

Discipleship – A life Long Journey

Week 2

Growing

Philippians 4:8

Too often we see discipleship as an education process for new Christians, when really what it is is a lifelong process of following Jesus.

One scholar said “We never arrive, we never know it all and we never have it all together Yet, we aspire to maturity.”

Paul articulated it this way:

Php 3:13 Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead,

Php 3:14 *I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

A couple of things here:

1. He hasn't made it.
2. He presses on – works at it.
3. Aims for the future
4. The aim is the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

So, its on going, we get that, we understand that yet sometimes we don't let it come from the brain to our processes.

We have good orthodoxy – good belief structures and understanding

But our

Orthopraxis is often at logger heads.

Part of Spiritual growth is the development of wisdom and it's assimilation into our lifestyle. As I have said before wisdom in the bible is not about knowledge but how to use the knowledge we have. So spiritual wisdom is about using the information we have about God and Jesus and using it wisely in our life.

Proverbs talks about wisdom and its use a lot. Have a listen to these verses.

Pro 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Pro 2:2 making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding;

Pro 2:6 For the LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;

Pro 2:7 he stores up sound wisdom for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk in integrity,

Pro 2:9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice and equity, every good path;

Pro 2:10 for wisdom will come into your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul;

Pro 3:21 My son, do not lose sight of these— keep sound wisdom and discretion,

Pro 4:5 Get wisdom; get insight; do not forget, and do not turn away from the words of my mouth.

Proverbs teaching about wisdom goes on and on, in every chapter it is expounded over and over again. And it all links knowing then reacting appropriately to that knowledge.

How does one grow in wisdom?

Let's have a look at that.

A couple of things here:

1. There is a list and it is about developing. Not one topic through the next but developing each. Truth, honour and integrity, purity, justice, commendability and a degree of niceness (lovely), excellence, good things.

2. We are told to think about them.

Logizomai= take an inventory, make conclusions,
I like that explanation- take an inventory. In other words, work it through.

Ow this kind of thinking has some consequences:

If we are to think about the good stuff, then what happens to the bad stuff. By inference – we don't think about it, in other words it has nothing to do with our lives.

Let's do some paraphrasing here.

8. Finally, brothers, whatever is not true, whatever is not honorable, whatever is not just, whatever is not pure, whatever is not lovely, whatever is not commendable, if there is anything not worthy of excellence, if there is anything not worthy of praise, don't think about these things.

Ok, do we get that, those things that don't fit the true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, commendable excellent standard don't get time spent on them.

Now that has some ramifications for our life style. I will be really simplistic here and pick one thing and let you apply it to other areas of life.

TV – what do we turn off. Well according to this we need to turn off what ever of those things that don't fit the true, honourable, just, pure, lovely, commendable excellent standard don't get time spent on them.

How does that play out?

Turn off the sex scenes, the senseless violence maybe half the news, the smutty comedy, the list goes on.

See what discipleship is about. Continued keeping up the relationship and its standards.

Part of our growth as Christians is identifying what is good and bad for us then making the decision to stay with the good.

I read recently that most commercials on TV were based on sex, greed and misinformation so I tried an experiment. I read during the commercials. In one show that I watched, when I read in the commercials I read all of 1 Timothy. I set my mind on good things. Is this simple trick a way forward for us in some of these things. Replace the bad with a good.

Let's look at the rest of that passage.

9. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Notice it says practice. It is not only practice to get better but put into practice. Deal with the good, eliminate the bad. Practice that.

The tag ending is interesting:

the God of peace will be with you.

There is a consequence to doing the right thing by God- peace with Him.