

Soul-Recharge!

Full-Throttle Living & Leading

September 2010

Soul-Recharge is a monthly periodical aimed to refresh and enrich you both personally and in your ministry influence.

JUMPstart

The Desire of God

Psalms 37 contains a goldmine of riches as David expounds on the contrast between the inheritance of the righteous and the tragedy of the wicked, the sharp disparity between lives brightened by light or those snuffed out by darkness. David delivers several injunctions – including, “**trust in the Lord,**” “**do good,**” “**delight ... in the Lord,**” “**commit ... to the Lord**” and “**rest in the Lord**” – urging us to emphatically plug into God ... to ensure our lives revolve around Him as our Divine Centre ... hidden in Him as our Source and Sustainer.

Yet it is David’s statement in verses 4 and 5 that has always intrigued me. He writes: “**Delight yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass**”. Wow! What a wonderful passage ... loaded with promise and weighty instruction. However, it is a passage often misunderstood.

It is easy to (incorrectly) conclude from verse 4 that if I “**delight**” myself in the Lord (whatever this may mean), He is **obliged** to give me the desires of **my** heart. And, according to verse 5, if I “**commit**” this to God (again, whatever this may mean), He is **obligated** to fulfil **my** desires. Yes? No! This is not what David meant.

Even as a young Christian I found it difficult to believe, having heard more than a few messages that implied this, that God was obliged to give me whatever I desired as long as I found whatever it was that “primed His pump,” so to speak. From the weight of Scripture, I could only conclude that I existed to serve His desires and fulfil His pleasure – not the other way around.

Upon closer study of these two verses, beyond the merely cosmetic attention given to them, clarity came. First, the word “**delight**” (v. 4) means “to be soft and pliable” – where the word picture refers to “clay in a potter’s hand”. David is urging us to be soft and pliable in God’s hand; in a word, surrendered. A surrendered heart brings great delight to God – in fact, God declares that He makes His home with those who are surrendered in heart (see Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 57:15; 66:1, 2). Second, the word “**give**” in the phrase “**He shall give you the desires of your heart**” (v. 5) means “birth or originate” not fulfil and endorse. As we are soft and pliable in His hands, He will **birth** in us **His** desires; He will **plant** in us the **passions** of His heart. How did Paul put it? “**God works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure**” (Philippians 2:13).

Thirdly, the word “**commit**” (v. 5) means, “to roll the responsibility off onto” and refers to our willingness to hold these God-given passions and visions **lightly**, not loosely (for we are to steward them responsibly) but **not** tightly – for they are first and foremost His not ours. We are to acknowledge that they have come from Him, they still belong to Him and we will one day give account to Him for them. As we then “**trust in Him**”, we can live with supreme confidence that He will indeed “**bring it to pass**” (v. 5). For He is able to perfect that which concerns us (Psalm 138:8); “**He who began a good work in us will complete it**” (Philippians 1:6).

What I initiate, I’ll have to continue in my own diminishing strength until I fall apart ... or repent. What He initiates, He will continue and complete ... my role is simply, in rest and freedom, to cooperate with Him.

Zachnoid Tumbleweed’s

LAUGH OUT LOUD

< True QANTAS technical solutions >



Problem submitted by pilot: “Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough”

Solution recorded by engineer: “Auto-land not installed on this aircraft”

Problem submitted by pilot: “Mouse in cockpit”

Solution recorded by engineer: “Cat Installed”

Problem submitted by pilot: “Something loose in cockpit”

Solution recorded by engineer: “Something tightened in cockpit”

And I quote...

“If you see no reason for giving thanks, the fault lies in yourself” (Red Indian Proverb)

“The reason why so many are still troubled, still struggling, still making little forward progress is because they haven’t yet come to the end of themselves. We’re still trying to give orders, and interfering with God’s work within us”
(A.W. Tozer)

Just for fun >

“If at first you don’t succeed ... so much for skydiving”
(Henry Youngman, Major League Baseball Player)

While some have the *gift of leadership* (Romans 12:6), everyone has the *potential to lead-serve others* (1 Timothy 3:1).

