

DISCIPLES' PRINCIPLES OF FAITH

By Dr. James Paul Humphries

**“Give attention to reading,
to exhortation, to doctrine.”**

1 Timothy 4:13



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TITLE: Disciples' Principles of Faith

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Preface

This book is written to help the disciple of Christ in their faith and walk with God. This is the one area that will be attacked mostly by the antichrist and Satan in the Last Days and if we hope to stand firm during the trials and tribulation, we must stand firm in Christ Jesus, with the full armour of God on (Eph 6:10-11).

The Word of God is where we find the truth of doctrines concerning our faith walk in Christ. The Word and the studying of it, is where we find hope, mercy and grace. It is the foundation to our walk here on earth, but this kind of study does not come easy and is sometimes difficult to understand. Theology is not to be our enemy, but it is the channel and way that God uses to give us knowledge, wisdom and understanding. Plus, it is the way that God uses to help break the cords and chains so that the enslaved and captive can be set free (Isa 58:6; John 8:36).

“Discipleship Principles of Faith” is the title for this book for several reasons. One because we first must come into a personal relationship with Christ Jesus through faith and commit to following Him only; this is what makes us a disciple of His. Secondly it takes the discipline of study. Paul tells Timothy, *“to study to show himself approved, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, one who is in a right way dividing the word of truth”* (2 Timothy 2:15).

David exhorts us to meditate on the Word of God, to reflect and let it become planted deep in our hearts. We are told that, for this man, he is like a tree planted by the rivers of water. He is a person that shall bear fruit, his leaves will not wither and whatever he does shall prosper, all because he delights in and meditates on the law of the LORD (Ps 1:1-3). Do not fear the Word of God for it

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is to be a light unto our path, a guide and road map to help us to get through the challenges that we face here on earth (Ps 119:105).

What follows is an overview of the major doctrines of the Christian faith, a study of theology. The word theology simple translated means, a “study of God”. I exhort you to please take time each day to draw closer to the teaching and truth of God’s Word. Get into the Word of God so that the Word of God can get into you.

The purpose of this booklet is not to try to prove or defend these doctrines. The goal here is to help the believer of Jesus Christ to understand what are the disciplines that one needs to understand, so we can be a true disciple, one who could then be called “Christ like” or Christian. The early disciples were also known as people of the “Way” (Acts 9:2), because their lives exemplified the teachings of Christ in all that they did and how they spoke to others around them. Our hope is to build a basic foundation on the rock of Jesus Christ concerning what a disciple should believe and live by, while they fulfill God’s will for their lives here on earth.

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Introduction

At the birth of the church, because there was a lack of books concerning the Christian faith, the early disciples developed a statement that contain many of the doctrines of faith. It was known as the Apostles Creed:

*I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth:
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, dead, and buried:
He descended into hell;
The third day he rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost;
The holy Catholic Church;
The Communion of Saints;
The Forgiveness of sins;
The Resurrection of the body,
And the Life everlasting.
Amen.*

This was a statement that was used by the disciples to remember the basic fundamentals of their faith, plus it was a tool for sharing their faith about Jesus Christ to others. It can be broken down into three parts, highlighting the Triune God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Then the early church fathers created and developed what is known as the Nicene Creed around 325 AD:

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I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things, visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten by the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for us became man for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and on the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended to the heavens, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead; whose kingdom shall never end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life; who proceeds from the Father (and his Son); who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. And I believe one holy catholic and apostle church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

This was the way a disciple could know what the truth of God is and how to discern what was false teaching. When one understands theology or doctrine, one then is able to stand strong in their faith and become bolder in their proclamation of their faith, concerning the teachings of God and man to others.

What follows is not so much a systematic study of doctrine, but just an overview in short form of what a disciple should believe in and live by. The simplicity of this book is meant to open the door for the disciple to begin the process of thinking and understanding what it means to be a true follower of Jesus Christ. When one believes clearly in their heart and has an understanding what it means to be a disciple, soon one will begin to see the fruit

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of the Spirit flowing out through one's life into all the various things that one does throughout the day.

But before we get started we should take a moment to define several words:

Disciple: Follower, believer, supporter, devotee, student, learner. A disciple is one who follows after the imparted knowledge of a teacher; disciples emulate the lifestyle of the teacher. In the New Testament people were called by Christ to follow Him and in so doing they became His disciples. (Both men and women can be called disciples).

Theology: The study of God. This can come in a variety of forms and methods, but the goal is to seek the truth of who God is, and how He personally interacts with man here on earth and with all of His creation.

Doctrine: A system of teaching concerning God, truth about God *and* containing laws and regulations. The disciple is to hold firm to the doctrines of the Word of God; they are there to nurture us and help to bear fruit for the honour and glory of Christ Jesus; they are the teachings and foundation stones of the church of Jesus Christ, with which we are to train and correct other disciples.

Faith: Confidence, trust, assurance, belief, obedience. For disciples, faith is putting complete trust and confidence in Jesus Christ, stepping out into the unknown and believing that He is able to carry us through this life, until we meet Him face to face in glory. Hebrews chapter 11 is a testimony chapter of faith. (People who are "Heroes of Faith")

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Discipline: Regulation, order, control, obedience, correction, punishment; discipline can also mean a form of training. A disciple comes under the discipline of their teacher. The disciple is subject to the way, truth and life of Christ Jesus (John 14:6).

These words are to be deeply rooted together, for the disciple needs to be spending time learning the theology of the Bible and also the doctrines of the Bible. The challenges are that this takes discipline and time. Going to church on Sunday or attending a midweek meeting will not bring the disciple of Christ into a deeper understanding of the Word of God. The Word has to get into our heart before it will be able to make any changes to our thinking and to our actions. The most important point concerning theology is having a relationship with Christ- a relationship which is truly built on faith. We have to make a deep conscious decision on how we are going to handle and believe in this book called the Bible.

Paul tells Timothy several times in his writings concerning the importance of sound doctrine.

Let us hear what Paul says to the young man Timothy:

*If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good **doctrine** which you have carefully followed. 1 Timothy 4:6*

*Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to **doctrine**. 1 Timothy 4:13*

*Take heed to yourself and to the **doctrine**. Continue in them, for doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you. 1 Timothy 4:16*

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*Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and **doctrine**.* 1 Timothy 5:17

*Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His **doctrine** may not be blasphemed.* 1 Timothy 6:1

*If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the **doctrine** which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wrangling of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.* 1 Timothy 6:3-6

*But you have carefully followed my **doctrine**, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance,* 2 Timothy 3:10

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for **doctrine**, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.* 2 Timothy 3:16-17

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound **doctrine**, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and turn aside to fables.* 2 Timothy 4:3-4



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