

# **The Gospel of the Kingdom**



# The Gospel of the Kingdom

Counsel of God Series

2025

## **The Gospel of the Kingdom**

Church in USA, 2013.

This Printout is a second edition of the entitled *The Gospel of the Kingdom* booklet from the Portuguese booklet *O Evangelho do Reino*, Church in Salvador, Bahia – Brazil (2nd Edition, July 2006 - Updated in December 2025).

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The Bible version that we are using in this work is the New King James Version (NKJV), or then we will put a reference saying which version of the text.

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# Introduction

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. (Mat 24:14)

We live times of restoration of the Church. Restoration of truth and doctrine. Restoration of values and principles that have been weakened and even lost, one of which is the Gospel of the Kingdom.

The preaching of the gospel, in great part of the church, distanced itself from the teaching and practice of Jesus and the apostles. Presenting Christ and His ruling over man was replaced by a gospel that was centered on man and his happiness, presenting Christ as a means to meet the desires and interests of man himself. By consequence, the quality of Christians is low and respected men of God affirm, with sadness, that many of who today frequent the church do not know God and will not be saved.

The preaching of the gospel of the kingdom is not for a specific part of the church, it is for the whole church. The gospel of the kingdom is not a movement or denomination; it is the powerful word of the gospel to be announced to all the nations, by all of God's people. If we want to make disciples, we need to announce the kingdom of God.

In this booklet, we will address the principle aspects connected to the Gospel of the Kingdom. It makes part of a series of basic themes for the formation of a disciple – The Elementary Principles, The Eternal Purpose of God, The Life in Christ, Communion with God, The Family, The Mission of the Disciple, The Character, The Work, The Finances, The Relationship amongst Brothers and Sisters, The Church and Christ's Return.

We are grateful to God for the lives of our dear Ivan Baker, a gift of priceless worth, and our beloved Jorge Himitian, precious proclaimer of these truths.

May the Holy Spirit produce in you ever greater revelation and admiration for our holy, beloved and eternal Jesus, the true and only King. To Him be the glory and dominion forever and ever.

July of 2006



# Preface

This is a special working manual for the Church!

It is special, because it does not flow from the mind of only one man. On the contrary, it flows from direct action, immediately from the Holy Spirit operating in the life of a local church in Salvador, Bahia.

It is special because it is not the fruit of an artificial elaborate theory. On the contrary, it sprang from the bible to the experience of the church there, and corrections and discipline of the Holy Spirit. It is a manual gauged by experience, and now it returns to the practice of the church, as dynamic orientation, precisely because it is truly practical.

It is special because it is not complicated and confusing, as the theological materials and methods that are commonly used by Christian congregations, in catechesis. On the contrary, it is as simple as the gospel is simple and how the formation of the majority of our people is simple, in the churches of every Brazilian city.

It is special because it is not dry and tasteless as are most teaching materials and catechesis. Instead, one sees, one feels, almost as if it is immersed in his anointing and is coming out of your pores, and that is discerned by simply reading.

It is therefore with great joy that prefaces this manual that the Holy Spirit aroused among our Northeast brothers, because we know we can be a very valuable tool in the Lord's Church, across our beloved Brazil.

Porto Alegre, RS, BR, October 18, 1990.

Moysés C. de Moraes

Presbytery in Porto Alegre



# How Teaching in the Church Should Be

The disciples who learn and then teach should be able to do it in simple instructions. The Lord teaches us to feed “sheep” and not “giraffes”. Those who have greater capacity should humbly kneel down to eat from the plate of the littlest ones. Jesus said, “I give you thanks, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and have revealed them to children” (Mat 11:25-26). The church does not need a sophisticated academic teaching framework (1Co 1:18-31; 2:1-16).

The example of the first church in Jerusalem is to be remembered as a role model in all the ways for all times. The brothers from that time were simple people, many of whom did not know how to read or write. They did not have a printing press or paper, nor did they have bibles.

Looking at the way they lived, we notice that the apostles used the method of constant repetition (catechism). Those who learned could absorb and keep the word in their minds and hearts. They did not walk around seeking novelties or inventing things. But the important things that they taught were repeated many times until everyone understood them well (Php 3:1; 2Pe 1:12-15).

