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THE PURPLE BOOK

updated edition

**BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS
FOR BUILDING STRONG DISCIPLES**

RICE BROOCKS
AND STEVE MURRELL

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In a time of increasing biblical illiteracy and conformity to the prevailing culture, Rice Brooks and Steve Murrell are calling Christians to a higher standard. If every Christian were to go through *The Purple Book* and prayerfully study it, I truly believe we would see Christians rising up and living the gospel with both clarity and power. I highly recommend this book for both individual and group study.

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I have done *The Purple Book* and know firsthand what an important discipleship tool it is. It gave me greater clarity on the importance of a strong biblical foundation and how to communicate that to others. It has been a joy to work in ministry with Rice and Steve and to witness its impact on lives around the world.

STORMIE OMARTIAN, Bestselling author of *The Power of a Praying* series, with more than thirty-two million books sold worldwide

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The Purple Book was a godsend to our church at a pivotal time—we needed a simple biblical resource to give to every person in our congregation to help shape the culture of discipleship. We have used thousands of these little books, and I tell pastors that it's the best resource ever for all people to use.

DR. FRANK DAMAZIO, Author and Pastor, Portland, Oregon

No aid, which has as its goal to establish biblical foundations in a person (or church's life), exceeds the simplicity or effectiveness of *The Purple Book*. Seldom a week passes when I have failed to help somebody better endure the storms of life by employing this study. It is the best and most often used tool in my ministry toolbox.

BRETT FULLER, Pastor of Grace Covenant Church, Chantilly, Virginia, and North American Director of Every Nation Churches

A foundational book on Christian doctrines, coming from reflective practitioners of movement discipleship. Tried, tested, and proven by Christians from all walks of life. *The Purple Book* is a Bible study guide on biblical faith; one that is faithful to Christian orthodoxy while emphasizing the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the Christian life. Useful, handy, and recommended for every Christ follower!

TIM D. GENER, Ph.D., President and Professor of Theology at Asian Theological Seminary

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AND STEVE MURRELL

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FOREWORD

Let's be honest: it's obvious we have a discipleship deficit in the church today. It's not true everywhere in the world, but it's true in the Western church. Christians everywhere are talking about discipleship and the necessity of a more robust approach to growing people in the knowledge and character of Jesus Christ. And it's in reaction to what leaders are seeing and perceiving in the general culture. In the West, we have a problem. Many of us are acknowledging it, and we have to fix it.

There are a lot of reasons for this discipleship deficit. Sometimes, it has to do with the shallowness of our theology. For others, it's individual laziness. And we can probably acknowledge at many junctures we are limited in discipleship because of a lack of systems that do not produce a comprehensive disciple-making journey. There is a deficit. So the question becomes: *what do we have to value to change the discipleship deficit?*

First, we have to start with an **individual's heart**. We have to have clear and simple discipleship processes that are constantly drawing us closer to Jesus so that we may know him and be changed by him. There is no substitute for the difficult but necessary internal character work that comes from being in proximity to Jesus and his Word, being changed by his Spirit, and being personally obedient to his Father's commandments.

Second, we have to focus on **multiplication**. We already know what happens when disciple-making becomes a multiplicative practice in an organization. Stories abound of people who have cracked the simplicity and multiplication code, seeing many come to Jesus and follow him rapidly. We have to find ways to disciple others and keep it simple enough to multiply quickly and easily.

Third, we have to create a **culture of discipleship**. This means that instead of being passive spectators, we become active participants in the mission of God. As leaders, we must participate in the discipleship process, model it to others, and shape an atmosphere

of expectation for disciple-making. This won't just make us more knowledgeable, but also more godly by showing the love of Christ, sharing the hope of Christ, and serving others like Christ.

Someone once said, "No matter how beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results." However beautiful the disciple-making strategy, we have to look at the quality and quantity of disciples being made. In the West, we have a church culture that is anemic when it should be robust, lazy when it should be active, and obese with content and no activity when it should be lean with good content *and* activity. I want us to be a different kind of people: transformed by the power of the gospel and made into missional disciples for Jesus.

We have to find and rediscover a deep passion for discipleship. At LifeWay Research, we did a discipleship study called the "Transformational Discipleship Assessment," in which we studied more than 4,000 Protestant churchgoers and asked them about spiritual formation. Over the past few years, we've learned that:

- 54 percent of American Protestant churchgoers say they set aside time daily to a few times a week for private worship, praise, or thanksgiving to God (prayer not included).
- 42 percent of American Protestant churchgoers intentionally spend time with other believers in order to help them grow in their faith.
- 41 percent of American Protestant churchgoers do not attend small classes or groups from their churches.
- 25 percent of American Protestant churchgoers say they have shared their faith once or twice; 14 percent have shared three or more times over the last six months.
- 19 percent of American Protestant churchgoers read the Bible every day.

