

GOING DEEPER



*Exploring three areas in which
every Christian can experience
more of God and His
eternal purposes*

Steve Highlander

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Copyright

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About the Book

Using the analogy of deep sea diving, *Going Deeper* looks at three areas in which Christians can go deeper in intimacy with God, gain a greater revelation of the eternal plans and purposes of God and combine these into a greater service for God. The reader will be challenged break free from complacency in their spiritual lives and long for a deeper experience in the things of God.

About the Author

Steve Highlander has been a dedicated Christian since 1980 and has spent over 30 years in the ministry garnering a wide variety of ministerial experience.

He has served as pastor of four churches and was one of three founding pastors/elders of Christ's Church of Nevada (MO - USA) a non-traditional church started in 2009.

He has years of experience as chaplain for at-risk youth in private and state-run mental health facilities and the Missouri National Guard ShowMe Challenge boot camp program for at-risk teens. He has held nearly 500 services inside a medium and minimum security prison and led hundreds of Bible studies in county jails in Missouri.

As a multi-media professional he produced and spoke on two Christian radio programs, created The Real News Review, a Christian newspaper (print and electronic editions) and created and published The Encourager, a digital Christian magazine.

Steve has a Doctorate in Pastoral Theology, holds three ordinations and is a certified Christian Counselor.

Currently he and his wife Brooke, who holds a Masters in Organizational and Industrial Psychology and a Doctorate in Christian Counseling, are serving on the mission field in Papua New Guinea working with at-risk young men, battered women and abused children. They are also involved in leadership development, encourage local churches and present seminars on a variety of subjects.

Preface - Please read

Any message is necessarily limited by time and space, either the clock on the sanctuary wall or the pages in a book. Even The apostle John suggested that the world could not contain the books if everything Jesus said and did were written down. This booklet is no exception. I have purposely left out quite a few things that some might think should be included. This essay is not meant to be a definitive work by any means, but perhaps more of a pre-primer.

There are many, both past and present, who have delved much deeper into the things of God than I have. I claim no special place among those saints. In fact I would love to sit at their feet and listen to the wonders they have seen and be inspired to go even deeper myself. My goal is simply to spark a greater hunger in each reader.

Depending on your present point of view and where you are in your spiritual journey you might think I am promoting self-effort, or that I am not promoting enough spiritual discipline. The fact is that neither of these thoughts is true. Revelation must be combined with spiritual discipline. It is not necessarily true that one comes before the other in every case. It is more of a merry-go-round than a slide, as one side of the equation tends to support and enhance the other. It is said of Abraham that when he was called to leave his country and family that he believed and obeyed. The sovereign call of God must be accompanied by our obedience.

I could have spent much more time talking about the value of spiritual techniques (speaking in tongues, worship, prayer, fasting, etc.) but I didn't for a reason. That is not the point of this booklet. I trust the Holy Spirit to lead you on these matters. The truth of the matter is that a legalistic approach to "Going Deeper" will not produce anything of spiritual value. So, with these preliminary thoughts in mind to guide your reading and (hopefully) give you an idea of my motive and intent, I truly pray that you are blessed and encouraged to seek God for a deeper experience in God, His eternal purposes and His plan for your life.

Steve Highlander
Papua New Guinea
2015

Going Deeper

Mankind has always been fascinated with breaking records. We love adjectives like: bigger, better, faster, longer, higher, deeper and such. We make “Hall of Fame” lists for a wide variety of accomplishments. Our record boards go back years –and sometimes decades –with the names of record holders. There is something inherent in man to try to outdo himself and everyone else.

Since our topic is “Going Deeper,” I was interested in doing a little research on deep sea diving records. The deepest dive with SCUBA gear was made by Ahmed Gabr in 2014. Gabr made it to a depth of 1,089 ft. The deepest dive with experimental SCUBA equipment and a special trimix of breathable air was made by Comex Hydra 8 Divers. They worked on a pipeline at a depth of 1752 feet. The deepest dive in an atmospheric suit was made by a US Navy diver in 1988. He reached a depth of 2000 feet.

There has even been some experimentation with “liquid breathing,” or immersing a person in an oxygen-rich fluid that fills their lungs and allows them to “breathe” liquid; thus allowing for much deeper dives. The movie *The Abyss* featured this futuristic technique.

