

GOD'S REVIVALIST

April 2023

and Bible Advocate





thinking out loud

“IS IT REAL?”

A recent Sunday morning sermon at church was about revival—what it is and how it has evolved over the years. The pastor was trying to put what has been happening on the Asbury University campus since February 8th in its proper perspective. At the time of the pastor’s sermon, the Asbury revival had been going nonstop for 11 days and was viral on social media. Thousands of people had made the trip to the small town of Wilmore, Kentucky, to observe or participate. The pastor himself had twice driven down to Wilmore and reported that he had been receiving a lot of questions—with one being prominent: “Is it real?” This was usually asked in a hopeful rather than negative sense.

My mind went back to early March of 1974. I was alone at my parents’ house (The Wesleyan Church parsonage in Huntington, West Virginia) when I heard a knock. I opened the door to a stranger who asked, “Are you Ken Farmer?” He explained that he was on leave from the Air Force and was currently stationed in Misawa, Japan. Some there had asked him to stop by this address and see if Ken Farmer was “for real.” Had he *really* become a Christian?

I had been discharged several weeks earlier after a four-year term in U.S. Air Force intelligence. About two weeks afterward, I had been gloriously saved at a Wednesday night prayer meeting. I wanted to let my old Air Force buddies know about this, so I sent them a letter to tell them that Farmer was a changed man. I jokingly signed it “Ken Farmer, Sacred Agent” (instead of “secret”). That letter was what had brought this visitor to my door. I was happy to send him back to Japan with the confirmation that I was indeed a changed man. What had happened *in* me and *to* me was “real.”

How can we determine whether or not a revival is “real”? When the Spirit is moving, we must genuinely open our hearts in full surrender and receive what God is offering. Our positive response to God will result in positive change in us—and the change in us will be proof enough for those seriously asking “is it real?”

Throughout the years I have stayed in touch with some of those old Air Force buddies who knew and were quite fond of the “old” Ken Farmer. But one day a “new” Ken Farmer replaced the old, and the change in me was the proof.

Are you ready for the knock on your door?—KF ■

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COVER PHOTO: “Ozzie” (named for famous devotional author and GBS faculty member Oswald Chambers) belongs to Vice President for Student Affairs Sonja Vernon and is a member of the dog breed Coton de Tuléar. What a delightful addition he makes to the GBS campus! Editor Ken Farmer particularly likes this photo of Ozzie guarding the grassy area near the entrance of the Women’s Residence Hall. Photo by Rachel Pohl.

Discipleship Tools for Success

by Nathan Brown



INTRODUCTION

In part one of this series, we looked at what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, and we did this in terms of five verbs: commit, follow, imitate, coach, and persuade. In part two, we answered the question, “How do I personally follow Jesus?” and we saw that it means:

- Resolving each day to be a disciple.
- Fostering a relationship with God.
- Following the example of Jesus and others.
- Showing others how to be disciples.
- Calling others to repentance and faith in Christ.

Now we are going to look at some tools that will help you succeed in putting these principles into practice. These tools can be found at the website <https://comeafterme.com>. The website was created to make a variety

of discipleship tools freely available to all who wish to use them. The menu includes:

- **Discipleship**—core material on discipleship with video lectures.
- **Lessons**—various topics related to discipleship.
- **Bible**—personal and family discipleship through the conversation.
- **Articles**—advanced issues related to discipleship.
- **Dear Phil**—answers to various questions related to discipleship and Christian living.
- **Tour Israel**—videos to help understand the geography of the Bible.
- **Links**—various helpful Christian websites.

Let’s go through some of these pages and look at how they can be used for personal and group discipleship.

DISCIPLESHIP PAGE

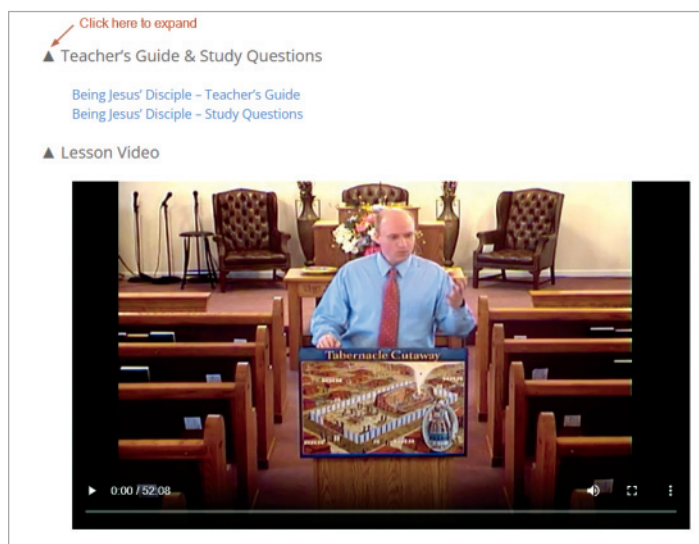
This page contains the core material on discipleship, and it covers everything in this current series of articles. The lessons include:

