

# Chapter 1

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## Identity and Purity

Disciple/apostle = learn/do.

**Training the Twelve.** Training means educating; teaching and forming by practice.

**At the end of this chapter you will:**

1. know how to purify and spiritualize consciousness
2. experience baptism
3. immediately begin to improve your life-work as a present-day powerful disciple of Jesus
4. demonstrate increased spiritual power to help, heal, and save

**The main questions to ask in each chapter are:**

- 1) what have I learned as a disciple, a student, of Jesus?
- 2) What *training* have we received through Jesus' words, actions, and healing work?



Disciple = learner; student

Apostle = one sent

Learn — then do (teach/ heal/ preach/ comfort).

You are a disciple-apostle about your “Father’s business” (*Luke* 2:49).

**The main theme** (idea) of chapter one is cleanness / purity.

Jesus' identity as the Son of God, the sinless Savior, is unique to him. However, we are also God's own children, His sons and daughters made in His likeness. Jesus confirms this by teaching his disciples to begin prayer: "*Our Father...*" Likewise, his beloved disciple, John, writes, "Now are we the sons of God..." (*1 John 3:2*).

Jesus' two healing works of chapter one have to do with cleanness / purity. As present day disciples it is imperative that we purify and spiritualize our consciousness to act in accord with our true Christ-nature.

## **Identity**

The very first words of *Mark's* Gospel introduce Jesus as the "Son of God" (1:1).

Verse eleven emphasizes Jesus' identity at his baptism when "a voice from heaven" announces, "Thou art My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (1:11). Then when he casts out an evil spirit, it blurts out, "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God" (1:25).



Verse 10 tells us that John the Baptist saw the "Spirit like a dove" rest upon Jesus as he emerges from baptism.

Dove = symbol of Spirit, purity, innocence; sacrifice. Twice it is used figuratively in *Song of Solomon*: "...my dove, my perfect one..." (5:2; 6:9).

Jesus is identified in *Mark 1* as:

1) “Son of God” 2) “My beloved Son” 3) “the Holy One of God” 4) and by inference with the simile of the dove, My perfect one.



So what about YOUR identity? What about the Father’s approval on your ministry to others?

Jesus told his disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit to come upon them — the symbol of dove will come and rest upon you.

Divine Love will speak to your consciousness, saying: “My perfect One” — My “image and likeness” (*Genesis 1:26*).

Jesus said, “I and my Father are one” (*John 10:30*). Your relationship to God is as a ray of light to the sun. The ray shines brightly with no shadow or dimness at all. It is never separated from its source. Each ray is equal to the next. This is the reality of your being, your true identity as the emanation of His Being.

**Instruction.** To purify thought and open the way for higher realization of oneness with God, pray by listening (not be speaking, telling, asking, informing, pleading). As the Scripture urges, “Be still, and know that I am God” (*Psalms 46:10*). Find a quiet place, or go to your quiet place within consciousness (it is always there), and focus on yourself as a ray of light, as emanation from the divine Source of pure Light and Love. Be still and feel after this. Words are not needed. Be still.

## IMMEDIACY

Notice how everything in Mark's Gospel is immediate. There is no warm-up or genealogy. It is an *action* beginning. This sets the tone for the Gospel — right to the point, concise, present, and moving.

Since Mark companioned with Peter and wrote down what Peter taught and preached, this tone must reflect Peter's 'personality' and his way of communicating to his hearers.

Following the initial announcement of Jesus as the "Son of God," Mark makes the *second* grand announcement through the record of God's words to our Master at his baptism: "Thou art My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (*Mark 1:11*).



God is “well pleased” with Jesus who is sinless.

To be powerful disciples for Jesus today, we must bring our thoughts and lives into conformity with innocence and purity. It is never too late to purify consciousness. No individual is so bad, or has so much evil history, that that one cannot immediately be washed clean in spiritual baptism.



### **I BAPTIZE YOU (now)**

Whether you have been officially baptized or never baptized, I baptize you right now, if you so desire. I baptize you in divine Love. You are now submerged in the reality of the Light of Spirit that cleanses consciousness, washes away past sins, and makes you new in God's image. You are forgiven and the Father smiles upon you with the benediction, Thou art My beloved Son/Daughter. Feel the waters of Life washing around you, and come up into a higher, more spiritualized thought of all things. Bring this light of Love

and purification of forgiveness with you everywhere. Let it shine gently on everyone. Be a powerful disciple with tears of gratitude, in the name of God's holy child, Jesus. Amen.

