



Messy Expectations: Discipleship, Spiritual Formation, Torah and Rebellion

By Barbara L. Klika, MSW

Undershepherd

www.set-apart-ministries.org

May, 2013

Summary

*I recently became aware that the term “**Christian Formation**” has come into more popular usage in Christian circles as compared to “**Discipleship**.” There is a perceived difference between teaching a “religious lifestyle and values” called discipleship, and teaching how to grow in relationship with God through intentional interaction with the Holy Spirit, called formation. Formation materials provide many good observations that would be helpful for all of us in faith based communities, especially pertinent for our current studies and conversations about community and messy expectations. The topic of “Discipleship” vs. “Christian Formation” may be a key to clarify how our halachah at SAM and our focus of teaching differs from other Messianic ministries.*

*Groups will find it difficult to move forward together very long when they include people with both perspectives, **especially when they are unable to see or state the difference clearly**. This leads to a division within and between Messianic fellowships of those who have what is described here as a discipleship perspective and those who have adopted a lifestyle more closely adhering to the formation process. We are among the latter, but do not reject the need for traditional Discipleship.*

However, the teachers and authors that address “Christian Formation” generally view the Torah as no longer applicable and a form of bondage. Likewise, they tend to relegate discipleship to be an outmoded, inadequate process. This leads them to put “formation” and “discipleship” as oppositional methods rather than as a progression as I see it. As I examined this phenomenon, I began to see both a personal or “micro” picture of the implications as well as a “macro” or societal level which appears to be a major piece of the process that has kept traditional Christianity and a Torah pursuant Messiah centered faith apart.

A discussion of the applicable areas of thought and the discrepancy follows. It is a work in progress as we continue our teleconference and local community examination of this topic.

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As a community we have used *The Life Model*¹ since our beginning 13 years ago as a model for personal and corporate growth. It has provided a baseline of Scriptural and personal growth concepts and stages that has helped us in both personal and corporate matters. Seeing the two terms, discipleship and Christian formation, being compared and contrasted provides another avenue to further develop our understanding and demonstrate the basis of our teaching materials as it differs from most Messianic ministries.

¹ <http://www.lifemodel.org/>

David Takle has been a part of the team that has grown out of *The Life Model* work of Jim Wilder et al of Shepherds House in Pasadena, CA. He has studied over many years particularly in the area of development of personal faith and overcoming life's struggles in joy through Jesus, obtaining a BA degree in Human Services/Counseling and an M Div with a concentration in Christian Formation from Fuller Seminary. He has written several books, among them is *Forming*, which is being used in the newer endeavors of Wilder et al, having to do with community and personal growth.² A recent webinar found him providing an overview of the aspects of what is now being called "Christian Formation." This is his personal brief summary of the topic as I requested it from him.

"Traditional Discipleship" was defined as the common practice of teaching Christians to adopt a religious lifestyle that includes reading the Bible, becoming active in church and missions, abstaining from obvious sins, and subscribing to an ethical value system.

While most of these are good things to do, as a discipleship model this has the effect of reducing the Christian life to a kind of behavior modification program dressed up in theological terms. This approach also leaves out the most important parts of the Christian life, namely, developing an authentic relationship with God and transforming our inner character.

Consequently, this training often leads to legalism or religious burnout.

"Christian Formation" on the other hand, focuses on inner transformation within the context of a vibrant relationship with God.

In this model, Christians are mentored in conversational prayer and other practices that build their relationship with God and bring about spiritual renewal as a matter of course.

As a result, they live more the way God intends by virtue of their renewed character rather than because "that is what they are supposed to do."³

It was observed in the webinar that many people of all ages respond enthusiastically to this second modality because they have been disillusioned or harmed by the limitations of the first method. [my summarized paraphrase] Takle has observed that this way of going about teaching our faith has been challenging for people to comprehend. *"Forming is such a big paradigm shift for many people, so when they see our contrast with standard practices, they begin to wonder whether we are dismissing all of it out of hand⁴."* David's brief summary more clearly indicates that he views traditional discipleship as a "religious lifestyle" approach that "often leads to legalism or religious burnout." He observed that spiritual renewal in relationship with God leads to living more as God would have us live, rather than just keeping external guidelines. I find his description of the "religious lifestyle" to be very apt and worthy of consideration but not necessarily for the reasons or outcome he has outlined.

