

2 Timothy 3:15-16

Instructions to Timothy Guiding, Growing, Guarding!



Comes Fully Furnished



Have you ever seen real-estate ads up – in the paper, or online – and they might read like “*Cozy four-room bungalow for sale, on 1.25 acres of waterfront property on White Moon Lake near Rhinelander, Wisconsin. It comes fully furnished and move-in ready.*” That means that the owners are leaving the furnishings, the dinnerware and silverware, the sheets and blankets – maybe even the lawn mower, the tools - the boat - if you’re lucky. Everything is there that you might need to spend some time at your new property, should you choose to purchase it. Your won’t have to take anything along for your very first visit, except for food and clothing. For some buyers, the fact that the place comes “fully furnished”, is a selling/buying point as added value. In the same way, when we come to Jesus, I want you to understand that we come into a salvation that comes “fully furnished. There are aspects to it that we are unaware of when we first give our hearts to Jesus, but our new Master

has our lives planned out for us. *This is not unknown to us. A good example is when a person enlists in the military, they show up for their first day of training (boot camp), and they suddenly realize that their life is no longer their own! They get their heads shaved, are given a set of ugly clothes and boots (fatigues) that they must wear. They are called “pukes” and worse, are yelled at constantly, must suffer being assigned to demeaning duties in the kitchen or in the latrine, they have to get up at or before daybreak to do endless hours of drills – marching in lock step, running for miles with backpacks on, practicing with guns, knives, hand-to-hand combat, etc. After boot camp, the recruits are often sent off for specialized training of one sort or another – from mechanics, to electronics, to logistics, to medicine, and many other endeavors that the military has need of. But, the point is, that once they sign up, their life belongs to Uncle Sam! Somebody above their rank is making important decisions about the direction of their lives for the next few years – where they are going to live, and what they are going to do everyday. They may have some input in the process, but it is ultimately up to someone else. Now, I have not been in the military, but that is how life in the military is depicted in movies I have seen and books I have read, and the guys that I have known that were in the military. This lifestyle appeal to some types of people because it organizes their life and joins it to something much bigger than themselves. ~In the same way, when someone gives their life to Jesus, their life is no longer their own. It belongs to Jesus, and Jesus has things planned for us to do **in** our lives and **with** our lives – not specific things, I don’t think, but general things. [Eph. 2:10]



Meaning - 1st - He intends to work on our character so that we do what is right “every good work/”and stop doing what is wrong. He intends to make us hospitable to the Presence of God’s Spirit within us so that we are . “Thoroughly furnished/equipped unto every good work”! Works of righteousness are the things we should be doing because we know that this is what God wants us to do. So that begins with working on ourselves. It rarely just happens without thought.

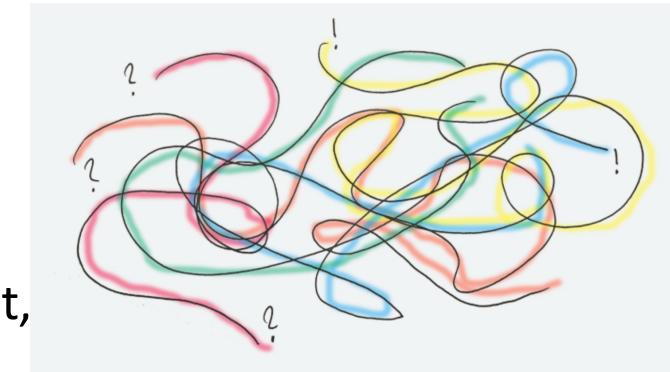


I have always said, Christianity is cognizant - it takes constant thinking - **comprehending - meditating, contemplating, learning**. The mind is always engaged when a person is a Christ-follower – always! The disciples of Jesus were never asked to empty their minds and just feel. There wasn’t time for that! Jesus only had 3 ½ yrs with them! They were on a steep learning curve, and their minds were constantly being overwhelmed with new knowledge – with mind-blowing new takes and angles on the old theologies that they all had thought were set in concrete. Jesus didn’t change those theologies, or reverse them - but He fleshed them out! The disciples had to learn what their belief system was getting at – what it was **really** all about! They hadn’t had to do that before. The Law of Moses was “do this and don’t do that” but they didn’t really understand why. They could just do it all without thinking. But Jesus was opening their minds to the underlying whys and wherefores of it all, and their minds had to be constantly whirling with wonder, and playing catchup - trying to figure out what was going on.
~This week I sat down and read Ephesians through 1 Timothy in one sitting. I was struck by just the volume of instruction and emphasis in each of those letters of Paul on attitude and behavior. There were repeated references to being joyful and thankful and humble – and that is all connected with being filled with the Holy Spirit of God [Eph. 5:19-21]. In carrying out the Law, attitude didn’t matter, as long as you did it down to the last letter! But in following Christ, the Spirit of God was working on the Christ-follower’s very outlook, perspective, feelings/emotions, reactions, thought process – which are all a reflection of one’s character. When we come to Christ, He has this all laid out for us in advance. His plan for us is that we undergo a radical transformation of our heart, soul, and mind, so that we mirror the pattern of Jesus and of His apostles. We will end up looking like a very different version of ourselves! “**If anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come!**” says Paul-2 Cor. 5:17.

