Matt 7:19-23 is very concerning:

"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. "So then, you will know them by their fruits. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. "Many

will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

Ultimately the conclusion must be that saying a “mechanical” prayer and even being baptized is no guarantee of a relationship with God. As the Lord Jesus Christ said Himself, "you must be born again". And to be truly born again, God's spirit must enter into our spirit so we can become new creatures. A literal "spiritual" birth. And as new creatures, because of God's Holiness and His love, our new natures will ultimately prompt us to build a relationship and submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

No help from my peers:

I was bussed to a different community for high school and I knew very few of the students. Most of those who I did know were Church peers but as most of them were rejecting God, it was difficult to relate to them. I was still climbing out of the hole of my early year's educational deficit. School studies and dealing with issues at home distracted me from very much social involvement in High School so I had very few friends during those years. For most of the first three years, I was unaware of any other fellow Christians. It wasn't until about the end of my junior year that I discovered that there was a Christian group on campus. I figured that if it took me that long to discover them that I didn't see any reason to become part of that group.

I had finally learned to read when I was in the 5th grade and had worked very hard to catch up during my 6th, 7th, and 8th-grade years. By the time I entered High school, my grades were pretty good and continued to improve. I had straight A's my junior and senior years and was invited to join the National Honor Society. The importance of being in that society was/is not important to me but it is worth mentioning because it demonstrates the tremendous changes that God had worked in my life.

During my high school years, a Christian family that demonstrated hospitality was the Pastor. I would often help him with his various Church activities. I couldn't guess how many Church bulletins that I helped fold. At the time I thought that he was a friend but afterward that relationship followed a bad pattern. There are always warm greetings and even the appearance of friendships while I was in a “ministry target group”. But shortly after falling out of the ministry criteria any warmth and friendship soon dissolved. I have come to see and believe that the leaders of such ministries are extremely insincere. I can appreciate when someone has goals and is focused to serve God, but if friendships are so easily sacrificed on the altar of their ministries, such friendships are of no eternal value.

The sad truth is that over the years, so many Pastors and those in full-time Christian work have not only sacrificed friendships but also their marriages and their children on the altars of their "spiritual" success. The pastor of my high school years appeared to have tremendous "zeal" for God but when God didn't give him the success that he felt he deserved, he became so bitter that he committed suicide. One of my conclusions is that genuine friendship is a product of the quality of love and loyalty that honors the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a sad statement that there have been so few true Christian friends throughout my life.

College:

During my later grade school and my high school years, my mom was married to my stepfather, Mike. He had been a sailor most of his life and he was truly a "tough" guy. But he always had my best interest at heart. He was "good people" and if he didn't drink, he would have been a great father and probably a friend. However, when he drank it was quite challenging to live with him. Sadly, he drank all the time. By the time that I left for College, Mike's and mom's marriage was falling apart. The day that I left home was a happy day in my life.

Almost immediately upon arriving at college, God lead me and my roommate to be involved with a campus ministry, the Navigators. The thrust of the Navigator ministry was one-on-one discipleship with a significant emphasis on God's Word, developing a personal relationship through prayer and spending time with God, ministry, and sharing the Gospel.

We had numerous ministry opportunities, including weekly door-to-door evangelism. In addition to sharing the Gospel, we invited students to attend introductory Bible studies. Many students made decisions because of those efforts and went on to be disciplined themselves.

Some of the responses of the students are worth mentioning. After some experience, it became fairly easy to recognize that many of the students lived pagan lives but had grown up in Christian homes. They represented my fellow Church peers that I grew up with. What is so concerning about that group is that they knew the truth of the Gospel but they rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. After talking with hundreds of students over the years, my estimation is that in the early 1970s close to 90% of those who grew up in Christian homes rejected the Lord Jesus Christ.

A tremendous amount of time was also spent memorizing, meditating, and studying the Bible. Numerous word studies, verse studies, book studies were completed. In addition to these personal studies, we often listened to messages from the Nav Rep. Every school term there was a weekend conference or two, many of which featured nationally renowned speakers. Many of these speakers had written books and had impacted the lives of countless men. They were very motivating.

In addition, after our freshman and sophomore years, we were encouraged to attend 6-week long summer training programs. These programs included intensive Bible studies.

Probably the most significant aspect of Navigator discipleship training was one-on-one time. These times were fundamentally counseling sessions where we were encouraged to develop Godly Character (Christ-likeness) and to strengthen our relationships with God. Some of the mentors were not as experienced as they could have been and were a little harsh. However, the consistent emphasis to strive to deepen our relationships with God and to live holy lives was invaluable.

Four years of continual intensive study and training gave all of us a fairly good grasp of God's Word. What was more important was the abiding relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Looking back over decades, abiding in Christ is one of the highest or possibly the ultimate desire that God has for us. Sadly, over all those decades of weekly Church messages, I have not seen much of a focus, teachings, or effort, to develop the importance of abiding in Christ.

Given the emphasis that the New Testament places on discipleship, it should be one of the highest priorities of the modern Church. However, discipleship has become a buzzword which indicates that few Church leaders have been discipled one-on-one themselves. The example of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul was one-on-one discipleship but the best of most Churches are discipleship "programs".

Encouraging individuals to die to self, to submit all to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to abide in Him requires mentors to be transparent, and to genuinely love others. Effective Discipleship rests on at least three critical elements; Qualified mentors who have an abiding relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. A commitment to honor and respect God and His Word. And genuine love, as is demonstrated by sincere hospitality and community. Someone cannot give away what they do not have. Discipleship is extremely rare within most of the modern Church.

While very few of the relationships I had during college have survived, I am very thankful for my involvement with the campus ministry. By graduation, I had developed a relationship with God where I had a constant awareness of Him. I don't hear voices but God does bring thoughts and ideas and questions into my mind every day for several decades. We have a fantastic friendship.

I love an old Sunday school song that has the phrase, "you ask me how I know He lives, He lives within my heart". I have not intentionally kept my relationship with God a secret but few have known about the depth of my friendship with Him. I suspect that the Biblical phrase, "pray unceasingly", has a completely different meaning to me than for most people.

After College:

During my college years, is committed to the ministry, I gave all romantic relationships and interests to God until He directed otherwise. There were some tremendous tests, but I continued to lay this area of my life on the altar of my heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. After graduation, God gave this sacrifice back to me as He guided me to marry a young lady who had become a good friend, Kandy. Over the 46 plus years that we have since been married, except for God, Kandy has been the most faithful and true friend in my life.

Both Kandy and I grew up in broken non-Christian homes but we had both seen our families involved in "communities". As Christians, being members of the family of God, we sought out Christian communities but even after all those years, there have been very few friendships among our Christian peers.

During my years in the Nav ministry, we were often on the front lines of spiritual battles and I hoped that through our common struggles that some level of friendship had developed. Not long after graduation, most of those "friends" were scattered all over the World to various ministries. We were able to keep in touch with many of them for a while, but, as we were just starting it was not possible to financially support very many of them. Sadly, a trend emerged that if we didn't provide financial support, the relationship evaporated.

After graduation, I no longer met the ministry objectives of the Nav's and was dropped like a hot potato. I am convinced that there was no ill intent but the ministry followed the model of the modern Church. "All to Jesus" and the importance of "accomplish great things for God's Kingdom" leaves little room for

genuine friendships. I am really grateful for the intensive discipleship training. But because of the lack of relationships as a child, I was on a quest to find genuine Christian friendship and communities.

While it would have been nice if more of the friendships had been sincere, the most grievous loss of "friends" has been when some fellow Christians have had major moral failures in their lives. The percentage of my Nav peers have done better, but overall, about 1/3rd of those whom I have known washed out of the ministry because of major moral failures.

As mentioned earlier, one former Pastor committed suicide. As I have considered many of these failures, I came to believe that suicide comes in many forms: Moral suicide, spiritual suicide, and physical suicide. Observing these disasters with fellow Christians and their destructive consequences, I am very thankful for the friendship that God has given to me.

God is merciful but out of all of those who had moral failures, only two have repented and reestablished our relationship. I had experienced failures in my own life and knew that it is only because of God's love that we have any hope of being able to love Him. However, when we are truly born again and God's spirit enters into our lives and because God's love is unconditional, the lack of repentance, even after decades has always surprised me. One possibility is that while many claim and even proclaim their faith, ultimately, they may not truly have been born again. This possibility is supported with the account of Matt 7:21-23 where the Lord Jesus Christ makes the statement, "I never knew you". It is worth noting that many of these folks had advanced degrees in theology, but it is doubtful that very many of them had been adequately disciplined where they would have developed an abiding relationship with God.

From what I have seen, with only a few exceptions, discipleship is one of few "ministries" that has shown to be effective in transforming the selfish desires of the heart. However, not all "discipleship training" is equal. Based on numerous life examples, effective discipleship is seldom accomplished in classrooms. The best process for effective discipleship is intensive one-on-one training, Bible training, and ministry serving opportunities. (Discipleship is further discussed in section #2.)

The issue of Divorce and Remarriage:

As both Kandy and I came from non-Christian broken homes, we had seen the results of unfaithfulness and broken trusts of failed marriages. We were keenly aware of the harm to the children. Of course, we were very concerned about the increasingly high failure rates of Christian marriages. God built convictions into our lives that He holds marriage and vows, and sex to be sacred and that Christian marriage is a representative picture of the relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and the Church. Failed Christian marriages are a significant insult against God and these failures embolden His enemies.

Because of our experiences with our parents, we had tremendous empathy for those who suffer through broken marriages. However, we cannot understand and are very concerned about how poorly the Church has/is responding to divorce and how little has been done over the last 50 years to strengthen marriages.

As we expressed our concerns, most of the Church leaders just did not appreciate our convictions. They either refused to address the issue or attempted to Biblical justify divorce and remarriage. The few exceptional pastors who took a position to not re-marry divorced Christians came under tremendous fire. One pastor was fired because of his conviction to not remarry individuals.

Somewhat ironically, the impression that I have received has been that many Pastors have been reluctant to hold a Biblical position against divorce and remarriage because they don't want to offend divorced and remarried couples. Most of our Christian friends who had been divorced and remarried openly admit that their divorces were the result of sin in their lives. They make no attempt of justification as they have repented. I suspect that the Christian friends who we have known who have suffered through a divorce have been able to work through their basic issue of selfishness and most of their second marriages have been successful.

When my non-Christian parents divorced in the early 1950s, divorce was relatively uncommon. However, by the mid-1970s, divorce and remarriage within the Church had become an epidemic. Disappointingly there has been a mountain of "Christian" books written to Biblically justify divorce and remarriage. The problem with this whole issue is that the foundation of failed marriages is self-centeredness and self-gratification. Divorce and remarriage are only the symptoms of much deeper problems of failing to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and failing to abide in Christ. While "lordship" and "abiding" in the Lord Jesus Christ are critical challenges, I have rarely heard sermons on these topics over the years. Instead, divorce and re-marriage have been quietly tolerated or openly justified. There is no reason to be surprised that a large percentage of Christians do not hold marriage, vows, and sex to be sacred.

