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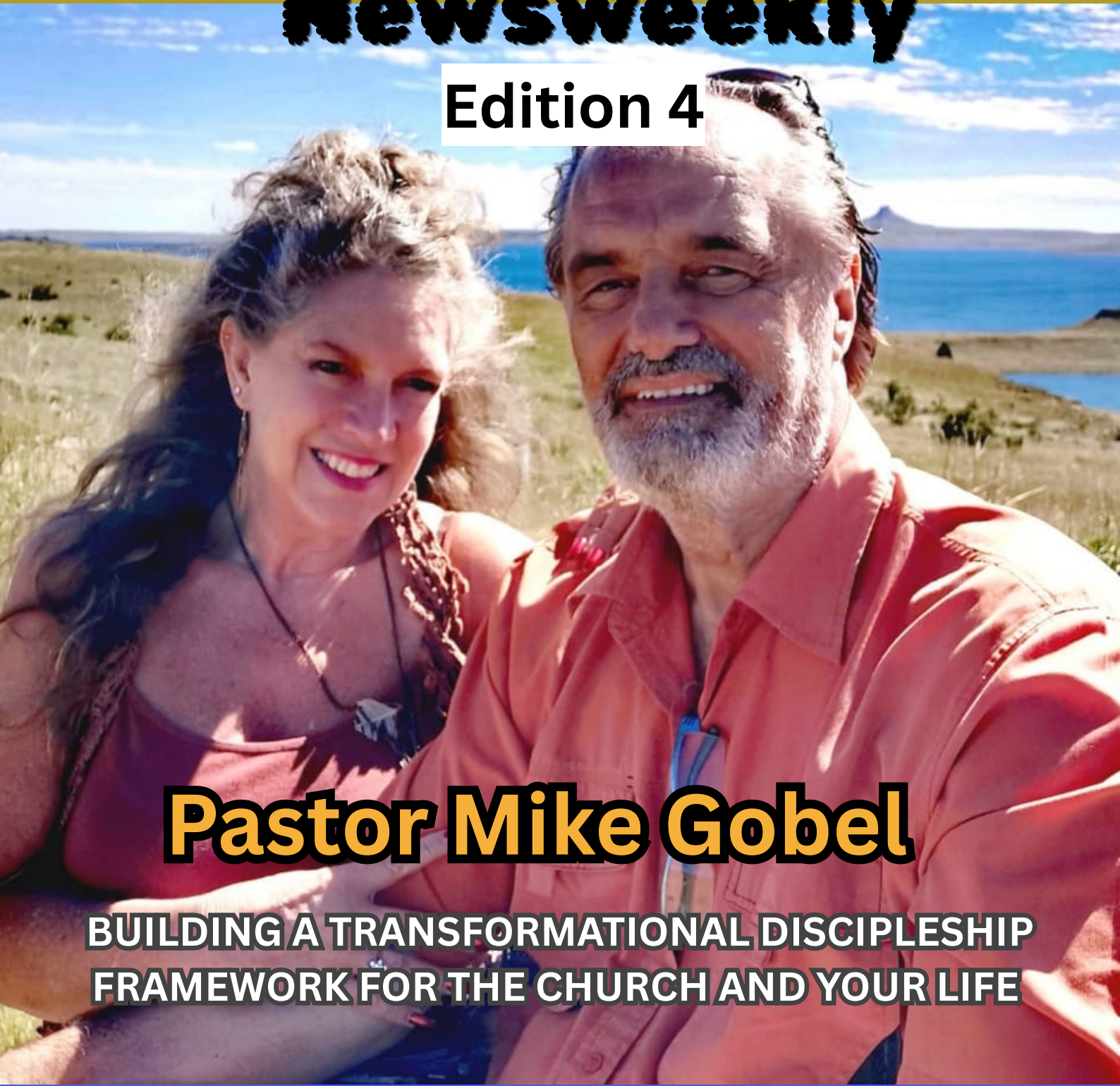
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Newsweekly

Edition 4



Pastor Mike Gobel

**BUILDING A TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP
FRAMEWORK FOR THE CHURCH AND YOUR LIFE**

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IN THIS EDITION

Issue 4
September 2026

BUILDING A TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP FRAMEWORK FOR THE CHURCH AND YOUR LIFE



INTRODUCTION

Firstly, let us look at what the true purpose and function of the modern-day Church (the Body of Christ) should be? Besides the obvious—it being a sanctuary, providing a safe space for individuals to seek refuge and shelter from various challenges.

