

# RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP

Vol. 3 No. 3 Jan. 30, 2009



Phil 1:6 – *Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

## THE LAST VESTIGES OF SELF

Jesus has made it very clear to us that if we want to follow Him, on His terms, we must deny our self, take up our cross, and follow Him. Most of us attempt to deny the self in our own strength, which, of course, is a battle that cannot be won. The self cannot overcome the self. Only God can do God's work.

We deny the self by yielding completely to God and allowing Him to do the work in us. **It is a lifelong process, one in which we are continually being conformed to the likeness of Jesus, but one in which we will never stop participating.**

God is gracious to continually show us things in ourselves that need to be healed; and He is also gracious to continually bring about that healing.

Ultimately, however, we will reach a point where God, in His sovereignty, His majesty, His wisdom, and His love, will knock all the pins out from beneath us and will remove from us the last vestiges of the defiant self. Good riddance! But not an easy road on which to travel.

We are speaking of a dying process that is essential if we want to serve God at the highest level – and in this day and age, it is imperative that we do just that.

This process can be considered the grand-daddy of all “wilderness experiences”. God does not coddle us. He does not participate in our pity parties. When it comes to the final death to self, He is pure business.

Jesus was not speaking in the abstract when He stated that in order to save our lives we must lose them. He meant every word of what He said.

## THE ULTIMATE YIELDING

Of course, to reach this spiritual plateau, we must have yielded and yielded and yielded again to the Lord. God really does want it all. He wants us to have all of Him and that cannot occur until He first has all of us.

Part of this ultimate yielding is to yield our wills to God. We can tell Him all day long that we are willing to yield everything to Him, but He is waiting for us to put actions behind our words.

**Most of us still have a firm grip on our wallet, on our**

**schedules, and on our ultimate decision-making.**

We say we trust God in those areas, but, in experience, we do not.

We must think long and hard about yielding our will to the Lord and exactly what that means. Are we willing for God to do with us, in us, and through us, anything that He desires, without His having to get our approval first? That's a big jump for most of us, but a necessary one if we want to serve God on His terms to the fullest degree possible.

We must allow the Lord to take us places spiritually that we have never been before. He wants us to think through, thoroughly, what it means to yield our will to Him. What does it mean to yield our possessions, including our finances, retirements, vacations, etc. to the Lord? When we give them up, we need to recognize that God has no responsibility to give them back to us.

How about our decision-making? We all quote Prov. 3:5 – *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding*, but in reality, few of us really do that. We pray, we ask God's blessing on our situations, then we do what we wanted

to do in the first place – and hope it's within God's will.

What does it mean to yield your family to the Lord? Can you give them to God knowing that He has no responsibility to give them back to you – ever?

These are hard questions but this is also the most important decision you will ever make regarding your Christianity. God is priming you to be part of His holy, warrior remnant. Are you willing to serve Him to that degree?

## **ADDITION BY SUBTRACTION**

This is what we call addition by subtraction. We say: "Lord, I need more power. I need more faith. I need more strength." But God says: "You have all you need in Me. What you need is to get rid of all the stuff that still reeks of you. The less there is of you, the more there will be of Me."

**God doesn't need our help running the world or running the Church, either. All He needs is "these old goats on which we ride".** God wants transparent vessels through whom He can do His own work.

Brother Yun, the Chinese pastor, says: "God doesn't bless the things we do for Him. He blesses the things He does through us."

So, it really is all about dying to self, isn't it? Yes!

But, in reality, if we look deeply into our spiritual mirror, many of us will see that it is still "all about me". What can we do about getting extricated from this unholy conundrum? We yield. **We allow God to take the last vestiges of the self and put them to everlasting sleep.**

God wants us to walk and to live in the spirit realm. We want Him to leave the spirit realm and come visit us where we are, but God doesn't work that way. He says that we must leave the natural order of things and enter into the divine order. We must begin to walk and to live in the spirit realm. Then He won't have to come and visit us. We will already be with Him.

Two weeks ago, I was discharged from the hospital, once again, and told that I had no chance of living beyond a few days. The cancer had returned and was moving very fast; and nothing else could be done.

No one, however, outdoes God. The night before, I spent the entire night in fellowship with the Lord and He assured me that He was about to move me out of this last "wilderness experience". He had accomplished that which He intended to accomplish. And He was ready to thrust me forth into ministry once again (not that I ever stopped ministering, but not to the same extent). So the next day the doctor's

statement caught me somewhat offguard.

I told him that I would not die. I shared with him what had occurred the previous night. The doctor has lived with me through these previous four times that I was supposed to die, so he was glad to hear that the Lord was going to see me through again. So they released me so that I could die at home.

It is very interesting that the Lord is allowing me to experience the dying process. My body is wasting away. I can both see and feel what the cancer is doing; and there are days when I can hardly keep my eyes open, I am so overwhelmed with what is happening to my body.

But God has assured me that I will be healed and I don't doubt it for a second. In fact, I fully intend to begin teaching this next Radical Discipleship class on January 20<sup>th</sup> (I am writing this prior to that date).

At one point, about a week ago, as I was drifting off to sleep, I suggested to the Lord that I knew I lived in the spirit realm, but I hadn't experienced much fellowship there with He and with the angels of God. Later that night, I awakened suddenly and saw a man standing in the corner of the room. He was only there for a second or two then was gone. Though normally I would jump up and flip the lights on, this time, I was in perfect peace. I knew it was an angel

of the Lord and I knew that he was there as my protector. We didn't speak but deep in my spirit I had a strong confirmation and confidence that could only come from the Lord. It was as if God was saying: "You asked and I answered." Can it really be that simple? Yes, it can!!