I have reviewed the primary resources and found that I have studied many of them but did not see that this new terminology was now being used as a sort of 'counterpoint' to the term "discipleship." (I will include a reading list at the end of this article.) A masterful job was done to describe a "religious lifestyle" that I believe will be illuminating for many in both Christian and Messianic communities. It is a kind of growing faith from the outside in by imitating what others do. I appreciated a comment attributed to Dallas Willard, recently deceased

² <http://kingdomformation.org/>

³ Personal communication/email with David Takle, April 29, 2013.

⁴ Personal communication/email with David Takle, May 22, 2013

teacher and author who has been credited with providing a foundation for *The Life Model* work. Rather than encouraging people to fight against their inner urges in order to behave in a merciful way, Willard suggested that we train people to become merciful people in themselves through engagement with the Holy Spirit. Amen to that!

I suggest that what is called doing “what they are supposed to do” could be considered a “performance base” in traditional Christian teaching/discipleship that falls short too often of being relationally based, because it results from external motivation. Some have called this “playing church.” Clearly, there is a difference that is related to the source of motivation for behavior, whether it is external or internal. Here again, Takle has a comment.

To restate our task:

our main job is to learn how to engage with the Spirit of God in ways that are life-changing, so that we become more and more prepared to live out of the new heart that God gave us, and less and less out of our old life patterns and values.... So what is our part? Well, without trying to evade the question, a full explanation is very difficult, because so much of what we need to know can only be learned experientially, and not from a printed page.⁵

He goes on to describe the difficulty of transmitting faith in a personal way that really cannot be learned through study alone. I have no argument there! The issue is that the traditional method of teaching, called discipleship, is viewed as having fallen short of the goal of helping others toward mature faith and relationship with our God as He presents Himself to be and that there is a better way.

I agree there is a difference in modalities of traditional discipleship and “Christian Formation”, but not that it is an “either/or” difference. I would add to the matter that both happen in the context of community but should be seen as a progression, not opposites, and not right or wrong. This perspective was surprising as all of *The Life Model* materials are developed within the concept that people grow through a series of levels of needs and accomplishments. I see a level of subconscious learning that goes on long before a child is capable of more formal study and learning as well as before personal acknowledgement of need for more relationship with Messiah usually comes. I believe that this process which was identified as “doing what they are supposed to do” is a necessary initial part of the process, not to be discredited since it is clearly Scripturally based.

Progression Rather than “Wrong” or “Inadequate

The *Biblical Research Seminar* presented by Frank Houtz, of Dry Bones Restoration Company in Lexington, KY does a masterful work of examining the various stages of learning. Our SAM community participated in it many years ago and still derives benefit from it. He has researched many different models from various disciplines in the preparation process. He has found the work of Rabbi H.D. Uriel Smith, linguist, to be very profound and helpful, though his erudite use of language can be intimidating to many. Houtz coined related terminology intended to be more accessible to represent what actually happens in the learning process. As he put it:

*I am the one who named the second stage of sub conscious learning societal osmosian.
I did not think that the other terms I found in psychological and philosophical circles communicated.
I needed something to indicate that they were absorbing their learning from their environment.*

⁵ <http://kingdomformation.org/formational-theology/introduction-to-christian-formation/>, May 13, 2013.

*I also coined the phrase primal osmosian for the first stage. The conscious level I renamed as well.
Rabbi Smith calls it Primo-Literate and Ishmaelian, ... I called it teachable and applicable.
The third levels are called Aristotilean and Galilean by many philosophers,
so I think they communicate.⁶*

So we have the subconscious level of learning, the conscious level and finally the technical level, each of these being subdivided into two stages. Without going into the full material, my point here is that the “doing what others do” stage is normal and a **necessary prequel** to the later stages of learning relationship. I think *The Life Model* captures this in terms of understanding that the infant needs to learn how to receive; and certainly the concept of belonging also fits here. This is why there is Biblical admonition to:

Pro 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Many verses come to mind that speak of a two stage process of learning and coming into faith. Among them:

Pro 1:8 My son, hear your father's instruction, and do not forsake the law of your mother;
Pro 1:9 for they *shall be* an ornament of grace to your head, and chains for your neck.