This concept is rooted in biblical teachings and is reflected in the church's role as a community of support and care. The church serves as a refuge for the needy, offering physical, emotional, and spiritual protection to its members (the congregation).

It is a place where individuals can find solace, guidance, and community, especially in times of crisis or conflict.

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TESTIFY MAGAZINE (TELLING PEOPLE'S STORIES - AFFIRMING GOD IS ALIVE!)

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**Building a Transformational Discipleship Framework
for the Church and your Life .**

**by Pastor Mike Gobel
Associate Pastor The Campus Church
Pietermaritzburg, KZN**



BUILDING A TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP FRAMEWORK FOR THE CHURCH AND YOUR LIFE

INTRODUCTION

Firstly, let us look at what the true purpose and function of the modern-day Church (the Body of Christ) should be? Besides the obvious—it being a sanctuary, providing a safe space for individuals to seek refuge and shelter from various challenges. This concept is rooted in biblical teachings and is reflected in the church's role as a community of support and care. The church serves as a refuge for the needy, offering physical, emotional, and spiritual protection to its members (the congregation).

It is a place where individuals can find solace, guidance, and community, especially in times of crisis or conflict. The church's commitment to providing refuge and shelter is a testament to its role as a 'community of believers' who are called to embody God's character and love in their interactions with others. It was never intended to be about the size of the building, or the quality of its music systems and lighting, the softness of its chairs or the comforts of its hospitality spaces. These are unfortunate distractions that require a tremendous amount of the churches budget and that could ultimately take the focus off what God intended the holistic Church (Body of Christ) to be.

A PLACE OF REFUGE AND SHELTER

In biblical literature, the concept of a place of refuge and shelter is deeply rooted in the understanding of God's protection and provision for His people. This theme is woven throughout the Scriptures, symbolizing both physical safety and spiritual solace.

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Old Testament Context

1. **Cities of Refuge:** In the Old Testament, God commanded the establishment of cities of refuge for those who had committed manslaughter unintentionally. These cities provided a safe haven from the avenger of blood until the accused could stand trial. Numbers 35:11-12 states, "**Select for yourselves cities to be your cities of refuge, so that a manslayer who kills a person unintentionally may flee there. These cities will be a refuge from the avenger, so that the manslayer will not die until he stands trial before the assembly.**"

2. **God as Refuge:** The Psalms frequently describe God Himself as a refuge and shelter for His people. Psalm 46:1 declares, "**God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble.**" This imagery portrays God as a protective fortress, offering safety and strength to those who seek Him.

3. **The Tabernacle and Temple:** The physical structures of the Tabernacle and later the Temple served as places where the Israelites could find spiritual refuge. These were places where God's presence dwelled, and where the people could come to worship and find peace.

New Testament Context

1. **Jesus as Refuge:** In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is depicted as the ultimate refuge for believers. He offers spiritual rest and protection from sin and death. Matthew 11:28 invites, "**Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.**"

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2. **The Church as a Community of Refuge:** The early Christian community is portrayed as a place of refuge and support for believers. Acts 2:44-45 describes the early church as a community where *"all the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they shared with anyone who was in need."*

3. **Eternal Refuge:** The New Testament also speaks of an eternal refuge in the presence of God. Revelation 21:3-4 promises, *"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying: 'Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man, and He will dwell with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the former things have passed away.'"*

Symbolism and Themes

The theme of refuge and shelter in the Bible is rich with symbolism. It represents God's unwavering protection, His provision of peace amidst chaos, and His promise of eternal security. The imagery of God as a rock, fortress, and shield is prevalent, emphasizing His strength and reliability. The concept also underscores the importance of community and mutual support among believers, reflecting God's desire for His people to care for one another. Throughout the biblical narrative, the idea of refuge and shelter serves as a powerful reminder of God's love and faithfulness, offering hope and assurance to those who trust in Him. (Bible Hub, 2026)

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In order for the Church to become that effective ‘Body of Christ’ again, it should continue to be a place of refuge and worship for God’s children to come and seek fellowship with Him. God uses everyday people like you and I to make His children into mature, world-affecting disciples. This statement is nearly unfathomable. That the God of the universe concluded that we would be the primary earthly tool through which someone begins to look more and more like Him is a mystery beyond comprehension.

