

REFLECTIONS ON THE NATURE OF FAITH.

Arising out of a summary written by Archibald Campbell M.A., D.D. the former president of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in Korea. The name of the book is *The Seven Great "I AMs" in John's Gospel* - published by Christian Literature Crusade in 1968.



John & Irene
Tanner

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A LIFE OF FAITH

Paul wrote that "we live by believing (faith), not by seeing," in 2 Corinthians 5:7. There Paul instructed the believers in how they must live here on earth while they wait for the time when they will enjoy the life of Heaven. Hebrews teaches us that "*without faith it is impossible to please God.*" So we can conclude that it takes faith in Jesus to become a Christian and it takes faith in Jesus to go on to live the Christian life in a way that pleases God.

As I turned the pages of Campbell's book I was forced to reflect on my own journey as a believer. Campbell talked about the miracles that followed the seven "Great I AMs" spoken by Jesus. He pointed out that whereas in the other Gospels Jesus alone worked the miracles, here in John's Gospel, the disciples had a role to play to "activate" the miracle. They were called upon to exercise their faith in ministry situations. It is always the same for us.

As I read the summary of faith lessons, I quickly realized that this was for me. Campbell took just five pages to outline the key steps that I now see God has led me to follow as I have endeavoured to serve Him for the last sixty years or more. If only I had read these pages at the beginning! Instead I had to learn the lessons of faith the hard way. The lessons have been compartmentalized in my thinking but now I see how they all fit together and I can be even more confident in the guidance and grace of the Lord Jesus.

Are you someone who has learned to love Jesus? Do you desire to please Him in all that you do? Have you given your life to His service? Then, at some time, you will need to learn these lessons about the life of faith. Why not now?

In what follows I will use Campbell's headings to be faithful to him and add some brief comments by way of explanation or application. Then I will finish each point with a reflection question to stimulate further thought and actions. So let us begin.

LESSONS ABOUT THE NATURE OF FAITH

Lesson One – Faith is not centred in us; it is centred in the Lord.

Key to Success: Depend totally on Jesus in everything

- Faith is not some good quality or virtue that we possess
- Faith is not a substitute for doing good
- Faith is not wishful thinking. (If I can wish for something hard enough God will give it to me.)

“Faith is **the conviction that He can and will do what He says** and that **we can do what He tells us to do**” (Campbell). John tells the story about the storm on the Sea of Galilee in John Chapter 6. Matthew has a parallel account in Matthew 14: 22-36. The disciples were afraid even though some of them had spent their early years as fishermen on the lake. Jesus sent the disciples ahead in the boat while He retired to the mountains to pray and seek God. Then the storm stirred up the waves on the lake and the disciples who were tired from paddling their boat realized that they were in trouble. About three o'clock in the morning, the disciples saw a human figure walking on the water towards their boat. They were terrified because they thought they were looking at a ghost. Somehow, Jesus knew they were afraid, so He called to them, “*Take courage. It is I. Don't be afraid.*” John tells us that the disciples

were immediately comforted and welcomed Jesus into the boat. Then John tells us, “*And immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading*” (Ch 6 v21). All the efforts of the tired disciples were unsuccessful in gaining the safety of the shore. But as soon as Jesus was in the boat *Immediately they reached the shore! With man it is impossible, but with God all things are POSSIBLE!* Faith believes this great truth.

But there is more! Faith believes that we can do what Jesus tells us to do! John omits one detail from his story which Matthew includes. Peter asked Jesus to help him to walk on the surface of the sea – an impossible task! But Jesus told Peter to “*Come to Him.*” And Peter found that he could do whatever Jesus told him to do. Too often our problem is that we decide what Jesus wants us to do without hearing Him say to us, “Come.” In my experience, this kind of assumption has always led to hardship and sometimes failure.

“Faith is responding to what He says. Faith must **be founded on revelation**. It is not so much believing in God as believing God. If we pray for something that He has not promised, it is presumption and not faith.” (Campbell) How do we know what Jesus has promised? Some things are made very clear to us in His Holy Word. Here is one example of many that could be given. 2 Peter 3:9 says, “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, **not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**” In this verse, God’s heart and God’s patience are revealed to all. He desires that none should perish, and for this reason, God remains endlessly patient with His rebellious children. The Great Commission makes our role in fulfilling this desire of God for humanity explicit. That God desires everyone to be saved is a clear revelation from God. No one can doubt it and those who have faith should be busily working to fulfil God’s expressed will.

