

Equipping the Saints – Lesson 3 – Building a Relationship

In Lesson 1 and 2 we talked about who the Saints are and What God Expects of the Saints. Now that we know who we are, what are we supposed to do? In this lesson we will discuss the tools and the process for equipping saints and define what saints must do and be.

Approved Tools

There is only one God approved tool to use to teach His bride how to act, what to be, what she should do, where she should go, and how she should conduct herself to be pleasing to God. That would be the Word of God and only the Word of God.

God gave us a personally made User Guide with all the instructions needed to equip His Bride for His purpose. God plainly stated in His Word exactly what He expects and nothing else will be tolerated. Churches, doctrines, or any other type of manmade rules or traditions will not be allowed. Through the centuries manmade traditions have tried to tell us what God wants, by making God's Word of none effect.

Mark 7:13 (NKJV)

¹³ making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

Jesus made it very plain that He doesn't approve of manmade rules, and He won't approve of how humans have decided to dress up His bride for Him. Jesus gave exact specifications on what was required to be in the Bride. He also told His bride to watch and wait for Him to re-appear and take His bride home.

The story of the Ten Virgins shows us that some won't listen to those instructions and when the day comes, they will not be ready. They won't have what God told them to have. They won't think it is important to have oil in their lamps, which by the way is the Holy Ghost, the oil of anointing.

Ecclesiastes 9:8 (NKJV) Let your garments always be white, And let your head lack no oil.

1 John 2:26-27 (NKJV)

²⁶ These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you. ²⁷ But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

Matthew 25:1-13 (NKJV)

¹ “Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. ² Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. ³ Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, ⁴ but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. ⁵ But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. ⁶ “And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ ⁷ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ ¹⁰ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.

¹¹ “Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us!’ ¹² But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’

¹³ “Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

In this story of the Ten Virgins, all ten of them were asleep. The fact that they slept was not a problem. It was the fact that 5 of them didn't take heed to the instructions that they needed to be prepared for what was coming. The only way a saint can miss the point that the Bride Groom is on His way, is if they have their head in the sand. These foolish five thought they could do things their own way and God would open the door for them anyway. Jesus proves in this passage that will not happen. Everything must be done His way, in His time, with His blessing. If you want to know what those are read the Word. He will show you.

Luke 12:56 (NKJV)

⁵⁶ Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time?

There have been a multitude of antichrist through the years that have worked overtime to convince us all the instructions God gave us are not really necessary.

Don't you see your in bondage?
Why do you need to do THAT?
Does it really take all that?
Is that a heaven or hell issue?

The questions go on and on as Satan stacks up the evidence against the saints who don't know the Word of God. If you know the Word of God yourself, it will be impossible for Satan or the traditions of this world, to fool you into believing their false doctrine lies. To know the Word is to Know God.

God is Spirit and the first thing God created was Logos, which is the Word of God. Jesus became flesh and embodied the Word of God. On Mt. Sinai God began to teach His people about Himself, as He gave the words to Moses to write the first 5 books of the Bible.

From that day to this we have been blessed by having the written Word of God within our hands. Traditions will tell you that the book is too hard to read, it's too hard to understand.

They want to tell you what it says and preach to you from scriptures they cherry picked to make them mean what they want to say. Taking scripture out of context is one of the greatest sins. God said don't add to or take away. Forcing the Bible to agree with their fake doctrine is a method of the antichrist that has been used since the Garden of Eden.

Don't be fooled by a snake with a pretty apple. The snake is venomous, and the apple has a rotten core. What looks good to the eyes and feels good to the flesh should be questioned. God's word doesn't patty cake our feel-good spots. God's word is a two-edge sword. Meaning His word will cut you up and expose all the places that evil has embedded itself in your flesh. He sees our thoughts and He knows our hearts. We can't know what is in our hearts but reading the Word will expose those attitudes and motives to us. We then have the choice to repent and correct those things or to continue in our wicked ways, only to hear those words, "I never knew you" as the door slams in our face. Because no matter how hard you try to hide those sins, He sees them and knows they are there. One day you will give an account for every single bad thought, bad action, lie, or whatever sin you took part in. The only way to cover those sins is with the Blood of Jesus. The only way to know how that is done is to study His Word.

Hebrews 4:11-13 (NKJV)

¹¹ Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. ¹² For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Commandments of Men

There are a multitude of books and courses out there to teach new saints or create disciples. There is even more on how to grow a church. You can use the tricks of the world to get people to attend your church. Attenders are not sons of God and will not be included in His Bride. Any source of training or making disciples, that is not completely based on the Word of God, will not produce a disciple that He will claim as His, on Judgement Day.

Paul tells Timothy that he "discipled" him, by living and being an example of the word of God before him and by communicating the word to him.