To be honest, we have probably felt more rejections from leadership for holding Biblical convictions than those who have had such failures. This is not to minimize the tremendous pain that is felt from a broken marriage but rather a comment regarding the attitude of some modern Church leadership.

No Christian Community:

While I can understand the reluctance to address complex emotional issues, genuine love should be very concerned about the destructiveness of sin. The problem has been that genuine love has not been very apparent for divorce or most other similar issues. Once basic salvation has been addressed in someone's life, the attitude has generally been "next". There has been limited evidence of genuine love, so there is no surprise that the fabric needed to build Christian communities is in short supply. True community is built upon friendships and friendships are built on genuine love. The scarcity of solid communities within the modern Church is a symptom of much deeper problems.

After surviving broken homes, good Christian communities would have been very valuable for both Kandy and me. Ironically, our understanding of community was modeled by our non-Christian families but seldom found within the modern Church.

Over the years we have been able to find a few good friends but communities are really scarce. We may have been more successful to find good communities down at the local bar. There is something wrong with the picture when the quality and the number of Christian and non-Christian friends is about evenly divided.

The few Christian "communities" that we have found are usually centered around a particular ministry goal. If we meet the "ministry criteria" we were welcomed in. But since we were already believers, already married, had some level of Biblical training, we were seldom welcomed into communities.

We made several attempts to start friendships through hospitality. Sadly, after a meal or two, they were just too busy to spend much more time with us and were not interested. We couldn't even give good food away. (Looking back, I now have to smile at those excuses because at that time none of us had children.)

As a lot of Christians scurry home after Sunday morning services, we have very low expectations of finding a Christian community within most Churches.

Children:

We were married 5 years before we had our first child, a very active little boy, Daniel. For the most part, life was fairly normal. When Daniel was 1-1/2 years old we began expecting our second child. Toward the time when she was to be born, it became all too apparent that she was not developing properly.

When she was born by C-section, her length was normal but she only weighed 3-1/2 pounds. The doctors had no explanation for her problems. Tiffany was very fragile and when she gained some weight, (through IVs) the result revealed various problems with her heart. It wasn't long before it was discovered that Tiffany was also diabetic. Looking back, since insulin is an important growth hormone, Tiffany was probably diabetic which hindered the proper development of her heart and her body, and the problems just cascaded from there.

We spent three months in the hospital with her. Starting with a very stressful delivery, all of the medical questions, the many lose-lose decisions that we were faced with, and our general concern for Tiffany made this a very rough time in our lives. Tiffany ultimately suffered through three heart surgeries. Every surgery revealed that the attempt of the previous surgery had failed. That was quite frustrating.

Our first child, Daniel, didn't get to see a lot of his parents during that time.

Tiffany was quite alert and we had a precious relationship with her. On the day of her last surgery, there was a long delay for the elevator. She just stared at me with her little dark eyes as if to say "goodbye". After the surgery, Tiffany's primary nurse had come in to see us, (even though it was her day off). The three of us each had an opportunity to say goodbye to Tiffany. I remember how nice it was to be able to hug her without all the tubes and wires that we always had to work around.

I have come to believe that part of God's purpose for allowing challenges into our lives is to bring Christians closer together. However, other than a few exceptions, we received very little support. One Christian "friend" made the statement, "you must have some deep sins in your life for God to allow such a tragedy into your life". At the time, we were faced with so many difficult decisions that I wasn't able to respond to the comment. I only mention this now because it may have been representative of why so many Christian "friends" that we knew just faded away.

We held a small informal memorial service for Tiffany at our house. Most of those who showed up to support us were doctors and nurses from the hospital. I can't recall if any of our Christian friends were there.

Neither Kandy nor I understood/understand why God would allow such a disaster to happen in our family. We do know that God loves us and that He causes all things to work together for good for those who love Him. We just don't have the "big" picture. One thing that is clear is that there are a lot of

things worse than death, even losing a child. Perhaps God will reveal to us what His purpose was for this challenge in our lives.

The delivery, hospital experience, and death of Tiffany left us exhausted. It took three or four years before we began to feel more normal. But, through all that time, Kandy and I had absolutely no doubt that God was with us. It is so easy to have faith, be thankful, and praise God when everything is good. Possibly, to even be a little proud. However, as God's servant Job would tell us, it is so important to cling to God's love, joy, and peace when things aren't going so well.

Through the years, the only time that the loss of Tiffany has ever really bothered me was around her birthday. I would be reminded of Tiffany when Kandy would place some flowers on the table in her memory. When the other children were still at home, as I looked around the table, seeing them, I couldn't help but wonder what our lives would have been like if another wonderful young lady was with us. However, if Tiffany had lived, with all of her medical challenges, there is no telling what our family would have been like.

With the loss of Tiffany, we were very thankful that our next daughter was very strong and healthy.

Homeschooling, the path to family discipleship:

Did I mention that our son Daniel was a very active little boy? He was very sharp, very creative, but also very sensitive, and needed tons of attention. Some days he would just "meltdown". When he was about 3-1/2, we got the idea that perhaps a little structure to his day would help him. Kandy started with Daniel coloring for a short period of time every day and that seemed to really help.

I like to say that it didn't take long before we ran out of coloring books, so, Kandy started using pre-school materials and with the personal attention, Daniel did very well.

One day Kandy asked me what I thought about homeschooling? "Homeschooling?", I asked, "Is that even legal?" Motivated to make Daniel as successful in life as possible, we continued to spend a lot of time and energy with him and God honored those efforts.

Over the years, many have stated, "I could never home school my children". Kandy was as concerned about how homeschooling would affect Daniel as anyone. The initial idea of homeschooling terrorized her. However, she was able to spend time with him every day and help him through increasingly advanced materials. Daniel's personality was not ideal for homeschooling, but through a lot of hard work and one-on-one time, he consistently tested above the 90 percentile. After graduating from our home high school, he later became a successful lawyer.

Sometime after starting homeschooling, Kandy asked me, "what am I supposed to say when asked why we are homeschooling?" Usually, when asked such a question, a number of verses come to mind and I can formulate an answer based on Biblical truths. However, I had absolutely no answer to that question. I first looked through all of the typical Bible study helps of the time and still found nothing. There had been no teaching from the pulpit about "homeschooling" or any related topic concerning how to raise and disciple children.

When I reported my lack of results to Kandy, she remembered a list of verses that she had received from a home school convention.

I eagerly worked through the list of verses and was surprised to find how specific God is towards parents, especially fathers to be responsible for properly teaching and disciple their own children. In light of the lack of teaching on the subject from the Church, the Bible presents several principles that apply to raising and discipling children. By the time that I finished that study, God had impressed on me the conviction that fathers are responsible to disciple their children. Because of time constraints, Kandy did most of the work but together we embraced this challenge. (The results of my study can be found in Appendix A).

Once we became aware of God's command for family discipleship, numerous good and mostly bad parenting examples throughout the Old Testament became obvious. I was reminded of my high school Church peers and those who I met in college who had grown up in Christian homes but rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. The promise of "raising up a child" is valid, but apparently God's definition of "raising up a child in the way that they should go" is considerably more substantial than what is typically practiced by the modern Church.

As we became more excited about what God was revealing and demonstrating to us, we were a little surprised that the Churches that we attended just did not appreciate our convictions and our efforts to homeschool and disciple our children.

Homeschooling requires a tremendous amount of time and energy and even a minimal level of support or encouragement would have been very helpful. By that time in our lives, we didn't expect much from the Church and the best that we received was silent disagreement.

Our personal convictions grew as we began to understand that at the heart of appropriate homeschooling is family discipleship so the opposition from the Churches was puzzling. One pastor made the statement from the pulpit, "some families are worshiping the family instead of God". That was our last Sunday there. For us, the choice was to obey God or not.

As we looked for support and encouragement, we found a homeschool community. We made several friends at homeschool conferences and curriculum fairs. Looking back, every one of the men that I consider "heroes of the faith" were dedicated homeschool fathers. As it turned out, most of those families had experienced similar rejections from Churches they had attended.

One father was requested to meet with the elders of his Church. They had a lot of questions and the elders concluded with the proclamation that the father was going to ruin his children. His children are now married with their own children and the predictions were very wrong.

Understanding how important discipleship is, especially family discipleship, has led me to believe that God has been the driving force behind the homeschool "movement". Some of the modern Church has been more accepting of homeschooling, but even after decades of success, apparently, many Church leaders are still not able to discern God's goals and desires for family discipleship, and discipleship in general.

Many homeschool families strive to live by Biblical standards. However, their encouragement for others to consider their insights is not always appreciated. Sadly, a lot of potential was lost because instead of working through the issues, many Church leaders take a dim view of home school families. An example was when a family challenged a leader (who was a "friend" of mine) concerning some of the values that

were being presented during a Church program. My "friend" bluntly told me that they "hated homeschool families". Hopefully, this was an isolated incident but at the time it was representative of the attitudes that we experienced.

Back in the mid-1980s, when the home school movement started, there were many valid questions and concerns. However, after decades of successful homeschooling, as God has greatly honored the families who took their responsibilities seriously, homeschool families are probably more tolerated than embraced. The lost opportunity of not embracing homeschooling is that family discipleship is not promoted.

A portion of the modern Churches has recognized the problems of the Public School System so their solution has been to start Church Schools. The rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ by students from Christian homes is typically better than that of children in the public school system, but the important message that leadership continues to avoid is that God fully expects fathers to disciple their children. Instead of challenging fathers/ parents, most Church schools usurp the discipleship role and responsibilities that God has given to fathers/ parents.

Vivid Contrasts:

So many folks "receive Christ" and after being under the teaching of the Church, sometimes even for decades, and yet so many of them turn away from God. While the overall track record of the modern Church is nothing to brag about, thankfully, God has supernaturally changed the lives of many.

Of all of the men that I have known over the years, I can honestly consider only a few of them to be genuinely Godly. The lives of those men exhibit numerous admirable qualities, especially their relationship with God. These outstanding men harbor no ambitions to bring praise to themselves but they strive to bring all honor to the Lord Jesus Christ. Tell-tail evidence is that when complimented, they deflect praise to what God has done in their lives. Their commitment to humbly bow to Jesus Christ as their Lord allowed them to have a deep personal relationship with God.

One phrase that was commonly expressed by these men is, "God is sovereign". Their statements are not repetitions of some mantra but sincere expressions of their faith and praise of God that He will cause all things to work for their eternal good.

Their love for God spills over into the lives of others. It is an honor to know them as they demonstrate true friendship and hospitality (see Appendix I for example). Of course, they have spiritual goals, but as they embrace the responsibilities that God has given to them, God's love takes first priority and flows through them to their marriages, their children, and to others.

If the modern Church genuinely desires to address sin, to demonstrate love, and to accept the command to disciple the nations, the Church must learn to recognize and hold such men in the highest regard (give honor to whom honor is due). The Church should also make every effort to "reproduce" such men through discipleship.

