

Study 9. Three Kinds of People

Becoming a Disciple Series

What You Are is What You Will Reproduce

The father of Jonathan Edwards was a minister, and his mother was the daughter of a clergyman. Among their descendants were fourteen presidents of colleges, more than one hundred college professors, more than one hundred lawyers, thirty judges, sixty physicians, more than a hundred clergymen, missionaries and theology professors, and about sixty authors. There is scarcely any great American industry that has not had one of his family among its chief promoters. Such is the product of one American Christian Family, reared under the most favorable conditions. The contrast is presented in the Jukes family, which could not be made to study and would not work, and is said to have cost the state of New York a million dollars. Their entire record is one of pauperism and crime, insanity and imbecility. Among their twelve hundred known descendants, three hundred and ten were professional paupers, four hundred and forty were physically wrecked by their own wickedness, sixty were habitual thieves, one hundred and thirty were convicted criminals, fifty-five were victims of impurity, only twenty learned a trade (and ten of those learned it in state prison), and this notorious family produced seven murderers.¹

We can teach what we know, but we can only reproduce what we are. Jesus commanded us to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19), but we cannot do that until we are disciples ourselves. The fruit of an apple is not just more apples but more trees. With eight billion people on planet Earth, we need to produce spiritual orchards, not just apples. I am only one, but if I can give my life as a seed, I want to be a seed that will grow orchards, just like my Master modeled to me. What we are is what we will reproduce. Jesus said,

“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, Let me take the speck out of your eye, when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye (Matthew 7:3-5).

Hypocrisy is Stage Acting

Hypocrisy is deception at its worse. We get the word hypocrite from the Greek word *hupokrisis*.” It was used in the common Greek language of the time to describe an actor on the stage having a mask on his face and acting the part of someone else. A hypocrite is a person who says one thing with his mask on but, in reality, is someone completely different to the image he or she portrays, i.e., someone who expects from others what they are not willing to do themselves.

Bonaventura, a Franciscan and one of the greatest philosophers of the Middle Ages, said, “A man who does not practice what he preaches destroys what he builds.” When we do not practice what we say we are, it is living a lie, a deception that is like the corrupting influence of yeast. Yeast is

¹ As told by J. Oswald Sanders in the book *Spiritual Clinic*, published by Moody Press, 1958.

a fermenting agent. When a little bit of yeast is added to a lump of dough, it gradually works through the whole piece, changing the size, appearance, and taste. Jesus wants us to be open and honest with Him about who we are inside and out. What is on the inside will always work through to the outside. Any inward deception we allow to remain in our lives will taint others with its corrupting influence.

You cannot hide who you are. The good news is that God accepts us the way we are. People make the mistake of thinking that they ought to be a better person before they can become a Christian. They work hard at trying to clean up their lives so that God will accept them. However, the Word of God declares that we are accepted not by what we do but by what Christ has done. It is a finished work upon which we cannot improve. It is 100% of what Christ has done that makes us accepted. We are deceiving ourselves if we think that we can be good enough by doing enough good works to please God. ²⁸Then they asked him, ‘What must we do to do the works God requires?’ ²⁹Jesus answered, The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent' "(John 6:28-29).

Spiritual Growth Takes Time

The Lord encourages His disciples to be God-pleasers and not men-pleasers. Life is short, so we ought to get real with God and man this side of heaven. Jesus warns His disciples that, when eternity starts, there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed. God will bring out into the open things that men have hidden, their motives as well as acts. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed or hidden that will not be made known. Sometimes, God reveals hidden things this side of eternity, e.g., the whispers that one thinks have been in private places, the interior rooms, will be proclaimed in full view of all humanity. Paul the Apostle, in writing to his protégé, Timothy, said, “The sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them” (1 Timothy 5:24). Jesus said, “What you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs” (Luke 12:3).

We that belong to Christ often want to see visible fruit from our lives immediately, but God's beginning purpose is more internal than external. It's a bit like the Chinese Bamboo tree, for when the bamboo sprout is planted in the ground, nothing seems to be happening for four to five years (and sometimes more). No matter how much care and attention to detail one gives to it, there is no outward manifestation until sometime in the fifth year. When it breaks ground, all of a sudden, in six weeks, it can grow to be ninety feet high. World Book Encyclopedia records that one bamboo tree can grow three feet in a single twenty-four-hour period.² Jesus trained His disciples by modeling behavior backed up by teaching. He taught them to have attitudes they could model to others. Often we cannot see God's internal work in the lives of those we serve, then suddenly, a burst of growth often surprises the leader. Continue modeling what Jesus taught you to others and leave the results to God. We can only model to others what we are; otherwise, we are just hypocrites and stage actors in the play of life. We must look at the internal fruit of the tree of our lives and make sure that ‘our tree’ has been made good by the Spirit’s work is dying to self and being alive to Christ.

² Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, Zondervan Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI. Page 394.

³³“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of (Matthew 12:33-34).

Three Kinds of People

¹⁴The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. ¹⁵The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, ¹⁶for, “Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:14-16).

1) Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians, chapters two and three, about three kinds of people, the person without the Spirit, the spiritual man, and the fleshly man. The Greek phrase translated as *the person without the Spirit* is the word *psuchikos*; it identifies the unregenerate sensual person, one governed by natural instincts and has no desire or sensitivity to the things of God. The person without the Spirit does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; he is enslaved to his passions and the things of this world. Such a person is unaware of God at work and does not accept or discern spiritual things. Human reasoning or emotions motivate him.