The truth is, “going deeper” requires desire, dedication, resources, effort, experience, training and ‘special equipment’ at times. It is not for the faint of heart or the casual weekend diver. It is only for those who want to push the limits to see what is beyond the commonly explored areas of God’s universe.

Likewise, “Going Deeper in God” is not for the self-satisfied, casual Christian. It requires more of a person in terms of passion if they want to explore spiritual discipline and the practical exercise of spiritual principles. It requires a greater level of humility, faith, perseverance and even desire than most people are willing to invest. Yet the rewards are incredible.

**“Going Deeper in God” is not for
self-satisfied, casual Christian.**

The famous healing evangelist of the 1970's, Kathryn Kuhlman, received a lot of negative response because she was a woman minister. Her reply was, "I was not God's first choice, but God could not find a man who was willing to pay the price."

It reminds me of the scripture describing Israel's sinfulness, which required judgement, yet God still desired mercy. Through the prophet Ezekiel God said, "So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one." Eze. 22:30 NJKV

If God were seeking people today to cooperate with him in His eternal plan, would He find them?

Would you be available?

He is!

Are you?

Before we go further a word of warning is required:

Record breaking is a passion of mankind. It is about competition. It is about ego. It is about being recognized as being the best at something. There is no room for this type of spiritual competition in the Body of Christ! Going deeper in God is not about competing with others. It is not to go deeper in God than anyone else has gone so we can claim some experience or revelation, and thus be recognized as a "spiritual giant".

Going deeper in God is a spiritual challenge to our own contentment and complacency in our individual lives. There is a time (usually several in our life with Christ) in which a person reaches a point where they think (perhaps subconsciously), "I have arrived. I am spiritual." It is at that point that they plateau spiritually for a period of time. That doesn't mean they are backsliding or not being fruitful. It just means that personally, they have ceased to "Go Deeper." The truth is, they may be way ahead of the others around them, spiritually speaking. However, the Apostle Paul admonished us in II Corinthians 10:

For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. II Corinthians 10:12 KJV

Remember, going deeper is about our own spiritual walk with God. We often know more than we practice. This is necessary because, unless I know a spiritual principle, I cannot develop it in my life. However, there comes a time when I have to start growing again. The danger in plateauing is that we sometimes fail to get started again; resting on our laurels, so to speak.

As God spoke this word to my heart, the Holy Spirit began to remind me of Bible verses that speak of the “deep things of God.” Verses such as:

“O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!”
Romans 11:33 KJV

“But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” I Corinthians 2:10
KJV

“He reveals deep and secret things;” Daniel 2:22 NKJV

“Deep calls unto deep at the noise of your waterspouts.” Psalm 42:7 KJV

These verses, and others like them, challenge us with three thoughts:

1. God is so deep there is no legitimate place for a person to stop and become self-satisfied and complacent with their current relationship, knowledge and experience in God.
2. God wants to show us the depths of His being, His eternal plans and purposes, His rich wisdom, mercy and righteousness, “through His Spirit.”
3. To “go deeper” requires recognition, desire, determination and commitment on our part.

The rest of this study will look at these three challenges.

The Depth of God

It goes without saying: God is infinite. There is a big difference between everlasting and immortal. Or, we might say, between everlasting and eternal. I once heard a preacher say that a sermon did not have to be everlasting to be eternal. A part of man is immortal – the soul/spirit part

of him (or her) will live forever somewhere we are told. However, every man had a beginning – God did not. God reveals himself as being from “everlasting to everlasting.”

Man is finite. God is infinite! It is foolishness for mankind to assume that they can ever totally understand God in this life. This isn't to say that we cannot know a depth of God, or that there isn't continually more to know. It simply means that there is no place to stop, hang our hats, cross our arms and say, “I've got it.”

The Word of God has a strange way of humbling us. The more we know about the Word, the more we understand what we don't know. Those who have “acquired knowledge,” but are not humbled by it, have only acquired knowledge; they have not acquired wisdom.

