

KANSAS COMMUNITIES MINISTRY UPDATE

"My objective is to know Christ in my own life in ever-increasing depth and to make disciples and develop laborers at all times, under any conditions, in every place I go"

John 14:15

"If you love me, you will obey my commandments." (NET Bible)

Growth in Christlikeness

How do we grow to be more like Christ? How much is up to us and how much is it the Holy Spirit's job? Ultimately, the Spirit is transforming us ("Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled faces reflecting the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another, which is from the Lord, who is the Spirit." 2 Cor. 3:17-18).

Sometimes we err by thinking that if I could just obey more, follow the rules better, be a "better Christian," then I will become more Christlike. However, Scripture says that that attitude is legalism and ultimately results in death. (Romans 8:1-4).

Instead our "job" is to keep our eyes on Jesus ("We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith." Hebrews 12:2, NLT). I must not look to the law to see if I am growing or to try to keep the commands in order to be more like Him. No, I must keep my eyes on Jesus, who, with the Holy Spirit transforms me into His likeness.

The Need for Struggle

by Larry Beck

In his book "Trusting God", Jerry Bridges writes that the "Word of God and adversity have a synergistic effect and God uses both of them together to bring about growth in our lives that neither the Word nor adversity would accomplish by itself."

Jerry uses the following illustration: "One of the many fascinating events in nature is the emergence of the Cecropia moth from its cocoon, an event that occurs only with much struggle on the part of the moth to free itself. The story is

frequently told of someone's trying to help a moth through its struggle by snipping the shell of the cocoon. The moth soon emerged with its wings crimped and shriveled and weak. In a few moments, the insect would have stretched those wings to fly but was now doomed to crawling out its brief life in frustration of never being the beautiful creature God created it to be. What the person in the story didn't realize was that the struggle to emerge from the cocoon is an essential part of developing the muscle system of the moth's body and pushing the body fluids out into the wings to expand them."

In this regard, Jerry comments that "we want God to snip the cocoon of adversity we often find ourselves in and release us." And truth be known...the sooner the better from our perspective. (Continued on p. 3)



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Goads and Nails

Excerpt from *Goads and Nails*,

"You may impress from a distance, but to have impact, you must be up close."

"Over the years, I have attended dozens of retreats, seminars, and conferences. I have also listened to thousands of sermons. Many of the speakers were outstanding. What they said was interesting and provocative. I was impressed with most of them ... All of this pales in significance, however, in comparison to the impact that one man, Jim Morris, made on my life.

Up close, I heard not only the message, but also saw the man. He was not giving a sermon, he was living a sermon... We were not dealing with hypothetical issues while in the huddle of the game of life, we were involved in the game itself. By living up close, I could become aware of the single mindedness of his commitment, the importance of the word of God, and the importance of the individual.

I have met many individuals over the years who have been more impressive than Jim, but none have had the impact on my life that he has had."

– Richard Spann

Days of our Lives

by Marvin Soliah

Just think, 100 years of life here on earth = 36,500 days. **The day** is the single most important measure of our life with the *passing of time ... day by day*. I would paint a picture of a day with a sunrise/sunset image. In **Mark 1:35 ... Jesus** rose early in the morning to pray.



Ponder this hymn about each **day** by Swedish hymn writer **Lina Sandell**, "**Day by Day and With Each Passing Moment**": "Strength I find to meet my trials; I've no cause for worry or for fear. His (God's) heart is kind beyond all measure. He gives us **each day** what he deems best. **One by one, the days**, the moments fleeting, Till I reach the **promised land**."

An encouraging Bible verse is **Psalm 40:3** – "With each **new day** we pray for a **new song** in our hearts. Also, Lamentations **3:22** – "His compassions are new every morning. **Great is Thy Faithfulness**"...to quote that famous hymn title.

Many decades ago, my mother would say, "We have had such a **happy day**, so we will surely sleep well tonight." A plaque from my parents explains the significance of **each new day**- "*I can use **this day** for good or waste **this day**. I must decide to use **each day** for some meaningful purpose. I hope I will not regret the price I paid for **each day** because I have exchanged **one day** of my life for it and, when it passes, it **will be gone forever**."*

Never take any **day** for granted. I remember how the sun was setting over my mother's hospital room as she passed away. My father passed away at sunrise before another **new day**. So always appreciate **each day** as a gift because it is a present.

Psalm 16:11 promises that God, being with us, will "fill us with joy; (**each day**) and at God's right hand are pleasures forever."

Remember **Stuart Hamlin**, the country western singer-turned gospel song writer who wrote "**Until Then**" (1958) He wrote these moving words: "*This troubled old world is not my final home. Until then, my heart I will go on singing... **Until that day**, I will carry on. **Until the day**, my eyes behold the city. **Until the day** God calls me home.*"

Another song that I find so profound in its meaning is "**It's Supper Time**." **Psalm 139:16** tells us that "God knows the number of **our days**" before we were even born. This song refers to our **days' work** compared to our **life's work**. Just as a mother calls her children home at the **end of the day** - so it is when the Lord calls us home at the **end of life** which represents our *entire life's work* because our whole life is just like a **day in eternity**.

