

IN THE STEPS OF Y'SHUA THE MESSIAH

**“For you have been called for this purpose,
since the Messiah also suffered for you,
leaving you an example
that you should follow on in His steps,
WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, AND DECEIT and
GUILF WERE NEVER FOUND IN HIS MOUTH.”**

(Isaiah.53:9. 1 Peter 2:21-22)

MEDITATIONS BY DON STANTON

Maranatha Revival Crusade,
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ישוע



Y'SHUA is the original Hebrew Name of **Jesus**. This Name is also often written as Yeshua, or Yahshua. The meaning of Y'shua is ...

“Yahweh (the Eternal One) is Salvation.”

THE MESSIAH (or, **The Christ**) means **“The Anointed One.”** It comes from the Hebrew words *HaMashiach*.

Y'shua is the fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies in the Old Testament.

All Christians recognise Y'shua (Jesus) as the Messiah; and in this generation, many Jews worldwide are also acknowledging Y'shua as the son of David - the prophesied returning Messiah.

#1 TOTAL OBEDIENCE TO THE FATHER'S WILL



As we study the life of Y'shua the Messiah, we are often struck by His words. We know His whole life was one of obedience to the Father's will, and His attitude was - "not My will but Yours." But Y'shua makes such statements as these:

"I assure you truly, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but only what He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son also does in like manner ... I can do nothing on My own *initiative*, as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just; because I do not seek My own will but the will of Him who sent Me." (John 5:19, 30)

"No-one takes *My life* away from Me, but I lay it down on My own *initiative*. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. These are the instructions I received from My Father." (John 10:18)

"For I have not spoken on My own *initiative*, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." (John 12:49)

These statements represent total commitment, and total control by the Father. And yet Y'shua was not a robot - His was total cooperation, and total communion. He was God manifest in flesh, and His humanity was filled, 100%, with the Spirit. And Y'shua was inseparable from the Holy Spirit. For even as the Father and the Son are one, the Spirit and the Son are one.

When the set time came for the Great Sacrifice - the time for Y'shua to become the Pesach (Passover) Lamb - the time for the Anointed One to embrace the *stauros* (the execution stake) and to lay down His life - the Master "resolutely set His face to go to Jerusalem." (Luke 9:51). He became obedient unto death. (Philippians 2:8)

As I see His footprints on the road to Calvary, I must ask myself, "Am I willing to follow in His steps?"

"For you have been called for this purpose, since the Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps. HE COMMITTED NO SIN, AND DECEIT *and* GUILF WERE NEVER FOUND IN HIS MOUTH. [Is.53:9]. When reviled - scorned *and* insulted, He did not retaliate; *while* suffering, He did not threaten, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness - by whose stripes you were healed." (1 Peter 2:21-24)

The apostle Paul says that it is not only actions, but the very attitude of the Master that should be ours.

"Let the same attitude and purpose be in you which was in the Messiah, Y'shua." (Philippians 2:5)

"I do nothing, I speak nothing, of myself,
I seek nothing for myself - but only the will of God."

Difficult, eh? Yes. But herein is the “success” of the Master. And herein lies one of the essential principles that leads us, his disciples, on to victory. In a very real sense, everything the Father is doing in our lives is to train us in this Y’shuan principle.

And yet this principle is not a passivism that puts us out of action. Rather, it produces a renunciation of our own human resources. When we discover our total human inability to do the will of the Father, we are close to discovering the divine power and resources that are at work in us.

Of myself I can do nothing of myself - nothing but fail.

But “... strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might,” (Colossians 1:11).
“I can do all things through the Messiah who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13)

Yes, through “Y’shua the Nazarene, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people.” (Luke 24:19)

*To be like Jesus, to be like Jesus!
All I ask is to be like Him.
All through life’s journey from earth to heaven,
All I ask, is to be like Him.*

“He who claims that he lives *and* remains in Him (*the Messiah*), should himself walk *in the same manner* as He walked.” (1 John 2:6)

“By this, love has been perfected with us, so that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.” (1 John 4:17)

Let’s pray:

O YHWH our God, we bless You. Our Father we want to be a blessing to You. Graciously teach us Your ways; teach us this principle that Y’shua our Master so perfectly lived by and demonstrated - total obedience to Your will.

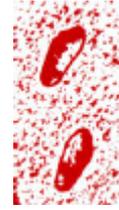
Father make us like Him, that we might walk in His footsteps, and fulfil Your will. We rejoice and give You thanks, Father, for the provision You have made for our spiritual walk and victory, in the mighty Name of Y’shua the Messiah!

Blessed is the Name of the Master, Yahweh-Y’shua

A PROMISE

“Although the LORD has given you bread of adversity and water of oppression, your Teacher will no longer be hidden, but your eyes will see Your Teacher. And your ears will hear a word behind you, ‘This is the Way, walk in it,’ whenever you turn to the right or to the left.” (Isaiah 30:20-21)

#2 SILENT BEFORE HIS ACCUSERS



“For you have been called for this purpose, since the Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps. HE COMMITTED NO SIN, AND DECEIT *and* GUILT WERE NEVER FOUND IN HIS MOUTH.” (Isaiah.53:9. 1 Peter 2:21-22)

Let us look for a moment at the example of our Saviour as recorded in Isaiah 53:7 - hundreds of years before Y’shua took upon Himself the form of man.

“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet **He did not open His mouth**. Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, **He did not open His mouth**.”

The fulfilment of the prophecy is, of course, recorded in the four Gospels.

“Now Y’shua stood before the governor, and the governor questioned Him saying, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ And Y’shua said to him, ‘You say so.’ And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He gave no answer.

“Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Do you not hear how many things they testify against You?’ But He did not answer him a single word *with regard to even a single charge*, so that the governor was greatly amazed.” (Matthew 27:11-14)

What a Testimony!

Y’shua could have reasoned, “I am the Truth, so I MUST tell the truth, and refute all these false accusations. They may crucify Me, but how can I let people believe these lies - that I am an impostor, blasphemer, and criminal. No! I MUST tell the truth!”

At His trial, Y’shua “the Wisdom of God,” could have given the greatest defence of all time. He could have commanded the most powerful arguments and words that would have flawed His enemies. He could have had them cringing in the dust, and slinking away in shame. But He remained silent!

“When reviled - scorned *and* insulted, He did not retaliate; *while* suffering, did not threaten, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously.” (1 Peter 2:23)

What an Example!

Now my reader, how is it with us, when we are accused? Is our natural reaction one of defending ourselves? Are we quick to let our accusers “know the truth”? Do we draw upon our “wisdom” to refute allegations, and to prove ourselves innocent?

To follow in the footsteps of the Master, we must learn to remain silent in the face of accusations, and to entrust ourselves to the One who vindicates.

“No weapon forged against you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of YHWH, and their vindication is from Me, declares YHWH.” (Isaiah 54:17)

We refute the accusers, not by arguments and heated words, but BY FAITH in the One who judges righteously. (1 Peter 2:23)

“... the prophets who by faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises ... whose weakness was turned to strength; and *who* became mighty in battle and routed foreign armies.” (Hebrews 11:32-34)

It's true, the Master did speak a few sentences. He knew when to speak, and when to remain silent. But during the trials - before Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate, Y'shua mostly remained silent.

This is a hard lesson for us to learn, but it's one we must learn! For we must walk in His steps.



#3 UPHOLDING THE WORD, FULFILLING THE LAW, AND YET, FORGIVING THE TRANSGRESSORS

Y'shua said; “if any one hears My words, and does not believe and keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My Words, has one who judges him; the Word I have spoken is what will judge him in the last day.” (John 12:47-48)

The Master demonstrated in His life the paradox that He is the Law-Giver - He is the Word - and He is also the One who fulfils the Law. He did not come to earth the judge, but to seek, to forgive and to save. And yet, His very Presence exposes sin, and His words will ultimately judge all. This paradox is demonstrated in the case of the woman caught in the very act:

“Then early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and having sat down He was teaching them. The scribes and the Pharisees *then* brought to Him a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in *their* midst, they said to Him, ‘Rabbi, this woman has been caught committing adultery - in the very act! Now in the Law Moses commanded us that such *transgressors* should be stoned; what then do You say?’

And they said this, testing Him, so that they might have *grounds* to accuse Him. But Y'shua stooped down and wrote on the ground with the finger, as though He did not hear. But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up and said to them, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him *be the* first to throw a stone at her.’ And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

And when they heard *this*, being convicted by their conscience, *they began* to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Y'shua was left alone, and the woman, *where she had been*, in the midst.

Y'shua straightened up, and seeing no one but the woman, *He* said to her, 'Woman, where are they - your accusers? Did no one condemn you?' And she said, 'No one, Master.' And Y'shua said to her, 'Neither do I condemn you; go your way, and from now on sin no more.'" (John 8:2-11)

The Rulers and Pharisees of Israel were "Masters at Law" - masters at upholding, and also masters at invalidating the Law. (Mark 7:13). They did not **love** the Holy Torah. How could they? The Law was something to be manipulated - an instrument that could be used to control the people; to keep them in subjection to their religious dictates.