I have done extensive word studies and presented on these verses and have seen a deep picture of the character work primarily done first by the mother which is not to be forgotten as it will provide guidance while learning the more in-depth matter of the entire Word. (Of course “father” and “mother” have symbolic meanings as well as literal.) **I have come to believe that it is the failure to have received or remained in the foundational work of character development that has led to the all too frequent misuse and abuse of scripture in legalistic or authoritarian ways.** I understand that the foundational truths are in fact intended as a protection against such danger as misinterpreting Scripture in ways that lead to fear bonds or external factors alone as motivation for performance.

1Co 13:9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;
1Co 13:10 but when the perfect thing comes, then that *which is* in part will be caused to cease.
1Co 13:11 When I was an infant, I spoke as an infant, I thought as an infant, I reasoned as an infant.
But when I became a man, I caused to cease the things of the infant.

I have understood that there is a need for learning to take place below the “formal” level of academic learning that some have called learning by osmosis, or absorption. The infant and young child learns a sense of identity, who we are and how we do things long before they can enter the more formal level of teaching. It is this level that I believe is the necessary predecessor to what is now being called “Christian Formation.” They are to have teachers in their parents and in community members/elders around them whom they observe and learn from. These people ideally are to have the characteristics of maturity that are to be emulated, particularly that of a mature and well developed relational faith which is evident in their behavior.

I know that these following verses have been used in various ways and will not address the controversy here. I see a picture that the teachings of God are a guideline that shapes the community as they provide the environment for the young before they get to the point of having consciousness of their own need for relationship with Messiah. I believe it was James Dobson who described his youth as being like going down a long hallway of locked doors that kept him relatively safe from many evils in the world before he was old enough to make wise choices. He spoke eloquently of how many of these doors are now wide open and alluring and seductively bringing young people into situations they are not yet ready to appropriately comprehend. It is the community that has failed to provide the structure to protect such young people early in their lives. Presumably, these adults and parents are not yet where they should be in mature faith either? When mature faith comes, the guidelines are no longer there as a guard for us, but we maintain them both because we now “heart know” that they are good for us and for the benefit of the next generation.

⁶ Personal communication/email with Frank Houtz, April 29, 2013.

Gal 3:21 Then is the Law against the promises of God? Let it not be! For if a law had been given which had been able to make alive, indeed righteousness would have been out of Law.

Gal 3:22 But the Scripture locked up all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to the ones believing.

Gal 3:23 But before the coming of faith, we were guarded under Law, having been locked up to the faith being about to be revealed.

Gal 3:24 So that the Law has become a trainer of us *until* Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Gal 3:25 But faith coming, we are no longer under a trainer;

Gal 3:26 for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

As much as children dislike hearing it, there are times when an adult simply says, 'do it because I say so' or 'this is how we do it' when it is recognized that the child simply does not yet have the capacity to comprehend a matter. This, too, follows the pattern of our God Who sometimes tells us things we must do whether or not we understand the "why" behind it. He teaches us as He sees we are able to receive, as our Good Shepherd. When we know at least enough to realize that He is good, His character is good and that He desires good for us, we know the "Who" behind the instruction, and we can better receive even if we don't understand. It is often our rebellion and self-sufficiency that short circuits the process.

Paul spoke of the recognition when people are rebellious or lax in their response to Him.

1Co 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ.

1Co 3:2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.

