

The Doctrine of PUT

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Part 1: The Power of “Putting” All Things in Christ

Living the Christ Life and internalizing the V Marks* of grasping “in Christ” reality hinges on the little verb “to put.” This tiny word can have huge implications! My dictionary has over a page of uses. It means to place, set, leave or trust “a thing” to a certain truth, action, position or idea and then expect results from what we have done. All of us anticipate that what is “put” has executed the purpose for which we “put” it. What we “put” into our decisions includes our values, goals, hurts, ideas, wounds, beliefs, people, needs, failures, victories, pleasures, challenges, recognitions, opportunities, etc. All of us are constantly “putting” our faith, our hopes, our responses and our desires somewhere. A woman puts her confidence in finding a husband, a man puts his hopes in a job or money, a child puts her security in her mother, an athlete puts his happiness in making the team, an older man puts his goal in retirement, a politician puts his ambition in winning the election, etc. Every person is engaged in “putting” in order to survive and thrive.

Most people choose to “put” their hope for truth in themselves, in some specific knowledge or in others. But those of us who have found the Savior are called to “put” all our hope “in Christ!” The more frequently and continuously we make decisions by first “putting them” in Christ, the more quickly we will taste the fullness and significance of living in His Presence and discovering His Purpose and His Pleasure and I might also add ... His Power. No matter what hits you each day ... good or bad, the best or the worst ... learning how to “put” every issue “in Christ” is the foundation for reigning in life. Every Disciple is called to be an Overcomer by living the Christ Life: to learn Jesus, practice Cross Discipleship with the goal of demonstrate Messiah Love (Rom. 5:17, 8:28; Col. 12:9-12; Col. 3:5, 12; Rev. 2-3).

How do we define “put in Christ?” What are we actually doing when we “put” things “in Christ?” Simply this: first, we are earnestly seeking to see, think, respond and wait as Christ would about every issue or impression we encounter; second, in doing this we initiate a process that begins to make us one with Him in Messiah Love; third, to taste and discover this intoxicating oneness with Christ awakens and enlarges our vision of His magnificence; fourth, our ambition increases to accomplish “our putting” as perfectly as possible in every situation that confronts us. To do so initiates us into His miraculous revelation and purpose. The V Marks* should be our instant reaction to everything. Our will, as a result, will increasingly merge with His will! To live as Christ did on earth is the most wondrous existence we can aspire to achieve! Our Lord made this purpose clear in John 20:21 ... “As the Father has sent me so send I you (to repeat My Life on earth)!” Our Ventures term for this “repeating” is called the Christ Life. It is Paul’s ambition in Colossians 1:24 to ... “complete Christ’s afflictions!” and in Philippians 3:10, “... that I may know Him.” Understanding the why, whence, what and who of this mission should be every Believer’s primary passion. To “put” all things “in Christ” is to “put” yourself in His Hands. In this act of trust in your mind you release His eternal purpose in and through your life. Awesome! Huge! Amazing! Results can be experienced immediately as you begin to reign in Christ over all that comes at you (Rom. 5:17).

The Father’s desire is to give us the mind of heaven about the issues of earth (I Cor. 2:14-16). Progress may be slow and not fully realized at first, but the pace will quicken once we are genuinely “PUTTING” all of our decisions, crises, joys, opportunities, stresses, rejections, questions, disappointments, triumphs, endurances, pleasures or sufferings “IN CHRIST!”

Please notice that our Creator-Redeemer is Himself a “PUTTER.”

“The Lord God took the man and PUT him in the Garden of Eden” Genesis 2:15.

To be delivered from death at the First Passover the Lord told Israel ... “They shall take some of the blood and PUT it on the two doorposts ...” Exodus 12:6-11.

If His children pay earnest heed to the Voice of the Lord He promises ... “I will PUT none of these diseases on you which I have PUT on the Egyptians. For I, the Lord, Am your Healer” Exodus 15:26.

“... in the hearts of all the skillful I have PUT skill that they may make all I have commanded ...” Exodus 31:6. “The Lord has PUT skill and understanding (in them) to know how to perform His works...” Exodus 36:1-2.

The Lord told Moses to “PUT some of your authority on Joshua” Numbers 27:18-28:1.

Israel was commanded, “... not to PUT the Lord your God to the test” Deuteronomy 6:13-17.

The Lord declares, “It is I who PUT to death and give life” Deuteronomy 32:39.

Joshua challenges the people (and us) with the great question that demands an answer ... “How long will you PUT off entering to take possession of the land the Lord has given you?” Joshua 18:3.

“All the earth was seeking the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom which God had PUT in his heart” I Kings 10:23-25.

The Lord spoke through King Jehoshaphat to tell the people to “... PUT your trust in the Lord and His prophets and you will be established and succeed” II Chronicles 20:20-22.

Nehemiah testified that ... “My God was PUTTING in my mind what to do for Jerusalem.” The people also PUT their hands to the good work that God had PUT into his heart to plan, Nehemiah 2:12, 18; 7:5.

The Psalmist was elated that ... “The Lord PUT gladness in his heart,” and that “He PUT a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to God” Psalm 4:6, 5:1, 40:3.

God “PUTS down one and exalts another.” The people “... should PUT their confidence in God,” and we should ask “... not to be PUT to shame” Psalm 75:7, 78:7, 119:30-32.

The “Doctrine of Put” continues in the New Testament.

Our Lord cautions that it is useless to try to PUT new wine in old wineskins (Matt. 9:16-17).

When He comes in His glory He will PUT the sheep on His right and PUT the goats on the left (Matt. 25:31-33).