Again Paul tells us, “We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes people arrogant, but love builds people up. If anyone thinks they know something, they don't yet know as much as they should know.” I Corinthians 8:1 CEB

The Bible speaks of the depths of God's love, wisdom, righteousness, thoughts and more. It challenges us to know God in a deeper and more life-altering way.

A big danger here is to assume that theological knowledge is what we (and God) want. God wants us to know HIM. When Jesus prayed in John 17 He stated the truth, “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” NJKV

We are saved by a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Theology is just our best attempt to explain that relationship. Theology can become an idol that hinders us from true relationship with God. Jesus said we would know “The Truth” and “The Truth” would set us free.” Jesus is “The Way, The Truth, and The Life.”

Let us be careful not to exalt our understanding of theology over our relationship with Jesus. Degrees, titles, positions and the acclamation of men mean very little if they are not born out of a hunger for and an intimacy with God. Spiritual pride is the worst kind of pride.

**Let us be careful not to
exalt our understanding
of theology over our**

relationship with Jesus.

There are at least three areas where we can go deeper in God.

Going Deeper in Intimacy with God.

The first area we can go deeper is with God Himself. God longs for an intimate relationship with each of His children.

The key disciplines that draw us closer to God personally are prayer, worship and Bible study. Like a three-legged stool, all three are necessary for a balanced Christian life. To neglect one means the others are over-emphasized (or possibly neglected also).

Worship brings us into realms of spiritual warfare and the prophetic. But, without the balance of a solid understanding and practical application of the Word of God, it is easy to get off track with personal experiences, revelations and prophecies that are not founded in the Bible.

Bible study, without worship and prayer, will cause us to become legalistic, judgmental and harsh; people end up become Biblicists and not Christians. They become like the Pharisees of Jesus' time that "strained a gnat and swallowed a camel."

Prayer provides the outworking of power to everything we do as Christians. Without prayer our Bible study becomes tedious and legalistic and our worship becomes fleshly and shallow.

Prayer without the balancing impact of spiritual worship and guidance from the word can become powerless, boring and routine very quickly.

If prayer, worship or bible study has become more of a duty than a blessing, commit to mixing these three disciplines.

The famous preacher, D.L. Moody, wrote a pamphlet in the 1800's entitled Devotion or Devotions, in which he challenged his congregation to discern if they were more devoted to God or to the idea of having a devotional time each day. Remember every idol was first designed to give the worshiper some visible thing to help them connect with the invisible god they sought to worship.

**Are you more committed to
"having devotions" or
being devoted to God?**

Unfortunately mankind's default is to start worshiping the idol rather than the deity to which the idol supposedly points. The same is true in Christianity. The things we create to help us worship and connect with God can be the very things that end up keeping us from connecting with God – when they become the objects of devotions themselves. Styles of worship, methods of preaching, denominations or organizations structures – even the Bible itself, as strange as that might sound – can become an idol that ends up getting between us and God.

Prayer, Worship and Bible study are essential for spiritual growth. At the end of Acts chapter two, we discover the birth of the early church when 3000 people are saved on the Day of Pentecost. These new converts quickly became disciples (yes, there is a difference) when they obeyed the command to be baptized and begin establishing their new life in Christ. Luke tells us the new church continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine, in prayer, sharing meals together and in fellowship. Here we find the three elements we have been discussing, along with a fourth element of sharing meals together.

Getting a Deeper Revelation of God's Eternal Purposes

The second area of going deeper in God is in understanding the cosmic/eternal purposes of God.

It is unfortunate that evangelical Christianity has reduced the eternal purpose of God to saving people from hell and getting them to heaven.

While that is an important element, it is not the totality of God's eternal purposes. It is the means to an end. If it were just about getting people to heaven, then evangelism would work like this: Jesus sends Bill and Joe out to witness to people. Once Bill gets them to say the 'sinner's prayer,' Joe shoots them and sends them immediately to heaven, thus avoiding all the grief of life, temptation, and potential backsliding. While this sounds silly, it is the logical conclusion of fundamental, evangelical theology that exalts personal salvation and neglects other aspects of God's eternal purpose.

When we reduce God's purposes to a strictly personal level (I am saved, blessed, healed, etc.) we miss the bigger cosmic picture. When this happens, our preaching becomes more like a self-help program with strategies for personal success. This results in self-centered Christians

who are primarily concerned about their own issues. It is hard to get very many of these people to sacrifice their comfort or convenience for the sake of the kingdom of God. (After all they came to Jesus because of what He could do for them.)

