
What is Discipleship Part II

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What is a Disciple?

Matthew 4:18-22; 28:16-20

"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

A Disciple is one who grows in Christ and in so doing models and teaches Christians the precepts of the Bible, prayer, doctrine, relationship, Christian living, service, and worship, to name the main ones.

Jesus ended His time on earth with an imperative command for them to make more disciples (Matt. 28:19-20), which is also our call! John the Baptist did the same with his disciples (Matt. 9:14). And having disciples was a normal way for Rabbis to train and develop the people who would follow them in leadership. Even the Pharisees had disciples (Matt. 22:15-16).

It is interesting to note, that before WWII, this was the primary way ministers received their training in the U.S. They still went to a divinity school for formal teaching, but personal instruction from someone who is well experienced and versed was the best way to learn and develop ministry skills, and it still is! Sadly, few will undertake this because of pride, lack of time, and/or misplaced priorities. Thus, many young pastors will make many mistakes at the expense of their congregation because there was too little supervised experience beforehand.

To give a comparison, the average medical Doctor will go to four years of college, then another four years of medical school. After that, a one year internship and then a four year residency will be done before he/she can become a full board certified physician and allowed to practice medicine in the U.S. Thus, over 1/3 of their schooling is in the form of discipleship!

What is a disciple?

- Jesus said, *Follow Me* (Matt. 4:19; 9:9). Jesus did not mean that they should just physically follow Him on the road. They were set a- part, challenged, and taught their call and mission. Just as they had worked at catching fish, now they would be catching men (Luke 6:39-40)!
- The word "disciple" literally means someone who pledges to be a "learner." Moreover, it is someone who follows another's teaching, and adheres to it. It is a commitment and a process. It involves commitment, and time to undertake the learning, and, as a Christian, a yearning to imitate Jesus!
- Discipleship is also reciprocal, that is, when one learns, he/she makes the commitment to train someone else. That is what Jesus meant by, *"I will make you fishers of men."* It is not just catching them and then storing them (fish were

processed and sold for the battlement and use of the community), it is training, and placing, so they, too, can catch, train, and place!

- Discipleship is the primary earthly goal of the Church as a whole, and the Christian as an individual. It is our duty, and the one thing Christ directly commands us to do (Matt. 28:19-20). In so doing, we will become like Him in character and share His outlook and concerns (Luke 6:39-40). We are never to make disciples in our image, like whom we are, how we think, feel, and act, but like Christ!
 - We are to become His disciple!
 - We are to be discipled!
 - We are to disciple others so they can in turn disciple others...
- The 12 disciples spent three years of their lives following, learning, listening, observing, and experiencing life directly with Jesus. Then they carried that leaning and experience to the world (Matt. 10:1-15; the Book of Acts).
- It all comes down to a decision. Will we make our faith real and impacting, relinquishing our pride to allow us to learn and grow, and in turn teach others, or will we plant our rears in the pew, so that our only impact is our butt print in that pew!

Let us make sure our impact comes from a life transformed and carried on to the people around us!

What we need to learn for today:

Discipleship has a cost. Following Christ will cost us and require effort and consistency (Matt. 8:18-22; 10:38; Luke 9:57-58; 14:27). The original disciples left their family and good jobs (Matt. 10:37; 19:27; Luke 9:59-62; 14: 25-26; 33)! Jesus did not call bums with nothing better to do!

Jesus expects us to know what we are getting into and embrace it with vigor and faith. Nothing can come before Him (Matt. 3:8; 6:33; Luke 14:15-24; John 8:31; 14-15)! We must embrace our call and responsibility to be discipled and make disciples! If we are truly willing to learn and apply what Christ taught, we will truly be His disciples! The Church will be on fire by the Spirit and impacting the world! Keep in mind, what we gain will far outweigh any suffering or loss on our part (Mark 10:28-30; 1 Cor. 15:58)! If, and when we hear God's call, depends on our ears, will, and attitude (Matt. 22:14).

God does not force us nor plead with us; He merely presents us the option (Isa. 6:8)! We must say, as Isaiah said, *Here I am, send me!* We must allow our spiritual eyes to be opened and our will to be relinquished to His, for real discipleship to take place. Then, our churches will grow in prayer, worship, and maturity, and revival may take place!

"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Are you doing that? Let us allow the power of the Holy Spirit to open our eyes, and break our will, so we can be receptive to our Lord and Savior, and so we can do as He called!

Questions:

1. What is a disciple to you?
2. If your life were lived in one day, where would you be, sunrise, morning, noon, afternoon, sunset, evening, or night? In what part of the day did Christ become real in you, if He has?
3. How can you embrace what discipleship means, and apply it to the time you have left?
4. A call was asked of them and a response was given. A call without irresistible pressure, yet with passion and conviction. *Follow Me*. What would have been your response? What is your response now? (Keep in mind what you would leave behind, and the cost involved.)
5. Do you spend more time on fishing or hobbies and recreation, than you do with His call to be fishing for people?
6. Which comes first for you, your family, your job or businesses, or Jesus Christ and His call for you? What is a healthy biblical balance?
7. Are we so busy in building our lives, or enjoying our retirement, that we forget what life as a Christian is all about? In so doing, does the Lord's Church suffer?
8. Jesus broke the pride and arrogance to model that we are to be seekers of disciples and not just waiting for them to come to us. What is in your way from being discipled, and/or taking in someone to disciple?
9. Does saying that Jesus' main goal or reason was the importance of discipleship, which outweighed His preaching, surprise you? Why, or why not?
10. Christianity does not end at repentance and conversion. It begins there! How has this been so in you? If not, what is in the way?
11. How does it make you feel that few of us ministers or Christian leaders will undertake discipleship for ourselves or train others because of pride, lack of time, or misplaced priorities?
12. Have you ever seen problems in a church because young pastors make mistakes at the expense of their congregation because they did not undergo enough supervised experienced beforehand?
13. Discipleship has a cost. Following Christ will also cost us, and require effort and consistency. This can cast fear and trepidation amongst most Christians. How can you develop an attitude to embrace what society, family, friends, or even people in your church fail to see and do?
14. What will you do to become a better disciple now?