

**BE IMITATORS OF CHRIST:
The Call to Genuine Discipleship to Jesus**

**In the Context Of Pastoral Guidance and the Care of Mental Health
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INTRODUCTION

- I. The question of the knowledge base for our practice of counseling and guidance generally, not just for Christian caregivers. THE BIBLE AND THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE.
- II. The human need to know and the modern impasse created by Empiricism and the skeptical reaction against tradition.

Do-it-yourself wisdom, theology, ethics and chemistry? God as complex as plastics and antibiotics?

We can only live by authority, and our only choice is whether we will be honest about it or not.

What are the authorities for life and professional practice that are actually operant today?

- III. Christian faith as knowledge—opposed to *sight* (2 Cor. 5:7)

Three views on how faith works:

As merit before God

As a psychological boost

As contact with reality—David (1 Sam. 17:34–37)

- IV. Salvation (deliverance) through reliance on Jesus Christ. Jesus knows about reality and leads us into it. Trusting Him, accepting His authority, integrates us with reality.

Jesus' Gospel and Ours

- I. What Jesus Taught: “Reconsider your strategy for life in view of the fact that you can now live under the rule of the heavens, the invisible reality of God immediately accessible to you by trust.” (Matt. 4:17; cf. Mark 1:15)

The language used here: *kai metanoēō gar ho basileia ho ouranos engizō*

- a. The grammar: *engizō* “has drawn near!” The perfect indicative generally expresses the present result of a past action.
 - b. “is at hand” or “has drawn nigh” means “is now available to you,” not, “is about to be here and in force.”
 - c. The significance of “heaven.” “Kingdom of Heaven” and “Kingdom of God.”
 - d. Gospel passages to study: Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 5:20; 8:10–12; 10:7; 11:11–12, 18:1–4; 21:31, 43; 23:13; Mark 1:14–15; 9:1–7 (cf. 2 Peter 1:16–18); Luke 10:9–11; 11:20; 12:31–32; 16:16; 17:21; John 3:3, 5; 18:38
- II. What Jesus Did: *Announced* The Kingdom, *Taught* of Its Nature and *Manifested* Its Power in Action (his miracles)
Matt. 4:23; 8:1–34; 9:35; 13:1–52
 - III. Bringing His Hearers the Life without Fear as They Trust the Rule of Heaven which He Announced.
Matt. 6:25–34; 10:27–31; Phil. 4:6–9; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14–15
 - IV. Continued in the Ministry and Works of His Disciples
Acts 1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31; Rom. 14:17
 - V. Compare the Gospel of “Sin Management” Prevalent Today

The Rule of Heaven in the Old Testament—in Israel
The Gospel in Israel: “Your God Reigns”(Isa. 52:7)

- I. The Professor who flunked the test: What Nicodemus didn't know. John 3:10
That Israel *as* Israel (Gen. 32:28) had life (power + direction) from “another world,” the world of God's rule.
The additional birth is entry *into* an additional world.
- II. Abram enters this additional world when in response to God's call, he leaves his kinfolk and hometown to become a pilgrim moving toward a promised land (Gen. 12:1–4), the location of which he did not know. (Heb. 11:8) Trust (“faith”) in response to God's word leads into experience of and cooperation with the additional world—God's realm.
- III. The covenant with Abram sealed in a “fire from God” (Gen. 15:17–18; cf. 2 Chron. 7:1) assuring Abram of God-at-hand; and he is later named “Abraham,” meaning “father of nations.” (17:5) This progeny was to come through a child (Isaac) born only with supernatural assistance. (“The Lord visited Sarah” Gen. 21:1) A child Abraham gave to God with utter confidence that even if he died (Gen. 22:8) he would be raised by the additional world. (Heb. 11:19)

