

# Sermon Manuscript for “The Way of Jesus – Part 3 – Learning Your ABCs”



## 7 Steps Closer Part 3: The ABC's of Following.

### **7 Steps Recap**

**#1. I have begun following Jesus, and am depending on the Spirit of Jesus in my journey.**

We are Christ followers on a journey. We rely on the constant infilling of the Holy Spirit for supernatural power to be overcomers and servants of Christ.

**#2. I have been sent by Jesus to bless others and to invite them to follow Him.** We find our significance in obeying the Great Commandment – to love God and others. We define our success in fulfilling the Great Commission – to Go and make disciple-makers.

### **3. I am learning to be like Jesus in my Attitudes, Behaviours, Character.**

Phil 2.5 “your **attitude** should be the same as Christ Jesus...”

#### **I am willing to give up my rights in order to fully serve God.**

*Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus... Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped... (Philippians 2:4-6, NIV)*

The whole world does not revolve around you and your life!

Will you willingly give up rights and privileges to serve others with love?

Would you endure personal insult in order to show kindness and patience to others?

That's the attitude of Christ.

#### **I am willing to give up earthly glory in order to make disciples.**

*He willingly “made Himself nothing” (Philippians 2:7a, NIV).*

He was willing to forsake His own glory to meet us on our own level.

*“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven” Matthew 5:16.*

It's amazing how much you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit.

We can accomplish incredible things in God's kingdom when we are willing to let God get all the glory.

#### **I am willing to give up my time in order to serve others.**

A Christ-like attitude does more than keep you positive and in a better mood.

Everything we have belongs to God, including our time.

That mindset connects us to sovereign dynamic opportunities that are somehow absent for people with the wrong attitude.

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### **I am willing to give up even my life in order to love others.**

*A chaplain was speaking to a soldier on a cot in a hospital. "You have lost an arm in the great cause," he said. "No," said the soldier with a smile. "I didn't lose it--I gave it."*  
In that same way, Jesus did not lose His life. He gave it purposefully.

### **3. I am learning to be like Jesus in my Attitudes, Behaviours, Character.**

How is it that church folks can live and grow up around church all their lives but still be full of selfish, hateful and decidedly non-Christ like behavior?

Many of us have relegated following Jesus to a series of do's and don'ts.

We try to modify our behaviour outwardly and keep busy with a bunch of religious activity.

We waste lots of time deciding what's right and wrong, so we can decide who is right and who is wrong.

*"I'm okay 'cause I don't dance, drink or chew nor hang with those who do."*

Paul had strong words for the Galatians; they were doing the same thing.

They had begun adding narrow Jewish laws to their behaviour because of outward social pressure to do so and be “super spiritual.”

*Gal 3:1-3 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?*

I call that kind of outward focused religion as “**sin management.**”

**We judge good Christian behaviour on how well we manage sin, as opposed to allowing our hearts to be managed by the Holy Spirit.**

**All sin in your life is linked somehow to unbelief.**

Our outward sinful behaviour betrays a lack of trust and surrender to Jesus in our lives. We become more like Christ in our behaviour when we trust His word and allow His Spirit to influence our inner and outer life.

*II Corinthians 3:18, “As the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him and reflect his glory even more.” - NLT*

Jesus is our model of living a life separated from worldliness and given to God.

Jesus gives us His Spirit to empower us to live a holy life.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Gal 5:22, 23)*

**You cannot sin-manage yourself into being a disciple of Jesus.**

**You cannot transform yourself into Christ-likeness from the outside in.**

Learn to love the Lord Jesus deeply and depend on His Spirit for your journey.

Your behaviour will reflect that reality as he transforms your **character** from the inside out.

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### **3. I am learning to be like Jesus in my Attitudes, Behaviours, Character.**

Character is unseen, like the soup carried in a bowl high over a waiter's head.

No one knows what's inside--unless the waiter is bumped and he trips!

Just so, people don't know what's inside you until you've been bumped around by life.

If Jesus is living inside, what spills out should be the fruit of the Spirit.

#### **How do we develop Christ-like character?**

#### **It takes time and testing.**

Imagine somebody tells you he is going to put \$100,000 in your account to pay for medical school.

And then you say, “Since I have this money, I better get a white coat and a stethoscope and start handing out prescriptions right now!”

We can't. We still have to go through a process to become a doctor.

We still will have to go through tests and trials, study and stay dedicated.

But the good news is we have support from someone dedicated to our success.

It's the same with developing Christ like character.

We can rest in the knowledge that in Christ, our “bill” is paid.

We can rest in the certainty that everything we will need is provided through our relationship with Christ.

But we still need to go through the lifelong journey of sanctification – being made holy.

#### **It takes discipline.**

We develop Christ like character is through practicing spiritual disciplines.

Developing a prayer relationship with Jesus, becoming a student of God's Word, tithing, serving the poor and denying the whims of sinful flesh... these are all ways we develop Christian character.

When you discipline yourself, you train yourself through denial and reward.

It's the law of the harvest at work – you reap what you sow.

The nature you feed is the one that grows.

If you want to grow tomatoes, you don't get tomatoes unless you dig the ground, sow the tomato seed, water and prune the plants and keep the pests at bay until the time is right.

But avoid the trap of assuming that spiritual disciplines alone are enough.

Relying on personal effort alone turns you into a smug, self righteous Christian.

Practicing spiritual disciplines without pursuing the presence and heart of the saviour is a spiritual rip-off.

Love without discipline is chaos and discipline without love is tyranny.

#### **Beholding = Becoming**

The treasure in practicing spiritual disciplines like prayer and meditation is that they teach us how to recognize God's voice over all the competing voices in this world.

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So few of us take the time and discipline to encounter Jesus personally and intimately. We are surrounded by war, fear, propaganda and greed all day long. We live in a world that is desperate for love. Love is a person, and that person is Jesus Christ. What would your life look like if you took time every day to behold Jesus, and surround yourself with pure love?

*2Co 3:18 And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

As you behold Him, you will become more like Him.  
What a promise, what a blessing.

### **The ABC's**

Discipleship is so much more than sin management.

Being a disciple is a life-long process.

We lay down our lives daily for Him.

We intentionally create space for Him to speak to us.

We keep our hearts and eyes on Him as his love transforms us.

That's how we learn to be more like Jesus in our attitudes, behaviour and our character.

**Let's Pray.**