The apostles were very aware of the necessity of passing on the whole counsel of God and not theological opinions. Every disciple had to be formed in the image of Jesus Christ (Act 20:26-27; Php 4:9; 2Ti 2:2). The teaching of the apostles spoke of basically three things:

- The revelation of the Christ; his person, his power, his promises.
- All of the commandments that Jesus gave us in order to live.
- All of the principles for the functioning of the church.

We have to return to simplicity so that the whole counsel of God can be received and absorbed by all the brothers, especially the less educated.

God will never examine us about our knowledge with respect to the contents of the Bible. He will ask us how we lived. A doctrine should only indicate how the disciples should live (Tit 2:1-15).



# How to work with this material

This booklet is divided into lessons to be studied by the disciples alone and in conjunction with their disciplers.

As we do not want to bring the whole teaching already chewed up for the disciple, each lesson has two sections: **Seeking Revelation** and **Understanding More**.

## Seeking Revelation

In this section we want the disciple to have contact with God and His Word, and to receive revelation and the knowledge of Him and His Word through prayer.

The disciple should read each of the verses indicated in the Bible Reading section, praying to the Lord to have revelation.

He should also seek to answer the questions from **Help for Meditation** in his notebook, noting everything that he has learned as well as any questions he has.

In each lesson, there are some phrases and Bible verses for **Memorization**. They should be memorized as they are in the booklet, so that all disciples will have memorized the same texts. They were chosen in the best translation of that text.

## Understanding More

In this section the disciple has the material to deepen and enrich their understanding with respect to the subject that he meditated upon alone.

However, they should only go to this section after carefully having done the previous section (Seeking Revelation) and having shown their meditation and notes to their discipler. Then they should read the content that is in this section (Understanding More).



Lesson 1 | **The Preaching of Jesus and the Apostles**

## Seeking Revelation

### Biblical Reading

- Mat 4:17; 4:23; 9:35; 24:14; Luk 4:43; 8:1; 16:16;
- Act 8:12; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23;
- Mat 13:3-9, 18, 19.

### Help for meditation

- In the above passages, what is the gospel called that Jesus and the apostles preached?
- Why is it important to preach the gospel correctly?
- Keeping in mind that the gospel is a seed, what happens when we sow a seed of bad quality?

### Memorization

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What is the only preaching that makes disciples?

*The only preaching that makes disciples is the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom.*

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Mat 24:14)

## Understanding More

### The Preaching of Jesus and the Apostles

#### The Preaching of the Gospel

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Mat 24:14)

The commission that Jesus entrusted to us as disciples is tremendous: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations”. It is a high and elevated task to be His co-workers in rescuing men and women from death and darkness, and conveying them into His kingdom of love.

The first tool that the Lord has given us to accomplish this task is the gospel. Paul declares that the gospel is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. The gospel is the Word of God to men, declaring to them His love, calling them to repent, and giving them the good news of salvation.



The only preaching that makes disciples is the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom.

However, when doing the work of God, we must be sure that we are doing it correctly. The Lord does not command us to do just any kind of work. He told us to make disciples. And it is impossible to make disciples if we do not preach the gospel correctly. We must preach the true gospel that was preached by Jesus and His apostles.

#### The Seed Determines the Fruit

If we make a comparison between the quality of disciples in the early church in Acts, and the quality of modern Christians, we will see a great difference:

#### The Disciples in Acts

- . Total commitment to God

#### Modern Christians

- . Lack of commitment to God and His service

## The Disciples in Acts

- Supreme love for God, putting God's interests above their own
- Lives of holiness
- Complete submission to God and the brethren
- Full of power
- Intense prayer lives
- Boldness in the proclamation of the Word
- Much fruit
- Intense fellowship – together daily
- Genuine love for one another

## Modern Christians

- Seeking their own happiness
- Lives with entanglements and constant sins
- Lack of subjection –independence from God and the brethren
- Little power and little grace
- Lives with little prayer
- Ashamed of the gospel and little proclamation of it
- Little fruit
- Lack of willingness to be together
- Lack of care; solitary

What is the reason for this significant difference? Why did the early Christians live a life of total renunciation and consecration to the Lord? Why were they such faithful disciples? Is it possible for there to be Christians like them today?