[Note: Angels enter with Abraham's family. Gen. 16:7; cf. Heb. 1:14]
- IV. The Additional World for Moses (Ex. 3) and in the deliverance from Egypt. (Ex. 13:20–22; 14:10–31) Then during the wilderness wanderings. (Deut. 8:1–4; 11:7) All to create a nation, a people with hearts *tender* to righteousness and love to all, symbolized by *circumcision*. (Deut. 10:12–22) They are capable of such love because they live from the additional world, which removes all fear.
- V. David, the great Monarch of Israel, lived from the additional world (1 Sam. 17:46–47) and clearly understood it. (1 Chron. 29:10–15). Whose son, Solomon, built a temple as a touch-point between the people of Israel (Prince with God) and “heaven.” (1 Kings 8:27–54) “That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God, and that there is no other.” (1 Kings 8:30)
- VI. The Children of Israel, *after* their nation and temple was destroyed, learned the rule of their God was interrupted, but was now *from Heaven*. The rule of heaven us the direct and immediate availability of God to all. (1 Chron. 36:23; Ezra 1:2; 5:11–12; 6:10; 7:12, 23; Neh. 1:5; 2:4, 8, 18; Dan. 2:18–19, 28, 44; 4:17, 26, 34; 5:23; 7:14, 27)

Something the Prophets in Israel know all along. (2 Kings 6:16–17; 2 Chron. 1:16; 14:11; 16:9; 20:6, 15–17, 21–25; Ps. 34:4–19; 68:5, 17–19; 145; 146.
- VII. “In the beginning God.” (Gen. 1:1) The theological and devotional significance of $e = mc^2$.
- VIII. The availability of *this* is what Jesus announced.

The Beatitudes as Gospel. The *Manner* of Jesus' Teaching

- I. Jesus as minister of God's rule, of the kingdom of "heaven"
 - a. "the spirit" comes upon Jesus. Luke 2:40; 3:21–22; 4:1, 14, 18–19
 - b. What the anointing was for. What Jesus was to accomplish. Luke 4:18–19
 - c. The three dimensions of Jesus' kingdom ministry:
 - i. Announcing the availability of the kingdom to all
 - ii. Teaching about the nature of the kingdom
 - iii. Manifesting the kingdom's power in healing, demon mastery, authority over nature
 - iv. Matt. 4:23; 8:16–17; 9:35; 10:6–8; Luke 9:1–6; 10:5–11
- II. How Jesus taught. By parable and paradox, designed to get past the heart hardened in its own willfulness and self-absorption. Matt. 13:10–15, 52. He teaches in such a way as to call to light and correct prevailing general assumptions underlying man's way of thinking. Luke 14:7–11, 12–14
- III. The biblical principle of inversion between God's rule and man's way. 1 Sam. 2:1–10; Ps.37:7–20; Luke 1:46–55; Matt. 19:30; 20:16; 21:31; Mark 10:28–31; Luke 13:29–31
- IV. The "Beatitudes" are statements designed to show the nature of the rule of heaven by *contradicting* the ordinary human assumptions about who is well-off and who is miserable.

Matt. 5:3—"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." That is: "Blessed are the spiritually deprived, the spiritually bankrupt since they too can have the kingdom. The intellectually deficient, uneducated, religiously disrespectable. The disciples Jesus chose were all of this sort. "This people who know not the law are cursed!" (John 7:49) And: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46)

Note how the translators strive to turn "poor in the spirit" into something good. Luke 6:20 makes clear—the condition referred to is not a good one. It is one universally thought bad by human beings. So for all. Blessed are the hungry, the depressed, these who ache for justice, who have pity for others, cannot settle for anything less than perfect, pay the price to make peace, are persecuted for doing good.

- V. These are not commands on what we must do to be blessed. The cause of the blessing is not in the condition in which the blessing is received. THEY ANNOUNCE THAT THESE COUNTED BY MAN TO BE IN A HOPELESS CONDITION ARE NOT, DUE TO THE AVAILABILITY OF THE KINGDOM. (Compare: "Good things come in small packages!")
- VI. Now: You write some beatitudes for today. Who's blessed?

