

## **THE PROMISE AND ITS PURPOSE (part-six of a seven-part study)**

The final step in the process of making a disciple is teaching. Throughout the New Testament, the new convert is portrayed as a child in need of spiritual growth, one primary example of which is found in 1 Peter 2:1-3, where we read this –

**“Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.”**

The apostle Paul went so far as to view himself as the spiritual father of the new converts which he led to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. He saw himself as not only their primary teacher, but a positive example that they could follow, which he reveals to the church at Corinth, in 1 Corinthians 4:14-16 –

**“I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children. For if you were to have countless tutors in Christ, yet you would not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. Therefore I exhort you, be imitators of me.”**

In the above passages, the importance of teaching is clearly emphasized; as well as the exemplary behavior which should be provided in support of what we teach. When a conversion to Christ occurs, it is incumbent upon the individual responsible for leading someone to Christ, in the context of a local church fellowship, to provide the necessary teaching, coupled with a positive example, so that spiritual growth can begin to take place, as soon as possible. The importance of teaching in the disciple-making process cannot be overstated. It also seems as if baptism serves as an essential element in the discipleship dynamic. When baptism fails to occur, it becomes a hindrance to the spiritual growth which is so necessary in the life of the new Christian. Why? It is an ordinance which our Lord and Savior expects all of His followers to obey (1 Peter 3:21-22). But when all the imperatives of the Great Commission mandate are faithfully fulfilled, the building of Christ’s Church will continue on a successful path forward from one generation to the next, as Paul points out to his disciple Timothy, in 2 Timothy 2:2 –

**“The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”**