Christ fundamentally changes a person, starting at our core being – 1st, where we do our **thinking/processing**, and 2nd, where we **feel** things and **react** to them emotionally!

~Unfortunately, I have met a lot of Christians with an edge of anger, bitterness, with a judgmentalism in them – a critical spirit that has never left them! Such “Christians” are not following the pre-plan of God! Tragically, these will never enter into the life of **love, joy, peace, and hope** that Christ intended for them at the start! They resist the Holy Spirit, and continue to do things their own way! They do not conform to the character of Christ, and cannot conceive of actually letting go of the control of their life – to a point, but not all the way! It’s like straddling a picket fence – partway into the plan of God for their everyday life, but only so far! Its back to the law for them – “*I’m a good Christian person if I don’t do this, that, and the other thing. But my anger and/or my resentments, and/or my discontentedness, and/or my judgmentalism, and/or my jealousy and envy, and/or my unforgiveness, and/or my secret lusts*” – all the character issues by the way – all the really challenging, actually, **impossible** aspects of God’s plans for the followers of His Son – **the inner character stuff**. That’s just too hard! So since I have given up on practicing Christianity God’s way and according to **His** plans, I will just practice Christianity my own way and according to **my** plans. I’ll do the outward changes that will convince the casual observer that I am a good Christian – maybe even a Christ-follower, but inside my own heart and head, I’ll settle for remaining the hot, steaming mess of anger and negativity I’ve always been! I cannot tell you how many times I have seen folks in the church do their own version of Christianity, and when there is some sort of crisis, or difficulty in the church, they become a real problem. Rather than solve problems they **become** the problem - attaching themselves to it and making it worse! True Christ-followers **solve problems**! They don’t cause them! The Devil takes a crisis in the church and incorporates it into his schemes, getting the half-followers of Christ to overreact and paralyze the church with **hysterics and ego and aggression, or passive aggression**!

~But God has other plans for His people and for His church. Here is what Jesus said it looked like to follow Him - **[Matthew 5:3-16]** So, **THIS** is what God planned in advance for the followers of His Son – something quite radically different from any movement the world had ever seen before! **These** beatitude people are the people that He is sending out into the world to represent Him to a world that needs Him desperately! **That** world needs to see and hear **these** people! These are the whole-hearted followers of Jesus! The half-hearted followers look quite different from this – and there are tons of them! These need a change of heart – through the reproof/correction of scripture!



We have been fully furnished/equipped by the work of the Holy Spirit who has *inspire* the prophets and apostles – who compelled them to put pen to paper - thereby giving us permanent knowledge/truth regarding our Creator/God – who He is, what He has done, and what He wants from us! We see that what He wants from us – what He **REQUIRES** from us - is that we become someone who is genuinely, powerfully, consequentially, centrally changed from the inside to the outside! He has given us **everything that we require** to succeed at what God has planned for us to become, and how He plans to use us in the service of His plan to win the people of this world to switch sides! It all came as a package deal with the salvation that we asked Jesus for! But He also needs fully equipped allies and partners for His plans to persuade as many human beings to come to Him in belief and trust as are willing! This too is preplanned! This is what God has always envisioned for His people to be doing with their lives! Significant things, remarkable things! But we will join God in His work and in His purposes, only when we are fully furnished with the inspired scriptures, when we have made the effort to get it in our head and in our heart! That effort to learn is a good faith indication that Jesus is number one in our life! Then the Spirit brings those powerful words to life inside the heart and mind and emotions of the whole-hearted Christ-follower! He speaks to us and moves us, and motivates/empowers us to move into His plan for our lives through what we are leaning and by what we already know. We grow and move into His plan and purposes as, simultaneously, we let go of the things that do not matter, and increasingly turn our attention to those things that do!