Won't it be wonderful to hear the beautiful invitation of our *Lord's voice from the glories of heaven?* ...Shall we gather around the **Heavenly table?** *For the **greatest Supper Time** of all eternity?*

Come Home Children..... it's Supper Time.

The Need for Struggle (by Larry Beck) (Continued from page one)

Many Christians have memorized **James 1:2** wherein James exhorts us to count it all joy when we fall into various trials. While it's perhaps easy to understand the theology in these words, I've never met anyone who truly considers it all joy when they encounter various trials, but most Christians after going through a significant struggle of faith will speak to God's faithfulness afterwards.

Another author asserted that Christians won't grow in faith until they have to. It's one thing to grow in *the faith* (biblical knowledge and understanding – head knowledge), it's another to grow in *faith* (heart knowledge); they're related but not the same. It is contrary to our nature to depend on God, we tend to depend on ourselves, our resources or that of others. For most of us, we won't learn that God is trustworthy and able to meet our needs until He sovereignly orchestrates circumstances which force us to look to Him as our only hope, be it for physical, spiritual or emotional support.

Moses memorialized this truth in **Deuteronomy 8:3** ***"He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD."***

The truth is, we need trials to help us grow and that growth comes from engagement with God through discovery and application of His word to our circumstances and His response to our prayers. Martin Luther once said "Were it not for tribulation, I should not understand the Scriptures." In **Psalms 119:71** David writes ***"It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I may learn Your statutes."***

Why Disciple? by David Dennis

What are your motivations for investing in the lives of individuals?

Of course the fact that our Lord Jesus commanded us to make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20) should be reason enough. But I wonder what other motivations we might have for making disciples?

1. We are motivated to disciple others because we have been given so much and we want to **share it**. *"Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another."* (1 John 4:11; NKJV)
2. We are motivated to disciple others because we **love** them, knowing that as people walk close to the Lord they will experience His blessings. *"Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly [places] in Christ"* (Eph. 1:3 NKJV)
3. We are motivated to disciple others because we **look to the example** of others in our lives. *"Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this [end] I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily."* (Col. 1:28-29 NKJV). *"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus [as] the Christ."* (Acts 5:42 NKJV)
4. We are motivated to disciple others because it **helps them know God's will**, increase in spiritual wisdom and understanding, helping them to produce every kind of good fruit. *"So we have not stopped praying for you since we first heard about you. We ask God to give you complete knowledge of his will and to give you spiritual wisdom and understanding. Then the way you live will always honor and please the Lord, and your lives will produce every kind of good fruit. All the while, you will grow as you learn to know God better and better"* (Col. 1:9-10 NLT)

Spotlight on Online Resources

◆ *Discipleship Library:*

Who are your favorite speakers from the [Discipleship Library](#)? Check out such speakers as Gene Warr, Lorne Sanny, Dawson Trotman, John Beckendam, Howard Hendricks, George Sanchez, and many, many more. What a wealth of wisdom and great free resource this is! Take advantage of it today!



◆ *Kansas Navigators:*

[“Lessons to be learned from those who failed.”](#) In this blog on our website, Dr. Spann shares some insights into the lives of three kings in the Old Testament whose lives illustrated failures in certain areas. Dr. Spann closes with: “From these three kings, then, we are able to understand the value of the word of God daily in our lives, the importance of regular contact with the body of Christ, that is, the church, and those individuals who minister to you as well as those to whom you are called to minister.”

◆ *Podcast “Making Disciples Naturally”*

Beginning season 2 of the Kansas Communities Ministry podcast is a new interview with Richard Spann, former director of this ministry. Dr. Spann discusses his insights into the concept of “Walking with God,” as we know Enoch walked with God (“And Enoch walked with God; and he [was] not, for God took him.” Genesis 5:24. This five-part series started August 22. A complete index to all our podcasts is found [here on our website](#). We think you’ll be encouraged by these podcasts found on Apple Podcasts, iTunes, Spotify and [on our website](#).

Back to the basics ... The Word Hand Illustration



The Hand Illustration is familiar to many Navigators over the years. It still teaches many truths as we review this, but the one that has been most important to me recently has been the “meditation” component. *Hearing* the Word (Romans 10:17) is very important but we retain only about 5% of what we hear. Next, *reading* the Word (Rev. 1:3) is important and we should immerse ourselves in God’s Word daily, but again, we retain only about 10-15% of what we read. *Studying* the Word (Acts 17:11) is key to our growth as well and by doing this we retain even more. If we *memorize* God’s Word (Psalm

119:9,11), we retain 100% of it, so that the Holy spirit can use it when He deems appropriate in our lives (and in the lives of others as we share). Despite this 100% retention by memorizing Scripture, I’ve found that only by going over and over it, emphasizing different words, thinking of cross references, asking questions and reading other commentaries, in other words *meditating on God’s Word*, can the Spirit begin to really use it in my life. Instead of thinking of studying God’s Word, try meditating on it. It changes your outlook and your life! (Here is a [free copy of the illustration](#).)