



Discipleship

Inform Inspire Ignite

Letter to Diognetus

I see, most excellent Diognetus, the exceptional desire you have to learn the method of worshipping God that prevails among the Christians. You inquire about them with great care and sincerity, seeking to determine what God they trust in and what type of religion they observe that allows them to look down upon the world and to despise death, all the while rejecting both those that are esteemed gods by the Greeks and the superstitions of the Jews.

They live in their own countries, but they do so as those who are just passing through. As citizens they participate in everything with others, yet they endure everything as if they were foreigners. Every foreign land is like their homeland to them, and every land of their birth is like a land of strangers.

They marry, like everyone else, and they have children, but they do not destroy their offspring.

They share a common table, but not a common bed.

They exist in the flesh, but they do not live by the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven. They obey the prescribed laws, all the while surpassing the laws by their lives.

They love all men and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned. They are put to death and restored to life.

They are poor, yet make many rich. They lack everything, yet they overflow in everything.

They are dishonored, and yet in their very dishonor they are glorified; they are spoken ill of and yet are justified; they are reviled but bless; they are insulted and repay the insult with honor; they do good, yet are punished as evildoers; when punished, they rejoice as if raised from the dead. They are assailed by the Jews as barbarians; they are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to give any reason for their hatred.

To sum it all up in one word, what the soul is in the body, that is what Christians are in the world.



Growing in Faith

Christ Centered ♦ Kingdom Focused ♦ Mission Minded

▶ We are **Shaped** by the Bible

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.” Ephesians 4:14

A Community is Christian to the degree that it is confronted by and attempts to form its life in response to the Word of God.

▶ We are **Growing** through Worship

Worship restores an eternal perspective that guides our daily decisions

“Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts” Psalm 95:6-7 NIV

▶ We **re-define** our Relationships

“Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.” Col 3:11

“In the [early] Church masters and slaves were brethren. It was not unusual for emancipated slaves to rise to positions of importance within the Church, some being appointed as deacons, elders and even bishops, for example, Callistus, Bishop of Rome in 217. Such people became highly respected members of the Church.” H. Chadwick

NEW BEGINNINGS

Romans 12:1-5

¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

This is the Word of the Lord

Try all things by the written word, and let all bow down before it. You are in danger of [fanaticism] every hour, if you depart ever so little from Scripture; yea, or from the plain, literal meaning of an text, taken in connection with the context." John Wesley (*Works*, 11:429)