

CORN; if you sow beans, YOU REAP BEANS! With that reality in mind, *what does the Bible say about the FOLLOW-THROUGH of our priorities:*

^{NAS} **Galatians 6:7** “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

May God enable us to see that our SOWING is closely connected to our PRIORITIES!

Conclusion: We are all sinners, we have all fallen short, but there is good news: ***By grace through faith in Jesus Christ we are forgiven!*** Therefore, let us be *open* and *obedient* to God’s work of transformation in our lives!

Right now, *how is God calling YOU to focus more on:* ✦ Christ, ✦ the Bible, ✦ your soul, and ✦ the salvation of others?

Stuart Bell lived each day with this philosophy: “**Prepare your body** like you will **live forever**, **prepare your soul** like you will **die tomorrow.**”

May God grant us a *similar daily attitude* as we focus on the things of eternity! And all God’s people said: *Amen!*

This and other sermons are available on Bethlehem’s website: www.blc7500.com

Please share them with your family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers!

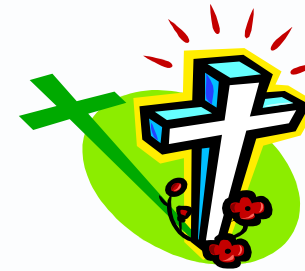
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Let’s Be Disciples of Jesus Christ – Part 2

Focus → ***Spiritual things first!***

Disciples live in time *without forgetting about eternity!*

Based on Various Passages



17th Sunday after Pentecost, 16th after Trinity – 2010
September 19 → 8:15 & 10:45

Introduction: Dear members of Bethlehem, ***Let’s be disciples of Jesus Christ!*** That is an invitation to each one of us to GROW in knowing and living for Jesus Christ! *But that is not an easy invitation to accept!* Since we live in a world which is *relentlessly* trying to keep us focused on earthly things, *may the ALMIGHTY GOD powerfully work in our lives to keep us focused on:* ✦ Christ, ✦ the Bible, ✦ our souls, and ✦ the salvation of others!

1. **Bodies and Souls:** *We each have one!*

a. **Our bodies:** In today’s health-conscience world, we know that *healthy eating* and *regular exercising* are key ingredients of a healthy body! Furthermore, we know the importance of a healthy body, so we:

✦ watch what we eat, ✦ try to exercise, and ✦ remain under the care of a good medical doctor!

- b. **Our souls:** Obviously, *BECAUSE OF THEIR LONGEVITY*, they are MUCH more important than our bodies! Our souls don't need care to preserve them – *THEY WILL LAST FOREVER*; instead, they need care to keep them in Jesus Christ! God even promises such care; the Bible says: God “*who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*” (Phil. 1:6 NIV) *Let us understand that God provides His essential care THROUGH WORD AND SACRAMENT!*
- c. **Food for thought – a quote from Joseph Addison:** “We make provisions for this life as if it were never to have an end, and for the other life as though it were never to have a beginning.” Since that quote seems to characterize many lives, *let's turn our attention to our focus – our priorities!*

2. **Priorities:** They are significant! *The order of our priorities CONTROL our lives – →HOW we use our time, →HOW we spend our money, →HOW we interact with others, and →so much more! We KNOW God should be number one, but is He? Most SAY He is; some ADMIT He is not! **But all of us have room for transformation – POSITIVE CHANGE – in the area of our priorities!** This is a *spiritually healthy* order: God – Spouse – Children – Work – Friends! When God is at the top (Exodus 20:3): ✦ our souls are blessed, ✦ God blesses our lesser priorities, and ✦ God works through us to bless others!*

May God *instruct us* and *transform us* through these key passages of Scripture:

- a. **Romans 8:1-6:** Since our greatest attempts to keep the law cannot save us, *GOD SAVED US THROUGH JESUS who became our sin offering!* Though we deserve the worst, *we have the very best in Jesus Christ*; then, our lives in Christ, our priorities become apparent to others as they see: →the decisions we make, →the money we spend, and →the things that we do! The Bible says: ^{NAS} **Romans 8:5** “For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. ⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace...” Therefore, *our mindset, our focus, our priorities are very important!*
- b. **Matthew 16:21-27:** Jesus is God's one and only Son; He came to be our Savior by ✦ living for us, ✦ suffering for us, and ✦ dying for us! But on one occasion when He shared His mission with His disciples, Peter said to Jesus: “*Never, Lord! This shall never happen to you!*” Peter's words SEEMED to be filled with *care* and *compassion* for our Lord! *Certainly Jesus would thank Him and commend Him!* But, instead, *what did Jesus say to Peter?* ^{NIV} **Matthew 16:23** “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.” So what is on YOUR mind, what is YOUR focus – *the things of God* or *the things of men?*
- c. **Galatians 6:7-8:** As a vicar in Iowa, I learned this basic farming reality: If you sow corn, YOU REAP