

# The New Covenant

\*A quick note regarding the Leader's Guide. Please use this only as a supplement to help further discussion. The book is your guide and should be your primary resource. This leader's guide is here to provide further insight into various moments and develop greater depth in understanding. As a leader, please add your own questions from your time in the book and your time in God's Word.

## Remember the Offerings of Covenants:

Suzerain (God)	Vassal (Us)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Protection</u></li> <li>• <u>Privilege</u></li> <li>• <u>Identity</u></li> <li>• <u>Provision</u></li> <li>• <u>Authority</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Devotion</u></li> <li>• <u>Loyalty</u></li> <li>• <u>Identity</u></li> <li>• <u>Representation</u></li> </ul>

Supplemental Questions and Commentary by Section and Page. Apply as appropriate.

## God and the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is THE TEACHER. How do you respond to that?

Let's look at a couple of examples of discipleship from the Bible. There are two interesting moments that show discipleship in ways that are contrasting, but when we really dive into these moments we'll likely find them to be quite complimentary as well.

**Read Acts 8:26-39 and Galatians 1:13, 15-18.** Let's start by focusing on two aspects from these stories. 1. The Ethiopian answers Philip's question about his understanding of Scripture with these words, "Well, how could I, unless someone guides me" and then he invited Philip to sit with him. 2. Paul tells us that he "did not immediately consult with flesh and blood" nor did he "go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before" him but "went away to Arabia..." The Ethiopian sought a teacher in flesh and blood named Philip. Paul sought the Holy Spirit. So are we to do one and not the other? No, and the answer to this is found as the passages continue. Paul tells us that after his time in Arabia he "returned once more to Damascus." In Damascus he walked for three years with other disciples such as Ananias. He also goes on to show that he did go to Jerusalem later and met with Cephas (Peter) and James, the brother of Jesus. In contrast, after the Ethiopian was baptized, the Holy Spirit swept Philip away. The Ethiopian had Scripture, the Truth of Scripture, and he had the Holy Spirit. Paul knew Scripture very well prior to his conversion. He was a student of one of the greatest Jewish teachers of his time. He didn't need to learn Scripture, he needed to come to know and experience the revelation of The Word. Further, in Acts 9, the Lord came to Ananias in a vision and told him about Saul (Paul) and said, "I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

- Who did Paul seek as his first teacher after his conversion?

- Who was the Ethiopian's first teacher that led to baptism?
- Who were Paul's teachers upon his return to Damascus and his journey to Jerusalem?
- Who was the Ethiopian's teacher after the Holy Spirit swept Philip away?

Why this tangent? We need to have both types of teachers. We need disciplers to help us understand what we're reading in Scripture. BUT, understanding and intimate knowledge are two different things. It is the Holy Spirit who discloses intimate knowledge in His Word and He writes it on our hearts. He can do this through independent study, and He can do it through guided study by a discipler. But you need to allow for both. Most of us tend to only seek the flesh and blood teacher experience. A flesh and blood teacher can teach us that we are to glorify Christ Jesus, but the Holy Spirit instructs our hearts and minds in His glory and fills us with His glory. A flesh and blood teacher can teach us that we need to view the world differently, but it is the Holy Spirit that opens our eyes. See the following Scriptures:

- **Psalms 86:11-12:** "Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name. I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And will glorify Your name forever."
- **Psalms 25:4-5:** "Make me know Your ways, O LORD; Teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; For You I wait all the day."

### Holy Spirit Discloses Identity

The two statements from Jeremiah 31:34 are so important to spend time discussing and praying over. Failure to accept and receive one and not the other is detrimental to our walk and will only serve as a stumbling block. Keep this in mind regarding the words, "I will remember no more": God isn't forgetful. God chooses not to remember. The blood of Jesus erases our sins through cleansing. It isn't that God is forgetful, He purposely focuses on His Son instead of our past. The big question is, what are you going to focus on?

There can also be detriment in our attitude toward the first statement, "for I will forgive their iniquity." If Jesus is just an insurance policy on getting to heaven, we tend to view this statement with the attitude of, "isn't that nice," which is just prideful glad-handing. When this is the case, we aren't really accepting forgiveness because we aren't entirely convinced we need it. The other detrimental attitude toward the first statement is the disbelief in His ability to forgive. It is rooted in our disbelief of the statement, "I will remember no more." If we cannot fully receive forgiveness, we will never experience freedom in Christ. Once again, we are creating God in our image and denying His identity, the identity from which our identity flows forth.

### Ratification

Take another look at Hebrews 10:1-4. Let's focus on the following words from verse 2, "because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins."

- Do you struggle with repenting of sins, asking forgiveness, and still having a heavy conscience regarding the sins?

- If you have struggles with this, what are you failing to receive?
  - *This struggle is indicative of a resistance to grace. Resistance can be a matter of not believing you need grace or a matter of feeling as though you are not worthy of grace. There is actually truth to the second matter, but that is the whole point of grace. Grace is the receipt of something you don't deserve. Feeling as though we need to exercise some sort of penance to receive forgiveness is counter to the Gospel. Penance shifts the focus away from unconditional grace and places the focus on you. Forgiveness is not earned. You are Forgiven. You are Free. Galatians 5:1. Until you accept this, you will struggle.*

### **Pg. 107**

What do the following words mean to you: "Jesus entered the holy place to set you free from your sins so that He, and you, would remember them no more...?"

### **For You**

How do you respond to these words: "At no time did God ever desire our sacrifices... they were, instead, for us?"

### **Pg. 109**

The book states, "...our response to God's kingdom responsibility is obedience, springing forth from faithfulness and love." In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians we encounter the "Love" chapter (13). In Paul's beautiful description of love he states, "it does not seek its own..." Because this chapter is associated with so many weddings, we often equate this statement with how we relate to others, especially spouses. When you look at the greater picture of Kingdom and consider obedience and faithfulness, how is this statement reflected in your love for God? We're happy Jesus didn't seek His own. What are you seeking?

### **Everything I AM, Is Yours**

Whether your group has done this chapter as homework or not, please read Revelation 5 together as a group. Let this moment set a little bit, and then ask the group to share their individual impressions from this moment in Scripture.

### **After Closing Reflections**

Don't forget to go back to the Preface and tackle the Scripture challenge.