

Lesson 3

The Book of Acts



If you were to write a journal about your life, what would you write in it?

Recap from previous lesson:

When we received the Holy Spirit, we became living stones, a royal priesthood; disciples whose lives are to become living sacrifices on a daily basis. We are all equally empowered by the Holy Spirit and need to learn how to walk in what He has given us.

We do not need a special gift to do ministry work. As a new born again believer, we already have everything we need.

1 The Five-fold Ministry

Apostle, Pastor, Evangelist, Teacher, Prophet

Ephesians 4:11 and he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers

God appoints people in the body of Christ in the fivefold ministry who have a greater ability to operate in a particular gift associated to that appointment. The gift is for the whole body of Christ and not just for that person. It is not given to raise him to a higher state of spiritual gifting over other believers.

If a person is appointed to the office of a prophet, he has a greater responsibility to teach the body of Christ how to prophecy. Similarly, an evangelist has the responsibility to teach others how to share the gospel etc.

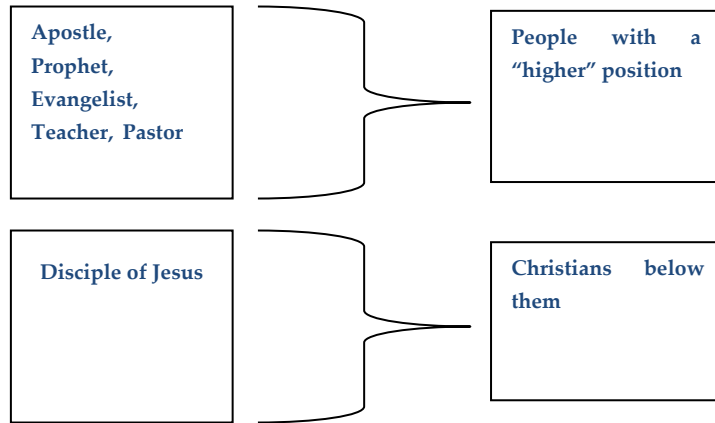
The fivefold ministry was created to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

Looking at the fivefold ministry, some Christians covet one of the gifts so that they can be called a prophet or an evangelist. When you believe in Jesus, you are called to be a disciple of Jesus first before you are called to anything else.

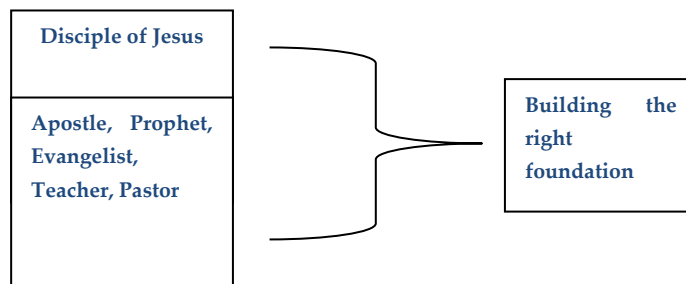
The fivefold ministry is not a position, it's a function. As a disciple of Jesus, you will function stronger in certain areas of the fivefold ministry than others. Because we have the gift of the Holy Spirit, all of the functions are present and we do not choose which one of the functions we want.

We see the fivefold ministry, apostle, prophet, evangelist, teacher, and pastor wrongly as positions and in higher positions than the rest of the disciples.

The way we see the fivefold ministry:



When we understand the fivefold ministry as a function, it helps form the foundation that builds up each disciple for the work of the ministry.



2 Christian or Disciple?

Discussion: Can you call yourself a Disciple of Jesus?

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

2 Corinthians 5:20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God

Scripture teaches us that we are ambassadors for Christ. The word ambassador has great significance and Wikipedia defines it as follows:

“An ambassador is an official envoy, especially a highest ranking diplomat who represents a state and is usually accredited to another sovereign state, or to an international organization as the resident representative of their own government or sovereign or appointed for a special and often temporary diplomatic assignment”

As ambassadors, we have both the right and responsibility, to represent the Kingdom of God with full authority. We live under the Kingdoms’ laws in a foreign country.