The truth is we live in an age where people easily swoon over the gifts and abilities of others ... and this has happened in every age since the dawn of time. In almost every arena – from ancient times to modern times; from circus maximus to the business boardroom – people are generally measured by their gifts and abilities. This is, of course, not a reflection of how God measures us. As one man wisely noted: “when God measures a man; He puts the tape around his heart *not* his head” ... nor (may I add) his bicep, nor bank balance, nor title, nor skill with a ball nor talent with a musical instrument. **God measures us by how we steward the gifts He gives.**

The gifts and abilities we have – whether in the world of sport, music, business, education, technology etc. etc. – are given graciously to us by God. They are, in a sense, God’s responsibility; first, He gives gifts as He chooses. Second, He gives the capacity of gift He desires; that is, one may have a higher capacity gift to sing or lead than another, or one may have a lower capacity gift in business or education than someone else. This is God’s domain ... both the gifts and the capacity of each gift is His call, His prerogative.

Our responsibility lies in: diligently discovering our gifts, gratefully accepting them, humbly perfecting them and then, graciously using them for God’s glory, the good of others ... and where possible, to put food on our table. And while there is no prize for neglecting them, they are gifts given by God and one day, we will give them back to Him. On that day of reckoning; we won’t be giving account for the gifts we have, **we will give an account for how we managed the gifts we were given** – specifically, the manner and the motive in which we used them.

Tip #117

True success is not measured by the capacity of our gifts but rather by how we steward the gifts we are given.

Reasons

“Always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you”
(1 Peter 3:15)

For A Confident Faith

Conflict with Science? Part 3 – Probability and Chance

“What is the probability of life forming by chance?”

Let me say it this way: if you were a betting man, you would not even bother with the improbability of life forming from nothing.

“The distinguished Sir Fred Hoyle has proposed an analogy to illustrate [the difficulty of probability]. He asks, ‘How long would it take a blindfolded person to solve a Rubik cube?’ If he made one move per second, without resting, he estimates it would take an astonishing 1.35 trillion years! Thus, he concludes, when you consider the life expectancy of a human being, a blindfolded person could not solve the Rubik cube.

Hoyle then explains that it would be equally difficult for the accidental formation of only *one* of the many chains of amino acids in a living cell. And in every human cell there are about 200,000 such amino acids. Now if you were to compute the time required to get all 200,000 amino acids for *one* human cell to come together by chance, it would be about 293 times the estimated age of the earth (set at the standard 4.6 billion years).

In another analogy Hoyle bolsters his argument. He calls this the ‘junkyard mentality’ and asks, ‘What are the chances that a tornado might blow through a junkyard containing all the parts of a 747, accidentally assemble them into a plane, and leave it ready for take-off?’” These are the kind of implausible odds one has to consider when asking whether life could form by chance (Paul Little, *Know Why You Believe*).

Answers

To Difficult Bible Passages

“Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law” (Psalm 119:18).

Ancient Writing Techniques...

An area which has led to unfounded criticism of the Scriptures is the general lack of understanding concerning ancient writing styles. Just as we have relatively common, accepted writing techniques for things like letter writing, recording scientific information or even poetry, the Biblical authors did too. Subsequent study of ancient writing styles and techniques has answered this category of criticisms, such as...

“Does the Genesis record not give two different creation accounts of man in Chapters 1 and 2?”

This question troubled many until it was discovered that Moses’ record was consistent with many ancient writings of the time. Moses wrote the general details of man’s creation in Chapter 1, the purpose of which was detailing the seven-day creation act of God. In Chapter 2, he then wrote the specific details of the creation of man, the purpose of which was to focus on the object of God’s heart and affection. There are no contradictions.

“How could Moses have written Deuteronomy if it contains an account of his death?”

Moses, without any doubt, wrote the first 33 chapters, and then consistent with the writing practices of the time, an obituary was written of the author to conclude his book. Joshua was the person who wrote the final chapter.

Do you have a question that troubles you? Flick your query to craig@crosswaveglobal.com

TEACHING > Making disciple-makers

"Go and make disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19)

WARNING:

Admittedly, this is not a warm and fuzzy article. But if you're a bona fide, pedal-to-the-metal, bonfire follower of Christ, I think this is an important piece and well worth the read.