Beyond “The Righteousness of The Scribes and Pharisees”

- I. Jesus’ inversion of blessings and curses *flew in the face* of those in charge of the religion of Israel, the scribes and Pharisees (S & Ps)—as well as of the common people under their influence. They had succeeded in identifying God’s order (the Law and the Prophets) with man’s order, “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. . . . Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition.” (Mark 7:5–13)
- II. Hence, that the “cursed” of man’s order could, as dwellers in the kingdom of the heavens (*ho basileia ho ouranos*), be the salt of the earth and the light of the world—a position carefully reserved by the S & Ps for their own best practitioners—could only mean that Jesus was out to *destroy* the law and the prophets!
- III. Jesus’ reply is that only by going beyond or surpassing—not by setting aside—the “okayness” (righteousness, *dikaïosynē*, Matt. 5:20) of the S & Ps can we come into contact with God’s governing from the heavens and thus become able to fulfill the law by becoming the sorts of persons God intended us to be. God’s kind of okayness is one of inner personality or heart, the *kind of person*.
- IV. Only *trusting* the king and the kingdom transforms the heart, making the kind of rightness (okayness) God has the kind we have. “Seek ye above all the rule of God and the kind of okayness He has.” (Matt. 6:33) “For they [the S & Ps] being ignorant of God’s okayness, and going about to establish their own okayness, have not submitted themselves unto the okayness of God.” (Romans 10:1–10—study this whole passage on okayness and its kinds and sources.) We “believe *unto* righteousness.” (Romans 10:10) Our acting in trust (without which there is no belief) meets the reality of the kingdom, and *its* life increasingly fills and transforms our souls. Our hearts, from which evil comes (Mark 7:23), is made good. (Matt 12:33, Luke 6:43–45)
- V. What are the marks of S & Ps “righteousness”?
 - (1) It seeks the honor that comes from men, not God. (John 5:44, Matt 23:5–12)
 - (2) Thus bringing bondage to appearance and to the opinions of others, and to self-justification. (John 16:15; Luke 11:46; Proverbs 29:25)
 - (3) It “says and does not.” (Matt 23:3–4)
 - (4) It murders “in a good cause.” (Luke 11:50–51)
 - (5) It keeps people out of the kingdom of God (Luke 11:52), and turns it “converts” into “twofold more the child of hell” than are the S & Ps themselves. (Matt. 23:13–15)
 - (6) It is covetous and wealth seeking, *servng* mammon. (Luke 16:13–15)
 - (7) It trust in itself that it is righteous and despises and condemns others. (Luke 18:9) AND MOST ESPECIALLY:
 - (8) Defines okayness in terms of externals, cleans the “outside of the cup and plate; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.” (Luke 11:39) etc.
- VI. Jesus illustrates kingdom okayness (of the heart) over against S & Ps (“ye have heard”) okayness. (Matt. 5:21–7:27) Remember: He teaches against prevailing false assumptions.

