**(TEACHER’S NOTES) “RECEIVE”101-2 GF**

**Decisions that Encourage Discipleship:**

Choosing to intentionally grow into Christlikeness

*“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” Hosea 4:6*

Last week we reviewed my resume as a pastor/teacher, talked about the recording of the class sessions for those not able to attend, and the class overview of lessons found on the bulletin handout that was distributed. If any of you are operating on the basis of the original handout, I need to let you know that **the last class will be on Wednesday, February 15, and not on Saturday Feb. 25th (a typo).**

The lesson last week covered Hosea 4:6, *“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge;”* John 1:12, “***But as many as received Him****, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name…”;* Ephesians 2:8-9*, “For****by grace*** *you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast”; and* John 6:44*, “****No one can come to Me*** *unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.”* We looked at some of the ways in which we were drawn to Jesus by the Father and distributed the “**Diagram of Grace.”** If you have not been a part of that first class, or need any of this material, see me tonight after this session and I will try to get you the materials.

Last week: we covered the first two concepts of this first unit of “Coming after Jesus” 1) **Deciding to** **Believe**—John 3:16, John 10:27, II Peter 3:9, and I John 2:2; and 2) **Deciding to Trust**—Proverbs 3:5-6, I Corinthians 3:1, and Galatians 2:20. Believing and trusting are essentials as we begin following Christ. His grace enables us to do that!Rather than trying to do it by our own abilities, we fortunately have the Grace of God to help us—and we need to receive it!

**Matthew 6:26-27,** *“Look at the birds of the sky, that they do not sow, nor reap, nor gather crops into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more important than they? And which of you by worrying can add a single day to his life’s span?”* **Last week’s handout with this material are here on the table tonight if you need one.**

***Psalm 127:1a “Unless the Lord builds a house, They who build it labor in vain”***

Here is another key verse as we think of discipleship, or growing in Christ. Let me ask you a few questions: \*\*Is the church making disciples, growing Christians into maturity, or Jesus? \*\*Are you as a mature Christians doing this work, or is Jesus?

I am convinced that we take too much of the responsibility on ourselves, rather than understanding that our job is to co-operate with what God is doing in another person’s life. We need to relax and be controlled by the Holy Spirit as we tenderly work with others as they begin their walk—or continue their walk with Christ!

We move on now from the decisions to believe and to trust, to the decisions we are emphasizing tonight: deciding to **Hear** and decidingto **pray.** Last week’s decisions were ones of our heart and mind, tonight’s decisions are ones not only of our desires in our life, but actions we take because of our desires. We need to want to hear and to communicate with God and take actions so that we can do that!

Look at the some of the promises that God through the Holy Spirit has promised to us as we believe and trust in Him: As you think of God’s promises, remember that you can memorize them and pray them back to heaven in your prayers. Anne Graham Lotz calls this **“praying back thunder to heaven!”**

\*\***Jesus has promised to meet all our needs** (Philippians 4:19) *“ And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”*

\*\***He has promised to never leave nor forsake us** (Hebrews 13:5-6) “*Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I will never desert you, nor will I ever abandon you,’ so that we confidently say, ‘The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?”*

\*\***He has promised to work good out of all that happens** (Romans 8:28) *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”*

\*\***He has promised His victory for us** (I Corinthians 15:56-57) *“The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the Law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” and*  (II Cor. 2:14) *“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us reveals the fragrance of the knowledge of Him in every place.”*

\*\***He has promised to help us overwhelmingly conquer** (Romans 8:37-39)*“But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

\*\***He’s promised to fight our battles & win** (Romans 16:20)*“The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.”*

\*\***He has promised to help us do all things** (Philippians 4:13) *“I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*”

**And Most of all for me…**

\*\***He has promised to reign with us in heaven forever** (Romans 8:17) *“The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”*

**(These verses are only a few of his promises for believers)**

…Can you trust the testimonies of thousands who have walked with Jesus?

…Can you trust His promises in Scripture?

…Can you trust the character of God Himself?

**Deciding to Hear**

**John 10:27-28** *“My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.”*

\*\*How well do you believe you listen to God’s voice and follow Him?

