

**DISCIPLESHIP 3
GOD'S PLAN
SERIES**

**UNIT III - LESSON 11
SUBMISSION TO A SPIRITUAL FATHER**

for

**CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE
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COMPILED BY

EDWIN M. GREGORIO

**Contact: Academic Dean
e-mail: emgregorio@yahoo.com**

Reference from:

**Hearing of Faith Bible Institute
P.O. Box 372
Axtell, Texas 76624**

UNIT III - SPIRITUAL MATURITY**LESSON 11 - GOD'S WAY TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY - THE JORDAN - SUBMISSION TO YOUR SPIRITUAL FATHER**

In this lesson we want to summarize and conclude the series of teachings entitled "**God's Plan for Spiritual Maturity**". Our Father God's plan for "Perfecting the Saints."

This plan of God as previously noted is revealed in the meanings of the four different places mentioned in II Kings 2:1-15 - GILGAL, BETHEL, JERICHO, AND THE JORDAN RIVER.

We have noted and would once again emphasize the progression to spiritual maturity is from Gilgal to Bethel to Jericho, then to the Jordan. THERE IS NO SHORTCUT. AMEN?

The background for II Kings 2:1-15 is the ministry of Elijah as recorded in I Kings and especially the call of Elisha in I Kings 19:19-21. Let us note that after Elijah cast his mantle upon Elisha that he in no way urged or encouraged Elisha to follow him. Elisha's following Elijah was a decision he made. The strength of Elisha's commitment is seen in verse 21 where Elisha slew the oxen with which he was plowing and used the plow and yokes as fire wood. He was burning his bridges behind him. We also note that Elisha went and ministered unto Elijah, who became his spiritual father. The events of II Kings 2:1-15 took place at least 10 years later and we find Elisha still following Elijah.

Now back to **II Kings 2:1-15.**

GILGAL means a whirlwind, a moving wind - This speaks of the infilling and moving of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. The initial infilling being known as the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. The Baptism with the Holy Spirit is the **MEANS**, the **ENABLER** of spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity cannot begin without the initial infilling of the Holy Spirit.

It does not matter how much knowledge you have of the Bible or how well you know the ways of God - If you have not been filled and are not being continually filled with the Holy Spirit - If you are not being moved and directed and motivated by Him - If you are not walking in the Spirit, under the Spirit's power, **YOU ARE FULFILLING THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH** (Galatians 5:16) which simply means you are **NOT BEING "PERFECTED"**. You are not growing up spiritually. Amen?

However, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and the subsequent continual fillings is **A MEANS TO AN END, AND NOT THE END IN IT'S SELF**. The goal of spiritual maturity is to cross over the Jordan and return in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

I mention this because with many believers the receiving of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit becomes their goal and once they receive it and begin to walk in some of the gifts of the Spirit, spiritual pride and independence sets in. The result being they either neglect or refuse to take the next step in God's Plan for their spiritual maturity. The Baptism with

the Holy Spirit has become the end of the maturing process instead of the beginning. They stay at Gilgal instead of going to Bethel.

BETHEL means the House of God. It is the PLACE where spiritual maturity takes place. Bethel speaks of the Local Church, which is the body of Christ. It speaks of the need of the believer to be in a local church and to **BE IN SUBMISSION TO THE OVERSIGHT MINISTRY** of that local church. Which Oversight/Bishop Ministry is administered by the Elders of that local body of Christ.

NOTE the correct order of submission to the oversight ministry of the local church.

- The men, married or single, are to be submitted and find their place directly under the oversight ministry of the Elders in the local church.
- With married women where husband and wife are both members of the local church, submission of the wife to the oversight ministry begins with submission to her own husband and through her husband to the Elders.
- Married women whose husbands are not members of the church are considered spiritual widows and thus come directly under the oversight ministry of the Elders.
- With single women in the body, submission is to the Elders.
- With children where parents (one or both) are members of the church submission is to their parents and through the parents to the Elders.
- Children in the body whose parents are not members of the church (neither mother or father or legal guardian) are considered spiritual orphans and therefore come directly under the oversight ministry.

Now when the believer becomes a member of the local church and has placed himself/herself under the oversight ministry of the church the primary element of submission is TRUST. Because of his own spiritual immaturity and lack of knowledge and understand of the word of God, he must learn to trust God and those whom God has placed. in authority in the local church, IF the maturing process is to begin.

Here in the local church the believer under the direction and guidance of the Elders begins to grow up as:

- healing and restoration takes place;
- the transforming process of the Word becomes a reality;
- a new way of life is learned;
- he begins to walk in this new way of life;
- he receives encouragement and help from brothers & sisters.

Let us understand, for the child of God to receive and keep the right perspective of life, to become a whole person, **THE LOCAL CHURCH** needs to be in the center of his life, **THE HUB** around which his life and activities revolve.

The primary reason there is so much confusion and congestion in our lives is because we are being pulled in so many different directions. In the local church we find peace and stability because we are where our Father God has placed us.

