

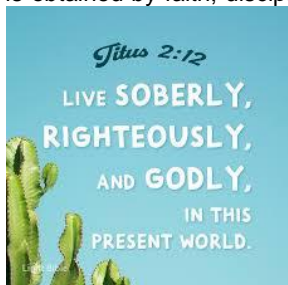
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True Discipleship & Changed Lives

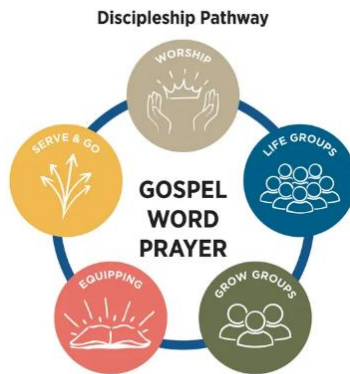
(Discipleship Series Part 4 of 4)

We find a clear relationship between committed discipleship and salvation. This relationship between true salvation and discipleship cannot be ignored: Salvation is a free gift; but discipleship come with a price tag. Salvation relates primarily to Christ as Saviour, discipleship to Christ as Lord. Salvation involves the will of God in redemption and reconciliation;

discipleship involves sanctification and the whole will of God. Salvation's sole condition is "believe"; discipleship's conditions are abide, obey, love, deny oneself, take up the cross, follow, lose one's life, "hate" one's family, etc. Salvation is a new birth; discipleship is a lifetime of continuing growth and stewardship. Salvation depends on Christ's work on the Cross for all people; discipleship depends on a believer carrying his or her cross for Christ. Salvation is a believer's response to Christ's death and resurrection; discipleship is a commitment to Christ's lordship and hence victory over sin and walk in holiness. Salvation determines eternal destiny; and discipleship determines eternal and temporal rewards. Salvation is obtained by faith; discipleship is evidence of that faith through an obedient life of service to Christ.



The sequence of justification before sanctification, salvation before discipleship, or faith before commitment is clearly taught in the Bible. Many verses appeal for commitment on the basis of grace already received (e.g. Rom 12:1; Eph 4:1; Col 2:6). The teaching of Tit 2:11-12 is especially relevant because it explicitly relates grace to the believer's sanctification. This passage shows that commitment and obedience come in response to God's sovereign election and grace:



"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world"

The grace received in salvation is witness of divine approval of the Christian commitment and discipleship. Paul uses a verb to express the idea of training that is different from the idea usually related to discipleship. The verb he chooses ("*teach*") is rooted in the Greek idea of training a child. Grace, when received, takes an immature person and trains him or her toward godliness. The commitment of discipleship is testimony of all true Christians. **The close relationship between discipleship and salvation cannot, therefore, be separated** If salvation could somehow be free but costly, to a true Christian, justification by faith alone also requires sacrifice from the sinner (costly grace) can be biblically justified.

The Meaning of Cross-Bearing

In the first century, a cross meant shame and suffering and death. Christ in his death at Calvary is talking about forsaking everything, even your own life. *"He that findeth his life shall lose it"*, you have your life and need to hold on to your life and faith lest you deny Christ under pressure, deny Christ under any persecution, be faithful to



you calling with a transformed life bound by God's gracious power to follow Christ. **You will lose your soul finally if you are not a true disciple. But the one who is willing to lose his life for His sake is evidence that he has a changed life and is supernatural. God has transformed you and put His Spirit within you to transform your heart and you cannot be unsaved once saved** (Jude 24-25) .

Genuine disciples do not give up in the face of threat and peril and false believers will fail. In Heb 11:38, talks about men who...who were so worthy the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. And all these having gained approval through their faith did not receive what was promised because God had provided something better for us so that they apart from us should not be made perfect.

Those faithful men were tested, and they passed the test finally. They conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight, women received back their dead by resurrection, others were tortured, not accepting their release. This is true discipleship.

Discipleship and Our Family

Matthew and Luke have deeper thoughts on discipleship. In Matthew's account, Jesus says the one who "loves" family more than Him is "not worthy" of Him. In Luke, Jesus says no one can be His disciple who does not "hate" or love less his family and his own life. This condition reeks of a deeper commitment to Christ over our relationships on earth.

Jesus must be the Master of all of our lives if one is to be His disciple. But in both Matthew and Luke, the words are applied to believers only. In Matthew, the saying is **Christ gave a warning about family members who may be divided over our commitment to Christ (10:34-35).** In such a situation, a person who is convinced that Jesus is the Messiah will have his loyalty tested by trials and testing in relationships. This would present a great temptation to close family ties and harmony over one's identity with Christ, but the true disciple will always pass the test.

We must be totally loyal to Christ. The Bible teaches that God offers salvation to some people He has chosen while they were yet sinners and requires their love and loyalty to Christ (Rom 5:6-8; I John 4:10). Furthermore, it speak of salvation as Matthew records that to Christ makes or shows one to be "not worthy" of Christ (Matt 10:37). The statement about unworthiness as none can be worthy of Christ but yet he chose some. **The unsaved are not chosen of Christ and His salvation and they do not believe in Him too. No fallen sinner is ever worthy of Christ's righteousness.**

It is truth of salvation which brings some who will be believers into a deeper relationship with Jesus as Lord through predestination and their loyalty to Him.