In His humanity He shows His grief over the people’s unbelief ... “How long shall I PUT up with you?” (Mark 9:19). He cautions that no one who PUTS his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God (Luke 9:62).

He tells Peter to PUT up his sword as He plans to drink the cup His Father has PUT before Him to drink (John 18:11).

Christians who yearn to be true disciples should:

PUT to death the fleshy deeds of the body – Romans 8:12-14.

“PUT on the armor of light” – Romans 13:12.

“PUT on the Lord Jesus Christ” – Romans 13:14.

PUT creates thankfulness when someone (Titus) cares about others like you do (Paul) – II Corinthians 8:16.

PUT off the old self ... PUT on the new self ... PUT off falsehood—Ephesians 4:22-25.

PUT away all bitterness, wrath, anger, discord, slander and malice ... forgiving each other as God forgave you – Ephesians 4:31-32.

“PUT on the full armor of God” – Ephesians 6:11.

“PUT on the new self which is being renewed according to the image of our Creator” – Colossians 3:10.

“PUT on, above all things, love, the perfect bond of unity” – Colossians 3:14.

Can there be any doubt that Scripture teaches “The Doctrine of PUT?” Isn’t it obvious that the purposes of God as well as the purposes of mankind are revealed by how, where and for what reason they “put”? Is it not clear that the heart resolve and maturity of a Disciple is exposed and declared by how he

or she “puts” the pressures and potentials of life where they belong ... “in Christ”? Where we “put” (or bet or trust or invest) our “belief system” determines what we become and reap.

The only fully satisfying reality we can ever experience on this earth is our hidden treasure “in” Christ Jesus (Matt. 6:21, 13:44; Luke 12:33; II Cor. 4:7; I Tim.6:19)! To consistently practice Biblical “putting” is to invest heavily in the treasure, promises and offerings of God. To “put” is “to become” an expectant recipient of the Father’s purposes. Once invested, our “putting” will be multiplied according to our faith (Matt. 9:22; Luke 6:38). To “put” is to search and dig in the realities of the Godhead and to blunt the illusions and lies of a fallen world!

If we learn to “put” every decision confronting us in Christ we are destined to grasp, grow and glory in our “creation calling,” as well as our “new creation calling.” We are redeemed to increasingly learn, live, subdue, cultivate, multiply and fulfill our being (Gen. 1:26-30; II Cor. 5:17). This is why understanding the V Marks* is so critical to the life of the true disciple. The V Marks* teach us how “to put” Biblically. We already know how to “put” our lives in our money, our pleasure, our dreams, etc. ... we do it all the time. But few Disciples seem to know how to “put” their lives continuously in Christ as they encounter the hits, the reversals and the vicissitudes of life.

The Disciples’ most essential challenge is to yield to Paul’s admonition to “PUT on the new self in the likeness of God” (Eph. 4:24 and Col. 3:10). Following the V Marks* provides a disciplined and precise way to practice this “putting.” Experimenting with the V Marks* is your first step to “put” on the Lord Jesus Christ! Wonderful tastes and touches of His kind of life can be ours NOW as we learn “to put.”

To practice with earnestness the V Marks* “puts” us in the great legacy stream of Paul and Timothy and Epaphroditus. All three were dominated by the primacy of “putting” Christ’s ideas, heart and interests above all else (Phil. 2:19-30). The great news is that we can know the thrill, satisfaction and significance of doing the same. We can start “putting” ... right now ... this instant! Learning to “put” all things “in Christ” is a simple process. The V Marks* discipline tells us how. We “put” by quickly asking ourselves, “what does the Lord see in this situation?” We quickly pray, “Lord Jesus, let me see this as You see this!” Then, “what is He thinking about it ... how does this fit with His sovereign mind, plan and control?” Next ... you pray immediately like Nehemiah (2:1-5) and Peter (Matt. 14:30) and ask, “Lord Jesus, how should I respond to this in such a way that pleases you?” These first three “put” questions prepare you to take step four ... to wait with wisdom and patience until you hear His Voice. You “put” yourself at the Lord’s disposal to watch Him act or to act/react yourself if He tells you to do so. Only in “waiting as HE waits” (Heb. 10:12-14) are you prepared to experience step five. It is then you begin to become one with Christ’s Messiah Love mission to the situation or the person. His Voice will definitely come to you with His counsel to either wait longer in love or act now in love. Our supreme purpose of life is at stake in this fifth level of V Marks progress. We have been given life to enter into the love of Eloheim and then to share the love we have yielded to with others. This is how Jesus related to the Father. He saw the world and His mission to it with the Father’s eyes and heart! To do the same will bring us into similar oneness with our Lord. Each of us have a daily mission to accomplish and we should do it His way!

Our lives are radically awakened and altered when we grasp the meaning of His Messiah Love. We yearn afresh to be exactly like Jesus and to fully please Him! We are “blown away” at the magnitude of this compelling oneness with “The Love” that overcomes all things! The high calling of God in Christ for every Disciple is to practice this V Marks* process, this drill, this game plan, this discipline ... instantly, earnestly, wisely, continuously and confidently. This is what the great Apostle yearned for and died for ... the goal of winning the prize of our “zenith God calling” given to us “in Christ” (Phil. 3:14). We, too, must take the initiative in “loving as Jesus loves” no matter the cost, rejection, misunderstanding or injustice! The Father will right all things when we stand before Him! This empowering revelation of His fullness, His love, His presence, His purpose comes from “Christ putting more of Himself in us and us putting more of ourselves in Him.” It is what we truly and most deeply yearn for ... live for ... wait for!