The answer to these questions is seen in the conversion of those disciples. The difference is in the gospel they heard. The church in Acts is the fruit of the gospel preached by Jesus and the apostles.

Here we will encounter an absolute principle: **a good seed produces good fruit and a bad seed produces bad fruit.** This principle is as true in agriculture as it is in the spiritual life.



Good seed => Good fruit.  
Bad seed => Bad fruit.

## What is the Seed?

Let's read Mat 13:3-9, 18-19.

In this parable, Jesus speaks of a sower, a seed, and four types of soil. We will not study the whole parable here, but only the type of seed that is sown in the different types of soil. There are different kinds of soil, but just one seed.

According to Jesus, what is the seed? The seed is the *word*. It is the gospel that is preached. But what is the *word* that is sown? The passage does not say only “the *word*”. In verse 19 we see that Jesus specifies what the *word* is that is preached. He says:

When anyone hears the **word of the kingdom...**

This is a very important point. What was the gospel that Jesus preached? What was the seed that Jesus sowed? The seed was the word of the kingdom.

The quality of the gospel that is preached to a person is of extreme importance. It will define the quality of Christian that person will be.

If we sow a withered seed, the fruit will be withered. If we sow a false seed, the fruit will be false. Similarly, a weak gospel produces weak Christians and a distorted gospel produces false Christians.

The opposite is also true. If we preach a complete and true gospel, we will obtain complete and true Christians. The disciples in Acts were the fruit of a true gospel which is why they were true disciples.

This is a natural law and a spiritual principle. The seed of a plant contains all of the genetic characteristics that plant will have. The gospel that is preached should already contain all the characteristics that we desire a future disciple to have.

Jesus sowed a good seed (a good gospel), and therefore reaped good disciples (the good fruit). The poor quality of modern Christians is a result of the gospel that is preached.

The secret to having good fruit is to use the same seed that Jesus used. If we preach the gospel that Jesus preached, we will have better disciples.



The true gospel produces true Christians. A distorted gospel produces false Christians.

## The Gospel that Jesus Preached

Let's take a good look at the seed that Jesus sowed:

From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the **kingdom of heaven** is at hand." (Mat 4:17)

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the **gospel of the kingdom**, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. (Mat 4:23)

Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the **gospel of the kingdom**, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. (Mat 9:35)

And this **gospel of the kingdom** will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. (Mat 24:14)



Jesus preached a specific gospel:  
the gospel of the kingdom.

But He said to them, "I must preach the **kingdom of God** to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." (Luk 4:43)

Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the **kingdom of God**. And the twelve were with Him. (Luk 8:1)

The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the **kingdom of God** has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. (Luk 16:16)

The passages with the expressions "gospel of the kingdom" or "kingdom of God" are quite numerous. This is not a coincidence. Jesus preached and announced a certain gospel – the gospel of the kingdom. It does not merely say that "He preached the gospel". The gospel that was preached is specified. It is a specific gospel. It is a specific seed.

## The Gospel that the Apostles Preached

What about the apostles and other disciples, what gospel did they preach?

But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the **kingdom of God** and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. (Act 8:12)

And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the **kingdom of God**. (Act 19:8)

And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the **kingdom of God**, will see my face no more. (Act 20:25)



Speaking of the kingdom of God  
was the main focus of the apostles  
and the other disciples when they evangelized.

So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly **testified of the kingdom of God**, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. (Act 28:23)

Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, **preaching the kingdom of God** and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him. (Act 28:30-31)

The expressions “kingdom of heaven” and “kingdom of God” were always present in the preaching of Jesus and the apostles. They appear more than 100 times in the New Testament. Speaking of the kingdom of God when evangelizing was something central and foundational for them.

And finally, what does it mean to speak to someone about the kingdom of God? What are the consequences of accepting the word of the kingdom? We will discuss this in the next lessons.

