

# A Believer's Personal Responsibilities

## Lesson 1 – Called to become fishers of people –

**Matthew 4:19** [New King James] *“Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’”*

Jesus Christ called His first disciples with the promise to make them *“fishers of men”* to attract people to Him, [Luke 5:10].

**As these fishermen were dedicated, prepared and willing to endure what it takes to catch fish. We need to emulate this in our own lives so we can “catch” people for Jesus Christ.**

However, we are frequently told that in a church fellowship that 80% of the work is done by 20% of the people.

## Lesson 2 – This call includes all disciples, and not just leaders –

I have observed there are two types of willing people in Christian fellowships – those who are willing to work and those who are willing to let other people work.

Usually it is just the leaders who do the work but sometimes, these leaders create an environment where **only** they can do the work.

However, this was **not** the intention of our Lord Jesus Christ when He gave the great commission to His Church.

**Matthew 28:16-20** [New King James] *“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”*

Notice *“make disciples”* what does this involve?

**To pass on to other people what they had learnt directly from Jesus Christ.**

**To replicate His lifestyle and place it in others.**

This would mean that the call these original disciples had received would also be reiterated in their disciples, who would logically do the same to their disciples.

**Thus the Great Commission is a perpetual call that is binding on all the followers of Jesus Christ.**

**No-one is excluded.**

We must **not** assume that a person can only be used once they have become totally proficient in the teaching of the scriptures before they can be involved in the task of evangelism.

When Philip found Nathaniel [John 1:45] he introduced Jesus Christ as the son of Joseph, showing the shallowness of both his theology and his Christology.

Philip was not clear regarding the deity of Jesus Christ.

Philip was indistinct about the humanity of Jesus Christ.

Philip was uncertain with respect to the Tri-unity of God.

Yet Philip's evangelistic zeal led to the conversion of one of the twelve primary leaders of the Christian Church.

**We need to recognise the value of enthusiasm that comes with a new Christian life.**

**Ephesians 4:11-16** [New King James] *“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head, Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which **every part does its share**, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”*

Note that “*every part does its share*” [verse 16].

**We must broaden the horizons of what we consider as the ministry of our church congregation.**

We must also broaden the horizons as to what we consider to be the extent of the church congregation, by limiting it to only those who attend worship and social meetings.

### **Lesson 3 – The Lord provides the harvest, we become the labourers –**

**Matthew 9:36-38** [New King James] *“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.’”*

**God looks for those who are willing to labour for Him.**

**1 Corinthians 3:5-8** [New King James] *“Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, **but God who gives the increase**. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labour.”*

Paul recognised that our part is to plant and water, that **only** God can give the increase.

**John 16:8** [New King James] *“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:”*

**It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict people of their sins that leads to repentance, and seeking the true righteousness from God.**

The initial requirement when we respond to God's call to be “*fishers of men*” is prayer.

**Evangelism without prayer is like dynamite without a detonator, yet prayer without evangelism has no end goal.**

**Notice Jesus Christ did not ask His disciples to pray for a harvest, He said the harvest time is now, but to pray that people will become labourers to gather that harvest.**

To illustrate this need for labourers Jesus Christ sent out His personal disciples to gather the harvest He knew was ready in their locality.

**Jesus Christ also gave to these disciples supernatural powers to fulfil what He sent them to accomplish.**

It is time to re-purpose all Christians in our fellowship.

This involves a revision of vision, seeing our calling in a totally new light as labourers in a harvest field that God has prepared for us to harvest.

Our prayer and study of God's Word, the Christian Bible, must now be converted into harvesting what God the Holy Spirit has prepared, it is time to go fishing for people whom God has prepared to be caught up in His ever-expanding work of seeking people to take on His "*likeness*," His very character, [Genesis 1:26-27] so that He can give them eternal life in His created family, the Kingdom of God.

## **Lesson 4 – The operative word is 'Go' –**

**Matthew 28:19** [New King James] *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"*

**Notice the word "go," the church is not to sit and wait for people to come through the doors of their meeting place.**

**Matthew 9:38** [New King James] *"Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to **send out** labourers into His harvest."*

Notice the words "*send out*."

**Matthew 10:5** [New King James] *"These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: 'Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.'"*

Notice the words "*sent out*."

**Luke 10:1-3** [New King James] *"After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, 'The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest. Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves.'"*

Notice the words "*I send you out*" this time it was to an expanded group of disciples, to prepare for His personal visit, [verse 1].

The Church today must always hold on to the vision that we are a group of people who are preparing the world for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, just as John the Baptist prepared people for His first coming as Saviour of the world.

The early Church only fulfilled the Great Commission, to start with, in the sense of preaching the gospel message locally at Jerusalem.

**It took persecution of the Church at Jerusalem and their being scattered that "reorganised" the approach to the preaching of the gospel message by incorporating the "going" part of the commission.**

Will the Creator God have to bring a similar persecution on local churches for a change to take place today.

## **Lesson 5 – The call includes a call to something different –**

The imagery of Jesus Christ making His disciples into fishermen would have evoked in the minds of those who heard Him to Old Testament prophetic scripture, [**Jeremiah 16:16; Amos 4:2; Habakkuk 1:15**].

These passages presented the image of one of judgement.