Section 2, The challenge of "reproducing" Godly Men:

It is proposed that to the degree that the modern Church is able to emulate and reproduce such Godly men, the Church will successfully honor the Lord Jesus Christ. However, to the extent that the Church is not able to effectively disciple others, the results will be failure and shame.

Looking back over my 50 years of experience if, with Church, there appear to be four general categories that are closely related to the success or failure of bringing honor to God:

The first category is those who make a profession of faith, are baptized, consistently attend Sunday services and various other Church activities but overall, the level of discipleship of those in this group is extremely limited. This is the general description of most of my peers from Christian homes during my high school years. Sadly, approximately 80% to 90% of those in this category will outright reject the Lord Jesus Christ. Many in this group appear to be "Christians" through self-discipline and obeying the rules until they are faced with major temptations which results in major moral failures. The key element that is missing in their faith is that they do not have a personal relationship with God and most of this group never repents. There is a huge difference between "being" a Christian and only obeying Biblical teachings or some set of expectations that have been placed on them.

The dangerous aspect of this group is that as they succumb to lifestyles of sin, knowing God's moral standards, and not wanting to submit to the Lord Jesus Christ they feel tremendous guilt. Desiring to dismiss and justify their guilt they often become very outspoken enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sadly, this sequence of accepting Jesus into their lives, falling to temptation, refusing a personal relationship, and making Jesus Christ the Lord of their lives leaves them to become enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ. What makes these tragedies worse is that a high percentage of them could probably have been avoided if they had been effectively disciplined. The core of discipleship is to help others to learn to die to self. But this is not an easy challenge that almost always requires extensive investment in others over years.

The modern Church has not only done a poor job of discipleship of students but the Church has actually discouraged participation in programs that achieved some level of discipleship. (See Appendix E for a further discussion).

The second category is those who usually don't grow up in Christian homes and receive the Lord Jesus Christ in their teen years. Because of the freedom from sin that they experience, they are often very excited about their new relationship with God. Many times, they are drawn to go into full-time Christian work which leads them to Bible School or Seminary, oftentimes right out of high school. While they receive significant Bible knowledge, there has not been significant evidence that they are ever adequately disciplined.

While the Bible places tremendous importance on discipleship, it is just not a significant goal, function, or product of their ministries. The low importance of discipleship is probably more of the result of their limited or no discipleship training, making "discipleship" is more of a theory than practice.

A major challenge of discipleship is to help others to die for themselves. Dying to self is resisted by every fiber of our being. Therefore, we must learn to acquire the power of God. A major source of the power that is necessary for change is when we come to embrace God's, unconditional love. In a few instances, God allows some to grasp His Love with very limited input. However, God's prescribed method is through effective discipleship.

The alternative to embracing God's unconditional love is to adopt a performance-based relationship with Him. A huge problem with performance-based relationships is the motives are self-centered instead of genuine desires to honor God. While striving to accomplish great things for God, such motives fundamentally become efforts to accomplish great things for oneself. And when God does not grant "success", those with performance-based relationships often begin to feel that God does not love them which promotes very high failure rates.

The expectation is that with the great sacrifice of their education, significant Bible knowledge, and a tremendous desire to "serve" God, such men are qualified to lead the Church. However, God warns us that "knowledge puffs up but love builds up". And under the lie that they can earn God's love, they are often very proud. Without the tremendous resource of understanding God's unconditional love, their emphasis is "doing" instead of "being" a Christian. Instead of evidence of loving others, their marriages and children are commonly sacrificed to their spiritual "success", resulting in terms like MK's and PK's.

If a Christian leader with a performance-based relationship with God happens to escape falling into major sin, they typically perform their duties very professionally. However, friendships, genuine hospitality, and community are often missing from their lives.

An important conclusion is that success must be properly defined and that Church leadership must be Biblically qualified. The only consistent path to achieving these goals is through effective discipleship.

The third category is those who have received a fair amount of discipleship training. Discipleship training included significant Bible knowledge and a variety of ministry activities but most important involved significant one-on-one mentoring. Mentoring where there was a strong emphasis on developing a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and character development. The failure rate for this group is much lower, but even after 4 years of such strenuous discipleship training, the failure rates can still be too high.

The 4th category is those who receive effective discipleship, but a significant difference in their training is where there is a one-on-one mentor who effectively communicates love towards the disciple. This is the example that the Lord Jesus Christ modeled for us. As should be suspected, the quality of love within the discipleship relationship appears to have a strong influence on how well a disciple is able to embrace God's, unconditional love. And the greater that a disciple is able to embrace God's unconditional love the greater will be their "success". Grasping God's unconditional love allows for pure motives of love towards God, smoothing the path to a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

The most effective and consistent loving disciple relationships that I have seen have mostly been in family environments between parents and their children. This is not to say that all family discipleship relationships have been loving environments. Discipleship holds tremendous power, but it is not "magic". In family disciple relationships where love has not been *successfully* communicated, the relationship with some children has been completely destroyed.

The length of time for effective discipleship is also important. The program that I was involved in during college was 4 intensive years. For family discipleship, parents often have much longer opportunities to train their children (10, 15, sometimes 20 years).

As the Church didn't promote the importance of parental discipleship for most of the last century, when the home school movement started in the 1980s, few parents had experience or had been discipled themselves. The result was, most home-school parents discipled their children through significant trial and error. Of course, those parents made many mistakes. Thankfully, because of the natural love that parents have for their children, willingness to sacrifice all for their children's success, it was not 100% but a large percentage of those discipleship efforts were successful. The full results of the large percentage of the young adults that were discipled within loving environments are yet to be seen.

A significant side benefit of family discipleship is that many of those parents experienced tremendous spiritual maturity. There are questions if much of the modern Church has been able to recognize and engage much of what God accomplished.

The importance of Biblical discipleship:

Essentially, the three-year ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ was centered on His discipleship efforts with the Apostles. The last verbal command of the Lord Jesus Christ was to "disciple all nations". Paul followed the example, and principles of discipleship are woven through the fabric of God's Word. It is strange that discipleship has been such a missing link within the modern Church for over the last 100 years.

John 15:8-13 has apparently been used to define discipleship with an emphasis on bearing "much fruit" and the keeping of "My commandments". These characteristics are probably focused on because they are relatively measurable qualities. However, the ultimate test of success is, "that you love one another".

John 15: 8-13 "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full. **"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. "Greater love has no one than this that one lay down his life for his friends.**

A major problem with viewing success by the quantity of fruit or even by living sacred lives ("keeping My commandments") such measurements are very subjective. "Love" is much more difficult to measure. But given the Lord Jesus Christ's teaching of the Royal Law (Luke 10:27, Mark 12:30,31) love must be the critical measurement of success.

Luke 10:27 "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; *and*, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

The importance of loving others is also clearly taught by the Lord Jesus Christ:

John 13:34,35 **"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."**

God clearly defines failure (and success) in 1 John 4:20,21:

1 John 4:20,21 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: **Whoever loves God must also love his brother.**

There is an unbreakable link between loving God and loving others. This is because genuine love requires that we die to ourselves. To the extent that we die to our own selfish desires, wants and goals equally affect our love toward God and towards others. No matter how much someone claims to love God, or how "successful" they are, without genuine love towards others, any claims of "success" are deceptive lies.

To be honest, I have seen very little genuine love within the Churches that we have attended over the last 60 years.

(Appendix J discusses the potential impact of effective discipleship.)

Biblical definition of discipleship:

A major difficulty with discipleship is that there are different definitions of success. Therefore, it is very important to consider God's perspective of discipleship.

During my high school years, I was presented with the question, "what is a mature Christian?" I didn't feel completely confident with my answers to this question for some time. During the years of my discipleship training, the question migrated to "what is a disciple?", and closely related, "What is discipleship?" I considered these questions for more than two decades before God revealed an answer that I finally felt comfortable with:

I Tim 1:5 "*The goal of our instruction is Love from a pure heart, a clear conscience and a sincere faith*"

Because the relationship between Paul and Timothy is significant, it is wise to pay close attention to what Paul said to Timothy. In 1 Tim 1:5, Paul is not just making a random statement to Timothy but he defines effective discipleship and successful ministry. (Refer to Appendix B for further discussion of how Paul follows this pattern of teaching through some of his Epistles.)

Not surprisingly, Paul's statement is in complete harmony with the principles of the Royal law.

As a side note, consistent with the importance of love, God has defined the qualifications for Church leadership in I Timothy 3. Every one of the qualifications are ultimately based on various qualities of genuine love. (See Appendix G for more discussion on this area).

Because of the deceitfulness of man's heart, there is no quick solution or recipe. *Ultimately, a transformed heart is a supernatural work of God and the most effective path is through effective discipleship.* But discipleship is not just a "program" that can be accomplished through Sunday morning messages and a few Sunday school programs. Effective discipleship demands one-on-one mentoring through an extended period of time (possibly several years), where there is significant "immersion" in God's Word, spending time with God, various ministry activities (serving others), and personal challenges.

Foundations of Discipleship:

Paul also defines three significant qualities or foundations of genuine love, "a pure heart", "a clear conscience", and "a sincere faith". These three elements are critical to developing a friendship with God (abiding in Christ) and to demonstrate God's love to the World and must be used to accurately evaluate all ministry and discipleship efforts.

- Sincere faith:

The modern Church has done a fairly good job promoting the Gospel which is important since salvation is obviously the first step for any relationship with God. However, having a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of the Universe is no small thing. Many appear to jump to the assumption that just being born again and having the Holy Spirit enter into our being, and consistently attending Sunday services automatically results in a personal friendship with God. The tragic examples of those who are not adequately discipled are described above in Category 1 above.

The ultimate purpose of having a relationship with God is for us to "abide" with Him. To truly abide with someone implies a close personal friendship. As with any relationship, there is a need to spend consistent time together, to share, and to listen to each other. The most admirable quality of King David was that he had a dynamic friendship with God. This should be the goal of helping others (discipling them) develop a sincere faith.

As mentioned earlier, a major aspect of sincere faith is coming to the point of embracing God's unconditional love. Without faith, it is impossible to please God but more specifically, faith is required to grasp God's love. So, any attempts to earn God's favor through our own efforts are not faith, but pride and arrogance. And the "fruit" of pride and arrogance is often discouragement and resentment towards God. Resentment turns into bitterness; bitterness yields moral failure and moral failures result in death. However, confidence in God's love motives us to serve and obey Him, allowing us to reflect love back to Him, setting us free.

It is also very helpful as we begin to grasp the tremendous contrast between God's Holiness and the natural depravity of our lower natures. Then as we receive God's forgiveness, whole new areas of understanding and experiencing God's love becomes clear to us. Therefore, when our relationship with God is based on love, even our failure helps us embrace Him and gives us life-changing power that furthers our personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And as our friendship with God develops, we begin to grasp the surpassing excellence of our identities and how God views us through the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

A sincere faith is a hallmark of the Godly men that I have known.

