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The Disciple-Making Minister

Biblical Principles for Fruitfulness and Multiplication

By David Servant

Introduction

Over the past twenty-five years, I've had the privilege of traveling to over forty nations of the world to speak to tens of thousands of ministers at three- to five-day conferences. Those conferences have been attended by dedicated Christian leaders from many different denominations and streams within the body of Christ. Every trip has confirmed that three- to five-day conferences are simply not sufficient to meet the needs that exist. So much more needs to be done to equip Christian leaders, and this book is an effort to fill the gap a little bit more.

I've also had the privilege of experiencing twenty-or-so years of pastoring churches. Although I was "successful" by some measurements, much of the time I found myself struggling because I lacked understanding of some very foundational principles of biblical ministry. I consequently have a deep concern for the millions of sincere ministers who are missing what I missed and who need to be better equipped for the task set before them. Some of the principles of which I lacked understanding are so significant that once they are understood, they set the course of ministry for the rest of a minister's life. They become the standard by which every aspect of ministry is measured. Those principles are found in the initial chapters and should not be overlooked by any reader, as all later chapters are practically useless without their foundation.

This book has particular application to pastors, as they are certainly the most common Christian leaders, but everything I've written also applies to evangelists, teachers, missionaries, church planters, prophets, Sunday-school workers, and so on. There isn't anyone in the body of Christ who couldn't benefit from reading this book, because every member of the body of Christ has been graced with a God-given function.

I've written primarily to ministers who live outside of the United States, Western Europe and Australia/New Zealand. This is not to say, however, that what I've written has no application to ministers in those parts of the world. Indeed, I think what I've written could help them considerably, but they already have plenty of teachers. In any case, depending on your knowledge, experience and nation of ministry, you will find certain chapters more helpful than others. Many Chinese, Cuban, and Vietnamese house church pastors, for example, will find the chapter on house churches to contain very little that they don't already know. Yet pastors who are unfamiliar with the house church model should find that chapter extremely helpful.

It is highly unlikely that every reader will agree with everything I've written on every topic in the book. Five years ago, I wouldn't have agreed with some of what I've written in this book! So don't let minor disagreements stop you from learning as much as you can

from every chapter.

As Jesus taught us, no one puts new wine into old wineskins, otherwise the stiff and inflexible old wineskins burst. It is only new wineskins that are flexible enough to withstand the pressure of fermenting new wine. Although some of what I've written might be considered to be new wine, it is actually wine that is quite old—at least as old as the New Testament. So any bursting of old wineskins is not the fault of the wine poured from the pages that follow! Jesus rejoiced that God reveals His truth to babes and hides it from “the wise and intelligent” (Matt. 11:25). Likewise, God gives grace to the humble, but He resists the proud (see Jas. 4:6). Thank God for the multitudes of humble Christian leaders all over the world. May God bless them as they read.

David Servant

Chapter One Setting the Right Goal

To be successful in God's eyes, it is essential that a minister understands the goal that God has set before him. If he doesn't understand his goal, he has no way of gauging if he has succeeded or failed in reaching it.¹ He may think he has succeeded when he has actually failed. And that is a great tragedy. He is like a first-place runner who jubilantly sprints across the finish line of an 800-meter race, basking in his victory as he raises his hands before the shouting crowds, not realizing that he was actually competing in a 1600-meter race. Misunderstanding his goal has guaranteed his failure. Thinking he has won has assured his loss. In his case the saying is certainly true: “The first shall be last.”

Most ministers have some kind of specific goal that they often refer to as their “vision.” It is what they uniquely strive to accomplish, based on their specific calling and gifting. Everyone's gifting and calling is unique, whether it be to pastor a church in a certain city, evangelize a certain region, or teach certain truths. But the God-given goal to which I'm referring is *general* and applies to *every minister*. It is the *big* vision. It should be the driving general vision behind every unique vision. But too often, it is not. Not only do many ministers have specific visions that do not harmonize with God's general vision, some have specific visions that actually work *against* God's general vision. I certainly did at one time, even though I was pastoring a growing church.