Beyond “the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, Part 2

- I. Beyond the okayness of the scribes and Pharisees (S & Ps) is a righteousness of the kingdom of heaven which doesn't just not kill, but has such tenderness that it rules out groundless anger and verbal abuse (Matt. 5:21–22), a tenderness more important than religious ritual (Matt. 5:23–24) or getting our way through the courts (Matt. 5:25–26).
- II. In sexuality, kingdom rightness would be pained to see others subject to the purposeful imaginings which serve to roil up “hot” feelings to be savored and slobbered over. (Matt. 5:27–30) A person whose heart is filled with welcomed lusts, and who uses the presence of others to excite themselves, has a sexually corrupted heart (“adultery in the heart”), and has little to boast about for not “doing it,” since they only lacked opportunity. —And one can't be righteous in divorce just by arranging for a legally proper “pink slip” for the one cast away. In Jesus' day, a woman divorced had her life ruined. She would never again know any but degraded sexuality. (Matt. 5:31–32) You can't love a marriage partner and do such a thing to him or her.
- III. True okayness does not try to overwhelm others by verbal fireworks, calling in God and “betting your head” that such and such is the truth. Just state it and let it stand. Allow people to make up their own minds. More than: “It is this way” or “It is not that way” comes from an evil tendency of the heart to control people. Don't swear. The point has nothing to do with “cussin'.” (Matt. 5:33–37)
- IV. The person living from the Kingdom does not need to “get even” (Matt. 5:38), strike back (Matt. 5:39), refuse aid to someone who has beat them in court (Matt. 5:40), refuse to further assist someone who has already compelled them to go out of their way (Matt. 5:41), or have any reason but the request itself to give to someone who asks them for something (Matt. 5:42). They find it easier to love than to hate their enemy (Matt. 5:43), and are able to act (Matt. 5:44) in a way that reveals the family resemblance in the family of God. (Matt. 5:45–48) Thus they are “the children of your Father which is in heaven.”
- V. In specifically religious “righteousnesses” (*ten dikaiosunen*), the kingdom dweller conceals his activities of giving (“alms,” Matt. 6:1), prayer and fasting (Matt. 6:2–18), and orients himself solely toward his “Father which is in heaven.” S & P okayness looks for rewards from man, gets them, and is ignored by “heaven,” since heaven was not sought anyway. (Matt. 6:2, 5, 16) By contrast, “heaven” falls upon those who seek it only.
- VI. Kingdom okayness finds all its “treasures” in relation to heaven (Matt. 6:19–25), is content with what the Father provides (Matt. 6:26–34, and gives first priority to securing the rule of God and the kind of okayness God has. (Matt 6:33) It doesn't borrow evil from the future, because each day has enough in it. (Matt. 6:34)
- VII. Kingdom okayness doesn't try to “manage” others by condemning them (Matt. 7:1–5) or by pouring the “best stuff” on them (Matt. 7:6). It works through prayer (Matt .7:7–11) and considerate love (Matt. 7:12).

- VIII. Entering the kingdom is a matter of doing the will of the Father, understood as going beyond S&P righteousness in the manner above illustrated. Miracles won't take the place of kingdom love and trust. (Matt. 7:13–27)

The Latest Decalogue¹

Thou shalt have one God only; who
Would be at the expense of two?
No graven images may be
Worshipp'd, except the currency:
Swear not at all; for, for thy curse
Thine enemy is none the worse:
At church on Sunday to attend
Will serve to keep the world thy friend:
Honour thy parents: that is, all
From whom advancement may befall:
Thou shalt not kill; but need'st not strive
Officiously to keep alive:
Do not adultery commit;
Advantage rarely comes of it:
Thou shalt not steal; an empty feat,
When it's so lucrative to cheat:
Bear not false witness; let the lie
Have time on its own wings to fly:
Thou shalt not covet, but tradition
Approves all forms of competition.²

–Arthur Hugh Clough

¹ Arthur Hugh Clough, *Poems, with a Memoir* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1862).

² One of the two extant manuscripts has four additional lines, not printed in any early edition of Clough, summarizing his decalogue in an ironic restatement of the two great commandments of the law (Matthew 22: 37–39):

The sum of all is, thou shalt love,
If any body, God above:
At any rate shall never labour
More than thyself to love thy neighbour."

The Power of “The Word of the Kingdom”

Our new life, from Jesus’ gospel of heaven’s-open-door-now, is one of personal action and interaction. A *kingdom* is a personal network and process. PERSONS WORK THROUGH WORDS. The Kingdom of God, his reign, works by words, and we share in it by using words—just as our share in satan’s government is through the tongue, “a world of iniquity . . . defiling the whole body . . . set on fire by hell.” (James 3:6) By words, God’s power goes forth to accomplish his will; by words, your power goes forth, by speaking *with God*, his power goes forth with ours: “In Jesus name . . . (e.g., Acts 3:6, 16, etc.) If we are to do kingdom work, we must understand how the kingdom works through words.

