

## Life Group Notes 7/27/2025

### Discipleship Week 3

No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at [tbeachhead@comcast.net](mailto:tbeachhead@comcast.net). Thank you for taking the time.

– Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

**Remember:** Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our heart and guide our discussions.

***Please pre-read these notes and choose the direction that is appropriate for your group.***

Be cognizant of your group's time and be sensitive. *Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.*

**Note:** I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 7/27. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. ***The purpose is to minister to one another.*** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnote speaks:

1. **On the biblical understanding of perfection.**

**Important:** At [the very end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week.

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Pastor opens by describing the message ahead in these terms: "A walk with Jesus is not always a walk in the park. Agreed?"

1. Do you agree?
2. How many of Paul's trials can you list? Do it now.
3. How did Paul die? How soon after he wrote this letter to Timothy?
4. Where is Timothy the bishop at the time this letter was written?
5. What do you know about the church at Ephesus? Strengths? Weaknesses? How do we know these things?
6. How many times is the church at Ephesus mentioned in the New Testament?
7. In what book is Ephesus mentioned for the last time in the New Testament? In what context?

Look up 2 Timothy 2: 1 *You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus,* 2 *and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.* 3 *Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.* 4 *No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.* 5 *An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to*

*the rules. 6It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops. 7Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.*

1. What do you see?
2. Look carefully at verse 2. In your own words, what exactly is Paul asking Timothy to do?
3. Why was the presence of witnesses so important to Paul, when he spoke these words to Timothy?
4. How important is it that these words be entrusted to “faithful men?”
5. Men only? Or all mankind? Explain.
6. How important are the many witnesses?
7. If Paul is only to relate what he and many others heard together, what room is there for invention?
8. Can Timothy get “creative” when relating the gospel?
9. Can we? What are we to be repeating exclusively?
10. What imagery does Paul use to describe the work ahead?
11. How apt are these images to the requirements of a Christian walk?

Pastor Mark continued with the theme of a commanding officer.

1. Mark asks, “Who is your commanding officer?” Answer him.
2. Is there proof enough to convict you, if you get indicted for serving Him?
3. What were the three choices of “commanding officer” Pastor Mark said we have? Do you remember? Discuss these:

✠ Your flesh— “Your flesh would love to be your general.”

1. What stumbling blocks does the flesh offer?
2. Look up Galatians 5: 17*For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.* What do you see?
3. Can you explain this?

✠ Satan—Satan also want to be the commander of your life. “The prince of this world is recruiting. He’s looking for anyone who will give in to their flesh, but also who will listen to the lie and be bought and controlled by the spirit of this world.”

1. Look up 2 Corinthians 4: 4*The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5For we do not proclaim ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. 6For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* What do you see?
2. Mark says, “The spirit of this world offers shortcuts, fake freedom and you end up with spiritual decay that happens in your life over time.” Explain. Do you have a testimony?
3. Do you get angry with unbelievers? What has happened to them?
4. What is the cure for blindness? Does getting angry ever help?
5. What steps do help? Do you have a personal testimony?
6. Can the blind lead the blind?

✠ Jesus—The third option for commanding officer is really the only good option. Look at Acts 3: 14*You rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked that a murderer*

*be released to you. **15**You killed the Author of life, but God raised Him from the dead, and we are witnesses of this fact.*

1. How does Peter describe Jesus?
2. What does it mean to be “the Author of life?” Take a minute to think about this.
3. If He is writing your life, what do you obtain? What do you lose?
4. Look at what Jesus says in John 16: **13**“However, when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak what He hears, and He will declare to you what is to come. **14**He will glorify Me by taking from what is Mine and disclosing it to you.” What does the author do? How does He do this?
5. Does a good author write everything all at once, like a photograph on Polaroid film? Why does a good author take time to develop his characters?

Pastor Mark revisited the theme of soldiery from Paul’s letter to Timothy.

1. Does a soldier enlist, looking ahead to beaches in the Caribbean?
2. If you experienced boot camp, can you describe what changed through the experience?
3. How is a soldier trained to lay down his own life for his brothers? ...to protect each other at all cost?
4. Is anything lacking in our own Christian training?
5. Who is giving the orders in your own life today?
6. Have you ever been a soldier? Describe your training.
7. Without revisiting trauma, what suffering does a good soldier engage in?
8. Who calls the shots, if you’re a soldier?
9. What happens if a soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits?
10. Why does the soldier aim to please his commanding officer? What is the reward?

Pastor looked at the athlete.

