

Discipleship: The Call to Follow Jesus

He looks today, as He has looked, not for crowds drifting aimlessly in His track, but for individual men and women whose undying allegiance will spring from their having recognized that He wants those who are prepared to follow the path of self-renunciation which He trod before them.

- H.A. Evan Hopkins

The Meaning of Discipleship

The word disciple is translated from the Greek word *mathetes* meaning 'pupil or learner'. It is related to the Greek *manthano* meaning 'to learn'. In the Greek world philosophers were surrounded by their pupils. Since pupils often adopted the distinctive teaching of their masters, the word came to signify the follower of a particular outlook in religion or philosophy. In the Jewish world pupils would attach themselves to particular rabbis from whom they would learn the traditions of Judaism. Some synonyms for disciple are student, apprentice, follower, pupil, devotee, pursuer, adherent, believer, admirer, and supporter.

1. Throughout scripture Jesus called men and women to follow Him. What do you think may have influenced their decisions to follow? How do you think they understood Jesus' call?

Matthew 4:18-22

Matthew 8:18-22

Mark 2:14

Mark 10:17-22

John 21:18-23

It is impossible for us to share His life until we have first in very deed surrendered ourselves every day to die to sin and self and the law and the world, and so to abide in the unbroken fellowship of discipleship with our crucified and Risen Lord.

-Miles Stanford

2. The life of discipleship begins with a turning away from our old life. How is this pictured in the following verses?

Galatians 2:20

John 12:24-25

Luke 14:26 [consider Abraham and Isaac]

What things keep us from surrendering to Christ?

3. Jesus tells those who follow Him what the purpose of discipleship is in Matthew 10:25.

The disciple follows the teachings and lifestyle of his teacher. How are we to imitate Jesus?

I John 2:6

I Peter 2:21

John 13:15

Luke 14:27

Christians need to understand that bearing the cross does not in the first place refer to the trials which we call crosses, but to the daily giving up of life, of dying to self, which marks us as much as it did the Lord Jesus. . .

-Andrew Murray

The Marks of a Disciple

Disciples had characteristics that identified them with their teacher and his teaching. The followers of Jesus were no exception. Jesus was careful to talk with them about who they were becoming as they developed as His disciples. These were not things they quickly incorporated into their lives, but characteristics that they developed over a lifetime.

4. Jesus instructed His followers about the characteristics that would identify them.

John 15:8

John 13:34-35

John 8:31

Luke 14:33

Matthew 6:24

Consider these characteristics. Why are they important for those who follow Christ? Why might Jesus highlight these particular areas?

5. What attitudes need to be a part of a disciple's life?

I Timothy 1:12

II Timothy 2:2

Revelations 2:10

Isaiah 6:8

II Timothy 2:4

Ezekiel 22:30

Psalm 25:4-5

Psalm 119:33, 125

Proverbs 18:15

Galatians 1:10

I Samuel 13:14

II Chronicles 16:9

When we are called to follow Christ, we are summoned to an exclusive attachment to his person.

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Living as a Disciple

Over the next several weeks we will study the lifestyle of a follower of Christ. Part of our purpose as a body of believers is to encourage and challenge one another to live this life in context of the world we currently live in (Philippians 2:14-16).

What do the verses below suggest about the life of a disciple?

Acts 13:36

Ephesians 2:10

Disciples do not spend their lives aimlessly wandering about. Living the life of a follower of Christ gives focus to our lives.

Consider one of the following passages and make notes on what you learn about the activities and concerns of a disciple of Christ.

II Timothy 2

John 15

Jesus is calling millions to follow him into the harvest fields to become disciples, learning how to labor. He wants to recruit those who are certain they want to be there. Being a disciple is a long-term commitment.

-Bill Hull