- I. Creation is by words (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26; Heb. 11:3; 2 Peter 3:5) and is sustained (Col 1:16–17; Heb. 1:2–3; 1 Peter 3:7) and is ordered by God’s word (Pss. 104; 109:89–91; 137:15, 18; 148:8).
- II. The word of God is, accordingly, substance and power or agency (Deut. 8:3–4 [Matt. 4:4; Mark 14:22; John 6:57, 63; 1 Tim. 4:5], Ps. 107:20; Jer. 23:29; Amos 8:11, Luke 4:32, 36; 8:11, Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20; 2 Tim. 29; Heb. 4:12; Rev. 19:13).
- III. The Word of God brings the life from above, birth from above. (James 1:18, 22; 1 Peter 1:23) It washes us (Eph. 5:26), sanctifies us (John 17:17). All due to its substance and power.
- IV. King Jesus, through whom all things are made (John 1:3; Col. 1:16–17), shows his will by spoken power over nature and spirits. (Matt. 8:26; 17:7–21; Mark 11:14, 20–26; Luke 4:35, 38–39; 7:7, 14; 8:54–55, etc.)
- V. Power and authority (Luke 9:1) are given to his pupils (Luke 9:2–6; 10:1–20) to *act with* the governance of God, though not, as with Christ, “without measure.” (John 3:34) He gives enough, however, that his people will do his works and even greater because Jesus’ power is heightened in his present position with the Father. (John 14:12)
- VI. What is it to act “in Jesus’ name”? (Not necessarily to say aloud the words, “in Jesus’ name,” but to act in reliance up[on his agency to accomplish his glory. (Acts 4:30; 13:9–11; 14:9; etc., but notice Acts 19:13–16)
- VII. The relationship of “speaking” to “praying.” They are essentially the same, and it does not matter how you use them since in both cases, you are acting with God.
- VIII. Should you individually expect to do all of these kinds of things? No. Though you should not rule any out. You should seek and teach and pray and wait upon every manifestation of kingdom power for the glory of God to be present in the church of your fellowship. Don’t force your faith. Don’t try to make things happen, but seek the faith that comes from God speaking to you. Seek to live before the shining face of the God who speaks to us in love and calls us out to be his co-laborers. (2 Cor. 6:10)

How to become a disciple. Disciples or Christians?

- I. Jesus invites us to walk with Him as He walks in the kingdom of heaven and learn to walk as He walks: to have his heart, his faith, his love, and to act *in his name*, under his authority, as his co-laborers. (Matt. 11:28–30, Luke 6:40, 1 John 4:17)
- II. This is something we learn how to do. To follow Jesus is *not* to do as He said and did, but to be with Him *to learn how* to do what He said and did; that is, it is to be his pupils, his students, his disciples. The *New Testament* accordingly is a book by, about, and for *disciples* of Jesus. The word “disciple” occurs 269 times in it, the word “Christian” only three times, being introduced to refer precisely to disciples. (Acts 11:26) We become able to do progressively more of what He said and did as we through practice learn to trust the rule of heaven and act from it. “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil 3:14)
- III. The New Testament does not recognize a class of non-disciples who are Christians—“Vampire” Christians: “Well, thank you Jesus, I would like to have a bit of your blood to cover my sins, but I wouldn’t care to keep constant company with you! I have far better things to do!” Yet the leading “discipleship” group in Western Christendom divides Christians up into: convert, disciple, and worker, clearly teaching that you can be and remain a Christian forever without becoming a disciple, much less a worker.
- IV. The disciple of Jesus is one who, in response to the Word of the Kingdom of Heaven:
 - a. Sees living in the kingdom to be the most important thing in life. (Deut. 30:11–20, Ps. 42, Jer. 29:13, Matt. 6:33; 13:44–46, Luke 14:25–33)
 - b. Plans, and constantly reviews and revises plans, taking all appropriate *steps or measures* to so live. (Rom. 8:13; 13:14, Eph. 4:22–24, Phil. 2:12, 2 Peter 1:5–11)
 - c. Increasingly does the deeds and bears the fruit of the Kingdom life. (John 8:31–32; 13:34–35; 15:8, Luke 8:15, Matt. 7:21–27)
- V. *We become* a disciple of Jesus by *deciding* to be with Him to learn to be like Him. *We are* his disciples, his students, by “continuing in his word” (John 8:31–32): that is, by immersing ourselves in his example and teaching from the four Gospels and by venturing to put into practice what we see there, which will bring his constant presence into our ongoing life as a tangible reality. (John 14:18–26, Rom. 8:4, 11, Heb. 6:18–20; 13:5–6, 1 Peter 5:5–7)
- VI. As disciples we can now obey the Great Commission by going to all kinds of people and making them disciples (students). (Matt. 28:19) You make disciples by *ravishing people with the word and reality of the Kingdom of Heaven and King Jesus*, so that they pine for it, ache for it, and crash the party with tears of repentance and joy.
- VII. Then, having become students of Jesus and been surrounded (“baptized”) by the power and authority (the “name”) of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we teach them to observe, to do, “all things whatsoever I have commanded you,” with the “all power in heaven and in earth” that is given unto Him who said: “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” (Matt. 28:18–20) We say: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (1 Cor. 11:1) And: “Those