Jesus' commission to **"go and make disciples of all nations"** is as straightforward and emphatic as you can get. This is what it is all about. We call this the Great Commission not the Optional Extra or Grand Elective. Yet in the midst of the seeming unending spiritual diet of many others things, disciple-making usually gets one of three inept responses.

Either it simply invokes a vigorous head-nodding token gesture; vigorous in that we know it's important, yet token in that it does not grab us by the throat and shake us into world-shaking action. Or we assume it is happening because our schedule is loaded and our calendar is full; for us, activity (sadly) equates to disciple-making. Or we shelve it because it just does not sound spiritual enough; in fact, it smacks of hard work and may even sound too clinical in our quest to be "led by the Spirit".

And I'm not pointing fingers here or trying to be frivolous – I've gone through all three responses too often for my own liking.

Yet, these are the marching orders Jesus gave to us. If I'm a follower of Christ, these words ought to define how I view my life-purpose of this planet. It was Francis Xavier who said: "Give up your small ambitions. Come and save the world".

We can pray for hours, worship all night, prophesy til we're blue, lay hands on people til they're bald and even glow in the dark ... but I'm fully convinced that when we face the Righteous Judge we will have to account for how we have participated in this mandate.

For this reason, it is my opinion, we cannot be provoked enough in this area. I hope you will hang with me in this article as we fuss with this issue – and I'm hoping to push the envelope too. My title is a deliberate attempt for us to go beyond the concept of making followers of our group or our ministry, but – in the spirit of Jesus' words – **to make disciple-makers**, apprentices of Christ (born into His life and mission), who themselves make disciple-makers, multiplying the life of God.

Before we look at this rather outlandish idea, it would be important to state that **"making disciples"** involves at least two aspects. First, on a broad scale, it involves educating society with the counsel of God. It is the responsibility of the church to teach (and demonstrate) – not control, police or dictate – God's ways to every mind-moulding area of society; from politics, to education, to family, etc. etc. This is an extensive subject and beyond the scope of this article.

Second, on a personal level, the Great Commission involves making individual followers of Christ. By this, I'm not referring to an individual, me-centred gospel. Making disciples is a community exercise; there are no Lone Ranger believers in the New Testament. We are parts of one body; an arm without a body is ... well, disgusting ... and dead! However, making disciples requires that **individuals place their faith in Christ** and in so doing, **are born into His life and mission in the context of a communal, spiritual family**.

In explaining Paul and Barnabas at work, Luke records: **"when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples ... they appointed elders in every church ... commending them to the Lord"** (vv. 21-23). Paul and Barnabas aimed to make followers of Christ, who in the context of spiritual community, would impact their world – making new followers of Christ who would continue to multiply the life of God.

It is this dynamic of the Great Commission – making individual followers of Christ in the context of **missional** community – that is the focus of this article. Having made that qualification, let's consider Jesus' words in Matthew 28:18-20, where the emphasis of His commission is to **make disciple-makers**.

Jesus urged: **"make disciples ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you"** (Matthew 28:19, 20). While this may immediately bring to mind the many, many teachings and principles He imparted to them, this is not the "main point". Jesus "main point", if I can use those words, was to make disciples who would continue His mandate. Jesus made it clear that, even before the cross, His work was to establish apprentices who would become His vessels or body here on earth. **"Father,"** Jesus prayed just before His Garden of Gethsemane ordeal, **"I have glorified You on the earth, I have finished the work You have given Me to do"**. What work? **"I have manifested Your name to the men who You have given Me out of the world"** (John 17:1, 4, 6).

And while Jesus taught them many things – which we, of course, should learn and impart to others – we can error in making Jesus' lessons the "main point" (and then forever settle for teaching and teaching and more teaching) and fudge the "main point" which is His mandate to make followers of Jesus – who are empowered to also make followers of Christ ad infinitum. Learning and imparting His teachings are the very necessary means towards this holy end. (But merely sitting, soaking and souring ... is one sure way to become God's *frozen* people).

To follow this message further and add your thoughts on our blog page, click here: www.soulrecharge.wordpress.com
(Where we unpack what it means to be a disciple-maker and, equally important, what it doesn't mean)

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