As we learn to apply the V Marks* as a constant habit of life they will carry us out of our spiritual babyhood (A-Life), through our discipleship adulthood (O-Life) and into our praising fatherhood (Z-Life) (I John 2:12-14). Loving Jesus is to develop the will and skill to increasingly “PUT” all of our minute by minute living ... all thoughts, circumstances, failures, hopes, sins and trials ... in who He is ... in how He thinks ... in how He forgives... and in what He wants (John 10:17-18). To “put” is to quickly process the V Marks* on every issue. Only then can we “have and keep” Christ’s commandments in every situation, especially the commandment to confess our sins! (John 14:21).

As we grow in the V Marks* discipline we will discover that the Father is “putting” more of His Son’s abundant kind of life in us (John 10:10). We will fail again and again to “put” perfectly. Yet the Father is still pleased with our desire to be obedient. He finds satisfaction in our grief over our sins, weaknesses and inadequacies. We must not quit. If we are to authentically live, there is no place else to go but to Christ (I Sam. 30:1-8; John 6:66-69)! You can be sure God’s kind of change in you will come! This is His promise (Phil. 1:6). Our Lord “put” Himself in the Father in all things. “The Doctrine of Put” is His plan to bring many sons and daughters to glory (significance and splendor) (Heb. 2:10; John 14:15-20).

Determine right now you will start “putting” every thought, every wound, every desire, every hurt, every emptiness, every crisis, every loss, every sin, every fear, every longing, every reaction, every depression, every success, every decision “in Christ.” Let me illustrate. Let’s say a certain person by the name of X has failed you or hurt you deeply. To take up our Lord’s cross ... His Messiah Love ... toward that person demands the immediate use of the V Marks*. First, you must see X with the eyes of Christ. Second, you must think about X with the mind of Christ. You then respond to X ... regardless of the sin involved ... with the heart of Christ to understand and love. Next, you wait for X ... to grow, to realize, to repent, to learn, to change and to mature ... with the patience of Christ. Lastly, as a result of this yielding process you become more one with Christ as He was one with His Father in Messiah Love (John 14:20). You actually begin to love X (and others) with the Messiah Love of Christ. You seek and desire to become to X what Christ is, was and wants to be to you (Eph. 4:32)! This is the ultimate achievement of the Disciple. It is our Lord’s creation purpose for every one of His Followers (Eph. 2:10). “God was ‘in Christ’ reconciling the world to Himself.” His supreme will is to work the same reconciliation through us when we “PUT” our own lives on our cross as He did (II Cor. 5:16-21; Is. 6:1-13).

Please comprehend! This was the path our Lord chose as He walked the earth. This is electrifying! In so many words He said, “Father, all I Am or hope to be I PUT in You!” And when the Father heard that He answered, “Then hear this, My Son, all I Am I PUT in you!”

Resolved: I will PUT everything of me in my little world in Christ!

Result: He will PUT everything in He desires into me!

Hallelujah ... what a Savior!!!

Part 2: The PUT Skilled Discipline

When a Disciple makes “putting” a skilled discipline of continuous thought and action, he or she is practicing “cross living.” To be a “putter” is simply to check our alignment with the will of God and be sure we have “put” our concerns in Christ. The point is to bring more of our Lord’s grace and truth into our lives and our issues (I Jn. 1:14). The “putter” is one who makes a consistent habit of using the V Marks* as a filter for processing life. When the Savior challenged His hearers with their decision to either ignore Him or follow Him He outlined “The Doctrine of PUT.”

Note our Lord’s words in Luke 9:23:

If anyone would come after Me

“decide NOW in Whom you will put your trust, efforts and hope” (Jn. 3:18-21).

he must deny himself

“put no confidence in your flesh” (Phil. 3:3).
and take up
“put My yoke and My burdens in your heart and on your back” (Mt. 11:28-30).
his cross
“put My specific mission for you ahead of all your smaller ambitions and put yourself at risk to achieve it” (Jn. 12:23-26).
daily
“regardless of the circumstances put My honor, My praise and My promises as your first priority on a 24/7 basis” (II Cor. 11:28-29).
and follow Me.
“put your feet on the same path the Father gave Me” (Jn. 21:17-22; Isa. 53).

WE MUST “PUT” TO FOLLOW CHRIST

To “put” your daily living in Christ is to connect yourself experientially to a reality that the Father has already created. That reality came when He “put” you in Christ positionally at the moment you embrace and received Him by faith. To “faith” Jesus is to act mentally, volitionally and emotionally on what He has said and then to consider it “done!” A person can be a husband or wife positionally without knowing the fullness of the relationship experientially. A child is one positionally before knowing the experiential fullness of the parent’s love. Using the V Marks* process is to “put” truth like John 14:21 into your current and ongoing struggles, challenges and decisions. The Lord Jesus promised that if we are “possessing, putting and processing” His commands (by study, experience and revelation) and seeking to “put” them into practice (by yielding and obedience) we experience the assurance and reality of Who He is. By this “heart habit” we drink and eat more and more of the Father’s Messiah Love (Jn. 6:32-58). To “put” is to eat the Bread of Heaven ... Jesus! To taste this kind of Love, which is beyond description, is what Jesus meant when He ends John 14:21 with ... “and I will make Myself real to you!” His presence with us ... in us ... around us ... over us ... through us ... is our supreme goal. Christ being real to us is our deepest satisfaction, our highest need and our most thrilling reward from “putting.” It is the key to “spiritually seeing” the Face of Him who is our Lord, our Life and our Love!! (Ps. 4:6, 27:8; II Cor. 4:6; Mt. 17:2). Let me clarify four basic insights about “The Doctrine of PUT.”

