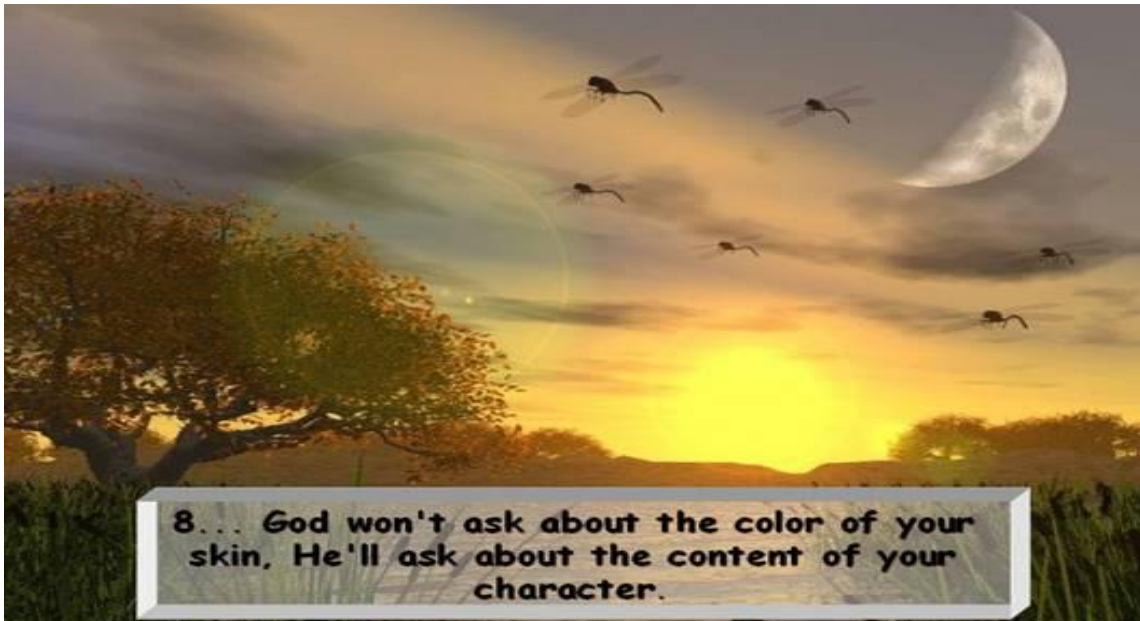


Relational Discipleship

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3
4 **Graham F. Watts, Sr.**

5

6 **VISION:** To hear the midnight cry, "The bridegroom comes, go out to meet
7 Him" (Matthew 25:6) and become like Him when I see Him as He is (1
8 John 3:2).

9

10 **MISSION:** Purify myself even as Christ is pure (1 John 3:3) to be glad,
11 to rejoice, give honor to Christ and be ready for the marriage of the
12 Lamb (Revelation 19:7).

13

14 **VALUES:** Follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Revelation 14:4), be without
15 fault before God (Revelation 14:5), be perfect even as my Father in
16 heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48), wear the Lamb's fine, clean and
17 white linen (Revelation 19:8) do righteously (1 John 3:10) and walk
18 humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

19

20 **OVERALL AIM:** Studies presented here unveil Bible knowledge to
21 inquiring minds to prompt the following inquiries: "Are our feet on
22 the rock of ages? Are we one with Christ as He is one with the
23 Father" (John 10:30 in Evangelism, {Ev} 199.1)? Am I crucified with
24 Christ (Galatians 2:20)?

25

26 **PURPOSE/REASON FOR/WHY**

27
28 This study focus on relationships between the Disciples of Christ!

29
30
31 **OBJECTIVES/WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH/THESIS**

32
33 At the end of this study, church people will have a clear
34 understanding of how God expects brethren to dwell together.