Thus Bethel speaks of the local church and its place in the life of the believer. It speaks of the believer in submission to the Elders, the overseers of his spiritual life. It speaks of brothers and sisters in Jesus loving and caring and encouraging and helping one another. It speaks of a place where the believer can find refuge and separation from the world and its ungodly ways.

Bethel, the local church, also, is **A TRAINING CENTER FOR MINISTRY**. Here in the local church Under the teaching ministry of the Elders and teachers, the believer studies and learns the Word of God, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one believing. This brings us to Jericho, the next step in the maturing process.

As we have seen, Gilgal is the **MEANS** (enabler) to spiritual maturity. Bethel is the **PLACE** of spiritual maturity. **Jericho is the HOW TOO of spiritual maturity.**

JERICHO means a fragrance. It speaks of the believer in the local church submitting himself/herself to the teaching ministry of the Elders and teachers of the local church. Jericho, thus, speaks of the believer becoming a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, a learner of the Word of God.

As a disciple he, the believer, allows the Word of God to save him, deliver him, wash and cleans him from his bad attitudes, his stinking worldly thinking, and his bad habits (sin habits) of doing.

The believer who is now a disciple is learning the ways of God and is beginning to apply godly principles to his life letting Jesus be his pattern for living. He is learning the need to die to himself, to his wants and desires, so that Jesus might increase in him. He is learning to take up his cross and follow Jesus. Learning to become an imitator of Jesus.

He, the believer, who is now a disciple, a learner, a follower and imitator of Jesus is becoming a sweet smelling savor (fragrance) to his Heavenly Father.

Jericho, therefore, is the believer, who is a disciple, abiding in Jesus, and His Word (the word of Jesus) is abiding in the believer, with the result being that much fruit is coming forth in his life.

At this point in the believers life there is the danger of spiritual pride setting in, the attitude of, see how God is using me, bringing with it spiritual independence. Here God's plan for spiritual maturity brings the disciple to the banks of the Jordan River.

As stated above, crossing the Jordan and coming back across under the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit is the **GOAL** of God's plan for spiritual maturity.

JORDAN means the descender. It speaks of the disciple in **submission to a spiritual father**, under which Father God has placed this believer, so that, in Father God's timing,

he can himself become a spiritual father, receiving the double portion of his spiritual father's anointing.

Let us, by the grace of God, see and understand the need for spiritual fathers in the body of Christ. Let us see the need to be in submission to the one the Lord leads us to be under.

Submission on the part of the disciple who has reached the banks of the Jordan in his journey to spiritual maturity takes on a deeper and more complete meaning than at the beginning of his Christian walk.

At the beginning of his walk with Jesus he was just a baby spiritually and had knowledge or understanding of spiritual things. For this reason it was necessary for him through faith to trust God and to trust those whom God had placed in the local church as teachers and Elders.

Now, however, the disciple at the banks of the Jordan, has through his submission to the oversight/bishop ministry of the church and by his submission to the teaching ministry of the church has reached a high level of spiritual maturity in the Lord Jesus, the fruit of this maturity is evident in his life.

He has spiritual stability; he has become in reality an overcomer; he is strong in the Lord and in the power of His might; perhaps he has become a teacher, or a deacon, or an Elder in the local body; he has grown-up in the knowledge and understanding of the Lord; he is chewing and digesting the meat of God's Word; he is being used greatly by God in the work of the ministry.

Now, because, he is being used by God; because he does have discernment and understanding of spiritual things, through his knowledge of the Bible and the ways of his Father God; because of his strength in the Lord - **HE IS FACED WITH THE GREATEST DANGER OF HIS CHRISTIAN WALK.** He is in danger of spiritual pride and spiritual independence.

If he is to cross the Jordan and return in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit - receiving the double portion of the Spirit, his submission **MUST** be more complete than at the beginning of his Christian walk.

He must know and acknowledge that even with all his Bible knowledge and spiritual understanding that he can not and must not lean on his own understanding.

He must know and understand, even as the Lord Jesus knew and understood that of himself he can do nothing.

He must submit to the fact and confess with Jeremiah,

"O Lord, I know that the way of n an is not in him self: it is not in n an that worketh to direct his steps" Jeremiah 10:23.

He must humble him self under the mighty hand of God (the mighty hand of God is represented by the five fold ministry); submitting himself to his spiritual father, knowing that he is not yet ready to go out on his own, but that he still needs to listen to and accept the wisdom and counsel of his spiritual father.

This total submission to God and his spiritual father takes him across the Jordan, where he is now in a position to **ASK for and RECEIVE** a double portion of the Spirit's anointing which rests upon his spiritual father.

His return to the other side of the Jordan is in a demonstration of the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. And those disciple and believers on that side of the Jordan on his return will acknowledge that "the spirit of Elijah doth rest on" him. They will come to meet him and bow in submission to him, acknowledging him to be in fact their spiritual father.

END of Series

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