



## Discipleship Lesson 9 1Q 2014

### Discipling the Powerful

This class and our online class has been actively supporting us in preparing and sharing all the materials, DVDs, Study Guides, etc. I wanted to share some of the feedback we have been getting. I have received more than a thousand emails and letters from around the world thus far, this is just a sampling of some of the feedback we are getting:

*We'd like to order another case of the DVD's, if we might. We've given out the previous case here in California. Now we're heading to Arizona and have relatives and friends there we'd like to share with. Thought you might enjoy some of the feedback we've been getting here with regard to the DVDs.*

*One woman was intrigued when I told her we found the DVD life changing. She watched the whole seminar in one afternoon, and watched it again the next day so she could absorb the points presented. She said she now understands why we found it life changing and was very excited about the message.*

*Another couple, on their own initiative, watched the DVD with a group of eight in their home.*

*We're pretty excited that the videos are being so well received and are praying that those who haven't yet viewed them will sometime in the future.*

*Thanks again for all the wonderful thoughts put forth by your ministry.*

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*I run the English Speaking group of the SDA church here in Freiburg Germany. We have been following your Bible lessons with great interest for a few months now, and they have been the cause for much deep discussion.*

*We would be extremely happy to receive any of the books, dvds and seminars that you have available.*

*They will be used not only for our own study purposes, but also for distribution to the other English speakers and churches here...*

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*Thank you for your Ministry. It has meant a lot to me personally. It has changed my thinking about God and has challenged my belief systems in many respects. There are many statements from you that I am battling with (at a theological and conceptual level at minimum). I am very disappointed that many in our Church are not willing to consider the perspective that you have studied in great detail. It really does offer tangible answers to many of the "difficult questions" most of us struggle with (e.g. why does a loving God let innocent children die ?).*

*Yes, we have our own set of lenses whereby we view God and the world around us. Our son passed away 4 years ago (he was 3.5 years), so we have had our own battle with this question. Ironically, this experience drew us closer to God and has led us to become born-again Christians. Our study of the book of Job led us to understand there is a great battle raging in a realm that we can't see, but are intrinsically part of. We understood the Great Controversy even before we studied the book by the same title. Our studies have led us to the Seventh Day Adventist Church. We were baptised 3 years ago. I therefore find it difficult that in our own Church, the Character of God is so misrepresented (i.e. non Biblical or seen through lenses that of the wrathful God).*

*The view that God has led you, brings a refreshing perspective about Him that appeals to my belief that God is*



*love, that He REALY cares for us and REALY wants to saves all of us. I also enjoy the balanced view that He created certain constructs/Laws of nature that we are "bound" to. The law of love, if broken breaks the circle of love and trust, and therefore damages our relationship with Him (and others around us). I truly believe that God's will is to change our hearts (to restore in us love and trust), to save us from sin, while we are still at the mercy of the consequences of sin.*

*I recognize that email is not the best forum for these discussions, nor is English my first language. The bottom-line is that I want to encourage you to continue to spread His story. The Gospel of Jesus. The one that brings people closer to the real God, through the Holy Spirit's ministrations and through the lens of a living and loving Jesus that came to exemplify God's character on earth.*

*I have worked through "Healing the mind" and I am eager to learn more. I have distributed a number of copies of your first book to Church members (with mixed results I am afraid ;)).*

*Would you be able to ship the new DVDs to South Africa?*

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*People have been getting restless minds because Of These DVD Seminars. - California*

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*I received one of your copies of the three seminars and I am having a hard time in trying to keep them. Several my friends would like a copy of them. Could you send me 20 copies so I can pass them out to our leaders in our church. -Massachusetts*

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*Wow, all the DVDs are free?! I don't know how you can afford it, but I would love to have all three sets. - Maryland*

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*I am a Juvenile prison Chaplain. I work for the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice. At the request of one of our volunteers I read your book The God Shaped Brain. I was challenged theologically, and confronted with a lot of great meditation material. All I know for sure is that the things that you speak about would do a lot to help the 165 bruised, broken, abused, neglected and genetically challenged male youth who reside within our razor wired prison fences. For that reason I am asking that you would send me your series, "God And Your Brain."*

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*I have watched GOD AND YOUR BRAIN DVD you graciously sent me multiple times, and i realize that our church, needs to know this new enlightenment about our brain how it works. May I request again to have more copies, at least 10 of them if there are more left available. We will use this as one the tools for church planting in our city. Thank you very much. Canada*