Y'shua exposed their unholy machinations - their plots, and hypocrisy. And they didn't like it! So they decided to use the Law against the Nazarene, to prove their "own righteousness," and "His fallibility." They would throw the Law at the Law-Giver Himself. They would show themselves to be more righteous than "My Righteous Servant." (Isaiah 53:11)

Such is the blindness of the religious heart that does not understand the righteousness of YHWH which is revealed from faith to faith. (Romans 1:17)

The Law was given, not only that sin might be exposed, but also so that people might be brought to repentance, and to salvation through faith in the Lamb of God. The commandments pronounced death - for the wages of sin is death; but the Holy Torah brought grace, for it revealed the provision of YHWH the Almighty for the forgiveness and justification of His people.

"But You, O LORD, are a gracious God, full of compassion, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth." (Psalm 86:15)

"I, YHWH your God, *am* a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth *generation* of those who hate Me, but showing mercy *and* steadfast love to a thousand *generations* of those who love Me and keep My commandments." (Exodus 20:5-6)

The Rulers and Pharisees knew this truth very well - it was a central part of the Decalogue; and they were, of course, determined to take full advantage of the mercy of God for themselves. But as they were "the guardians of the Law," the Chief Priests would not extend the same mercy to sinners in need, unless the transgressors accepted their Pharisaic conditions.

They invalidated the Law, for they did not regard The Law as a schoolmaster to bring sinners to the Messiah. (Galatians 3:24). Oh no! Sinners must be condemned and stoned! The Pharisees and priests, of course, were exempt, for they were always able to establish their own righteousness. They could not be condemned! But Y'shua had news for them.

"But if you do not forgive *other* people, then your Father will not forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:15)

"He who is without sin among you, let him *be the* first to throw a stone at her." (John 8:7)

They tried to throw the Law at the Law-Giver; but it bounced back upon themselves. The Law that was intended to lead to salvation, now became the Law that condemned them.

But to the woman who was condemned, both by her transgression and by her accusers, found that the Law-Giver fulfilled the Law on her behalf. She may not have understood it all at that moment, but in due time it became so clear.

Y'shua was the Righteous One who upheld the Law, and He was the Merciful One who fulfilled the Law by a perfect life, and He was also the Sacrificial Lamb who fulfilled the Law's just requirements for redemption.

So Y'shua proved Himself to be the Righteous and the Merciful - the One who is able to forgive and to cast our sins into "the depths of the sea." Yes, He is the Holy One who, with the Torah in His hand, could say, "I do not condemn you. Your sins are forgiven. Go your way, and from now on, sin no more."

Now, beloved disciple of Messiah, let us walk in His steps.

"For you have been called for this purpose, since the Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow on in His steps." (1 Peter 2:21-22)

We have NOT been called to condemn the world, but to preach the Gospel to the end that sinners might be saved. Does this mean that we must not preach repentance?

No! Y'shua preached repentance, and we must follow His example in upholding the commands that are reiterated in the New Covenant. And as we proclaim the righteous standards of God, the Word will do its own work. We do not need to condemn. We should not even have the desire to condemn others.

Let us be careful not to go beyond the commission of our Master. Preach repentance, but don't set yourself up as a judge.

Preach the Word and righteous standards, but do not try to usurp the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It is His work, and His alone, to convict the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. (John 16:8)

There is a "right use of the commands of God." The preaching of the commands brings conviction, and conviction leads to Salvation. But let us not manipulate or invalidate the Word of God like the Pharisees did.

Let us not imbibe the attitude of the self-righteous: "Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone ..." - lest we condemn ourselves.

May the Master never have to say to us:

"Wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt seeing you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, as I also had pity on you?"
(Matthew 18:32-33)

Rather let us pray with genuine hearts:

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven those who were indebted to us."
(Matthew 6:12)

Many Christians are still battling in this realm of forgiveness. May the Master give us, each one, the victory!

"Be kind towards one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in the Messiah also has forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32)

Let's pray:

*Blessed are You, Oh Yahweh our Sovereign Master. You are indeed our gracious Father, full of com-*passion*, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.*

We worship You, O Yahweh Tsidkaynu - our Righteousness. We delight, we rejoice, we revel in Your faithfulness, in Your mercy and unending love. We exult in You and magnify Your Holy Name.

We proclaim Your Name in song; we sing a song of triumph to Y'shua the Messiah, our Redeemer and King.

Beloved Master, You have paid the penalty; You have cast our sins into the depths of the sea; You have loosed our bands, and set us free.

You have delivered us from so great a debt. We love You, Master; "We will not go out free." We are Your bond-servants, for ever and ever.

Y'shua our Saviour, we want to follow in Your steps. Teach us Your ways, and cause us to glorify Your Holy Name in all our behavior.

Blessed be the Name of
Yahweh-Y'shua our Righteousness

Amen.



#4 IN THE HOLY OF HOLIES

“But when Messiah appeared as High Priest of the better things to come, (*better than those that are now here*), He *entered* into the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with *human* hands, that is to say, not of this *material* creation. He entered once and for all into the *Holy* of Holies in *Heaven*.

“*And He entered*, not by virtue of the blood of goats and calves, but by virtue of His own blood, having secured eternal redemption *for us*.” (Hebrews 9:11-12)

We normally think of following in the steps of the Master, as following His example while on earth. But here is another dimension - following His steps into the innermost sanctuary in Heaven - into the Presence of YHWH Elohim.

But how can we do that while we are still on earth?

In spirit - not yet physically. One day, in glorified bodies, all believers will approach that Holy Place - the Throne of the Almighty and the Lamb. But right now - this very day - we are invited, and exhorted, to follow the steps of Y'shua into the Holy Place, and to engage in our priestly duties - offering the incense of worship, and interceding on behalf of others in need.

“Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Y'shua - by a new and living way which He consecrated and opened for us - a way through the curtain, that is through His flesh - His torn body.

“And since we have such a great priest ministering over the household of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled with His blood and cleansed from a guilty conscience, *even as* our bodies have been washed with pure water.” (Hebrews 10:19-22)

“Therefore He is also able to save completely and forever those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to intercede for them.” (Hebrews 7:25)

As Y’shua entered the Holy Place to intercede for us, let us also enter, to share in His ministry, and intercede for needy and perishing souls.

(See also: Isaiah 53:12. Revelation 1:6, 5:10. 1 Peter 2:5, 9. Ephesians 6:18)



#5 THE GOD WHO LOVES TO BLESS

Our Master was full of love. How could it be otherwise? “For God so loved the world!”

Y’shua was the very incarnation of love. In Him dwelt all the fullness of Elohim (God). He is the One who blesses; the One who loves to bless.

In the first chapter of Genesis it is twice written: “**God blessed them.**” In the last chapter of the Bible, Revelation 22:14, there is a blessing upon the redeemed: “Blessed are those who wash their robes ...”

Look throughout Genesis, and again and again you read ... “**God blessed them.**” “YHWH blessed them.” “I will bless you.”

In Deuteronomy 10:8, and 21:5, the tribe of Levi was set apart specifically to **bless in His Name.**

The Psalms are full of blessing and the blessed.

In the New Testament our Master tells us to “**bless** those who curse you.” (Luke 6:28). And the last words of the Master to His disciples formed a blessing. While He was blessing them He ascended into Heaven. (Luke 24:50-51)

In Ephesians 1:3 we see that our Father has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. And so we join with Paul, saying, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Master, Y’shua the Messiah.”

So being the One who loves to bless, how could Y'shua tolerate seeing young children being turned away, along with their parents who wanted Him to bless their children?

“And they were bringing children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who were bringing them. And when Y'shua saw *this*, He was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the children come to Me; do not stop them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it *at all*.’” And taking them up in His arms, *and* laying His hands upon them, **He blessed them.**” (Mark 10:13-16)

Tired or not tired, Y'shua would bless them! Children were not insignificant to Him - they were very important!

Now if we are told to bless those who curse us, how much more should we bless our young ones. Yes, we do pray for our children. But there is a specific promise that we should take hold of - a promise that God will bless our sons and daughters, if we call upon Him with the deliberate intention of receiving His blessing.

“Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: ‘YHWH bless you and keep you; YHWH make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you; YHWH turn His face toward you and give you peace.’ So they will put My Name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.” (Numbers 6:24-27)

These may have been the very words the Saviour used in blessing the children. Let us follow in the steps of the Master, and bless in His Name.



#6 RECOVERING LOST SHEEP

“So He told them this parable:

‘Which man among you who has a hundred sheep, and if he has lost one of them, will not leave the ninety-nine *even* in the wilderness, and go *and search for* the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he puts it on his shoulders, rejoicing; and when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbours saying to them, “Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!” I tell you that in the same way there will be *more* joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent’.” (Luke 15:3-7)

Y'shua came to save the world; but while reaching the hundreds and thousands, He was concerned for individual souls – even a single lost sheep was important. He demonstrated this when He went out of His way to meet one needy woman in Samaria. She was a lost soul, and one desperately needing help. We might have called her a “lost cause,” but the Good Shepherd found her, and reclaimed her.