-Pure Heart:

A sincere faith, when combined with embracing God's unconditional love produces pure motives. Pure motives are essential for us to offer genuine expressions of love to God and to others. So, when we "sacrifice" our selfish wants and desires to God, this is the purest form of worship (Rom 12:1,2) resulting in truly honoring the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord.

Rom 12:1,2 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, **to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Abiding in Christ is a relationship with God where we are constantly aware of His presence. Not just in designated prayer times but all through the day. As we experience various thoughts and challenges and even temptations, God becomes our constant counselor and companion. When we entertain wrong thoughts, even if it is only for a second, with God's awareness, it is natural for God to prompt us concerning Sin. Abiding in Christ does not make us perfect but it becomes natural for God to prompt us and for us to claim 1 John 1:9.

Sometimes we may struggle back and forth with our lower natures, but if we are faithful and persistent, we will ultimately prevail. Not only will our living relationship with God be strengthened but as we strive to be victorious, Jesus Christ becomes Lord of more of our lives, producing a pure heart.

Therefore, a major goal of discipleship must be to help the disciple in training to develop a personal relationship with God, to develop a pure heart, and to help them bring everything in their lives under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Gal 2:20 "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."

A pure heart is a hallmark of the Godly men that I have known.

-Clear Conscience:

There are at least three areas entwined with obtaining and maintaining a clear conscience.

The first area is to develop a functional understanding of God's Word. Knowing God's Word is essential to knowing God, to embrace His standards, and to be able to discern truth. As we saturate our minds and spirits with God's Word, we can then renew our thinking and see life from God's perspective. Seeing life from His perspective allows us to develop a value system that is based on Biblical truths.

With renewed minds, as we work through the challenges of life, in the presence of our friendship with God we will be able to learn to distinguish good from evil.

Heb 5:14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

And as we are able to discern good from evil, we will then be able to overcome evil with good (Romans 12:21). The immediate results will be a clear conscience, but over time, there will be proven Godly character.

A sincere faith, a pure heart, and a clear conscience produce tremendous power. As there is maturity in these three areas, when combined the result is to transform our lives. It has been a tremendous privilege to know some Godly Believers who have experienced such transformational power.

But the end goal is not just a transformed life but rather a personal and abiding relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Note: A family discipleship program based on the description of discipleship (above) has been developed. This program has been developed for family discipleship but it can easily be used for other discipleship situations. See the link below, "Discipleship Meditation System".

God's purpose for Disciples:

When the Lord Jesus Christ suffered the penalties for man's sin, He made a tremendous personal sacrifice, literally dying to self, demonstrating love towards man, and obedience to God the Father. Therefore, it is God's purpose that the Lord Jesus Christ be honored above all.

So, when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, every knee will bow and tongue will proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ to be Lord. Mankind will be in the presence of an all-powerful and holy God. Some will desire a personal relationship with God but most will only bow out of fear and will have no other choice. It will be a time of judgment.

Therefore, what makes this age so important (after He ascended and before He returns) is the opportunity for man to honor the Lord Jesus Christ, motivated only by faith, grace, and most importantly love. However, man has an extremely powerful lower nature. For man to love God, we must learn to die to our selfish and self-centered desires. The "tool" that God has provided to help perfect our love towards Him (and towards others) is discipleship.

The last verbal command, directly given by the Lord Jesus Christ was to "disciple" all nations.

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came up 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 the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**"

The problem has been that the primary thrust of most of the modern Church has not been to honor Lord Jesus Christ above all. Many may disagree with this statement, believing that their praise and honor is appropriate. However, after seeing the depth of the relationships and the commitment and the examples of genuine praise of the Godly men that I have known, most of what is typically considered to be praise and worship of the Lord Jesus Christ pales in comparison.

If Jesus Christ is not Lord in someone's life, it is impossible to teach or disciple what the mentor does not possess himself. Given that discipleship has been so neglected over the last century, it is no surprise that discipleship has not been held as a primary purpose or the "tools" of the modern Church.

In summary, the progression is simple and clear. First, we must become a disciple. Not just a "follower" but one who genuinely loves God and others with a pure heart, a clear conscience, and a sincere faith. Next, we need to instill these qualities in others (discipleship). And finally, we can then begin to disciple nations.

However, the discipleship of nations is much more than only discipling individuals.

Section 3, Representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ:

Discipling the nations:

While discipling individuals is the foundation for discipling a nation, disciples in a nation does not make a disciplined nation. As the Lord Jesus Christ holds three significant titles of authority; Prophet, Priest, and King, it is proposed that a nation is disciplined when each of these major areas of a nation has been brought under His authority.

-Prophet: The definition of a prophet is one who is a "true representative of God". As representatives of The Prophet, a major challenge is to transform the culture. This means that the Christian population must live Holy and Godly lives as examples of God's love and Holiness.

Sharing the Gospel and discipling new believers is absolutely necessary to transform the culture of a nation.

Then as a greater percentage of a nation begins to live holy lives, the culture of the nation will begin to model God's design. When love becomes the hallmark, the results will be strong families and genuine friendships, which will then result in whole communities who strive to love and honor the Lord Jesus Christ. Marriages will honor the Lord Jesus Christ and children will be appropriately disciplined. The qualities of such families will become one of the greatest evangelical tools. Essentially, the culture will be brought under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

-Priest: As believers are appointed to be Royal Priest, one of their primary responsibilities is to lead the nation to worship the Lord Jesus Christ. But God will not accept worship from impure hearts. As described in Romans, genuine worship of God is built upon presenting ourselves and being living and holy sacrifices to the Lordship of Jesus Christ:

Rom 12:1-2: Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, **to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Worship must be in Spirit and in Truth, so the responsibilities of Royal Priests are to build solid Biblical values, convictions, wisdom, discernment, and to be living examples, leading and guiding the worship of the people of the nation.

And as the priests of old addressed sin, when there are failures, one of the functions of Royal Priests is to encourage confession and repentance of sins.

The consequence of sin is death. So, when God's people, being Royal Priests, consistently demonstrate and promote God's moral laws and values, the ultimate result will be salt and light to the nation. Such demonstration of genuine love will fulfill the Royal Law.

-King: The Lord Jesus Christ is the King of kings and Lord of lords. His Representatives have significant responsibilities to promote good, to resist evil, and to secure justice. Representatives of The Prophet

will transform cultures and societies. As Royal Priests, the worship of a nation is transformed. As representatives of the King, Civil Governments will promote and support liberty and justice.

God calls some to "focus" on being Representatives of the Prophets. He calls some to "focus" on being Royal Priests. And He calls some to be His Representatives within the Civil Government. Each of these three areas is important but they should never be confused with each other. For example, it is not God's direct design for Royal Priests to evangelize or disciple through worship. And Civil Governments should never be used to legislate salvation, discipleship, or worship. However, each office of the Lord Jesus Christ is very important.

If we are to bring honor to the Lord Jesus Christ as King, it is absolutely essential to grasp God's love for justice. It should always be remembered that God also loves mercy.

In the beginning, the wickedness of man was so great and God was so displeased with the violence that the Holiness of God prompted Him to release the destruction of the great flood. This theme of God's love for justice is woven throughout history and described in the Bible. Before the flood, there is no mention of any form of Civil Government. After the flood, Civil Governments began to appear and while many Civil Governments have been corrupted, God's design for them is to be instruments to restrain evil and secure liberty to the nations. One of the most elements is to protect the liberties to share the Gospel. (Refer to Appendix H).

Because of the evil intent of the wicked, God has ordained Civil governments to use the sword. However, the "weapons" that God has provided for His representatives to "conquer" the nations are love and truth, and wisdom. God has no respect for salvation motivated by any form of threats or by the sword. So, while God loves justice, and while justice is an important element of the discipleship of a nation, it should never be expected that Civil Governments are responsible for individual salvation or transformation through discipleship. All that is required for Civil Governments to honor the Lord Jesus Christ is to administer true justice that protects liberty. While bringing the Civil Government under the authority of Jesus Christ is not the first priority, ultimately it will be necessary for a nation to be disciplined so that there will be liberty to share the Gospel and to love and honor the Lord Jesus Christ.

-Family discipleship: Family discipleship is extremely important for a number of reasons. God designed the family for children to be in a close loving relationship for well over a decade. The natural tendency for parents is to do whatever is necessary to help make their children successful (sacrificial love). Foolishness is bound up in the heart of the child but the rod of reproof will drive it out. God designed the family to be the only environment for appropriate discipline (the rod of reproof).

It is no minor task to disciple a nation. God specifically designed the family to be the perfect discipleship environment but possibly more important is that multiple generations are needed to transform nations. If the Church in any age attempts to disciple a nation without building on the efforts of previous generations, that nation will probably never be disciplined and may continue to grow more hostile against God.

Our Political Experiences:

We had been homeschooling our children for a few years and in good faith had registered with the State in compliance with the new home school law. One day, we received a phone call from a friend who

informed us that the Department of Education planned to effectively make homeschooling illegal in our State. Given that we were registered, if the Department of Education was successful, the situation could have easily come down to our family being forced to place our children into the public school system or for me to go to jail. With the Biblically-based convictions that God had given to us, neither of the two options were going to be good news.

Given the lack of support that we received during our challenges with Tiffany, gave us no confidence that the Church would rally behind us if the situation with the State turned ugly. The lack of respect for our home-schooling convictions evaporated any hope of support from the Churches that we had faithfully attended. From my younger years I knew what abandonment felt like, so being faced with the potential choices, with no expected dependency on the Church produced very lonely feelings.

The background of the political situation was that the new home school law had been passed as a result of the efforts of only a few Christians. They went down to the State Capitol and worked through the legislative process. The probability of passing a law that was so contrary to liberal philosophies of the State was nothing less than a miracle of God. Truly a "David and Goliath" type of victory.

As many states have adopted home school laws that are founded on the principles of the liberty that God desires for parents, it is amazing that while much of the modern Church doesn't seem to grasp God's purpose for families or the importance of liberty. Sadly, while God demonstrated tremendous victories, most of the modern Church continues to be unaware of God's intentions and flatly refuses to get involved.

Apparently, God had blinded the eyes of the Department of Education. And when they discovered that that the Bill had already been signed into law, they were furious! The Department of Ed then made a commitment to close down homeschooling in the State.

Looking back, it appeared that the Department of Ed was expecting to hold some meetings out of formality and then to adopt their new departmental guidelines. It is not commonly known that every department in the state, such as the department of Ed adopts its own guidelines with sets the rules and policies for the department. In the absence of legislated laws, departmental guidelines usually have the same force as legislated law. Therefore, if they had been successful, the Department of Ed would have effectively made homeschooling illegal.

Because of the attitudes and philosophies taught by most of the modern Church, involvement with the Civil Government and political actions are typically silently scoffed at. As a result, I knew absolutely nothing about how State Governments operated and had no idea what to expect at these hearings.

