

By R. Wayne Wilson

Looking for the Real

The Lord Jesus Christ is looking for real, true disciples. His eyes are looking throughout the earth for those who will truly be loyal to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9 NKJV). He is looking for people whose hearts are committed to Him, His kingdom, and His word. *The Amplified Bible* says the Lord is looking for those whose hearts are blameless toward Him. He is looking for real disciples.

For much of my life I have been looking for the real. I believe this is something the Lord Jesus has worked within me. It was expressed in an experience that happened in 1993 while my wife Susan and I were driving to the home of friends. As we waited for a stoplight to allow us to proceed, I pointed up toward heaven and with brokenness said, "God is real!" Then moving my hand horizontally, "There have to be real pastors!" I later added that there also have to be real Christians. These were cries that came from deep within my spirit.

My search has become more defined in the last few years. I could even say it is becoming more defined daily. The more defined it has become, the more I realize that I must be real; I must be true to Jesus Christ, His kingdom, and His word.

Following are some of the comments I wrote to a friend a few days ago which give voice to what has been growing inside my spirit (with minor editorial changes to give clarity to the reader).

"I think for most of my life I have been looking for the real, the true. I have learned in my search that I must first make sure that I have yielded all to Jesus Christ so that He can make me real. Having said that, I will add that in the midst of all that is going on within the Church, as well as outside of it, I believe the Lord is calling His real (true) disciples to come together.

[Note: When I first wrote the previous line, I wrote 'the Lord is bringing together' but changed it to 'the Lord is calling' because those called must still respond.] I reiterate: I believe the Lord is calling his real disciples to come together.

"Before we moved several years ago, I was sitting in our living room one day and heard in my spirit, 'You are not moving from something, but are going to something.' I did not realize the full meaning of that statement at the time. Looking back, one thing I went to was a 'stripping.' When I speak of this, I am careful not to say I have been totally stripped because I know God is listening (*in a drama script, you could add a cautious laugh at this point*). I made note this morning that God strips away things to bring us to the place where self is stripped away. Self does not go away willingly or easily. It will even dress itself in the clothes of humility just to stay around. I desire to walk in the Spirit continuously. To do this I have learned that I must have faith in all that took place on the cross. I must believe and live like Jesus died for me, but I must also believe and live like I was crucified with Him. That can only happen when self has been stripped away.

"I recently wrote to you that I am a nothing. However, if we yield to God, He can do great and mighty things through us. We need 2 Chronicles 7:14 to be a reality in the body of Christ, but we also need to be found loyal, as we read about in 2 Chronicles 16:9.

2 Chronicles 7:14 NKJV: '... if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.'

2 Chronicles 16:9 NKJV: 'For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.'

"When I was a child, I memorized Matthew 6:33, 'But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto

you.’ Although I have known about the kingdom since I was a child, God has shown me recently that there is a greater depth to be found in the meaning of the words seek *first* the kingdom of God, seek *first* His righteousness. I want to be completely surrendered and yielded to God. I want to be at the place where it is God and God only. I want to be so hidden in Christ that all that can be seen is Him. May we all be able to join with our brother Paul in saying, ‘It is not I who live but Christ who lives within me ...’ (Galatians 2:20). May God have many to answer His call of coming together to follow Jesus Christ.”

Now, looking back over the letter above, I will add that the cost of attaining that place in God is full surrender to Him in every area of life. The cost is total self-denial, the cost is total consecration to God, the cost is taking up our cross daily and following Jesus Christ. I choose to pay the price! Who will join with me? Will our Lord Jesus find you among the real, the faithful, as He searches the earth?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A “REAL” DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST?

What is the definition of the word “real”? It is that which is actual, true, genuine, or authentic, not pretentious, fictitious, imagined, or “relative.” One dictionary defines “real” as being or reflecting the essential or genuine character of something. God is actual, true, genuine, and authentic; He is real! I am looking for real pastors and real Christians (true set apart followers of Jesus) who truly reflect the character of Christ Jesus. We need real pastors to come forth to equip the body of Christ for the work of the ministry. We need real Christians (true disciples) who will come forth to edify one another and who will go forth ministering the truth of Jesus Christ and of the kingdom of God. We need people to go and make disciples unto Jesus Christ and not unto Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Martin Luther, John Wesley, or anyone else, including those who have started a church or denomination. We are disciples of Jesus Christ!

First Corinthians 3:1-4 NKJV: “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, ‘I am of Paul,’ and another, ‘I am of Apollos,’ are you not carnal?” (See also 1 Corinthians 1:10-17.)