things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.” (Phil. 4:9)

The Great *Omissions* from the Great Commission are: We don’t lead people to discipleship and we don’t even try to teach them how to do what Jesus said and did. I do not know of a single church in existence today with a program designed and intended to teach people to do what Jesus said and did. How can we justify this? Our failures do not justify it. We must be willing to endure the tension of Christ’s call or we will never be given the spiritual substance to meet it.

Have you ever decided to be a disciple of Jesus? Committed yourself to be with Him to learn from Him how to walk in the kingdom as He did? To learn how to be with Him?

You probably won’t drift into discipleship. You will have to decide. Jesus Christ is The Door, The Opening:

The Opening³

Now is the shining fabric of our day
Torn open, flung apart,
Rent wide by love.
Never again
The tight, enclosing sky,
The blue bowl,
Or the star-illuminated tent.
We are laid open to infinity,
For Easter love
has burst His tomb and ours.
Now *nothing* shelters us
from *God’s desire*—
Not flesh, not sky,
Nor stars, not even sin.
Now Glory waits
So He can enter in.
Now does the dance begin.

—Elizabeth Rooney

³ Elizabeth Rooney, *Morning Song* (Blue Mounds, WI: Bringham Farm Publishing, 2001). “The Opening” was written in 1981.

Discipleship and Disciplines for the Spiritual Life

Pursuant upon our last lesson, let us understand, then, that being a disciple of Jesus is a *perfectly definite state of being* which one is either in or not in. You can *fail* to be a disciple of Jesus. Many people are not in a state of discipleship to Him. Some know it. Some are confused about it. Some think they are though they are not, because they have been led to suppose that simply being a “Christian” by some definition automatically involves being a disciple of Jesus. We have, however, noted that the dominant tendency in our times, with regard to discipleship, is to try to lead *Christians* to enter “discipling” activities, all the while assuming that they might very well remain Christians though they decide *not* to become students of Jesus, abiding with Him to learn how to be and do as He did.

Realization of the New Testament ideals of abundant life and love and power are the results of *sustained* discipleship to Jesus, and of that alone. Many dear and devoted Christians doggedly carry on with their lives in spite of the fact that their spiritual aspirations and hopes for life in Christ don’t work out very well. They have not found a *plan* for spiritual growth into the peace and power of Jesus for their own lives, and the religious activities which they engage in are not adequate to the end hoped for.

- I. The a of the easy yoke. (Matt. 11:28–30) In two parts:
 - a. “*Take my yoke*”; that is, get into the harness with Him. Be his person everywhere and He will be with you in the same harness. Stop trying to save your life and do “your own thing”: “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” (Matt. 16:25) LIVE TO DO THE WILL AND WORK OF JESUS!
 - b. “*Learn of me.*” Watch the way Jesus lived in the Gospels; do the same things and He will meet you in them now, for that is where He is. What did He do on his days off or during breaks? What He did while “off the spot” is the key to his power when “on the spot.” ADOPT HIS OVERALL STYLE OF LIFE.
- II. Disciplines: *Activities we can engage in by direct effort that enable us to do things we CANNOT accomplish by direct effort.* The “disciplined person” is the one who is able to do what needs to be done at the time and in the way it needs to be done.