What is the general goal or vision that God has given *every* minister? We begin to find the answer in Matthew 28:18-20, a passage so familiar to us that we often miss what it is saying. Let's consider it verse by verse:

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matt. 28:18).

Jesus wanted His disciples to understand that His Father had granted Him *supreme* authority. Of course, the Father's intention was (and is) that Jesus be *obeyed*, as is the case any time the Father gives someone authority. But Jesus is unique in that His Father gave Him *all* authority in heaven and on earth, not just a limited authority, as He at times gives to others. *Jesus is Lord*.

This being so, any person who doesn't relate to Jesus as Lord is not relating to Him rightly. Jesus, more than anything else, is *Lord*. That is why He is referred to as “Lord” over 600 times in the New Testament. (He is only mentioned as Savior 15 times.) That is why

¹ Throughout this book, I refer to ministers using the masculine pronoun *he*, purely for the sake of consistency and because the majority of vocational ministers, such as pastors, are men. I am convinced from Scripture, however, that God calls women to vocational ministry, and I know quite a few with very effective ministries. That is the topic of the chapter entitled, *Women in Ministry*.

Paul wrote, “For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be *Lord* both of the dead and of the living” (Rom. 14:9, emphasis added). Jesus died and came back to life for the purpose of reigning as Lord over people.

True Saving Faith

When modern evangelists and pastors invite the unsaved to “accept Jesus as Savior,” (a phrase and concept never found in Scripture), it usually reveals a fundamental flaw in their understanding of the gospel. When the Philippian jailer, for example, asked Paul what he must do to be saved, Paul did not respond, “Accept Jesus as your Savior.” Rather he said, “Believe in the *Lord* Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved” (Acts 16:31, emphasis added). People are saved when they believe *in* the Lord Jesus Christ. Mind you, they are not saved just because they believe a doctrine *about* salvation or Jesus, but when they believe in a *person*—the *Lord* Jesus Christ. That is saving faith. Too many think because they believe that Jesus’ death was a sufficient sacrifice for their sins, or salvation is by faith, or a hundred other things about Jesus or salvation, that they have saving faith. But they don’t. The devil believes all those things about Jesus and salvation. Saving faith consists of faith *in* Jesus. And who is He? He is *Lord*.

Obviously, if I believe that Jesus is Lord, I will act like he is Lord, submitting to Him from my heart. If I don’t submit to him, I don’t believe in Him. If someone says, “I believe there is a deadly poisonous snake in my boot,” and then calmly puts his boot on, he obviously doesn’t really believe what he says he believes. People who say they believe in Jesus but haven’t repented of their sins and submitted to Him in their hearts don’t really believe in Jesus. They may believe in an imaginary Jesus, but not the *Lord* Jesus, the one who has all authority in heaven and on earth.

All of this is to say that when a minister’s understanding of the most fundamental message of Christianity is flawed, he is in trouble from the start. There is no way he can succeed by God’s appraisal, as he misrepresents the most foundational message God wants the world to hear. He may be a pastor of a growing church, but he is failing miserably at fulfilling God’s general vision for his ministry.

The Big Vision

Let’s go back to Matthew 28:18-19. After declaring His supreme lordship, Jesus then gave a commandment:

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20a).

Notice that Jesus used the word “therefore.” He said, “Go *therefore* and make disciples...” That is to say, “*Because* of what I just said...*because* I have all authority...*because* I am Lord...people should *of course* obey Me...and so I am commanding *you* (and you should obey Me) to go and make disciples, teaching those disciples to *obey* all My commandments.”

And that, simply put, is the general goal, God’s great vision for all of our ministries: *Our responsibility is to make disciples who obey all of Christ’s commandments.*

That is why Paul said that the grace of God had been given to him as an apostle to “bring about the *obedience of faith* among all the Gentiles” (Rom. 1:5, emphasis added). The goal was obedience; the *means* to obedience was faith. People who have genuine faith in the Lord Jesus obey His commandments.