Yet, that’s exactly what He chooses to do. Being a “***fisher of men***” means following Jesus, sharing the gospel, and helping others become His disciples. Yes, we are called into the five-fold ministry to be apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers and evangelists, but ultimately, every believer, irrespective of title, position or years of experience is called by God to fulfill the **Great Commission**—the sharing of the Gospel and to making disciples of all nations. We should never take our focus off one of the primary purposes of our creation, or we could easily be led astray by false ideologies, inaccurate teachings, and wayward preaching.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

The Great Commission is a **Biblical mandate** given by Jesus Christ to His disciples, primarily found in Matthew 28:18-20. It emphasizes the following key principles:

- ✓ **Authority of Christ:** Jesus asserts His divine authority, which encompasses all authority in heaven and on earth.
- ✓ **Mandate to Make Disciples:** The primary task is to make disciples of all nations, which involves evangelism and nurturing new believers.
- ✓ **Baptism and Teaching:** Disciples must be baptized and taught to obey all that Jesus commanded.

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✓ **Promise of Christ's Presence:** Jesus assures His followers of His continual presence with them, providing comfort and strength in their mission. This commission is foundational to Christian evangelism and missionary work, calling believers to actively share the Gospel and make disciples of all nations.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF DISCIPLESHIP

The phrase ***"fishers of men"*** comes from Jesus' call to His first disciples, Peter and Andrew, in Matthew 4:19: ***"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."*** It is a metaphor for evangelism and discipleship, not literal fishing. Jesus used imagery familiar to the fishermen to illustrate that His followers are called to reach people with the message of the Kingdom of God.

God didn't just create us so we could enjoy a life of happiness and prosperity after conversion and not have a care in the world to either building a relationship with Him or to be used by Him to extend the Kingdom of God.

That my friend is a false doctrine and a denominational doctrine that will create a spiritual void between yourself and God and will cause you to have a shallow faith and understanding of your responsibility and duty to call in helping to grow the Kingdom of God. It is also a false belief that is very self-absorbed, self-reliant and focused more on personal achievement than on brotherly love and/or on your relationship with the one true God that gave us life, afforded you and I mercy and grace when we least deserved it. The Bible teaches that God created us with a specific purpose to know Him, love Him, and

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reflect His glory. According to Genesis 1:27, God created mankind in His image, indicating that we were made to have a relationship with Him. This purpose is rooted in God's desire for us to glorify Him and bring Him joy, as stated in Ephesians 2:10, ***"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works."*** Additionally, Isaiah 43:7 emphasizes that God created us for His glory, highlighting the importance of our relationship with Him and our stewardship of creation.

THE DEFINITION OF THE WORD 'DISCIPLE'

In this series on "Building a Transformational Discipleship Framework for the Church and Yourself," it is important that we understand and define the word "disciple" in order that we can appreciate the process required and the pathway to follow in achieving transformational discipleship. In the Greek language, the word 'disciple' can be understood as pupil, apprentice, or learner. It was and is a term that has a generic sense to it. In fact, one could say that ***everyone*** (every believer or follower of Christ) is a disciple. The question is simply: about what subject or to whom are we a disciple?

The meaning of the word is simple, but the impact of the concept is life altering. When a person becomes a disciple of Jesus, it indicates that he or she has become His follower. We surrender our lives for Christ to be our Master, the One who pays for our sin and establishes our relationship with God. Our faith in His work makes us His disciples. So then, what does a disciple do? It is all determined by how we follow.

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Jesus taught that the choice as to whom a disciple will follow affects everything. In Luke 6:39 and 40, it reads, ***“He also told them a parable: ‘Can the blind guide the blind? Won’t they both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.’”*** The parable and explanation give us the sense that discipleship happens and that it has consequences. When we give our lives over to someone as “blind” as we are, all of us wind up in a ditch. The implication is that we need to seek a Master that is greater than us so we can be led toward life rather than toward ruin. It is why we choose Jesus. When we become His disciple, the passage above helps us to see that three things characterize the life of a disciple. Discipleship is about being led in a direction, trained in the truth, and formed in our character.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

If the task of being a disciple for Christ and of making “fishers of men” seems like an overwhelming and daunting task, don’t let it be. You needn’t be fearful that you don’t have what it takes or that you can’t pull it off. When Jesus gave the command to make disciples He made this declaration, ***“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age”*** (Matt. 28:19-20).

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Jesus Himself is ***“with you always.”*** You and I are not alone, whether it is in walking the road of being an ordinary child of God (a sinner saved by Grace) or whether it is in wanting to become a true follower of Christ (being obedient to His Word) in sharing your story by telling others of your testimony of the transformation that has taken place in your own life. Either way, Jesus is with us, whether in Person in the form of His Holy Spirit or whether He places others across our path to lead, guide and protect us, Jesus is always there. He is always aware of what is going on in the lives of His children.