The remedy for this is receiving a deeper revelation of God's plans and purposes. This only comes when we stop praying about THINGS and start praying for wisdom and revelation. In Ephesians chapter 1, Paul prays the most awesome prayer for the Ephesian believers. As a young, Spirit-filled Christian, my pastor at the time, Dave Hamer, told me that as a young Christian, he started praying this for his pastors and leaders and, as a result, God started giving him more wisdom and revelation. I pray this prayer for myself and for those I minister to. If you spend time in meditation on this prayer and begin praying in faith you will see your life transformed – and those whom you minister will be changed too.

“Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.” Ephesians 1:15-23 NKJV

Paul prayed for these disciples that God would give them a “Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ,” and that the “eyes of their understanding would be enlightened.”

Paul received his knowledge of the eternal plans and purposes of God through revelation. He knew and understood that others would have to get that information the same way. We can't teach the Bible like we do math or science or philosophy. True spiritual understanding only comes

by revelation from the Holy Spirit. When Jesus asked His disciples who He was, Peter answered, "...the Christ, the son of the living God." Jesus responded with, "You're blessed Peter, flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father which is in heaven."

Paul tells the Corinthians that, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard nor entered into the heart of man the things God has prepared for them.... BUT God has revealed them to us by His Spirit." Almost every sermon I have heard on that verse stops at verse 9 and the preacher begins to expound on the glories of heaven that await us and how we can't possibly understand them right now.

Sorry guys, but that verse really isn't talking about heaven or what we can't know. By reading seamlessly through verse 10 we discover that Paul says God IS revealing these heavenly and eternal things to us by His Spirit. Paul is just telling them that revelation knowledge can't be discerned with the natural senses of man – sight, sound and thought - like other subjects, but IS revealed by the Holy Spirit.

While a detailed discussion of the eternal purposes of God are outside the scope of this teaching, I do want to give you some things to start praying and meditating about. Paul shared his deepest revelations in the letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians. Spend some time studying and meditating on these two books and you will begin to see the deeper, eternal purposes of God.

In His book [From Eternity to Here](#), Frank Viola suggests that there are four great streams of God's eternal purpose that flow throughout the Bible.

1. God wants a house to dwell in on earth so He can be with His people (OT Tabernacle –Exodus 25:8 / NT Church – the living temple I Peter 2:50)
2. God wants a bride for His Son (Witness the stories of the women in the Bible who were specifically chosen: Sarah, Rebekah, Leah and Rachel, Ruth, Ester and others – Revelation 21)
3. God wants a family – a people to call His own (Israel, and now the Church – "one new man" Ephesians 2:15 and Colossians 3:11)
4. God wants a Body – a group of people acting as a single man that He might work through in cooperation to advance His Kingdom on the earth (Ezra 3:1, Judges 20:1 and Ephesians 4:11-16)

The Bible opens with a garden and a river and closes with a garden and a river.

These four great purposes can be likened to the river that flowed out of the Garden of Eden in Genesis, parting into four distinct rivers of revelation and flowing in sweeping drama throughout the Old and New Testaments to finally reunite in fulfillment in the last chapters of Revelation. In fact we find three of these eternal purposes fulfilled in the first verses of Revelation 21. The Bible opens with a garden and a river and closes with a garden and a river. It is a safe bet that the rest of the Bible carries the streams of these things between the beginning and the end.

Refracted Revelation

A rainbow speaks of revelation. It is light broken open so you can see the individual spectrum of colors that make up white light. The sun is too bright to look at directly; however, light refracted through a prism (or raindrops) creates a beautiful rainbow of color.

The stories and experiences of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and others illustrate New Testament spiritual truths (I Corinthians 10:6, 11). They give us practical glimpses of God's plans, purposes and ways of doing things.

My grandfather, Harold Weidman, was a spiritual man, but not a church-goer (long story). I became a Christian several years after he died. When I started studying the Bible seriously and doing some writing, my mother gave me some of my grandfather's old papers he had written. I will never forget when I got the revelation, through something he wrote, that the Old Testament was more than a history book. The two verses mentioned above in I Corinthians unlocked a whole new way of looking at the Old Testament and drawing spiritual truths and principles from the types and shadows of the scriptures. It is one of the foundational revelations that have guided the course of my teaching ministry for 35 years.

