

# VINTAGE BIBLE COLLEGE

"EQUIPPING FOR SPIRIT-FILLED MINISTRY"

## News & Update

Fall 2011



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## The Countercultural Gospel (John 13:1-17)

by Dr. Curtis Wood

The gospel of Jesus is countercultural. In most every comprehensible way, the nature and teachings of Christ contradict the nature and philosophy of this world. Throughout Scripture, the contradiction is evident, as the way of the world is contrasted with the way of God and believers are consistently warned of the distinction between the Spirit and the flesh (Mat. 26:41; Jn. 3:6; Rom. 8:1-13; Gal. 5:16-23; Phil. 3:3-4).

Jesus' teachings were revolutionary and they challenged not only the secular world, but also the religious community. He taught that in order to preserve life, one must surrender it (Mat. 16:25); in order to have, one must give away (Lk. 6:38); if one is to be the greatest, he must become the least (Lk. 9:48); and he who desires to become chief, must become the servant (Mat. 20:26). That was Jesus' message and He not only taught it, but He personally demonstrated it, both in His nature and in ministry. Thus, not only is faith and the Christian life countercultural, but so is Christian ministry, and in Jn. 13:1-17, Jesus' learning lesson for his disciples was emphatic and deliberate in his delivery and He insisted that the disciples comprehend and follow His example. He addresses the temporal nature of His disciples and attempts to refocus their attention on the spiritual aspects of submission to Christ and deep

service to others.

Ministry springs forth from a life that is surrendered to God and committed to serving others. Jesus' example provides a beautiful and personal example of a philosophy of ministry that models the humility and unselfishness each believer is called to demonstrate. Paul echoed this example, as he emphasized the importance of nurturing and serving the body of Christ in his admonition to the Corinthians regarding the love feasts, in which they were instructed to discern the Lord's body and thus, to respect fellow believers (1 Cor. 11:17-31).

Paul also cites Jesus as the supreme example of humility in Phil. 2:1-8. He reminds his readers that nothing was to be done out of selfish ambition, but that, with humility, one must consider others more important than self (Phil. 2:3). Instead of seeking attention and notoriety, Jesus attempted to hinder it. He held no public relations campaign, employed no media director, issued no press releases, etc., but rather, He merely sought to fulfill His mission and to obey the One who sent Him (Jn. 4:34). The absolute surrender of Jesus in the incarnation and finished work is paramount and serves as example to the believer of genuine humility and abandonment of all self-interest (Phil. 2:4-8). Truly embracing Christ and his mission and ministry requires absolute surrender of self-interest and personal ambition.

*Please see "The Countercultural Gospel" on page 2*

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humility in preferring others above self.

In the beginning of Jesus' ministry, His popularity grew rapidly and the disciples were often concerned about their notoriety. On numerous occasions, they were caught up in debate over who was the greatest (Mat. 18:1; Mark 9:34; Luke 9:46). Such was the case as arrangements were made to observe the Passover meal -- and it was here that Jesus addressed the issue one last time. During the course of the meal, Jesus exercised the role of a servant and washed His disciples' feet.

The necessity of foot washing was a common practice, due to the dusty limestone roads in and around Jerusalem; however, if performed by someone other than oneself, it was the duty of a lowly servant... and such was the nature and attitude of Christ (Mat. 11:29). There are two examples of humility taught by Christ at the Passover -- Communion and foot washing, and both emphasize relationship and serving. Thus, Jesus' learning lesson for his disciples was one of genuine love, personal humility, and selfless

## The Fall Quarter is now underway... (Come and visit a class!)

	Monday	Tuesday	Thursday	Saturday
8:00 am				Intro to Composition (1 Sat/Month)
12 noon		Marriage & Family II	Essentials in Theology	
4:45 pm	Counseling & Self-Esteem	Childhood Ed in the Church I	Intro to Chr. Counseling	
6:00 pm	Great Bible Doctrines Ministry, Church & Law I	Dynamics of the Holy Spirit Innovative Approaches in Chr. Counseling	Evangelism A Study of Romans	
7:30 pm	The Life of Christ I Personal Spiritual Development	Contemporary Issues Practical Pastoral Theology	Apologetics Bible History: How We Got Our Bible	

## Will you partner with us?

Since 1996, hundreds of students have enrolled in programs of study at Vintage Bible College designed to help equip them to fulfill the particular call the Holy Spirit has placed upon each one. It is with great conviction that we affirm our continued commitment to offer genuine Biblically-sound instruction and quality education. These are trying times and many have become weary; however, please be assured that our mission is as clear today as it was in the beginning. Vintage Bible College continues in our original commitment and purpose: (a) We are a school of the Word of God, thus we are committed to Biblical integrity; (b) We are a school of the Spirit, surrendered to the Holy Spirit in our educational programs and classroom activities; and (c) We are a school of relationships, and our students are committed both to the gospel and the body of Christ!

As a friend of Vintage Bible College, will you help us continue our heritage of Christ-centered studies and servant ministry? It is through our partners that the Lord continues to provide. We appreciate your prayers and financial support in any amount. Will you partner with us?

## *The Countercultural Gospel* from page 1

Jesus exhorts that, if His role was that of a servant, then certainly His example should be appreciated and followed. The servant role of Jesus' true disciple is certainly deeper than ceremonially washing feet as a symbolic practice. Some practice an ordinance of foot washing, while ignoring the life of service and ministry that Jesus intended with His example. Paul referred to this example in his reference to believing widows, whose servant heart and ministry to believers was referred to as "washing the saint's feet" (1 Tim. 5:10). We must exercise caution in allowing such a deep spiritual lesson from our Lord to become mere formality or ceremony.

Jesus' example is countercultural to today's trends, presenting a sobering message of His gracious humility, and confronting the world with the reality of His extraordinary love and unprecedented sacrifice. It serves as a challenge and offers several applications as one considers it. First, Jesus' unselfish commitment to His mission and willingness to surrender Himself and serve others provides the supreme example to the believer. Second, Jesus' appreciation and care for others reinforces the value and necessity of a mutual respect among members of the body of Christ. Third, it reinforces genuine humility in ministry and the necessity of the absolute surrender of our lives to the will of Him who has called us. Finally, it reminds the believer that it is only as we surrender to Christ that the fruit of the Spirit will become truly evident in our lives (Gal. 5:22-23).

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