The same Jesus who calls each of us to make disciples is with us every step of the way. You'll be blindsided by the number of times you don't know what to say, yet the right and wise words come spilling out of your mouth. Or, you think you've blown it, and, in the moment, when you need it the most, you hear a word of encouragement through the still small voice of the Holy Spirit or as you read God's Word.

In indescribable whispers or through the words written thousands of years ago in Scripture, He lets you know, at the precise moment your heart is in need of it, that the action you took or the words you spoke were used in ways that accomplished His goals. You'll be ambushed by the power of a simple prayer and how God will answer it when you do not have the ability to meet the need of the person you're discipling.

You are not alone. In fact, if you go it alone, you can only accomplish in the lives of those you're discipling what you, a flawed and fragile human being, are capable of—and that is never enough. Disciples are made as a disciple-maker works in tandem with our all-knowing, all-powerful God to do what only can be done through this unfathomable partnership.

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THE TRANSFORMATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP FRAMEWORK

For a mature, obedient and devoted disciple to be made, it is essential that there be a biblical, intentional, and systematic approach to a person's relationship with God. The Transformational Discipleship Pathway comprises of six steps: The Beginning, The Way, The Call, The Truth, The Life, and The Mission. Each of these steps can be done independent of the rest, but it would be much more effective if they were done in succession over a period of time. As you can see by looking at the diagram below, the journey for any believer follows a strategic transformational discipleship pathway. The sequence of spiritual growth and biblical knowledge moves the person being discipled logically forward into ever increasing levels of understanding, obedience and maturity. Ironically, each pathway is a journey that includes practices and routines that even Jesus Christ took while walking this earth—teaching, conversing, learning, demonstrating, practicing, and reporting.

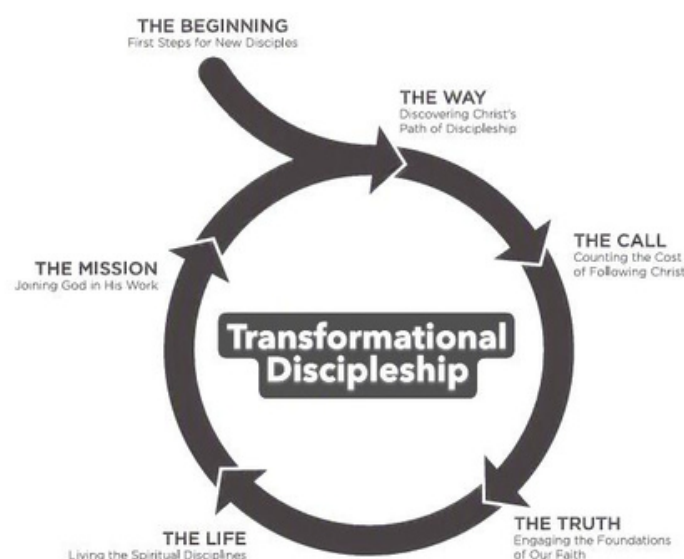


Diagram: *The Transformational Discipleship Framework*

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The disciple-maker teaches and models a practice of a disciple which leads to conversation which then guides the disciple (follower of Christ) to practice what was taught and demonstrated by Jesus on His own disciples. Then, the disciple in training reports to the disciple-maker what was experienced, leading to another transformational conversation. Spiritual growth is the outcome when each of these principles and/or practices is carried out.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO MAKE DISCIPLES?

The Bible teaches us that making disciples involves guiding individuals into a committed, growing relationship with Jesus, where they learn, practice, and share the teachings of Scripture. This process is grounded in intentional fellowship, instruction, and mentorship. The Great Commission, found in Matthew 28:19-20, is the foundational directive for making disciples. It calls for evangelism, ongoing teaching, and encouragement toward spiritual maturity and service. The early church exemplified this mandate, preaching the Gospel and making disciples, as seen in Acts 2:42, where believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, prayer, worship and the breaking of bread (Holy Communion). The Apostle Paul also emphasized the importance of teaching and mentorship, instructing Timothy to entrust what he had learned to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

