

The Disposition of true disciples

‘Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.’ Phil 2:5

‘We have the mind of Christ.’ 1 Cor 2:16

The Disposition of true disciples

Disposition speaks of a person's inherent qualities of mind and character.

The flesh has one disposition and the spirit another.

"Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit."

John 3:6

Those who are still according to the natural person are of the flesh, have a disposition contrary to God's will. Those who have been born of the Spirit have a disposition created to seek to do the will of God.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

John 3:5

'For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.' Rom 8:5-8

But that's not all. Those who are born again by the Spirit still have to overcome the disposition of the flesh that remains embedded in the mind from habitual practice. *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."*

Rom 12:2

'Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.'

Col 3:2-4

This is the process of sanctification that requires a commitment to live by the Spirit while putting to death that which is still fleshly in our minds. *'So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.'*

Gal 5:16

We need to realise all our actions arise out of our thoughts. Therefore, we need to be renewed in our thinking so that we grow in the knowledge of God in order to think His thoughts and to do His will.

The thoughts that habitually occupy our minds indicate the nature of our disposition at the time. We are either disposed, that is, inclined or willing to live for the will of God, or we are living for ourselves and the flesh.

The chosen people of God are made for glory. *"But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

2 Thess 2:13-14

As the children of God, we are required to live by His word if we are to glorify God. *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."*

2 Tim 3:16-17

However, maturity isn't automatic, we are often slow to practice what have we actually learnt from God's word that tells us we are born again by the Spirit in the image of Christ.

Doesn't God's word tell us that we are no longer a fleshly natural person, but a new creation in Christ?

2 Cor 5:17

Doesn't God also tell us we are a house built by God so that the Holy Spirit can dwell in us as a temple of God?

1 Cor 6:19

Aren't we told that the Spirit of Christ lives in us since we have died with Him and being raised up with Him?

'Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.'

Rom 6:4-5

Aren't we told we are to be transformed into the image of Christ?

Rom 8:29

How can we become as He is if we don't see His glory that we are to put on?

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John 1:14

His life was the perfect expression of the Father. *“If you have seen Me you have seen the Father.”*

John 14:9

The disposition of Christ is glorious in our sight, then and now.

In order to be like Him, we are to have the mind of Christ, the disposition of Christ. We are to have the attitude that was in Christ. Full of grace and truth, humble in obedience to the end in the same way as our Lord.

‘But we all, with unveiled faces, looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.’

2 Cor 3:18

‘And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.’

2 Cor 3:18 NIV

As we live with a disposition intending to glorify Him by the leading of the Spirit, we bear testimony to His glory. As much as we live according to the example Jesus has given us, we reflect His glory.

We need to examine ourselves

What have we done with God's word that tells us He has given us His Spirit to enable us to obey Him? *“I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”*

Ezek 36:27

What have we done with the promise of the Lord that He will never leave or forsake us? *“I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

Matt 28:20

How do our lives reveal the security we have because God is working out all things for our good so that nothing can separate us from His love?

Rom 8:28-37

When we are afflicted from the darkness, how much peace do we have because we know His grace is sufficient for all our needs. 2 Cor 12:9

How convinced are we that His grace is only found in His presence, a presence that is closer to us than our own breath? 1 Cor 6:19

God's word says that Christ is our life, and that He lives in us.

Col 3:3-4

So, how much of our time is revealing His glorious reality to the world that needs a saviour?

When we are put to the test by God's ordained training in righteousness, how much can we claim that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us? Phil 4:13

How often do we suffer in the world as if God has abandoned us?

Does our disposition reveal the power of God working in us?

How much have we neglected our sanctification where God is working to reveal the glory of Christ? *'For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.'*

Rom 8:29

'For it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.'

Phil 2:13-14

Jesus' gives us a guide to the self examination of true disciples

Ten verses from Jesus that give us the test of genuine discipleship, which is absolute surrender in obedience to His Lordship and Majesty.