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*I just received the dvds today. Thank you so much. Dr. Jennings' seminars have been such a blessing to me. I am beginning to see God the Father as He really is... A God of Love....love beyond anything our finite minds can fathom. I am so thankful for the light about God's love that Dr. Jennings is sharing in his seminars and books. I am reading "The God Shaped Brain". What a wonderful book!!! I got it on Amazon. I will read it all the way through from cover to cover. It vindicates God's true character as our loving heavenly Father. Truly a God of Love. I am learning so much from Dr Jennings. This message is for the last days. It should be preached in every church. So many people would turn to God if they only knew how He really is. I am grateful for this ministry and will be praying for it and that the message will be spread everywhere. God bless all of you.... - California*

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*I have sat at the feet of some pretty impressive and Godly people; Maxwell, Anderson, Stone, Ellquist, Gothard, are some of the names. These are human heroes I've met and whom I long to meet again. And as refreshed and encouraged as I've been by all these and more, Tim Jennings has thrown open a window the size of the whole wall on the sunny side of the room. Its like I had cataract surgery of the mind! I'm really almost speechless. - California*

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*All three cases arrived within the last few days, and I have begun to share the DVD sets. Having the connection between scripture, science, and experience outlined so clearly makes seeking Truth a freeing rather than a scary or depressing experience. For the last couple of decades, God has been leading me to find truth through scripture and my experience. Looking back now, I see that He was using science as well, but I really hadn't recognized its part of the process. Seeing the Venn Diagram model of Truth incorporating all three avenues of God's revelation cleared so many things up for me! I am no longer at the mercy of those whose views take into account only one or two of God's avenues of revealing Himself and His truth. How freeing that is! – Oregon*

These are just some of the emails we are getting. The message about God and His character and methods of love is changing lives and I want thank you each of you for your contribution and support in helping us share this message and encourage you to continue pressing forward, promoting this message as lives are being healed and minds are being set free.

I also want to make a personal request – I will be in an out throughout the year as different groups have scheduled me to come speak and present this material in their community. My request – don't let this class disintegrate if I am not here. Some people have suggested that this class is a Dr. Jennings' personality cult – rather than a group of people committed to this message about God. I know you don't follow me, you love the truth about God we cherish in this class.

## **SUNDAY**

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Read first paragraph, “Over the long...” thoughts?

What gives rulers the right to rule? Has anyone heard of “The Divine Right of Kings?” It was a theory from the middle ages that monarchs received their right to rule from God and as such could only be judged by God. Therefore, they were not subject to any court, law, church, or aristocracy.

This idea was supported particularly by Protestants as a way of diminishing the power of the Pope over the state.

King James I of England was a strong supporter of this idea and of course is the Monarch who commissioned the King James Bible.

Thoughts about this theory? Are kings above the law? Do monarchs have divine rights and can only be judged by God?

Interestingly, this idea has its roots, not in the Bible, but comes from Roman law. Doesn't it fit with Roman, imposed law, that a human ruler could have such absolute, arbitrary power? Who presents



God as ruling like this, absolute power, above all accountability, answerable to no one, creating rules without inherent consequence that required God to be the inflictor of punishment and pain to breakers of His rules.

This is an historic view from our church, from RH, February 18, 1890 par. 2:

Satan had accused God of requiring self-denial of the angels, when he knew nothing of what it meant himself, and when he would not himself make any self-sacrifice for others. This was the accusation that Satan made against God in heaven; and after the evil one was expelled from heaven, he continually charged the Lord with exacting service which he would not render himself. Christ came to the world to meet these false accusations, and to reveal the Father.

And this is from RH, September 7, 1897 par. 4:

As one in holy office, he [Lucifer] manifested an overbearing desire for justice, but it was a counterfeit of justice, which was entirely contrary to God's love and compassion and mercy.

What was the kind of justice, that was counterfeit, that Lucifer alleged God must perform? From the same author, the historic SDA view, found in DA 761:

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. **Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan;** and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. When men broke the law of God, and defied His will, Satan exulted. It was proved, he declared, that the law could not be obeyed; man could not be forgiven. Because he, after his rebellion, had been banished from heaven, Satan claimed that the human race must be forever shut out from God's favor. God could not be just, he urged, and yet show mercy to the sinner. {DA 761.4}

Satan presents God as a God who inflicts punishment for disobedience. This is false justice. This is the justice that stems from imposed law, this is the justice that created beings invent, because created beings can only impose rules, and then impose punishments for the rules they have created.