We have a long way to go. And to get there, we need a culture shift. Creating a culture of discipleship means reversing the discipleship

deficit currently in the church. We have to recognize we are fighting a winnable, but uphill, battle.

The next question we have to ask is: *how are we going to actually change the discipleship deficit?* We have to have a clear pathway on the journey of disciple-making and acknowledge along the way that there are some things that deeply matter. I'm convinced (and have preached or shared on this subject) that we are missing the mark on discipleship if we don't see maturity as a goal for a disciple. God wants the people in our churches to be on a path toward spiritual maturity, and he involves us in our own growth as well as the church's growth.

Paul writes of this path in his letter to the Colossians:

For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven't stopped praying for you. We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God (Colossians 1:9–10 HCSB).

There are three ways we can change discipleship for the better:

First, **knowing**. Being “filled with the knowledge of God’s will” and “growing in the knowledge of God” is a vital part of becoming a disciple of Jesus. We can instruct people to be like Jesus, but if they don’t *know* him it is impossible to be *like* him. A key to knowing Jesus is saturating ourselves in God’s Word. Psalm 119 says, “Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path” (Psalm 119:105 HCSB). As we read the Scriptures, they shine the light brighter in our lives, and we are able to see and stay on the path of spiritual maturity.

Second, **being**. Being “worthy of the Lord” extends beyond our knowledge to who we are in Christ to how we rest in Christ and his work on the cross, for our sins, and in our place. As we follow Jesus in discipleship and maturity, there is a transfer of who he is into who we are. It is like a blood transfusion, changing our being into his in

every area of life. Paul says, “Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind” (Romans 12:2 HCSB). We walk worthy of the Lord when we take on his traits and our actions flow out of who we are becoming as a result of our proximity to him.

Third, **doing**. “Bearing fruit” is another way we change discipleship from the classroom to the front lines. Knowing who we are in Christ (knowledge), then being who we are in Christ (walking worthy), leads us to doing the work of Christ (bearing fruit). We are designed to produce fruit. In Ephesians 2, Paul gives us God’s plan for what that looks like: “For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10 HCSB). God has prepared for us practical outworking of our faith as followers of Jesus, and we should boldly live our lives to love and serve others out of Jesus and his Spirit’s empowerment within us.

For a long time now, I’ve found that if I want to do something, I need to find someone who is doing it right and learn from them. So is the case for Rice Broocks and Steve Murrell with their newly updated version of *The Purple Book*. *The Purple Book* is the type of resource that has begun to shape their movement with robust disciple-makers. More than a million copies are now in print, and both my wife and I have worked through *The Purple Book* in my own home.

We all need a simple and effective disciple-making tool that creates a culture, gives a pathway for multiplication, and focuses on the individual’s heart first. We can grow in knowledge, become more like Jesus, and bear much fruit by putting into practice the many helpful tools that Rice and Steve provide.

I hope you will be as encouraged and challenged by this book as I was!

Ed Stetzer

Billy Graham Distinguished Chair of Church, Mission,
and Evangelism at Wheaton College

PREFACE

Anyone who wants God's best for their life must begin by building a strong foundation. Jesus said as much when he declared, "As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built" (Luke 6:47–48). He then contrasted this wise man with one who was foolish, who heard but failed to act and found himself living in a house built on sand.

Both had their works tested by the storms of life—storms that come even more often in today's uncertain world. And in this real-life game of *Survivor*, only one person was left standing. The large number of damaged and/or collapsed lives in today's church is testimony to the pressing need to once again build strong foundations.

Several years ago, I took a team of students to the island of Guam for an evangelistic outreach. Checking into my hotel, I was given what would later prove to be a prophetic sign. "Sir," the clerk said as she handed me my key, "your room is 911." Everyone joked about how I would be getting all the emergency calls.

Two days later, one of the century's worst earthquakes—8.2 on the Richter scale—jolted the island. Even more incredible, it lasted for sixty bone-chilling seconds. Inside room 911, the world seemed to explode. The television hurtled to the floor. Slammed from its perch, the sliding glass door shattered into a million pieces.

We ran for the fire escape only to find the route blocked. With nowhere else to go, we stood on the balcony, riding out the most terrifying minute of our lives. With each tremor came a growing certainty that the building would soon collapse. We were about to die!

Suddenly, just as it felt like the hotel would rip in half, all motion ceased. We found a way out and made our way to the street,

singing the praises of our God. Never had I found a more humble audience and had an easier time telling strangers about the Lord!

The next day, we toured the island to assess the damage. One of the images that stood out was a brand-new hotel now on the verge of collapse. Two of its floors had disintegrated, and the rest of the structure tilted like the Leaning Tower of Pisa. Before the quake, it appeared perfectly sound. But the storm of this earthquake revealed what was really there beneath the surface. Because the foundations were faulty, the entire building had to be torn down.