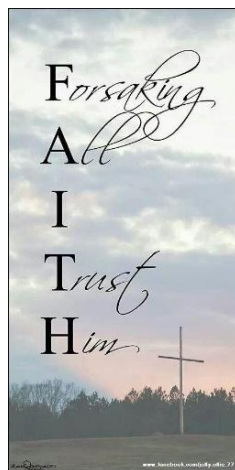
Forsake All and Follow Christ

Another condition that Jesus gives is that *"whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all ... cannot be my disciple."* It shares the same context as the condition discussed above (Luke 14:27) and is addressed to believers. Following the example of a builder who of the necessity to complete their tasks, this condition demands that a believer commit or surrender our time talents and possessions are to follow God's will. The condition is in absolute terms. Are we willing to give all of yourself to Christ to be a authentic Christian. Be committed to forsake all of earthly assets that we have (Luke 14:33), to acknowledge Christ as the Lord of our lives.

A truly saved person will surrender fully to Christ as a testimony of his salvation. He or she will abide in His Word and rely on Him fully and repent of our sins and obey His word (John 8:30-31).

This passage is thought to be a condition of discipleship spoken to unbelievers, but it is not. Speaking of Jesus' ministry, John writes, *"As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed".* Some were not prepared to yield Him the far-reaching allegiance that real trust in Him implies.

The condition for becoming disciples in verse 31 is an uncompromising call to believers to be changed by God. Abiding is a condition for obedience and further knowledge of the truth and our freedom in Christ. Discipleship, as abiding relationship with Christ, is elsewhere in John made conditional on our total love and obedience to



Christ (e.g., 13:35; 14:15, 21, 23; 15:4, 7, 10, 14). The true disciple will prove to be real, and he or she persevere to the very end (Jude 24, 25).

Conclusion

The call to discipleship given in the Gospels are directed toward challenging believers to live lives of obedience, surrender, sacrifice, and self-denial. Discipleship is costly, but the cost is worth it if one has truly received at salvation. Fake Christianity will be exposed here as a believer we need to understand the sacrifice of God for his redemption, he will respond to the grace given with a reciprocal commitment of following him till the end of life. As he learns to also sacrifice, obey, and deny himself, he will become more like the Saviour who exemplifies these things. Salvation is by grace alone, but discipleship is costly. The term "*costly grace*" is *not* a paradox, although grace, by definition it is free and remembers that salvation is costly and the **perfect example is Jesus Christ who paid the highest price, His life, for the sinner's redemption and he requires us to follow him with self-denial and full surrender. Let us then be true disciples of Christ today and take up our cross and deny self and follow him fully.**

Jack Sin

With Grateful Thanks from Yangon, Myanmar....

Rev. Dr. Jack Sin & Sovereign Hope BPC,

Firstly, I thank God for His unlimited grace and amazing doing.

Secondly, I am thankful to Pastor Jack and Angie for your kindness and prayer for me.

Lastly, I thank the Deacons and Members of SHBPC who are remembering my ministry and my family in your prayer.

And let me say again thank you so much for your providing for me this Laptop to use translation works for God's ministry.

We, my family always keep you all in our prayer.

In Christ,

Myitta



Note: Pr Myitta is translating our weekly into Burmese for distribution to Myanmar brethren. SHBPC met his need by helping to purchase a second-hand laptop for this purpose.

Sharing by Deacon Yue Kay

Psalm 103:2 ~ Bless the LORD , O my soul, and forget not all his benefits”

- Although we are consistently called to thanksgiving and worship by our faithful Pastors, by the Word of God, and by godly friends, there is another source from which we should expect this admonition - our own soul.
- King David writes, preaching to himself the gospel of grace, "Bless the LORD, O my soul". We should constantly be preaching to ourselves, as David does in the Psalms. It need not be a complicated or particularly academic sermon. It can be as simple as these three words: "**BLESS THE LORD!**"
- As the first point in his sermon to himself, David exhorts "*forget not all his benefits*". The most powerful antidote to depression is a grateful heart. And the most effective way to develop a grateful heart is to consciously, specifically recount the Lord's blessings and to thank him for each one.
- Are you spiritually cold or disheartened? Preach this sermon to yourself - Bless the LORD, O my soul! Are you discouraged? Forget not all his benefits.
- When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed, when you are discouraged, thinking all is lost, count your many blessings, and name them one by one. And it will surprise you what The LORD hath done.
- How easily, in the muck and clamour and distractions of life, we seem to forget The LORD'S many blessings to us. If we pray at all, then our prayers are largely taken up with requests for family and friends and health and blessing. But how often do we pause to bless the LORD, to praise Him for the many benefits He has given to us already.
- Thousands of people struggle daily with discouragement and frustration, or at least with discontentment, even though they are surrounded by prosperity and property. Why is it? Why does there seem to be so little contentment in the midst of such enormous wealth? Perhaps it is because we have neglected to develop grateful hearts.
- But we are here encouraged to develop the habit of of gratefulness - forget not all his benefits. Not a single blessing of God should be taken for granted. Not a single benefit should come to us without our carefully marking it as yet another unmerited favor from our Heavenly Father.
- It is also interesting that this admonition is an entirely inward one. The psalmist is actually speaking to himself, addressing his own soul. He is keeping a close check on his spirit and correcting trends that he sees there toward ingratitude, complaining, or dissatisfaction.
- We ought also to stir ourselves up to habitual, genuine, God-centred gratitude, which will then lead us to habitual, genuine, God-centred praise.

