

## Additional Scripture and Quotes:

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2:9-10

“But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

Titus 3:4-6

“Far too many of us assume that discipleship is merely the transfer of information leading to behavior modification. But discipleship, at heart, involves transformation at the deepest levels of our understanding, affection, and will by the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God and in relationship with the people of God.”

Discipleshift, Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington

“Christlikeness is the goal of discipleship, and looking at Jesus' life helps us better understand what it means to be a mature believer. Before Jesus focused on *doing* something, He focused on *being* in relationship with God and with His disciples.”

Discipleshift, Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington

“We all need to experience the love of Christ in order to grow. The people of God demonstrating the love of God is the ultimate thing. Love is the ultimate sign of true discipleship. (John 13:34-35) Learning to love others is a huge component of the disciple making process. If we aren't intentionally striving to get along with other people, we are not growing in this area; we are not becoming spiritually mature, despite the amount of biblical information we may have acquired. It's as simple as that.”

Discipleshift, Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington

“We must love them with the love of Christ until we can like them.” Unknown

## Recommended Reading:

Churchless: Understanding Today's Unchurched and How to Connect with Them  
Barna Group

Discipleshift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples  
Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington

Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda  
Henry and Richard Blackaby

The Pursuit of Holiness  
Jerry Bridges

The U-Turn Church: New Direction for Health and Growth  
Kevin Harney and Bob Bower

The Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations  
Ed Stetzer and Thom Rainer

Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too  
Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson

Multiply  
Francis Chan

The Compassionate Congregation: A Handbook for People Who Care  
Karen Mulder and Ginger Jurries

Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples  
Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger

God is in Control: My Unshakeable Peace When the Storms Come  
Charles Stanley

7 Basics: Strong Roots for Every Christian  
Beth Jones

Organic Outreach for Ordinary People: Sharing Good News Naturally  
Kevin Harney

## Becoming All You Were Meant to Be

December 27/28, 2014 – Gary Post

### I. Leaving With Regrets

#### A. Top Ten Regrets of the Dying (Bronnie Ware, 2013)

- I wish I'd had the courage to live life in a way that fully realized my dreams and aspirations.
- I wish I hadn't worked so hard and had made more time for my family.
- I wish I'd had the courage to express my genuine feelings.
- I should have said 'I love you' a lot more.
- I should have spoken my mind instead of holding back and becoming resentful.
- I should have been the bigger person and resolved my conflicts with others.
- I wish I'd had children.
- I should have saved more money for my retirement.
- I wish I'd had the courage to live truthfully as the person I really am.
- I wish I had known earlier that happiness is a choice that we can make.

#### B. Choosing to live a life that matters to God now and for eternity

“Our greatest fear should not be of failure, but of succeeding at things in life that don't really matter.” Dale Partridge

- Three obstacles to living a life that matters:  
“But the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.” Mark 4:19
- King David: A life of purpose:  
“For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep and was laid with his fathers...” Acts 13:36

### II. The Single Most Important Thing

#### A. Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?

Jesus replied, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.”  
Matthew 22:37-38

#### B. What does “loving God” look like lived out?

Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching.” John 14:23-24

“Jesus is referring not to simply holding onto his teaching, but to actually acting in accordance with it, as he himself has responded to the Father (v. 31). His teaching is not just interesting thoughts about God and the world. Rather, he has revealed God and opened the way to share God's own life. To obey his teaching is to adopt God's pattern of life. But the condition for such obedience is love for Jesus.” (IVP New Testament Commentary)

Principle: Love for God is inseparable from obedience to God

#### C. Christ calls us first to become disciples, then to make disciples

And calling the crowd to him with his disciples, he said to them, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” Mark 8:34

“Self-denial means letting go of self-determination and replacing it with obedience and dependence on the Messiah.” (ESV Study Bible Notes)

“Disciple” is a “student” who:

- Sets aside his or her own interests in favor of the Master's interests

- Lives in close relationship with the Master and learns to do what He does
- Becomes like the Master over time in character qualities and actions

“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.”  
Luke 6:40

- The Great Commission

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”  
Matthew 28:18-20

D. The Great Commission Reflected in New Hope’s Purpose Statement

“The purpose of this church is to glorify God by producing maturing followers (disciples) of Jesus Christ through the four scriptural principles of Learning, Loving, Worship and Prayer.”  
(From New Hope Constitution)

E. Report Card: How are we doing at what we say we are here to do?

“The core question of effectiveness—the question that ultimately matters—is whether the people who are getting saved are being conformed to the likeness of Christ. Are we making mature disciples of Jesus who are not only able to withstand the culture, but are also making disciples of Jesus themselves?”

Discipleshift, Jim Putman and Bobby Harrington

III. How Discipleship Leads to Transformation—and Why That Is So Important

A. Spiritual (trans)formation is the process of becoming like Christ in our character and actions

“My little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!”  
Galatians 4:19

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. Rom. 8:28-29 (NIV)

“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”  
II Corinthians 3:18

B. Spiritual transformation takes place when we’re in God’s presence

“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.”  
Acts 4:13

C. “Being” comes before “Doing”

“Before we do, we must be. As we press into our relationship with Jesus, He leads us to be right in the other spheres of our lives.”

Discipleshift, Jim Putman and Bobbie Harrington

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.”<sup>5</sup> I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.<sup>6</sup> If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.<sup>7</sup> If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.<sup>8</sup> By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.<sup>9</sup> As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.<sup>10</sup> If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.<sup>11</sup> These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

John 15:4-11

“Abide in me” means to continue in a daily, personal relationship with Jesus, characterized by trust, prayer, obedience, and joy.” (ESV Study Bible Notes)

- Results of Abiding in Christ: John 15

- We bear “much fruit” (produce results of eternal significance to God)
- God answers our prayers and gives us whatever we ask
- God is “glorified” (His name and reputation are celebrated in the world)
- We abide within the sheltering protection of Christ’s love
- We will have the joy of Jesus Christ Himself within us

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”  
Galatians 2:20

IV. Why It Matters—Now and for Eternity

A. We live in an increasingly “post-Christian” culture in America

- Over past decade, number of “churchless” adults has increased 30% (38M)
- Estimated 43% (156M) of U.S. population unchurched (= 8th largest country)
- More than half born between 1984 and 2002 have never been to church
- One third of the churchless say they have an active relationship with God
- 15% fit the criteria of “born again Christians” (repentance/Christ as Savior)
- More than half say faith is very important, but almost half see no value in attending church
- Many would respond favorably to invitation to church/group by a trusted friend
- Many would respond favorably to a church that regularly and visibly serves the poor in their community

B. “Churchless” need to see Jesus alive in us to consider faith credible

“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”  
II Corinthians 5:20-21

“The church is the Church only when it exists for others.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

C. We will give an account to the Master and receive our reward from Him

“So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.”  
II Corinthians 5:9-10

V. How Do I Become More Useful to the Master? (Next Steps of Obedience)

A. Immerse yourself in the Word of God and be transformed by it

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”  
II Timothy 3:16-17

- Begin one of the Daily Bible Reading Plans for 2015
- Begin a daily “Quiet Time” (brief Bible reading, prayer, journaling)
- Take the “New Testament Challenge” with Gary in 2015
- Memorize/meditate on key scripture verses to grow in your life with God

B. Join the upcoming Men’s or Women’s Bible studies January 13 and 14

C. Pickup “7 Basics: Strong Roots for Every Christian”

D. Consider joining one of our small group communities when available