Within the broad sweep of God’s plan that remains largely unknown to us, there are details that He wants us to implement. For example, “Who are the people He has called us to reach? How are we to reach them? When is the appropriate time to commence? Who will lead us? And importantly, how does our vocation fit into God’s plan?” In our troubled world today, we need more than ever to receive fresh revelations from the Lord. How are we to pray about

the rise of secular humanism around the world? How are we to pray about the threat of widespread war among the nations? And what does the Lord want us to do in order to properly represent Him in these confusing and troubled days?

“Faith must be founded on Revelation.” (Campbell)

For Further Reflection and Action.

- Think about two or three times when the Lord spoke to you clearly. What did He say? How did you obey? What was the result of your obedience/disobedience?
- What can you do to position yourself better so that you receive more revelations from the Lord?
- Read Romans 10:17

Lesson Two – Faith is characterized by TRUST IN A PERSON.

Key to Success: Trust God to fulfil His plan; He is faithful!

Why do we trust someone? Why is it that we immediately believe that one person is speaking the truth and that another person may be trying to deceive us?

People believed Jesus “not because there was any outside evidence, but because of the character of the One who made the promise” (Campbell). The character and the personhood of Jesus inspired all those who met Him to put their trust in Him. Jesus never, ever betrayed anyone’s trust!

Campbell lists the miracles that preceded the great I AM statements to show that none of those who participated in the miracles had received any outside evidence that Jesus could do it. Here is Campbell’s list.

- The servants at Cana had no previous experience to make them think that the water they carried to the governor of the feast would turn into wine (John 2:1-11).
- The nobleman who came to ask Jesus to visit his home and heal his son had no evidence that anything had happened to his son so far away (John 4:46-54).
- The man at the pool had no way of knowing that if he did what he was told, strength would come to his wasted legs (John 5:1-9).
- The disciples could not imagine how five loaves and two small fish could nourish the hunger of five thousand men (John 6:1-14).
- And Lazarus, of course, was dead. He could not weigh evidence, and his sisters and friends could not understand the point of opening up the grave (John 11:1-46).

In each case, there was trust involved. Something inspired needy people to act in faith! “There was something in the matchless voice, in the confident eyes, in the calm authoritative person which inspired trust. In many cases they had never met Him before, but He won their confidence. They trusted Him for Himself in spite of how impossible the situation appeared to be!” (Campbell)

Faith is built on the foundation of trust. That is true in all relationships but especially our relationship with Jesus. Faith cannot find its foundation in my own desires, the advice of other people, or even in circumstances. Faith says, “I trust Jesus and all He has promised!” I remember an old saying often quoted by evangelicals at the time of the Billy Graham Crusades. It went like this –

*God said it,
I believe it,
That settles it!*

This is an appropriate time for me to share my own story about growing in faith.

I grew up in a Christian home and attended an evangelical Church. After a series of crusade meetings in my Church, I began the journey of faith by committing my life to Jesus when I was twelve years of age. As I grew up in the Church, I often heard people speaking about

their “promise box.” I later learned that this was a little cardboard box filled with little pieces of paper on which were printed some of the many Scripture promises. The idea was that if you needed to strengthen your faith you opened the promise box and read a promise.

I never owned a promise box but I often scrambled across the pages of God’s Word prior to preaching asking Him to give me a promise about who would be saved and so on. Now, without a doubt, the promises of God are faithful and reliable as we learned in Lesson one. But I had to learn that there was something more reliable and true beyond the promises of God.

The Lord took us as a family to serve as missionaries in the Solomon Islands. We lived in an isolated location where there was a Bible College but no regular transport, no roads, no medical help and no local stores or markets. At the end of our second year, Gordon who had been the principal for many years, returned to New Zealand and the Church leadership told me that I was to take his place. For many reasons, this task was a great challenge to me. However, it became overwhelming when I was told that the College was to increase its learning community by taking in a greater number of married families and single girls. In addition, for the first time, the College was to be totally funded by gifts from the local Churches and our own production of copra, fish and garden food. To accommodate the extra students, we were encouraged to seek overseas funding to enlarge the college buildings by adding two stories to the existing structure. Faced with these overwhelming responsibilities, I remember beginning my year with the prayer, “Oh Lord, I cannot do all this. I trust you to provide for whatever you want – extra students, staff, buildings. I cannot ask you again – it is up to you!” My promise box was empty, and I cast myself totally on God for whatever He wanted.

