

FOOTSTEPS OF THE FLOCK

The FOOTSTEPS OF THE FLOCK reveal the Path, the Trail, the Tracks, THE PATTERN that God's people must follow to bring them to spiritual maturity. There are no shortcuts and no exceptions. All who come into the HIGH CALLING will walk this way; Philippians 3:10-14.

1. There is no "new" way or path to inheritance in God's Kingdom; Prov. 22:28; Jer. 18:15; Eccles. 1:9-10
2. Someone has gone before us, walked before us, demonstrating a pattern for us to follow; 1 Tim. 1:16.
3. There is a "due order", a proper procedure concerning God's house and His ways; 1 Chron. 15:13.
4. There are patterns that lead to His purpose, and His principles must build the house; Psalm 127:1; Ezekiel 43:10; Matthew 16:18; Hebrews 8:5.
5. The "heir" must be trained, placed "under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father"; Proverbs 22:6; Galatians 4:1-2.5
6. Paul told Timothy to "make full proof of thy ministry", fight the good fight of faith, finish the course, and keep the faith; 2 Timothy 4:5,7.

7. Inheritance is realized in degrees. There can be a loss of inheritance, a partial inheritance, and a full inheritance. He who overcomes shall inherit all things; Revelation 21:7.

1. The Footsteps Are Revealed Through The Life Of Jesus Christ, the WAY for the sheep; John 14:6.

1. He was born of the Spirit; Luke 1:35, 38; John 1:12-13
2. He was baptized in water, and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him; Mark 1:9; Rom. 6:4
3. He was led into the Wilderness; Mark 1:12-13; Deut. 8:2
4. He was given a ministry by His Father; Luke 4:14,18
5. He died to self, was crucified outside the camp; Matthew 27:35-38
6. He was raised on the "Third Day"; Luke 9:22; 24:46; Hosea 6:2
7. He ascended into Heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; John 3:13

2. The Footsteps Are Revealed In The Song Of Solomon. The entire book describes the JOURNEY of the believer, the path that leads to spiritual growth and maturity. "Ponder the PATH OF THY FEET, and let all thy ways be established"; Proverbs 4:26. "Thou wilt show me the PATH OF LIFE..." Psalm 16:11.

- a. He first calls us to rise up and "come away"; Song of Sol. 2:10,13
- b. Then He says "come with Me"; Song of Sol. 4:8
- c. After we "come up hither", we can see from an elevated perspective; Song of Sol. 8:5; Rev. 4:1; 21:9

3. There Is A Progression Of Growth:

- a. We go from "faith to faith"; Romans 1:17
- b. We go from "strength to strength"; Psalm 84:7
- c. We are changed from "glory to glory"; 1 Corinthians 15:40-44; 2 Corinthians 3:18
- d. Spiritual fruit develops; Galatians 5: 22-23. Godly character develops; 2 Peter 1:5-10

4. There Is A Progression Of Love:

- a. "My beloved is mine, and I am his" - Song of Sol 2:16
- b. "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine" - Song of Sol. 6:3
- c. "I am my beloved's, and his desire is toward me" - Song of Sol. 7:10

5. This Forward Progression Indicates:

- a. No looking back - "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God"; Luke 9:62
- b. No drawing back - "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him"; Hebrews 10:38
- c. No turning back - "Many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him"; John 6:66
- d. No falling back - "That they might go, fall backward, be broken, and snared, and taken"; Isaiah 28:18

6. This Forward Progression Is Seen In The Footsteps Of The Flock:

“...GO THY WAY FORTH by the FOOTSTEPS OF THE FLOCK, And feed thy kids beside the shepherds’ tents”; Song of Solomon 1:8. These footsteps will lead her to the SECRET PLACES OF THE STAIRS; Song 2:14. This is the Bride’s journey as she pursues her Beloved into the place of union and rest. The Shulamite maiden (Bride-to-be) is being awakened to hear the voice of her Beloved.