**P.S. It is common for people to think they’re listening when they’re not**

Scripture is a way we hear the voice of God. The Holy Spirit is a way of communication to us. Followers of Christ are a way we hear God’s voice.

**What are some of the ways you believe God has spoken to you?**

On the handout sheet, you see three ways I am suggesting we can hear the voice of Christ in our lives—**through Scripture, through prayer, through fellowship**.

…Is there one of these ways that has been more effective for you?

…Is there one of these ways that you think you need to concentrate on to improve?

\*\* Memorizing Scripture \*\* Daily reading of Scripture \*\* Speaking Scripture with Others \*\* Listening to Scripture electronically \*\*Other methods

**Each of these can be helpful, but don’t let your physical ability to read as often as you like, or memorize Scripture, or any of these things determine your hearing—remember it is receiving, not achieving!!!**

\*\* Is there a promise to claim? \*\* Is there a command to obey?

\*\* Is there a challenge to consider? \*\*Is there an example to follow?

\*\*Is there a sin to avoid? \*\*Is there a question I need to explore?

**Hal Perkins: “Being Discipled by Jesus?”**

…How is God manifesting Himself in this passage? … What can we learn about Him from these Words?... What do you think He wants to teach us from this time with Him? …what is your greatest blessing right now? ... What is a big concern in your life as you have read this Scripture?

**Again, I want to return to the concept of “receive”. We can do all these things, but not hear until God speaks. We need to have an open mind to receiving from God on His timetable. We may be doing spiritual things—things of discipleship itself—and not hear from God; or we may be doing very common things and be surprised that God seemed to direct us or speak to us about something we were not even thinking about. The important thing is for us to be committed to try to hear when God speaks!!!**

The same thing is true about our prayers. We may set aside a time of prayer, but we may feel “called to pray” at a time we weren’t expecting! Finding a place and time are helpful, but don’t ignore the opportunity when it comes!!!

**Deciding to Pray**

***Romans 8:26-28 “****Now in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;**and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”*

…how completely does the Spirit know and help our weakness—in prayer!

…what are some of the things we might overlook & not pray as we should?

…what prayers have you prayed in the past that needed intercession?

--why does our human condition not always see what is important?

…**who is the one** who knows the Spirit and intercedes for us in God’s will?

…does this passage help you understand why some requests are not given?

--names some of the purposes to which believers are called!!!

*Matthew 7:13-14 “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is narrow and the way is constricted that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”*

\*\* Praising: God’s character and goodness

…seven-fold praise: Hebrews 1:1-3 (word file)

**I was led to a praise focus when I least expected it! Time doesn’t allow me to tell all the details, but I have included a seven-fold praise focus from Hebrews 1:1-3, with accompanying scriptures that I use almost daily. Another resource of praise is “The Lord’s Prayer” found in Mathew 6: 8-15**

\*\* Thanksgiving: God’s protection and providence

…review of your life-story (Jerry Davis)

**Develop you own personal list of things you are truly thankful for in your life and past history. Thank God that some things weren’t worse than they were!!!**

\*\* Asking: (lightening back to Heaven—Anne Graham Lotz)

***I John 5:14-15*** *“This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked…”*

*Matthew 7:7-11 “****Ask****, and it will be given to you;****seek****, and you will find;****knock****, and it will be opened to you.****8****For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.****9****Or what person is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf of bread, will give him a stone?****10****Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he?****11****So if you, despite being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven* ***give good things*** *to those who ask Him!*

**ATTITUDE IN PRAYER (Golden Rule)**

***12****“In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.*

**ATTITUDE IN FAITH (God’s challenge to us!)**

***John 15:7*** *“If you remain in Me, and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.”*

**As a special resource: I wanted to introduce you to some material that will help you in listening to and talking with God.**

Read the following material which are my notes from a seminar lesson taught by Rev. Hal and Debbie Perkins, then try to apply them to the last Scripture we read together, Matthew 7:7-11. Do this in quietness and privacy, and then let’s come next session to discuss what we heard and what we prayed!

**GO FOLLOW JESUS THIS WEEK!!!**