That is why Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, “Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him [Jesus] both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom

you crucified” (Acts 2:36). Peter wanted Christ’s crucifiers to know that God had made Jesus *Lord* and *Christ*. They had killed the one whom God wanted them to obey! Under great conviction, they asked, “What shall we do?” and Peter responded first of all, “Repent”! That is, turn from disobedience to obedience. Make Jesus Lord. Next Peter told them to be baptized as Christ commanded. Peter was making disciples—obedient followers of Christ—and he was starting the right way with the right message.

This being so, every minister should be able to evaluate his success. All of us should ask ourselves, “Is my ministry leading people to become obedient to all of Christ’s commandments?” If we are, we’re succeeding. If we aren’t, we’re failing.

The evangelist who only persuades people to “accept Jesus,” without telling them to repent of their sins, is failing. The pastor who is trying to build a big congregation by keeping everyone happy and organizing many social activities is failing. The teacher who only teaches the latest charismatic “wind of doctrine” is failing. The apostle who plants churches that consist of people who say they believe in Jesus, but who don’t obey Him, is failing. The prophet who prophesies only to tell people what blessings will soon be coming their way is failing.

My Failure

Some years ago, when I was pastoring a growing church, the Holy Spirit asked me a question that opened my eyes to see how far short I was falling in fulfilling God’s general vision. The Holy Spirit asked me the following question as I was reading about the future judgment of the sheep and the goats described in Matthew 25:31-46: *“If everyone in your church congregation died today and stood at the judgment of the sheep and the goats, how many would be sheep and how many would be goats?”* Or, more specifically, *“In the last year, how many of the people in your congregation have provided food for hungry brothers and sisters in Christ, water for thirsty Christians, shelter for homeless or traveling followers of Christ, clothing for naked Christians, or visited sick or imprisoned believers?”* I realized that very few had done any of those things, or anything similar to those things, even though they came to church, sang songs of worship, listened to my sermons and gave money in the offerings. Thus, they were goats by Christ’s criteria, and I was at least partly to blame, because I wasn’t teaching them how important it was to God that we meet the pressing needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ. I wasn’t teaching them to obey all that Christ commanded. In fact, I realized that I was neglecting what was extremely important to God—the second greatest commandment, to love our neighbor as ourselves—not to mention the new commandment Jesus gave us to love one another as He loved us.

Beyond that, I eventually realized that I was actually teaching what worked against God’s general goal of making disciples as I taught a modest version of the very popular “prosperity gospel” to my congregation. Although it is Jesus’ will that His people not lay up treasures on earth (see Matt. 6:19-24), and that they be content with what they have, even if it is only food and covering (see Heb. 13:5; 1 Tim. 6:7-8), I was teaching my wealthy American congregation that God wanted them to have even more possessions. I was teaching people *not* to obey Jesus in one respect (just like hundreds of thousands of other pastors around the world).

Once I realized what I was doing, I repented and asked my congregation to forgive me. I started to try to make disciples, teaching them to obey all that Christ commanded. I did so with fear and trepidation, suspecting that some in my congregation really didn’t want to obey all of Christ’s commandments, preferring a Christianity of convenience that required no sacrifice on their part. And I was right. By all indications, quite a few didn’t care about suffering believers around the world. They didn’t care about spreading the gospel to those who had never heard it. Rather, they primarily cared about getting more for themselves. When it came to holiness, they avoided only the most scandalous sins, sins that were condemned even by unregenerate people, and they lived lives comparable to average

conservative Americans. But they really didn't love the Lord, because they didn't want to keep Jesus' commandments, the very thing He said would prove our love for Him (see John 14:21).

What I feared proved to be true—some professing Christians were really goats in sheep's clothing. When I called them to deny themselves and take up their crosses, some became angry. To them, church was primarily a social experience along with some good music, just what the world enjoys in clubs and bars. They would tolerate some preaching as long as it affirmed their salvation and God's love for them. But they didn't want to hear about what God required of them. They didn't want anyone questioning their salvation. They were unwilling to adjust their lives to conform to God's will if it cost them anything. Sure, they were willing to part with some of their money, as long as they could be convinced that God would give them more in return, and as long as they directly benefited from what they gave, such as when their money improved their church facilities.