God and His eternal plans and purposes are too great for man to comprehend at face value. Paul called them "unsearchable" and "past finding out." However God refracted, or "broke open" His plans and purposes and revealed individual aspects of them through the Old

Testaments stories, rituals and experiences. The Sabbaths, tabernacle, priesthood, offerings and feasts, as well as many of the life experiences of God's chosen people, were all refracted pieces of God's eternal purpose, displayed and detailed on the stage of human history to show us various elements of His plans and purposes.

A key passage that reveals this is God's instructions to Moses to make the tabernacle after the expressly detailed pattern given him on the mountain (Exodus 25:9, 40). Later, we are told that these were shadows of heavenly realities (Hebrews 8:3-5). Moses could not ad lib or use creative license to enhance the tabernacle because every part, every design, every color and every piece of furniture refracted heavenly reality and spiritual truth in a physical way that could be spiritually interpreted.

For instance, the seven-branched candlestick in the Holy Place had 66 ornaments on it. The candlestick had a center branch and three other branches coming out of either side of the main branch for a total of 7 branches. The three branches on either side had three sets of three ornaments (a bowl, a flower and a Knop) on each branch – or 9 ornaments to a branch. The center branch had four sets of three ornaments (12 total). Three branches on the left side (27 ornaments) and the center column (12 ornaments) contained a total of 39 ornaments and the three branches on the right side contained 27 ornaments.

**Today the Bible is the light
which Christians operate by.**

The commonly accepted protestant Bible has 66 books and is divided into two sections of 39 books (OT) and 27 books (NT). Is it merely coincidence that the only source of light in the tabernacle of God had the same number of ornaments, divided in the same way as the Bible you now read 3500 years later? There was no natural light in the Holy Place or the Most Holy Place. The candlestick gave the only light for the priests to operate by. Today the Bible is the light which Christians operate by. This is just one example of many.

Jesus spoke in parables in the New Testament because God reserved the right to reveal His truth to the disciples via the Holy Spirit. Jesus was just continuing what God had done in the Old Testament – packaging spiritual truth in bite-sized chunks that required some accurate spiritual interpretation. By breaking these elements apart, God can bring us more

revelation, like discerning the colors that combine to make white light.

Going Deeper Requires Experience, Dedication and Equipping

The third area where a person can go deeper is in dedication and service. The deeper a diver goes in the natural, the more dedication, experience and special equipment he needs. It is not for the casual diver. The same is true when we want to experience the “deep things of God.”

Paul spoke of the “milk” and “strong meat” of the Word of God. He encouraged young Christians to “desire the sincere milk of the word” in order to grow. At other times he chided older Christians for still requiring milk, when they should be eating meat (understanding deeper revelation).

The milk of the word revolves around salvation and personal issues. The meat of the word goes beyond the individual expression of Christianity to encompass the corporate and cosmic plans and purposes of God. The deeper we go in God the less we will be concerned about our personal issues and the more we will be concerned about understanding and cooperating with the plans and purposes of God. One reason for this is because we come to the place of understanding that, if we “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,” all the other things we are so concerned about will be taken care of.

As we progress from believer, to disciple, to servant, our revelation and motivation changes. The servant is totally committed to the master and depends on the master to provide everything he or she needs to be the most profitable servant possible.

In the parable of the talents (Matthew 25) the master gave resources to his servants according to his understanding of their ability. God does not give you more or less than you can adequately manage. This is revealing for two reasons. First, if God is giving you something to do that seems overwhelming, it really isn't. He knows you can accomplish the task assigned. On the other hand, if you are longing for more and it doesn't seem God is opening doors; perhaps you are not yet ready to handle the increase. Both scenarios require that we seek God for an accurate understanding of where we are, spiritually – from God's point of view. It is not God's intent that you be destroyed by the job He gives you to do. We must trust this.