FOUR OF THE WAYS WE LEARN TO “PUT”

First, the practice of “putting” all things “in Christ” is simply applying what our Lord taught us to do in John 15:4-11. Note that in just seven verses the Lord Jesus uses the word abide or remain eleven times! The Greek word used here, “meno,” means to stay with, stay under, persevere, abide, remain or to endure. It describes the weight lifter who strains under the weight but holds up the bar. Another use of “meno” in Scripture means to endure courageously, to abide under suffering or as a military man would put it ... “hold on under fire!” It is the patience that will grow only under trial. It means to hold fast, stay through or continue. In essence Jesus uses “meno” to say ... “Stick with Me and My purposes. Don’t quit the battle regardless of its exhaustion and pain. Join Me in My kind of spiritual combat. Don’t separate from My words by listening to anyone else!” Note the incredible promises taught by the Master in each of His phrases if we “remain” in His truth ... or “stay put” in Him:

Verse 4: 1) If you remain in Me, 2) I will remain in you. 3) There will be no fruit from your life unless you remain in Me.

Verse 5: 4) Remaining in one another (you in Me and I in you) produces much fruit. 5) You are powerless to be spiritually significant unless you remain in Me.

Verse 6: 6) Refusing to remain in Me results in your diminishment. You become useless, decayed, diminished. Opportunities to bear fruit are ultimately destroyed.

Verse 7: 7) The wonder of answered prayer depends on My Words remaining in you.

Verse 8: 8) Remaining united with Me a) brings glorious significance to the Father, b) enables you to bear much fruit and c) demonstrates you are My true disciple.

Verse 9: 9) Remaining results in your stunning discovery that I (Christ) love you the way the Father loves Me. This reality will transform you as you recognize the depth of My Messiah Love!

Verse 10: 10) To yield to My Voice empowers you to remain united with Me in My love.

Verse 11: 11) I Am teaching you this “truth of remaining” so that you may drink of My kind of joy and have the fullest joy possible for yourselves during your brief journey on earth!!

In light of this great emphasis by the Savior our first ambition and most urgent quest should be to remain in Him, even as He remained in the Father. Actually, “to put” and “to remain” mean the same thing! When we “put” every personal issue and/or thought through the filter of the V Marks* we are seeking to remain in Him. The promise of “putting” is to discover the motivating joy of Christ and then be overwhelmed with joy of our own (Jn. 15:11). It is this kind of God sourced joy that compels us to love others with His kind of Messiah Love (Jn. 10:17). Only then are we eager to lay down our lives for others! (Jn.15:12-14). “For the joy set before Him He endured the cross” (Heb. 12:2).

Second, to “put” is also the outworking of what Paul teaches in Romans 8. In his discussion on walking in the Spirit he is describing the Christ Life. To be “led by the Spirit” is “to put” your life continuously through the filter of the V Marks* and to prove yourself a true son of God (8:14) ... one who lives with Messiah Love! To “put” is to be set free from the legalism of sin, rules and death (8:2). To “put” is to train your mind to please God (8:8). To “put” is to yield to the discovery of Christ’s resurrection power-life within you (8:11). To “put” is to share in the suffering and significance of Christ Jesus (8:17). We are empowered to “put” because the Father has already “put us” in Christ (8:9-11). The Father’s “putting” us in Christ frees us to “put” each of our issues in Christ (8:15-16). If you use the V Marks* regularly you begin to comprehend life and all of its complexities from God’s point of view! You will increasingly experience release freedom from and victory vision over condemnation, guilt, despair, unworthiness, anxiety, meaninglessness and sin’s constant struggle (8:1).

Third, to “put” is to make an automatic Christ reaction to every thing and everyone you encounter (Phil. 2:5-11). It is to live your life intensely oriented to be merged with the Messiah Love of God! This should be the authentic Disciple’s most consuming desire and most driving concern. This “effort of yielding” must be approached humbly, brokenly and supernaturally (Heb. 4:11). The Father has “recreated” us by our new birth and wants us to become (like) Jesus to others. We have truly been born again into a new spiritual dimension (kingdom) (Jn. 3:5-8). It is this enlarged realization of His new kingdom of “now” ... today ... that will both fill and thrill our deepest human need (Ps. 119:32). It is what we truly seek and hunger for as persons. It is what the Father wants for us as our Lord. This is why He “created” us (first birth) and “recreated” us (second birth). It is both His desire and His command that we live as His agents of Messiah Love. “Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5 and Rom. 12:2, 15:1-7).

We are to “think like God” about every issue in our life. To “put” is to make a continuous conscious decision that you want to “be a Jesus in all circumstances toward all people!!” As the Apostle put it ... “God lives in us ... in this world we are (to be) like Him” (I Jn. 4:12,16-17). To “put” is to rehearse becoming like Christ in all we do. To live and love as the Lord Jesus lived and loved necessitates a burning desire, a yielded heart and a costly cross if we would act as He did toward everyone in everything! “Putting” will transform us into “a Jesus” to others! We become true witnessing sons and daughters of the Father. In spite of your own self-centeredness, flaws, blindness, ignorance, impotence and failures you even begin to see some of Jesus in YOU!!! (Jn. 13:34-35; II Cor. 5:16-18; Col. 2:9; Heb. 9:14). This awesome, unbelievable awareness of your heart potential drives you to repeat Paul’s cry in Philippians 3:10-11 ... “Oh that I may know more of Him ... !”

Fourth, The power to “PUT” is both His gift to you and a developed skill by you! The Lord does His part and we do our part. The great “working principle” of Philippians 2:12-13 tells us this. You must work out your salvation (your skill) while the Father works in you His will (His gift). These two

forces ... His gifts and our skills ... equip us to pursue, do and become what He wills. There are some things only God can do, but He will not do what He has told us to do!