Therefore Jesus Christ's call to them to be fishers of men, to reveal the salvation of God in context of judgement was giving way to grace, mercy and forgiveness.

**Understand this, the call to follow Jesus Christ is a call to evangelism, but it is also a call to change.**

Even though the Almighty God is unchangeable, [**Malachi 3:6**], He is **not** locked into unchangeableness in the way He does things in His relationship with humanity, [**John 1:17**].

**Isaiah 43:19** [New King James] *“Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”*

The Old Testament expressed “*new things*” as part of the way God worked with His people.

**Revelation 21:1-7** [New King James] *“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ Then He who sat on the throne said, ‘Behold, I make all things new.’ And He said to me, ‘Write, for these words are true and faithful.’ And He said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.’”*

The final complete change of the environment for God's people, [**2 Peter 3:9-14**].

This “*newness*” must be incorporated into our approach to evangelism. I seek to tap into the media of the internet as a means of “*fishing for people*” which was not available in my youth.

## **Lesson 6 – Answering the call requires faith on our part –**

**In a world of fear for the future of humanity, faith in a Creator God speaks to it as a dynamic antidote.**

We need to take stock of who we are as Christians, where we are going and understand what it means to be an “*overcomer*.”

This last part was the message given to the apostle John by Jesus Christ and recorded by him in revelation to the seven churches, [**Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; Revelation 3:5, 12, 21**].

To understand what this “*overcoming*” means, we have to read a scripture in the same book.

**Revelation 12:9-12** [New King James] *“So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.’”*

**It is our faith in the blood sacrifice of our Saviour Jesus Christ and our personal example as a true active Christian that will “overcome” the evil influence of Satan and his demons in this world.**

**Romans 10:10-17** [New King James] *“For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘**How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!**’ But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘LORD, who has believed our report?’ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*

**Every Christian has to have “beautiful feet” as we go into this world with the gospel message, the only hope that is available for the future of humanity.**

**Matthew 24:21-22** [New King James] *“For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the **elect**’s sake those days will be shortened.”*

**The “elect” are true Christians called by God to do a job of work at this time.**

## **Lesson 7 – Understand the authority that we go with to this world –**

When talking about authority Jesus Christ did **not** say that He gave Christians His authority, the actual words Jesus Christ said to the disciples was *“all authority has been given to **me** in heaven and on earth.”*

As a result of Him having the total authority, **not** any human being or group of human beings, we are to “go.”

Not because we have His authority, but that we have Him in us, in the person of the Holy Spirit, [**John 14:17**].

**The results do not depend on us, it depends on how active the Holy Spirit is in us, and flowing out to others in acts of godly love and compassion.**

**John 7:37-39** [New King James] *“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”*

This is how we overcome the influence of Satan in this world and lift the veil of deception that Satan has blinded people to the truth.

**2 Corinthians 4:3-7** [New King James] *“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.”*

This is the heart of all evangelism.

**Our part is to ensure we are not hindering the work of the Holy Spirit in us and through us.**

[Please download and study our article, ‘Are We Resisting The Work Of The Holy Spirit?’ listed under sub-heading ‘Holy Spirit’.]

## **Lesson 8 – The best example we have is Jesus Christ Himself –**

**Jesus Christ came first as a servant not a king –**

**Matthew 20:28** [New King James] *“just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”*

**We also are to offer our lives as “living sacrifices” to serve Jesus Christ.**

**Romans 12:1** [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

True Christians see themselves as “living sacrifices” or as “bond slaves” of Jesus Christ, [**Romans 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1; Revelation 1:1**] in each case the Greek word is “*dōulōs*” meaning a purchased bond slave, [**Acts 20:28**].

**Jesus Christ was motivated by compassion –**

**Matthew 9:36** [New King James] *“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.”*

**An essential ingredient for true motivation in evangelism is compassion for all who are “lost” – that is blinded to the truth by Satan, [2 Corinthians 4:4].**

## **Lesson 9 – Catching people requires getting close to them –**

When people experience vulnerability, then a form of spirituality is released.

We as humans feel lost, without answers to our problems, it is then that the Creator God finds us, He no longer is hidden from us.

**We do not seek or find God, He seeks and finds us.**

The Creator God reaches lost people through human contact 80% of the time.

So it would be best if 80% of the church go where we can meet people whom the Creator God is calling.

**Physical and emotional need is when people are most open to allowing the Creator God into their lives.**

In such situations our personal compassion can be the key to their change of heart and mind towards their Creator and Saviour.

### **Evangelism is often friendship-based –**

Andrew brought Philip, Philip brought Nathaniel, [**John 1:43-46**].

The Samaritan woman brought her friends, [**John 4:6-30**]. This reaches the unchurched people. Evangelism is a process, people go through a series of stages coming to the point of faith.

Evangelism involves the whole person, the mind, emotions, experience and will all look to a personal one-to-one friendship.

### **Lesson 10 – God equips and enables those He calls –**

**Mark 16:15-20** [New King James] *“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.’ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.”*

These signs are the direct work of the Holy Spirit working through people.

**Acts 1:8** [New King James] *“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

**Only as we allow the Holy Spirit to work in and through us will we be fulfilling our responsibility as a believer, a true Christian.**