Zaccheus was another “hopeless” case. Who would expect that such a man - a mean, little, corrupt tax-collector would repent and get saved? Some Christians might have spat upon his beard, and called him “a cut-throat dog.” But Y'shua went after him - another lost sheep of the House of Israel - and rescued him. There was great rejoicing that day - in heaven!

Let us, also, keep our eyes and ears open for the bleating sheep that have wandered away and have become ensnared in thickets, or have fallen into slimy pits. There's many of them - backsliders we call them! Remember, our Heavenly Master is committed to their rectification as well as ours. It's His love, and His purpose, for He ...

“... *causes* all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

Let us follow in the steps of the Good Shepherd!



7 GENTLENESS, AN ESSENTIAL FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

To walk in the steps of the Messiah is not taking a tour of Israel and visiting the historical sites. It is a call and a commitment to walk in the ways of Y'shua the Messiah. It is to follow His example; to live as a disciple of the Master; to take up the cross, which means death to one's self-life; and to live in the power of the Saviour's resurrection life - in the energy of the Holy Spirit.

This walk is not “one of the options” open to us as true believers. The Master calls us to choose to live and to walk in His steps.

“Y'shua said to His disciples, ‘If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me’.” (Matthew 16:24)

“And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.” (Matthew 10:38)

We all know, of course, that “whoever calls upon the Name of the LORD will be saved” (Romans 10:13), and that a believer has been accepted in the Beloved, justified and sealed with the Holy Spirit the moment He believes.

Does it mean then that there are two groups of believers - those who are simply “saved,” and those who are “disciples”?

It certainly looks like that, but in fact, it is the Master's desire and intention that ALL believers should follow in His steps, as His disciples. The apostle Peter writes:

“For you have been called for this purpose, since the Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps. HE COMMITTED NO SIN, AND DECEIT *and* GUILF WERE NEVER FOUND IN HIS MOUTH. [Is.53:9]. When reviled - scorned *and* insulted, He did not retaliate; *while* suffering, He did not threaten, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness - by whose stripes you were healed.” (1 Peter 2:21-24)

Now although discipleship - walking in His steps - is the Master's purpose for each one of us, He does not issue a command, "You must walk in My steps!" Our Saviour's way is to win the believer's heart by the depths of His love, and through His implanted Word. It is like the master whose love compels a servant to become his bondservant forever, as we read in the Fifth Book of Moses:

"If your kinsman, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you, and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you ... And if it happens that he says to you, 'I will not go away from you,' because he loves you and your household, *and* since he fares well with you; then you shall take an awl and pierce through his ear into the door, and he shall be your servant forever." (Deuteronomy 15:12, 16-17)

To walk in the steps of the Messiah must be the choice of the believer who loves his Master. And it is God's grace, that brings us to the place where we can say, "I will not leave You, Master. I do not want a freedom that keeps me at a distance from You! I choose my freedom and fulfilment in You! I want to learn of You and to walk in Your steps. Master, teach me Your ways."

When we come to this attitude and commitment, the Master is able to teach us to take steps - to walk in His ways. His plan for us is that we should be conformed to His image. (Romans 8:29)

So to walk in His steps is not an imitation of the life of Christ; it is participation in, and conformity to His life. And the power to produce that conformity is of God, and not of ourselves.

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves." (2 Corinthians 4:7)

As His Spirit works in us, this becomes our desire and immediate goal - "to be like Jesus ... all I ask is to be like Him." As we consider Him, we begin to grasp the depths of Y'shua's love and His Spirit-filled life, and then we cry out, "Make me like You; Master, make me like You!"

The GENTLENESS and HUMILITY of Y'SHUA

One of our Saviour's most well-known statements is Matthew 11:28-30. And isn't this one of our favourite passages when we are feeling weary and heavy-laden? But aren't we inclined to read it like this ...

"Come to Me, all *you* who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest ... you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light." ?

The central words we leave out are:

"Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for **I am gentle and humble in heart.**"

While meditating on these words and several other promises recently, this truth came home anew to me. Gentleness is not weakness; it is strength! Gentleness is the fruit of the Saviour's holy nature - the fruit of the Holy Spirit. And gentleness is very much a part of God's solution for our restlessness.

In Matthew 11:28-30, the Master is offering to yoke with us - to walk along with us, and to carry the lion's share of our heavy load. He does not say, "I am weak but I'll help you anyway." No!

He presents His qualities of gentleness and humility as His strengths - strengths that will bring rest for our souls.

How different this is to the [world's perspective](#). To the world, gentleness and humility are qualities that are to be despised; they are weaknesses. You have to be strong; not gentle! You have to take pride in yourself, not debase yourself!

But the way of the Messiah is not the way of the world! "I am gentle and humble in heart." This is the lesson we must learn, and this is the way we must walk.

When Y'shua rode into Jerusalem, it was on a lowly donkey.

"All this was done that it might be fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet, saying: TELL THE DAUGHTER OF ZION, LOOK! YOUR KING IS COMING TO YOU, MEEK, AND SITTING ON A DONKEY, AND ON A COLT, THE FOAL OF A DONKEY." [Zech 9:9] (Matthew 21:4-5)

A proud king would ride on a donkey only if he had a broken leg, and if there was no horse around! But not this humble Sovereign! Y'shua would not ride on a horse until Armageddon when He will descend in power and great glory.

Unfortunately the picture that many people seem to have, is of a "weak and gentle Jesus, meek and mild" - a weakling. But our Master was no weakling. He was mighty in Spirit, and mighty to save. He was mighty in purpose, and mighty in obedience. He was awesome in power, and doing wonders.

No! Gentleness does not mean weakness. [Gentleness](#) is a divine quality - the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23); [meekness](#) is its synonym; and [humility](#), you might say, is its twin brother.

Gentleness, meekness and humility are the beginnings of Beatitudes (Matthew. 5:3, 5). And here is a lesson for all of us. If we would be "strong in the Lord," we need to excel in meekness. If we would walk in the steps of the Messiah, we must partake of the Master's gentleness! But remember, the gentleness we need is not merely a natural disposition. It is the supernatural fruit produced in our lives by the Holy Spirit.

"But you, O man of God, flee from these things (*love of money, etc.*) and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, *love, patience, perseverance, meekness, gentleness.*" (1 Timothy 6:11)

Here is another promise, which again indicates that gentleness has something to do with God's solution to our anxieties:

"Rejoice in YHWH the LORD always; again I will say, rejoice! Let your [gentleness](#) be known to all men. The Master is near. Do not be anxious about anything - do not worry at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. And the peace of God, which exceeds all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds through the Messiah, Y'shua." (Philippians 4:4-7)

GRACE and HUMILITY

The apostle Peter links humility and grace to our anxieties and God's concern for us.

"You younger *ones*, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, be submissive to one another, and clothe yourselves with [humility](#), for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. [Prov 3:34]. [Humble yourselves](#), then, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares, *and* is concerned about you." (1 Peter 5:5-7)

James quotes the same Proverbs verse on grace and humility, and links it to our spiritual warfare.

“But He gives more *and more* grace. Therefore He says, GOD OPPOSES THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (James 4:6-7)

CHRISTIAN LEADERS!

The apostle Paul writes about the qualifications of an overseer or leader, and makes gentleness an essential requirement.

“An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine, not violent, not covetous, nor a lover of money, but *gentle*, and uncontentious.” (1 Timothy 3:2-3)

Christian leaders must grow in this grace! But many have the idea that leadership demands toughness, and even harshness at times. We might even be inclined to say that Paul was harsh at times. But this apostle said:

“But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.” (1 Thessalonians 2:7)

It is not the apostle Paul, however, who is our supreme example. It is Y’shua our Master. And Y’shua’s gentleness is seen in His dealings with people of all stripes.

Look at the wretched tax-collector, Zaccheus! The Master didn’t scold him, and consign him to outer darkness. “Zaccheus ... I must stay at your house.” (Luke 19:5)

Gently He lifted the sinner up! To the adulteress He said; “Neither do I condemn you. Go on your way; from now on sin no more.” (John 8:11). Gently He forgives the woman, and sets the captives free.

“Y’shua stretching out His hand, touched him. ‘I am willing,’ He said. ‘Be cleansed.’ And immediately he was cured of his leprosy.” (Matthew 8:3)

“When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to Him. He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. This was to fulfil what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet; HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES, AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES.” (Matthew 8:16-17)

“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.” (Isaiah 53:7)

“And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He gave no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Do you not hear how many things they testify against You?’ But He did not answer him a single word *with regard to even a single charge*, so that the governor was greatly amazed.” (Matthew 27:12-14)

“... since the Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps, HE COMMITTED NO SIN, AND DECEIT *and* GUILE WERE NEVER FOUND IN HIS MOUTH. [Is.53:9]. When reviled - scorned *and* insulted, He did not retaliate; *while* suffering, He did not threaten, but kept entrusting *Himself to* Him who judges righteously ...” (1 Peter 2:21-23)

The Lamb of God looked very helpless and weak during the trial and agony. He was, of course, physically drained. But His meekness, humility and commitment to the will of God were still His strengths during the whole ordeal. He was so gentle to His executioners. Not a curse, nor a word of condemnation or rebuke.