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2 Timothy 3:10-15 (NKJV)

¹⁰ But **you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith**, longsuffering, love, perseverance, ¹¹ persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra—**what persecutions I endured**. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. ¹² Yes, and **all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution**. ¹³ But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. ¹⁴ But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

God expects us to learn this same way, by watching those around us who have reached the level of a mature fully equipped saint. Once we reach maturity ourselves, He expects us to teach others by being that living example they can learn from. In this way the Word of God comes alive in each of us. We build the kingdom by showing what is possible when you live your life in daily communication with God. This is why the Word of God is the best and only tool to use for maturing us.

1 Peter 3:15-16 (NKJV)

¹⁵ But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; ¹⁶ having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed.

This type of training proves the Word of God to be the truth within the heart of the student. I can tell you all day what God has shown me, but it will never make as much of an impression on you as it will the first time God opens a scripture and explains it to you.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV)

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

This scripture teaches the sufficiency of the Bible. Meaning, that the Bible contains everything we need to know and teaches us to live righteously. The scriptures were given to us by God to equip us to do the work He has called us to do. No other resource is necessary. God uses His word to encourage good works in us just as He uses the Word to correct our bad behavior. The closer you get to God the more He will show you what is not acceptable to Him.

You can join a wide variety of denominations today, and each one will give you a different list of what it takes to become a senior member or whatever their term is for a saint. These are manmade list, and they mean nothing to God. Even the Pentecostal list means nothing to God.

Don't drink. Don't smoke. Don't do drugs.
Women don't cut your hair. Men cut your hair.
Dress modestly.
Be faithful to church.
Pay your tithes.
Be nice.

If you can keep this list on a regular basis, the Pentecostal churches will call you a saint. God doesn't honor this list because it only looks to the outside of a person. God looks to the heart to see what your attitude and motives are. Keeping a list of rules doesn't make you a saint in God's eyes.

Matthew 15:5-9 (NKJV)

⁵ But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God"—⁶ then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. ⁷

Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

⁸ 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth,

And honor Me with their lips,

But their heart is far from Me.

⁹ And in vain they worship Me,

Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' ”

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I am not saying that you should not do the do's and do the don'ts but the point is why are you doing them? If your reasons are to look like a saint and to fit in with the crowd, then your motives are wrong, and your heart is not pure. Just because you don't do those things doesn't make you an approved saint in God's eyes. Motive is everything. If the list of rules the church hands out is your guideline to tell you if you are Holy or not, you have totally missed the point, and the rapture, I might add.

That list of church rules is the same thing that Jesus spoke about so strongly in His ministry, including Teaching as Doctrines the commandments of men

1 Timothy 4:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

These rules that men make and set up as traditions of the church were created by people who had their own conscience seared. Meaning they want to do this thing that Bible said was wrong, so they self-justified their own sin then taught others to do the same. Before long so many people were doing it no one even questioned why. They just did it.

2 Peter 3:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.

God speaks to all of us. When you start getting a feeling something is bad for you or that doing it will cause you harm down the road, listen. That is the voice of God warning you not to do the things that displease Him. He will only warn you so many times. There is a limit. When you reach that limit God will give you the desires of your heart and let you do as you please. At that point you have chosen your sin over God's desires for your life. At that point you have chosen your place in eternity. God didn't choose it for you. He made a way of escape, and you said, "No thank you, I would rather enjoy my sin on this earth now!"

A Function of Time

Isaiah 28:9-13

Becoming a fully equipped saint of God is a process that is only possible through time. That is time spent in God's presence and time spent learning His Word. There are no instant saints. In today's world of microwaves and having it your way, we don't want to commit our time and energy to anything that will take more than a day or week to accomplish. It is impossible to speed up God's defined process for training His saints. The Lord never varies from His principles. EVER. Becoming a fully equipped saint is a lifetime commitment.

Being a saint that God approves of will require changing your life to align with His Word. We must remove the things of this world that drown out the voice of God. Those things are different for every person. I hate sports of any kind. Just the sound of them grates on my nerves. Because of that fact it is no sacrifice for me to give up sports. While God isn't looking for you to make sacrifices for Him, He is looking for you to spend time with Him. If your time is taken up by watching, playing, or focusing on sports then sports has become your God. What you spend your time on and with is your God.

We have to learn to hear the voice of God. The only way to hear the voice of God is to turn off all the other noises in your life. Look around you and take notice of how many things are just noise in your life. The TV, the computer, a video game, appliances, people, or even your environment. All these things make noise and drown out God. There are many other things we allow in our life that produce distractions. Entertainment of any kind is a distraction from the things of God. None of these things are sin unless we allow them to take up so much of our time that we have no time left to spend with God.