## THE DIVINE ORDER

God wants us to live in the spirit realm. He wants us to exist in the divine order rather than the natural order. This can only occur as we allow Him to strip us from those last surviving evidences of self. And when He does that, we will begin to experience life the way God wants us to experience it.

Remember, God's purpose for us is to conform us to the likeness of Jesus. In doing so, we become nothing and He becomes everything in us. We don't become stronger; we become weaker. We don't become more humble; we become less proud. **We don't have more faith. We have better understanding of who God is. Our faith, therefore, becomes stronger, not bigger.**

God wants us to live in His presence at all times. This is not an ideal to which we should aspire; it is a spiritual place in which we are to live. God will do the work but we must allow Him to. We must yield – and we must yield to the highest degree.

Do we settle for: "Lord, I want to serve You," or do we cry out with all that is within us, "Lord, I want to serve You at the highest possible level – regardless of the cost?"

We already know the cost. It will cost us everything. If we choose to save anything regarding our life, we will, in fact, lose it. If that dreamhouse, that long-awaited vacation, the retirement money, our children or spouses – if there is any of that, anything at all, that we are unwilling to lose, then we will, in fact, lose not only that but much more.

**Only when we are willing to die to everything will our lives become whole. And they will become whole in a manner far above anything we ever thought or hoped.**

God wants us to live in the divine order. It is where Jesus and the Father reside, deep within our hearts. It forces us to take a step into the unknown – but it is a place that is not unknown to God. We must trust the Lord in a far greater fashion than we ever knew was even possible. We must allow Him to take us places, spiritually, that we didn't even know existed.

And, we must allow Him to strip us of those final rotting-away pieces of self. And when we are ready and willing to allow God to do that, He will move us out onto an island. You will still go to the same job, do the same things, and meet the

same people, but deep inside, you will be dying. You will wonder if the Lord didn't turn His back completely on you. You will wonder what in the world you did that was so wrong. You will wonder if you will, indeed, get through it all.

God doesn't have to apologize. He is the one who brought it all about. He is only answering your prayer. **You said: "Lord, you can have all of me." And God said, "Okay, son. Fasten your seatbelt."**

## PERSEVERANCE

Part of God's overall plan is for us to learn perseverance. We must see these things all the way through. We must trust the Lord, knowing that He knows what we are experiencing; He knows how much we can handle; and He knows when it is time to stop.

God wants to take us all the way through to the end. Only at the end of the trial will the victory shine through. In all of King David's "wilderness" psalms, he starts off by explaining his difficulty; calls out to God to rescue him, and always ends up worshipping the Lord.

Phil. 1:6-*Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*

It is the Lord who has called you to this place of difficulty. His purpose is to conform you to the likeness

of His Son, Jesus. His desire is to strip you completely of your self so that you can begin to serve Him in the divine order and to walk in His daily presence. You must, then, allow the Lord to complete this work that He has started. And you must understand that it is He who has started it.

Of course it is hard to understand. God's ways are higher than our ways. But that also means that God is doing something in the spiritual realm of which we have no knowledge. That is a good thing. And the time will come when He will allow us to see what it is that He has done. We, too, can then walk where we have never walked before.

Oh, dear Christian friends, we must understand that God has great plans for us. We are living at the end of the End of the Age. We are about to witness the most powerful move of God ever. And God is looking to and fro, throughout the earth, for men and women through whom He can exact His will upon this earth. If He has put His mark on you; and if He cares enough (and He does) to take you through such an experience, about which we have been speaking, then you are blessed, indeed.

You have been called to be part of God's holy, warrior remnant that He is raising up at this time. There are many who are already operating at this unbelievably, powerful

spiritual place. God wants you to be part of this work.

Don't for a moment think that things in this world are going to get better. They are going to get worse; and that is why God is doing what He is doing. He is preparing a people through whom He can exact His will in these last days.

You are part of this remnant. Allow God to have His way with you. His plan is culminating to perfection. There is always room for one more in this holy remnant. Isn't that seat saved for you?

## **Radical Discipleship Seminar**

**Peter Hess is teaching a Radical Discipleship seminar on Tuesdays, beginning Jan. 20, 2009 at Cornerstone Fellowship (behind the Fredericktowne Mall, next to Ollie's Outlet). Classes start at 7:15 PM. All are welcome.**

**Beginning Tues., Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>, these teachings will be online real time (audio only). Go to the Home Page of our website to access.**

**RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP** is created and published by Peter Hess through PDH Writings, Inc. The information in this publication is not necessarily the opinion of any particular church or denomination. The author

takes full responsibility for its content.

To view prior messages, please visit the website listed at the end of this publication and *click* on Radical Discipleship Newsletters in the upper right corner of the Home Page of the website.

If you would prefer to have this publication emailed or to add new subscribers, please contact Peter at the email address at the end of this publication. Please note: there is no cost to subscribers nor do we accept donations regarding these publications.

Please call or email for permission to copy or distribute this publication. In most cases, permission will be granted.

Peter Hess is the author of multiple non-fiction Christian books and Christian fiction novels that are sold nationwide. More information is available on the website.

Website:

[www.peterhessbooks.com](http://www.peterhessbooks.com)

E-Mail:

[peter@peterhessbooks.com](mailto:peter@peterhessbooks.com)

**GOD BLESS YOU!**

**BE RADICAL FOR GOD!!!**