In Romans 12, Paul reminds us that we “should not think more highly of ourselves than we should.” This does not mean we are to walk around with false humility, saying we are nobodies. Paul didn’t say we shouldn’t think highly of ourselves, he said we should not think more highly than is warranted. Genuine humility neither brags nor makes excuses; it accurately assesses the anointing and assignment God has given, and acts accordingly.

One thing that keeps many people from going deeper in relationship, revelation and service is fear. The servant in the parable of the talents said, “I was afraid...so I hid your talent, here is what you gave me; I didn’t lose it.” Somehow the servant thought he would be commended for not losing the talent. Jesus wasn’t impressed.

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We could finish that sentence for the servant in a variety of ways. “I was afraid...of failing, so I didn’t try.” “I was afraid...that you are hard to please, so I didn’t try.” “I was afraid...because I didn’t know how things would work out in the future, so I didn’t try.” Do you find yourself making excuses for hiding your talent? If so, work it out with God now. Put everything else on hold and settle this issue.

There is a natural progression in the life of a Christian. As I have already noted the Christian starts out as a believer. He (she) hears the simple message of forgiveness of sins and salvation through Christ and accepts that message. It is unfortunate that many people never progress past the believer stage. In other words, their entire Christian life is centered on what God can do for them. I believe this is caused by the failure of our evangelical message to preach Jesus as Lord and not just saviour.

In the rush to get people to “accept Christ,” or “say the sinner’s prayer,” or “give their heart to the Lord,” (pick your favorite traditional cliché of salvation) we have reduced the cosmic plan of God to the length of a tract (once again you can pick your favorite: Roman’s Road, Four Spiritual Laws, Steps to Peace with God, etc.).

Without even really being too conscious of it, we limit the message of

surrendering our lives to God so as to not scare off the potential convert.

This effectively gives the “sinner” the idea that Christianity is all about what God wants to do for them. And, while God does want to do great things for us, that is not the totality of His plans and purposes. Once infected with this self-centered impression of Christianity, it takes much longer to get us focused on the things of God rather than our own things.

Jesus told His disciples to go into all the world and make disciples. You will note He did not send them out to make converts. A disciple was a “disciplined learner.” Most of our English Bibles use the word “teach” twice.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you....” Matthew 28:19-20a KJV

The first time ‘teach’ it is used the word literally means, “to enroll as a student.”

While Christians will never cease to be believers, they should progress rapidly to becoming disciples. The discipleship process is a dedicated one. You don’t disciple someone by accident. Real Biblical discipleship is a process of older believers walking out life with younger believers. Many churches think discipleship is done in a classroom on a Sunday morning, but doctrinal teaching and practical application is only a small part of the disciple-making process.

Jesus often called people with the phrase, “follow me.” There was a call and a response. Those who are hungry for God will end up seeking out more mature believers to help them, especially if the church does not have a heart for discipleship. Those who are genuine disciple-makers will seek out those that they invite to become disciples. I believe the process of discipleship needs acknowledgement from both sides to genuinely be effective.

Jesus often called people with the phrase, “follow me.”

While a growing Christian will never stop being a believer or a disciple, they will progress to becoming servants. The truth is you can only grow so far in the Spirit without starting to give out what you have received. We reach a level in which we stop receiving until we start giving back out

what we have already freely received (spiritually speaking). Jesus sent His disciples out with a command, “freely have you received, freely give.”

Again, this is a plateau point for many Christians. This happens for a couple of reasons. The first is the false clergy/laity system that has been passed down from the Roman Catholic Church through centuries of tradition and perpetuated even among Protestant churches.

Many church structures don't recognize the “priesthood of the believer” and relegate “lay-persons” to a second level of service. Too often the “clergy” claims the right and responsibility of “spiritual” ministry and relegates the “lay people” to natural ministry.

It is true that there are many ways to serve the Lord, both in the natural and in the spiritual realms, but minimizing the saints, while exalting the clergy is not Biblical. Paul told the Corinthians that they could all prophesy and move in the spiritual gifts. They could all pray for one another and minister. Jesus said, “These signs shall follow them that BELIEVE...” not them that are licensed or ordained.