A Time for Self-Examination

This would be a good time for every minister reading this book to ask himself or herself the same question the Holy Spirit asked of me: *"If the people I minister to died right now and stood at the judgment of the sheep and the goats, how many would be sheep and how many would be goats?"* When ministers assure people of their congregations who act like goats that they are saved, they are telling them the exact opposite of what God wants them to be told. *That minister is working against Christ.* He is taking sides against what Jesus wants such people to be told according to what He said in Matthew 25:31-46. The entire point of what Jesus said there was to warn the goats. He doesn't want them to think they are going to heaven.

Jesus said that all men would know we are His disciples by our love for one another (see John 13:35). Surely He must have been speaking of a love that exceeds the love that non-Christians show each other, otherwise His disciples could not be distinguished from nonbelievers. The kind of love of which Jesus spoke is a self-sacrificing love, when we love each other as He loved us, laying down our lives for each other (see John 13:34; 1 John 3:16-20). John also wrote that we know we have passed out of death to life, that is, been born again, when we love each other (1 John 3:14). Do people who grumble, speak against, and hate ministers who teach Christ's commandments display the love that marks them as being born again? No, they are goats, on the road to hell.

Disciples of All Nations

Before we move on, let's look once more at Matthew 28:19-20, the Great and General Commission that Jesus gave to His disciples, to see if we can glean any other truths from it.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matt. 28:19-20a).

Note that Jesus wants disciples made in all the *nations*, or more correctly stated according to the original Greek, all the *ethnic groups* of the world. If Jesus commanded it, I am led to believe that it must be possible to do so. We *can* make disciples of Jesus in every ethnic group of the world. The task was not given just to the original eleven disciples, but to every single disciple after them, because Jesus told the eleven to teach their disciples to observe *all* He had commanded *them*. Thus, the original eleven taught *their* disciples to obey Christ's commandment to make disciples of all the nations, and this would then be a self-perpetuating commandment for every subsequent disciple. *Every disciple of Jesus is supposed to be involved in some way in the discipling of the nations.*

This explains in part why the "Great Commission" has not yet been fulfilled. Even

though there are millions of professing Christians, the number of actual disciples who are committed to obey Jesus is much less. The large majority of professing Christians do not care about disciples being made in every ethnic group because they simply aren't committed to obeying Christ's commandments. When the subject is brought up, they will often use excuses such as, "That's not my ministry," and, "I just don't feel led in that direction." Many pastors make such statements, as do all goats who pick and choose which commandments of Christ are worthy to fit their agenda.

If every professing Christian truly believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, before long everyone in the world would hear the gospel. The collective commitment of Christ's disciples would make it happen. They would stop wasting all their time and money on temporal and worldly things, and use them to accomplish what their Lord commanded them to do. Yet when godly pastors announce that a missionary is going to be speaking at an upcoming church service, he can often expect that attendance will drop. Many of the goats will stay home or go elsewhere. They aren't interested in obeying the last commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ. Sheep, on the other hand, always become excited at the prospect of being involved in making disciples of all the nations.

One last point in regard to Matthew 28:18-20: Jesus also told His disciples to baptize their disciples, and the apostles faithfully obeyed this commandment. They immediately baptized those who repented and believed in the Lord Jesus. Baptism, of course, represents a believers' identification with Christ's death, burial and resurrection. New believers have died and been raised as new creations in Christ. This truth Jesus wanted dramatized in the baptism of every new believer, imprinting upon his mind that he is now a new person with a new nature. He is one spirit with Christ, and is now empowered to obey God by Christ who lives within him. He was dead in his sins, but now has been washed clean and made alive by the Holy Spirit. He is more than "just forgiven." Rather, he has been *radically transformed*. Thus, God is indicating once again that true believers are different people who act much differently than they did when they were spiritually dead. This is certainly also implied by Jesus' closing words, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:20). Would it not be reasonable to think that Christ's continual presence with people would affect their behavior?