“There they crucified Him ... but Y’shua was saying, ‘Father forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing’.” (Luke 23:33-34)

And to the thief who had, at first, hurled insults at Him, but then repented and prayed; “Remember me when You come into Your kingdom,” Y’shua said so graciously:

“Today you will be with Me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43)

Yes, and the self-righteous, proud, enemy of the Gospel, Saul of Tarsus, was touched by the same grace of Y’shua. Subsequently Paul came to know the depths of the love, humility and gentleness of the Messiah. And from a Roman prison, Paul wrote to us:

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Master, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all **humility** and **gentleness**, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love.” (Ephesians 4:1-2)

BOLDNESS DOES NOT CONTRADICT GENTLENESS

Yes, it is true there were times when the Master was forth-right; and seemed harsh. For example, Y’shua did not cast out the traders from the House of God in a “gentle manner.” There were times for “the zeal of the Lord” which displays righteous indignation. There is an anger of the Lord. There is divine warning, wrath and judgment, and Y’shua displayed these attributes of God on a number of occasions.

“My House shall be called a House of Prayer, but you are making it a robbers’ den.” (Matthew 21:13)

“Woe to you, Chorazim! Woe to you Bethsaida!” (Luke 10:13)

“But I tell you, no! Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” (Luke 13:3)

“You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good?” (Matthew 12:34)

“Go and tell that fox (Herod)!” (Luke 13:32)

The prophets, and the disciples at times had to oppose sin, hypocrisy and error, and to speak out with such holy indignation. Paul was bold **and** gentle.

“By the meekness and gentleness of Messiah, I appeal to you - I, Paul, who am meek when face to face with you, but bold toward you when absent!” (2 Corinthians 10:1)

And today there is a need for righteous indignation, in the church, and out of it. But sadly, some leaders find it much easier to condemn than to forgive; much easier to grate than to be gentle; much easier to brag than to be humble. Often it is not holy indignation, but a person’s harsh temperament that is expressed.

We all need to heed the old maxim:

“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” (Proverbs 15:1)

Gentleness is not simply good diplomacy; it is godliness! Peter, warning about external ornaments, garments and physical appearances, says:

“But *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.” (1 Peter 3:4)

And with this Paul fully agrees:

“And so, as set-apart ones *who are* chosen and beloved of God, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” (Colossians 3:12)

RECOGNIZE TEMPERAMENTAL WEAKNESSES AND LET THE MASTER CONQUER THEM!

You will have noticed that some people have a more gentle nature than others. Some people just can't succeed in being gentle, even though they strive for it. Harshness is their temperamental weakness. We are told that there are four basic temperaments - personality dispositions, described as:

SANGUINE: A cheerful type of person who enjoys being up front, and who is confident and optimistic. He makes friends easily, but these are often temporary because, unfortunately, his weakness is that he loses interest in things quite quickly. Thus he is not inclined to pursue long-time goals.

PHLEGMATIC: A person who is cool, calm, sluggish and who seldom gets excited about anything. His strength is that he doesn't easily get hassled. His weakness is often his state of apathy or indifference.

MELANCHOLIC: A person who sets high goals, and is very meticulous, but who is often reserved, and inclined towards gloominess and depression. His strength is that he will keep on working at a task, and pursuing goals. He is inclined to be sympathetic. His weakness is a giving way to fear and discouragement.

CHOLERIC: A person who often has leadership talent, organisational ability, but who also shows a quick temper, an irascible, irritable, harsh, hot-headed nature. His strength is his confidence and abilities. But his weakness is that he “knows everything” and he wants to put everyone else in their place. He is inclined to be contentious, and without gentleness.

Now a person may not fit into any one of the above temperament descriptions exactly. There is usually a mixing of temperaments in a single personality.

The strengths and weaknesses of the temperaments are the person's NATURAL traits, not his spiritual qualities. And unless the Holy Spirit fills us, the temperamental weaknesses are going to dominate much of our lives. So let us recognize that whatever temperament weaknesses we may have, we must deliberately bring them to our Master, asking Him to take full control over them.

Whatever our temperament is, we should present it, both the strengths and weaknesses, to the Saviour as a living sacrifice.

“... Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service and spiritual act of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is - His good, acceptable and perfect will.” (Romans 12:1-2)

His Spirit residing within us will then produce the fruit in us that will replace the “works of the flesh.”

Now if you have a choleric type of disposition, you need to recognize that gentleness is probably not one of your natural traits; and therefore you need to ask the Master to teach you meekness and patience, and to produce the fruit of **GENTLENESS** in your life.

If you are melancholic and inclined towards gloominess, you need to major on **REJOICING IN THE LORD**, and ask the Master to produce a deeper faith and joy in your life.

If you are phlegmatic, recognize that you need the Holy Spirit to fill you with the **ZEAL OF THE LORD**.

And if you have a sanguine personality, you may need to seek the fruit of patience, endurance and **CONTINUANCE**.

Whatever our temperamental weaknesses, however, the Master will help us to overcome them as we walk in His steps.

“In all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37)

“Be ... **gentle**, showing **meekness** to all men.” (Titus 3:2)



#8 DISCIPLESHIP, IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE MASTER

“For you have been called for this purpose, since the Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps.” (1 Peter 2:21-24)

In this chapter we focus on discipleship - **our walk in the footsteps of the Messiah**.

“Discipleship” is a word that sometimes frightens believers. To some believers, the word seems to suggest something that’s very tough and painful; something that’s associated with discipline, drill, regulations, chastisement, and hardship. Some even think of discipleship as “rigour under a taskmaster.”

But a true view of discipleship sees this as the opportunity and privilege to learn the ways of the Master. It is not a life we must submit to with anxious reluctance, but one which we should gladly embrace in anticipation of plumbing the debts of spiritual reality and fulfillment. Discipleship is a vast valley that we are invited to traverse in our determination to participate in the depths of the *Mystery of Godliness* - “Messiah in you the Hope of Glory.”

Discipleship is not like service in the French Foreign Legion, with harsh regimentation, desert marches, and floggings or death for failure. But neither is discipleship an air-conditioned comfort zone that provides us with easy step-by-step, video-taped lessons, and an *a la carte* menu to satisfy our carnal appetites.

Discipleship does mean self-denial, sacrifice and discipline; it means 'yes' to the Master, and 'no' to my own whims and ways. But it also means applied wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption (1 Corinthians 1:30). It means the knowledge and experience of the Holy, of grace, growth and fruitfulness in the Christian life.

Discipleship means walking as the Master walked, serving as the Master served, and living in fellowship with the Father. It means total commitment and surrender to the will of God.

The goal and outcome of discipleship is nothing less than

CONFORMITY TO THE MASTER

“A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the servant like his master.” (Matthew 10:24)

Do you know this chorus?

*To be like Jesus, to be like Jesus,
All I ask, is to be like Him.
All through life's journey, from earth to Heaven,
All I ask, is to be like Him.*

That's the song of the true disciple! Conformity and maturity as sons of God, and as followers of the Heavenly Master. This is the will of God. Is it your heart cry, my dear reader? If it is, then **GO FOR IT WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH!** Your Master beckons and says, “Follow Me.”

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.” (Romans 8:29)

PERSONALLY DISCIPLED

Discipleship is not “an external, short-term course.” Rather, it is very much an internal, personalized training, in the hands of the PERFECT Master. Y'shua knows every detail of your personality, your potential and limitations. He knows your temperament and talents, and He specializes in people like you!

Discipleship is learning the ways of God through example - by watching, listening to the Master, and walking in His steps.

“He who claims that he lives *and* remains in Him (*the Messiah*), should himself walk *in the same manner* as He walked.” (1 John 2:6)

YOU'RE NEVER ALONE!

The walk of a disciple sometimes seems to be a lonely one. But no! It is lonely only if we are out of fellowship with the Master. And He never wants us to remain out of fellowship. The Master has promised:

“He Himself has said, ‘I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU’.” (Hebrews 13:5)

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Master, and He guides us into all truth. He sanctifies us, ministers to us, and leads us in the way of discipleship.

“... the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance everything I have said to you.” (John 14:26)

He also anoints the various gifted teachers whom our Heavenly Father chooses to use, to help fulfil His intention in our lives. So we are not alone! As the apostle Paul says:

“And He *gifted and gave* some *disciples as* apostles, some *as* prophets, some *as* evangelists, and some *as* shepherd-pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the set-apart *believers*, for the work of service, for the building up of the body of Messiah; until we all come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown, mature, perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Messiah.” (Ephesians 4:11-13)

And then, as we grow in the Spirit, we are able to help others make more progress - to be like Jesus, Y’shua; to walk like Him, to talk like Him; to minister like Him; to react like Him; to think like Him; to be set-apart, Spirit-filled instruments like the Master was, in the midst of a dark world.

“... as He is, so also are we in this world.” (1 John 4:17)

If we are going to “press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Messiah, Y’shua,” (Philippians 3:14), we need a ...