Luke 14:25-35

'Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them,

He comes before family. 26 *"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.*

He requires our death to self. 27 *Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.*

We must count the long-term cost. 28 *For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?*

29 *Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’*

We must surrender all to the greater king. 31 *Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand?*

We must humble ourselves or perish. 32 *Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.*

We must forsake all our possession in the world. 33 *So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.*

We must have real integrity. 34 *“Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?”*

We must have ears that hear the word of God. 35 *It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”*

This test is intended to show that Jesus has absolutely first place in our hearts in comparison to all people, and before all things of the world, or we are not true to His calling to obediently follow His way of the cross into the kingdom of God. At another time Jesus called the way to glory the narrow gate. *“Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”* Matt 7:13-14

Saving faith from God is not just about trusting in Christ for our salvation, but it involves receiving Christ as the greatest treasure above all creation. *“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field,*

which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.” Matt 13:44-46

“Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness.”

Matt 6:33

This seeking is receiving the love of Christ that follows and obeys all He has commanded.

"Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

John 15:9-10

To have a relationship with God in Christ means we are blessed with the knowledge of His Majestic Light by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

To be in Christ is to be blessed with His unsearchable love poured out into our hearts by the Spirit.

To be in Christ means we are secured forever by the power of His eternal Spirit to inherit with Christ the kingdom of God.

All this is the undeserved grace of God freely given to us in Christ, even while we live in the world under the influence of the devil. God's love is so great that He is prepared to live in us even while we still harbour in our lives what is vile and detestable in His sight.

These blessings we have received are not of this world but spiritual and eternal. They flow from the glory of God in Christ who now lives in us by faith.

We are blessed by this grace of God to be a witness to Christ by the power of the Spirit, so that those who God has chosen to receive Christ can hear about His substitutionary death and resurrection on behalf of those who the Father is giving to the Son of God.

We are blessed to be a blessing, but not everyone who claims to be Christian is blessed in Christ.

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.²² Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many [□]miracles?’²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’

Matt 7:21-23

How often are we disposed to the flesh and give in to fear and anxiety?

Christ Jesus has provided for our peace in the valley of death by making His glory visible to the people of faith.

In his book "The Glory of Christ" **John Owen** gives us some valuable insights that we must take seriously. "The greatest desire that Christ expressed was that His people might be with Him to behold His glory."

John 17:24

"Only a sight of His glory, and nothing else, will truly satisfy God's people. The hearts of believers are like a magnetized needle which cannot rest until it is pointing north. So also, a believer, magnetized by the love of Christ, will always be restless until he or she comes to Christ and beholds His glory. The soul which can be satisfied without beholding the glory of Christ, that cannot be eternally satisfied with beholding the glory of Christ, is not a soul for whom Christ prays."

Again: **"Unbelievers see no glory in Christ.** They see nothing attractive about Him. They despise Him in their hearts. Outwardly they cry, like Judas, 'Hail, Master, but in their hearts they crucify Him. Thus they strip Him of His glory, deny the only Lord that bought us' and substitute a false Christ."

Again: **"So it is only as we behold the glory of Christ by faith here in this world that our hearts will be drawn more and more to Christ and to the full enjoyment of the sight of His glory hereafter."**

Again: **"It is by beholding the glory of Christ by faith that we are spiritually edified and built up in this world, for as we behold His glory, the life and power of faith grow stronger and stronger. It is by faith**

that we grow to love Christ. So if we desire strong faith and powerful love, which give us rest, peace and satisfaction, we must seek them by diligently beholding the glory of Christ by faith. In this duty I desire to live and to die. On Christ's glory I would fix all my thoughts and desires, and the more I see of the glory of Christ, the more the painted beauties of this world will wither in my eyes and I will be more and more crucified to this world. It will become to me like something dead and putrid, impossible for me to enjoy."

