

PRAYER EMPHASIS 2019 JULY  
PART 3 - HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE DISCIPLE

**1. be ready to die with Christ**

John 11:15-17 - *“and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him.” 16 Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us also go, so that we may die with Him.”*

What was Thomas willing to do?

What did he encourage other disciples to be willing to do?

Are you willing to die for Christ should you be faced with that possibility?

*Lord, grant me the grace and courage to stand with You and die for You, if necessary.*

**2. Rejoice that Christ has risen from the dead**

John 20:20 - *And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord.*

Why were the disciples rejoicing?

Why is that a cause for rejoicing?

Do you rejoice that Christ as risen from the dead?

*Lord, I rejoice that You have risen from the dead. You conquered death and the grave and have given us hope for a future in eternity with You.*

**3. Rejoice in suffering**

Acts 5:40-41 - *They took his advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them. So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.*

Why were the apostles rejoicing?

Have you suffered persecution for telling others about Jesus?

If so, what was your response?

If not, what could help you to rejoice under those circumstances?

*Lord, if I am called upon to suffer for Your name, remind me to rejoice that I have been considered worthy to do so.*

**4. Rejoice continually**

Acts 13:52 - *And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.*

What was the continual attitude and outlook of the disciples?

What enabled them to be continually filled with joy?

Are you continually filled with joy?

Why, or why not?

*Lord, fill me with your Spirit that I may be continually filled with joy. Help me to keep my focus on You instead of on my circumstances.*

## 5. Live a life of devotion

*Acts 2:42* - They [the 3,000 believers saved on the Day of Pentecost] were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

To what were these early believers devoted?

Each of these areas of devotion imply that these early believers were also continually meeting together. Are you continually meeting together with other believers?

How can we live a similar life of continual devotion?

*Lord, thank You for the example set by these early believers. Help me to also be continually devoted to teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.*

## 6. Be devoted to serving God's people

*1 Corinthians 16:15* - Now I urge you, brothers—you know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the service of the saints—

In addition to being devoted to teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer (see Acts 2:42), to what was the household of Stephanas devoted?

This family was following the example of Christ (see John 13:12-15; Matthew 20:25-28). How are you following the example of Christ by serving others?

Sometimes it is easier to serve people outside the church than inside the church. Why is that?

When we come to church, pride leads us to crave acclaim, approval, and attention. Humility leads us to serve as though we are serving Christ.

When have you given in to a spirit of pride?

What was the result of that?

How can you maintain a spirit of humility?

*Lord, keep me from pride. Give me the grace I need to be humble, serving others in the church as though I am serving You.*

## 7. Share with believers

*Acts 4:32-35* - And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. 33 And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. 34 For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales 35 and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need.

What was the attitude of these early believers toward their material possessions?

How was that attitude demonstrated in their daily lives?

How did that attitude affect the lives of others?

What is your attitude toward your material possessions?

*Lord, give me the grace to claim nothing as my own. Help me to generously share with others in order to meet their needs.*

## 8. Glorify God when others are saved

*Acts 11: 18 - When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life."*

What did the believers do when they heard that other peoples were also being saved?  
Do you glorify God when you hear that someone has come to know God?

*Lord, I praise You that You have revealed Yourself to \_\_\_\_\_. I thank You that \_\_\_\_\_ has repented and been saved! May You be glorified in every way by what You have done in his / her life!*

## 9. Learn gentleness and humility from Christ

*Matthew 11:29 - Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

What does it mean to take Christ's yoke upon you?  
How are you learning gentleness and humility from Christ?  
In what way have you found rest for your soul?

*Lord, as I take Your yoke upon me - as I give You complete control of my life and allow You to teach me and guide me - help me to learn gentleness and humility from You. Help me to find rest for my soul.*

## 10. Eagerly learn from Scripture

*Acts 17:10-11 - The brothers immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and when they arrived they went into the Jewish synagogue. Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.*

NOTE 1: The people were meeting together in the synagogue. If they hadn't been there, they would have missed the blessing of hearing about Jesus. What blessing are you missing when you are not in church meeting together with other believers?