TOTAL COMMITMENT TO THE MASTER, AND WILLING SUBMISSION TO HIS AUTHORITY

Discipleship is not the way of the fickle and double-minded. Discipleship is not for those who want an insulated, trouble-free life of ease, and a guaranteed prosperity pack included. The Master says, “Count the cost! There must be no turning back!”

“For which one of you, *when he* wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, *to see* if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid the foundation, and is unable to finish, all who see it will ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’

“Or what king, *before* going out to wage warfare with another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand *men* to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? So that if not, while the other is still far away, he may send a delegation and ask terms of peace. Likewise, any one of you who does not give up all that he has, cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14:28-33)

The cost is total commitment to the Master, and submission to His authority. He is, and must be, the Master!

“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” (Matthew 28:18)

If we decide to put our family first; or if we use the family as an excuse for a mediocre commitment to the Master, we will not prove to be true disciples.

“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”
(Luke 14:26)

Hard words! Does this mean the Master expects us to literally hate our loved ones?

Of course not! This is a “comparative.” Y’shua is saying that a disciple’s love and commitment to the Master must be total, and come before everything else. Our love for the Master must be so great that our love for others looks like hatred.

You might ask, “Is this possible? Who can love the Master to that extent? ... I could never aspire to such lofty devotion. I guess I’ll have to settle for something less. Maybe I can sing in the choir, or take up the offering plate.”

Indeed, it does seem to be an impossibly “high” standard; so high that there should be few starters or “winners.” But the Master does not call us to an ideal that is utterly impossible!

We know that the apostle Paul was one prominent starter, and “winner”; and we can pick out many other well-known examples of “winners” down through the centuries.

“Yes,” you say, “but Paul and these others were spiritual giants! I’m just an ordinary struggling Christian!”

True, Paul was a giant, but he wasn’t at the start. He was not perfect. Paul did not consider himself to have attained, but he was pressing on towards the goal. He did not start at the goal, the final line. He started at the beginning, with a confession that everything he had been holding as valuable and important, was in fact “loss” and rubbish.

After facing this reality, he submitted to the will of God and to the Messiah as the Master of his life. From there he went on to learn the Master’s ways, and step by step, to reach the ultimate goal.

“But whatever things were gain to me, these I have counted as loss because of the Messiah. More than that, I count all things to be loss because of the surpassing value of knowing the Messiah, Y’shua my Master, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain the Messiah, and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own *derived* from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in the Messiah, the righteousness which *comes* from God *on the basis of* faith.

“*I want* to know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

“Not that I have already attained *this*, or have already been perfected, but I press on so that I may take hold of that for which the Messiah, Y’shua took hold of me. Brethren, I do not consider that I have taken hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching out to what *lies* ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Messiah Y’shua.” (Philippians 3:7-14)

Likewise, we must start by presenting our lives to the Master. As Paul exhorts us:

“I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service and spiritual act of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is - His good, acceptable and perfect will.” (Romans 12:1-2)

DO YOU LOVE ME MORE THAN THESE?

Love and devotion for the Master is not usually total at the beginning of our spiritual life; it is a progressive path. And somewhere down the tract, maybe even today, the Master will pause and ask us personally, as He did to Simon Peter:

“Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?”

Peter said to Him, “Yes, Master! You know that I love You.”

Y’shua said to him, “Feed My lambs.” *And* He said to him again, the second time, “Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?”

He said to Him, “Yes, Master. You know that I love You.”

Y’shua said to him, “Shepherd My sheep.”

He said to him the third time, “Simon, *son* of Jonah, do you love Me?”

Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Master, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Y’shua said to him, “Feed My sheep.” (John 21:15-17)

My friend, if you are seeking to walk in the footsteps of the Master, don’t be surprised when He asks you: “Do you love me more than all these - your wife, your husband, your parents, your children, your friends, your work, your business, your career, your wealth, your goals, your entertainment - more than your very life?”

It is not with a view to strip you of everything you love and possess that the Master asks you this question. It is a matter of priorities. Love, devotion and determination to follow Him, whatever the cost, must be uppermost in our mind and life.

“It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher.” (Matthew 10:24)

Love for the Heavenly Father was certainly uppermost in the life of the Messiah - love and the will of God!

Y’shua fulfilled the Law of God so perfectly. The first and great commandment was:

“You shall love YHWH your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” (Deuteronomy 6:5)

That’s total love! But how is love expressed?

I would have thought that in the Psalms we should read expressions such as, “I love You, Lord” many times. But in the Psalms we read, “I love Your commands, O LORD”; “I love Your Torah (teaching), Your precepts, Your testimonies, Your Name, Your salvation.” “I love the habitation of Your House.” But only in one place (Psalm 116:1), does it say, “I love Yahweh (the LORD).”

In the Psalms and Scripture generally, love is expressed in two ways -

In heartfelt praise ...

“I will praise *You*, O Yahweh, with all my heart; I declare all Your wonders. I rejoice and am glad in You; I will proclaim Your Name *in song*, O Most High.” (Psalm 9:1-2)

In undeviating obedience ...

“I delight to do Your will, O My God.” (Psalm 40:8)

“Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me, yet not my will, but Yours be done.” (Luke 22:42)

The Master expects obedience motivated by love from His disciples.

“If you love Me, you will obey what I command.” (John 14:15)

Our commitment to total obedience expresses our confidence in the total goodness and infinite wisdom of the Master, as well as in His authority. As John says:

“For *true* love for God means that we obey His command; and His commands are not burdensome - *oppressive or grievous*.” (1 John 5:3)

DISCIPLESHIP IS NOT A CRASH COURSE!

It's a lifetime course! When we feel that we've learned enough and have conquered this “subject,” we discover that we have only just begun. As we walk in the footsteps of the Master, there are lessons on many aspects of the Way, the Truth and the Life, that we need to learn.

Following are 40 “subjects” that disciples should learn to apply in their lives. It is not merely a matter of being able to give a 2-minute homily, or a one hour discourse, or even being able to write a whole book on these subjects. It is a matter of the truth being applied - a present reality in our lives.

I encourage you to look up the Scriptures and check out these subjects. The references given are not the whole answer; they are a lead in to these subjects which could provide topics for discussion at a weekly Bible class. Look up the cross references.

- * [The Master's Omniscience and His other attributes](#) (Psalm 139:11-4. John 1:47-48. 21:17. Rev. 2:2)
- * [God's Unconditional Love](#) (1 John 3:1,16. John 3:16)
- * [Prayer](#) (Matt. 6:9-13. Eph. 6:18. Phil. 4:6)
- * [Holiness](#) (Heb. 12:10. Ex. 15:11. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9)
- * [Wisdom](#) (James. 1:5, 3:17. Psalm 111:10)
- * [The Power of Messiah's Name](#) (John 14:14)
- * [Authority](#) (Matt. 28:18-20)
- * [Humility, Grace and, Gentleness](#) (1 Pet. 5:6. James 4:6. 1 Tim 1:14. Titus 2:11-13. 1 Pet. 5:5-6)
- * [Patience, Forbearance and Compassion](#) (Matt. 9:36-38)
- * [Brokenness](#) (Job 17:1. Ps. 51:17)
- * [Sacrifice](#) (Rom. 12:1. Heb. 13:16)
- * [Dying to Self](#) (Gal. 2:20. 1 Cor. 15:31)
- * [Taking up the Cross](#) (Luke 9:23)
- * [Resources](#) (Isaiah 12:3. Phil 4:19)
- * [Pride and Unbelief](#) (1 John 2:16. Heb. 11:6)
- * [Cowardice, Fear and Lame Excuses](#) (Rev. 21:8. Prov. 29:25. Luke 9:59-62)
- * [Positive Attitude](#) (Luke 9:49-50)
- * [Reality v Superficiality](#) (2 Tim. 2:15, 3:15-17. Eph. 4:11-16)

- * Contentment (Matt 8:19-20)
- * Living by Faith (Rom. 1:17. Heb. 11:39)
- * Depending on God and not on one's Intellect (2 Cor. 4:7)
- * Living the Good News (Rom. 10:15. 2 Cor 4:1-3)
- * A Burden for the Perishing (2 Pet. 3:9. Ez. 3:17-21)
- * Accepting People as they are (John 6:35-37)
- * Priorities (Matt. 6:33, 23:37)
- * Attitudes towards Money (1 Tim 3:3, 6:9-10)
- * Attitudes towards Government (Titus 3:1. Rom. 13:1-7)
- * Attitudes towards Sinners (Matt: 9:9-13)
- * Relationships (Titus 3:2, 9. 1 Peter 3:8-11)
- * The Imperative to Forgive (Matt. 6:12-15)
- * The Unity of the Body (Matt 18:18-20. Eph. 4:3-6. John 17:21-23)
- * Serving one Another (Gal. 5:13. 1 Cor. 9:19)
- * Shepherding (1 Pet. 5:1-4. John 10:11-16)
- * How to Bless the Family of God (Numbers 6:23-27)
- * Attitudes to Enemies (Matt. 5:44. Prov. 25:21-22)
- * How to Bless Enemies (Similar to Numbers 6:23-27)
- * Reaction to Affliction (2 Cor. 4:8-12)
- * Suffering for Righteousness' Sake (Matt. 5:10. 1 Peter 3:14-17)
- * Spiritual Warfare (1 Tim. 6:12. Eph. 6:10-18)
- * The Kingdom of God (Luke 12:32. Jam. 2:5. Matt. 6:10)

Many of these “subjects” may not be learned in a day, or even in a single year; for learning does not mean theory or doctrine only. It means application; it means experiencing the Reality of the Truth.