Let’s get honest! Let’s get real! We stumble over 1 Corinthians 3:1-4 constantly in the modern church. We stand back with our superior attitudes and talk of how false religions are growing, how the world is waxing worse and worse, how the rapture must take place soon, and all the while are blind to the fact that we are a major part of the problem. We have divided the body of Christ into so many parts that it is not a body “fitly joined” (Ephesians 4:16). It no longer even looks like a body. How can the world be drawn to Jesus when His body is so divided? As some politicians are more *against* our President than they are *for* our country, some Christians are more for their manmade doctrines and traditions than they are for Jesus Christ, His kingdom, His truth and His body. Oh, for conviction, humility and repentance! Oh, for love!

WHERE DO WE BEGIN IN BECOMING A “REAL” DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST?

There are many doctrines, traditions of men, and misunderstandings of Scriptures in the world and also in the Church that hinder and even stop some people from becoming real, mature followers of Jesus Christ. We must begin to address these issues as to their truth. In addressing them, we must be ready to lay aside any weight, any belief that has hindered us and the body of Christ from becoming real and mature in Christ. All doctrines and traditions of men are based on words or someone’s interpretation of words. We must make sure the beliefs of the Church are based upon the true words of Jesus Christ because His words are the only ones that give us a solid foundation on which to build our lives. His words will enable us to withstand the storms of life (Matthew 7:24-27). His words will not change.

We are going to look at some words that are vital to our becoming real, words that have too often been misunderstood, ignored, or watered down within the Church. In order for us to become real, we must begin to fearlessly examine the belief systems with which we have aligned ourselves, even if that involves re-examining some of our favorite church or denominational doctrines and beliefs.

As we look at these words, let me assure you up front that I do understand that certain things are not going to be completely fulfilled until Jesus Christ returns. I also understand that it will be done by the work of the Holy Spirit and not by our works. Our job is to fully cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit. This requires knowing the Lord Jesus and His word intimately, which helps to safeguard us from any misuse of God’s word. Therefore, I encourage you to judge all that you hear, read, or see by the Living Word and His written word. As we said above, this will go a long way in giv-

ing us a solid foundation upon which to build our Christian life. It will also help train our spiritual senses to discern truth from error. Building one's house upon Jesus and His word not only gives spiritual strength, but protection from storm winds and deceiving spirits.

Now may we look together at some of these words as they are used in Scripture and see what the Lord has to say about them. I ask you to let your mind and heart be as a slate upon which the Lord can write the pureness and intent of His word. Let us remember that showing ourselves approved as workmen requires us to take the time to pray over and diligently study all of God's word. Now may we apply this principle to these words and the accompanying Scriptures.

The words we will look at here are "perfect," "sanctification," "consecration," and "holiness." These are words that we hear often in the Church, but there may be many believers who do not have full understanding of what they mean to the kingdom of God and to the believer. As we examine them, led by the Holy Spirit, we will gain a better understanding of God's purposes and expectations for us, His children, and the importance of our obedience.

First, let's look at the word "perfect" and its true biblical meaning. In Matthew 5:48, the word "perfect" means *prove the perfect will of God; complete in labor, growth, mental and moral character; full age*. In John 17:23, the word "perfect" means *complete finish, fulfill*. Jesus is praying that we may be complete in unity. In Romans 12:1-2, the word means the same as in Matthew 5:48. In Hebrews 6:1, it means *a completer; a finisher*. Matthew 5:48 in the *Amplified Bible* defines "perfect" as *growing into complete maturity of godliness in mind and character; having reached the proper height of virtue and integrity*.

Many people make the excuse that they cannot be perfect in this life, which can lead them to a "perfect excuse" for willful sin. I say that tongue-in-cheek but to emphasize that we absolutely must become aware of these little foxes that spoil the vine if believers are to ever grow up into mature disciples of Jesus Christ. Gaining knowledge of the biblical meaning of this word "perfect" casts a whole new light on the word, revealing that seeking after or even striving for perfection is a legitimate goal for those who desire to be mature in Christ. It also removes our excuses for willful sin and provokes us to resist our sin nature. I have not forgotten that certain things are not going to be completed or fulfilled until Jesus returns, but I am attempting to show that with the help of the Holy Spirit and the rightly dividing of the word, there is much that can be accomplished by faithful disciples prior to our Lord's return.