NOTE 2: They "received the word". Someone taught them, and they were eager to be taught. Are you eager to be taught God's Word? If not, why not?

NOTE 3: They examined the Scripture daily. They had daily Bible study. Are you studying Scripture daily? If not, why not?

NOTE 4: They examined the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. They checked what they heard against Scripture to be sure that what was being taught was truth. Are you checking what you hear against Scripture? What could happen if you don't do that?

NOTE 5: No human being - not your minister, nor your Bible study leader, nor your choir director - can ignite an eagerness in you to learn God's Word. Meet together with other believers. Study and pray. Ask God to speak to you and give you understanding. Your hunger for His Word will grow as you seek God in these ways.

Are you expecting your pastor, Sunday School teacher, or other church leader to fill you with excitement about God and His Word?

What is the problem with having those expectations?

## 11. Change your affections / sacrifice

Luke 14:25-27 - *Now great crowds accompanied him, and He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."*

In this verse, the word "hate" does not mean "dislike", or "show contempt for", family members. However, it does mean a willingness to give up family, if necessary, in order to follow Christ as your first love. In many parts of the world, a choice to follow Christ requires being willing to give up family because your family will disown you (and possibly beat or kill you) for following Christ. Even in our own culture, a choice to follow Christ may mean taking a different path than other family members, going to church rather than to a family gathering, or sometimes even being ridiculed by family members who do not understand your commitment to Christ and His church.

What difficult choices are you making in order to follow Christ?

Are you willing to put Christ above all else?

Where can we gain strength and courage when we need to lovingly stand for Christ?

*Lord, please give me the grace I need to be strong, courageous, and loving when I am called on to stand for You. May my love for You be greater even than my love for family.*

## 12. Do good works and acts of charity

Acts 9:36 - *Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity.*

We can learn how to live like a disciple by looking at the lives of other disciples. What was the example set by Dorcas?

Are these things also characteristic of your life?

These were not occasional good works and acts of charity. Rather, those things are what she was known for - the reputation she had built. What are you known for - the reputation you are building?

Are you setting an example of how to live like a disciple?

*Lord, I am Your disciple. Help me to set an example for others through good works and acts of charity. Help me to build a reputation that will point others to You.*

## 13. Glorify God in whatever you do

1 Corinthians 10:31 - *Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

In our many daily decisions, activities, and habitual practices, one of the best questions we can ask ourselves is, "Does this bring glory to God?"

Do you take the time to ask that question?

In order to bring glory to God, what we say or do must help others to know who God is, what His true nature is according to Scripture, and what His purposes are as stated in His Word.

Do the things that you say and do on a daily basis accomplish those three things?

*God, whether I eat or drink or whatever I do, I want to do it for Your glory. As I commit myself to doing that, please guide me to help others know who You are, what Your true nature is, and what Your purposes are.*

#### **14. Don't be ashamed of the gospel**

*Romans 1:16 - For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

What does it mean to be ashamed of the gospel?  
How can we demonstrate that we are ashamed of the gospel?  
How can we demonstrate that we are not ashamed of the gospel?  
What does this verse say about sharing the gospel?  
How can knowing that help you share the gospel more often?

*Lord, help me to no longer be ashamed of the gospel. Remind me constantly that You can powerfully use my sharing of the gospel to bring salvation to others.*

#### **15. Meet together with other believers**

*Hebrews 10:25 - not forsaking (or neglecting) our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.*

That "assembling together" thing? That is what we call our Bible studies and worship services.

Do you have a tendency to neglect meeting together with other believers at church?  
There are a number of reasons why church is important. The writer of Hebrews mentions one very important reason in this short verse. What is it?  
Did you know that your church attendance encourages other believers? That they miss out on being encouraged when you are absent?  
How does your absence discourage your teacher who has carefully and prayerfully prepared a Bible study for your class?  
How does your absence discourage your pastor who has carefully and prayerfully prepared Bible instruction for the church service?  
How does your absence discourage those who might otherwise receive an encouraging word, testimony, or example from you?  
Of what does the writer of Hebrews remind us in order to help us be faithful in church?  
Are you keeping that fact in mind as you consider whether you will attend church?

