

Twelve Lessons

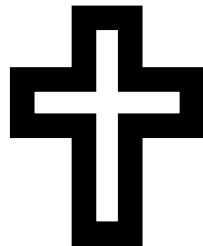
on

Discipleship

Compiled and Written

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\$6.00

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THE CREATION OF DISCIPLES – LESSON 1

Lesson Goals:

1. To qualify the participants of discipleship.
2. To verify the credentials of a disciple.
3. To vindicate the demands of a disciple.

Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:

1. Disciple – A student, learner, or pupil. In the Bible the word is used most often to refer to a follower of Jesus. The word is rarely used in the Old Testament. Isaiah used the term disciples to refer to those who are taught or instructed (Isa 8:16). (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).
2. Cross – Figurative. The cross is used in Scripture, in a general way, for what is painful and mortifying to the flesh (Matt 16:24). After the resurrection of our Lord the cross is spoken of as the representative of His whole sufferings from His birth to His death (Eph 2:16; Heb 12:2) and for the whole doctrines of the gospel (1 Cor 1:18; Gal 6:14); whereas the opposers of the gospel were spoken of as enemies of the cross (Phil 3:18). "The cross of Christ" (1 Cor 1:17) represents that Christ was crucified for man and thereby procured His salvation. (The New Unger's Bible Dictionary).
3. Course – A word in the Bible with many different meanings, including the passage of time (2 Chron 21:19); a straight path, as of a ship (Acts 16:11; 21:1); the evil ways of this age (Eph 2:2); and advancement or progress (2 Thess 3:1). (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).

I. THE DESIGN OF DISCIPLESHIP is seen in the beginning and closing of Jesus' ministry. He began His ministry by calling Peter and Andrew and closed His ministry by giving the Great Commission. Charles Ryrie said,

“Now making disciples is the objective of the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19). *Two things characterize Christian disciples* – they were baptized (a clear sign of their faith in Christ) and they are constantly learning. Baptism is a single event, but learning is a lifelong process. What is testified to in baptism can be accomplished by an act of faith. What is taught in the “all things whatsoever I have commanded you” cannot be fully accomplished in an entire lifetime. There is one condition for baptism – faith (Acts 16:31-34); there are many conditions for growth.”

His entire ministry was absorbed with creating disciples. He trained His disciples from *three groups*: the disciples of the Pharisees, the disciples of John, and from among others who called themselves disciples of Moses.

II. THE DESCRIPTION OF DISCIPLESHIP

A. What is a disciple? *A Biblical Disciple would be one that followed the terms that Jesus demanded.* I am afraid that many do not know the term discipleship in the light of New Testament doctrine. While it is true that all disciples are saved, it is not truthful to say that all saved are disciples. We see the same distinction in the difference between a saved man and a Christian. All Christians are saved but not all the saved are Christ-like. Discipleship has nothing to do with becoming saved but has all to do with what one does after salvation.

B. I have found in teaching and learning, one must be a disciple or be disciplined. I am firmly convinced this is why many do not study, because there is a price to teach or learn.

1. The demands of discipleship are found in Luke 14:25-33. Matthew Henry puts it this way:

“Though the disciples of Christ are not all crucified, yet they all bear their cross, and must bear it in the way of duty. Jesus bids them count upon it, and then consider of it. Our Savior explains this by two similitudes; the former showing that we must consider the expenses of our religion; the latter, that we must consider the perils of it. Sit down and count the cost; consider it will cost the mortifying of sin, even the most beloved lusts. The proudest and most daring sinner cannot stand against God, for who know the power of his anger? It is our interest to seek peace with him, and we need not send to ask conditions of peace, they are offered to us, and are highly to our advantage. In some way a disciple of Christ will be put to the trial. May we

seek to be disciples indeed, and be careful not to grow slack in our profession, or afraid of the cross; that we may be the good salt of the earth, to season those around us with the savor of Christ.”

2. In Salvation, the Lord wants everybody to come (Vs. 23) but in discipleship the call is only for those willing to pay the price (Vs. 25). Salvation is a free gift while discipleship demands a high price! in salvation, Jesus died that I might live in Him but in discipleship, I die that Jesus might live in me (Gal. 2:20). One must “*come in*” (Vs. 23) to find salvation, we must “*come to*” (Vs. 26) Him for discipleship and we must “*come after*” (Vs. 27) to carry our cross.

III. THE DEMANDS OF DISCIPLESHIP

A. The demands of discipleship will scatter the multitudes. There were “great multitudes with him” however Jesus knew that it was time to thin out the multitudes (God is not interested in quantity but quality when it involves discipleship).

1. We see this in Judges 7:2, “...*The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves...*” God thinned the crowd from 32,000 to 300!
2. The demands of discipleship is found in its meaning. A “disciple” is an adherent who accepts the instruction given to him and makes it his rule of conduct. He is a pupil, a learner. A disciple is really an apprentice who learns by “*hands on*” experience. There are three basic tests that Jesus put the multitudes through to see if they were willing to become disciples.