Discipleship vs. Christian Formation seems to represent a dilemma that has erupted for several reasons. It may be when this method of teaching became limited, thinking that it alone was adequate to bring people to maturity in faith. There was a concentration on the "what" of things but not on the "Who" behind these instructions. Thus it is not the content of Scriptural teaching but the interpretation of it that has led to the limitations. I would also add that there is an impression that there is a distinction to be made between the Father and the Son's ways. Here is one Scriptural example of how the process was intended to work, clearly indicating that there are gifts of the Spirit—the "Formation process"—that come into the work of ministry which is to help others grow.

Eph 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

Eph 4:2 With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Eph 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Eph 4:4 *There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

Eph 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

Eph 4:6 One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

Eph 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Eph 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Eph 4:9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

Eph 4:10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Eph 4:14 That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:
Eph 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted
by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part,
maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

I submit that learning our faith through a “performance base” or “doing what they are supposed to do” is a necessary part of the process. There is learning that goes on when born into a society that Houtz called “societal osmosian” or learning by absorption, who we are and how we do things. It is the protection of guidelines around a young person so that they are kept in safety until personal faith comes. The problem comes when the teaching or learning stops here and when decisions about faith and behavior are made from this inadequate base of information.

Kohlberg’s stages of moral development describe this in part, observing that initial stages of maturity involve observing “rules” or in-secret violation, in order to avoid punishment or perhaps to get mutually beneficial results. It is only in the later stages of maturity that one begins to conform to guidelines “from the heart” internal recognition of what is right. Of course, I believe Kohlberg stopped short of a final maturity stage in which one acknowledges that an infinitely superior Being has established His order and there **is** no way that we can ever do anything in-secret because He is omniscient and omnipresent. A case could be made that this perspective **should** be concurrent with the others. (Side note: This belief is regarded as mental illness by many in secular fields of psychology.)⁷

A community teaches first by example before a child develops the mental/emotional/intellectual capacity to learn in a formal way. So, Scriptural guidelines and standards for behavior are a beginning point to know what is right or wrong.

Pro 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

The “Micro” Picture

Ultimately, the goal is for that external observance of faith to become internalized “when faith comes.” Ideally, there are parents and community elders who have been modeling a mature faith so that the young person can see what it looks like; not just mechanical observance of rules, but faith relationship with heart felt, loving motivation and concern for the well-being of all, not just self. They need to see the parent/elders functioning with “good will” toward others.

(I have the understanding that “good will” toward another is not so much based in the behavior of the person choosing to be kind toward another, but that this behavior comes out of the ability to recognize the true heart of motivation of another’s behavior, whether or not it “came out right” or is fully understood. It can also be understood as having “found favor” with someone.)

The demonstration of the character of the parent/elder as learning to increasingly yield to our Father, being more and more like the character of our God was intended to be an ongoing teaching model. If these models are not in view or held in high esteem by the community, the desired end result of transmitting mature faith can be easily lost. All too often, “elders” may actually be people who have simply grown older but are still functioning in the same external observance of faith that has been called the outcome of discipleship, a religious lifestyle. Young people are quick to see the hypocrisy behind “do what I do” and may reject any and all authority as suspect.

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawrence_Kohlberg's_stages_of_moral_development for a concise overview of this theory.

There are significant differences in how someone who is in adolescence or young adulthood and someone who is in middle or later adulthood understand what it means to yield to His Presence and work in our lives. It is common for younger people to view their willingness to allow God “a” place in their lives as being yielded to Him, while those in older age groups and growing maturity expand this being yielded to mean that He has “the” place and priority of life. I can certainly testify to this from my own life experience as well.

This process can also be prematurely truncated when a young person becomes resistant or rebellious. (For that matter, these can happen at any age.) They may do this because the ideal is not visible or not appearing to be desirable or because they are headstrong and unwilling to be teachable. Commonly, people interpret the actions of others based on their own internal processing and stage of development, and assume it is the same for others. They may not yet have learned how to deal with one another in “good will.” One in rebellion may scoff at greater yieldedness to God as irrational and impractical. **If they are not able to *shema shema*, hear and obey, and be patient in the learning process as to the “Who” and the “why” behind the “what” or “how” we do things, they may summarily reject the guidelines and come to a halt in the maturation process.** They may think they understand everything already and have made a justified decision to reject what they have been told, rightly seeing it as “doing what I should do” without the knowledge of the true heart basis.