- **Being Jesus' Disciple**—the basics of what it means to be a disciple of Christ.
- **I Follow Jesus**—how to live as a disciple of Jesus.



- **Discipleship Tools**—how to use the discipleship tools available on the website.
- **The Disciple-Making Home**—how to disciple your family.
- **The Disciple-Making Church**—how discipleship works in the church.

Each of these lessons has a Teacher's Guide and Study Questions that accompany the video presentations. You can access these by clicking on the triangles as shown.

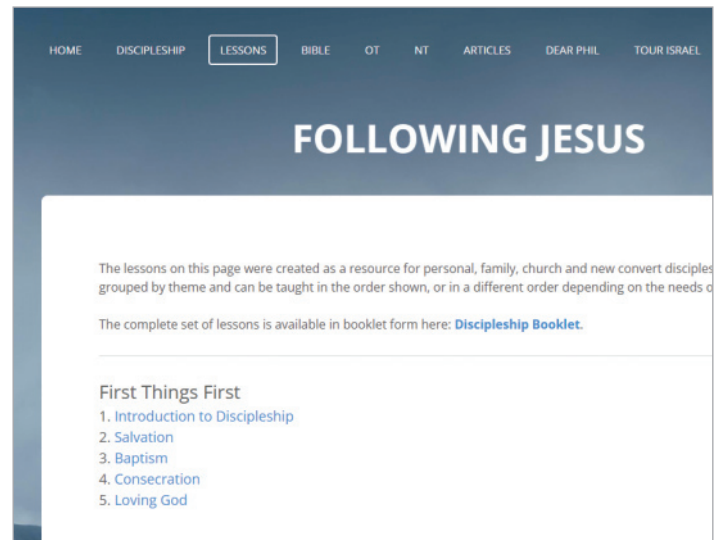


Families, small groups, and churches can use this page to host discipleship seminars. You can print seminar work-

books for the material using the link on the page or by ordering them from Country Pines Printing, Shoals, Indiana.

LESSONS PAGE

The lessons on this page are designed to ground new disciples in the basics of the Christian life. While they are



geared toward new converts, they are also useful for those who have never been discipled, and I've found that many who have attended church for decades have also profited from this material. The menu includes:

First Things First. This section covers the basics of salvation, baptism, consecration, and loving God. While the lesson on salvation may seem redundant, it's fundamental to the following lessons, and after reading the lesson, some new converts have realized that they didn't truly understand what it meant to become a disciple of Jesus. The salvation lesson also lays important groundwork for the lesson on witnessing in the next section. The lesson on consecration introduces new disciples to the basics of sanctification, while avoiding the more advanced wording that is typically used by various denominations.

Essentials for Success. This section covers four essentials for being a successful disciple: Bible reading (listening to God), prayer (talking to God), participating in church, and witnessing (sharing the gospel). If new disciples are not properly grounded in these disciplines, they will have difficulty going on to maturity. The fifth essential is memorizing and meditating on Scripture. This important discipline is at the heart of what it means to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2), and it forms the foundation for dealing with sinful habits.

Early Struggles. New disciples often go through times of persecution and discouragement, especially when they first decide to follow Jesus. This section deals with some of those early issues and teaches them how to cope with rejection, to forgive those who wrong them, and to understand the principle of sowing and reaping. It also gives them tools to deal with temptation and to conquer sinful habits.

New Perspectives. Following Jesus involves a radical change of perspective on life and living. This section introduces new disciples to the kingdom of God and tells them about their role in that kingdom. It also gives them a biblical framework for living and shows them how to think about life from a godly perspective.