But the Creator operates on a different plane of existence. He constructs, He builds, He designs, He creates the very fabric of the cosmos, the protocols upon which all life, all nature operates. His laws are not imposed rules, but the design parameters for life itself.

Thus God's justice is the justice of restoration, healing, recreation, renewal, and allowing those deviant, who refuse healing, to reap what they have sewn.

But Satan alleges God is like human rulers, who impose rules and answers to no one.

But when we think about the divine right of kings, this idea that rulers are not subject to law, that only works when we accept the false view of law, imposed rules. Why? Because a ruler is still subject to the laws of health, the laws of nature, the law of liberty, and in fact, it was the violation by rulers of



the law of liberty, the abuse of liberty, that led to the rebellion of their subjects and the revolutions that eventually destroyed the divine right of kings doctrine.

If kings and rulers would have understood God's law, as the design protocol, and not operated upon the Roman concept of imposed law, perhaps they would have won the love and support of their subjects.

The lesson asks what is the best form of government, any thoughts? Does it matter the situation? What form of government is best in a sinless world versus a sinful world?

Do we govern children different than mature adults? Do immature adults need different governing than mature adults?

What is the difference? Which group gets more freedom? When liberties are being restricted by governments, what is the driving force? Is it love or fear? And is the government making rules for the most mature in society or the most impaired?

When speed limits are posted, are those limits for the best cars, with the best suspension, traction, and handling, with the most experienced drivers, or for the worse cars, with the worse handling and least experienced drivers?

In other words, the laws are on the dumb side of the population curve, for the most immature, the most ignorant, the least capable.

So what is the best form of government? In my opinion? Self-government in harmony with God's design! In Galatians we are told that when the Holy Spirit has His way in our lives we get certain traits of character the last is, "self-control" or self-government, the Greek, *enkratia* en – within, crat, like democrat, autocrat, means to exercise authority or control. Thus, the best form of government is a government in which all inhabitants are self-governing, operating upon God's original design, the law of love! Thus, the new covenant, the new plan, the new agreement, the new government God will have with His people?

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel  
after that time, declares the Lord.  
I will put my laws in their minds  
and write them on their hearts.  
I will be their God,  
and they will be my people.  
No longer will a man teach his neighbor,  
or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,'  
because they will all know me,  
from the least of them to the greatest. (Heb 8:10,11)

Thoughts?



Read Romans 13:1-7:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. <sup>2</sup> Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. <sup>3</sup> For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. <sup>4</sup> For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. <sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience.

<sup>6</sup> This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. <sup>7</sup> Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Are all governments and leaders set up by God? Did God set up Adolf Hitler, Stalin, Hussein, Pol Pot?

Are such leaders the leaders God Himself chose? Or, does God allow humans to reap what they choose? When they choose to deviate from His plan, to value human and Satanic values, they love and prefer leaders who share such debased values and methods?

Why would God allow such leaders to ever get power and hurt so many innocents?

Because intelligent beings can be fooled by lies, flattery, innuendo, and the only way to expose a liar once the liar is loved and trusted is to what? Let the liar expose himself. Let the methods of the liar be carried to its conclusion.

Parents, how many times have you had to let your children experience something because they would not learn because you told them? Whether it be not to eat too many pieces of pie lest they get sick, to something more serious?

Once intelligent beings have believed a lie, only overwhelming evidence will displace the lie.

Thoughts about obeying human governments? The lesson asked in the first paragraph, "Should we always obey the governments?" What do you think in light of this Romans 13 passage?

Does this Bible passage give much leeway? Was the government of Rome a respecter of human rights? What is going on? Do the instructions of God change from time and place?

Read second paragraph, "Oppression and brutality..." thoughts?



Were Jesus' actions in the temple civil disobedience? I would not characterize it as such, but as theological correction. They were misrepresenting God in the service instituted by God to reveal His character. Jesus intervened to set the lesson right.

Why didn't Jesus go to the various pagan worship centers and overthrow their false worship tables, and idols etc?