35
36
37 **SIGNIFICANCE: SO WHAT**

38
39
40 **"The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin.** It
41 means: [(1)] ...sin is taken away (Revelation 1:5), [(2)] ...the vacuum
42 is filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:38), [(3)] ...the mind is divinely
43 illumined (John 8:12) [and (4)] the heart is emptied of self (Matthew
44 16:24) and filled with the presence of Christ" (Our High Calling,
45 {OHC} 154.5). "The Spirit...: [(1)] takes of the [deep] things of God
46 and shows them to us (read Jeremiah 33:3; John 16:13 & 1 Corinthians
47 2:9-10, [(2)] ...illumines our darkness (Isaiah 60:3), [(3)] informs our
48 ignorance (1 Corinthians 1:30) and [(4)] helps us in our manifold
49 necessities (Romans 8:26), which is neither gratis nor involuntary.
50 **The mind must be constantly going out after God.** If worldliness is
51 allowed to come in, if we have no desire to pray, no desire to
52 commune with [God] who is the source of strength and wisdom: [(1)]
53 the Spirit will **NOT** abide with us [and (2) we will]... not receive the
54 rich endowment of grace that would make [us] wise unto salvation,
55 patient, forbearing, quick to perceive and appreciate heavenly
56 ministrations, quick to discern Satan's devices and (3) strong to
57 resist sin" (OHC 154.4). In other words, your life will have a form
58 of godliness without the accompanying power (2 Timothy 3:5), which
59 will give a misleading impression much like "...White sepulchres...
60 [although] beautiful outward, but [inward] are... full of dead... bones..."
61 (Matthew 23:27). You don't want that type of religion; do you?

62 **BACKGROUND CONTEXT**

63

64 "The days in which we live are solemn and important. The Spirit of
65 God is gradually but surely being withdrawn from the earth
66 (Maranatha, {Mar} 35.1). "Men possessed of demons are taking the
67 lives of men, women and little children. Men have become infatuated
68 with vice and every species of evil prevails" (Mar 35.2). In 2002,
69 homicide accounted for 140 of 3,018 deaths to kids ages five through
70 nine in the United States alone; which rendered homicide the 4th
71 leading cause of death for children in the five to nine age-group
72 (http://www.statisticstop10.com/Causes_of_Death_Kids.html). "[Across
73 many lands, violence evidences the divine declaration that] the fear
74 and love of God have almost left the world. This is the time
75 prophesied of by Isaiah, when "darkness shall cover the earth and
76 gross darkness the people" (read Isaiah 60:2). [...We... interpret the
77 weather signs in the sky but don't... interpret the signs of the times"
78 (Matthew 16:3, New Living Translation, NLT)]. **Multitudes are led
79 away by the delusions of a faithless generation and are living in the
80 darkness of error**" (In Heavenly Places, {HP} 313.2). Thus, Christ
81 places His disciples in the world as "...The light of the world..."
82 (Matthew 5:14). "...In the midst of a crooked and perverse nation,
83 [Christ's Disciples are to] shine as lights..." (Philippians 2:15) and
84 to be "...The salt of the earth..." (Matthew 5:13). "The world today is
85 in crying need of a revelation of Christ Jesus in the person of His
86 saints. God desires that His people shall stand before the world a
87 holy people... to call men out of darkness into God's marvelous light
88 (read 1 Peter 2:9), [which] is given by the... lives of [church]
89 members [that are] sanctified by the Spirit of truth... to bear witness
90 to the verity of the messages [they] proclaim" (HP 313.4)). **"In
91 order to convict and convert sinners, the Spirit of God must come
92 into [our] work and sanctify every spiritual development"** (Conflict
93 and Courage, {CC} 341.2). This background provided the impetus for
94 the study question that follows.

95 **STUDY QUESTION**

96
 97 How might believers of different temperaments, cultures, backgrounds,
 98 personality types and other dividing elements relate to each other
 99 while engaged in the service of Christ?