Many Christians want to walk in the Spirit ... to be like Jesus ... but they don't have a clue on how to do it. They make sincere attempts but seem to miss the goal more often than they hit it. Numerous and urgent efforts are made but breakthroughs to radical Discipleship are slow and rare! Most Christians (we) lack clarity of thinking and precision of action. These "thought-acts" come only with the skill produced by "Practicing the V Marks"**.

J. Sidlow Baxter wrote an insightful book entitled *His Part and Ours*. We must understand this two person team concept and then yield to Christ's lead. Our job is to increase our skill so that we can respond more fully to His great gift of destiny planned for each of us. The results from using V Marks* skill will create more excitement, adventure and satisfaction than anyone could hope for. Think of it! You can be a participant in the highest intent of the Mind of God for His people. To take advantage of this empowerment is the greatest decision you can ever make on earth. You must be intent on one passion ... to be overwhelmed with Christ's love for you in spite of what you are or have done. This realization and confession floods your being with wonder and praise for Christ. Armed with this liberating inner strength you too can begin to love as God loves and everything about your life changes. You see people as subjects of His love and yours. Every person becomes someone to test your love on. In short, a person you can show what Christ's love looks like. Seeking to be Jesus to others lifts you to your highest potential and fulfillment of living. To "put" right is the start of the process! (See *VFC Resource #51: The Unbelievable Ambition: Being Jesus*.)

Godly precision can be ours if we practice the skill of "putting" each duty, crisis, challenge or temptation "in Christ." Our precision is sharpened as we practice quick yielding to the Lord's gifts of counsel and power! Every situation or experience we encounter is an opportunity "to put" something else "in Christ." We begin to reign on earth the more we practice (Rom. 5:17)! We move the bar higher ... see His purpose clearer ... sense His presence nearer ... love Him dearer! We are dominated by a calm, continuous, conquering joy!!

In summary "to PUT" is a fourfold lifestyle: 1) to remain in Christ, 2) to walk in the Spirit, 3) to think like and become "a Jesus" and 4) to skill yourself as a teammate of the Father. Learning "to put" merges these four realities into one continuous lifestyle of "Practicing The V Marks"**. You instantly see see everything from Christ's point of view. You examine the event or thought with His mind and then respond to it in His way. You then wait for His fresh confirmation and/or direction. Finally, your awareness grows of possessing the power and joy of Messiah Love. Remember, the goal is to "put" your life experientially "in Christ" by the continuous use of the V Marks* process. This is His plan for all of us! This is how you "let" His Mind be in you (Phil. 2:5)!

TO "PUT" OPENS OUR TAP OF ABUNDANCE

Why should the Lord give His secret strength and significance to those who refuse to "put" His will ahead of their own will? It is obvious that the Savior must hold back and even limit His fullness to His children when they value their desires, ambitions and wisdom more than His. To practice the V Marks* of the Christ Life turns the tap on your own God-given provision. To "put" places the Lord's will above your own. It opens and increases the flow of His promises into your life. All the resources we specifically need for reigning in life right now are already there for us as His chosen ones (Rom. 5:17)!

For a Disciple to stay put, endure under, live through and go beyond all his or her current challenges calls for disciplined use of V Marks* skill. In doing this we can live as overcomers "in Christ." The more we "put" ... and "put" with precision ... the more we show the Savior we "faith Him" completely! This is how His Living Water flows into our lives and out through our circumstances (Jn. 7:37-39). "Putters" are tap openers! Tap openers are the overcomers (Jn. 16:33). Remember, overcomers must be challenged with something to overcome! To "put" will teach us how His every promise defeats our every problem ... abundantly!!

OUR LORD'S USE OF "PUT TRUTH"

Many illustrations from Scripture teach us to "put." First, the Lord promised the Israelites through Joshua that the flood waters of the Jordan River could be stopped. This would permit their passage into their "promised land destiny." But the promise would be realized only when the priests first "put" their feet into the raging water (Josh. 3:1-17). The miracle doesn't always come and then we obey. The obedience more often comes first and then the miracle follows. The same question still comes to us many times daily ... "are you 'putting' your heart and feet where Jehovah wants you to go?" Only when we "keep putting" do we close in on our own "promised land destiny." We find our purpose and ministry by "putting" each step, every thought and all responses exactly where the Savior tells us to "put" them. "I have come down from heaven to "put" my will in the will of the Father," said the Lord Jesus in John 6:38.

Second, the Lord challenged Israel through the Prophet Malachi about their "put" record! The Israelites were diminishing and destroying themselves by refusing "to put." They were embracing a curse because they were playing life cheap. They refused to share the wealth God alone had given them. They were glad to take but gave nothing to others in their need and gave nothing back to God, the Giver. The Lord said they were robbers ... of Him, of others and of themselves. "Test My heart," He tells them ... " 'put' (bring) the whole tithe into My treasury and see if I will not open the floodgates (the tap) of heaven (the promises) and pour out so much blessing (Living Water) that you will not have room enough for it" (Mal. 3:6-12). To learn to "put" as He commands is to learn to reap according to His promise.

A third illustration comes from the lips of our Savior after His resurrection. When He appeared to the disciples behind locked doors they were confronted with the miracle of His promise ... that He would live again and they would see Him. They were stunned, fearful, amazed and doubting. They finally and joyfully believed that He was truly alive again ... but Thomas was absent and missed it. The next Sunday he was present but he still had his doubts. The Lord knew what Thomas had told the other disciples when he rejected their witness. He had boldly stated that, "Unless I see the marks of the nails and 'put' my fingers there, and 'put' my hand into His side, I will not believe." When the Lord Jesus saw Thomas for the first time He knew how to handle him (and us as well)! "Do you see my wounds, Thomas? I challenge you to 'put.'" When Thomas "put" where it mattered (in Christ) he immediately quit doubting and believed. By "putting" Thomas entered the wondrous new kingdom of "my Lord and my God." We, too, enter that kingdom when we listen to the Master's Voice and yield to His invitation to start "putting" where He says to "put" (Jn. 20:19-29). Truly, blessed are those who "put!"