What is the big point then? Jesus never taught, nor did His disciples practice, politics or attempts to reform earthly governments. Jesus taught explicitly that His kingdom was not of this world. Is the church on mission or off mission when it gets involved in promoting political agendas?

Should the church seek to control the state or seek to convert the hearts of men?

Is there a difference between the church mobilizing its membership and using its resources for political agenda, and a Christian relying on his relationship with God to give him wisdom in how he votes and acts as a citizen? For instance, if individuals in political office were converted to God's methods and operated like Daniel, would those individuals bring God's principles into the way they govern? Is that the same as the church seeking to control the state?

What method uses coercive tactics? What would lead Christians to want to use the state to legislate laws to force non-believers to practice lifestyle in harmony with Christian beliefs?

Where is the balance between granting liberty and promoting God's values and principles?

When societies make laws, where to draw the line? What laws intrude into personal conscience, and what laws are appropriate for social order?

- What about laws that require parents to get medical treatment for their children who are under 18, including antibiotics even if they believe such decisions violate God's will?
- What about laws that make it illegal to smoke hallucinogens, such as peyote, when it is part of certain religious rights to some American Indians?
- What about drafting individuals into the armed forces?
- What about laws regarding marriage and adoption?
- What about prohibition?
- What about legalizing marijuana, not just by prescription for medicinal uses, but for recreational use?
- What about blue laws, requiring stores to close for business on Sunday?
- What about restricting the sales of alcohol on Sunday?
- What about restricting the sales of alcohol and tobacco in your community?

Are there any lessons from history regarding states that try to enforce religious code upon people with a different belief system?

- Crusades
- Inquisition



- Witch burnings

What principles did Christ and His Apostles use? What do you think is the proper role for the church in today's world?

Can we win people to God's kingdom by force? What about by coercion, sanctions, believe in God or you cannot trade with America?

## MONDAY

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Read first paragraph, "Unfortunately, some of..." thoughts

Is there a lesson in this for us? Throughout history has the state or the church been more active in opposing the gospel? Certainly, there have been some states that have opposed the gospel – Rome – initially through legal and military opposition, and later through infection of its ideas into the church, Communism, but throughout the landscape of human history, who has done more to obstruct the truth of God, civil powers or religious powers?

Isn't it interesting that the very institution set up by God, can become infected with beliefs and ideas that result in that institution misrepresenting God and opposing His methods, principles and agents?

What would cause people who claim to be on God's side to end up opposing Him?

Would it be, not actually knowing God and His methods? Wouldn't it be accepting false ideas about who God is, what He is like, what His law is, what His justice looks like and then practicing those false ideas?

What about today? How did Christ deal with religious leaders, who held to wrong God concepts, in His day? Did He or the Apostles spend time seeking out theological debates with the religious leaders? Did they seek out the religious leaders to get their approval of their message?

What did they do? They went to the people with the message of truth and how did religious leaders respond? They became threatened and used what tactics?

- They misrepresented Jesus – saying He had a demon
- They threatened people with disfellowship
- They accused Jesus of denying traditional beliefs
- They tried to twist Scripture to undermine Jesus' message
- They twisted Jesus words to make it appear He said things He didn't actually say
- They sought to confuse his followers
- They refused to embrace the truths and principles He taught

When they did confront Christ, seeking Him out to force a discussion, how did Jesus deal with them?



- He discerned their purpose, on the occasion when a person legitimately sought to find out the true intention of the law Jesus validated him
- But, when they were trying to trick Him He let them entrap themselves. When they asked by what authority He was teaching He said He would tell them if they would first answer His question, and He asked them by what authority was John's baptism....
- Other times He spoke in parables and had them incriminate themselves

The leaders in Christ's day had problems with authority – they believed authority rested in position, tradition, status, wealth, or the written word. They refused to recognize Jesus as authoritative,

- because He held no church office,
- because He was not taught in their theology department,
- because He didn't have a theology degree
- because He was not wealthy or come from a connected family
- because He didn't promote their traditions and man made rules
- because He wasn't exclusive and egotistical, he loved the non-Jews

What makes Jesus authoritative?

When an expert witness is called in to testify on a subject, what makes them an “authority” or authoritative? It is their knowledge of the subject matter. To the degree they can communicate reality/truth accurately they are authoritative.

Thus, truth, fact, reality is authoritative and God is truth, Jesus is the truth, the Word made flesh. But they refused to recognize it.