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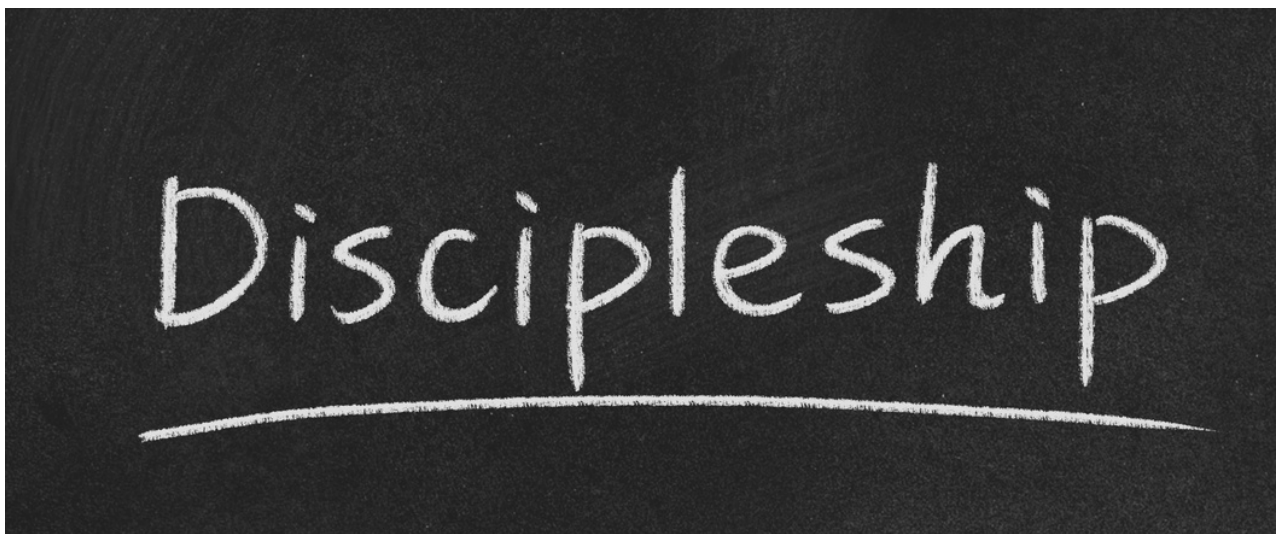
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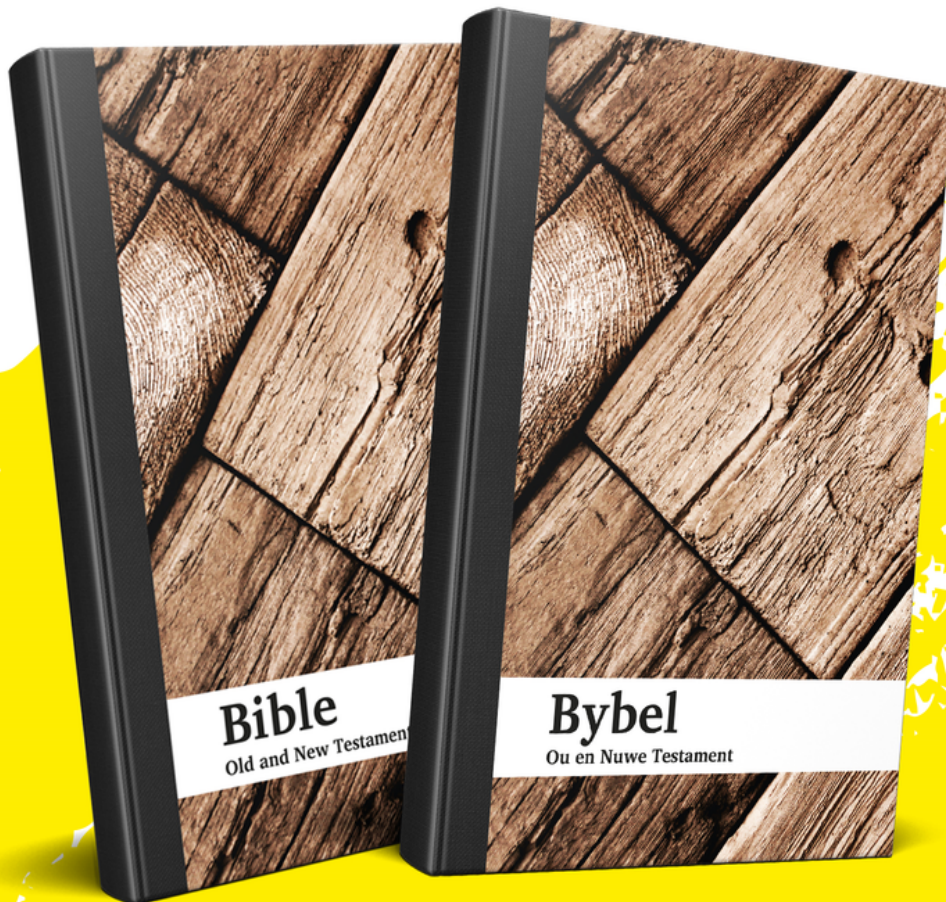
In Closing