## Lesson 2 | What means the Kingdom of God?

### Seeking Revelation

#### Biblical Reading

- Rom. 10:9; Acts 16:31; Acts 2:36;
- Luke 17:20-21.

#### Help for meditation

- What does the expression “Gospel of the Kingdom” means?
- What does it mean to confess Jesus as “Lord”
- What are the consequences of this fact?

#### Memorization

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What does it mean to confess Jesus as Lord?

*To confess Jesus as Lord means a total surrender of one's life to Him.*

*There is no such thing as conversion without consecration.*

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If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. (Rom 10:9)

## Understanding More

### What is the Kingdom of God?

#### What does “The Gospel of the Kingdom” means?

The term “gospel” means “glad tidings” which is to say “good news”. The term “kingdom” means “government”, “reign” or the “action of ruling.” So, literally the expression “gospel of the kingdom” means “the good news of God’s government.”

To preach the gospel of the kingdom is to announce the good news of Christ and of His government over man’s life. It is to present Jesus as the King and Lord of men.

Some think that the expressions “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” are referring only to heaven. Or that the kingdom of God is in the future. This is not true. Scriptures says:

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the **kingdom of God** would come, He answered them and said, “The **kingdom of God** does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the **kingdom of God** is within you.”. (Luk 17:20-21)

In other words, we can say that a kingdom is a territory where a king rules. It is the place where the authority of a king is recognized. The kingdom of God is where God rules. The kingdom of God is in the life of a disciple.

The Bible says that there are two kingdoms – the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness (Col 1:13). All those who do not recognize the authority of Jesus over their lives are in the kingdom of darkness. All those who recognize the authority of Christ and submit themselves to his governing are in the kingdom of God.

Therefore, we see that in the preaching of the gospel, it is essential that we place the basis of God’s governing over the life of man. To preach the gospel of the kingdom is to speak of Christ, His life and work, and to speak of the necessary subjection to Him and the conditions for being a disciple. If we preach salvation without the conditions for following Christ, we will not make true disciples.



If we preach  
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without the  
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disciples.

#### The Lordship of Christ

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. (Act 2:36)

When we speak of the basis of God's governing, we need to make very clear the implications of this governing. To do this, it is necessary to understand what it means to have Jesus as our Lord.

What does the word "Lord" mean? The word Lord, during the time of Jesus and the apostles, was **Kyrios**. This word was not simply a respectful way to refer to someone. It was something much stronger than this. **Kyrios** meant to be the owner of someone, the absolute lord over them and the one who held the power of life and death over them. He was the lord of slaves. If someone called someone **Kyrios**, they were saying that he had complete power and authority over them. The Roman Caesar was the **kyrios**. In the Roman Empire there were different kings under the Caesar, but there was just one **kyrios**. When the apostles introduced Jesus not only as King, but as the **Kyrios**, they were putting Him as the ultimate authority over them.

The word "Kyrios" is used more than 600 times in the New Testament, referring to Jesus. This shows that there was an emphasis on God's government and on the lordship of Christ.



To proclaim the kingdom of God is to announce that there is a center of the universe and that in this center is God's throne.

To proclaim the lordship of Christ and of the kingdom of God is to announce that there is a center of the universe and that within this center is God's throne. He rules. He always reigned. His kingdom is the one of all ages. He reigns over all that exists. He upholds all things by the word of His power. He is the ultimate authority in the universe. He reigns over the angels, over the principalities and powers. He reigns over the nations, over the kings, over all men, and over nature. He is Lord. Hallelujah!



### What is it to confess Jesus as Lord?

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Rom 10:9)

And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." (Act 16:31)

Only the preaching of the gospel that presents Jesus as Lord and owner can bring true salvation.

When the apostles said, "Believe in the Lord (Kyrios) Jesus and you will be saved", or "confess Jesus as Lord (Kyrios)", they were also saying that the

person would have to recognize the Lord Jesus as the absolute Lord of his very life – Kyrios, to be saved. Jesus would become the owner and would make the decisions in the life of that person. What a strong gospel is the gospel of the kingdom! What a powerful and total salvation it brought! What true disciples it produced!

