

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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There's More!

by Dan Trygg

“And on the Sabbath He began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard Him were astonished, saying, ‘Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to Him? How are such mighty works done by His hands?’” Mark 6:2

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.” Acts 4:13

“I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, would give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the true-knowledge of Him. ¹⁸ I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the glorious riches of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power to us who believe, according to the inworking of the might of His vast-capability.” Ephesians 1:17-19

Happy New Year! While many in our culture are thinking of new year resolutions, I want to dial up some things for you to consider. There is more to this “Jesus thing” than simply coming to believe in Him. There is more than calling on Him in faith, getting baptized or attending church. **Eternal life is *not* the end goal, ...it is the doorway to an entirely new set of possibilities.** The first of these is that we might come to experientially know God (Jn. 17:3). That is a never-ending, deepening, expansive objective all by itself! Paul says that God has made us alive in Christ so that in the ages to come He might show and demonstrate to us the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness upon us in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:7). **2023 is just the tiniest sliver of that ongoing, expansive process of discovery. Embracing Jesus in faith is the beginning of discovery of new realities and understandings, growing in our own walk and relationship with Him, and developing the skills that are part of our inheritance and calling in Christ.**

It is this last part I want to draw your attention to in today's study. **We are called to be “disciples” of Christ, ...active followers, imitators, apprentices, ones who are to be learning how to think and live like our Master.** A disciple is not just a pupil, or a student of information. **A disciple is a person who is learning the skills and approach of the One they are following.** As Jesus said, “A disciple is to become *as* or *like* his or her Master” (Matt. 10:25). Jesus was *not* just a human teacher of some philosophy or religion, either. Jesus spoke, acted, and did things that were clearly *not* the status quo. The way He perceived things, the choices He made, and the power He demonstrated revealed a very different quality of living that He has invited us to discover and emulate. ***Our lives are also to look radically different than the lives of other people who don't know Jesus.*** We ought to think and perceive things differently. We ought to approach situations differently, and act in ways that may seem strange to others. **We ought to demonstrate a supernatural quality of life and power that would cause others to say, “Where do these people get those things? What is this wisdom that they possess? How do they do such mighty works?”**

I have listed below sixteen “skills” that a follower of Jesus Christ should be looking to experience and develop. As “skills”, they are *not* just experiences. They are *abilities* that they *learn to do, practice and become proficient in.* Possibly you had not considered these as something *you* should be looking to expect or pursue, ...but they are part of your inheritance and your calling, if you are one who knows Jesus and is actively following Him. **Too often, people of faith are ignorant that these are things available to, or expected of, them. These skills remain undiscovered, untapped and undeveloped. When God's people pursue proficiency in these skills that are meant to be ours, however, things will really begin to happen.** We will discover a depth and vibrancy of life we had never dreamed of before. Read on.

(1.) We are to gain a sound understanding of basic Bible doctrine – Ephesians 4:13. While this would seem to be self-evident, it is amazing how many have never invested the time or effort to know even the basics accurately. How can we say we are “disciples” of Jesus, if we aren't applying ourselves to become informed as to what He said and did? Jesus Himself said, “If you abide in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine” (John 8:31).

(2.) We are to learn the skills to study and rightly interpret the scriptures – 2 Peter 1:20,21; 2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 5:11-14. Do *you* have those skills? Do you know what they are? Do you practice them for proficiency? This will require repeated effort on our part. We need to make Bible study a regular part of our lives, and we must develop the ability to discern between what is sound teaching, and what is not.

(3.) We are to develop the ability to obtain revelatory/experiential knowledge of Jesus – Ephesians 4:13. This goes beyond information or study. This is about experience. We are to learn to recognize the reality of Jesus at work in our lives. We learn to notice His promptings, His communications to us – e.g., Acts 18:9,10.

(4.) We are to learn to walk in victory over sin, and in the fruit of the Holy Spirit – John 8:30-34; Romans 6:11-22; Galatians 5:22,23. The victory is available to us in Jesus. We just need to believe that and discover how to walk in that.

Also, there is no excuse for “sub-Christian”, fleshly behavior. The power of the flesh has been broken. If we live by the Spirit, we can learn to abide in Him and express His character.

(5.) We are to learn to be sensitive to and be led by the Holy Spirit – Matthew 4:1; Romans 8:14; Galatians 5:18. How can we expect to be proficient at following Jesus, if we don’t develop this skill. It is available to us. We need to set our minds on the things of the Spirit (Rom. 8:5,6), and learn to discern and respond to His activity in our lives.