Upon arrival, I was very pleased to find myself surrounded by about 1000 other home-school folks. Of course, the Department of Ed was not happy with the turnout and attempted to make the proceeding as awkward as possible. There were various restrictions and we were bussed away from the capital where the meeting was held by an "assistant" with no authority within the Department of Ed.

The whole experience seemed useless but we later learned that even though there were significant liberal influences in the Legislature, they were not happy to hear that the Department of Ed was attempting to usurp the homeschooling laws that the legislature had previously passed.

After the hearing, we were then bussed back to the capital where many of us attempted to meet with our representatives. The Lobby of the Capitol was packed with home school folks. As Vera Katz (a State Senator) was weaving her way through the crowd, I happened to hear her make the comment, "we have not seen crowds like since the Vietnam protests". As a point of interest, Vera Katz was a co-author of the Education 2000 Bill. The Education 2000 was a program that was very similar to the current Common Core Curriculum. After 10 years of the Education 2000 program, the resulting quality of education in the State significantly declined. Now with the Common Core Curriculum, our state is working hard to offer the poorest education in the US.

God gave the home school community another miraculous victory as the Department of Ed was forced to back down. The good news was that because of their attempted grab power, the Legislature sent a clear message to the Department of Ed to keep their grubby hands off of homeschooling. Proverbs 18:10 says, "[The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe.](#)" Despite that most of the Church was MIA, because the homeschooling community was seeking to honor and obey God, He has kept us safe.

As previously mentioned, we generally knew very little about how the State Legislature operated, which forced us to learn as we volunteered and worked through various political struggles. One thing that became very clear was the immeasurable value of Godly legislators. Legislators hold positions that allow them to accomplish more than a considerable contingency of citizens. This is why the forces of evil are so desperate to maintain control of the Civil Government. As a result, much of the homeschooling community began to help good candidates get elected into the State Legislature. Expecting future attacks, much of the homeschooling community across the state became politically involved.

As some of the good candidates won their campaigns with the help of the homeschooling community, some of those legislators allowed home school students to volunteer in their offices. The result was that the entire legislature had an opportunity to observe numerous homeschooled students in action. What they saw were very polite, socially well-rounded, quite bright, effective volunteers. The volunteer efforts of those home school students probably had a greater effect on securing and maintaining the liberty of homeschooling than we will ever know. There is no doubt that God was responsible for those victories, however, out of a desire to obey God to teach (disciple) their own children, God showed Himself very strong.

As the home school community gained an understanding of the political process, many of us began to track and respond to various Bills, even some that were outside of the area of homeschooling. It wasn't difficult to discern the intent of most Bills. If the Bill became law, either justice would be promoted or liberty would be lost. As we gained experience, we were faced with the challenge to learn what God's purpose is for Civil Government. What we found was considerably different than what we had been led to believe from the modern Church.

One of the more obvious truths concerning Civil Governments is that God loves justice and liberty. Not just justice for the sake of justice but because true justice restrains evil and protects the weak and the innocent. Ultimately, just about every political issue gets down to the question of where honor is placed. Generally speaking, good laws promote Biblical principles of truth and justice and even love. Bad laws destroy justice and unrightfully steal from individuals. And as absolute power corrupts, those with evil intent and motives often seek the power of Civil Government for their own personal gains. Some may feel that this is a simplistic perspective, but in the final analysis, bad laws empower and

honor the forces of darkness while good laws enforce Biblical truths and ultimately brings honor to the Lord Jesus Christ. (See Appendix C).

Over time the battle lines became clear that there is a significant size group in our State and Nation that are committed to rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 6:12). Sadly, the large number of children who grew up in Christian homes, who were tempted and fell into sin, who refuse to repent, are driven by their guilt to reject the Lord Jesus Christ, have become an "army" against God. An army who has successfully expelled the Lord Jesus Christ's authority in a growing number of areas of our Nation. Instead of the modern Church discipling our nation, through poor leadership, the modern Church has unwittingly been responsible for planting the seeds of destruction.

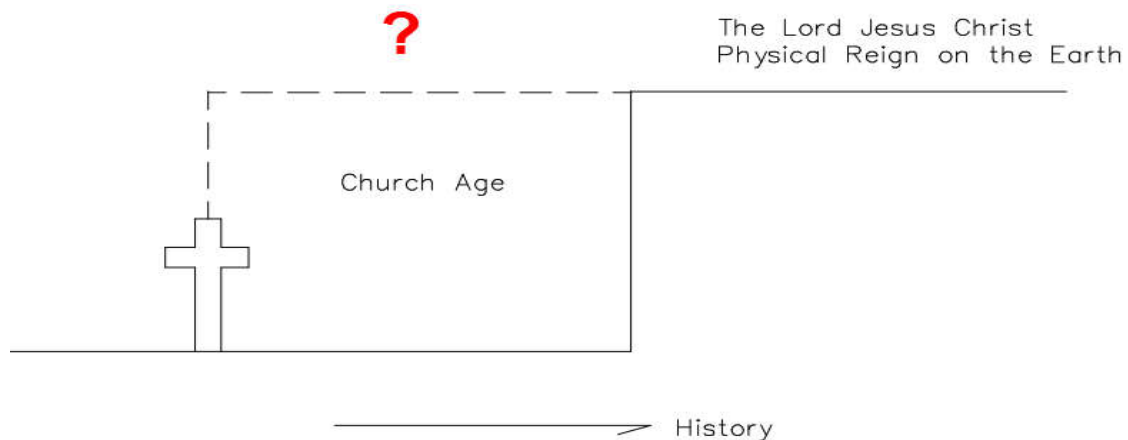
Desiring to justify their rejection of God and His moral values, a tremendous spirit of deception has been promoted. And as disturbing as this anti-Christ "army" that has been allowed to develop is the number of "Christians" who embrace many of the lies of the forces of darkness. God warns us to not listen to false teachers, but our nation has been saturated with false teachers (through movies and false reports, and liberal media). Not only has the modern Church failed to stand for truth in many areas, teaching God's people to discern good from evil has been a total failure as a fair percentage of the Church is incapable of recognizing many basic lies.

The doctrine of "limited" Lordship:

When I began to see how God was truly showing himself to be strong in the political realm, given the philosophy taught in the modern Church, I was prompted to consider a number of questions. There are some very dynamic and dedicated Christians in the political arena, but why are most Churches not only unaware but refuse to get involved to defend valuable and hard-fought liberties?

As questions and answers were identified, a pattern emerged. There is strong evidence that much of the modern Church has adopted a doctrine that the Lord Jesus Christ only has "limited" Lordship in this age. Most Church leadership will probably deny that they hold and teach a doctrine that Jesus Christ is not Lord of all but the evidence indicates otherwise. The failure of the modern Church to protect the liberty of the Gospel, the liberty of life (abortion), and other issues support such philosophies.

The diagram below is often presented in the modern Church. In the diagram, history (time) is represented from left to right. Above the Cross, referred to as the beginning of the Church age is a dashed line. The "solid step" to the right represents when the Lord Jesus Christ physically reigns on the earth with power and dominion and is when He will take full possession of His Kingdom. Given that He possesses His "full" level of authority when He physically reigns, the diagram unwittingly presents a philosophy that the Lord Jesus Christ is not fully Lord of the World until He returns at the end of the Church age (our time in history).



There is a difference between being fully Lord and being in full control, but the modern Church has so poorly taught the importance of the Lordship of Jesus Christ, it is difficult for the average Christian to effectively embrace His Lordship overall, especially in their lives. It is not usually stated or specifically taught, but there is a wide acceptance of the doctrine of "limited" Lordship.

One of the consequences of this doctrine is that it forces believers to compartmentalize their lives where Jesus Christ is Lord of some areas, but not others. The result of compartmentalization is that individuals may present themselves to be spiritually mature but there are significant inconsistencies in their lives.

During the 1960s, J Vernon McGee presented an extended Radio program, teaching through the Bible. McGee is not usually considered the absolute authority on Biblical doctrine, but his Bible teaching was so widely accepted that his teachings can be considered to be "representative" of much of the modern Church of the 1900s.

On the topic of Christians and politics, McGee's comment was: "you don't polish brass on a sinking ship". The intent of this statement was that before the Lord Jesus Christ returns, tremendous rebellion and sin is expected. The implication is that since the Lord Jesus Christ only has limited Lordship (during this age), the only reasonable course of action for the modern Church is to direct as much energy as possible towards spreading the Gospel. Such a perspective promotes a victim or martyr mentality, where Christians focus on "getting by" instead of working towards becoming victorious Representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The significant problem with the "don't polish brass on a sinking ship" philosophy is that it is in direct opposition to the clear command that the Lord Jesus Christ gave to the Church to disciple all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). As important as evangelism and Bible teaching are, they are only the first step towards discipling a nation. So as the modern Church adopted the philosophy of "don't polish brass on a sinking ship" the doctrine of "limited" Lordship has been unwittingly promoted.

And as should be expected in the cosmic war between good and evil, over the years there have been a number of assaults against the Lord Jesus Christ. However, the doctrine of "limited" Lordship has bound the modern Church from effectively protecting the liberty of the Gospel and justice in general.

The decision of Roe v. Wade was not only a travesty against the innocent unborn child but it was a direct assault against the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in our nation. Consistent with the "limited" Lordship doctrine, most of the modern Church divorced itself from responsibilities to strongly oppose the murdering of innocent children. Not only was the Churches' inaction a demonstration of a lack of love but it was also a statement of the denial that the Lord Jesus Christ possessed all authority.

If for no other reason than to apply the message of the Good Samaritan, the Church should have immediately responded. However, the lack of response sent a clear message to the forces of darkness that the modern Church did not embrace the Lordship of Jesus Christ and was not going to obey the command to disciple our nation. Because there has been so little resistance from the modern Church, the forces of darkness have been emboldened to flood our land with a tidal wave of evil. If the modern Church had recognized that the decision of Roe v. Wade was clearly an assault against the Lord Jesus Christ authority and had faithfully responded, that single "political" battle would have sent a strong message that there was a limit to the insults that would be tolerated against the Lord Jesus Christ. However, as the Church has been MIA, the political landscape of America has experienced tremendous turmoil and destruction.

In reality, "limited" Lordship is an oxymoron; if the Lord Jesus Christ is not Lord of all then He is not Lord. And if the Lord Jesus Christ has not been truly embraced as Lord, then it is no wonder that the modern Church has failed in the area of discipleship, in building strong marriages in guiding the training of children, in demonstrating genuine love to the Word, in politics, and several other areas.

America's founding fathers designed a government that was firmly built upon the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The founding fathers left us, literally thousands of documents of discussions of their intent to incorporate Biblical principles into America's government, laws, and cultures. The founding fathers rejected Democracy and desired a Republican form of government where representatives of the people operated under the authority of King Jesus. Their intent is clearly expressed with the statement, "No king, except King Jesus". Sadly, a large percentage of the modern Church is unaware of the Founding Father's intent and many do not even understand the tremendous difference between a Republic and a Democracy. (Appendix D)

Biblical arguments for "limited" Lordship:

To be fair, there is some Biblical support for the doctrine of "limited" Lordship. A key statement is Jesus' own words, "My Kingdom is not of this World". If Jesus' Kingdom is not of this world, the implication is that He currently only has limited Lordship on the earth. At least in this age.