The authority to carry out the assignment is given to us when we become followers of Jesus. In Bible terms, we should refer to ourselves as disciples of Jesus rather than Christians. Look at the scriptures:

Matthew 28: 18-20 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

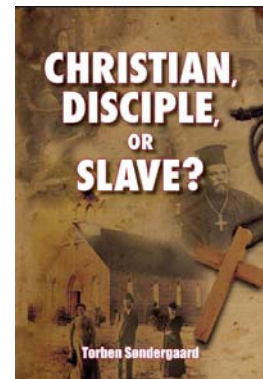
The word “disciple” is used by Jesus and throughout the New Testament over 200 times. The word Christian only 3 times and the first time was almost 11 years after the resurrection of Christ.

The word “Christian” was a nickname given to the disciples, because they were doing all that Jesus was doing and were seen as being little Christs. The word “Christian” means “little Christ”.

In order for us to function effectively as disciples of Jesus, the church was given the fivefold ministry functional gifts. If we need to grow in the area of prophesying, we seek the prophet to teach us how to prophecy.

Recommended reading:

[Christian, Disciple or Slave](#) by Torben Sondergaard



3 The Book of Acts

As taught in Lesson 2, the only book in the Bible which shows Holy Spirit led lives (besides Jesus' life in the gospels) is the book of Acts.

In Acts we read about Peter, Paul and Timothy etc. It's the second letter written by Luke, after the book of Luke.

He started both his letters addressed to the most honourable Theophilus. Scholars believe Theophilus was the lawyer who was taking Paul to court in Rome. Luke was trying to give the background about Jesus and the disciples from the time the Holy Spirit came.

You read about many things prior to Paul's conversion. After he is saved, the rest of Acts is mostly details about Paul's life but not much about the rest of the disciples. Therefore the book of Acts is about the journey of Paul.

4 The life of a Disciple

In Luke 10, Cornelius saw an angel who tells him to call for Peter. Prior to this, Peter saw a vision where God told him to go the gentiles. Without receiving this vision, Peter would never have shared the gospel with a non-Jew.

When Peter obeys and shares the gospel, the Holy Spirit falls on the entire household of Cornelius with the evidence of speaking in tongues. Peter immediately baptized them in water.

Is Jesus the same yesterday, today and forever? According to scripture He is, so we should have similar experiences to Peter's today. We should see visions, be led by Holy Spirit and share the gospel etc.

Discussion: Why don't we see this happening in our lives?

Many Christians today are waiting to be led by the Holy Spirit to approach someone and pray for them or share the gospel with them. Nowhere in scripture does it tell us to wait. Jesus said go...so we just need to go.

For example, in Acts chapter 8, Philip went to Samaria. He did not go there because the Holy Spirit told him to go. He went there because he was running away from persecution. When he got to Samaria, many miracles and healings happened.

In Acts 9:10, there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord."

Ananias was not one of the first disciples and we know nothing about him. He was led by the Holy Spirit to go to Saul. He obeyed and Saul was saved, baptized and became one of the foremost advancers of the gospel.

What is special about Ananias is the following:

- He got a vision
- He was led by Holy Spirit
- He heard God Speak
- He healed the sick
- He led Paul to salvation
- He baptized him in water
- He baptized him with Holy Spirit.

This showed us one day in the diary of Ananias.

Do you think the things that Ananias experienced that day, were the only supernatural things he experienced in his whole life? He could have had many experiences like this.

We don't read about these experiences or many of the other disciples' experiences in the book of Acts. It was not written to show the lives of all of the disciples but about the life of Paul.

The Bible could have had a book for each one of the disciples and the 3000 other disciples that came into the kingdom on the day of Pentecost with all the supernatural things they experienced daily. We, who have been baptized into Jesus and filled with the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, can experience the same things. We can, similarly

- Have visions
- Be led by Holy Spirit
- Hear God speak
- Heal the sick
- Lead people to salvation
- Baptize people in water
- Baptize people with Holy Spirit

5 Your Diary

If we were to write our own diaries today, would they compare to Ananias' or Paul's diary or more to those around us? Being a Holy Spirit filled disciple, we can expect God to give us visions, lead us etc. There is so much more in Jesus, than just being a Sunday morning church attendee. We need to start our own diary today.