Again: "**By beholding the glory of Christ by faith we shall find rest to our souls.** Our minds are apt to be filled with troubles, fears, cares, dangers, distresses, ungoverned passions and lusts. By these our thoughts are filled with chaos, darkness and confusion. But where the soul is fixed on the glory of Christ then the mind finds rest and peace for 'to be spiritually minded is peace.'" Rom 8:6

"By beholding the glory of Christ we shall begin to experience what it means to be everlastingly blessed. *'We shall always be with the Lord.'* (1 Thess 4:17) We shall 'be with Christ, which is best of all. (Phil 1:23) For there we shall *'behold His glory.'* (John 17:24) And by seeing Him as He is, we shall be made like Him.' (1 John 3:2) This is our everlasting blessedness."

We need to take ourselves in hand and refocus our minds in what God is doing in us for our eternal glory. And since our Father is concerned with transforming us into the image of Christ, we had better assist our sanctification by focusing on beholding His glorious life so that we can mature in our faith in Him. Christ is all we need for life and godliness.

Instead of reflecting on what is going on in the world that we cannot change, or worrying about things that may never happen, or getting all worked up about those who judge us unfairly, we need to put our minds to work for our eternal benefits. We need to focus on what Jesus Christ has done and is doing so that we can better serve His purpose rather than getting enmeshed in the world that is under His judgement. We need to defer to the mind of Christ. 1 Cor 2:16

Without the exercise of due diligence in seeking after the kingdom of God we will naturally find our minds default to the world.

Remember, our sanctification is the will of God, and it is work, hard work, for it means putting to death that which is earthly in us.

Lazy disciples are always in danger of not having enough oil in their lamps for when the Master returns.

True disciples are to have the disposition of the Lord.

"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master."
Matt 10:24-25

"A student is not above the teacher; but everyone, when he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher"
Luke 6:40

John Piper

The revealed "glory" of the Son of God, the glory of the Word, the glory of Jesus Christ, in His first coming, is mainly a spiritual glory, a spiritual beauty seen by those the Father gave Him. It's not something we see with the physical eyes, but with the eyes of our heart. (Eph 1:18) We look at the way He interacts with people, how He speaks and acts and loves and dies, and by grace, we see a self-authenticating, divine glory, or beauty. what John 1:14 calls "*glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*" "*If you have seen Me you have seen the Father.*"

Paul put it like this in 2 Cor 4:4, "*The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*" The "*glory of Christ who is the image of God*"

The glory is a glory that we see spiritually when we hear the story of Jesus. We don't see Him physically. Jesus said, "*Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed.*"
John 20:29

We meet Him in the Gospels and the other writings of the Bible. And when we meet Him, through these inspired stories of His words and deeds, His glory shines through—the self-authenticating beauty of that matchless mixture of grace and truth.

John Owen focuses our attention on 10 ways we see the glory of Christ.

1. Christ's Glory as God's Representative. In other words, He is the perfect revelation of the Father.
2. The Glory of Christ in His Person. In other words, He is God and man in one person.
3. The Glory of Christ's Humbling Himself. In other words, in His humility as our mediator.
4. The Glory of Christ's Love as Mediator. In other words, His love for us is our treasured mediator.
5. The Glory of Christ's Work as Mediator. In other words, we see His glory in His work on our behalf.
6. The Glory of Christ's Exaltation. In other words, He suffered and entered His glory.
7. The Glory of Christ under the Old Testament. In other words, the tabernacle testified to the glory of Christ.
8. The Glory of Christ's Union with the Church. In other words, the church is the glorious body of Christ.
9. The Glory of Christ's Giving Himself to Believers. In other words, in union with Christ believers are glorified in Him.
10. The Glory of Christ in Restoring All Things. In other words, everything is in Christ to the glory of God. The new heaven and earth, the new temple and the chosen children are one life in Christ.

Christ is all we need

That which is born of the Spirit is spirit to reflect the glory of Christ. Life according to the Spirit is one life in Christ. Therefore, we can be anxious for nothing because Christ is our life as we have a disposition to behold His glory. *'Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.'*
Phil 2:5

'But we have the mind of Christ.' 1 Cor 2:16

Living Water Resources

Come to the River

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