a. She is told to “go forth” by the path of the flock, and feed her “kids” (those whom the Lord has entrusted into her care) by the shepherds tents (the ministries, the local church). The tents are places of public worship, where the Word of God is preached, where ordinances are administered; they are “pitched” so that the flock can be fed and taught how to walk in righteousness; Song 1:8.

b. She will glean from seasoned ministry, and learn how to move with the flock. She must be established in the elementary principles of Christian faith, and taught in biblical doctrine and living; Heb. 6:1-3.

c. She will be drawn to Him, and will run after Him, which indicates a continuous desire, an active pursuit of a relationship with Him. This leads into the chambers (storehouse, inner rooms) of His grace and truth, and the new birth; Song 1:4.

d. Her neck with “chains and borders of gold and studs of silver”, speaks of the progressive unfolding, and linking together of Kingdom principles, the fruit and gifts of the spirit and His divine nature; Song 1:10-11

e. She will come to know the feasting and the riches of a supper at His table; Song 1:12; 2:4.

f. She learns about the mountains (of suffering, difficulties) from where He has come; Song 2:8; 4:8

g. She experiences the joy of the “banqueting house” (Pentecostal experience), but lacks experience and understanding of the authority and power of spiritual warfare and Christian service; Song of Sol. 2:4.

h. She is separated from Him by a wall (barrier, her carnal mindset), which must come down; Song 2:9.

i. She arises from spiritual complacency to new experiences in the “journeyings” of the camp; Song 2:10.

j. She comes to the land of singing birds (praise), hears the voice of the turtledove (Holy Spirit). She is like a dove in “the clefts of the rock”; she is found in the “secret places of the stairs”; Song 2:12-14.

k. She must overcome the obstacles, and watch for the little foxes (wasted time, foolish talking, lack of diligence, neglect of prayer) which can hinder her growing love relationship with Him; Song 2:15.

l. She passes on from wandering and distractions, from running after the ministries of the people and hears the call to deep communion with Him. She finds rest with him; Song of Sol. 2:3; 3:4,7; 6:2,12.

m. The Beloved withdraws Himself; this encourages her to seek Him out and search for Him; Song 3:1-4.

n. She is invited to look from the top, to gain a heavenly perspective into the spirit realm; Song 4:8.

o. She becomes His private garden of delights, with living waters, fruit and rare spices; Song 4:12-16.

p. She gives an intimate description of Him who is altogether lovely. She speaks of her devotion and adoration of Him. He also describes her beautiful features, her spiritual virtues; Song 1:15; 4:7; 6:10.

q. She “puts off” the old man and “puts on the new”. He disturbs her spiritual ease and complacency, calls her to rise to a new requirement. He beckons her to come to a deeper fellowship of His cross; Song 5:3-4.

r. She opens to her Beloved willingly, to accept the fellowship in His sufferings. She feels loneliness and rejection, but He doesn’t answer. This is a deeper exercise of her faith; Song 5:6.

s. She is the “choice one” among the virgins, the daughters of Jerusalem, the queens, the concubines, the little sister. The watchmen (leaders of the people) found her and wounded her. She suffers persecution at the hands of the religious system. “Keepers of the wall” took away her veil (credentials); Song 5:7; 6:9

t. The two of them go into the field (all the world) to check the condition of the vineyards; Song 7:11-12.

u. One step at a time, He fashions His Bride to sustain life and bring forth in her all manner of pleasant fruits. She is His workmanship and His desire is toward her. They experience mutual love beyond the veil in the Most Holy Place; Song 7:10. She “comes up” from the wilderness leaning upon Him; Song 8:5.

v. His “companions” are listening for His voice. She calls to her Beloved to come in the power of His resurrection; this is an urgent call to Him, to “make haste” and come quickly; Song 8:13-14.