Today, many people suffer the same problem, they falsely believe authority comes from position. So if someone is pastor, conference president, chair department of theology, bishop, cardinal, pope – then by right of position what they say is authoritative.

This was one of the arguments put forth when we met with local church leaders. How could I question the senior pastor, he is the “Lord's anointed.”

Position doesn't make what one says true and only truth is authoritative. This is why I tell my patients, when I give them a copy of my first book, “Never believe anything because it is written in a book. Believe it only after you have thought it through, examined the evidence for yourself and found it to be true.”

The last paragraph states, “Finally, the miracles...” thoughts? What about miracles? What role should they play in our pursuit of truth? Are miracles reliable indicators of truth? Why or why not?

**TUESDAY**

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The lesson notes that while most of the time Jesus' encounters with those in power ended "acrimoniously" that there are exceptions. They cite Nicodemus.

Thoughts about Nicodemus? What positive things can we say about him?

- He was willing to inquire
- He was willing to consider new ideas
- He was willing to be taught
- He was willing to follow new truth
- He was willing to admit he was wrong
- He was willing to accept Jesus, after investigation
- He didn't convert on emotions
- He didn't convert for political expediency
- He didn't convert to please others
- He didn't convert to avoid punishment

Then the lesson asks us to examine the centurion, He didn't need Christ to come personally; he only need Christ to command it and he believed it would be so. Thoughts about his faith? Where do you think this man's faith originated?

## WEDNESDAY

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The last sentence of the first paragraph states, "Whatever judgment they pronounce against Christ is ultimately the judgment they pronounce against themselves." Thoughts?

Why is it that the measure we use to judge others is the measure that is used to judge us?

Because our judgment of others is actually a reflection of the motives, character, principles and methods of our own heart. This is natural law at work. Our actions toward others reveal the very attributes of our own character. Do we promote mercy and love or vengeance and punishment? Do we operate on Design law, seeking to heal and restore, or imposed law seeking to stone and execute?

How do we represent God as judge and His judgments? Do we represent Him as a being who inflicts punishment and vengeance or do we represent Him as the Great Physician who intervenes in love with therapeutic judgments designed to heal?

Read last paragraph, "Likewise, Christ's..." thoughts?

What is the relationship between prayer and outcomes? Are we to pray for what we want? Are we to have any qualifiers? Do we allow, in our prayer life, for possibilities beyond our awareness and invite God to intervene to bring about His purposes, even overruling our request if He knows better? Or do we insist and plead for certain outcomes?

What does it mean to call listeners to a decision? A decision about what?



The classic question is “are you saved?” Do you like this question? Why or why not? Where does this question put the emphasis? Any better questions?

How about instead of asking people if they are saved, we instead ask, Do you know God – personally, as a friend? Do you walk with Him daily? Do you trust Him with your life, your eternal life? Do you trust outcomes to Him? Do you know Him well enough that you love Him and open your heart to Him inviting Him in all day long?

Are these better questions? Where is the focus? It is on God and our relationship with Him.

The “are you saved question” focuses on self and what must I do, and we too often boil it down to some formula that people can go through without ever actually coming to know God as Jesus revealed.

## **THURSDAY**

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Read first paragraph, “Christ’s earliest...” thoughts?

Notice they met in various places, but they didn’t actually have church buildings for worship until around 320 AD when Constantine outlawed home churches and required Christians worship in the worship centers set up by the state, which were the pagan worship centers, recently modified for Christians. This introduced the professional speaker, and moved Christian worship from community, discussion, fellowship, sharing, to spectators being entertained by the “Spiritual elite” who merit the special robes and elevated podiums.

Thoughts? Any impact on how we see God? Any impact on church parishioner relationships? Any impact on church leadership?

The lesson points out that political motives were frequently the motive for the rejection of the gospel and God’s witnesses. Do we have problems like that today?

Are politics limited to the state or are there politics within the church structure?

## **FRIDAY**

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The lesson points out that the powerful are often the most difficult to witness to, why might that be? What are some of the obstacles?

- Inaccessibility
- Guardedness of the powerful, conditioned to anticipate requests
- Star-struck mindset of the person witnessing – not treating them as equal?
- Fear of rejection by the powerful or just the opposite an over zealous belief in the need to “witness” to the powerful