The disciple will need to start serving in some capacity in order to continue growing deeper in his revelation and relationship with God. He may start cleaning the church or mowing the grass. She may progress to teaching Sunday school or leading a youth group or Bible study. There are three points in this process that we have to consider at this stage of a disciple's life:

1. Jesus told several parables about being faithful stewards with what God has given us. At one point He said, “He that is faithful in little will also be faithful in much.” The small, seemingly unimportant acts of service that nobody sees are often the tests of character that open doors for greater service and fruitfulness down the road. How we handle minor tasks are important. They reveal our attitudes and dedication. Thoughts such as: “I am too important for this task!” or “How come Joe gets to do that and I don't?” reveal our motives and attitudes. Our dedication is revealed in the way we do the tasks assigned. Was the task done right, or was it done in a hurry with shortcuts to get it over with quicker? In the parables the stewards were given great authority based on, and in proportion to, how they handled the previously assigned tasks.

2. The second point is that no act of service for God, performed with a

right heart and motive, goes unrewarded. Jesus said that those who served the “Least of these my brothers” did it to Him. That those who did not, did not do it to Him. (Matthew 25) Elsewhere Jesus tells us that giving a cup of cold water to a prophet earns a prophet’s reward.

3. Finally, we must understand that the word “deacon” literally means to “run errands” and the word “minister” means servant. Far from the celebrity status often assigned to these offices, the Bible indicates humble servanthood – even in leadership. We discover another amazing thing here. Stephen and Phillip were both “deacons”, however they were powerful preachers and mightily used by God, even when they were serving in somewhat humble ministries (organizing the food outreach and waiting tables) in the church. Stephen preached a powerful message that the Jewish leaders could not stop and, as a result, became one of the first Christian Martyrs. Phillip sparked a revival in Samaria and started a church there. Consider what the apostle Paul tells young pastor Timothy in I Timothy 3:13, “For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

Noted Physicist Albert Einstein once said, “Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value.” This reflects the heart of the true servant. The valuable servant is the successful servant. Success has to do with us and value has to do with others. Or attitude toward success and value are subtle indicators of our motives and thus are the things judged by God on a more significant level. As we are told in Hebrews 4:12, “The word of God...is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

**"Success has to do with us and
value has to do with others."**

Conclusion

In both the natural and the spiritual realms “Going Deeper” requires more than a casual approach. You won’t get there by accident. The three D’s of Desire, Determination, and Dedication must be mixed with the three R’s of Relationship, Righteousness and Revelation.

An exciting world waits for those who long for the depths of God, His Spirit and His eternal purposes. The deeper one goes, the fewer there will be that swim beside him. However that is the point, to go where others

have not and come back to share the wonders of the depths of God, challenging and inspiring others to make the effort.

**"The three D's of Desire, Determination, and
Dedication must be mixed with the three R's
of Relationship, Righteousness and Revelation."**

Desire, I believe, comes from God. It is the Spirit of God calling and drawing. "Deep calls to deep." We cannot produce desire in others, we can only produce wonder. We can open their eyes to the fact that there is more that they can experience in their walk with God. . . We can stir their spirits to seek God. We can teach and model the principles of Christian discipline, but passion must be birthed by revelation from God. We must be careful here. Paul spoke of these that had, "zeal without knowledge." We've all known Christians that were like the proverbial "bull in the china closet." They combined a lot of human emotional zeal with a little bit of Biblical knowledge and made a major mess of things. Passion, imparted by God's Spirit, through revelation of God's plans and purposes will produce a balanced Christian. The fact of the matter is we need wisdom and revelation. We also need to speak the truth in love.

We see how this plays out in a practical sense in the Word of God. As Jesus walked along the road to Emmaus with some disciples, He opened the word of God to them. "And they said one to one another, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the scriptures?" Luke 24:32

The disciples immediately returned to Jerusalem to share their new revelation with the others. This is the responsibility of every one that has gone a little deeper in the things of God. Not to seek their name on a plaque somewhere in the dusty halls of Christendom, but to surface regularly to share with others and invite them, as Phillip did with Nathaniel after he found Jesus, to "Come and see."

No matter where you are at in your spiritual journey, there is more. Don't settle for less. Resist the temptation to say, "I have all I want." Don't allow your service for God to interfere with your journey in God.

"O the depths of both the wisdom and knowledge of God." Romans 11:33
KJV

See you there?