Basic Doctrines. This section covers the basic beliefs of Christianity (doctrines), including lessons on God, angels, Satan, heaven, hell, and the resurrection of Jesus. It also teaches new disciples about the Bible, introducing them to words like “inspired” and “inerrant.” The last lessons in this section cover more advanced topics, like the security of the believer and the gift of tongues. It concludes with a very important lesson on faith—a concept that is important for you to understand correctly at the beginning of your walk with Jesus.

Future Events. Everyone is curious about the future, but there’s a lot of confusion about the establishment of Christ’s earthly kingdom. This section covers the rapture of the saints and the return of Jesus to rule on this present earth. Major emphasis is given to the book of Daniel as a guide to the future, and Jesus’ Olivet Discourse is covered in great detail. (The lessons are taught from a *futurist, pre-millennial* perspective).

Building Godly Character. This section covers the key character qualities of humility and diligence, which are so important to being a successful disciple. There is also a lesson which encourages you to examine your life and make any changes that would better conform you to the image of Christ.

BIBLE PAGE

This page models “The Conversation.” In the previous article, I mentioned that when we read the Bible, God is

speaking directly to us. We often think of reading the Bible as a solitary activity, but when we read God’s Word, we have just entered into a conversation with our heavenly Father. This means Bible reading and prayer are not separate from one another. They are two sides of the same relational coin. Here’s how it works: God talks to us through His Word, we think about and meditate on what He said, and then we respond to God in prayer, telling Him what we have learned. Since following Jesus means fostering a relationship with God, this conversation is essential to being a disciple of Jesus.

Date. The first thing you’ll notice at the top of the page is the date. Each time you open this page, it opens to the current date. You can use the calendar buttons to navigate to a particular date. The right and left arrows on either side of the month/year at the top of the calendar will let you move quickly across the months. You can use the “Today” button to return to the current day. Sometimes, you’ll want to locate a particular passage of Scripture, and you can do this using the “Select Book” and “Select Chapter” drop-downs under the calendar.

Text. The first section on the upper left is the “Text” section. This shows you what portions of Scripture are in that day’s reading. Directly under that is the “Chronology” section. This tells you the time period for the reading. Knowing this is helpful for making connections to other events in world history. To the right of the chronology, you’ll notice an “Index” link. This takes you to a PDF of the entire Bible laid out in chronological order. Every passage of Scripture is dated and harmonized, so you can quickly search for and find any particular event. Sometimes a particular day will also have extra links to specific chronological charts such as “Patriarchal Chronology” or “Mosaic Chronology” (see January 31 as an example). You can print these out and keep them for reference as you read.

Read. The next section is the “Read” section. There are four English translations available: the New American Standard Bible (NASB), which is an excellent word-for-word style translation; the King James Version (KJV), which is the Bible so many of us have grown up reading; the Lexham English Bible (LEB), another good word-for-word style translation from Lexham Press which is one of the only freely licensed English Bible translations; and the New English Translation (NET), another helpful translation that is freely licensed for non-commercial use. I chose these translations primarily because they allow the use of their texts without requiring payment. The only exception is the NASB, controlled by the Lockman Foundation, which gave me a separate license agreement to use their text. Next to each version is a small “(M).” This links to a complete month’s worth of readings for those who like to print out the entire month and have the pages in their hand as they read.

If you click on one of these translations, your browser will open a PDF file of that day’s reading. The files are made up of blocks of text, with titles in the headers that tell you the main thought, and dates in parentheses that

Sunday, August 7, 2022

Text
2 Kings 23:1-3, 21-27
2 Chronicles 34:29-35:19
Jeremiah 11-12

Chronology
622 BC (index)

Read
[New American Standard Bible \(M\)](#)
[King James Version \(M\)](#)
[Lexham English Bible \(M\)](#)
[New English Translation \(M\)](#)

[New King James Version](#)
[New International Version](#)
[New Living Translation](#)

Listen
[ESV Narrated by David Heath](#)

Pray
[Daily Prayer \(PDF\)](#)
[Prayer Template](#)