Further support is found when Satan took Jesus to a high place and tempted him, "bow down to me and I will give you all the nations". Since Jesus did not challenge Satan's claim of ownership of the nations, the obvious conclusion is that Jesus was not Lord of all.

However, there are some major problems with this line of thinking. The implication is that when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, without rightful ownership, with tremendous power, He will "rip" the ownership of the nations out of the hands of Satan. With brute force, He will then proclaim Himself to be the ultimate Lord of lords and King of kings. The flaw with this perspective is that it is not consistent with God's character. While God holds all power, it is not His practice or His Holy character to "rip" or, steal or, take by force what is not rightfully His.

When Jesus rose from the grave, He conquered sin and death. When the veil was ripped from top to bottom, the very "nature" of the relationship between God and man was dramatically altered. Therefore, it is reasonable to understand that when the Lord Jesus Christ made the statement, *"All authority has been given to me on heaven and on earth"*, He was literally making a declaration that He had legally obtained full legal ownership of the nations.

So, when the Lord Jesus Christ commanded His disciples to "make disciples of all nations", He was not intending or inferring in any way that His representatives should "sneak around" Satan's kingdom as thieves stealing little parts of his kingdom. *But since the Lord Jesus Christ had legally gained full ownership, the intent of His commands in Matt 28:18-20 is to appoint His people as His fully authorized representatives to bring the culture, the worship, and the Civil Government of the nations under His authority.* Thus, **"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, **teaching them to observe all that I commanded you"** is a declaration that Jesus Christ is Lord of lord and King of Kings, of all. Not only in the coming age but in this current age!

Therefore, the philosophy of "not polishing brass on a sinking ship" is in direct violation of His command to bring all nations under His authority and promotes complacency and even rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ.

Representatives of the King of kings:

If Jesus Christ is Lord of all, as His Representatives we have not only been given the challenge of discipling the nations but our Lord Jesus Christ has given us His full authority. "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you". "And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age". Whereas, if we accept that the Lord Jesus Christ only has limited authority, there isn't much of a foundation for us to understand our identity in Christ and the command of Matt 28:18-20 virtually makes no sense at all. If God had only said, "Evangelize the nations" that would be different.

One of the excuses that have been given by the modern Church to avoid direct involvement in political arenas is that we are only commanded to pray for civil leaders. This is wise counsel for situations, such as the First Century Church was faced with under the Roman Government. However, many times down through history, such a limited approach is not consistent with the commands of Matt 28:18-20. (Please see Appendix F for a further discussion of this issue.)

While the modern Church has discouraged political involvement, God's Word is filled with examples of His representatives who were called to impact various Civil Governments. Joseph was called to save much of the earth, through direct involvement with the Civil government of Egypt. Moses made tremendous demands for liberty to Pharos, "let my people go". Ester risked losing her head to save God's people as she appealed to the king. God called King David and King Solomon to be king. Daniel was called to set an example of liberty (to worship God above man's edicts) and was thrown into the lion's den. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into the furnace because they refused to worship the idol. God's servant Job was highly respected, including his impact within the civil government. His protection of the widows and orphans was so effective that their hearts "sang". There are so many examples of Godly men of old who stood for liberty and justice it is unbelievable that much of the modern Church teaches that the Church should deny our Responsibilities and opportunities. Not only opportunities for salvation but to promote justice and liberty.

So much of the modern Church has avoided addressing the issue of marriage and divorce. Yet, John the Baptist approaches a very corrupt government over an issue of not respecting the sanctity of marriage. Yes, he lost his head, which warns us that political action is not without risks but he was willing to stand for what was right at the peril of his own life. Throughout history, standing for truth, justice and liberty often carried the risk of death. Luther and Calvin paid severe penalties for their Biblical convictions.

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself took no overt political actions but being the King of kings, by His very nature He was a threat to the Governments of the time. And being His Representatives, as believers, we also pose the same threat to evil and corrupt Civil Governments. There is a very specific reason why the Lord Jesus Christ added the words, "And lo I am with you always". As His Representatives, it is our responsibility to promote truth, justice, and liberty. Beginning with the truth of the Gospel, and the liberty to worship the Lord Jesus Christ, if our lives are not a threat to the Civil Government, then we are failing our highly honored positions. God does not desire His Representatives to use brute force but the forces of darkness understand that the power of truth, wisdom, and love, are tremendous threats against them.

William Wilberforce is praised for his instrumental efforts to abolish Slavery in England. His legislative efforts effectively advanced justice and liberty, essentially bringing part of England's Civil Government under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. However, somehow the modern Church has failed to embrace his example.

What does it say when much of the modern Church scoffs at political involvement and has failed to be salt and light in our nations? Yes, the Gospel has been shared but given the examples of the Ten Bom's and men like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, most of the modern Church has failed to be faithful Representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Callings:

As representatives of the King, many have identified and embraced the calling that God has given to them. And being faithful to their callings, many believers are very focused and dedicated to what God has called them to do. Any such faithfulness is admirable if offered from a motivation of genuine love towards God.

Some believers are called into leadership, into evangelism, into many other "ministries", many are called into "secular" careers, and some are called into the ministry of Civil Government. What is important to consider is that while we may have a specific calling, God may still direct us to some temporary service outside of our primary calling.

As an example, if we have a calling to be a bricklayer, God may arrange a divine encounter to share the Gospel. If we have a calling to be a Pastor, God may call us to lay bricks. It is important for us to discern the correct balance between our calling and other challenges that God may bring into our lives.

The only way to achieve the correct balance between our primary calling and specific challenges is to approach life from the perspective of loving God and others. If God places us into someone's life and they need bricks, then we should lay bricks. If God places us into someone's life and they need the Gospel then we should share the Gospel.

The problem is that there is a tendency for some to be so focused on their callings that "opportunities" to demonstrate love are often neglected.

An analogy of this is a soldier who has been assigned to cook. His job is to cook, not to fight. However, if the enemy breaks through the defensive line, even cooks need to stop cooking and take up their weapons.

How this applies to the modern Church is that when the forces of darkness have overrun our nation, even the "cooks" should have entered into the battle. There have been a number of times when evil came in like a flood. One such time was when Roe v. Wade was handed down. God does not call very many believers to be actively working within the sphere of Civil Government but sadly, when these attacks have occurred, most of the modern Church continued on with their "callings" ignoring the enemy. Essentially, the "cooks" continued cooking and when the enemy crashed through the camp, instead of entering into the battle, the "cooks" only asked the enemy if they would like bacon with their eggs.

The modern Church is in a cosmic war against good and evil. As loyal Representatives of The King, we need to be very aware of the spiritual battles around us and we must respond accordingly. We absolutely must focus on draining the swamp (our calling) but when alligators are biting, it is prudent to deal with the alligator before our leg is chewed off. Sadly, in the case of Roe v. Wade, the leg has long been lost and the alligators keep moving upwards.

The weapons of our warfare:

When the Lord Jesus Christ was born, the nations were clearly in the possession of the forces of darkness. Serving the King of kings, the first Century Christians did not take up the sword or attack Rome, and neither should the modern or any other Church. However, this does not mean that the Representatives of the Lord of lords should not take up the "weapons" of truth and love and wisdom. History reveals that through these weapons, over the last two millennia the nations are gradually being brought under the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus was born during the time of one of the most corrupt Civil Governments in History. About 250 years later, the original American Government gave tremendous honor to the Lord Jesus Christ. Not all but a fair number of the founding fathers desired to honor Him and the result of their convictions was a great nation. However, during the 1900s, the modern Church divorced itself from representing the Lord Jesus Christ in political involvement and the fruit has been tremendous sin, corruption, and death.

God loves man and only desires and respects relationships that are firmly founded upon genuine love. God also has absolutely no respect for any person who is motivated to honor Him out of personal greed, or coercion, or through the threat of force. So, if the Lord Jesus Christ had remained on the earth, men would have had no other reasonable option than to bow before the Lord Jesus Christ. Faced with an all-powerful God, faith would have been obsolete. Therefore, He appointed Believers to be His Representatives to establish His rule, not by force but through love, and wisdom.

If we understand the implications of the value of faith, it is easy to grasp why God has allowed the Church age to last over 2000 years. While there are many "signs" of His imminent return, given God's love for man, it wouldn't be surprising if God waits another 2000 years before the Lord Jesus Christ returns. The Lord Jesus Christ appointed Believers to be His Representatives, for Him to reign through

love and wisdom and truth to lead men to God through faith where they have the opportunity to genuinely love Him.

As we come to understand our identity, we begin to realize that we are *Representatives* of the Lord Jesus Christ. Matt 28:18-20 "All authority has been given to me on heaven and on earth". (Appendix K further discusses our identity). The Lord Jesus Christ is Lord of all! "Go therefore", reaffirms that we are His chosen Representatives. And later when He says, "And lo I will be with you always", verifies that we are operating under His full authority, until the end of the age. And when we are commanded, "And make disciples, teaching them all that I have commanded you", this means that we are to work towards bringing every area life (within every nation) under His authority. *Thus, God desires us to be valuable and key elements to demonstrate His love to the World as we are Representatives of the King of kings.*

Conclusions:

We don't know what is actually in the heart of others. However, Jesus did tell us that we can know a tree by the fruit that it produces.

Matthew 7:15-20 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. "You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn *bushes* nor figs from thistles, are they? "So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. "So then, you will know them by their fruits. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. "Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

For the few truly Godly men that I have known, some of the Pastors, the "fruit" of their lives is obvious. They love the Lord Jesus Christ and that love clearly overflows to others. However, while most Pastors have usually performed their duties with professionalism, the type of genuine love that Paul had towards discipling Timothy is seldom found. True disciples, sincere friendship, and hospitality are extremely rare.

John 10:11-13 "**I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.** He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters *them*. *He flees* because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep."

If Pastors faithfully perform their duties, have no genuine friendships, no discipleship relationships, and have failed to build Christian communities, the question is what is the true fruit of their lives? Can it be said that they were willing to lay down their lives for the sheep? Or did they just perform the activities of their jobs so that they would be "successful"?

In place of discipleship, genuine love, and honoring the Lord Jesus Christ, much of the modern Church has placed evangelism, "teaching", and knowledge to be the highest purpose of the modern Church.

There is absolutely no intent to diminish the importance of evangelism and teaching. However, there are significant problems when these "activities" are deemed to be the highest goals of the Church. Anyone, Believers or not, with the right talents can easily perform these tasks. Talented individuals can easily present good "performances". Instead of Biblical standards of leadership, men who are dynamic speakers and inspirational teachers have been allowed to fill the ranks of the leadership of the modern Church for decades. Such men often "manage" Churches but they miserably fail the responsibilities of spiritual "leadership".