1. Have you ever seen an athlete running a marathon in flipflops while eating a burrito?
2. What is the problem with this picture?
3. Have you ever been an athlete? Describe your training.
4. What happens when an athlete does not play by the rules?
5. Please avoid controversy and do not answer this question: Should Pete Rose be allowed into the Hall of Fame? Now, do explain why this is an issue.
6. Explain how the issue does illustrate Paul’s point. What happens when cheating is suspected?
7. What does it take to win?
8. Pastor makes a list: “Winning takes discipline. Winning takes intentionality. Winning means you have to play by the rules. (He asks, “Where are the rules found?” Answer him.) What else does it take to win?
9. Where is the rulebook found for this race Paul describes? Have you read it?
10. Mark describes our rulebook, the Bible, as “...food for us, and direction for us, and life for us.” Explain.

Look up 2 Timothy 3: **14***But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it **15**and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **16**All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for*

*teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17that the man of God may be complete [perfect], equipped for every good work.*

1. What do you see?
2. Trace Timothy's growth. From whom did he learn? How did Timothy become acquainted with the sacred writings? Who taught him?
3. Think of this: If the Holy Spirit was sent to teach us, and "spirit" means "breath," then the Holy Breath was sent to teach us. So, if all scripture is "god-breathed," describe the relationship between textbook and teacher.
4. How intentional is our Teacher? How do you become His disciple?
5. List the three profitable effects listed in verse 16 that are derived from scripture in your own words. Describe how that works.

Look again carefully at verse 17, above.

1. If one wins, what does one win?
2. See footnote 1 below. What does the word "complete" mean?
3. When one wins, what reward comes with the crown? What comes after receiving the crown?
4. Does a runner in flipflops holding a burrito stand a chance to win the prize? Explain.
5. How dependent is a player on the rules of the game?
6. How dependent are you on the rules of this race?
7. Do you ever make up your own rules? Explain.

Now go back and look again at 2 Tim 2:6-7, above.

1. Have you ever been a farmer? Describe your training?
2. Why is it a "hard working" farmer who gets rewarded? What is the alternative?
3. What calls the shots, if you're a successful farmer?
4. What role does the farmer's field play? (What goes into prepping the field?)
5. What role does the seed play? What role does the weather play? What role do the seasons play?
6. Describe the state of mind of the farmer as winter draws to a close? How does his state of mind instruct us?
7. What is in his field in the end of winter? What must he do to receive a harvest?
8. What does the farmer foresee? Why?
9. What are the obstacles to the harvest during the entire season?
10. How does a farmer face each obstacle?

Pastor then prophesies a spiritual principal: "You will never harvest what you have not cultivated."

1. Explain.
2. What is the difference between "planting" and "cultivating?"
3. He says, "If you want peace, you have to plant some prayer. If you want love you need to pull weeds of bitterness. If you want patience... (he laughs) ...you have to watch for that one. Brace yourself for that one." Explain. What does each action produce?
4. In his parable of the four different soils, Jesus says this of the seed among weeds in Matthew 13: 22 "As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful." Explain. What interferes with the harvest?

5. How has this “soldier” described here as a type of soil grown distracted from “civilian affairs?” What is the impact of Netflix on a spiritual life?

Pastor says, “One of the great joys I have in farming, is that I get to share in the produce. I can give away the zucchini, the tomatoes.”

1. Have you ever grown vegetables in the summer?
2. Have you had zucchini so abundant you HAD to give some away? And tomatoes?
3. Have you ever had a crop smitten with blight?
4. Were you as generously inclined, when your garden wilted? Explain.
5. Think of this: If riches is defined by the abundance of zucchini in the garden, what happens to the zucchini if they are not shared?
6. How does God view riches?

Look at how Paul describes this principle in 2 Corinthians 9:9As it is written, “He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.” 10He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. 11You will be enriched in every way to be generous in every way, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God. 12For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God.

1. What do you see?
2. What is the promise here? Describe it in your own words?
3. Who supplies seed to the sower? Who, then, supplies bread for food? Explain.
4. What happens when you sow, according to this promise?
5. What are the limits to this promise?
6. Mark says, “You are blessed to be a blessing.” Explain. What is included in this blessing?