Jesus Defines Discipleship

We've established that Jesus' overriding goal for us is that we make *disciples*, that is, people who have repented of their sins and who are learning and obeying His commandments. Jesus further defined what a disciple is in John 8:32:

If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

True disciples, according to Jesus, are those who are abiding, or making their home, in His word. As they learn His truth from His Word, they are progressively "set free," and the later context indicates that Jesus was speaking about being set free from sin (see John 8:34-36). So once again we see that by Jesus' definition, disciples are learning and obeying His commandments.

Jesus later said,

By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and *so prove to be My disciples*" (John 15:8, emphasis added).

Thus, by Jesus' definition, disciples are glorifying God by bearing fruit. Those who bear no fruit are not proved to be His disciples.

Jesus more specifically defined that identifying fruit of His true disciples in Luke 14:25-

33. Let's begin by reading just verse 25:

Now great multitudes were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them...

Was Jesus satisfied because great multitudes were "going along" with Him? Had he attained His goal now that He had succeeded in gaining a large congregation?

No, Jesus was not satisfied that great multitudes were hanging around Him, listening to His sermons, watching His miracles, and sometimes eating His food. Jesus is looking for people who love God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength. He wants people who obey His commandments. He wants *disciples*. Thus He said to those multitudes who were going along with Him:

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 (Luke 14:26).

There can be no mistake about it: Jesus laid down a requirement for a person to be His disciple. But must His disciples actually hate those people whom they would naturally love the most? That seems unlikely since we're commanded in Scripture to honor our parents and love our spouses and children.

Jesus must have been speaking in hyperbole, that is, exaggeration for emphasis. At bare minimum, however, He meant nothing less than this: If we are to be His disciples, we must love Him supremely, much more than the people we naturally love the most. Jesus' expectation is certainly reasonable since He is God whom we should love with all our heart, mind, soul and strength.

Don't forget—the job of ministers is to make disciples, which means they are to produce the kind of people who love Jesus supremely, who love Him much, much more than they love even their spouses, children and parents. It would be good for every minister reading this to ask himself, *"How am I succeeding at producing people like that?"*

How do we know if someone loves Jesus? Jesus told us in John 14:21: "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." So it would certainly be reasonable to conclude that people who love Jesus more than their spouses, children and parents are also people who keep His commandments. *Disciples of Jesus obey His commandments.*

A Second Requirement

Jesus continued speaking to the multitudes that day who were going along with Him by saying,

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

This is the second requirement Jesus laid down to be His disciple. What did He mean? Are disciples required to literally carry large beams of wood with them? No, Jesus was again using hyperbole.

Most, if not all, of the people in Jesus' Jewish audience would have witnessed condemned criminals dying on crosses. The Romans crucified criminals along major thoroughfares outside the city gates to maximize crucifixion's effect as a deterrent to crime.

For this reason, I suspect that the phrase, "Carry your cross" was a common expression back in Jesus' day. Every person who was crucified had heard a Roman soldier say, "Take up your cross and follow me." Those were words the condemned dreaded, as they knew it marked the beginning of hours and days of gruesome agony. So such a phrase could have easily become a common expression that meant, "Accept the inevitable hardship that is

coming your way.”

I imagine fathers saying to their sons, “Son, I know you hate to dig out the latrine. It’s a smelly, dirty job. But it’s your responsibility once a month, so *take up your cross*. Go dig out the latrine.” I imagine wives saying to their husbands, “My dear, I know how you hate to pay taxes to the Romans. But today our taxes are due, and the Tax Collector is coming up our road right now. So *take up your cross*. Go pay the man.”

Taking up one’s cross is synonymous with self-denial, and Jesus used it in that sense in Matthew 16:24: “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” It could be paraphrased, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him put aside his own agenda, embrace the inevitable hardship that is coming as a consequence of his decision, and follow Me.”