B. Discipleship demands no rivals (Vs. 26). It is important to understand “hate.” In the Jewish economy, the one that was loved most was considered loved and the other was considered hated (not detested but simply not loved as much – a comparative word). An example is found in Gen. 29:30-33, “...*and he loved Rachel more than Leah...and when the Lord saw that Leah was hated...and said, because the Lord hath heard that I was hated...*”. In Romans 9:12-13, “...*the elder shall serve the younger. As It is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*”

Warren Wiersbe explains this verse in this manner:

“God chose Jacob before the babies were born. The two boys had done neither good nor evil, so God’s choice was not based on their character or conduct. Romans 9:13 is a reference to Malachi 1:2-3 and refers to nations (Israel and Edom) and not individual sinners. God does not hate sinners. John 3:16 makes it clear that He loves sinners. The statement here has to do with national election, not individual. Since God’s election of Israel does not depend on human merit, their disobedience cannot nullify the elective purposes of God. God is faithful even though His people are unfaithful.”

Do you think that Jacob “hated” Leah in our sense of hatred or that he simply loved Rachel more than Leah? Do you think that God “hated” Esau in our sense of hatred or that he simply loved Jacob more than Esau? Jesus was *simply teaching a lesson*, He must come first (before family, before self). He must be preeminent, He deserves it, the Scripture declares it, and the Father will one day demand it. We may have a father and enjoy his loving attention but the disciples’ love for even his own father cannot rival the Lord Jesus Christ. We may have a mother and enjoy her loving affection but our love for her cannot rival our love for the Lord Jesus Christ. We may have a wife and enjoy her loving devotion but our love for her cannot rival our love for the Lord Jesus Christ. We may have children and enjoy their loving submission but our love for them cannot rival our love for the Lord Jesus Christ. We may have self-ambitions but they cannot rival the Lord Jesus. Luke 16:13, “*No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*” There can only be one Lord in our life (master – supreme in authority, controller). There is only one throne in your heart and either you control your life, someone controls it or Christ controls it. There can only be one Love in our life (“love” – sacrificial love). There can only be one Loyalty in our life (“hold to – adhere”). Discipleship demands that Christ should reign unrivaled in our life.

C. Discipleship demands no return (Vs. 27). Following the Lord Jesus is not as simple as we would like to think, it involves carrying your cross (“...doth not bear his cross...”) Notice, Christ did not say “my” cross

but “his” cross. The cross meant no return. The disciples had no doubt seen many men take up His cross and they knew what it meant. They knew that it was a one way journey; there was no return! When Jesus calls us to follow Him, He calls us to die (to self – Gal. 2:20) so there can be no return.

1. The cross is a place of service (Mark 8:31-34),
2. The cross is a place of suffering (Heb. 12:2, “...endured the cross, despising the shame...”)
3. The cross is a place of submission (Christ prayed in the garden, “...not my will but thine be done”). They did not make Him carry His cross, He did it willingly. This is where most people turn back! Many are not willing to endure the cross so they will not enjoy the crown. There will be no crown wearers in Heaven that were not first cross bearers down here! The disciple must die to the old life (Gal. 2:20).
 - a. The principle in teaching and learning is “...yet not I, but Christ...” The world says it is me first, others, and then God. The disciple says “Christ is first, others, and then me.”
 - b. The passion in teaching and learning is “...Christ liveth in me...” No longer what pleases me but what pleases Him. The disciple must also “come after him.” “After” means “to the back, aback, to follow.” This method is that he is leading and you are following. He is instructing and you are learning. John 12:26, “If any man serve me, let him follow me.” It takes both self-denial and self-discipline to follow the Lord Jesus.

D. Discipleship demands no retreats (Vs. 28-30). “To finish” is used three times in Vs. 28-30. The Lord is looking for disciples that will be finishers (graduates). II Tim. 4:7, “...I have finished my course.” Acts 20:24, “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.” Dr. J. Vernon McGee believes that the Apostle Paul was right in going to Jerusalem. This is fitting with the statement, “discipleship demands no retreats.” Listen to what Dr. McGee says:

“Here is a point over which many great teachers of the Bible differ. Some of my good friends in the ministry and many good, authoritative Bible teachers believe that Paul made a mistake in going to Jerusalem. They think that he should not have gone. However, this testimony which Paul gives is very clear. I believe that he was entirely in the will of God in going to Jerusalem. He is saying in effect, ‘I am going to Jerusalem. I am bound in the spirit because everywhere I have gone, the Spirit of God has shown me that bonds and affliction await me in Jerusalem.’ Now that is different from Acts 16 when he was forbidden by the Spirit of God to preach in Asia. In fact God simply put up roadblocks which directed him to Europe. There is no roadblock here. Rather the Spirit of God is revealing to Paul what he will be walking into when he reaches Jerusalem. Paul makes it clear that he realizes he will suffer if he goes to Jerusalem. He says, ‘I don’t count my life dear. I’m willing to lay down my life for Jesus.’ He wanted to bring the gift to the poor saints in Jerusalem in his own hands. In his swan song Paul wrote, ‘I have finished my course.’ I think Paul touched all the bases. Jerusalem was one of those bases.”