At the end of year graduation, which also marked the dedication of the brand new college buildings, we praised God for all His blessings and for all those who had become a part of the journey. The treasurer told me that day that all the accounts had been paid and we still had one dollar left over! How good is God!

In the quietness of the evening I returned to my prayer place to thank the Lord for His goodness. I opened my Bible and read, *“He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Thank you, Lord, for keeping me strong right to the end of the year! Then I read, *“God, who has called you into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, is faithful”* 1 Cor.1:9. What a lesson for a promise box pastor to learn! We can depend on His promises – yes we can! But even if there is no promise at all, we can depend on Him because the God who called us is faithful!

Yes, Jesus inspires us to have faith in Him- to trust Him to come through for us when all seems to be lost. God’s faithfulness is even greater than His wonderful promises. This experience has changed my life completely in relation to trusting Jesus. As a mission leader, I remember being told that \$50000 was needed the next morning to meet some accounts, and there was no money. There was a great crisis looming over the whole organization. The following day, I went to my office with full confidence in God. He is faithful! Within an hour, the whole amount had been located and the accounts were paid. God is faithful! My level of trust has grown year by year as I have witnessed the faithfulness of God.

I no longer look for a promise box. I have the Promiser Himself, who has never failed and who inspires confident trust in all His followers. Sometimes, pastors have asked me, “Where did you learn such faith?” And I always reply that you cannot learn it in a Bible College class, you have to follow God to some extreme situation where you cannot possibly cope with the demands yourself and then cast yourself totally on God and see His miracles begin.

Faith is characterized by trust IN A PERSON – a wonderful, patient, always loving God.

For Further Reflection and Action.

- Think about two or three times when you were like the disciples – fearful and sinking down! How did God come to your rescue?
- What lesson did you learn when God rescued you?

- What have you done to teach younger believers to look to Jesus in their troubles and trust Him to rescue them?
- Read 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

Lesson Three – Faith must express itself in obedience.

Key to Success: Listen for God's instructions, then obey Him!

Obedience was required in every miracle in John's Gospel.

- The water pots were to be re-filled by the house-servants
- The nobleman was to return to his home to see his miracle
- The lame man was to try to stand up - "Get up and pick up your mat!" (John 5:8)
- The disciples were to distribute the bread and the fishes to the five thousand men
- Lazarus was to "Come forth!"

A friend of ours who was a Bible teacher in the Solomons Church taught us a valuable lesson when he often said, "Every revelation demands a response!"

God loves every human being unconditionally. God expects us to respond in some way to His love. How does God feel when He shows His love to someone and they ignore Him? Jesus taught us that if we truly love Him, we will keep His commandments! (John 14:15) So we see that there is a relationship between putting our faith in the Lord Jesus and being obedient to Him.

There is always a relationship between faith and obedience. In fact, if obedience is absent, then faith may also be absent! Hebrews chapter 11 refers to many of the men and women in the Bible who lived by faith and did amazing things for God. One character mentioned in Chapter 11:8 is Abraham. Paul wrote about Abraham as an example of someone who was justified by his faith. The Bible

says, “By faith Abraham ... obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going.”

Campbell reminds us that obedience in itself does not bring the result. That is, obedience does not cause the result to happen – God does that! But without obedience, there will be no result. Remember the Bible story about the night when the disappointed disciples went fishing and caught nothing? When the Lord Jesus appeared on the beach, He heard about their poor results. Jesus directed them to try once more by casting their net on the other side of their boat. And this time they successfully captured a whole net full of fish! (John 21:6)

How many fish would they have brought to the seashore if they had not obeyed Jesus in response to their faith in Him? Without obedience, there will be no results.

So what can we say to someone who claims to have faith but who lacks obedience to the clear commands of Jesus in His Word? The Apostle James said, “Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead” (James 2:17). Therefore, obedience to Jesus is one proof that someone’s faith is genuine. This is true because faith expresses itself in obedience.