Very often, people say, “Oh, I was a student of Arthur Rubenstein or something like that. Now, any individual who will even give a part of what a person would give up to be a student of a great master in some art—if they would just think in those same terms.
- III. *Spiritual* disciplines, or disciplines for the spiritual life, are disciplines in the general sense just stated, but they are specifically designed to enable us to interact with the spirit of God and receive his grace “to help in the time of need.” E.g. “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matt. 26:41, cf. Rom. 6:11–14, Gal. 6:7–8, Eph. 5:15–16; 6:11–18, Col. 3:1–17)
- IV. What were some of Jesus’ “off the spot” activities? *Study* (Luke 2:46–49, John 7:15), *submission* (Luke 2:51–52, Matt. 3:15, Heb 5:8), *solitude* (Matt. 4:1–2; 14:23, Mark 1:35; 6:31–32) *fasting*

(Matt. 4:2–4 [Mark 6:16–18], John 4:31–34), *secrecy* (John 7:1–12 [Matt. 6:1–18], Luke 4:42, Luke 5:16; 9:21). IN THESE ACTIVITIES, HE DWELT IN THE RICHNESS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN FROM WHICH HE DREW TO LIVE AND MINISTER ON THE SPOT. (John 5:30; 8:16; 8:29; 10:30).

- V. These and other activities such as silence and prayer and service and worship and confession and celebration—some more or only suited to our condition and not His—are activities *which we can choose* and in which we learn to draw from Him and His Kingdom; the truth, love, and power we need to be the light and salt in our place. He will *personalize* the disciplines to us as we seek Him in them, for He will be our teacher. We will learn to know His voice.
- VI. The disciplinary activities:
- a. Are not for *merit* but for *access and reception* of grace.
 - b. Are of no use if they are not needed (like medicine or training in other respects).
 - c. Are *our* part in “working out our own salvation with fear and trembling because God is working in us.” (Phil 2:12–13)
 - d. Constitute ways, which can become a coherent plan, for placing our time and our bodies at God’s disposal, “redeeming the time” (Eph 5:16) and making our bodies “living sacrifices” (Rom 12:1–2)
 - e. Are for disciples only, for those who have found the pearl of great price, life in the kingdom of heaven, and really want to possess this gift of God.
 - f. Require the ministry of a discipline fellowship with ministers equipped to bring the kingdom to bear upon real life.

“Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18)

The Little Gate to God⁴

In the castle of my soul
Is a little postern gate,
Whereat, when I enter,
I am in the presence of God.
In a moment, in the turning of a thought,
I am where God is.
This is a fact.

The world of me is made of jangling noises.
With God is a great silence.
But that silence is a melody
Sweet as the contentment of love,
Thrilling as a touch of fame.
When I enter into God,
All life has a meaning.
Without asking I know;

⁴ Walter Rauschenbusch Selected Writings, ed. Winthrop S. Hudson (New York: Paulist Press, 1985). “The Little Gate to God” was written in 1918.

My desires are even now fulfilled,
My fever is gone
In the great quiet of God.

My troubles are but pebbles on the road,
My joys are like the everlasting hills.
So it is when I step through the gate of prayer
From time into eternity.

When I am in the consciousness of God,
My fellowmen are not for off and forgotten,
But close and strangely dear.

Those whom I love
Have a mystic value.
They shine as if a light were glowing within them.

So it is when my soul steps through the postern gate
Into the presence of God.

Big things become small, and small things become great.
The near becomes far, and the future is near.
The lowly and despised is shot through with glory.
God is the substance of all revolutions;
When I am in him, I am in the Kingdom of God
And in the Fatherland of my Soul.