100

101 **ANSWER SOURCE: HOLY BIBLE**

102

103 1. **Believers engaged in the service of Christ relate well to each**
 104 **other when they actively put away differences.** But this is not a
 105 passive process that occurs only by thinking about it. It calls
 106 for interpersonal confession and intercessory prayer (read James
 107 5:16). Unity, **NOT UNIFORMITY**, under the banner of our Lord, Jesus
 108 Christ, requires dissolution and resolution of all our differences.
 109 One preemptive path to interpersonal harmony is avoiding "Foolish
 110 and unlearned questions..., [which] ...gender strife" (2 Timothy 2:23)
 111 "[Because] where envy and strife [exist], there is confusion and
 112 **EVERY** evil work" (James 3:16). So our goal must be to do "Nothing...
 113 through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind ...esteem
 114 others better than [we esteem ourselves]" (Philippians 2:3). We
 115 have Christ's example, who, "Made himself of no reputation and took
 116 the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and being
 117 found in fashion as a man, humbled himself and became obedient unto
 118 death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:7-8). "[And
 119 knowing] that to whom [we] yield [ourselves] servants to obey, his
 120 servants [we] are to whom [we] obey, whether of sin unto death or
 121 of obedience unto righteousness" (Romans 6:16); let us take the
 122 position that Abram took with Lot: "...Let there be no strife, I
 123 pray... between me and thee..." (Genesis 13:8) because "The servants of
 124 the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all [people]; apt to
 125 teach, patient [and] in meekness instructing those that oppose..." (2
 126 Timothy 2:24-25).

- 127 2. **Believers engaged in the service of Christ relate well to each**
 128 **other when they practice integrity based on liberty provided by the**
 129 **Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:17).** For example, "Don't lie [as in
 130 misrepresent facts] to each other for you have stripped off your
 131 old sinful nature and ALL its wicked deeds" (Colossians 3:9, NLT).
 132 "[We] shall not steal, neither deal falsely..." (Leviticus 19:11).
 133 "Wherefore [put] away lying [and] speak every man truth with his
 134 neighbor..." (Ephesians 4:25). "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger,
 135 clamor and evil speaking be put away from [among us]..." (Ephesians
 136 4:31). "...Laying aside all malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies and
 137 evil speaking" (1 Peter 2:1); let us "...Keep our tongue from evil
 138 and our lips from speaking guile" (Psalms 34:13). Let us pledge,
 139 like Job, that "...As long as [we] have life within [us], the breath
 140 of God in [our] nostrils, [our] lips will not speak wickedness [nor
 141 our] tongue... utter... deceit" (Job 27:3-4, NIV). By using these
 142 principles, among others, we can live peaceably with all men,
 143 including our brethren (Romans 12:18).
 144
 145
 146 3. **Believers engaged in the service of Christ relate well to each**
 147 **other when each is hospitable.** By this shall all men know you are
 148 my disciples, if you have love one to another (John 13:35). "When
 149 God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager
 150 to practice hospitality" (Romans 12:13, New Living Translation,
 151 NLT). "Love your enemies..." (Matthew 5:44). Bless them [that]
 152 persecute you, bless and curse not" (Romans 12:14) "And pray for
 153 them which despitefully use you" (Luke 6:28) "That you may be the
 154 children of your Father which is in heaven for He makes His sun to
 155 rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on
 156 the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). If God expects us to do good unto **ALL**
 157 people and to love our enemies, can we justify anything less than
 158 hospitality and love toward the community of believers? **We should**
 159 **not permit personality differences and idiosyncrasies to disrupt**
 160 **the harmony and unity that God desires within His church.**

161 4. **Believers engaged in the service of Christ relate well to each**
 162 **other when each makes preparation for life in the New Jerusalem.**

163 If we focus on working out our own salvation with fear and
 164 trembling (Philippians 2:12) rather than embroiled with
 165 distractions, we can claim the promise: “[S/he] that overcomes ...I
 166 will make a pillar in the temple of... God and [s/he] shall go [out]
 167 no more. I will write upon him [and her] the name of my God and
 168 the name of the city of my God, which is, New Jerusalem, which
 169 comes down out of heaven from... God...” (Revelation 3:12). Dear
 170 reader, “...John saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down
 171 from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her
 172 husband” (Revelation 21:2). So let us “...Look for a city [that] has
 173 foundations, whose builder and maker is God” (Hebrews 11:10). We
 174 are “...Strangers and pilgrims on earth” (Hebrews 11:13). Contention
 175 and strife among us will cause us to lose sight of the prize. “In
 176 [our] Father’s house are many mansions... [Jesus has gone before us
 177 to] prepare a place for [us and He] will come again [to] receive
 178 [us] unto [Himself] that where [He is], there [we will] be also”
 179 (John 14:2-3). Let us therefore, “...Press toward the mark for the
 180 prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians
 181 3:14) for Jesus will “...Come quickly and [His] reward is [in His
 182 hands] to give every [person] as his [or her] work shall be”
 183 (Revelation 22:12). In view of these things, God grant that our
 184 work is NOT confusion, contention, strife, envy or any such
 185 behaviors; but rather, “Let us consider one another to provoke unto
 186 love and good works (Hebrews 10:24).