"INSTANT PUTTING"

One of the most magnetic illustrations I ever heard was the story of the little girl who asked her Daddy if it was possible to go a whole week without sinning. She had just become a Christian and didn't want to disappoint or hurt Jesus.

Her Daddy answered, "No, honey, no one can go a whole week without sinning." "Then, Daddy," she asked, "could we go a whole day without sinning?" "I don't see how," he answered. "Then, Daddy, could we go a whole hour and not sin?" "Honey, I don't believe any of us could go even an hour without sinning!"

Still, the little girl probed one last time, "But Daddy, we could go for one minute and not sin, couldn't we?" The father thought for a few seconds and responded, "Well, sweetheart, I guess we could go a least one minute without sinning."

Finally, with a big smile on her precious face, the little girl announced, "Well, then, Daddy, why don't we just live our life in minutes?" This is the recipe for "instant putting!"

TO "PUT" IS TO TAKE UP THE CROSS

This is the vision of the Christ Life ... to “put” each of our minutes through the filter of the V Marks*. Pursuing this heart discipline will “process us” into the image of the Father’s beloved Son (Rom. 8:29). We will increasingly aim at filling all our minutes to all people in all situations with Messiah Love! We will experience the thrill of our Lord’s Truth being fulfilled in us and through us. We will embrace the wonder and resurrection of our cross. We will taste the promise of our destiny.

To “put” is to turn on the tap of Living Water that will wash us both inside and outside! “Let us ‘put’ on the fullness of Jesus Christ” (Rom. 13:14)! What else could Paul mean building a life of grace and truth that we can “put” on display for the significance of Jesus just as He did for the Father. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace (love) and truth (Messiahship) ... and we beheld His significance” (John 1:11). “Beheld” is our Greek word for theatre. Hence, John informs us they had front row seats to the theatre of Christ’s glory!

The Father “put” His Son on the earth because of love, “The Word became flesh.” Our love should respond as we “put” our lives at His disposal so that “our flesh can become His Word.”

FOOTNOTES

***The V Marks:** This term is my own and summarizes the FIVE MARKS process (or five steps, evidences or reactions) of Christ Life living. When confronted with any decision or response our goal is ... first, to see through everything with the Eyes of Christ, second, to think about everything with the Mind of Christ, then, thirdly, to respond to everything with the Heart of Christ, fourth, to wait on everything with the Patience of Christ until finally, fifth, to become one in everything with the Messiah Love of Christ!

I am not insisting that my V Marks idea is the only way to living the Christ Life. But it contains the necessary decisions a Disciple must make to follow Christ. His most earnest lovers and followers have practiced some form of the V Marks for 2,000 years. I encourage you to come up with your plan to control your issues if my V Marks suggestions don’t match the rhythm of your life. How your plan works is secondary so long as it does. What is essential ... urgent ... vital ... is to have a plan that will make Philippians 2:1-5 a minute by minute reality in your life.

**** Practicing The V Marks:** We can do this instantly and live our discipleship right this minute ... in the NOW. Don’t be deceived by long range ... one of these days ... maybe next week ... when I’m older ... after this problem ... then I’ll grow ... obedience. God’s rest and reigning for us is today ... immediately ... not tomorrow (II Cor. 6:1-2). To reign doesn’t mean freedom from hurt, but freedom from harm! Even while on the cross our Lord was reigning because He was doing the Father’s will. Our goal in using the V Marks is to “put” each minute of our life in the will of God. All of us will sin and fail but we do it by the minute: The challenge is to use the “next minute” to come back to the will of God. You may not correct the problem in a minute but you can start thinking right about the problem in a minute.

ADDENDUM

Four terms I use in this article on “Put” need further amplification ... Messiah Love, the Christ Life, Disciple and the A-O-Z-Life concept.

The A-O-Z-Life: This insight is built around I John 2:12-14 where the Lord’s followers are referred to by the Beloved Disciple as children, young men (adults) and fathers. This tells us there are three general levels to attain in learning, grasping and applying Christ Truth to all of our issues. There is overlap between these three so we must not be too rigid. The goal is to keep on progressing! In Revelation 1:8 our Lord says He is the A to Z about everything. His use of the alphabet prompts me to see our growth in Christ as a process in letter terms. Hence, my categories :

Children – they are learning the A-B-C’s about Jesus (A-Life)

Adults – they are practicing the M-N-O-P’s of Discipleship (O-Life)
Fathers – they are demonstrating the X-Y-Z’s of “grace and truth” (Z-Life)
(See our *Victory Visual # 16: Picturing the U-A-O-Z Life*, for a fuller description.)

My designation for those without a personal acceptance of and relationship with the Savior is the U-Life. I see this in I John 2:15-17. Loving the world rather than Christ puts one in bondage to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. These folks are unaware, unconscious, un-awake, unsaved, unclear and dominated by unbelief. The A-O-Z person can escape this bondage and experience release and freedom. They know the overcoming pursuit of the Christ Life depending on their level of mature obedience!