Because of the power of our lower natures, we only love God because He first loved us. If mentors/leaders haven't been able to fully embrace that God loves them unconditionally it will be extremely difficult for them to present and teach what they do not possess themselves. Regardless of how "spiritual" or how dynamic one is able to teach if the most obvious quality of their life is not "love", they will never be anything other than professional "hired hands".

Without discipleship being a high priority, the emphasis to honor Jesus Christ as Lord over every area of life has been greatly diminished. Biblical standards, abiding in Christ, genuine Christian love, community, and moral fidelity, the importance of family and family discipleship have all greatly suffered. Some of the more devastating consequences have been unacceptable percentages of failed Christian marriages and large percentages of children from Christian homes rejecting God.

The pseudo doctrine of limited Lordship has prevented the modern Church from fully embracing the Great Commission which has been a significant roadblock for believers to discover important aspects of their identity in Christ. The philosophy of limited Lordship has crippled the modern Church from defending and advancing the Lordship of Jesus Christ in a number of areas of life. Countless liberties have been lost, and millions of the weak and innocent have not been protected.

Matthew 28:18-20 And Jesus came up 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 the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.**"

When the Lord Jesus Christ commissioned His people to disciple the nations, it is implied that the people, the culture, the religion, and the civil Governments all need to be brought under His authority. There is absolutely no indication that the Lord Jesus Christ intended for His people to avoid influencing Civil Governments.

As sad, disappointing, and as negligent that these failures have been, the underlying foundational issue is the refusal of the modern Church to embrace that Jesus Christ is Lord over every area of life. It is past time for serious repentance.

A Call to repentance:

2 Chronicles 7:14 "and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

Lord Jesus, please forgive us for not loving and honoring you with our whole hearts. We acknowledge that You have all authority in heaven and on earth.

We do not have pure hearts and we commit ourselves to develop a closer personal relationship with you, and to bring every thought and attitude captive under your authority and into your presence.

Forgive us for not respecting your moral standards and laws.

As fathers and parents, with your help and guidance, we will strive to be excellent examples of moral purity.

As you guide us, through love we will encourage all those who you bring into our lives to live Godly lives and to honor you and to disciple them as you lead, especially our own children.

Forgive us for not promoting and defending justice. We commit ourselves to bring every area of life under your Lordship.

Help us to be shining examples of your love. Please forgive our selfish attempts to be great before your eyes through our own efforts and ministries.

Forgive our selfishness and for not building your community. We will strive to demonstrate true hospitality.

Thank You for the tremendous unconditional love that You have towards us.

Thank You for the tremendous gifts and for considering us to not only be your official Representatives but Your very sons and daughters.

We make these requests as your appointed Representatives and through Your Holy and powerful name, "The Lord Jesus Christ".

Appendix A, the responsibility of fathers to disciple their children:

Children belong to God:

Ps. 127:3 "Behold, **children are a gift of the LORD**; The fruit of the womb is a reward."

Ps. 24:1 A Psalm of David. The earth *is* the LORD's, and all its fullness, the world **and those who dwell therein.**

Is. 8:18 Here am I and the **children whom the LORD has given me!**

Gen. 33:5 And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who *are* these with you?" So he said, "**The children whom God has graciously given your servant.**"

Ez. 16: 20-21 "Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. *Were* your *acts* of harlotry a small matter, "**that you have slain My children** and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through *the fire*?"

Parents are responsible for Children:

Eph. 6:4 And you, **fathers**, do not provoke your children to wrath, but **bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.**

Deut. 11:18-21 " Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. "**You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.** "And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, "that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth.

Prov. 1:8 My son, hear the **instruction of your father**, And do not forsake the **law of your mother**;

Prov. 22:6 **Train up a child** in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it. (This verse strongly implies that parents are to be the primary teachers.)

Parents are responsible to train and discipline their children:

Prov. 22:12-14 Apply your heart to instruction, And your ears to words of knowledge. **Do not withhold correction from a child**, For *if you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod*, And deliver his soul from hell.

Prov. 13:24 **He who spares his rod hates his son**, But **he who loves him disciplines him promptly.**

God will judge parents for not properly training their children:

Samuel 3:11-14 Then the LORD said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. "In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, **because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them.**

"And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."

Some may argue this application of God's word, however, there are no Biblical exceptions for the responsibility that fathers have towards properly raising of their children.

God has appointed the fathers/ parents to instruct their children:

Gen. 18:19 "For I have known him, in order that he may **command his children and his household after him**, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."

Deut. 4:9 "Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. **And teach them to your children and your grandchildren,**

Ex. 10:2 "and that **you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son** the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I *am* the LORD."

Joel 1:3 Tell your children about it, *Let* your children **tell their children,** And **their children another generation.**

We are not to allow the ungodly to be peers or teachers of our children:

Prov. 13:20 He who walks with wise *men* will be wise, But the **companion of fools will be destroyed.**

Psalms 1:1-2 Blessed *is* the man **Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;** But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

Jer. 10:2 Thus says the LORD: "**Do not learn the way of the Gentiles;** Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, For the Gentiles are dismayed at them.

Luke 6:40 "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained **will be like his teacher.**

Col 2:8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

True knowledge and wisdom only come through God's word:

Prov. 1:7 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge, *But* fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Ps111:10 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments.* His praise endures forever.

Deut. 7:12 " Then it shall come to pass, because **you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them,** that the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers.

Matt. 4:4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, **but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'** "

2 Tim. 3:16-17 All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Conclusion:

Since children belong to God and parents have been given the sole responsibility to train and discipline them. And, that there are no Biblical exceptions of anyone other than the parents to raise children. And there is at least one case where God harshly judged a father for not properly training and disciplining his children. And that God has appointed the parents as the primary teachers of their children. And children should not have ungodly influences through "companions" or teachers. And since true knowledge and wisdom only comes through God's Word. Therefore, God has given the responsibility of raising, disciplining, and training children to only the parents, (primarily fathers).

No doubt, many will look for loopholes in this conclusion. Two possible examples are Moses and Samuel. Both were raised by families other than their natural-born parents after they were three years old. Both of these cases were extremely unique situations. However, these examples say nothing that diminishes the responsibilities that fathers have towards their own children.

Appendix B, Paul's pattern of teaching:

To fully grasp Paul's intent of this statement, it is important to understand Paul's relationship with Timothy. Timothy was Paul's #1 disciple. Paul does not merely make this statement but he clearly follows this "pattern" in many of his letters to the Church. In bold terms Paul's goal for fellow Christians in his life was love.

In the Book of Romans, Paul describes aspects of a "sincere faith" in intimate detail for 11 chapters until the "therefore" in Rom 12:1-2. The remainder of the book is the practical aspect of loving God and others.

Another example of this pattern is in the Book of Ephesians. Paul describes in detail the position of the believer before God, our identity for 3 chapters before he presents the "therefore" in Eph 4:1. The remainder of Ephesians then addresses aspects of loving others. Paul uses this pattern of love built upon the aspects of faith, purity, and a clear conscience throughout his writings. In Colossians, Paul presents a number of arguments based on one of these three foundations.

Therefore given this pattern in Paul's teachings, "discipleship" is being defined ("the goal of my instruction") as having genuine love towards God and others from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and a sincere faith (1 Tim 1:5).

Appendix C, God loves Justice:

When I began to realize how much that God loved justice, major sections of the Bible became enlightened. From a casual perspective, it is not clear why God invested so many pages for books like Leviticus, but justice is so important to God, of course, He included such books into the Holy Scriptures.

God has tremendous respect for His servant Job. It is said that when Job spoke at the gate (the term for the Civil Government of that time) he spoke with such wisdom that the young men stopped and listened. Job is offered some of the highest praise as it is said, "he (Job) made the widow's heart sing".

Once I was aware of God's love for justice, it became obvious why God wove the theme of Justice through the Bible. Justice was a key consideration for the great flood and is a significant characteristic of the lives of Joseph, Moses, Job, King David, King Solomon, Queen Ester, and many others.

God loves the World and part of the reason why God so loves justice is because justice defends the weak and the poor.

Justice requires men to be unselfish and to demonstrate love so even non-believers unknowingly honor the Lord Jesus Christ when they exercise justice. Conversely, when men strive to obtain power for themselves, especially political power over others they subvert justice and dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ.

Appendix D, the need to support Christians in political positions:

When our son Daniel was old enough to volunteer at the State Legislature, I drive him down to the Capital for a number of weeks. A group of Christian legislators started the day with a prayer meeting. There were usually half a dozen of us home school dads. Those prayer meetings revealed the heart of

those brave men and women. I say "brave" because they faced tremendous struggles and pressures. They were definitely on the front lines of many spiritual battles.

One day after the prayer meeting, I stopped by the office of a very fine Christian State Senator. She was in the middle of a number of critical battles and she had even received death threats for holding righteous positions.

We weren't close but she understood our mutual desire to honor the Lord Jesus Christ, and because I was there to support her, for a short moment she began to cry. She was a very strong woman so I then understood how important it is to not only help get good Christian legislators elected but then to pray and support them as they are on the front lines of significant spiritual battles.

Since that time, I have made a number of pleas for help from our Church and other Churches. Sadly, over the years, there has not been a single response or reply.

Appendix E, Poor program priorities:

Instead of encouraging fathers to be spiritually responsible for their children, the modern Church has continued to insist on promoting Church-based "programs". Most of these programs include so much glamour and "tensile", it is not uncommon for them to create dissatisfaction within home school families. Discipleship requires a fair amount of work. So, when youths are faced with the of being involved in Church programs that are filled with fun, popcorn, pizza, and beach trips, or programs that require work, most youths will not make wise choices. Family disciple-based activities require Bible study, prayer, and service projects.

A good example of the conflict caused by glitzy youth group programs is the AWANA program. When a student completes the 10 years of AWANA they have memorized over 1000 verses, have had the opportunities to build friendships, and have worked together within teams and there is a fairly high probability that they have a well-established personal relationship with God.

However, the trend over the last decade or so has been to replace AWANA programs with glitzy youth programs.

Appendix F, the wisdom of praying for Political leaders:

1 Tim 2:2 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, **for kings and all who are in authority**, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.

Some may assume that these instructions to pray for kings and all who are in authority are all that God expects of His people concerning involvement with Civil Governments.

Another perspective is that God foreknew the wide variety of Nations and Rulers and dictators that would exist during future millennia. If God had given more specific instructions, such as the time of the Roman Empire, it would have been suicide for any Christian to attempt to influence the Government. During such times the most appropriate actions would **only** be to pray for kings and all who are in authority.