187

188 **ANSWER SOURCE: SACRED WRITINGS:**

189

190 We are pursuing answers to the question: How might believers of
 191 different temperaments, cultures, backgrounds, personality types and
 192 other dividing elements relate to each other while engaged in the
 193 service of Christ? More answers follow!

194 5. **Believers engaged in the service of Christ relate well to each**
195 **other when each lives by Bible truth.** And Jesus said, "I am the
196 way, the truth and the life..." (John 14:6). So living by the Bible
197 means living by the principles Jesus established. For example,
198 Jesus was never rude; never needlessly spoke a severe word; never
199 gave needless pain to a sensitive soul (The Desire of Ages, p.
200 353). This was the example He left the disciples and "[After Jesus
201 ascended to heaven, the disciples] rejoiced in the sweetness of
202 communion with... [each other]; but gradually a change came. The
203 believers began to look for defects in others. Dwelling upon
204 mistakes, giving place to unkind criticism, they lost sight of the
205 Savior and His love. They became [stricter] in regard to outward
206 ceremonies, more particular about the theory than the practice of
207 the faith. In their zeal to condemn others, they overlooked their
208 own errors. They lost the brotherly love that Christ had enjoined,
209 and, saddest of all, they were unconscious of their loss. They did
210 not realize that happiness and joy were going out of their lives
211 and that, having shut the love of God out of their hearts, they
212 would soon walk in darkness" (Reflecting Christ, {RC} 222.2). Dear
213 reader let us heed John's counsels: "The one who loves his brother-
214 [or sister-in-Christ] abides in the Light and there is no cause for
215 stumbling in him" (1 John 2:10, New American Standard Bible, NASB).
216 We have already established that truth represents Jesus. Now we
217 will establish that light also represents Jesus. In John 12:46,
218 Jesus said, "I am come a light into the world that whosoever
219 believes on me should not abide in darkness." "Jesus is the Light
220 of the world by His own admission. He said], 'I am the Light of
221 the world; s/he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will
222 have the Light of life" (John 8:12, NASB). "[Therefore], if we
223 walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship
224 with one another and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from
225 all sin" (1 John 1:7, NASB). Clearly, the formula for relating
226 well to each other as brethren is abiding in Christ.

227 6. **Believers engaged in the service of Christ relate well to each**
 228 **other when each climbs Peter's ladder (read 2 Peter 1:5-7).** The
 229 final rung of Peter's ladder is love. Prior to A.D. 95, "John,
 230 realizing that brotherly love was waning in the church, urged upon
 231 believers the constant need of this love. His letters to the
 232 church are full of this thought. 'Beloved, let us love one
 233 another,' he writes; '...For love is of God; and every one that loves
 234 is born of God and knows God'" (1 John 4:7 in RC 222.3). This
 235 statement is understandably a bitter pill for some church people to
 236 swallow who are pregnant with ceremonial religion, yet desperately
 237 lack love. But it is much easier to accept this critique now and
 238 repent than it will be in the judgment when Christ will say, "...I
 239 never knew you, depart from me, you that work iniquity" (Matthew
 240 7:23). But, but Jesus, "...Have we not prophesied in [your] name and
 241 in [your] name cast out devils and in [your] name done many
 242 wonderful works" (Matthew 7:22)? "Then shall He say... unto them on
 243 the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire,
 244 prepared for the devil and his angels'" (Matthew 25:41). Dear
 245 reader, Christ said: "A new commandment I give unto you... that you
 246 love one another as I have loved you..." (John 13:34). As God's
 247 commandment keeping people, let us honor the principle of Romans
 248 13:10, which states, "...Love is the fulfilling of the law," the same
 249 law that is "...Our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ that we
 250 might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24). God has provided us
 251 with all the resources to love one another; therefore love each
 252 other.