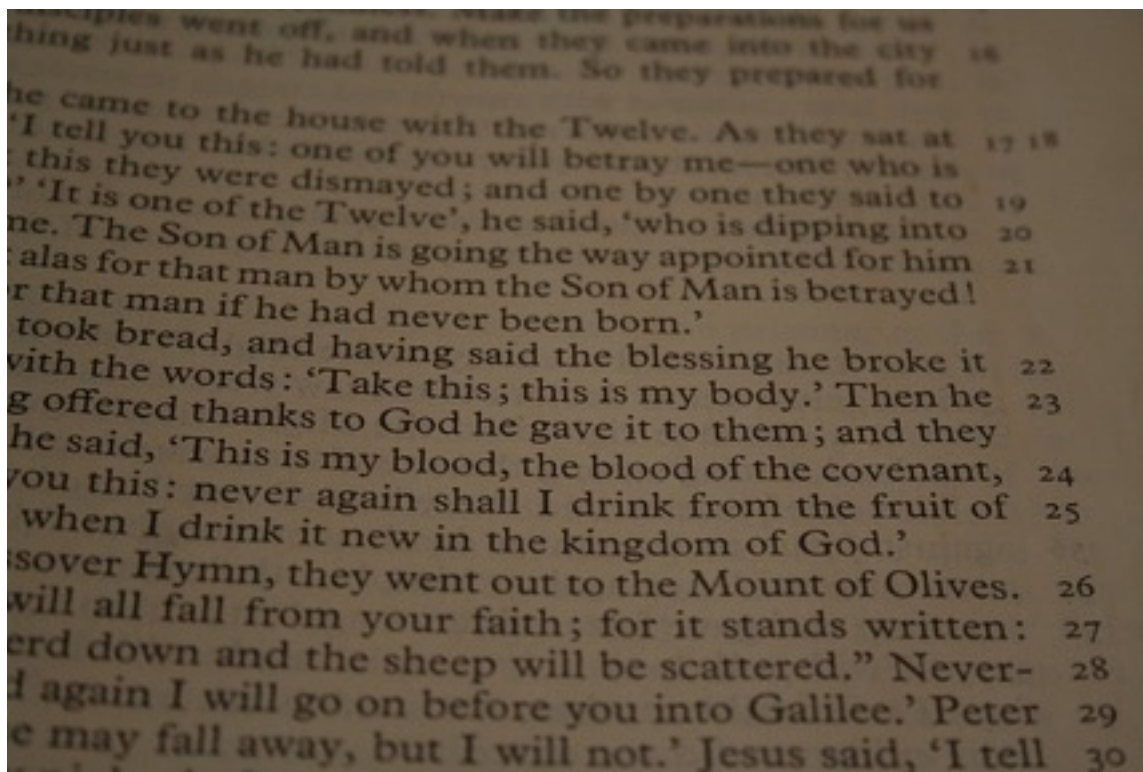


Humanly, your baptism means forgiveness, repentance, and purified thought. Spiritually it means being in accord with your eternal sinless selfhood in God's own likeness — reflecting and expressing His pure Being. You are a powerful disciple of Christ.

**ASSIGNMENT.** Exercise your newly washed and purified consciousness. Here are a few ideas:

1. forgive someone — drop a grudge
2. heal someone — hold in thought the spiritual “image and likeness” of God right where a sick, injured, hurt, or dying person appears to be
3. uplift someone — do an unexpected good deed (even giving a smile or single word of encouragement as opportunity arises)

The *Jamieson Commentary* notes that Mark's Gospel possesses a “direct, practical, and singularly vivid setting [that] imparts to it a preciousness peculiar to itself.”



It states that although *Mark* is “the briefest of all the Gospels ... in some of the principal scenes ...our Lord’s history [is] the fullest.”

Jamieson also comments that the “finer and subtler feelings of humanity, or the deeper and more peculiar hues of our Lords’ character” blend in harmony with what we know of the deep human affection of Peter (from whom Mark heard these things) toward our Master.” These “leave indelible impressions upon ... the thoughtful.” Peter, having lived in the pure atmosphere of Jesus’ thought, must have imparted a sense of this rich purity to his listeners, including Mark.

Clean. Pure, bright, clear, flawless, innocent (Strong’s). Free from mixture with whatever diminishes the distinctive quality or essential character. Free from disease. Free from anything that tends to obscure. Free from moral taint or corruption. Guiltless. Spiritually pure. Having simplicity and gracefulness” (Webster’s).



As *Isaiah* says, “Wash you, make you clean” (1:16).

John the Baptist prepares the way through baptism, and through encouraging and literally demanding repentance — changing to more pureness and spirituality of thought.