Some time ago I was privileged to visit the Island of Negros in the Philippines together with an evangelist friend. As a part of the trip we were to visit various universities and military establishments to preach the Gospel. On one particular day, we had a number of appointments which involved travelling on roads of different standards and in a variety of modes of transport. There were four of us in the group altogether. We needed to travel about forty kilometres on a sealed road but we had no transport. Eventually, my friend, the pastor, found a man who had a small motorcycle with a small chair attached to the side. It was barely big enough to carry himself and two small passengers. But there were four of us, and we were much bigger than his normal passengers. The road was dangerous for motorbikes because there were many heavy vehicles that travelled along this road hauling sugar cane to the mill. I doubted that we could arrive at our appointment safely, but my pastor friend said he was confident that the driver would be careful.

Did I know the driver? No! Did the machine look able to carry five people? No!

I had to decide. To my eyes and in my experience, this transport was not going to bring us safely to our next destination safely. Did I trust the pastor's judgment – yes! At that point, it did not matter how much faith I had in the pastor or the bike rider. If I did not climb on behind the driver and commit the outcomes to him I would go nowhere. Faith always leads to some action. With a silent prayer to God for His protection, I climbed aboard with the other four men. We had a few terrifying moments in our journey, but we arrived safely and on time, ready to share the Gospel at the army camp.

Sometimes, obedience just does not make sense to us. But it makes sense to God!

Real faith always expresses itself in obedience because faith recognizes that God always factors Himself into our act of obedience to Him.

In the middle years of my ministry I took a small group of pastors each year on a mission trip to the Solomon Islands. I wanted them to see God at work in another culture and to experience true revival for themselves. One day we had to walk along the dirt road from one village to another. It was about five kilometres. Partway into the journey one young pastor came up to me as we walked and said, "John, it seems to me that God is with you because I see Him bringing many blessings to us through you." This took me completely by surprise and, to be honest, it caused me to feel embarrassed. (I am not saying that this young pastor was correct, only that this was his impression.) After thinking for a moment or two, I replied, "I do not know whether what you have said is true or not, I only know that whenever the Lord has told me to do something, I have obeyed Him. To me there is no great mystery – life is simple, just trust and obey!"

If we will concentrate on letting God grow our faith and being obedient to everything that He says then God will be with us.

Faith must express itself in obedience!

For Further Reflection and Action.

- Try to think of two people in the Bible who disobeyed God. Who were they and what were the consequences?
- Think about one or two examples from your own experience about God speaking to you and what was involved in your steps of obedience.
- How strong is your faith? Remember, we have learned that faith involves believing that we can do whatever He tells us to do. Are you an Abraham yet? God spoke to him and he moved his whole family away from home not knowing where he was going to end up.
- Read Hebrews 11 and consider how important obedience was to the great people of faith.

Lesson Four – What God commands us to do may seem difficult, absurd, or even impossible.
Key to Success: Never limit God to what you think; His ways are far above our ways!

What is a miracle?

A miracle is something impossible for us as humans to do. It is only possible to God!

When we ask God for a miracle, we are asking God to do what we find impossible to do. Mark tells us in Chapter 10:27 about the amazement of the disciples when Jesus told them how difficult it was for a human to enter the Kingdom of God. They asked Him, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus replied, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; ALL things are POSSIBLE with God!”

In faith, we believe these words of Jesus to be true. All things are possible with God. That is why we believe in miracles! That is why we often ask God to do what is impossible for us to do. Then, when

He begins the miracle process and tells us to obey Him, we often think, “I cannot do what God has told me to do.”

We need to understand that God’s impossible miracle includes our faithful obedience. If He tells us to act, then He will give us His power to enable us. Faith and obedience are two sides of the one coin.

Many people do not believe in miracles in our modern secular age. Perhaps it is because miracles defy science or logic. So when we ask God to work one of His miracles, our faith is running counter to most of our education and the way we have been taught to think. And if asking in faith for a miracle is difficult for most people to do, how much more problematic will it be for them to obey whatever God tells them to do in relation to the miracle?

Here is the truth!

God will often command us to do difficult, absurd or even impossible things as a part of the faith/miracle process.

When I carefully considered the miracles recorded by John in his Gospel I realized that in every case, obedience did not really make sense to those people called upon to obey. Think about it.