253
 254
 255 7. **Believers engaged in the service of Christ relate well to each**
 256 **other when each is supportive of the other.** "Let each [church
 257 member] give love rather than exact it. Cultivate that which is
 258 noblest in [you] and be quick to recognize the good qualities in
 259 each other. The consciousness of being appreciated is a wonderful

260 stimulus and satisfaction. Sympathy and respect encourage the
261 striving after excellence, and love itself increases as it
262 stimulates to nobler aims" (Mind, Character and Personality, Volume
263 1, {1MCP} 154.1). We must remember the golden rule addressed to
264 those who assume the role of disciplinarian. Paul counseled,
265 "Brethren, if a man [is overcome] in a fault, [you that] are
266 spiritual, restore such [a person] in the spirit of meekness..."
267 (Galatians 6:1). These three prerequisites: spirituality,
268 restoration and meekness are essential and imperative because "Our
269 life leaves upon the minds of others impressions which will be
270 transferred even into eternity. Angels take note of our works, of
271 our words, of the spirit which actuates us. Those who desire to
272 reform others must begin the reformation in their own hearts, and
273 show that they have acquired [kindness] and humility of heart in
274 the school of Christ. **Those who have charge of others must learn first**
275 **to master themselves, to refrain from blunt expressions and exaggerated**
276 **censure.** There are cutting words which are indulged in, which may
277 offend, hurt and leave upon a soul a scar which will remain. There
278 are sharp words that fall as sparks upon an inflammable temper.
279 There are biting words that bite like vipers" (The Upward Look,
280 {UL} 59.2). "A radical conversion must take place as regards the
281 manner in which the various minds are to be dealt with. If every
282 apparent injustice is considered as an affront; if amends for every
283 slight injury are required with a spirit different from the spirit
284 of Christ; if harsh language is used; if for difficulties small or
285 great a spirit of impatience is manifested which stirs up and
286 irritates, there will soon be a state of things worse than if
287 nothing had been done to correct the evil. If such dispositions
288 are entertained by believers; **if everyone feels free to utter hasty**
289 **words, we shall have miserable hearts, miserable families, and in the**
290 **church, discord and dissension"** (UL 59.4). "But there is a

291 Christlike way of settling all these things. **The presence of**
 292 **Christ's love in the heart will lead to love the very ones who are astray**
 293 **and who are in the wrong"** (UL 59.5). "Who is a wise [person] and
 294 endowed with knowledge among you? Let him [or her] show out of a
 295 good conversation his [or her] works with meekness of wisdom"
 296 (James 3:13).

297
 298 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS: In this study we examined how God expects
 299 brethren to dwell together. The question that focused the study
 300 asked: How might believers of different temperaments, cultures,
 301 backgrounds and personality types relate to each other while engaged
 302 in the service of Christ? Seven points were discussed. They are as
 303 follows: 1) Actively put away differences; 2) Practice integrity
 304 based on liberty provided by the Holy Spirit; 3) Practice
 305 hospitality; 4) Make preparation for life in the New Jerusalem; 5)
 306 Live by Bible truth; 6) Climb Peter's ladder and 7) Support each
 307 other. Dear believer, are you relating to your brothers-and-sisters
 308 in Christ in a way that brings a smile to the Godhead? Because it is
 309 of little redeeming value to engage in Bible study merely for
 310 information, subsequent paragraphs follow that make a practical
 311 application of the truths set forth here.