Disciple: I feel this word is the most descriptive and more accurate term for those who are authentic Christ followers. Believers can also include those who do believe that Jesus is Christ and Lord but they don’t believe it enough to act on the reality. Christians are professors that Jesus is Savior but one can be a Christian without being a true and earnest Disciple. The word disciple ... mathetes ... means a learner/adherent/follower. The Greek word root is “math” indicating thought accompanied by endeavor. To really learn is to be educated about it and then do it! A disciple who doesn’t disciple himself and others is not a disciple but a hearer only (James 1:22). He or she may be a Believer or a Christian but no a serious Disciple. True Cross Disciples continuously pay a price, devote the time and make an investment to follow Jesus. They seek to do what He has taught them in all areas of their life. Their failures and mistakes never stop but they keep coming back to “cross thinking” again and again and again. They never give up seeking “more of the Savior,” forgiving themselves and learning more deeply the ways of His cross in their daily living.

Christ Life: Over 160 times the New Testament two words are used to teach us that true, authentic, quality and abundant life on earth and forever is found only “in Christ.” This reality is a deep mystery but it is increasingly revealed to these Disciples who seek its meaning (Col. 1:26). Every day of our lives we have countless opportunities to put every experience ... whether with people or with situations ... “in Christ.” Our expertise and precision in doing this validates the claim that our goal in life is to “be a Jesus to people” ... “to be like Christ” ... to be conformed to His image (Rom. 8:29).

Here again we have a God ordained process of growth. We shouldn’t be anxious about our ignorance and immaturities. We can’t help it. Our primary concern is simply to keep growing as rapidly and consistently as we can in learning the wonders of our Savior’s life, purposes, desires and promises. Again the Christ Life is composed of three familiar stages. Notice our expanding definitions from the previous page.

Children – Learn Jesus Truth (A-Life) – I experience loving Him
Adults – Practice Cross Discipleship (O-Life) – I experience loving others
Fathers – Demonstrate Messiah Love (Z-Life) – I experience love as He loves me

The goal of this process is simple to see but staggering to realize ... an authentic Christ follower has determined to “be Jesus” to everyone! That’s what our Lord did! He came to earth to “be Jesus” as He understood it from the Father! Our task and ambition is the same. “As the Father has sent me, so send I you!” (Jn. 17:18; 20:21).

Yes! That’s it! If the point of your life isn’t aimed supremely at “being Jesus” to every person you can in every situation of life, it is pointed nowhere! Only this will most please your Creator-Redeemer-Perfecter. Only this will display His fuller glory and significance through you! Only this will bring peace, pardon, purpose and power to your own life while on earth!

Yes! I hear your great and immediate reluctance to believe this. I join you in saying, “Surely no me! I am so far from being like Jesus that it would be pretense to try! Maybe so but answer me this: Who are you trying to be like? Everyone of us has some vision of someone, some qualities, some attraction, some power that dominates our perception of who we are! We can’t escape it, nor have we. All of us have exalted some other human who has gaps and weaknesses we have adopted as our own.

For the Cross Disciple this issue is already decided! The command is clear from our Lord: Be like Me! Paul told the Corinthians they should be followers of him even as he follows Christ! (I Cor. 4:15-17). Isn't it better to exhaust your efforts seeking to be like the Lord Jesus and fail than strive to be like some other person ... or composite person ... and succeed? Of course!

Besides, you don't have to be exactly like Jesus to help other people ... at least in "that" particular moment in time and on "that" particular issue. The Lord will use us again and again in this service. Praise His Name that this is His plan to include us.

Let us be relaxed in our mind but stretched in our heart to truly become a person who will "be Jesus" to others. If this passion is truly in your heart, then you are a person "after God's own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22). That was what the Lord saw in David. That is what the Lord wants of each of us. If you earnestly have "that passionate ambition dream" in your heart for the Master even your failures will be a success!

The above thoughts are a small glimpse of what it means to be "in Christ." To live the Christ Life is to "be Jesus" to everyone you can!

Messiah Love. This is a term I have never heard or seen in print. The Lord gave it to me as I struggled to find the language to grasp more deeply the words of John 1:1-18. These are probably the most magnificent words ever penned in all of human literature! Note particularly verses 14-18. Jesus, the Father's Son, was made flesh and lived in the midst of mankind's mess! The Apostle John declares that they saw the Savior's glory. The world glory, from my study of its Hebrew and Greek roots best means something heavy, weighty, of magnitude or most concisely ... significant! To see the glory of God is to gaze on the significance of Jesus Christ and be overwhelmed, awed, stunned, amazed and blown away by "His significant magnificence."

The text tells us what this significance consists of ... He was full of grace (perfect action) and truth (perfect knowledge). Grace is essentially the Father's initiatives on our behalf. Truth is essentially His gift for us to learn of His significance on His behalf. Moses gave Israel the law so that they could enter into the Creator-Redeemer-Perfecter's revelation of mankind's abundant responsibilities. The Son gave Israel and the Gentiles grace and truth so that they could enter into the Creator-Redeemer-Perfecter's revelation of mankind's abundant salvation. The "truth" here is huge and always beyond us. Yet we have still been given enough truth to make a huge difference if we act on it. I define truth as "thinking about everything with the mind of Christ and responding accordingly." That concept alone will cover all your bases with the fragrance of Jesus. Hence, "in Christ" truth equates love and love equals truth. What is that by Messiah Love!

The sum of these realities is that our Lord Jesus was sent by the Father as One Who lived out perfectly both law and grace. He did this by living out His role of Messiah Love. He was the Messiah of Truth Who demonstrated the perfect Love of Grace. Our Lord was Messiah Love incarnated! These two words about Jesus summarize the Heart of the Father more perfectly than any other words I could find. In being His child and son for almost sixty years this is my summation testimony about the Savior. He was (and remains) the Light Who shined in my own darkness and Who gave me the light of His definition of life ... real life ... the life that is in "a knowing relationship with the Father" (Jn. 17:3; II Cor. 4:1-6)! The Master enabled me "to meet" the Godhead face to face! It was only a glimpse at first but the vision continues to clear. I know my life has never been the same!