So, true disciples are willing to suffer for the sake of following Jesus. They’ve already counted the cost before they began, and knowing that hardship is inevitable, launched out with determination to finish the race. This interpretation is supported by what Jesus said next about counting the cost of following Him. Two illustrations made His point:

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? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, “This man began to build and was not able to finish.” Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace (Luke 14:28-32).

Jesus’ point could not be clearer: “If you want to be My disciple, count the cost in advance, lest you quit when the going gets rough. True disciples accept the hardship that comes as a result of following Me.”

A Third Requirement

Jesus listed one more requirement of discipleship to the multitudes that day:

So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all His own possessions (Luke 14:33).

Again, it would seem logical to conclude that Jesus was using hyperbole. We don’t need to give up all of our possessions in the sense that we are left without shelter, clothing and food. We must, however, certainly give up all of our possessions in the sense of turning their ownership over to God, and to the degree that we are no longer serving mammon, but serving God *with* our mammon. The result could certainly mean giving up many unnecessary possessions and living a simple life of godly stewardship and sharing, as did the early Christians we read about in the book of Acts. Being Christ’s disciple means obeying His commandments, and He commanded His followers to not lay up treasures on earth, but to lay them up in heaven.

In summary, according to Jesus, if I am to be His disciple, I must bear fruit. I must love Him supremely, much more than even my own family members. I must be willing to face the inevitable hardships that will arise as a result of my decision to follow Him. And I must do what He says with my income and possessions. (And many of His commandments have something to say in this regard, so I must not fool myself, as so many do, saying, “If the Lord told me to do something with all my possessions, I would do whatever He said.”)

And these are the kinds of committed followers of Christ that we as ministers are supposed to be making! That is our God-ordained goal! We are called to be disciple-making ministers!

That is a foundational truth that many ministers around the world are completely missing. If they evaluate their ministries, as I did, they will have to conclude, as I did, that they are falling far short of God's desire and expectation. When I considered the level of commitment to Christ demonstrated by the people of my congregation, I had little doubt that there were many who could not be classified as true disciples.

Pastors, take a look at your congregation. How many of your people does Jesus consider to be His disciples according to His criteria in Luke 14:26-33? Evangelists, is the message you preach producing people who are committing themselves to obey all of Christ's commandments?

Now is the time to evaluate our ministries, before we stand before Jesus at the final evaluation. If I'm falling short of His goal, I'd rather discover it now than then. Wouldn't you?

A Final Sobering Thought

Clearly, Jesus wants people to become His disciples, as revealed by His Words to the multitudes recorded in Luke 14:26-33. How important is it to become His disciple? What if one chooses not to become His disciple? Jesus answered these questions at the close of His discourse in Luke 14:

Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? 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 (Luke 14:34-35).

Notice that this is not an unrelated statement. It begins with the word *therefore*.

Salt is supposed to be salty. That is what makes it salt. If it loses its flavor, it is useless for anything and "thrown out."

What does this have to do with being a disciple? Just as salt is expected to be salty, so Jesus expects people to be His disciples. Since He is God, our only reasonable obligation is to love Him supremely and take up our crosses. If we don't become His disciples, we reject His very reason for our existence. *We are good for nothing and destined to be "thrown out."* That doesn't sound like heaven, does it?

At another time, Jesus said to His *disciples* (see Matt. 5:1):

You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men (Matt. 5:13).

These are sobering warnings indeed. First, only those who are salty (an obvious metaphor for "committed obedience") are of any use to God. The rest are "good for nothing...except to be thrown out and trampled." Second, it must be possible for one who is "salty" to become "unsalty," otherwise Jesus would not have seen any need to warn His disciples. How these truths contradict what so many teach today, saying that one can be a heaven-bound believer in Christ but not be a disciple of Christ, or that it is not possible to forfeit one's salvation status. We'll consider those erroneous ideas in more detail in later chapters.