312

313

314 **DISCUSSION: WHAT DO THESE THINGS MEAN?**

315

316 "In the church of God today brotherly love is sadly lacking. Many
 317 who profess to love the Savior do not love one another" (RC 222.5).
 318 "The world is in need of a demonstration of practical Christianity.
 319 In view of the fact that those who claim to be followers of Christ
 320 are a spectacle to an unbelieving world, it behooves [us] to make
 321 sure that [we] are in right relation to God. In order to stand as
 322 lights in the world, [we] need to have the clear light of the Sun of

323 Righteousness constantly shining upon [us] (HP 313.5). "Unbelievers
 324 are watching to see if the faith of professed Christians is exerting
 325 a sanctifying influence upon their lives; and they are quick to
 326 discern the defects in characters, the inconsistencies in action" (RC
 327 222.5). "When God's people so fully separate themselves from evil
 328 (read 2 Chronicles 7:14) that He can let the light of heaven rest
 329 upon them in rich measure and shine forth from them to the world,
 330 then there will be fulfilled more fully than it has ever been
 331 fulfilled in the past the prophecy of Isaiah: "The Gentiles shall
 332 come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. The
 333 abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee and the force of
 334 the Gentiles shall come unto thee" (Isaiah 60:3-5 in HP 313.6).

335

336 **CONCLUSIONS: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

337

338 "It is not the opposition of the world that most endangers the church
 339 of Christ. It is the evil cherished in the hearts of believers that
 340 works their most grievous disaster and most surely retards the
 341 progress of God's cause. There is no surer way of weakening
 342 spirituality than by cherishing envy, suspicion, faultfinding and
 343 evil surmising. [In contrast], the strongest witness that God has
 344 sent His Son into the world is the existence of harmony and [unity]
 345 among men of varied dispositions who form His church. This witness
 346 it is the privilege of the followers of Christ to bear. ...To do this,
 347 they must place themselves under Christ's command; their characters
 348 must be conformed to His character and their wills to His will" (RC
 349 222.4). "Let Christians not make it possible for the enemy to point
 350 to them and say: 'Behold how these people, standing under the banner
 351 of Christ, hate one another.' Christians are all members of one
 352 family, all children of the same heavenly Father, with the same
 353 blessed hope of immortality. Very close and tender should be the tie
 354 that binds them together" (RC 222.6) that they are willing and ready

355 "...To lay down [their] lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16) and **NOT**
 356 "...Betray [or hate] one another..." (Matthew 24:10).

357

358 **CALL TO ACTION: WHAT SHALL WE DO?**

359

360 To stop and eliminate the threat of the love of many growing cold
 361 because iniquity flourishes (Matthew 24:12), first and foremost, let
 362 us receive the love of God in our hearts by the Holy Ghost that is
 363 given to us (Romans 5:5). This is a prerequisite for "Whoever does
 364 not love does not know God because God is love" (1 John 4:8, NIV).
 365 When we put first things first, "[Then we can] Let the peace of God
 366 rule in [our] hearts to... which... [we] are called in one body..."
 367 (Colossians 3:15). "...So far as it depends on [us], be at peace with
 368 **ALL** [people]" (Romans 12:18, New American Standard Bible, NASB).
 369 "...Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace and
 370 the God of love and peace shall be with [us]" (2 Corinthians 13:11).
 371 "...By love, serve one another" (Galatians 5:13). "...Love with faith..."
 372 (Ephesians 6:23); "...Love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1
 373 Peter 1:22); "...Love without hypocrisy..." (Romans 12:9, NASB); "...Love
 374 as brethren; be pitiful [and] courteous" (1 Peter 3:8). "We know
 375 that we have passed from death unto life because we love the
 376 brethren..." (1 John 3:14); therefore, "...The Lord make you increase and
 377 abound in love one toward another and toward all [PEOPLE]..." (1
 378 Thessalonians 3:12) that our "...Love may abound... more and more in
 379 knowledge and in all judgment" (Philippians 1:9). "In this the
 380 children of God are manifest and the children of the devil: whosoever
 381 [does] **NOT** righteousness is not of God, neither [s/he] that [loves]
 382 **NOT** [the brethren]" (1 John 3:10); "But whoso keeps His word, in him
 383 [or her]... is the love of God perfected [and] hereby know we that we
 384 are in Him" (1 John 2:5).