- *“There was no more wine.”* The natural reaction would be for the Governor of the Wedding Feast to send a servant out to buy more wine. But no, “Fill the pots with water!” They needed wine urgently, not water! But the servants had already heard Mary’s Gospel message, “Whatever He says to you, do it!” And God turned ordinary water into the best wine ever!
- *“Come to my house and heal my son. He is close to death.”* The royal official asked Jesus to come to his village and to his house in order to work another miracle. He had faith. Jesus declined the official’s invitation to come to his house. “You may go. Your son will live,” Jesus told him. “The man took Jesus at His word (faith) and he departed for home” (obedience). Before he could travel the distance to his home, he was met by his excited servants who told him that his son had been healed. It had happened at the very minute that Jesus had said, “Your

son will live.” The official thought that a miracle required Jesus to be present. He must have struggled to believe and obey when told that his son would live. It didn’t make sense to him. But he obeyed and discovered that Jesus had already healed his very sick son.

- We could find the same dynamic present in each of the miracles. But let us look briefly at the crowning evidence that even when obedience may not seem to be sensible to us, it is always necessary if we want God’s miracles. Think about Lazarus – poor dead Lazarus. It did not make sense, even to Mary and Martha, for Jesus to call to Lazarus, who had been buried for three days, *“Lazarus, come forth!”* How could poor dead Lazarus hear the voice calling to him from beyond the grave? Yet, wonder of wonders, Lazarus’s dead ears heard the command of Jesus and the dead man came back to life to the astonishment of all! Yes, sometimes it does not seem logical or even sensible to obey Jesus’ commands – but obey we must! God looks at things very differently from us.

Forty years ago, I was involved in some evangelistic crusade ministry in two Melbourne Churches. In the second Church, the pastor took me to visit a single mum from his congregation who was distressed about her teenage daughter. As she told us her story, we could understand why her mother’s heart was troubled for her only daughter. The daughter had commenced an apprenticeship with a nearby hairdresser just a few weeks after finishing her education. The mother could see very quickly that the hairdresser had a bad influence on her daughter. After a few weeks, the daughter announced to her mother that she intended to move out and live in the hairdresser’s home. The more the mother pleaded with her daughter not to go, the more the daughter became rebellious and angry.

“What can I do?” she asked us.

The pastor expected me to provide some incredible wisdom to the distraught mother. I remember secretly asking the Lord, “What can I say?” I heard His voice so clearly say, “Let her go and trust me.” I struggled with this because it seemed insensitive and even dangerous to say. Nevertheless, I said to the mother, “I believe in

this instance God wants you to show your love to her by letting her go and trusting God to keep her safe.” We prayed for the mother and daughter. “Let go and trust God.” This might sound like two actions, but it is really only one. The mother was to turn the care of her daughter over to God in simple faith. This decision must have seemed like the very opposite of what her heart wanted!

The next day, the pastor told me that the young girl had moved away from home to live with the hairdresser. But the very next Sunday, the mother greeted me before the service with a smile. She told me that her daughter had contacted her on Thursday and asked to meet with her mum at a Coffee shop to talk. And on Saturday night, the daughter had come home, full of apologies for her behaviour and deeply appreciative of her Mum’s unfailing love.

Sometimes God asks us to do something that we think is not logical or even possible but faith meets the challenge and the miracle follows.

For Further Reflection and Action.

- Think about two people in the Bible who made excuses to God about obeying His commands. Who were they, and what was the result of their hesitating to obey?
- Have there been times when you have not carried through fully in obedience to God’s command? What was the result?
- Remember that our disobedience is not a failure of obedience but a failure of our love for Jesus! If we love Him we keep His commandments.
- What is your favourite Bible passage that you read to strengthen your faith? Read it today and ask the Lord to give you a deeper love for Jesus.

Lesson Five – The miracles seemed to be performed by the disciples as they acted in obedience.

Key to Success: Expect the Lord Jesus to work with you and give Him all the credit!

In this final lesson, there is great encouragement for us and a reality check to keep us humble.

I am always encouraged when I read the final paragraph written in Mark's Gospel. *"After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was taken up into heaven and He sat at the right hand of God. Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, **and the Lord worked with them** and confirmed His word by the signs that accompanied it."*

Jesus had been glorified in Heaven, but He was not absent from the disciples – *"The Lord worked with them!"* Jesus was still present and He continually confirmed the spoken words of the disciples by signs (miracles). We still live in the age where Jesus wants to work His miracles in confirmation of His Word as we speak. That is a great encouragement to us. He Himself said that ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE TO HIM.

When Jesus chooses to work a miracle through our obedience, it often appears to others (or even to us) that we worked the miracle or that we are miracle workers. This must have been true of the miracles recorded in John's Gospel.

