

# GOING DEEPER



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

*Steve Highlander*

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## ABOUT THE BOOK

Using the analogy of deep-sea diving, *Going Deeper* identifies three areas in which Christians can develop a more significant experience with God. These areas include intimacy with God, a greater revelation of God's eternal plans and purposes, and committing to more extraordinary service for God.

**Going Deeper** challenges the believer to break free from complacency in their spiritual lives and long for a more profound experience in the things of God.

## PREFACE – PLEASE READ

Time and space place a limit on every author or speaker. It is either the clock on the wall or the pages in a book. 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. I do not intend this essay to be a definitive work by any means, but perhaps more of a pre-primer.

Many, both past and present, have delved much deeper into the things of God than I have. I claim no special place among those saints. 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.

Perhaps some will think I went too far; others not far enough. Depending on your present point of view and where you are in your spiritual journey, you might think I am promoting self-effort or not promoting enough spiritual discipline. The fact is that neither of these thoughts is true. We must combine revelation with spiritual disciplines. 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. God called Abraham — "the father of faith" — to

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leave his family and country; Abraham believed and obeyed. Our obedience must accompany the sovereign call of God.

I could spend much more time talking about the value of spiritual techniques (speaking in tongues, worship, prayer, fasting, etc.), but I did not for a reason. That is not the point of this booklet. I trust the Holy Spirit to lead you on these matters. The truth 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 the next level of your life.

Steve Highlander  
Papua New Guinea  
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## GOING DEEPER

Humanity 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. The epitome of this is, of course, The Guinness Book of World Records.

Since our topic is "Going Deeper," I was interested in doing a little research on deep-sea diving records. Ahmed Gabr made the deepest dive with SCUBA gear in 2014. Gabr made it to a depth of 1,089 ft. Comex Hydra 8 Divers hold the record for the deepest dive with experimental SCUBA equipment and a special trimix of breathable air. They worked on a pipeline at a depth of 1752 feet. A navy diver made the deepest dive in an atmospheric suit 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



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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. Risk is also a factor. It is not for the faint of heart or the casual weekend diver. Going deeper is only for those who want to push the limits to those who desire to see what is beyond the commonly explored areas of God's universe, a universe that includes a spiritual realm.

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 the spiritual discipline and the practical exercise of spiritual principles. It requires a greater level of humility, faith, perseverance, desire, and even risk than most people are willing to invest. Yet, the rewards are incredible.

The famous healing evangelist of the 1970s, Kathryn Kuhlman, received many negative responses because she was a female 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 judgment, 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 humanity. 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 to claim some experience or revelation and thus be recognized as a "spiritual giant."

Going deeper in God is a spiritual challenge to our contentment and complacency in our individual spiritual 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 some time. That doesn't mean they are backsliding or not being fruitful. It just means that 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. 2 Corinthians 10:12  
KJV

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Remember, going deeper is about our spiritual walk with God. We often know more than we practice. That is necessary because I cannot develop something in my life unless I know a spiritual principle. 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.

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. 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 humanity to assume that they can ever totally understand God in this life. That isn't to say that we cannot know some depth of God or that there isn't continually more to learn. 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. If acquiring knowledge doesn't humble us, we have only received information. We have not acquired wisdom.

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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 more profound and more life-altering way.

A significant 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 chapter 17, He stated this 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 our genuine 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 men's acclamations mean very little if they are not born out of a hunger for and intimacy with God. Spiritual pride is the worst kind of pride.

*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 area often means the others are over-emphasized (or possibly neglected also).

Worship brings us into the 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 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's 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, dull, and routine quickly.

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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 1800s entitled Devotion or Devotions. 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 initially designed to give the worshipper some visible thing to connect with the invisible God they sought to worship.

Unfortunately, humanity's default is to start worshipping the idol rather than the deity to which the idol supposedly points. The same is true in Christianity. The things we created 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, preaching methods, denominations, or organizational structures – even the Bible itself, as strange as that might sound – can become an idol that ends up getting between God and us.

Prayer, worship, and Bible study are essential for spiritual growth. Over three thousand people were born again 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, 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 into God is in understanding the cosmic/eternal purposes of God.

Unfortunately, evangelical Christianity has reduced God's eternal purpose to saving people from hell and getting them to heaven. While that is an essential 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. That results in self-centered Christians who are primarily concerned about their issues. It is hard to get very many of these people to sacrifice their comfort or convenience for the Kingdom of God's sake. After all, they came to Jesus because of what He could do for them.

The remedy for this is receiving a more profound revelation of God's plans and purposes. That only



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comes when we stop praying about THINGS and start praying for wisdom and revelation. In Ephesians chapter 1, Paul prays the most remarkable 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 began to giving him more wisdom and revelation. I pray this prayer regularly for myself and for those to whom I minister. If you spend time meditating on this prayer and begin praying in faith, you will see your life transformed (as well as the lives of those to whom you minister).

*"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. Proper 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 hear 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 nine, 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 isn't talking about heaven or what we can't know. By reading seamlessly through verse ten, 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 cannot be discerned with man's natural senses - sight, sound, and thought - like other subjects, but IS revealed by the Holy Spirit.

While a detailed discussion of God's eternal purposes is outside the scope of this teaching, I do

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want to give you some things about which you can start praying and meditating. 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 purposes of God.

God's free gift of salvation enables us to see and enter into these plans and purposes. Jesus told Nicodemus that a person couldn't see the Kingdom of God unless he was "*born again*." Jesus was not saying you couldn't go to heaven without being born again (although you can't); He was saying that to see –that is to recognize and comprehend –the Kingdom, you had to have a spiritual rebirth.