The response of the parents and elders of a community to such adolescent rebellion, whatever the age, can be crucial to its final outcome. It may make or break the bridge to the second stage of growth, ability to personally perceive the need for and enter into personal relationship with our Messiah. It can range from gracious yet firm to authoritarian and rejecting. It can involve prayerful inclusion and conversation with Him on behalf of and with the rebellious one that models genuine faith relationship. If one can’t approach Messiah alone, one who is accustomed to doing so can be part of showing the way. Assessment of their rejection in open communication can be helpful. Is there a lack of models of mature faith? Have the existing models been rejected? What has gone in to either response? Room for the process to occur is necessary, yet recognition of rebelliousness as a way of life must also be made as necessary. Paul confirmed that a little leaven leavens the whole lump so discipline is necessary, sometimes to the point of putting someone outside the community for a season of learning.

I submit that our God knows this full well since He designed our beings as they are and laid out the process throughout His Word, both individually and corporately. He has been patient with us, as our Elder and Good Shepherd, allowing us to experience these struggles within ourselves and our communities as part of His discipline and plan until the fullness of time has come. It is not by accident that recognition of the need for a “Christian Formation” relational model is gaining momentum now, though I do not believe that the formative stages of the “Discipleship Model” could be skipped over.

The “Macro” Picture

The tribes of Israel were also in rebellion, not acknowledging the character of our Father, not honoring His Word. Ultimately, they were put out and away from the land and from knowledge of their heritage. With the understanding that there has been an exile, imposed by our Father, on those who have resisted Him and His Word, I see a bigger picture. There was a separation that resulted from failure to honor Him when Israel turned away, yet it was to be accepted.

1Ki 12:24 Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD.

There was a long term separation as a result of this disobedience though restoration was ultimately promised. In very brief review:

Lev 26:18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me,
then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

Lev 26:33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you:
and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

Lev 26:40 If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers,
with their trespass which they trespassed against me,
and that also they have walked contrary unto me;

Lev 26:41 And *that* I also have walked contrary unto them,
and have brought them into the land of their enemies;
if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and
they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity:

Lev 26:42 Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob,
and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham
will I remember; and I will remember the land.

Lev 26:43 The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths,
while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment
of their iniquity: because, even because they despised my judgments,
and because their soul abhorred my statutes.

Lev 26:44 And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies,
I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly,
and to break my covenant with them: for I *am* the LORD their God.

Lev 26:45 But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors,
whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen,
that I might be their God: I *am* the LORD.

I have considered verse 44 to be one of the most encouraging words in all of Scripture. Despite the rebellion, they will not be destroyed entirely and He will remember His covenant. Though the separation has been necessary to tolerate it has been misunderstood.

As those who have studied our Hebraic heritage have realized these past decades, many of His people have been scattered throughout the nations. They have had some knowledge of Messiah through traditional Christian teaching but that knowledge has been “divorced” from the entire Word. I see a picture that indicates He has intended this for the “two witnesses” of the two Houses; one having kept knowledge of His Torah and the other knowledge of His Messiah but that is peripheral to the point here. [see “*And The Two Shall Become One*” introductory PowerPoint]

In this division, traditional Christian teaching certainly has not included submission to all of His Torah to the point that many Christians today are quite willing to ascribe cruelty and bondage to the teachings on righteousness He provided for us. They have not been willing to interpret His Word with “good will;” acknowledging the “Who” and “why” behind the “what” and “how,” that His character and intent toward them is good, **whether or not they understand it**. They have not been willing to “shema, shema” long enough to know the character of the One Who designed all things. Therefore, the initial teachings of His Word, His covenant, His community, all that is involved in being set apart for His purpose has been rejected by those who **think they already know enough** to recognize that these teachings are outmoded and inadequate. Traditional Christian teaching has assured people for generations that there is no need to be aware of these things. We just need to do the right thing as Jesus taught.

