

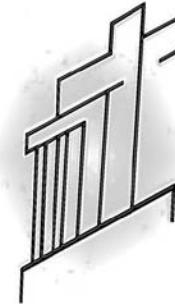
place by the Father for the instruction, guidance, and maturity of His chosen people — His children. So I urge you brothers, let us rein in our enthusiasm and trust in the Father's wisdom to best raise up His children. Let us direct our enthusiasm and energy towards studying His word (Acts 17:11) and discipleship.



#### **About the Author**

*Richard Fleming is a 37-year-old prisoner currently serving a 24 year sentence for burglary at the Buena Vista Correctional Facility in Buena Vista, Colorado. He is the father of two beautiful daughters, Tiana and MiKayla, and a son, Kayden. He started using alcohol and drugs at age 13, and served briefly in the U.S. Army. He studied many religions – including practicing witchcraft – before being redeemed by Jesus.*

*Prior to his new life in Christ, Mr. Fleming says, he did not finish things he started; but as a disciple of Christ he has completed an apprenticeship program at a Colorado Correctional Industries fish hatchery. He is presently facilitating a weekly prayer meeting of prisoners at his facility, and ministering to a Muslim man from Ethiopia who is hungry to learn more about the living God we call Yahweh and His Son Jesus Christ. He is also being discipled by his mentor Mike. He has a God-given desire for intercessory prayer, and the prayer group he facilitates has partnered with The Cell Church and Expected End Ministries in Arizona, which receives prayer requests from correctional facilities around the country.*



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Published by The Cell Church  
P.O. Box 351913  
Westminster, CO 80035-1913

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***"The word of God is not imprisoned."***  
***- 2 Timothy 2:9***

# **DISCIPLESHIP**

***Richard Fleming, Jr.***



***“Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.”***

**– Romans 12:11-12 (NLT)**

As Christians we should have no hesitation to do those things that bear witness to the Gospel we have come to know — Christ’s saving grace. We should, through the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2), desire those things that first and foremost glorify the Father, and secondly cause us to mature in our walk with Christ. We should seek these things with the enthusiasm and energy that we put towards our work-out routines or favorite pass-time (sports, games, reading etc.), putting forth the effort we exert towards “looking good” in the eyes of others. We will most times go to almost any extent to defend our reputation and credibility before men. How much more should we be unashamed and enthusiastic to defend the credibility of our Savior and His gospel (Rom. 1:16; 1 Pet. 3:15-16)?

It is just as important, that we young Christians’ (babes in Christ) enthusiasm be coupled with biblical knowledge and understanding of the practical application in their lives: ***“Enthusiasm without knowledge is no good; haste makes mistakes.”*** – Prov. 19:2 (NLT).

As young Christians our salvation can have us feeling very enthusiastic, like we’re ten feet tall, like we can conquer the whole world for the kingdom of God. But it is more often than not, that we run out half-cocked and misfire in our true-hearted desire. This point bears on the biblical command that as young Christians we need to be mentored and instructed by those brothers who are more mature in their faith. Yes, even behind these walls, there are brothers whose maturity places them in position to mentor their younger brothers. Obviously, this is a matter of concern for The Cell Church, which is the reason they have partnered with the TUMI ministry in order to train brothers to be spiritual leaders in the churches behind the walls.

This brings me to my point: that this mentorship is a joint responsibility of both the young believer and the more mature leaders. The young Christian is to submit to the more mature, and the more mature are to understand their responsibility to the church as well as the instruction and guidance of those newborn babes in Christ. Just as an infant requires frequent feeding and attention, so too does the young Christian need to eat from the table of the Master (i.e., Bible studies, searching Scriptures, prayer, and instruction). For the more mature this is often “hard work” requiring quite a bit of effort, bearing with the younger brothers

and their frequent over-exuberance in demanding attention and correction.

Hebrews 13:7 (NLT) tells us: ***“Remember your leaders who taught you the word of God. Think of all the good that has come from their lives, and follow the example of their faith.”*** The author of Hebrews explains exactly why we as young Christians should exercise this submission to our more spiritually mature brothers in Christ: ***“Obey your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.”*** – Heb. 13:17 (NLT)

It’s vital that we recognize that our more mature brothers are being used by the Father on our behalf, and they will give an answer to the Father for their work in our lives. We must not resist! They are like the shepherds or watchmen, who call out alarms when they see danger in our lives. We must take heed! They give instruction and guidance because they care, and are being led by the Father to do so. It is sometimes made more difficult for us, because of the stigma that we have placed on the word “submit” – even more so in environments such as jails and prisons. Submission is not a form of weakness but a show of strength, courage, and trust in the system or structure set in