- The servants at the marriage feast carried the water pots inside, and when they poured it out, it had become wine. Who had worked a miracle, the servants or Jesus?
- The lame man at the pool stood up when commanded to do so by Jesus. Did he contribute to the healing by standing, or was it a miracle worked totally by Jesus?
- As the disciples distributed the bread and fish to the five thousand men, the crowd could have thought that it was the disciples who had worked the miracle, but it was Jesus.

- When the blind man did what Jesus commanded him to do and washed the clay from his eyes, it may have seemed that he himself was working a miracle, but it was Jesus!

In John 14:12 Jesus said, “*I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.*”

Since Jesus spoke these words to His followers, his words have proven to be true over and over again. His small group of believers has grown to more than two billion people around the world today. No one could count the number of people who have come to believe in Jesus and have been set free and given Eternal life. There have been millions of healings and supernatural miracles, and many people have been set free from the powers of evil. And through the 2000 years of Church history, there have been times when it seemed that the Christian witness was dying out, but then God intervened and fresh fires of revival and outreach were lit. Christians have built orphanages, hospitals, homes to care for the disabled and aged, and innumerable schools and universities. Cruel persecutions have been endured, and waves of prayer have circled the world again and again. Strong men and women of God have influenced the history of Christian movements and Nations. God, through His Spirit, has imparted wonderful gifts to His Church – gifts based on wisdom, power and revelation and others based on divine love. These are some of the “greater works.”

Our human tendency is to credit the messenger with doing the miracle. We admire those among us who have the gift of healing, for example. We have great admiration and respect for the men and women like Moody, Billy Graham, Corrie Ten Boom or Luis Palau who have preached the Gospel to great crowds with wonderful success. But here is the reality check. These people were just the servants carrying the water pots! It is always Jesus who is the miracle worker! “*And the Lord worked with them!*”

When we fail to understand that only Jesus can work miracles, then we are in danger of elevating a human being, even ourselves, to a position where we are doomed to fall. It might seem that the preacher is producing converts or that the one with the healing gift is healing the sick, but it is not true. Unless Jesus works His miracle,

there will be no healing. Unless Jesus is lifted up by the preacher and the Holy Spirit brings conviction of sin, there will be no salvation. We are but servants who are expected to be obedient to the voice who once said, *“Let there be light, and there was light”* (Genesis 1:3). Or, as the Psalmist wrote, *“For He spoke and it came to be”* (Psalm 33:9).

So let us be encouraged that the risen Lord Jesus still works with His followers today. Let us also consider this reality check, whenever a miracle occurs, it is not because of us but because the Master has spoken it into being. Our role is to be full of faith and ready to be obedient to any word that He speaks.

We have learned, with some help from Campbell, that –

- To live by faith, we must be focused on and totally dependent upon the Lord Jesus
- God’s faithfulness to us and to His promises is meant to inspire us to have faith in Him
- Faith must be followed by obedience in the miracle process
- Sometimes obedience will not seem to be possible, but nevertheless, it is necessary
- Jesus continues to work His miracles through us, but they are always His miracles and not ours. We should not give glory to humans for what God does.

Final Thoughts

As I have reflected on these five topics and how they have worked out in my own life, I have come to realize again the importance of some of the “Christian Disciplines” that we seek to teach new disciples.

1. The Christian life is life lived in relationship with the risen Lord Jesus. It begins when we put our faith in Him to save us, and it only progresses as we allow Him to grow our faith from “little” to “much.”
2. This wonderful relationship is fostered by the Holy Spirit who lives in us. It is His voice that comes to us by way of revelation, either in the Word or directly to our hearts. We must be disciplined in our lives so that our relationship with the Holy Spirit grows closer and closer.

3. When we receive a revelation, we must obey or we risk hindering the work of Jesus.
4. The greatest hindrance to the life of faith today may be our low level of expectation about what Jesus might want to do in us or through us. We have become “managers.” Managers only deal in the “possible” and never or rarely believe in the “impossible.”
5. We need to be living where the stormy winds are blowing or where our nets are breaking because that is where miracles are required. Miracles have no place in a life dedicated to being comfortable.

For Further Reflection and Action.

- What was the last miracle that you saw Jesus perform in your situation?
- Why is it that many believers do not see miracles in their own lives?
- What one attitude, belief and practice needs to change so that Jesus can “work with you?”