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1 John 1:6-7 (NKJV)

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Be careful when you make statements like, “I am too busy to read my Bible”, “I don’t have time to pray.” It’s time for a self-check. What exactly is taking up so much of your time. Do a time study. Write down what you do from the time you get out of bed until you go back to bed. Such as, I woke up at 7:30 AM. Showered, dressed, went to work. Work from 9 to 5. One hour drive home in traffic. From 7 to 8 supper with the family. From 8 to 10 looked at Facebook. At 10 pm I was too sleepy to pray, so I went to bed.

That is an average day for most people. Church goers think they have to schedule a time to kneel down and talk to God. Fully equipped and trained saints understand that they can talk to God at any time, all day, every day. Yes, you can talk to God in the shower. The best prayer meetings are on the road, in traffic. It is certainly much safer to talk to God than it is to text a friend. That just opened up 2 hours a day of time you can spend with God.

As for the time you spend with your family during supper, nothing should stop you from doing that. However, if you are spending your time on your phone, while you should be talking to your family, that just became a sin for you. God expects you to be a caring parent and an example of God’s love in your home. That means you need to dedicate time and attention to your family.

Now the 2 hours on Facebook is an area of sin in your life. Not because Facebook is a sin but because you are doing this instead of praying or studying the Word of God. Spending those two hours helping a child with their homework wouldn’t be a sin in God’s eyes but wasting time for no reason, that adds no value to your life, is a sin. A sin is defined as missing the mark. God’s mark for your life is for you to be a good and faithful servant. Any thing that takes you out of the will God is missing the mark He set for you, thus it is sin.

1 John 1:8-10 (NKJV)

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Ephesians 5:15-17 (NKJV)

¹⁵ See then that you walk **circumspectly**, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶ **redeeming the time**, because the days are evil.

¹⁷ Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

James 1:26-27 (NKJV)

²⁶ If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless. ²⁷ Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to **keep oneself unspotted from the world**.

Experiencing God

1 Peter 2:1-3 (NKJV)

¹ Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, ² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Being a fully equipped saint requires more than just head knowledge. I can know a thing, but it doesn’t become real to me until I experience it. Such as flying. You can watch videos and read books about it. Other people can explain it to you, but nothing will express that feeling when the plane lifts off the ground and you know you are suddenly 35,000 feet in the air. You also can’t explain that feeling when turbulence hits. Or how about how it feels to be on a cruise ship in a bad storm? Or how terrifying it is to hand a baby over to a surgeon to do open heart surgery on them?

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Some things can only be understood when they are experienced. This is true of the deep things of God. People can tell you how great it is when God gives you a revelation about a scripture, but nothing can come close to that feeling when the lightbulb goes off and for the first time you truly understand what that means. Those times of revelation only come when you commit to spending time with God and learning about Him.

Psalms 34:6-10 (NKJV)

⁶ This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him,

And saved him out of all his troubles.

⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him,
And delivers them.

⁸ Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good;

Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

⁹ Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints!

There is no want to those who fear Him.

¹⁰ The young lions lack and suffer hunger;

But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good thing.

When a young couple, who think they are in love, first get married they soon learn they didn't know this person at all. From small things to huge things, there is nothing like living together, and spending time in the same house will teach you about each other. A lot of people don't commit to marriage and therefore they don't make it past this time of testing and learning. If you are just in this for the good times it won't last. If you are not willing to commit to trying, compromising, submitting, admitting you are wrong, trying new things, and apologizing, the marriage will fail. So will your new walk with Jesus.

Jesus requires commitment and complete dedication. Every one of those things that are required to build a strong marriage are required to build a strong relationship with Jesus. All those and more. The number one priority of a fully equipped saint is that we must seek to have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 6:4-6 (NKJV)

⁴ For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

Biblically Valid Relationship

The number one priority of a fully equipped saint is that we must seek to have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. To do that we must be continually growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and His love for us. In order to grow in that grace and knowledge we must spend time in His presence learning about Him.

Think about the relationships in your life. We have around us those we love dearly and then we have those that we might call acquaintances. We know their names and a few things about them. We don't know what makes them angry or what makes them happy. We don't know what their goals are or their purpose in life. If I know you then I understand you and I know what makes you tick. I know what buttons not to push. But if I don't know you then I can easily offend you. My lack of knowledge about you can cause you pain, when I had no intention of doing so.

Our walk with God is the same. If I don't know God, I can't know what makes Him happy or what He considers an abomination. Without meaning to I can offend Him by my actions.