Second, let's study what Scripture says to us about "consecration," *being cleansed, being holy*. In 2 Corinthians

6:17 through 7:1, we read that we are to *come out and be separate*, and as sons and daughters, we are to *cleanse ourselves and perfect holiness in the fear of God*. In Ephesians 5:26-27, we are to *become a glorious church*. In 1 Peter 1:13-14, we are to *be holy as God is holy in all our conduct*.

Third, "sanctification" is *being set apart, a separation to God to live a life of service and holiness*. Sanctification must be pursued and sought after by the individual. For that person, it is *a possession of holy character, built up little by little as the result of submission to the Holy Spirit, obedience to the word of God, and of following Christ's example*. While "consecration" is *dedication to sacred service*, "sanctification" is *to be set apart to sacred service*. A synonym of sanctification is "holiness." As consecration and sanctification are to be pursued individually, so holiness is likewise to be pursued by the individual who, by choice, is set apart to God.

I'M GETTING THE PICTURE, BUT WHAT NOW?

In both the Church world and the non-church world, there will be people who will not accept that what we are saying is applicable to today. For many years, there have been ministers in the Church who say, "Yes, it is in the word, but it is not for now; it just can't take place in this dispensation." Many others will never even address these words or Scriptures. But in truth, these are things that need to be taught to people even as they are making a decision to follow Jesus Christ. We do need to teach them John 3:16 and tell them that if they were the only person alive, Jesus would have died for them, but we can't stop there. We also need to teach them that if they are going to receive the life of Jesus within themselves, it involves denying self, taking up their cross daily and following Him. It involves forsaking all. It involves seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. It involves what we are reading in these Scriptures.

Maybe you have been born again for many years and are recognizing that you would have benefited from a better understanding of these biblical truths and mandates had you known them from the beginning. Don't fret over it, but learn these things now so that from this point on, you can fulfill all that God has intended for you. As a natural example of what I'm saying, some of you may look back at experiences of the past, such as your sports activities, and realize that with a little more information or training, you could have done much greater things. The lesson is that we can't go back, but we can take what we are learning here and, for the glory of Christ, go forward. Then, as we go and make disciples, which we are commanded by the Lord to do, let's train them well from the very beginning.

We are applying these Scriptures to now, to the present, and not just to the future because these Scriptures reveal much of what God is looking for in His disciples. When ministers teach that these things are only for the time after the Lord's return when His kingdom is fully established, it often creates a people who may have occasional times of living holy (holy in conduct), but their norm is a lifestyle of battling with the flesh and demonic attacks, and giving in to temptations. The norm should be a life of living holy with only occasional trip ups. Let's remember that the precious blood of Jesus has already been shed. Let's allow the Spirit of Christ to make real for us now what Jesus purchased and gained for us through His life, through His cross, His resurrection, and His ascension. The total fulfillment may not be until after our Lord returns, but there is so much more that can be worked in us now if we will totally yield to the Spirit of Christ. For those who think that some of these things cannot be accomplished until our Lord returns, a thorough study of 1 Peter 1:13-19 would be eye-opening. Verse 17 specifically refers to how we are to conduct ourselves throughout the time of our stay here on earth.

We love the chorus that says, "Fill my cup, Lord," but we must understand that what we are singing about will not be a reality until we are empty of all things that oppose God, especially and specifically self. We must yield ourselves to the lordship of Jesus Christ and allow the Holy Spirit to fulfill Luke 9:23 and Luke 14:27 and 33 within us.

Luke 9:23 AMP: "And He said to all, If any person wills to come after Me, let him deny himself [disown himself, forget, lose sight of himself and his own interests, refuse and give up himself] and take up his cross daily and follow Me [cleave steadfastly to Me, conform wholly to My example in living and, if need be, in dying also]."

Luke 14:27 AMP: "Whoever does not persevere and carry his own cross and come after (follow) Me cannot be My disciple."

Luke 14:33 AMP: "So then, any of you who does not forsake (renounce, surrender claim to, give up, say good-bye to) all that he has cannot be My disciple."

We absolutely must forsake all. We must go into the harvest field as true laborers, taking the message of Jesus Christ and the gospel of the kingdom to people who are lost and dying. Up front, we must already be teaching them that Jesus gave His life for them, and they cannot save themselves by any works. We must teach them that there is a judgment day coming, and they need Jesus as Savior for their salva-

tion. And we must teach them that they need to take up their cross and follow Him in order to fulfill the work assigned by the Lord Jesus and for their own Christian growth. As they receive Jesus, they receive Him with the understanding that they are going to forsake the world and the things of this world. They are not going to be double minded, partly seeking the kingdom of God and partly the kingdoms of the world. They will be serving God and God only! Then we can go forward with them, and they will very quickly grow to maturity. The young in age can be mature in the Spirit. They can do great and mighty things in the Spirit.