Let us hold fast to the truth that the Bible is not just history, or a collection of historical facts or even books, letters, prophecies or principles of doctrine—it is God’s Living Word, meant to guide, convict, and transform us—mind, body, soul and spirit. Study it with reverence, obey it with humility, and allow the Holy Spirit to illuminate its truths in the corridors of your mind, soul, heart and in the belly of your spirit. Equip yourself with the Word, guard against deception and false doctrine, and let Christ’s presence shape every step of your life. Walk in His wisdom, stand firm in His truth, and may His peace and power be your constant guide on this journey of faith, trust and life. May God bless His Word.



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HAVE YOU ACCEPTED JESUS
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Romans 3:23 ESV

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"

The abovementioned verse is an extremely well used verse and many people know it and can even quote it off by heart, but the significance of it is the reality that every single person needs to contemplate.

If you have not accepted Jesus as your Personal Saviour yet or are thin king about it, you have to start here. The reality of your sin problem cancels and disqualifies you from the very presence of God and this bars you from eternal Life. Your choices are simple here, either an eternity with God or an Eternity without God. I would think that the logical answer would be an Eternity with God. Why? Well let's look at this:

2 Thessalonians 1:9

"They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might"

NASB

This is the reality of a choice that omits Jesus as your Personal Saviour -

= Everlasting Punishment

= Destruction

= Shut Out

= No Godly Presence

= And no Glory at all

This is not something to take lightly and by the way this is not scaring you into making a false decision, God is love, thus we as His followers are love, this means if I say I have the love of God, it is my duty to tell you the truth and point you into the right direction.

So in looking at the sin problem and the reality of this, what is the answer then? Let's look at this:

John 14:6

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

NASB

What a wonderful solution to an immense problem, God has made a way and in making the way He has also made it very clear that this is the only answer to the problem. You have to accept Jesus His Son in order to obtain Eternal Life and ward off all the destruction and other bad things spoken about in the previous Bible verse.

It also makes it very clear that this can only be done through JESUS CHRIST His Son, there is no other way to salvation or Eternal life other than through Jesus, NONE!

Let's look at this too:

John 1:12-13

"But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

NASB

Wow! Just look at this, not only do we get Eternal Life but we become Children of God. The impact of this is massive as it speaks to the fact that we now belong to the family of God and receive the benefits of being part of a family, and not just any family but a royal family (1 Peter 2 vs 9).

So in looking and understanding all of this, How do you accept Jesus as your Personal Saviour?

Romans 10 vs 9-10

"that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; 10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

NASB

Let me just make one point very clear before we look at the above verses, your salvation cannot be obtained by good works, you cannot go to Heaven or be part of God's family because you are a good person, or you do good deeds, No! The Bible makes it clear, if you want to accept Jesus as your Personal Saviour then it gets done on the basis of two things. These two things are critical because it will also help you on your work with the Lord and attain righteousness and a life pleasing to God.

Firstly, you have to confess with your mouth that Jesus is your Lord, this is very important because by your confession God will know and people in the world will know. This is significant because one does not hide a light under a bowl. Everyone must see and hear that you are a child of God.

BELIEF

And secondly you must believe in your heart, with your whole being and understanding that Jesus was raised from the dead and is alive and is your only Saviour.

So if you have read all of this and the Holy Spirit is directing you to accept Jesus as your Personal Saviour please pray the prayer on the next page, God loves you so much.



ACCEPTING JESUS IS EVERYTHING!

PRAYER FOR SALVATION

Dear Lord Jesus,

I understand that I am a sinner and in need of desperate saving, The Bible tells me clearly that the only answer is for me to confess with my mouth and believe in my heart. I am now confessing with my mouth that I am accepting You as my Personal Saviour and believing in my heart that you are alive and well and dwelling within me. Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit and the fellowship of other Believers and allow me please to follow in your footsteps. Amen!

Wow! Congratulations if you have just prayed this prayer, and know that you are now part of the family of the Kingdom of God. Please tell someone about your decision, pray all the time and read and study your Bible. Find a Holy Ghost, Bible preaching church and join.

Please let us know if you have made this decision and allow us to point you in the right direction.

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