

# Five Challenging Concepts

These concepts are designed to challenge men to become Christ-like spiritual leaders in their home. They will also require an intense commitment to God, wherein a man must determine that **he will acquire** the understanding necessary to become more and more Christ-like! God wants every man to discover if he will accept this kind of challenge: Will he build a testimony that can be easily identified by others as a Christ-like response to every event in his life?

Let me take this opportunity to mention it is my intent to present the Christian community with a challenge that contains some of the most demanding concepts I've ever heard. I'm going to offer here some of the most rigorous opportunities for illustrating Christ-likeness in the Christian home I was ever confronted with.

This challenge centers on **five concepts** that are going to be presented in question form.

- 1. What is actually involved in a man understanding his own human spirit well enough to qualify him to be a Christ-like spiritual leader?** (Proverb 25:28 requires that a man understand his own human spirit, warning him about the trouble he will encounter if he does not, "...have rule over his own spirit...") If we do not recognize, nor specifically understand, our own human spirit how can we build spiritual maturity in ourselves, or in those for which we are spiritually responsible?
- 2. What is specifically involved in dying to self... how does a man put his own flesh to death?** II Cor 7:1 clearly describes that, "We need to purge ourselves of the filthiness of the flesh and filthiness of the spirit." Do we know how to recognize our flesh in all of its manifestations? Do we even recognize when and how our flesh manifests itself in our everyday lives? Knowing these things would enable us to understand what is necessary to put our flesh to death, and allow us to acquire greater spiritual strength.
- 3. What is necessary before a man is actually capable of literally understanding the mind of a woman... as Christ would/does?** This capability would enable a man to discover even more about spiritual leadership and spiritual power. I Peter 3:7 commands that we live with our wives in an understanding way... that our prayers be not hindered.
- 4. What is involved in a man developing the ability to actually illustrate Christ to his wife in his everyday life?** We know that Christ was/is spiritually mature! And, Ephesians 5:23-27 requires that we be like Christ to our wives; Romans 8:29 also requires that we be conformed to the image of God's Son. If we are struggling in our marriages, and the evidence clearly illustrates that there is a lack of harmony and oneness, then Christ-likeness in husbands is missing. What resource will we use to discover when, where or how we are not Christ-like? What resource will we use to help us discover how to discipline ourselves, so we would more effectively illustrate Christ to everyone? How about drawing upon the help that God ordained for us? Do you know what this help is?

**5. How does a man successfully discern God's intentions and directions in every situation? Can he interpret all of life's physical events, in such a way that he is able to turn them into beneficial spiritual lessons thereby daily leading his family into victorious living?**

(Romans 8:28 says, "All things happen for the good...") What is the evidence of our daily recognizing what God's good is in all things?

If we are going to be an illustration of Christ... doesn't it make sense that we would have to learn these **five concepts** ourselves before we could teach them to others?

**Doesn't it make sense** that we cannot bring stability to the Christian community without our providing the kind of spiritual leadership, (especially in our marriages), that Christ would?

**Doesn't it make sense** that we cannot bring stability to Christian marriages if we do not understand the heart/spirit of our wives so well, that in each situation we face in our marriages, our wives feel as though they've had an encounter with Christ?

**Doesn't it make sense** that we cannot bring stability to Christian homes if we cannot illustrate that we know what our wives are thinking in a given situation? (We aren't guessing or thinking we know...we know!) And, our wives will readily testify that we do, indeed, know what their thinking would be in a given situation?

**Doesn't it make sense** that we will not be able to pass on any knowledge, nor understanding about the human spirit, if we don't thoroughly understand our own human spirits, nor our wives spirits?

**Doesn't it make sense** that if we are unable to specifically identify all of our own emotions, that we are emotionally unfamiliar? And, as such, we will be unable to identify with the emotional needs of our wives and others, and thereby be unable to care for their emotions? That we would also be unable to minister to them as Christ would? (See Hebrews 4: 14-16)

Now, having said all of that, may I propose that the most significant means God has devised for developing spiritual understanding and leadership is found within the framework of the home... marriage... because it is the most challenging institution for relationships.

Marriage is the most significant means for training a man to illustrate Christ because God wants it to be so. It is the first institution that God Himself established.

Concerning this role of spiritual leadership and how serious God is about it...Malachi 2:13-15 explains what God's expectations are of spiritual leadership; expectations that require a spiritual awareness...a complete ability to understand our own spirits and the spirit of our wives, so that we can successfully provide Christ-like care for others.

Verse 13 says, "And this is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the (your) offering or accepts it with favor from your hand.

Verse 14 says, "Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, (and may I ask, 'Who gets to decide what is treachery to a wife?') though she is your companion, and your wife by covenant.

Verse 15 says, “But [he who has the Spirit of God in him does not treat his wife treacherously] ... Take heed then, to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of (his)... youth.” (NAS)

It is normal that we men fail to understand all the five concepts, which validates that ignorance about spirituality is normal to us.

Can we not recognize then, that the non-Christian community has cause to mock us as impotent? Can we not see that the Christian testimony has indeed come to this grievous state?

I wish the widespread response among Christians would be similar to the one found in Nehemiah 1:2-9. Nehemiah was overcome when he heard of the wretched state of God’s people. (Emphasis mine.)

“Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men from Judah came (to me); and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped and had survived the captivity, and about Jerusalem. 3. And they said to me, ‘The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and reproach and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates are burned with fire.’ 4. Now it came about when I heard these words, **I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.** 5. And I said, ‘I beseech Thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and loving kindness for those **who love Him and keep His commandments,** 6. let Thine ear now be attentive and Thine eyes open to hear the prayer of Thy servant which I am praying before Thee now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Thy servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against Thee; I and my father’s house have sinned. 7. We have acted very corruptly against Thee and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which Thou didst command Thy servant Moses. 8. Remember the word which Thou didst command Thy servant Moses, saying ‘If you are **unfaithful I will scatter you among the peoples;** 9. **but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them,** though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and will bring them to the place where I have chosen to cause My name to dwell,’ 10. And they are Thy servants and Thy people whom thou didst redeem by thy great power and thy strong hand. 11. O Lord, I beseech Thee, may Thine ear be attentive to the prayer of Thy servant and the prayer **of Thy servants who delight to revere Thy name,** and make Thy servant successful today, and grant him compassion before this man.”

And when we examine ourselves, in the light of these five concepts, and we discover how dismally we’ve fallen short...because we’ve not prioritized, nor demanded of ourselves, that we certainly will illustrate Christ in every aspect of our lives to our wives and families...might we, as Nehemiah did when we recognize our terrible shortcomings, “...**sit down and weep and mourn for days; and fast and pray before the God of heaven that we would be obedient to Him**”?

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