A CALL FOR REAL DISCIPLES TO COME TOGETHER!

By the Spirit, I call you to come to Christ and to be one with Him and with each other. I call real disciples to come together. Some I can only call prophetically through prayer, and I may never see them until we are in heaven. But those I do see, I am personally calling to come together. This message, this article, is a prophetic call to come together.

When we as Christians start to respond and come together, some in the spirit and some actually physically, all will be under the direction of the Holy Spirit. There will be no competition, no jockeying for position, and no thought of what's fair and what's not fair, such as, "Well, next time, let's meet over at my place." We will just be glad to meet in one accord with our like-minded brothers and sisters whenever and wherever the Holy Spirit wants us to meet. All who respond will be totally submitted and yielded to the Holy Spirit as He organizes, directs, and accomplishes His goals. This will require humility, total denial of self, and pureness of heart. In essence, it requires the lordship and character of Christ. Remember that among those where Jesus is truly Lord, no one is offended. May each of us yield all to the Lord Jesus Christ; may we forsake all and follow Him. May we all be real! May we all be one with the Lord and in one mind and one accord with each other.

May real disciples unite in Spirit all over this earth with the goal of glorifying Christ, serving others, and making Ephesians 4:12-16 a reality.

Ephesians 4:12-16 NKJV: "... for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may

grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

There is work to be done now. The body of Christ needs to be built up now. Some say this won't take place until ... It surely won't take place until there is surrender, until we totally yield to the Holy Spirit. It won't take place until we deny self and get rid of those traditions of men and manmade doctrines that have so hindered and divided us and believe that it can happen now. For those who have ears to hear and hearts to respond, these things can be accomplished in the here and now. They can be done now!

Let's become humble like Moses (Numbers 12:3). Let's now no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine ... (Ephesians 4:14). Let's speak the truth in love. People are flocking by the thousands to meetings in and out of churches to be personally built up, to build up their self-esteem. These Scriptures and the words we have studied show how to be really built up by being built up in the Spirit. This is the way to build up the body of Christ. This is building people up in an everlasting way. This is 1 Corinthians 13, true *agape* love.

I plead with you, I urge you to pray that Christ would be formed within each of us, that Christ would be formed within each person who calls himself a Christian (Galatians 4:19). Pray that we would be true disciples. Pray that we would truly fulfill these Scriptures that we have studied, that we would offer our bodies as living sacrifices, that we would be transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we would do the perfect will of God. Pray that we would be complete, we would be finishers, and we would be moral people. Pray that we would be holy as God is holy in all of our conduct. Pray that the true Church would hear, repent, and come together in unity and in one accord. Selah.

Heavenly Father, let your Holy Spirit do a work within us. Begin with me, O God. God, I can't call people together, not in my own self, but I can be a voice of your Holy Spirit. I believe you are calling for people all over this earth to unite in the Spirit of the Lord, in the knowledge of the Lord, in the unity of the faith. I believe there are people whom I know that need to come together, and I ask You, Holy Spirit, to call them. Send Your ministering spirits out to draw them together. Let us be what You would have us to be. Let us pray, let us fast. Let us proclaim Your word. Let us deny self and take up our cross daily and follow You. Let us be yoked with Christ in the Spirit, one with Him and one with each other. Make it a reality now, O God! Burn this in our hearts and minds. Give us no rest, Lord, until it is accomplished. May we pray and cry out. Do not let us be distracted by the cares of life. Lord, we have to go to our jobs; we have to do other things. God, let this be burning within us even while we are doing those things. We can read a book and feel the fire from the fireplace at the same time. In the same way, Lord, we can have our mind on other things and feel the fire of Your Spirit burning within us. Let it be!

The following came through inspirational gifts of the Spirit toward the end of the above prayer during our Sunday service.

The Spirit of the Lord is looking for the real. By His Spirit and by His word, He is calling. Will you hear the call? Will you respond? Will you be one that denies self and takes up the cross? Will you be one that forsakes all? Will you be one that allows the Holy Spirit to strip away all that needs to be removed that you may have a life and live a life that gives glory to God and loves and helps others? May you be found faithful!

We bless You and thank You, Lord. In Jesus Name, Amen.

For an audiotape titled "Looking For The Real" write or call:

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