*Lord, help me to be faithful in attending church so that I can encourage others as the day of Your coming draws near.*

#### **16. Work hard in order to give**

*Acts 20:35 - In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"*

How is your work ethic? Are you working hard, or hardly working?  
According to this verse, what is one reason we should work hard?  
Are you working for the purpose of being able to help others?

*Lord, help me each day as I go to work to work hard so that I can give to others and be a blessing to them.*

## **17. Set money aside to give**

*1 Corinthians 16:1-2 - With regard to the collection for the saints, please follow the directions that I gave to the churches of Galatia: 2 On the first day of the week, each of you should set aside some income and save it to the extent that God has blessed you, so that a collection will not have to be made when I come.*

These early believers were meeting on the first day of the week, just as we do. They brought their tithes and offerings as they met together. The money was used to meet the needs in their own church, the needs of missionaries, and the needs of other believers and other churches that needed help. These are the same things accomplished by your tithes and offerings today.

Are you being faithful to meet together with other believers in your local church?  
Are you setting aside some income, to the extent that God has blessed you, in order to meet the needs of your church, the needs of missionaries, and the needs of other believers?

*Lord, help me to be faithful to go to church and faithful to give to meet the needs of others. Thank You for blessing me so that I can give.*

## **18. Set your mind on things above**

*Colossians 3:1-3 - Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Keep thinking about things above, not things on the earth, 3 for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

What does it mean to seek the things above?  
Are you continually doing that?  
Are you more focused on heavenly things or on earthly things?

*Lord, help me to keep seeking the things above. Help me to not let earthly things distract me or change my focus.*

## **19. Guard against greed**

*Luke 12:15 - Then he said to them, "Watch out and guard yourself from all types of greed, because one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."*

Notice that Jesus says to, "guard yourself from all types of greed." What are some various ways we can exhibit greed?  
How can we guard ourselves from greed?  
What is the reason Jesus gives for guarding ourselves from greed?  
What are some ways you may be demonstrating greed?

*Lord, help me to guard myself from all types of greed. Continually remind me that life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.*

## 20. Serve Christ

John 12:26 - *If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.*

What are some ways we can serve Christ?

According to this verse, what will we have to do in order to serve Him?

Are you willing to follow Christ, and to go where He goes - to be at work where Christ is at work?

What is the reward for serving Christ?

*Lord, fill me with a willingness to follow You and to serve You.*

## 21. Be willing to serve in menial ways

John 13:14-15 - *Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*

Christ performed a lowly task in order to teach us how to serve others in humble ways. Are you willing to

    Serve others by performing lowly tasks in humble ways?

Christ didn't complain as He performed this task. How is your attitude when performing lowly tasks for others?

*Lord, give me the grace to be humble and uncomplaining as I perform lowly tasks in service of others.*

## 22. Meeting needs

Proverbs 25:21-22 - *If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink, for you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you.*

God has always desired for His people to meet the needs of others in order to reflect who He is: a God of mercy.

In these verses, whose needs are we to meet?

What is the purpose?

What does that mean, "you will heap burning coals on his head?"

Who will reward us?

Sometimes we feel that if we are kind to our enemy, then we are validating their unkind behavior. Kindness does not validate cruelty, but instead enables mercy to shine brightly.

Romans 5:8 - *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

What condition were you in when Christ showed kindness and mercy to you?

*Lord, help me to demonstrate mercy and compassion by meeting the needs of others - including the needs of my enemies.*

### **23. Serve Christ to the end of your life, whatever the cost**

Acts 20:18-24 - *And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, 19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews; 20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, 21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, 23 except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. 24 But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.*

With what attitude did Paul serve Christ?