—Walter Rauschenbusch

Christian Disciplines and The Spiritual Guide or 'Pastor'

- I. The spiritual guide is one who:
 - a. Guides another in spiritual things or through the spiritual world
 - b. By spiritual means. (Acts 1:2; 1 Cor 2:1–16)
- II. God has ordained that there be spiritual guides among His people. (1 Peter 5:1–5, Heb. 13:17, 2 Cor 12:19–13:11)
 - a. It is part of the structure of love.
- III. Such a one has a special power for helping and guiding others and knows it by experience and relies on it,
 - a. Will not move "in the flesh"
 - b. Though it is not a technique, nor something that they have under their control or "mastery," For it is the moving of God's hand. (Luke 11:20)
 - c. These know how to "sow to the spirit." (Eph. 6:7–9)
- IV. Such a one is not personally "needy," discontent, lacking in peace and joy and vision of their place in Goodness.
 - a. Otherwise, they would be too dangerous to be allowed into the soul space of others to influence their spirits
- V. The "three things that are in the world" (2 John 2:16)
 - a. the lust of the flesh
 - b. the lust of the eyes
 - c. the pride of lifeare manifest to the spiritual guide, Who also is not ruled by them.
- VI. Th spiritual guide is not the same as a *friend*
 - a. Though spiritual friendship is also important.
 - b. There is a certain "distance" in spiritual guidance, which, among other things, is designed to help the one guided understand what *love* is.
- VII. There must be absolutely no domination in the relationship, either direction. The guide needs to be very sophisticated psychologically, in order to realize what is happening at all times. Beware of neediness. Meet infrequently. Have few people under guidance.
- VIII. The spiritual guide knows how to wait for the moving of the spirit while in the presence of the one to be guided, how to move *with* it while not always understanding *why*. All of this without being the "answer man." Often this moving comes while praying with the person involved, which one learns how to do from experience.
- IX. Vigorous, joyous practice of spiritual disciplines prepares one to serve as spiritual guide.

The Centrality to Mental Health of Spiritual Guidance and Discipline Within the Gospel

- I. Fleshly lusts war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11) and decimate the personality and its resources for life. Flesh and spirit war against each other. (Gal .5:14–17) Mental illness, non-functionality, is the natural state of mankind apart from God. *CONTRAST*: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT (Gal. 5:22–23)
- II. This is glorified in human life as it is. See everything from art to gossip. Rom 1:32—“Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” TO STEP OUT OF THIS SEWER OF DEATH IS VIEWED AS STRANGE, ABNORMAL.
- III. *In* the fallen condition, the primary problem for mental health is one of the mind, of faith. Study carefully Ephesians 4:17–18. Hopelessness and self-destructiveness are a natural outcome of the mind which sees only “the flesh.” (Rom. 8:5–8) The religiously chastened despair of Ecclesiastes.
- IV. But “the presenting problem” as the “client” comes for help—the soul comes to be healed or restored—will lie in the domain of feeling and resultant will. Study carefully Ephesian 4:19 and 1 Peter 2:11) Disappointment and anger at self, family, world, certainly God—who remains humanity’s biggest disappointment—leads to will responses that disintegrate the self and paralyze it in its disintegration.
- V. The first step to cure is always the presentation of reliance on Jesus and His kingdom as “the way things are.” This must be living water “from the belly,” whether or not also from the mouth. (John 7:38; cf. Luke 6:45) Whether or not you *really* believe will come out of your mouth also, and cannot be hid from the client or parishioner. *Spiritual disciplines cannot take the place of the good news of Jesus, or of other types of ministry that may be required*—e.g. deliverance ministry or ministry to physical needs. Lay “peace platform of personality” (Rom 5:1–10)
- VI. But now we come to “putting off” the old person and “putting on” the new. *NOTE*: This the individual must do! Study closely Ephesian 4:20–32; cf. Colossians 3 and Romans 8:1–13. What we “learn of Christ” (Eph. 4:20–24; cf. Matt. 11:28–30) This is a matter of disciplines for life in the spirit, as explained above.
- VII. *We minister life to those under us by guiding them into the suitable practice of the disciplines.* Their life becomes their religion; they move toward being “spiritually competent” individuals. See model in Ephesians 4:24–6:19 as well as Matthew 6–7.

Illustration of the effect of disciplines in program of therapy, Christian track, at Loma Linda University Hospital.