(6.) We are to receive wisdom, freedom and boldness from the Holy Spirit to speak effectively for Jesus – Luke 21:15; Acts 6:10. The Holy Spirit will give us the words to speak when we are to testify before others – Matthew 10:19,20.

(7.) We are to learn how to become an effective “fisher of people” – Matthew 4:19. You may not have the spiritual gift of being an evangelist, but we all can do the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:5). When Jesus called the original twelve disciples, He said “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men!” This is definitely a skill that our Master intends to teach us to be proficient at. Proficiency comes through experimentation and practice.

(8.) We are to learn to effectively recognize and deal with spiritual warfare, and to cast out demons – Ephesians 6:10-20; Mark 3:15; Luke 10:17-19; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Revelation 12:11. Many believers ignore this critical part of the reality that the Bible declares to us. We are in a spiritual war. We have an intelligent enemy who seeks to disable or destroy us. We must be aware, prepared, and must be able to resist the enemy. Not only are we to protect ourselves, but delivering others from demonic oppression is a key aspect of gospel ministry. If we are in the fight, we will need to deal with these skills.

(9.) We are to learn to operate in the healing ministry of God’s Spirit – Luke 5:17; 6:19; 9:1-6; John 14:12. Healing was another common feature of gospel ministry. We should *expect* that God would continue to authenticate the genuine preaching of the message with healing, signs, and wonders (Acts 2:22,43; 4:29,30). Jesus specifically told us to expect that we could do the same kinds of works that He did, if we trusted in Him.

(10.) We are to learn to operate effectively together with others in the gifts of the Holy Spirit – 1 Corinthians 12; 14; Romans 12:3-8; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Peter 4:10,11. Every one of us has at least one spiritual gift, and God may also impart other giftings upon us in particular circumstances. It is possible to “neglect” our spiritual gift (1 Timothy 4:14). The word there is to be “careless” or “unconcerned” about our gift. No! We are to apply ourselves to discover our giftings through the service we do in the body of Christ. The next verse says that we are to be diligent in meditating, thinking about, and applying ourselves wholeheartedly toward discovering, utilizing and developing our ministry gifts.

(11.) We are to develop an effective life of prayer and intercession – Luke 11:1-10; John 15:7; Colossians 4:2-4; James 5:14-18. That means clear, direct, and obvious answers by God to our prayers. If you go through the gospel of Luke, it becomes very evident how much Jesus prayed, or taught about prayer. Prayer was a deep and regular part of His life. He expects us to develop a healthy and practical life of prayer. The Christian life was never meant to be lived apart from God’s involvement. He wants us to seek Him, to include Him, to ask Him.

(12.) We are to grow in the heart of Jesus to put aside self-interest and to freely serve others – Philippians 2:1-11. This is a powerful passage about developing a mindset like Jesus had. He did not consider just His own needs or interests. He was willing to set aside His privilege and comfort in order to get involved with people in need (us) and help them. We are to develop a humble, servant-heart like He demonstrated.

(13.) We are to become consistent, joyful, faith-filled and sacrificial givers – Galatians 6:6,7; Malachi 3:8-10; 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15; 1 Corinthians 9:1-14; Romans 15:22-28; 3 John 1:5-11. The Bible speaks a great deal about money, because how you use the resources you have indicates what is important to you. Under the old covenant a 10% tithe was *required* to be given to support the people who were called by God to serve Him full time. To withhold this was considered to be robbing God. In the new covenant, we are not under that constraint, but our hearts should lead us to give freely, generously and in faith that God will be honored by our giving and will enlarge our hearts. The support of ministry workers is clearly taught in the NT, as well. Again, generosity and giving in faith is a discipleship skill. Those who are serious about the support and advance of the ministry, and about brothers and sisters who are in need, will rightly demonstrate their love and support through their giving. As we grow in our walk, we find ways to prioritize our resources so that we can support the work and those in need.

(14.) We are to learn to test out to discover the will of God for ourselves, and for the gathering of believers we fellowship with – Romans 12:2. A disciple is not passive. He or she will be engaged in the process of discovering where God’s purpose and direction may be. Sometimes this is quite clear. At other times, it requires some experimentation. We are told to “test things out” to discover where and how God is intending for us to work with Him.

(15.) Above all things, we are to learn to love effectively in the power of the Spirit – 1 Timothy 1:5; 1 John 4:7-12; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 3:14; John 13:34-35. Jesus said that love like His would be the mark that makes us most evident. Love is also a discipleship skill, learned through responding to the Spirit and practice.

(16.) We are to ‘discipline’ all nations, teaching them to do all that Jesus taught His disciples – Matthew 28:18-20. This also will require intention and effort. We train others to learn the discipleship skills that Jesus taught us.