1. *Prepare the way* — “baptism of *repentance* (change thinking) for the *remission* of sins” (1:4).
2. *Resist temptations of evil* (1:12-13). Wilderness “forty days” — the Hebrew number that indicates a testing time. Angels will minister to you as they did to him.
3. “Resist the devil and he will flee from you; draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you” (*James* 4:7).
4. Heal the sick and sinful. The man with an “*unclean* spirit” (1:23-28). Jesus “cast out many devils” (1:34, 39).
4. *Cleanse the lepers*. Jesus “moved with compassion, responds tot he request for healing: “be thou *clean*” (1:40-45).

Examples in this first chapter show the need to be morally, mentally, and physically *clean*.

## HEALING WORK

This first healing in chapter one (23-26) is of “a man with an unclean spirit.” Evil is afraid in the conscious presence of Christ. It is destroyed in the presence of Good (as darkness in the presence of light).

We learn from this that we do not fear whatever needs healing, but vice versa. The “evil spirit” (disease or threat) fears your true identity as a “Holy One of God,” Love’s own “image and likeness” or reflection of omnipotent Truth and Good. Know yourself as you are, one with God as a ray of light to the sun.



Let the Light that is God shine through you on the darkness, on that which needs to be healed.

The problem fears you, you don't fear the problem!



The first healing recorded in the *Gospel of Mark* produces immediate fame for Jesus. The result is that “all the city ... gathered together at the door” at Peter’s house where Jesus was staying. He heals Peter’s mother-in-law of a fever as soon as he arrives. The chosen Peter, James, and John are present, along with Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. In this healing we see some of those wonderful touches that must have come from Peter’s preaching. Jesus “went to” Peter’s mother-in-law, he “took her by the hand,” then he “lifted her up” and “rebuked the fever.” She immediately ministers to them.

When a light is turned on, darkness disappears.

Be clean — a transparency for Love to shine through. Be the expression of love, moved with compassion, going to the ones in need, taking their hand and lifting them up. Rebuke the false beliefs and fears with the truth that God is present and all-powerful good.

Jesus healed all who came to the door. No exceptions. God can heal everyone and everything. Know this. Be a law to yourself that this is so, and that God is working in you as a disciple of Jesus who commanded us to follow him and do the works he did. Know that the power of God, Love, is working in you and is the Light that shines in place of the darkness called sin or disease, injury or age. God is perfect Being, and man is His likeness. Here, you stand.

Very early the next morning Jesus got up and “departed into a solitary place” to pray (35). He needs to be alone, to refresh himself and pray, as do we. A close follower of Jesus in the 19th century, Mary Baker Eddy writes in her book *Science and Health*, “Jesus prayed; he withdrew from the material senses to refresh his heart with brighter, with spiritual views” (32). Let us refresh our hearts with bright spiritual views!

Feel after God’s love, and respond to the impartations of angel messages. Get up early in the morning for the richness of calm and silence. Let divine Love feed you, nourish and nurture you. Jesus did this, so must we. We must follow his example. Sometimes he sought solitude, at other times he was extremely engaged in the midst of a multitude — teaching and healing. We need time and opportunity to recharge.



How many people need healing today?  
Are we ready to be in high demand?  
Do we give our consent? Sometimes  
Jesus and the disciples did not even  
have time to eat! The intensity  
increases. How much time will you  
devote to your discipleship? All your  
hours! Whatever you are doing,  
wherever you are working — actively  
BE a disciple/apostle.

Quiet prayer in realization can often be more effective and powerful than speaking. The Father will guide you. Keep thought pure, that is the important thing. Remain in a state of Love and patience. Feel God's presence.

After this first healing, Jesus “could no more openly enter into the city” but had to stay outside the city “in desert places” (45). Think of what would be like. Unable go home because there are too many people at the door. Stuck in a barren place — no bed, no pillow, no food, no comfort — no getting home. Realize and appreciate that Jesus cannot even get back to Simon Peter's house!

**Remember:**

Clear thought of past hurts. Be baptized; be pure. Forgive everybody everything.

## Journal Ideas

Things I've learned about being a disciple in chapter one:

LOOK AHEAD FOR THIS WEEK. How can I actively express what I've learned? Write at least one thing you might do this week that is unselfish and a Christian service to others — using some of the ideas from Chapter 1.

How can I teach others what I've learned from chapter one? How might I impart at least one of the ideas?

Before beginning chapter 2. Record a few highlights of daily ministering work resulting from the training in chapter one.

REFLECT AND PREPARE FOR CHAPTER TWO: What more might I have done? How could I have done something better? Can I still do this in some way?

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