When someone believed to the word of the kingdom, it meant a total surrender to Jesus and His service, a loss of one's entire life, a renunciation of everything because of love of Him, and a radical change of the course of one's life.

Man's biggest problem is independence from God. Only the preaching of the gospel that presents Jesus as Lord and owner can bring an end to independence.

### **The Current Preaching of Promises**

Sadly, today it is common to find a preaching of the gospel that is different from that of Jesus and the apostles. It is a gospel that is centered on man and not God. It is a preaching that leads people to go after the promises of God and not after God Himself.

The contrast between this current gospel and the Gospel of the Kingdom will be studied in the next topic.

# Lesson 3 | The Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Promises

## Seeking Revelation

### Biblical Reading

- Luk 14:25-33; 18:18-23;
- Mat 6:33; Rom. 12:1-2; 14:17;
- Mat 11:28-29; Luk 12:32-33.

### Help for meditation

- What did Jesus say when He preached the gospel? How is the gospel preached today?
- What must a disciple seek first above other things?
- Are there conditions to receiving the Lord's promises that are in Mat 11:28-29 and Luk 12:32-33?

### Memorization

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What must a disciple seek first above other things?

*A disciple seeks first to please His Lord, and not his own happiness.*

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

(Mat 6:33)

## Understanding More

### The Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Promises

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Mat 6:33)

#### The Gospel of Promises

Today in the preaching of the gospel, it is very common to present Jesus as the resolver of man's problems. People are attracted to God's blessings. There are common expressions in today's preaching such as, "Come to Jesus and He will solve all your problems.", "Accept Jesus as your personal Savior", "Come to Him for Him to resolve your health issues and financial problems."

We do not find such expressions in the preaching of the gospel by Jesus and the apostles. While it is true that Jesus is our Savior and that through Him we receive many blessings, these cannot be the reason for someone to come to Christ.

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. (Rom 14:17)

This is a gospel that presents Christ as man's servant and not man as Christ's servant. It is a gospel that puts man's happiness at the center of the preaching. It does not put Jesus and His will at the center. Jesus said, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you".

We call this current preaching the Gospel of Promises. It is the preaching that says, "Come to Jesus and you will receive this, that, and the other". This is not the true preaching of the gospel. Every gospel that does not present Christ and His absolute reign over man's life is not true.

Jesus, using a parable, spoke of the enemy that would sow false seed among the wheat (Mat 13:24-30). Tares are weeds that grow among wheat. The wheat is true Christians that indeed have Jesus as the Lord of their lives. The tares are religious people that are among the church but have Jesus as Lord in name only. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." (Mat 7:21)

Religious people are produced by a different deficient gospel — the Gospel of Promises. It is a cheapened gospel. It is one that does not present Christ as the Lord of life.

Jesus always presented the conditions for someone to be His disciple:

Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. (Luk 14:25-26)

So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (Luk 14:33)

To promise blessings and salvation without presenting the true conditions for someone to be a disciple is to cheapen the gospel of Christ.

Great multitudes followed Jesus. However, He did not want to deceive anyone. Not everyone who followed Him was His disciple.



The Gospel of Promises attracts many people,  
but does not make disciples.

If we preach a gospel that is an advertisement for blessings, we will gather many needy people, but will not have true disciples. True blessings are the consequences in people's lives when they have received Christ as the Lord of their lives.

### **The Difference between the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Gospel of Promises**

The preaching of Jesus differed in many important points from the current gospel. Below we will present the difference between some of these points.

## **The Gospel of the Kingdom    The Gospel of Promises**

### **1. The center of the message**

Jesus, His will, His authority, and His Kingdom are the center of the message.

Seeking God's will must be in first place for man. Happiness comes as a consequence (Rom 12:1-2; Mat 6:33)

Man and his happiness are the center of the message.

## The Gospel of the Kingdom

### 2. Attitude toward God

Jesus is Lord (Kyrios) and we are servants. God is not obligated to serve His servants. When He attends to them, it is because of His love.

### 3. The Blessings

People go after the Lord. The blessings are secondary consequences.

### 4. The Promises

They advertise the promises along with the conditions and requirements presented by Jesus.