2 Peter 3:17-18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; ¹⁸ but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen

God has never accepted half hearted people in His presence for long. People such as King Saul, who wanted to do things his own way. King Saul chose to ignore the instructions that God gave him personally. Saul was greedy and wanted to keep the best of everything for himself. He was looking to please the people not God. Because of this Saul lost his kingdom and his family but worse he lost his relationship with God.

1 Samuel 9-31

We must put God first in everything we do and think. You have heard people talk about sitting on the fence. Fence sitting is not acceptable to God. If He doesn't have all of you, He doesn't want any of you. No one can truly serve two masters.

Mark 12:29-31 (NKJV)

²⁹ Jesus answered him, "The first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. ³⁰ **And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.** This is the first commandment. ³¹ And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

1 John 4 talks about knowing God through love and seeing God through love. The closer our relationship with God the more we will love those around us. God is love and when you spend time with God that love radiates out from you to everyone else around you. You become a funnel that allows God to express His love through you. How do we know we have love for one another? Examine yourself and your feelings toward those around you. Not just the chosen few but everyone you come in contact with. The more we mature the more that love of God will be reflected through us to others.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NKJV)

⁴ Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

You can't live in fear and God's love at the same time. Fear of anything smothers God's love in your life. If I fear a thing then that thing is bigger than my God. If I fear something it has control of my feelings. Fear is not of God and the more we experience God's true love for us the less we will have to fear from anything this world has to offer.

1 John 4:16-19 (NKJV)

¹⁶ And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

¹⁷ Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. ¹⁸ **There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear,** because fear involves torment. But he who fears **has not been made perfect in love.** ¹⁹ We love Him because He first loved us.

Shame and Pain

To build that strong loving relationship with God we must first deal with the Shame in our lives. The only way to reach full maturity is to have a clear conscience that all we have done or that has been done to us is under the blood. Anything under the blood is gone in God's eyes. But if we still have open bleeding wounds then those things can be held against us. God doesn't remember them, but Satan sure does, and we do. Which in most cases we are our own worst enemy.

We must be healed from the pain of the things we have experienced. We can't live with open bleeding wounds. We must also forgive God for allowing that thing to happen to us. To be free of the torment of those things we must be healed from the inside out.

If there is any pain when you think of those things then you are not fully healed. If there is still unforgiveness or anger, when you think of those things, then you are not healed. If we don't forgive then God can't forgive us. Which means we have to forgive ourselves. Get alone with God and talk to Him about it until He heals you completely. That may be one time, or it may be every day for months. Your salvation depends on it. You will not be able to stand in these last days with wounds the enemy can pour salt into to control you. Be clean. Be healed. Be free.

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2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV)

⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Luke 4:17-19 (NKJV)

¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,

Because He has anointed Me

To preach the gospel to the poor;

He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,

To proclaim liberty to the captives

And recovery of sight to the blind,

To set at liberty those who are oppressed;

¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”

Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted and to free those who are oppressed. To be oppressed means to be subjected to harsh and authoritarian treatment, often involving prolonged unjust control or cruelty. That unjust control takes place in our minds. Our memories hold us hostage. The things within us that have not been healed are open doors for the adversary to attack us.

When you hold on to shame that shame has unjust control over your life. You cannot change what happened, but you can let God heal you. You can't experience the full complete love of God until your heart is clear and whole. Shame puts up a wall in your heart and mind that God can't cross. If He can't reach all of you then the relationship can never be complete.

The reason we can't hold on to the shame is because it gives Satan a foothold in your life. As long as that thing is there, he can use it to control you. The thoughts and feelings we have of shame are crippling to our spirit. It chokes the life out of you. We must let God heal those deep wounds so we can be free. When we are free there is nothing, Satan can use against us but there is also nothing to make us feel like we are too dirty for God to use.

The world will tell you that you must learn to cope with your issues. That is a lie. God can deliver you from the pain of shame. God can heal you. He will not be able to take the memory of those things away, but He can heal how you feel about them. All you have to do is give it to Him. He will do the rest. Then you can move on into what God has called you to do and be.

John 14:30-31 (NKJV)

³⁰ I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, **and he has nothing in Me.** ³¹ But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

Jesus statement here that Satan has nothing in me, means that Jesus's heart and mind are clear of anything Satan can use against him. There is no sin, there is no shame, no oppression, no depression. There is no feeling of "I am not worthy". Therefore, Jesus's heart and mind are clear and clean, and the love of God has free rein to flow through Him.

This is Jesus' goal for our lives. For each of us to be able to say, "Satan has nothing in me to use against me". Jesus never expected us to be sin free and perfect, but He does expect us to be clean and clear of the torment that sin and life's hardships can leave on our soul. This is absolutely not something you can accomplish on your own. These wounds are too deep for you to handle alone. But God can heal anything and everything. He is only waiting for you to decide to put it in His hands.