

Observations of Discipleship

Introduction

1. In our efforts to lead people to Christ....
 - A. We understand the importance of the Word of God —
Romans 10:17
 - B. The gospel is the power of God to salvation

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for **it is the power of God to salvation** for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.

2. Yet it helps to complement the Word with a demonstration of certain qualities whereby....
 - A. People can see the truth of the gospel in action.
 - B. People are more likely to believe in Jesus Christ.
3. When demonstrated by Christians in a local church, these “observations” can serve to....
 - A. Let the nonbeliever know:
 - 1) There is a God Who loves him or her.
 - 2) Who has sent Jesus as a manifestation of that love.
 - B. Let the true searcher know:
 - 1) Those who are true disciples of Christ.
 - 2) Who can thus lead him or her to Christ.

4. There are at least four such "Observations", one being....

Unity

1. The Value of Unity of Believers.

John 17:20-23

- A. It shows that God has sent Christ.
- B. It shows that God has loved the world.

2. Unity is an observation to the World

John 3:16

- A. That God sent Christ who produces the unity witnessed by the world.

Ephesians 2:13-16

3. Thus the Importance of Unity.

- A. It led Paul to condemn division and those who cause it.

1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Romans 16:17-18 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

B. The importance of unity led Paul to teach attitudes essential to preserving unity

Ephesians 4:1-3 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you **to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called**, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring **to keep the unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace.

Philippians 2:2-4 fulfill my joy **by being like-minded**, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. **Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.**

- 4. Let's be sure that we do nothing to destroy the "observation" of unity; rather, let's work toward enhancing its effectiveness. Another "observation" that points one in the right direction is....**

Love

1. The Value of Love for One Another.

- A. It shows that we have been loved by Christ, whose love we seek to emulate.**

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; **as I have loved you**, that you also love one another.

- B. It shows that we are truly His disciples.**

John 13:35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, **if you have love for one another.**"

2. Love is an “observation” to the World.

A. That Christ has loved His disciples.

John 15:12-13 This is My commandment, that **you love one another as I have loved you**. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

B. That those who emulate His love are His true disciples.

Ephesians 5:1-2 Therefore **be imitators of God as dear children**. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

3. Thus the Importance of Love.

A. It led Paul to encourage churches to increase in love.

1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves **are taught by God to love one another**; and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more;

B. It led Paul to consider love as the “bond of perfection.”

Colossians 3:14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

- 1) Here we see that love and unity go together.**
- 2) By our love for one another, we are more likely to preserve our unity in Christ.**

- 4. Unity and love also go hand in hand as “Divine Observations.”**
 - A. Unity first lets people know God loves them, and Love shows people who are the followers of Christ.**
 - B. Now for a third “observation”....**

Hope

- 1. The Value of Hope.**
 - A. It can prompt people to ask us questions.**

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and **always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you,** with meekness and fear;
 - B. It can provide us opportunity to share the reason for our hope.**
- 2. So Hope is an “observation” to the World.**
 - A. Presuming that our hope is something:**
 - 1) It is noticeable, prompting people to ask “Why?”**
 - 2) Based upon reason, i.e., evidences for our faith.**

B. Especially when our hope is:

- 1) **Accompanied by peace and joy.**
Romans 5:1-2
- 2) **Steadfast even in tribulation.**
Romans 5:3-4
- 3) **Based upon the love of God.**
Romans 5:5
- 4) **Made sure by the resurrection of Jesus.**

1 Peter 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has **begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

3. Thus the Importance of Hope.**A. It led Peter to command Christians to set their hope fully on the grace to come.**

1 Peter 1:13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and **rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ**;

B. It led Peter to command Christians to always be ready to explain their hope.

1 Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

4. Let us now consider a final "observation"....

Good Works

1. The Value of Good Works.

A. Good works can lead men to glorify our Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

B. They can lead men to glorify God in the day of visitation.

1 Peter 2:12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

2. So Good Works are an observation to the World.

A. Directing people to consider the motivation behind such works.

B. Opening people up to the gospel message which inspires such works.

1 Peter 3:1-2 Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

3. Thus the Importance of Good Works.

A. This led Paul to command to the Thessalonians....

Titus 3:1

B. This led Paul to command that we be careful to maintain good works.

Titus 3:8, 14

Conclusion

1. **With such “Divine Observations,” we can see how people can be led to Christ.**
 - A. **Our unity can convince people of God’s love for them in sending Christ.**
 - B. **Our love can direct them to true disciples of Christ.**
 - C. **Our hope can prompt them to ask questions as to the reason for our faith.**
 - D. **Our good works can encourage them to glory God by their own obedience to the gospel.**

2. **This in no way takes away from the power of the gospel to save souls...**
 - A. **But the Lord intended for His church to be a city set on a hill.**
 - B. **Which by demonstrating certain qualities as a group would draw people to Him.**
 - C. **Without these “Divine Observations,” we make it a lot harder for souls who are searching to find their Savior and His gospel!**
 - D. **Are we doing our part in the local congregation to display unity, love, hope and good works?**
 - 1) **God truly knows, and others can truly see!**

Invitation

Place

Date

Observations of Discipleship.wpd
Richard Thetford, July 2021 (Based on a lesson by Tom Moore)