LEARNING REACTION TO PROVOCATION

What a hard lesson! How often we loose our cool; and we respond to insults and injuries in like manner. Sometimes we even seek to take revenge, or at least, we harbor a spirit of revenge, and wish our opponent ill, forgetting that vengeance belongs to the LORD.

“For we know the One who said, VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL RECOMPENSE, says the LORD. And again, *YHWH WILL JUDGE (determine, solve and settle the cause and the cases of) HIS PEOPLE.*” (Hebrews 10:30)

I don't need to tell you that you must give the other cheek. But I just remind you:

“But I tell you, do not resist an evil person; but if someone strikes you on your right check, turn to him the other also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your tunic *or your shirt*, let him have your coat *or your shawl* also.” (Matthew 5:39-40)

We all know the words of the Master. But the question is, do we do what He says? Here is a lesson that the Master may need to test us on 50 times before we succeed at right reaction.

Peter was an eye-witness of the Saviour's responses:

“For you have been called for this purpose, since the Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps. HE COMMITTED NO SIN, AND DECEIT *and* GUILE WERE NEVER FOUND IN HIS MOUTH. [Is.53:9]. When reviled - scorned *and* insulted, He did not retaliate; *while* suffering, He did not threaten, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness - by whose stripes you were healed.” (1 Peter 2:21-24)

ENDURING HARDSHIP

Not many people enjoy hardship. But we are not told to enjoy it. We're told to endure it, as Paul taught his young disciple:

“Do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Master or of me His prisoner, but suffer hardship with *me* for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling - not because of our works, but because of His own purpose and grace. *This grace* was given to us *who have been united with* the Messiah, Y'shua, from before the beginning of time.” (2 Timothy 1:8-9)

Remember, with hardship there is also the promise of grace; and grace is the enabling power of God.

“But He gives more *and more* grace. Therefore He says, GOD OPPOSES THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” (James 4:6-8)

THE TONGUE AND EAR OF THE DISCIPLE

The tongue and the ear are two important members, I'm sure you will agree. And both of these need a powerful touch from the Master. The following is a Messianic passage:

“The Sovereign Master YHWH has given Me *the tongue of a disciple* - of the instructed, that *I may* know *how* to help the weary *with* a word. He awakens *Me* morning by morning, He awakens My ear to listen as an instructed *disciple*. The Sovereign Master YHWH has opened My ear; and I was not rebellious, nor did I turn back. I gave My back to those who struck *Me*, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from humiliation and spitting.” (Isaiah 50:4)

Each morning the Father woke “His Disciple”; and Y'shua's mind was filled with thoughts of the Father's love. And then He sought His Heavenly Master's instructions for the day.

That's what we need, my dear reader - the open ear, and the tongue of the disciple. Otherwise our tongues may be the unruly instruments of which James warned us.

“Look, we put bits into the mouths of horses so that they will obey us, and we turn their entire bodies around. Look also at the ships; though they are so great and are driven by strong winds, *they* are turned by a very small rudder in whichever *direction* the pilot decides.

“Likewise the tongue is a small part *of the body*, and *yet it* boasts of great things. See how great a forest is set ablaze by a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of wickedness. The tongue is so set among the members of our body that it corrupts every part of it, and *it* sets ablaze the *entire* course of *our* life, and *the tongue itself* is set on fire by Gehenna - hell.

“For every species of animal, bird, reptile and sea creature is being tamed, and has been tamed, by the human species, but no one can tame the tongue; *it is* unruly, evil, *and* full of deadly poison. With it we bless *our* God and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come *both* blessing and cursing. My brethren, this should not happen!” (James 3:3-10)

From this Scripture which we accept as Gospel truth, it is clear that the tongue is one major reptile that needs to be tamed in our lives. But it can't be tamed by man. Only the Master can do it; and for Him to do it, the tongue needs to be surrendered daily to His control. If the Father has given us a new heart, He can also give us a new tongue - the tongue of the disciple.

TOTAL UNASHAMED PUBLIC IDENTIFICATION WITH THE MESSIAH

Secret disciples? How can that be? In some countries believers need to meet secretly. But we cannot be secret disciples any more than Y'shua can be a secret Master! True disciples don't have a hidden agenda! Their agenda is Messiah Himself - Y'shua the Messiah, the Saviour of the World.

“Everyone, therefore, who confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in the heavens. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in the heavens.” (Matthew 10:32-33)

“For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when He comes in His glory, and *the glory of* the Father and of the holy messengers.” (Luke 9:26)

ABSOLUTE LOYALTY

A true disciple will maintain loyalty to the Master even at the expense of relationships with family members. Compromise and appeasement is not the solution to opposition or to appeals to backtrack from the Master's steps. The gospel often divides families, although this may prove to be a temporary impasse.

“Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to SET A MAN AGAINST HIS FATHER, AND A DAUGHTER AGAINST HER MOTHER, AND A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AGAINST HER MOTHER-IN-LAW; and A MAN'S ENEMIES ARE THOSE OF HIS *own* HOUSEHOLD. [Micah 7:6]. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” (Matthew 10:34-37)

DO NOT DESPISE THE DISCIPLINE OF YHWH

Yes, it's true, the Father disciplines His children. How could it be otherwise? He's our Father, and He does not spoil His children. Authority requires obedience; and a disciple needs discipline. It's part of the process to maturity.

“Look *how* happy the man is whom God reprove; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.” (Job 5:17)

“Consider *and think much about* Him who endured bitter hostility against Himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart. You have not yet resisted to the point of *shedding* blood, in struggling against sin; and you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons: MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF *YHWH*, THE LORD, NOR LOSE HEART WHEN *YOU ARE* REBUKED *AND* CORRECTED BY HIM; FOR *YHWH* DISCIPLINES THOSE HE LOVES, and He scourges, *that is*, punishes everyone He receives as a son.

“So if you *need to* endure discipline, God is treating you as sons; for what son is not disciplined by *his* father? But if you are exempt from *the* discipline in which all *true sons* share, then you are illegitimate children and not *true* sons. Furthermore, we have *all* had *human* fathers who corrected us, and we respected them. Shall we not much more willingly submit to the Father of *our* spirits, and live? For they indeed disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He *disciplines us* for *our* profit *and good*, in order that we may *constantly* partake of His holiness.

“Now all discipline seems sorrowful rather than enjoyable at the time; but later on it yields *its* peaceful fruit of righteousness for those who have been trained by it.” (Hebrews 12:3-11)

*Have Your own way, Lord, Have Your own way;
You are the Potter, I am the clay
Mould me and make me, after Your will.
While I am waiting, yielded and still.
Have Your own way, Lord, have Your own way;
Hold over my being, absolute sway.
Fill with Your Spirit, till all shall see,
Christ only, always, living in me.*

DISCIPLES MUST MAKE DISCIPLES

At the end of His course on earth, the Master instructed His disciples to go and make disciples worldwide. This was the Father’s plan - to bring many sons to glory. (Hebrews 2:10)

“And Y’shua came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you. And *remember!* I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:18-20)

In the Great Commission, as we see in Matthew, preaching the Gospel means “making disciples, and teaching them to observe the Master’s commands.” This is not just getting people to make a decision or to sign a card. The sinner’s decision to receive the Saviour is the beginning of a life-long discipleship course.

“After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying*, “Through many tribulations, hardships *and* afflictions we must enter the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:21-22)

Evangelism today seems to be aimed at getting people saved, so that they live happily ever after. Well, happiness is not necessarily a disaster, but happiness is not our goal. It's the will of God that we pursue, and it's discipleship that leads us to this highest goal.

"It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the servant like his master." (Matthew 10:24)

"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to be* conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." (Romans 8:29)

CAUTION! Remember that Y'shua is the Teacher, and that disciples must become like Him! If our discipling makes a new disciple like **us**, we fail miserably! And in no way are we to be a master over others, bringing disciples under **our** control. We must teach, guide, encourage them to be like Jesus, and to be totally under **His** authority!

LEARNING TO BLESS

Blessing is not simply a friendly farewell, "God bless you," or even praying, "God bless Mum and Dad, and all the kids."

In the Old Testament, the Levites were taught how to bless the people of God. And in the New Testament, the Master and His disciples expect us to have an understanding of that passage so that we also can know how to bless people - our families, the people of God, and even our enemies.

Y'shua said; "I tell you who hear, 'Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, **bless** those who are cursing you, and pray for those who insult you'." (Luke 6:27-28)

Paul said; "**Bless** those who persecute you; **bless** and do not curse *them*." (Romans 12:14)

So how to bless? Specific instructions are given in the Book of Numbers:

"Then Yahweh spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, "This is how you shall bless the children of Israel: Say to them:

""Yahweh bless you, and keep you ... Yahweh make His face to shine on you, and be gracious to you. Yahweh lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.'"