The intention of this reality should astonish, astound, dumbfound, flabbergast, shock and startle every single one of us who would aspire to be the Master's authentic Disciple. We must ask ourselves, "What is that point?" John 1:16 makes it clear. His own children have received the fullness of that Messiah Love dwelling in Jesus. We have been given the potential ... and the calling to fulfill it ... to live out our own life of Messiah Love!

This is only realized however by His grace upon grace and more grace enabling as we invest our primary passions in the abundancies of His treasures! John Peterson in his New Testament translation, *The Message*, grasps the thought well, "We live off of the Lord's generous bounty ... this exuberant giv-

ing and receiving, this endless knowing and understanding, this gift after gift from the Father ... has all come to us through Jesus the Messiah! No human being has ever even glimpsed the Father, but this One-of-a-kind man of Messiah Love ... Who exists so honorably and relationally close to the heart of the Father ... this Jesus has made the Father plain as day to those who will really look ... and has given us a dress rehearsal of the Father's intentions." I have added a few thoughts of my own but they are faithful to the Greek meaning and (I sense) Peterson's translation intent.

I offer these brief thoughts above as justification for and my contention of this incredible fact ... the ultimate lives lived on earth ... be the people small or great, known or unknown ... are those who demonstrate best Messiah Love. It is they who become people after God's own heart. Again as our Lord put it, "As the Father has sent me, so send I you" (John 20:21). Go My son, My daughter, and live the life of one who demonstrates with maximum power Messiah Love!! We are to do this to before everyone we can ... especially one person at a time. Your highest destiny is to show your generation and the angels of Heaven what it means to be "in Christ." Let our Master's own words guide us. "If you have seen Me (as One of Messiah Love) you have seen the Father!" (Jn. 14:9). "I Am among you as a Servant of Messiah Love!" (Lk. 22:22). The greatest think you can ever do for another human being is to seek to bring them the truth (about Jesus) in love!

Let us recall that the Hebrew word "Messiah" and its Greek equivalent "Christ" express the same reality. To be "in Christ" is to be "in Messiah." The Father sent the Messiah, the Christ, the Son, for us ... for fallen, crippled, helpless, blinded, hopeless and sinful us!! All that we were before the foundation of the earth, all that we are as His created ones, all that we purpose, do, think and hope, all that we are destined to become, produce and be, etc. are wrapped up in comprehending that eternal word ... Messiah! It means "the anointed One of the Godhead has appeared in order to reveal, teach, bless and empower those to whom He is sent." All that is included, and more, in that fantastic definition of Jesus is what it means for us to be full participants "in Christ" and "in Messiah."

Reread and ponder afresh those incredible words in John 1:14 and 16! "God became flesh ... we behold the glorious significance of it ... His initiative to have me (grace) and the illumination of what really matters (truth) ... and the more I behold the wonder of it the more I will experience the implications and power of His Messiah Love fullness!" (HDM).

Definition of Put:

Learning how to "put" is simply this: to educate yourself increasingly in the Mind of Christ, believe what He thinks and says, act on it as quickly as your limitations allow, learn more truth from your struggles and while you wait, perceive how the results of any issue matter only to God, assure that your conclusion fills you with more praise for His wondrous Heart and a desire for more yieldedness to His ways. You will find your own heart enlarged and expanded in the worship of Who He is and how He uses guilt and grace, sin and redemption to "put" you into a closer relationship with Himself!

It's not how much I am like Jesus that prepares me to witness but am I more like Jesus than the person I'm witnessing to. The answer to that is usually yes if Christ has initiated the opportunity. You don't hype your weaknesses but Christ does focus the other person on His strength for their weaknesses. I don't question my surgeon's knowledge of Scripture before he removes my gale bladder. If God uses what you know of Him to help another person, you know enough to take him or her a little higher in loving Jesus. If the Lord "puts" you in an opportunity, He will "put" in you what you need to know!

There is a sense of I must win myself for Jesus before I feel too guilty about not winning others to Jesus.

Some have even been destined to believe the life (II Thess. 2).

If they reject Jesus ... can I do better. Most people exist and labor and keep enduring, hoping, believing by having an illusion that someday things will be as they want. The reality is that there are scores of things that will never be "fulfilled" in their lives and the sooner they accept it the sooner they will be engaged in the priorities of what really matter ... the purpose and will of the Father made possi-

ble by the grace and truth of Messiah Jesus! (Jn. 1:14)..

Fired from a job – poverty – tyrannical government – death of a loved one – critical illness – tragic accident – terrible injustice – unhappy marriage – missed opportunity – crushing cross – prodigal child – unresolved wounds – financial crisis – unsolvable agony... all bitter waters from which we often have to drink but when stirred with the cross they can become sweet as you see the peeper love and wonder of Jesus.

Wherever the Father “puts” us ... and whatever He allows us to be “put” through ... He will “put” within us the wisdom , endurance and strength to “put” up with it ... until we are qualified in His do time to have His deliverance “put” into our experiences. This depends in a big way , of course, of how much “cross” we have “put” into the pursuit of the Christ Life!

PS on Putting:

A friend just sent me this joke.*

The schoolteacher was taking her first golfing lesson.

"Is the word spelled p-u-t or p-u-t-t?" she asked the instructor.

"P-u-t-t is correct," he replied.

"Put means to place a thing where you want it. Putt means merely a vain attempt to do the same thing."

*Letter from Richard S. De Witt, President and CEO of Marketplace Chaplains USA.