Though the Word clearly states repeatedly that Messiah and the Father are One, that They do not change, that the Word has not been done away with as long as heaven and earth stand, that Messiah’s doctrine **is** His Father’s

doctrine, these generations have been taught from one to another that they only need to know the “character” of Jesus, who is supposedly different from the God of the Old Testament. Marcion’s teachings have influenced so much over the decades and remain today as a “mindset’ or worldview among those who reject Torah.⁸

Just as adolescents or young adults may rebel against His righteous teachings and their elders because they are headstrong or have not seen indication of mature faith in these elders so have Christians today rebelled against His righteous teachings because they are headstrong or have not seen indication of mature faith in their elders, including their “elder brother, Judah.” They have not been patient and teachable enough to learn the “Who” and “why” behind the “what” and “how” of the entire Word.

Just as the “Christian Formation” teachers now consider the “Discipleship” model to be outmoded and to lead to “legalism and religious burnout” so has it been true that Christian teachers have taught that the Torah led to legalism and death, viewing it as going back under the law. They have not been willing to study and to observe and to know the character of our God, to know the “Who” behind the “what,” to know that **He** never described His Law as bondage or death but as life, light and liberty! They have resisted the knowledge that it is the law of sin and death that has been overcome, not the Torah. They have resisted Hebraic contextual study of His Word to know Him in all of His fullness, preferring instead to hold on to what they can see based in what they already know, and heaven help us if anyone tries to point out that additional understanding is needed.

And for those in Messianic community who bring the “discipleship” mode of simply adhering to a set of values and behaviors because that is what they are “supposed to do” to their newly Torah pursuant lifestyle, there is a rebellion when things do not happen as they expect they “should.” They are also exceptionally uncomfortable, fearful and resistant if they begin to see or hear that there are personal matters they themselves need to yield to the *Ruach haKodesh*, with the help of more mature believers.” I already do all the right things. What more could be asked of me? Who are you to ask anything else?” In effect,” I am already “disciplined” and I don’t need any “forming!””

Many have been wounded by inappropriate actions of their elders in faith communities and so are fearful of any new authority. Presumably many leaders are of those who have grown older but not necessarily mature, continuing in the “discipleship” or “do what I do” mode. These are the elders who have contributed to both hurt and harm in their communities. Over the past 13 years I have seen many who indicate that they already know all they need to know and so resist any kind of teaching that would help them grow beyond the “do what I do” stage. Sadly, this limits their ability to learn more about being yielded to the *Ruach haKodesh* as much as it limits their relationship skills and commitment.

This examination of “Discipleship” and “Christian Formation” has attempted to compare and contrast their definitions and the implications of each style of teaching about our faith for both Christian and Messianic fellowships. Hopefully, it will stir up more prayerful thought and consideration as we continue to discuss the many messy expectations of our communities. Please contact us for further conversation or if you would like to be included in our teleconference discussions on the matter!

Barbara L. Klika, MSW
Undershepherd
Set Apart Ministries
www.set-apart-ministries.org

⁸ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcion> concise summary of Marcon’s teachings, May 13, 2013.

Resources on Christian Formation

David Benner: [Surrender to Love](#): Discovering the Heart of Christianity
Wayne Jacobson: [He Loves Me!](#) Learning to Live in the Father's Affection
Karl Lehman: [Outsmarting Yourself](#)
J.B. Phillips: Your God is Too Small
M.Robert Mulholland: *Invitation to a Journey*: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation
James Bryan Smith: *The Good and Beautiful God* (and other books)
David Takle: *Forming: A Work of Grace* (see Resources.LifeModel.org)
Jim Wilder and Chris Coursey: [Share Immanuel](#)
Dallas Willard: *The Divine Conspiracy*
Dallas Willard: *The Spirit of the Disciplines*
Dallas Willard: *The Renovation of the Heart*

See Also Set Apart Ministries material pertaining to Individual and Community Development

[The Messy Expectations Series](#)

[What Shepherds Need to Know Series](#)

[Categories of Written Articles](#)

[Categories of PowerPoint and DVD Materials](#)