""So they shall put My Name on the children of Israel, and I, yes, **I will bless them**'." (Numbers 6:22-27)

Here is a definite promise. Yahweh will bless because we call upon His Name in faith, and put His Name upon the people. We should include the name of the person we're asking God to bless, in the first line of the blessing.

And that person may even be our enemy. Yes, both Y'shua and Paul said to bless our enemies. If we hesitate or refuse to do so, it means we may still have an unresolved problem, and our problem needs to be dealt with. Quite likely it is the problem of unforgiveness, and so we need to come back to the Lord's Prayer:

"Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven those who were indebted to us ... for if you forgive men their trespasses *when they sin against you*, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive *other* people, then your Father will not forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:12)

Is this a hard lesson to learn, my friend? It takes some of us years to learn to be willing to bless our enemies. And in the meantime we struggle on without much spiritual progress.

“To sum up, all of you be of one mind, harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kind-hearted, courteous, *and humble-minded*; not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but *giving a blessing* instead; knowing that you were called for this *very purpose*, that you might inherit a *blessing*.” (1 Peter 3:8-9)

KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE MASTER

There is a common danger when we have been on the way for some time - we become overconfident in ourselves. Keep your eyes on the Master. Don't concentrate on the winds and waves, on the affliction and threats, on your inadequacies or your achievements. Look to the Master, and tread carefully in His footsteps.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a *great* cloud of witnesses, let us also throw off every weight, *every encumbrance, every hindrance*, and *particularly* the sin that most readily assails, entangles *and* leeches onto us, *robbing us of spiritual strength*; and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Y'shua, the Author of the Faith and the One who completes *and* perfects *our faith*, who, in view of the joy set before Him endured the cross, *ignoring and even* despising *its* shame, and has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-2)



#9 THE OBEDIENT SERVANT

“The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many’.” (Matthew 20:28)

The condescension of Y'shua, His stooping down so low, was a tremendous example for us, His disciples:

“For you know the grace of our Master, Y'shua the Messiah, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor ...” (2 Corinthians 8:9)

But more than merely being born into a humble estate, the Messiah took the form of a servant. He was the servant of Yahweh (Isaiah 53:11), and lived as a servant to His people.

“If I then, the Master and the Teacher have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. For I gave you an example that you should do as I have done to you.” (John 13:14-15)

“Let the same attitude and purpose be in you which was in the Messiah, Y'shua, who, although existing in the form of God - *being in very nature God*, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied Himself (*of all rightful dignity*), taking the form of a servant, being made in human likeness.” (Philippians 2:5-7)

The natural man likes to be served. But the desire and goal of the spiritual man, the disciple of the Messiah, is conformity to the Master. And His footprints outline our way.

“Y’shua called them *to Himself* and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. It is not *to be* this way among you; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many’.” (Matthew 20:25-28)

“Through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13)

The Master’s condescension went much deeper than merely being a servant, and meeting the needs of hungry and tormented souls. His stoop led to the ultimate service of giving His life for the salvation of doomed humanity.

“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself (*still further*) by becoming obedient to the extreme of death; death on a *stauros* - an execution stake – a *cross*.” (Philippians 2:8)

His sacrificial death was the Father’s plan and provision for the redemption of a condemned world; and the Messiah came to fulfil the will of God.

“See, *here I am!* I have come - in the scroll of the book it is written of Me; I delight to do Your will, O My God; Your Torah *is* within My heart.” (Psalm 40:7-8)

“And *Y’shua* withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, and falling on His knees, He *began to pray*, saying, ‘Father, if it is Your will, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.’” (Luke 22:41-42)

“So they took Y’shua and led Him away. And **bearing His own cross**, He went out to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.” (John 19:16-17)

Nothing would divert the Messiah from walking according to the roadmap the Father set out for Him. And on the cross, He could cry out triumphantly, “It is finished.” He had fulfilled the Father’s plan. My reader, are we also determined to do the will of the Father, no matter what it costs?

TAKING UP THE CROSS

“Whoever does not carry his *own* cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.” (Luke 14: 27)

“And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.” (Matthew 10:38-39)

Here is a lesson every disciple needs to learn thoroughly. To carry your cross does not mean “putting up with your pains and problems.” It means embracing the principle of “death to self.” The cross principle means, “Not I, but Messiah – Christ, living in me.”

Our final chapter, *The Eternal Cross Principle*, teaches this subject more fully.

THE SAVIOUR'S EXALTATION

Beyond the inexpressible experience of His Sacrificial Death, there was His glorious reward – the exaltation of the Messiah:

“Therefore *(because He humbled Himself)*, God exalted Him to the highest place, and gave Him the Name that is above every name, that at the Name of Y’shua every knee should bow - in heaven and on earth and under the earth - and every tongue confess that Y’shua the Messiah is Lord *(the Heavenly Master)*, to the glory of YHWH, God the Father.” (Philippians 2:9-11)

“‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom, and might and honour and glory and blessing.’ And I heard every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and everything in them, saying: ‘To the One seated on the throne, and to the Lamb, *be* blessing and honour, and glory and power, for ever and ever’.” (Revelation 5:12, 13)

And for all believers who follow in the steps of Y’shua, there is also a glorious reward:

“Blessed are you when men revile, *insult and slander* you, *and when they persecute* you, telling all kinds of vicious lies about you because of Me. Rejoice, and be glad for your reward in heaven is great.” (Matthew 5:11-12)

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory that is to be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:18)

“Look! I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to what he has done.” (Revelation 22:12)

“Therefore ... let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Y’shua, the Author of the Faith and the One who completes *and perfects our faith*, who, in view of the joy set before Him endured the cross, disregarding *its* shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider *and think much about* Him who endured such bitter hostility against Himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.” (Hebrews 12:1-3)



#10 THE ETERNAL CROSS PRINCIPLE - SELFLESS-GIVING. DYING TO SELF

“I am telling you the truth; unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone - *all by itself*. But if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life will lose it; and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for everlasting life.” (John 12:24-25)

As the believer embraces Y'shua the Messiah and begins to learn the ways of his Saviour, he realizes more and more that he is called to embrace a new principle - a principle that is to govern his new life in the Spirit; a principle that is so different to his old way of life. This is the principle of "the eternal cross" - an inward working of death - death to self, so that the life of the Messiah might be manifest in the believer.

In the above Scripture, Y'shua is referring to His imminent, sacrificial death. He would be lifted up; He was the 'grain of wheat' that was soon to die in order to bring forth much fruit. The Master was teaching, and soon He would demonstrate, the eternal principle of self-renunciation, selfless-giving, and of dying to self, that would result in a harvest to eternal life.

The Saviour was not telling the disciples to do something that He Himself would not do. He was demonstrating the principle of "the eternal cross."

"The cross" in the life of our Master, was not only those dreadful hours when He was nailed to the rugged tree on that Passover day. "The Cross" was a principle that operated in His daily life. It operated when He left His glory and took upon Himself, the form of a human servant. It operated when He trudged over the hills of Galilee and Judea, seeking the lost. It expressed itself in His words, "Father, not My will, but Yours."

This is the principle that He taught His disciples - not the hangers-on, but those who really wanted to walk with Him.

"And He was saying to *them* all, 'If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.'" (Luke 9:23)

This is a principle that is as unchangeable as the love of God. And as there can be no spiritual life without our participation in the cross of Calvary - that is, in the atonement through the sacrifice of the Lamb of God on the cross - so there can be no progress and depth in the Christian life without our embracing the way of the cross - the principle of the cross.

We are talking here, not about the shape of the cross, nor of the wood of the cross. We are talking about the **principle of death**.

While we **live for ourselves**, we will always be barren, even though we may appear prosperous. But when we yield ourselves to God, **to live utterly for Him and the fulfilment of His purpose**, we will be spiritual and fruitful.

"The cross" is a symbol of even more than salvation. "The cross" is a principle built into eternal God's plan. It is a principle that is inherent in the very nature of God; for long before the cross of Calvary became necessary, the principle of the cross operated in *Elohim* - the eternal Deity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

This principle, "the Eternal Cross," was, and is, the divine way of life. It is the principle that has governed the very heart of God from eternity. It is expressed in the phrases, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," and "God so loved the world that He gave His one-and-only Son."

We all know that "God is love," and that we ought also to love one another. But this love is not the sentimental thing that we so often express. God's love is an active power. It is a love that gives, a love that loves to give. It is the self-less giving of oneself for others. This is not based on a profit motive; it is not love that gives for the sake of selfish return, but it gives for the sake of others, without anticipating any form of reward.

God's love is the eternal cross principle in operation. In eternity past the Father was giving Himself, and planning for His beloved Son; planning to create and perfect a companion - a glorious bride for the Son.

The eternal Son, likewise, lived by the same principle of self-less giving. He lived only for the Father, and the Father's purposes. "I delight to do Your will, oh God." "Here am I, send Me."

