

11. Learning to Help People Develop an Action Plan for Their Lives

In our last two topics, we have talked about how to help developing leaders develop a vision and a purpose for their lives. Although vision and purpose are both extremely important in a person's life, they mean nothing until the person develops a plan of action to help him begin to move from thoughts to actions. James 1:22-25 says, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."

In these verses, we see several principles to help developing leaders develop a plan of action for their lives. These principles are:

- A healthy Christian becomes a doer of the Word of God
- A healthy Christian does not deceive himself by hearing and forgetting
- A healthy Christian is one who is regularly looking into the perfect law of liberty
- A healthy Christian is one who is continuing in the law of liberty
- A healthy Christian is a doer of the work that the Word tells him
- A healthy Christian will be blessed for obedience

First, a healthy Christian becomes a doer of the Word of God. A doer is one who obeys or fulfills the Word of God. This requires two things:

- * A person has to become familiar with the Word of God
- * A person has to obey and carry out what he learns from the Word of God

In order for a Christian to develop and become a godly spiritual leader, this verse points out that the person focuses on obedience to the Word of God. The healthy Christian learns to ask the same two questions Saul asked on the road to Damascus as the Christian studies the Word each day:

- ◆ Who are you Lord?
- ◆ Lord, what do you want me to do?

Second, a healthy Christian does not deceive himself by hearing and forgetting. Matthew 7:24-27 says, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall." In these verses, we see that a wise man hears the things that Christ teaches and obeys them. In contrast, the foolish man hears the things that Christ teaches and does not obey them. The healthy Christian has asked the two questions mentioned above. As he studies the Word, the Lord speaks to him through the Word. Then, the healthy Christian asks the Lord to give him the Lord's strength to carry out what the Word tells him to do.

Third, the healthy Christian is one who regularly looks into the perfect law of liberty. The law of liberty is the Word of God. Here, we see that the healthy Christian is one who has made it a regular

habit to study the Word of God so that he is able to be obedient to the Word. The title “perfect law of liberty” is an important title to understand about the Word of God. Galatians 5:13-14 says, “For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not *use* liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” True liberty is not the freedom to do what we want, but the power to do what we ought. The “perfect law of liberty” has set us free from our sin so that we have the power to truly love and serve one another as we yield to the Lord.

Fourth, the healthy Christian is one who is continuing in the perfect law of liberty. The word that is translated “continue” means *to remain in the place where we are*. Here, we see that we are to remain in the perfect law of liberty. The basic thought here is that we learn the Word of God, obey the Word of God and continually practice what the Word of God tells us to do. Since the perfect law of liberty tells us to love and serve one another, loving and serving one another is something that is becoming a pattern of life in the healthy Christian. Galatians 5 goes on in the following verses to tell us how the Holy Spirit works in our lives to help us carry out the perfect law of liberty. We see that we are to:

- Walk in the Spirit – verse 16
- Be led by the Spirit – verse 18
- Bear the fruit of the Spirit – verses 22-23

These things lead us to the next thing James tells us.

Fifth, the healthy Christian is a doer of the work that the Word tells him. A doer of the work is one who is carrying out the work that the Word teaches us we are to do. When we walk in the Spirit, and are led by the Spirit, we will see the Holy Spirit produce fruit in our lives. Christ told the disciples in Luke 24:48-49, “...And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.”

Christ told the disciples (and us) the work to do. However, He also told the disciples that they needed the power of the Holy Spirit in order to do that work. The same is true for us. If we try to do the work the Word teaches us to do in our own strength, we will fail. In contrast, when we do the work the Word teaches us to do in the power of the Spirit, even the devil cannot stop us, because greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world – 1 John 4:4.

We are able to do the work of God with boldness as we pray and then depend on the Lord for His strength. Acts 4:29-31 tells us, “...Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.’ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

Sixth, a healthy Christian will be blessed for obedience. As each Christian does the work the Lord has called and equipped that Christian to do, the Lord promises His blessing. Even when there are times of severe testing, James 1:2-4 promises us, “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into

various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.” Here, we see that the Lord is using those times of testing to produce patience and bring us to spiritual maturity.

Every Christian can develop a plan of action for his or her life. Christ takes the unique spiritual SHAPE He has given each of us, guides us through His Word to the things that we are to obey, and then gives us the power of His Spirit to carry out the work He has called us to do. As we help developing leaders begin to realize that Christ has created and gifted them in a unique way, because He has a particular work for them to do, they will have a sense of expectancy as they yield their lives to Christ so that He can work through their lives. They will find great joy in their lives as they learn to walk in obedience to the way the Lord is leading them.

Remember, we do not tell people what God has called them to do. Instead, we help them search the Word and become obedient to the Word so that the Lord is able to show them what He has for them to do. That way, the Lord is able to guide them step-by-step as He closes and opens doors for them (Acts 16:6-10). May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders develop a plan of action for their lives.