In His book From Eternity to Here, Frank Viola suggests 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 | Peter 2:50)
2. God wants a bride for His Son (Revelation 21 – Witness the stories of the women in the Bible who were specifically chosen: Sarah, Rebekah, Leah and Rachel, Ruth, Ester, Mary, and others)
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 like 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)

We can liken these four great purposes 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, finally reuniting in fulfillment in the last chapters of the Book of the Revelation. 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 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 to 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. (It is a long story). I became a Christian several years after he died. When I started studying the Bible seriously and writing, my mother gave me some of my grandfather's old papers he had written. I will never

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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 1 Corinthians unlocked a whole new way of looking at the Old Testament. By drawing spiritual truths and principles from the scriptures' types and shadows, we gain a more profound understanding of God's ways and purposes. 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 were all refracted pieces of God's eternal purpose. Each of these things gave us a clearer picture of some aspect of God's plan and purpose. Others played out on the stage of history as Israel stumbled along in her relationship with God.

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. 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 Knob) on each branch – or nine decorations 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.

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 was the only light source for the priests to perform their work and worship inside the tabernacle or temple. 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

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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" to grow. At other times he chided older Christians for still requiring milk when they should be eating meat (understanding more profound revelation).

The milk of the Word revolves around salvation and personal issues. The meat of the Word goes beyond Christianity's expression in the individual to encompass God's corporate and cosmic plans and purposes. 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 God's plans and purposes. One reason for this is because we come to the place of knowing that if we "*seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness,*" God will take care of all other concerns we have.

Our understanding and motivation change as we grow. We begin as believers and choose to become disciples. As disciples, we learn to become servants, and as servants, we move towards leadership. The servant is committed to the master and depends on the master to provide everything he or she needs to be the most profitable servant possible.

The parable of the talents (Matthew 25) explains the master gave his servants resources according to his understanding of their ability. God does not give you more or less than you can adequately manage. That is revealing for two reasons. First, if God is giving you something to do that seems overwhelming, it 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.



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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." The servant expected to be commended for not losing the talent. Jesus wasn't impressed.

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 as a believer. He (she) hears the simple message of forgiveness of sins and salvation through Christ and accepts that message. Unfortunately, many people never progress past the believer stage. In other words, their entire Christian life centers on what God can do for them. The reason believers do not become disciples is partially due to the shallow evangelical message we preach.

In a 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 choose your favorite: Roman's Road, Four Spiritual Laws, Steps to Peace with God, etc.).

Without even being too conscious of it, we limit the message of surrendering our lives to God so as not to scare off the potential convert.

That 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 personal issues.

Jesus told His disciples to go into all the world and make disciples. 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 in what we now call "The Great Commission."

*"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' is used, the word 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. Authentic Biblical discipleship is a process of older believers walking out the Christian life with younger believers. Many churches think discipleship is done in classes on a

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Sunday morning, but doctrinal teaching and practical application are only a small part of the disciple-making process.

Jesus often called people with the phrase, "follow me." There were a call and a response. Those who are hungry for God will seek out more mature believers to help them 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 disciple-making process needs acknowledgment from both sides to be effective.

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 having to begin giving out what you have received. We reach a level in which we stop receiving until we start giving back out what we have freely received already (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. That happens for a couple of reasons. The first is the false clergy/laity system handed down from the Roman Catholic Church through centuries of tradition. Many church structures don't recognize the "priesthood of the believer" and relegate "lay-persons" to a secondary level of service. Too often, the "clergy" claims the right and responsibility of "spiritual" ministry and relegates the *lay-people* to natural tasks. There are many ways to serve the Lord, both in the natural and 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 to continue growing deeper in his revelation and relationship with God. He may begin by cleaning the church or mowing the grass. She may progress to teaching Sunday school or leading a youth group or Bible study. A growing servant will be rewarded with more responsibility and privilege.

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.*" Often the small, seemingly unimportant acts of service that nobody sees are the character tests that open doors for greater service and fruitfulness down the road. How we handle minor tasks is essential. It reveals 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 demonstrated in the way we do the tasks assigned. Was the job done right, or was it done in a hurry with shortcuts to get it over quicker? In the parables, the master gave

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great authority to the stewards 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" (Matthew 25). That those who did not, did not do it to Him. 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 served 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." That

reflects the heart of the faithful 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 significance are subtle indicators of our motives and thus are the things judged by God on a more significant level. Hebrews 4:12 says, *"The word of God...is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."*

### 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 an effort to experience them for themselves.

Passion, I believe, comes from God. It is the Spirit of God calling and drawing. *"Deep calls to deep."* We cannot produce passion in others; we can only invoke 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 Christian discipline principles, but passion must come by revelation and impartation from God.

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We must be careful here. Paul spoke of those that had "zeal without knowledge." We've all known Christians that were like the proverbial 'bull in the china closet.' They had a lot of human, emotional zeal and combined it with a little bit of Biblical knowledge and made a major mess of things. Passion, imparted by God's Spirit, will produce a balanced Christian through a revelation of God's plans and purposes. 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. That is the responsibility of everyone who has gone a little deeper in the things of God. The goal is not to seek their name on a plaque somewhere in the dusty halls of Christendom. Instead, It is to surface regularly to share those wonders with others and invite them, as Phillip did with Nathaniel after finding 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

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Highlander has been a dedicated Christian since 1980 and has spent nearly 40 years in the ministry, garnering a wide variety of ministry 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 that started in 2009.

He has years of experience as a 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 has lead hundreds of Bible studies in two county jails in Missouri.

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

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



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Currently, he and his wife, Brooke, serve on the mission field in Papua New Guinea. The couple teaches in Bible Colleges, speaks in regional leadership conferences around the country, and holds services, revivals, and crusades in communities and tribal regions.