***Pastoral Reflections from Vancouver,
British Columbia, Canada
- Pray for Revival in Canada -***

Out of the 40 million people in Canada, 53 percent profess to be Christians out of which 30 percent are Roman Catholics. Cults like the Jehovah Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists and Freemasons are active here too.

The United Church of Canada is the main denomination here with the Anglican and Baptists having a stronger presence.

The Vancouver Bible Presbyterian Church here was started in 1996 by the Sovereign will of God with Bro Robert Liu, Eld Chee Ah Chai, Joey Seow, Bobby Seah, Rev Daniel Chew and others supported by Dr Tow Siang Hwa. The church is located along Lougheed Highway in Coquitlam.



We thank God for the kind hospitality of Robert and Lily as we are staying with them during our time in Vancouver.

We had a fruitful morning worship service at Willingdon Church which is of Mennonite background (ie brethren) and joined a Chinese cell group Bible study to study the subject of Christian spiritual gifts with many good questions asked by the different members led by an Elder's wife. She requested me to share on the cult leader Witness Lee and his false teachings, the doctrine of the Trinity and other relevant themes as discussed in the class followed by lunch with Robert, Lily and Robson (older son). We had another meal with their other son Robin too.



In the evening, we attended the worship service at Faith Reformed Presbyterian church. The Pastor is Dr Mark Jones (on Pastor's left) who is a famous writer, and he gave me his book. Eld Steve (standing next to Pastor Mark) welcomed us warmly and we had a blessed time of sharing. We also met up a Singaporean working here Hillary (extreme left) and Shelley (next to her) from China and gave them each our church weekly.



We are praying for the Lord's messengers at Sovereign Hope pulpit, Joseph and Dr Kwong Leen teaching the Sunday School classes and all of you are faithfully serving the Lord.

Mal 3:16

***Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another:
and the LORD hearkened, and heard it,
and a book of remembrance was written before him
for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name.***

Pastor & Angie

Memory Verse

Psa 103:5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Worship Service! If you are here for the first time, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave. Those who share the church vision to acquire a place of worship in due time, may designate your offerings to the SHBPC Church Building Fund.
2. Rev Philip Heng brings us God's Word this morning on "***Approaching God with Praise (Psalm 103:1-15)***", continuing the quarterly series on "***Approaching God with the Right Disposition***".
3. Next Sunday, Rev Matthew Yong will bring us on God's Word on "***Approaching God with Faith (Heb 11:1-6)***".
4. Sunday School classes after worship service are as follows:
 - The Apostle Paul's Solution to Church Problems – Lessons from 1 Corinthians (Joseph)
 - Studies in Job (Dr Kwong Leen)
5. Chinese Fellowship meets on every Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. We have systematic studies on New Testament Foundations and the Psalms. [**Zoom ID:883 9662 4157 Passcode: 218178**].
6. Pastor & Angie are on sabbatical leave from Apr 23 to Jun 5. Rev Nathan and Bro Joseph will be available to provide pastoral support during this period. Do contact the session members for assistance when needed.
7. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church. [**Zoom ID:863 7527 5431 Passcode: 625551**].
8. Pray for:
 - **2025 Annual Church Camp**, Jun 10-13 at Forest City Marina Hotel, Johor, Malaysia on the theme "*Wise or Foolish Living in a Smartphone Era*" by Rev Tan Eng Boo.
 - **Visa application**: Amulya's (Pastor Babu's daughter) visa application for travel to Singapore for our Church Camp.
 - **Travels**: **Pastor & Angie** (23/4-5/6 Sabbatical), **John W** (16-23/5, Japan), **Dn Paul** (22/5-5/6, Japan)
 - **Medical**: **Agnes' mother** [medical investigations], **Dr KL & CP's daughter: An Yan** [baby delivery on 14 May], **Mrs Philip Heng** [brain aneurysm], **John W's sister Angeline** [lung cancer], **John W's daughter** [dialysis treatment].
 - **Myanmar Earthquake Victims & Relief Ministry Teams**.
9. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB Account 392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**

Kindly indicate "**Church Building Fund**" if you would like to designate towards this cause.