Here are pastor Mark’s “...six quick practical steps:”

- ✝ Do a daily surrender check. Ask “Who today is my commanding officer? Who is leading my life today: Is it my flesh? Is it the spirit of the air? Is it the culture, or is it Jesus? Begin the day by saying, “Jesus, I want you to be my commanding officer.”
- ✝ Set a bible routine. Decide how you will get the Word into you. Pick a time and utilize it for getting acquainted with the Word that bought you. Pastor says, “See it as your sacred time with the Creator of the Universe who wants to speak life into YOU.”
- ✝ Train with others. Join a discipleship group. Make it a habit.
- ✝ Plant good seeds. Pastor says, “I think I planted strange seeds from last year. Maybe they cross pollinated. I do not know what’s growing.” How does this fit? He explains, “Speak life. Love your neighbor. Forgive. Serve.” What else can you do?
- ✝ Pull weeds often. Pastor is “...always looking for weeds in his garden. Weeds choke out the harvest.” He tells us to ask God to show us what is choking out our fruitfulness. What is killing? What is stealing? What is actually destroying?
- ✝ Share the harvest. Encourage somebody. Give generously. Speak truth. Bless somebody else with what God has been doing in your life.

Pastor concludes, “So to the soldier, the athlete, the farmer, let’s get to work. Paul tells us this is what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Nothing is easy. Nothing is glamorous. It comes with requisite discipline. Requisite perseverance. Requisite intentionality on your part. It requires the hard, disciplined work of pulling weeds.”



Look at what John says in 1 John 2: **15** *Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* **16** *For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not from the Father but from the world.* **17** *The world is passing away, along with its desires; but whoever does the will of God remains forever.*

1. How does this apply?
2. What is your next step?

### Follow up application:

1. Use the [Soap study below](#) to pursue your own understanding.
2. Write down who is giving you your marching orders. What needs to change?
3. Pick a favorite competitive activity. What does it take to win? Make a list.  
Can you do it?

**Take the time to pray.**

### Scribe's Footnotes:

1. **On the biblical understanding of perfection**—There are many false doctrines describing biblical perfection that a simple examination can address. We were raised with the doctrine that states, “No one can achieve sinless perfection. We will continue to sin until the day we die...but the Bible clearly states that if we continue to sin, we are a slave to sin. And Jesus came to SAVE us from our sins. He came to deliver the captive and to set him free. Jesus said, “The one the Son sets free is TRULY free.” So, putting that aside, let us talk about biblical perfection, beginning with the Perfect One Himself. God’s name YHWH has often been translated “I Am,” but because Hebrew has no future tense, this can also be translated “I [already] Am [what I will be.]” Biblical perfection is that which does not ever change. The same, always and forever. In that sense, then, God already is what he will be. Now, with this understanding we know that we who have been offered His image can say, “We are becoming as He is,” and we change, and we grow. Nothing says we will continue to sin. The promise is that we will continue to grow. The word that Paul uses for perfection to describe us above, in 2 Timothy 3, when he says, “**16** *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete [perfect], equipped for every good work,*” is “ἄρτιος,” *artios*, which means: “properly, ready now, prepared to function (efficiently) in the immediate present. **739** /*ártios* (“ready-because-prepared”). [This word] is only used in 2 Tim 3:17, “So that the man of God may be *adequate* (**739** /*ártios*), equipped for every good work” (NASU). Scripture perfectly equips us to face whatever comes. Another understanding of perfection is seen when James says patience makes us, “...perfect, complete, not failing in any way...” in James 1:4. Here, James uses the term τέλειος, *teleios*, described in Strong’s as (an adjective, derived from **5056** /*télos*, “consummated goal”) – *mature* (consummated) from going through the necessary stages to reach the *end-goal*, i.e. *developed* into a consummating *completion* by fulfilling the necessary *process* (*spiritual journey*). This is not perfection that equips, because it is adequate. This is perfection that is mature UNTO consummation, in other words, that perfection that imparts life to another. Let me interpret this clearly: If we were to live one day without sin, we would not be perfect. If we were to live the rest of our lives without

sin, we would not be perfect today. In that sense, Jesus himself, in sandals and a beard, though he was incontrovertibly without sin, was not perfect UNTIL the day He said, "It is finished/perfect/complete/paid in full" on the cross. At that point, when His physical body ended all biological processes of change, and was redeemed by the resurrection He was made perfect, and will change no more. Sinlessness, therefore, is not perfection...it is a determined, intentional goal, achieved perfectly...but only one minute at a time with intentionality and the humility that admits failure without accepting it as a prognosis.

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### For further study:

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP method** (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—Write what God is saying. / **P**ray—Write what your response is.) to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

Monday: 2 Timothy 2:1-2
Tuesday: 2 Timothy 2:3-4
Wednesday: 2 Timothy 2:5-6
Thursday: Galatians 5:17-18
Friday: 1 John 2:15-17
Saturday: 2 Corinthians 4:4-5
Sunday: 2 Timothy 3:14-17

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.