2) The spiritual man is contrasted with the man without the Spirit in verse fifteen. The Greek word used is *pneumatikos*. This word describes one who is spiritually minded and awake to the things of God. He thinks the thoughts of God and is led and motivated by the Spirit of God. This man has been born-again of God's Spirit and wants to please God more than himself. The seed of the Word of God has been understood, valued, and has germinated in his life—he is growing as a Christian. Jesus talked about this kind of person in the Parable of the Sower as a person who hears the word of God and puts it into practice in his life:

But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown” (Matthew 13:23).

When Jesus talked about the difference in crop yield, what could it represent?

What stops a person from investing himself to the level where he will receive 100-fold fruit?

There are varying degrees of fruitfulness in the spiritual man's life depending on how much of his inner life is under the control of the Spirit. It is not about how much of the Spirit of God a man (or woman) has; instead, it is more about how much control of the person's life the Holy Spirit has. There must be obedience to God's Word and the Spirit of God. At the point of his will, the spiritual man chooses to obey God rather than his emotional or physical inclinations. The more of the seed of the Word of God he hears and puts into practice, the more fruitful he will become. He who is genuinely abandoned to God will bear a hundredfold fruit.

3) There is a further distinction among believers that Paul mentions. In writing to these people that attend the Corinthian church, Paul calls them brothers. We note they are Christians; otherwise, he

would not call them brothers. He calls them worldly (1 Corinthians 3:1-2) as opposed to spiritual. The Greek word is *sarkikos*, from *sarx*, which means flesh, body, or that which pertains to the flesh or body. Upon conversion and regeneration, the Spirit of God comes into the person's life, and they are born-again and enter the Kingdom of God. The problem is that the new believer retains the sinful nature with its evil inclinations (Galatians 5:16-18). As believers, the Lord works on us to overcome those evil inclinations through the power of the Spirit of God residing in us. This transforming work is not done in a day but rather an ongoing work of the Spirit to renew our minds and restore our souls.

¹Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still **worldly**—mere infants in Christ. ²I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. ³You are still **worldly**. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? ⁴For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings? ⁵What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. ⁷So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. ⁸The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. ⁹For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building. ¹⁰By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. ¹¹For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, ¹³their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person’s work. ¹⁴If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. ¹⁵If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames (1 Corinthians 3:1-15).

Paul is answering a letter from the Corinthians and pointing out four things that concern him as to the health of the Church.

What four things concern Paul in the passage above?

- 1) They are worldly and “infants in Christ.”
- 2) They were still on "milk" and could not be fed solid food (meat).
- 3) They were nursing unconfessed sin, jealousy, and quarreling (v. 3).
- 4) They were walking like mere human beings (v. 4).

When Paul says to the Corinthian church that he could only give them milk, what do you think he means? (v. 2). What would be solid food?

We Are All Called to Build

¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held

together by every supporting ligament, grows and **builds itself up in love**, as **each part** does its work (Ephesians 4:15-16).

⁴For just as **each of us** has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function ⁵so in Christ **we, though many**, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given to **each of us**. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully (Romans 12:4-8 Emphasis mine).

A Disciple is to be self-controlled.

³Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, **to be self-controlled** and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God. ⁶Similarly, encourage the young men to be **self-controlled**. ⁷In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us (Titus 2:3-8).

Every disciple of Christ should have a healthy fear and respect for our Father, the Creator of all things, the One before Whom we shall stand in eternity. It should not be a cowering fear that hinders us from any action and paralyzes us. It is a healthy respect that is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Proverbs 9:10). We are to consider that we are eternal beings and that there will come a time when we pass into eternity and stand before the Lord and be held accountable for what we have said and done (2 Corinthians 5:10). “Fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe” (Proverbs 29:25). There are those who say that there is no hell, but they have a hard time with Jesus’ words in verse 5. If there were no existence after death, then what is the validity of the warning of Jesus, for He says that, after the killing of the body, there is One who has the power to throw a person into hell. Satan has no power to send people to hell; he is the one bound for that destination. No, we are to fear the Lord and get our lives right with Him. He alone has the authority to cast into hell.

Why should we fear God? It is because of His complete knowledge of everything, e.g., “are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God” (v. 6). The price of two sparrows was a penny. Sparrows were caught in nets and eaten by the poor because they were so cheap. It seems that one sparrow was thrown in for free when you bought four, but God forgot not even the freebie. If God feeds the least valuable of His creatures, the sparrows, how much more will He provide and watch over the most precious of His creation, man? God doesn’t miss a thing. If God notices even a sparrow that falls from the sky, how much more is His knowledge of what is happening to each of those who are blood-bought sons of His? He has complete knowledge of everything. We call this attribute of God, His *omniscience*. So, what’s the point in trying to hide anything when we know that all will be brought into the open in eternity? It is better to get things

right down here on earth and for any fallout of our actions on others to be ended. We should allow God to come and transform our lives to be more honoring to Him.

Prayer: Father, we ask that all believers see that each of us is called to reach beyond ourselves to those without Christ. Transform us and grant us the power to live for You and testify to all You have done. Please help us to be flexible, available, and teachable. Amen!

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