Throughout His time on earth, the cross principle is seen operating in the life of the Messiah. He gave Himself to the utmost. He did not live unto Himself, but for the Father. Day after day He gave Himself to the people of Israel, and ultimately He poured out His very life for the sinners of the world. As Isaiah says:

"He poured out His life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For He Himself bore the sin of many, and interceded for the transgressors." (Isaiah 53:12)

Throughout His life the Messiah demonstrated the principle of the eternal cross. And the cross of Calvary revealed the depth and extent of that principle operating in Him, as indeed, within the Eternal Three-in-one. For not only was the Son giving Himself, the Father was giving His Beloved Son, and the Holy Spirit was giving Himself to the Son, even as the Son was giving Himself to the Holy Spirit and to the Father.

The cross of Messiah demonstrates the principle, and sets the course for believers, for we are called to embrace that same cross principle of selfless-giving, which Paul refers to also as, "Not I, but Messiah living in me."

This is basic to the true Christ-centred life - dying to self, living unto God, and the giving and pouring out of one's life for the sake of others. The big "I" is dethroned and disempowered! And when that happens, we can truly say, HalleluYah!

This is far deeper than the shallow type of Christianity that is displayed before the world today - the type of Christianity that is thoroughly self-centred, self-seeking, self-pleasing and self-planning. "For me, for me, for ME!"

My reader, are you willing to walk in the steps of the Master? Then embrace the same cross principle as He did.

"For you have been called for this purpose, since the Messiah also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, AND DECEIT WAS NOT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH, [Isaiah 53:9] who, being reviled, He did not revile in return; *while* suffering, did not threaten, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness - by whose stripes you were healed." (1 Peter 2:21-24)

EMBRACING THE ETERNAL CROSS

"If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me." (Luke 9:23)

We have seen that "the cross" is a principle which operated within *Elohim* from past eternity. It is now God's plan that all His children should **wholeheartedly embrace** that same principle. It is quite easy to know this truth, this aspect of the Plan of God, and yet not live in the reality of it.

My reader, we need to understand the doctrine, the truth of the Word, but we also need to allow the Holy Spirit to bring us into the REALITY of that truth - that we might live in the freedom that the Son has provided for us.

“If then the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:36)

“To take up the cross” today, is often considered optional, and that's because the majority of believers are Christians for what they can **get** out of their faith. Many regard God as someone who is “up there” for our benefit - someone we can get "goodies" from. This is the ‘prosperity-getting’ type of Christian. Get to heaven! Get salvation! Get eternal life, get power, get blessings, claim your possessions!

“What’s wrong in wanting to get eternal life?” you may ask.

Our trouble is that we are seeking to use God for our benefit, while we continue on in our egocentricity. God, on the other hand, is seeking to deliver us from our self-centredness and to bring us to the place where we will embrace the same manner of life as He has - to embrace the principle of the eternal cross.

One might ask, “Isn't it possible for a person to be a true believer, without going so deeply into these spiritual truths of discipleship? Aren't there two types of Christians - those who take up the cross and wholeheartedly follow the Master; and those who simply believe and follow along?”

Well, it's true there are various types of believers, and of course, all believers are at various stages in the **process** of sanctification. Some believers have not imbibed (*taken in and absorbed*) the doctrines and principles of God so deeply. We do see believers who are following closely in the steps of the Master, and we see others who are following far off. But from the Saviour’s teaching, we know that “taking up the cross” is not one of several options. It is clearly His intention for every one of His people to take up the cross. Discipleship is for **all** believers, not just for “the twelve,” or for 100,000.

Discipleship is for **you and me**, my dear reader!

Look again at the Master’s words:

“If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.” (Luke 9:23)

The word “if” calls for a definite decision. We must choose whether we are going to follow the Master, or not follow Him. But if we decide to follow Him, we are not given the option to take up the cross, or to leave it at home. Following Y’shua the Messiah means taking up the cross daily. That’s understood!

Y’shua once told a certain man:

“One thing you lack; go and sell all you possess, and give *it* to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow Me, taking up the cross.” (Mark 10:21)

He is not necessarily telling **you** to sell up and give away everything you own. But He does say to every one of us, **“Come, follow Me; and take up the cross.”**

“Taking up the cross” is not hanging a cross around your neck, or putting up a cross in your home. Crucifixion does not mean “a whipping,” “a bucket of tears,” “a patch-up,” or “a new deal.”

If you should see a man carrying a cross, you would know that he was not going to indulge his life, but to give it. Crucifixion means death! **It means death to the old self life!**

In a very real way, the cross principle works deeper and deeper in our lives as we submit daily to the Master and follow Him. The cross will become more and more inwrought in our lives, conforming us to the image of our Saviour, and manifesting the life of Messiah through our lives.

“To deny oneself and take up the cross” as the Messiah teaches us, is not merely denying a few pleasures, and enduring our daily burdens as cheerfully as possible. Nor does this verse teach us that through self-discipline and afflicting the body, we can put the old self to death. No!

The cross means death to the old self; but the call to denial and cross-bearing comes to the **“new man”** - for the new spiritual, born-again nature is the new man that submits to God, and is used in self-less giving for the Father’s purposes.

The “old man” - the old nature, is to be reckoned dead - crucified with Christ. The “new man” - the new nature and life - comes from God, and it is this new nature that is to live by the principles of God.

The cross principle is one that God will not force upon us. It is something we must chose, for unless it is freely and deliberately chosen, it cannot truly operate in us. It is for this reason that the apostle Paul exhorts believers:

“I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service and spiritual act of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what the will of God is - His good, acceptable and perfect will.” (Romans 12:1-2)

Paul does not command us, for the presenting of ourselves as a sacrifice (to be poured out for the Master and others), must be the **willing** yielding of ourselves to God.

Bearing the cross, I repeat, is the cross principle. It is not merely enduring daily problems. It means 'no' to self, 'no' to sin, and 'no' to the world. But it also means submission; 'yes' to God so that the life of Christ might be manifest in me. It means the giving of my life daily for God’s purpose and glory.

Paul said, **“I die daily.”** (1 Corinthians 15:31), speaking of his willingness to hazard his life for the Gospel.

“For we who live are constantly being given over to death for the sake of Y’shua, that the life of Y’shua also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So **death is working in us**, but life in you.” (2 Corinthians 4:11-12)

To the Romans he also writes:

“Just as it is written, **FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE ARE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.**” [Ps 44:22]
(Romans 8:36)

John also alludes to the cross principle when he says:

“We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and **we ought to lay down our lives** for the brethren.” (1 John 3:16)

This goes contrary to the self-centred life. But what will it be for us, dear believer? Is it to be the principle of the cross, or the rejection of the cross? Will we seek to “save” our life, and preserve our self-centredness? Or will we embrace the principle of our Master - the eternal cross principle, and its deep working in our lives?

The cross working in our lives will cut us loose from our own natural resources, so that we learn to live by the life of Christ. And we will discover more and more, that the Christian life is ...

NOT I, BUT MESSIAH

“I have been crucified with the Messiah; and I no longer live, but *it is* the Messiah *who* lives in me; and *the life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

Let me emphasize, for I want it to be very clear, the NEW LIFE the Heavenly Father has planned for His people is not a REFORMED life. It is not simply a matter of engaging in “Christian works.” It is not a NEW LEAF, nor is it a divinely-empowered OLD life. No! It is a completely NEW life, which is described as “Messiah in me.”

The OLD LIFE needs to undergo a radical crucifixion, and the NEW LIFE needs to embrace the cross principle. As Paul says, “I have been crucified with the Messiah.” Past tense! But he also says, “I die daily.” Present tense!

Here the young believer can be quite confused ...

“Have I already been crucified, or do I still have to be crucified?” he asks. And the answer is, BOTH.

In our **POSITION**: When we were placed “in Christ” we were once and for all, crucified with Christ, because Y’shua is our Substitute, our Representative.

In our **EXPERIENCE**, the “body of sin,” the power of sin and the flesh - that is, the self-life that continually seeks to assert itself, must be rendered powerless. And this can happen, not because of our determination and striving, but because of the life of the Messiah working in us. His is the mighty power that can deal with our old nature, and render it inoperative.

I say, this CAN happen, because the believer is to deliberately submit to God, and present himself to the Master day by day.

If we insist on “having our own way” and feeding on self-gratification, we will grieve the Holy Spirit, and be held captive by the flesh - the old nature.

But if we yield ourselves to the Master and invite Him to live out His life in us, we will find that the Son sets us free indeed. By faith and the grace (*the enabling*) of God, we CAN then walk in that freedom. And as we truly live unto God, we will experience the blessing of a truly Christ-centred and Spirit-filled life.

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Messiah Y’shua have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death so that just as Messiah was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

“For if we have been united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, so we will also be *united with Him in the likeness* of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man - *our old self* was crucified with *Him*, that **the body of sin might be rendered powerless**, *and* that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died has been set free from sin.

“Now if we have died with Messiah, we believe that we will also **live with Him**, knowing that Messiah, having been raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer is master over Him. For *the death* that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God.

So you also consider yourselves to be **dead to sin**, but **alive to God in Messiah**, Y’shua our Master.” (Romans 6:3-11)

“Messiah in you, the Hope (expectation) of Glory.”

May Yahweh bless and keep you!