What things did he do to serve Christ?

How long did he serve Christ?

Looking at verse 24, what things helped him to enduringly, continually serve Christ?

*Lord, help me to serve you with humility, courageously teaching others about You and sharing the good news of Jesus. Help me to finish the ministry You have given to me, testifying solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God, not considering my life as dear to myself, but enduring and continuing to the end.*

### **24. Be teachable**

John 14:26 - *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*

God has things He wants to teach us. Are you willing, or resistant, to being taught?

How do we demonstrate a willingness to being taught by God?

How do we demonstrate a resistance to being taught by God?

We have to position ourselves to hear from God. How can we do that?

*Lord, please forgive me for resisting Your teachings. Fill me with a willingness to learn from You. Help me to have a teachable spirit. Help me to position myself to hear from You by spending time in prayer and Bible study and being faithful at church.*

### **25. Have a daily prayer life**

Psalms 88:9 - *... I have called upon You every day, O Lord; I have spread out my hands to You.*

Psalms 145:2 - *Every day I will bless You, And I will praise Your name forever and ever.*

A disciple has a daily devotional time and is developing his prayer life.

Have you called on God today?

Do you bless God every day?

Is praise a part of your daily prayer time?

*Yes, Lord, I will call upon You every day. I will bless You and praise Your name forever and ever.*



## 26. Continue in the Word

*John 8:31 - So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;*

*Acts 17:11 - Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.*

*Colossians 3:16 - Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

*2 Timothy 2:15 - Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.*

According to these verses, a disciple demonstrates faithfulness to Scripture and a sincere desire to live it out, study it, hear it preached and taught, teach it to others, etc.

In what ways are you demonstrating a faithfulness to Scripture?  
Are you receiving the Word with eagerness?  
Are you being diligent in your study and use of Scripture?  
Are you applying what you are learning from Scripture to your life?

*Lord, help me to be faithful to Your Word, eagerly studying it, learning from it, and applying it to my life.*

## 27. Witness to others

*1 Thessalonians 2:4 - just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who examines our hearts.*

A disciple has a heart for sharing the gospel with others, and seeks to please God by doing so.

In what way have we been entrusted with the gospel?  
Are you looking for ways to share the gospel?  
How is speaking to others about the good news of Jesus pleasing to God?

*Lord, help me to openly and eagerly share the good news of Jesus with others!*

## 28. Demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit

*Galatians 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

A disciple demonstrates the fruit of the Spirit in his life.

What are the nine parts of the fruit of the Spirit that should be apparent in our lives?  
Are any of these lacking in your life?  
Is this fruit growing in your life?

*Lord, please help me to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He seeks to produce spiritual fruit in my life. Help me to grow in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*

## 29. Testify

*John 1:6-8 - There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light.*

When we testify, we tell others who Jesus is and what He has done in our lives.

According to these verses, what is the purpose of testifying?

Who has come to believe in God because of your testifying?

When was the last time that you gave your testimony to someone?

*Lord, help me to always be ready to testify about Jesus. Give me the words and wisdom I need to lead others to believe in You by telling them what You have done for me.*

## 30. Point people to Jesus

*John 1:29 - The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

A disciple points other people to Jesus, taking the spotlight off of self and putting it on Him.

What are some ways we can point others to Jesus?

Are you doing those things?

How can seeking the approval of others keep us from pointing them to Jesus?

*Lord, keep me from seeking the spotlight. Help me to point others to You.*

## 31. Be a good soldier of Christ Jesus

*2 Timothy 2:3-5 - Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4 No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him. 5 An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 6 It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. 7 Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.*

According to these verses, what are the characteristics of a good soldier of Christ Jesus?

Do you demonstrate those characteristics?

What needs to change?

*Lord, help me to be a good soldier of Christ Jesus by sharing in the suffering of Christ, not getting entangled in worldly pursuits, aiming to please You, doing things Your way, and working hard to cultivate the kingdom.*