However, the admonition to pray absolutely doesn't limit direct involvement into political processes when it is appropriate. In fact, as nations are discipled, God also knew that at certain times in history it would be the responsibility of representatives to work to bring Civil Governments under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Appendix G, Considerations for Pulpit committees:

1 Tim 1:1 It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires *to do*. An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. *He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?), *and* not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside *the church*, so that he will not fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

1. "The husband of one wife" is fairly explanatory. However, the foundation for being a husband of one wife is putting others first, respecting vows, and generally loving those close to our lives. Ultimately, this is a very important test of qualifications.
2. "Temperate, prudent, respectable" are all character qualities of respecting others and having good discernment.
3. "Hospitable", with the right attitude, hospitality demonstrates genuine love for others and an acknowledgment of "community". Ultimately, hospitality is indicative of being open and transparent, and committed to loyal friendships.
4. "Able to teach". Many times, this is used to focus on good speaking abilities. However, being able to teach is best defined when there are a number of successful students. The first student that should be considered is the candidate's own children. If the children are not adults, it is extremely difficult to determine if the candidate is an effective teacher or if he just goes through the motions. There should also be a number of men that he has discipled.
5. "Not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. All of these tests could be looked at individually but as a group, the question is if the candidate generally died to self. They are also evidence that Jesus Christ is Lord of His life. One of the best methods of determining if a leadership candidate has died to self is to carefully determine what their definition is for success in general and for ministry success. If the candidate is willing to sacrifice his marriage and his children on the altar of his ministry, he does not pass the test of having learned to die to self.
6. "*He must be* one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?)," In parallel with #4 the candidate must have demonstrated effective discipleship of his own children. In parallel with #3, there should be close friendships between the candidate and his young adult children. There needs to be solid evidence of "generally being concerned about the welfare of others". This includes friends, those in the Christian community, and his wife and his own children.
7. "Not a new convert". What has happened all too often is that young men from non-Christian homes receive the Lord Jesus Christ sometime in their high school years. They are very excited about their new life and freely share their faith with their friends. When faced with career choices they choose to pursue full-time Christian work so they continue on to Bible school/

seminary. 3 To 6 years later they graduate with a degree or two and get their first pastorate in a small Church. At that time, many of them have not been a Christian for much more than 8 years. Small Churches typically have high turnover rates about every 4 years. At that time many of the Pastors leave their first Church "under fire" and with not the best attitudes. They have been a Christian for only 12 years but feel that they are much more spiritually mature than the average members of their previous Church. Also, by this time they have usually been married about 6 years and have 2 or 3 children. No doubt many of these young Pastors have tremendous potential but their spiritual maturity is questionable.

Another common avenue is that they grow up in a Christian home, attend all of the normal Church programs. They don't become bitter and desire to pursue full-time Christian ministry. Overall, tremendous potential but many times they really have never been discipled as is evidenced by their lack of abiding in Christ. More overall maturity than the first group but still unable to effectively disciple others.

A very small group of young adults grow up in a Christian home where they have been effectively discipled and do have an abiding relationship with Christ. It is not uncommon for these young adults to have studied the Bible some amount of time most days of the week since they have been young. By the time they graduate from high school they have had at least 12 years of solid Bible teaching, and have usually been involved in various ministries. What is interesting about this group is that they usually realize that they are not fully qualified and pursue "experience" before pursuing full-time Christian work. Following this path in their lives, they may be the best qualified for leadership but they may not have formal credentials.

It is extremely important to develop questions and interview situations to help discern if potential candidates fulfill each of the requirements above.

Many appear to assume that Seminary or Bible School programs are synonymous with discipleship. However, there is a fair amount of evidence that these programs lack critical elements of effective discipleship. A common philosophy of Seminaries and Bible schools is that if they teach the correct information, the students will "become" spiritual. However, such philosophies are in direct opposition with what God teaches, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up". It is foolish to expect that years of strenuous academic achievement (the acquisition of knowledge) will result in genuine love towards God and others.

One way to discern if a Pastor genuinely loves others is if they have a history of holding their previous congregations at arm's length. If we look at the close friendships that Jesus had with His disciples, and if we look at the relationship that the Apostle Paul clearly had with many in his congregations, (especially Timothy) there is no Biblical foundation for some of the attitudes and the relationship that many modern-day Pastors have towards their congregations. But, if there are no close relationships, any discipleship efforts have been void of genuine love.

Appendix H, God's purpose for Civil Governments:

Before the flood, there is no mention of any form of Civil Government. After the flood, Civil Governments began to appear and while many Civil Governments have been corrupted, God has guided them to be instruments of His plan for the World.

An exhaustive study on God's purpose for Civil Government reveals His desire to restrain evil and to promote good, which is consistent with the importance of God's people being salt and light. Regardless if a nation is considered to be "Christian" or not, injustice in a nation represents bowing to man and its rejection of the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, to the extent that a nation exercises justice, its civil government bows to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. If a nation is to be disciplined, it is extremely important for representatives of the King to successfully integrate the principles of God's laws into the laws of the nation.

If the laws of a nation are not built upon the principles of God's laws, a few men with wicked and evil motives will subvert justice and destroy liberty as they oppose the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This was the case that the First Century Church experienced. Christians were unjustly crucified along the sides of the road for miles and God was not pleased with Rome.

A nation cannot be disciplined without bringing the Civil Government under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ. If anyone believes liberty does not need to be secured, they are naive that the forces of darkness will continue to let the believers worship God or to be free to continue to share the Gospel. If the modern Church continues down this MIA path, our nation may get back to the political conditions of Rome quicker than anyone may expect.

Liberty is when God's people are able to safely fulfill their responsibilities and live lives that worship the Lord Jesus Christ. "Freedom" is when people can do whatever they want. Liberty and freedom should never be confused. Civil Governments that promote "freedom" and individual rights, ultimately subvert justice. When individual rights are emphasized, the selfish and self-centered nature of man will not result in honoring the Lord Jesus Christ.

One of the responses from modern Church leaders of why they do not promote or are not involved in political actions is, "morality cannot be legislated, and man's heart must be changed through faith in Jesus Christ". There are a number of issues with such a perspective, but the most grievous is the very high percentage of those who verbally acknowledge Jesus Christ, perhaps they attend Church for years and who later fall into sin and reject their faith. Apparently, the modern Church has not been able to impact society even when men have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ.

Biblical examples, modern examples, and the inability of the modern Church to affect society through the doctrine of limited Lordship all indicate that God desires His representatives to work towards bringing Civil Governments under the authority of the King Jesus Christ.

Appendix I, example of true hospitality:

When our son was about 10 years old, we met another family at a homeschooling convention. Both of our families were waiting in line and their genuine love and friendliness were obvious. Even with that short encounter, lifelong friendships were started.

The age and interests of our children were a good match between the families. Because there was a 10-hour road trip between our two homes we were only able to see them about once a year. They lived in a "wilderness" with hunting and fishing. They had a few horses and with other activities, our family often drove to their house and stayed with them.

Their hospitality was absolutely unquestionable. They always invited us to visit when we called. Our stays were about 4 or 5 days long and we visited 10 years in a row.

Beyond the hospitality was the genuine love and friendships that we developed. I doubt that there was a single squabble between any of the children over the entire 10 years.

Something that is important to note is that while we were staying with them, it was very common for other families to drop by their homes. Over the years we began to develop strong friendships with about 10 other families. Essentially, we were accepted into their "community". The quality of love and fellowship and friendship and sincere love was fantastic!

It was in that community where I met some truly Godly men.

The only problem was that as we drove back home, we had a lot of time to contemplate another year of pitiful Christian fellowship.

Appendix J, the potential of discipleship:

If we assume that the Church embraced discipleship, what would that mean?

One characteristic of discipleship is if the mentoring ministries continue to encourage, guide, and assist graduates to continue to share their discipleship training with others ("managed" discipleship). Those ministries that do not "multiply" their efforts can be considered to be "unmanaged" discipleship programs.

YWAM has had tremendous success with about a 1-year intensive discipleship program. One year is probably not typically long enough, but it is very common for the students (disciples in training) to continue for more than one year, many times for several years. YWAM is growing and the ultimate impact is yet to be felt. It is difficult to know how many graduates continue on to disciple others, but it appears that YWAM is a "managed" ministry.

AWANA is a 10-year discipleship program. Because many do not complete the full 10 years (the Citation Award) it is difficult to understand the true impact. However, for those who receive their Citation Awards, the statistics indicate about a 90% success rate. Because the AWANA program has typically not encouraged graduates to continue to serve in AWANA, it should probably be considered to be an unmanaged discipleship program.

College ministries such as the Navigators and CREW, generally invest 4 years into the disciples that they train. Back in the '70s and 80's they were unmanaged programs but it was reported that they have been managed for the last few decades.

About 1980 homeschooling (family discipleship) started. The discipleship cycle for homeschooling is about 20 years. While the slowest of all discipleship programs, the level of spiritual maturity is significant. As much of the modern Church has not fully supported family discipleship and as the parents have desired their grandchildren to be discipled, family discipleship should be considered to be "managed" under significant resistance. The full impact of family discipleship has not yet been felt and significant results will probably not be realized until about 2080.

It is no surprise that God desires effective discipleship and ultimately, He will guide a number of ministries until His plans are fulfilled. However, if the modern Church repents and embraces discipleship, the following is a model of the potential results. There is a number of assumptions, so this is just one possible set of numbers.

In this State, which is a very "average" for size and population there is an estimated 1000 to 3000 pastors and assistant pastors. If 1000 of them are obedient to disciple one other person every 4 years and if the fallout rate is only 20%, the following chart illustrates the potential:

Year	Teachers	Students	Total	80% Success
2020	1000	1000	2000	1,600
2024	1600	1600	3200	2,560
2028	2,560	2560	5120	4,096
2032	4096	4096	8192	6,554
2036	6,554	6553.6	13107.2	10,486
2040	10,486	10485.76	20971.52	16,777
2044	16777.22	16777.22	33554.43	26,844
2048	26843.55	26843.55	53687.09	42,950
2052	42949.67	42949.67	85899.35	68,719
2056	68,719	68719.48	137439	109,951
2060	109951.2	109951.2	219902.3	175,922
2064	175921.9	175921.9	351843.7	281,475
2068	281475	281475	562950	450,360
2072	450,360	450360	900719.9	720,576
2076	720575.9	720575.9	1441152	1,152,922
2080	1152922	1152922	2305843	1,844,674
2084	1844674	1844674	3689349	2,951,479
2092	2951479	2951479	5902958	4,722,366

While 100% of a population will probably never happen, in theory, the entire population of the state would not only be Christians but would be strong Disciples with a significant personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ before 1970.

Appendix K, our identity in the Lord Jesus Christ:

I suspect that most of the fellow believers that I have known over the last 50 years have had a weak understanding of our identity in the Lord Jesus Christ. The identity of the believer is woven throughout

the New Testament. A short section of the identity of the believer in Eph 1 is italicized below. It is important to note the past tense of the statements:

Eph 1:3-14 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*, just as *He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world*, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. *In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself*, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, *which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved*. *In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses*, according to *the riches of His grace* which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight *He made known to us the mystery of His will*, according *to His kind intention* which *He purposed in Him* with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. *In Him also we have obtained an inheritance*, having been *predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will*, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to *the praise of His glory*. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, *you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise*, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of *God's own possession*, to *the praise of His glory*.