7. The Footsteps Are Revealed In God's School Of Divine Instruction.

- a. Every "crisis" in our life is an opportunity for us to be trained. Every trial we endure reveals the condition of our faith: is it weak or superficial? Is it a momentary enthusiasm or a deeply rooted conviction? Our faith must be genuine; the outcome of proven faith is the salvation of our soul; 1 Pet.1:9.
- b. If we fail the "tests" in the class, we will have to take them over again. When we pass the "tests" in the class, we graduate to another level (STEP).

There are "classes of instruction" where we are trained through "lessons":

1. The Lesson Of Forgiveness – We are forgiven when we believe and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ at the cross. Therefore, we must forgive ourselves and others; Matthew 6:14-15. We must learn to forgive others continually and completely; Matthew 18:22.
2. The Lesson Of Disappointment – All of us must learn to live with the challenge of our own limitations and the shortcomings of others. We must also learn about God's delays; John 11:6-32; His methods; 2 Kings 5:11-12, and His claims upon the life of a disciple; Mark 10:17-22.
3. The Lesson Of Submission - We learn to submit ourselves one to another in the fear of God; Eph. 5:21. We learn to be accountable and subject one to another, being clothed with humility; 1 Pet. 5:5. We submit ourselves to ordinances, governing authorities, showing respect to all men; Rom. 13:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:13-17.
4. The Lesson Of Patience - We must learn to be patient in tribulation, trusting in God, waiting and enduring through trials for extended periods of time. Rom. 12:12. In our patience we "possess our souls"; Luke 21:19. Patience must have its "perfect (complete) work"; James 1:4.
5. The Lesson Of Conflict - The Lord teaches our hands "to war"; Ps. 144:1 through the challenges that we face: living in the world, the pull of the flesh, against the devil and his kingdom of darkness. He perfects us as we cooperate with Him in times of temptation; Matt. 4:1-11 and opposition; Jer. 11:19-20.
6. The Lesson Of Persecution - Persecution arises for the word's sake; Mark 4:17. In this world we will suffer persecution; we are told to "rejoice" when we are reviled, persecuted and spoken evil of for His sake; Matthew 5:11-12. We are told to bless those who curse us; Rom. 12:14
7. The Lesson Of Flexibility – We must learn not to be stubborn or stiff-necked, insisting upon our own will and our own ways; 2 Chron. 30:8. We learn to accept the changes that come in life, becoming pliable in the Master's hand; Jer.18:2-6. We must not harden our hearts or resist the Holy Spirit; Ps. 95:7-8.
8. The Lesson Of Need – Our God shall supply all of our needs, but He will meet our needs in the way He chooses. Supernatural provision (manna) was supplied every day for God's people; Ex. 16:4. This includes the material; Matt. 6:25-34, the spiritual; Ps. 42:1-2, and the occupational; Acts 18:3.
9. The Lesson Of Prosperity – God leads us into the abundance of His goodness, to teach us gratitude and to test our humility. He leads us into prosperity in the spiritual and material realms, so that we might learn to abound for the glory of God, not the glory of man; Philippians 4:12-19; 1 Timothy 6:17-18.
10. The Lesson Of Restraint - We must place a guard over the words of our mouth, accepting the bit and the bridle; James 3:2-3, as well as His "harness" which keeps us under His yoke; Matt. 11:29-30. Fleshly impulses must not rule over us. We bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ; 2 Cor. 10:5.
11. The Lesson Of Pressure - When God increases our responsibilities, He will sustain us. He teaches us priorities, divine order and how to delegate responsibly. When assigned work multiplies, there is pressure: will I submit to God's wisdom, or will I yield to the demands and opinions of the people? Ex. 18:17-24.
12. The Lesson Of Rest - God teaches us to enter His rest; Heb. 4:9-11. We must cease from our own "self-directed, self-appointed" labors. He leads us into devotion at His feet, consecrated service to Him, abiding in Him; Luke 10:38-42. When God is silent, we learn to wait until He shows us the next step.