August 2022

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3

Today

use the calendar to select a date

--Select Book--

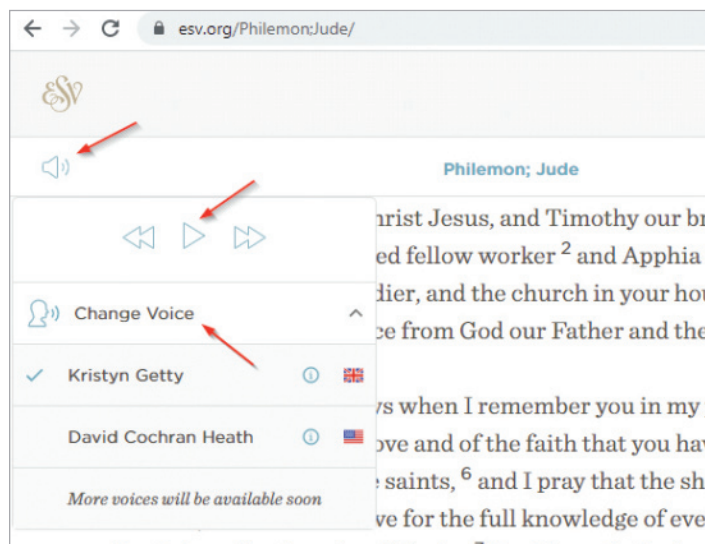
use the dropdowns to select a passage

give you the chronology. When more than one book of the Bible covers the same event, the text is presented in synopsis form—parallel columns of text that are harmonized at the word level (which is very rare). The synopsis form allows you to notice and appreciate the differences between harmonized passages of Scripture, and are very useful for study.

Many of the readings have “Chronological Notes” or “Textual Notes” at the end of the file. There are a total of 75 pages of these notes throughout the readings, and they give background and explanation for why I made certain decisions about chronological questions and arrangement of the text.

Another important feature of the PDF files is the captioning that is included with the text. You’re probably used to seeing this in your own Bible, and I have personally written or chosen every single caption that is found in the readings. They are helpful in making the text easier to understand. I also handpicked every single cross-reference that is included in the readings. You can click on them to open a new browser window where you can quickly read the reference.

Listen. The next section is the “Listen” section. Listening to the Bible can be a great way to add variety to your time in the Word. Many people find listening to be easier than reading, and it can really come in handy if you spend a lot of time in your car. I know several people who listen to the reading on their way to work. The link in this section will take you to the esv.org website made by Crossway. Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, is the owner of the English Standard Version (ESV), and their website is the only one in the world that allows you to listen to a verse-level audio recording of the Bible (all other audio versions are at the chapter-level).



To listen to the reading, click on the Audio icon to the left of the text, then click the Play button. Use the “Change Voice” option to choose between a male or female reader (currently David Heath or Kristyn Getty). If you ever have

difficulty hearing the audio on an iPhone, try using the Chrome browser rather than the default Safari browser. You can find the Chrome browser in the App Store by searching for “Google Chrome.”

Pray. The next section is the “Pray” section. As I mentioned earlier, “The Conversation” works like this: God talks to us through His Word, we think about and meditate on what He said, and then we respond to God in prayer, praising Him and telling Him what we have learned. Think about what this means for prayer. It means we don’t have to think up something to pray about each day. We can simply talk to God about what He just said. But how do we do that? How do we talk to God about Leviticus and Lamentations and Luke? This can be difficult if you’re not used to doing it, so I’ve included a sample prayer for each day of the Bible reading plan. If you click on the “Daily Prayer” link, it will open the prayer at the bottom of the Bible page. If you click on the “PDF” link, it will open a PDF file of the prayer that you can print. The sample prayers can be prayed as your own, or you can click on the “Daily Prayer Template” and use it to create your own prayers. If writing isn’t your strength, you don’t have to write them out; you can just use the template as a guide for your thoughts.

The prayers are designed to help you praise God, learn lessons from His Word, reflect on how Scripture applies to your life, ask God for grace and strength to live for Him throughout the day, and thank God for all He’s done for you. The goal is for your Bible reading and prayer time to be a conversation with God that challenges you and enriches your life.

Let’s walk through a sample prayer and get a feel for each part. We’ll be using the prayer for November 7; in the Scripture reading for that day, God tells us about Jesus’ night in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Praise. The “Praise” section is about praising God for Who He is and what He’s done. This part is usually straightforward, because everything that God is and everything that God does is worthy of praise! In this case, I focused on God’s love in sending His Son to die in our place and how that act of love is worthy of praise. This trains us to recognize that God’s actions and attitudes reveal His character, and His character is truly glorious to behold!