For example:

- . Luk 12:32-34 (the blessing and condition for receiving it);
- . Mat 11:28-29 (the blessing and condition for receiving it);
- . Luk 14:26-33 and Luke 9:57-62 are conditions to be a disciple.

### 5. The Condition for Being Saved

The condition for being saved is to believe in the Lord Jesus. It is to believe in His work and to truly recognize His lordship. Repentance. (Heb 5:9; Act 2:38)

We are not those who accept the Lord. It is Him that accepts us, by His great love.

## The Gospel of Promises

God exists to bless and serve man. He is obligated to answer the requests of His children. He is treated almost as man's servant.

People go after the blessings of the Lord and not after the Lord of blessings.

They advertise only the promises of God without speaking of the conditions that Jesus put.

For example:

- . Luk 12:32 (just the blessing);
- . Mat 11:28 (just the blessing);
- . The phrase "come to Me" is worthless without the condition "take My yoke".

The condition for being saved is to accept Jesus as one's personal Savior.

It would be the same as saying at one's wedding, "I accept my wife as my personal cook and housekeeper."

## The Gospel of the Kingdom

### 6. Consecration

There is only conversion when there is total consecration. Or better said, conversion is consecration (consecration meaning total dedication of one's life to God. Luk 9:57-62)

### 7. The Door

Mat 7:13-14 There are only two doors – the wide door and the narrow door. The narrow door is the one where a disciple of Jesus renounces everything, lives an upright life, and is dedicated to serving God.

### 8. Forgiveness and Sanctification

The forgiveness of sins is by grace and is free, but is followed by a required transformation of life. Justification and sanctification go hand in hand. (Eph 2:8-10; Heb 12:14; Rom 6:22; 1Co 1:30) "The faith that justifies is the same faith that sanctifies."

God's grace is the power given by Him so that the disciple does not go on living in sin.

## The Gospel of Promises

Someone can convert and be saved without dedicating himself completely to the Lord. This is conversion independent of consecration. Consecration is an optional step that some people take later on.

There are three doors. There is a middle door that has been unconsciously created to follow Christ without as much renunciation and consecration. It is permissible to be a believer and not be very holy or very dedicated to serving God.

Justification independent from sanctification is taught. This means that someone is forgiven from their sins even though they go on sinning.

To be under God's grace means that God tolerates sin.



The faith that justifies  
is the same faith that sanctifies.



# Lesson 4 | The Disciple and the Religious Person

## Seeking Revelation

### Biblical Reading

- Mat 6:33; Joh 8:31, 14:23;
- Joh 13:34-35; Eph 5:21;
- 1Jo 3:6-9; Jam 5:16;
- 1Pe 2:9; Joh 15:8, 16;
- Rom 8:13-14.

### Help for meditation

- Look at the passages above and make a list of the characteristics of a disciple found in each passage.

### Memorization

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What is a disciple?

*A disciple is someone that believes in everything that Christ said and does everything that Christ commanded.*

Why in Jesus' likeness?

*Because God wants quality.*

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Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. (Mat 7:21)

## Understanding More

### The Disciple and the Religious Person

A disciple is one who has recognized Christ as his Lord and lives through Christ. In other words, we can say that a disciple is someone that believes in everything that Christ said and does everything that Christ commanded.

In contrast to a disciple, a religious person is within the church but only mouths that Jesus is Lord. The characteristics of a religious person's life are very different from those of a disciple.



A disciple is someone that believes in everything that Christ said and does everything that Christ commanded.

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. (Mat 7:21)

### Characteristics of a Disciple and a Religious Person

#### A Disciple

1. God is the center of his life  
His foremost desire is to please Him. His own happiness is in second place (Mat 6:33). Christ is the one in charge of his life.
2. He renounces everything that he has (Luk 14:33)
3. He went through the narrow door and walks the narrow road with joy (Mat 7:13-14)

#### A Religious Person

1. He is the center of his life  
He goes to God to be happy. God is there to serve him. He himself is still the one in charge of his life.
2. He renounces only some of the easier things.
3. He walks the middle road, a road that is not as narrow as that which "God's servants" walk, nor as broad as the world's road.