Thankfully, the engineers who designed our hotel did not make the same mistakes. Though it cost them time and money, they took into account the fact that they were building in an earthquake zone, designing and building the foundations accordingly.

There is an important lesson in all of this. We, too, live along a “fault line.” The tectonic plates of sin are pushing hard against us. From the Middle East to our middle schools—everywhere—we see massive upheaval. If we are going to build lives that will stand, not just any foundation will do.

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11).

We must dig down deep and tear out everything that is hostile to Christ. We must hear his words—particularly those that deal with the very foundations of faith—and obey.

The book you hold in your hands will teach you these great foundational truths. It will help bring alive the words that the apostle Paul shared with a young man who was also seeking to build his life upon the rock:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

Most of us like the teaching part. But far fewer of us are thrilled about being rebuked or corrected. The fact is, however, that it is the latter that separates the winners from the losers. There is no way to be equipped for a good work—or a good life—without God’s Word doing a deep work in us. And there is no way to be a disciple without being disciplined. Who has ever heard of a successful athlete, soldier, musician, or scientist who has not subjected themselves to a strict regimen of training and discipline? And so it must be for the children of light.

We are living in one of the greatest times in church history. Technology has drawn the world so tightly together that we can realistically hope to reach every nation and tribe and language with the Gospel. But with this great opportunity comes an even greater responsibility. It is vital that the faith we preach is the one that we live out—in all its powerful, life-and-nation-transforming glory.

The early church turned their world upside down. They reached multitudes without jets, computers, the Internet—not even a sound system! What spoke the loudest was their lives. People saw the transforming power of Christ in the men and women who left everything to follow him. The fault lines that ran through the Roman Empire, and the many earthquakes (both literal and spiritual) that followed, only tested their foundations and helped them stand when everything else around them came crashing down.

Let us pray for a new generation to come forth, pledging their all, doing their part to help turn the world back to righteousness.

Rice Brooks

Cofounder, Every Nation Churches & Ministries



CHAPTER ONE

SIN & SALVATION

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth . . .

GENESIS 1:1

*Through him all things were made; without him nothing was
made that has been made . . .*

JOHN 1:3

All things have been created through him and for him.

COLOSSIANS 1:16

The earth, humanity—all that we see around us—had a beginning.

God declared each phase of creation “good”—until he created the first man, Adam, and said that it was “not good” for him to be alone.

So God created Eve, the first woman, and gave the original couple everything to enjoy. They were only forbidden to eat the fruit of one tree: the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”

The fatal decision that followed and its tragic results have affected all of human history. Humanity would pass down this fatal flaw, this inner corruption, from generation to generation. The power of evil and darkness would have prevailed—except for God’s intervention. His plan of salvation, of deliverance from evil’s power, began to unfold in that very Garden of Eden. This is the primary story of the entire Bible.

LESSON 1

THE ORIGINAL STORY

1. What was creation like in the beginning (Genesis 1)?

verse 10 _____

verse 12 _____

verse 18 _____

verse 21 _____

verse 25 _____

2. How many commands did God give Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:17)?

3. What was God's command to the first human beings (Genesis 2:16-17)?

Read Genesis 3:1–13 to find out what happened next.

4. How did Adam and Eve respond to God's command (Genesis 3:6-7)?

5. In light of this, do you think that you would have responded any differently?

Think about what God attempted to shield Adam and Eve from: the knowledge of evil. What loving parents today don't do everything possible to protect their children from dangerous material—on television, on the Internet or anywhere else?

6. Who tempted Eve (Genesis 3:1)?

Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit—in essence saying to God, “We don’t need you or your rules.” They disobeyed God. They *sinned*.

7. How did Adam and Eve react after their eyes were opened and they realized they were naked (Genesis 3)?

verse 7 _____

verse 8 _____

verse 10 _____

8. Why do you think they reacted this way?

9. How did God respond to Adam and Eve's sin (Genesis 3:8-9)?

Notice the two very different responses to humanity's sin:

- Humanity covered up and hid from God.
- God sought humanity.

Things have not changed much since the beginning. After thousands of years and billions of people, human beings still hide from God—and God still seeks. This is the starting point for understanding salvation.

Application & Reflection

What did you learn from this lesson? How will you apply it to your life?

LESSON 2

THE RESULTS OF SIN

The act of disobeying God is called *sin*. One definition of sin is to “miss the mark,” as when you fail to hit the target in a sporting event.

Obviously, the Bible’s understanding of sin is much more serious than that. In fact, Scripture has a couple different ways of expressing this idea. Sin is sometimes described as a *trespass*, which is something that involves crossing forbidden lines or boundaries that God sets up for our protection.

The concept of *iniquity* speaks of sin’s most troubling and destructive result: to twist and pervert our inner nature. This is gravely serious because the Bible says God’s nature is *holy*—that is, completely free from evil or defect, absolutely pure in love and goodness.

1. What state does the Bible describe us as being in (Ephesians 2:1)?