Today in Your Word. The “Today in Your Word” section is about learning something from what God just said to us. Paul makes it clear that all Scripture is “profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17 ESV). This means every part of the Bible has meaning and application for us today. As we read, we need to be asking ourselves, “What is this teaching me about how to be a disciple of Jesus? In what way does this show me how to love God and others?” When you ask those questions about the Garden of Gethsemane, you start to see how Jesus’ actions are a model for how to deal with intense times of trial and temptation.

Reflection

I always read the account of Judas' betrayal of Jesus with a mixture of revulsion and bewilderment. How could you spend three years with God's Son and come to such an end? Yet any time I say 'Yes' to sin and 'No' to the Spirit, I'm right there with Judas, betraying the Son of Man with a kiss. (Keep me from such madness!)

Reflection. The "Reflection" section is about challenging ourselves with the truth of God's Word. James said, "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like" (James 1:22-24 ESV). God's Word is like a spiritual mirror. When we listen to what God says, we receive insight into the condition of our hearts and minds. We need to be sensitive to that, and not walk away without giving serious consideration to what changes might need to be made in our lives.

Request. The "Request" section is about asking God to help us put what we've learned into practice. You can use the applications from the "Today in the Word" section to inform your requests. We're very used to asking God for help with our physical issues, but are we asking God for help with our spiritual needs?

Thanksgiving. The "Thanksgiving" section is about thanking God for what He's told us and being grateful for the many blessings He's given us. Gratitude is essential for making it through the storms and trials of life, and this is a great way to end your time in prayer.

The prayers end with a suggested hymn and a verse you can meditate on during the day. Hymns are a wonderful way to impress the truths of Scripture into our minds, and the meditation verse is handpicked to help you keep your focus on Jesus throughout the rest of your day.

Think. The last section is the "Think" section. This section provides an easy and helpful way to promote group discipleship. Each day has a set of fill-in-the-blank questions that are taken from the prayer (see example below). If you click on the "M" link, you can print out a complete month of questions, which is handy for doing this in a group set-

ting. I answer these questions in my daily lectures. You can listen to the audio-only format by clicking the "Play" button or watch by clicking on the "Video Link."

If you miss an answer or want to make sure you've filled in the blanks correctly, you can click on the "Answer Key" link to see the answers. The goal of this section is to facilitate group discussion of the daily reading. I use this personally for family discipleship. Each person in my family reads the daily reading, and then we all listen to the lecture together and discuss what we've learned. It's perfect

December 21 Questions

- 1) Hebrews was an _____ letter to the Christian community in _____, who had recently gone through a time of _____. Many of them were discouraged and in danger of _____ from faith in Christ. Knowing this, the author of Hebrews warned his readers of the peril of _____ and urged them to endure to the end by _____. He did this by proving the _____ of Jesus and his covenant, and then calling the disciples to remain firm in their _____ to Christ. The author began by showing that the OT proclaims the Messiah to be the _____ of God (Ps 2; 45; 110). This means that Jesus is _____ than the angels, for they are ministering spirits sent out to _____ for the sake of the saints (Heb 1:14). This teaches us that we should pay very close _____ to what Jesus has said, lest we _____ away from it. The author continued by showing that the OT also proclaims the Messiah to be the son of _____ (Ps 8:4-6; Heb 2:9). As man, Jesus was made _____ than the angels for a little while, but _____ he is crowned with glory and honor, and all things will be put in _____ under his feet. His incarnation means that he is _____ and blood just like us, and his obedient suffering _____ him to be our High Priest. He made _____ for our sins, and because he himself _____ when tempted, he is able to help us when we are tempted. The author then showed that Jesus is superior to _____ (Heb 3:1). Moses was a faithful _____ in God's house, but Jesus was faithful over God's house as _____ and _____. If we remain _____, like Moses, then we will be a part of Jesus' house. But if we _____, like those Moses led from Egypt, then we will not enter God's _____. This teaches us to fear the danger of _____.

for couples, families, small groups, etc. If you've ever struggled to have a time of family devotions, this is as easy as pushing a button.

CONCLUSION

In closing, my hope and prayer is that you will find the tools on the comeafterme.com website to be useful in your own discipleship journey.

The next installment will focus on **The Disciple-Making Home**, followed by **The Disciple-Making Church**. I trust these will be a blessing. 📖

Nathan Brown is a senior engineer for Southern Company Services, Director of Discipleship for the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches, and founder of ComeAfterMe.com (a discipleship website). He, his wife Charity, and two children live in Trussville, AL. All Scripture quotations are ESV.