## A Disciple

4. He listens to God.

He doesn't desire simply to know biblical doctrine but desires to know God's heart in order to please Him.

He understands and loves God's will. (Joh 4:34)

5. He desires to keep all things that Jesus commanded. (Mat 28:20)

For him to keep Jesus' commands is more than knowing, it is to practice them.

6. He practices the Word of Christ. (Joh 14:23)

He obeys God in everything. It does not matter what he thinks. He does not question the Word of God or consider it outdated.

7. Christ lives in him. He is dependent on Christ in everything. He lives in Christ's strength and power. (Gal 2:19-20)

8. He loves the brethren as Christ loves him (Joh 13:34-35). He has a solid and deep relationship with the church.

## A Religious Person

4. He listens to the truths about God.

He interprets the Word of God mechanically (2Ti 3:7)

He does not understand the Word of God and holds to the outward rules that he considers important. (Col 2:16-23)

5. He desires to know the things that Jesus commanded.

6. He practices only that which he agrees with from the Word of Christ.

He obeys some things from God's Word. Therefore, he allows himself to disobey other things that he considers difficult or that he does not agree with.

7. He tries to imitate Christ in his own strength.

8. Relationships and commitment with the brethren are superficial.

## A Disciple

9. He submits himself to God and his God-given authorities. (Rom 13:1-2; Eph 5:21; Heb 13:17)

He doesn't decide everything alone. He seeks advice and depends on his brethren.

10. Does not live in the practice of sin. Believes that he was freed from the slavery of sin. (Rom 6:6, 12-14; 1Jo 3:6-9)

11. Walks in the light. Confesses his sins not only to God but also to the brethren that walk with him. His life is transparent. (Jam 5:16; 1Jo 1:7-10)

12. Presses on toward the goal because he desires to see God's eternal purpose fulfilled. Every day he becomes more like Jesus and continues forward, overcoming his personal shortcomings. (Eph 4:13; Phi 3:12-14)

13. Serves God. Understands his calling and is completely involved with the Lord's service. Converting is the same thing as consecrating himself to the Lord. Therefore, he dedicates himself to the Lord. (1Pe 2:9)

14. Bears much fruit. Preaches the gospel and makes disciples. This is his happiness and the reason for which he remains on the earth. (1Jo 15:8, 16; 1Co 9:23)

## A Religious Person

9. Says that he obeys God and not men.

Hides himself behind a false spirituality and does not submit himself to his God-given authorities.

10. Lives entangled in sin, excusing himself by saying that his flesh is weak.

11. Does not confess his sins to men. Says that God already forgave him and he doesn't owe satisfaction to others.

12. He only wants to be saved and freed from condemnation. He says that his goal is to be like Jesus but he thinks that it is impossible.

He remains bound by the same sins and shortcomings throughout the years.

13. Attends meetings. Believes that only some Christians have a calling and must work for God. Thinks about someday consecrating himself more to the Lord.

14. Preaches the word very little, claiming that he doesn't have the gift for it. When he does preach, it is out of duty or obligation.

## A Disciple

15. His family, character, finances, and other areas of his life are in order in accordance with the Word of God.
16. Keeps his word and is responsible. His word is 'yes', 'yes', 'no', 'no'. (Mat 5:33-37)
17. Accepts suffering with joy and patience, giving thanks in all things. (Jam 1:2-4; Rom 8:13-14)
18. Walks in Spirit. Is guided by the Lord and depends on Him every moment. (Rom 8:13-14)
19. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are for edification.
20. Praises God from his heart. (Eph 5:19)  
Gives thanks for all things. (1Th 5:18)  
Speaks with God. For him, prayer is a relationship with God. (Mat 6:5-8)

## A Religious Person

15. Several areas of his life are disordered: family life, finances, character, etc.
16. Does not keep his commitments and is not responsible.
17. Complains, murmurs and revolts in the face of suffering. He does not accept it.
18. Does not depend on the Lord throughout the day.
19. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are to show spirituality.
20. Sings songs.  
Gives praise in the meetings and then goes on to complain about everything at home.



Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

(Mat 13:44)