

A Disciple of Jesus

Thank you for the opportunity to be with each of you today. I am so thankful and grateful for each of you. Just as Paul told the Philippians..

Philippians 1:3-6 ESV

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, [4] always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, [5] because of your **partnership in the gospel** from the first day until now. [6] And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

We are going to try and answer 3 questions today...

What is a disciple?

How does a disciple grow?

How does a disciple make disciples?

What is a Disciple?

The Greek word *mathētēs* (meaning a learner, pupil, or follower) appears over 260 times in the Gospels and Acts. A disciple is someone who believes in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, intentionally learns from Him, and strives to live more like Him.

What about Discipleship?

Is the word discipleship in the Bible? No, the exact English word "**discipleship**" does not appear in the Bible. However, the foundational concepts, the noun "**disciple**", and the verb form meaning "**to make disciples**" are used extensively throughout the New Testament

Discipleship is a widely-used word to describe a journey of spiritual growth. This growth happens as a person comes alongside another to teach them, pray with them, study the Bible with them, and fellowship with them.

If we have a theme verse for this lesson it would be Matthew 4:19.

In **Matthew 4**, Jesus is at the very beginning of His public ministry. He is tempted by Satan in the beginning of the chapter. He then begins His public ministry... Jesus begins preaching: "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.**" (Matthew 4:17). This becomes the central message of His ministry.

Jesus then calls His first disciples (Matthew 4:18–22) – let's read it...

Matthew 4:18-22 ESV

While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. [19] And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." [20] Immediately they left their nets and followed him. [21] And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. [22] Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Along the Sea of Galilee, Jesus calls:

- Simon Peter
- Andrew
- James
- John

To Peter and Andrew He says in v19: "**Follow Me, and I will make you** fishers of men."

Immediately they leave their nets and follow Him. What does this teach us? Following Jesus requires leaving old priorities and trusting Him with the future.

This one verse contains the **entire process**:

- **Follow Me** — Relationship with Christ
- **I will make you** — Spiritual growth and transformation
- **Fishers of men** — Making disciples

1. FOLLOW JESUS

Every disciple begins by following Christ.

Ask: "Can a person become like Jesus without following Him?" The answer is obvious.

In Matthew 4:19, Jesus says '**FOLLOW ME**, and **I WILL MAKE YOU....**' **Your making is in following Christ.** You can never be made... into that man/woman you were created to be... without following Christ. You can't be made... by following the crowd... or even your own ideas... it is by Following Jesus.

Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. [6] In all your ways acknowledge him, and **he will make** straight your paths.

In becoming what God wants you to be in life... you have a responsibility... what is that responsibility? That is... **to follow Christ**... follow Him step by step... follow His leading... follow His instructions (even when they don't make sense)... follow His commandments... follow Him day by day... follow Him all the way!

Luke 9:23 ESV

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

This is one of the clearest and most challenging descriptions of what it means to be His disciple. Let's look at each phrase.

"If anyone would come after me..." Jesus is inviting people to become His disciples—not merely to believe certain facts about Him, but to follow Him with their lives.

This is an invitation open to **everyone**, regardless of background.

"Let him deny himself"... This does **not** mean hating yourself or pretending you have no value. It means saying **"no" to self as the master of your life** and saying **"yes" to Christ as Lord**.

So instead of asking...

- "What do I want?"
- "What makes me happy?"

the **disciple asks**...

- "What does Jesus want?"
- "How can I obey Him?"

Paul describes this attitude: "I have been crucified with Christ. **It is no longer I who live**, but **Christ who lives in me**." (Galatians 2:20)

Even Jesus Himself modeled this in Gethsemane when he said... **"Not my will, but yours**, be done." (Luke 22:42)

"Take up his cross daily"... This is probably the strongest phrase Jesus used. Today people sometimes say, "My bad back is my cross to bear."

That is **not** what Jesus meant. In the first century, a cross was an instrument of execution. A man carrying his cross was walking to his death.

Jesus is saying:

Be willing... every day **to die to your own** plans, pride, reputation, comfort, and even your life if necessary... in order to obey God.

Notice Luke adds the word "**daily**." So every morning a disciple chooses:

- **to obey** rather than rebel
- **to forgive** rather than seek revenge
- **to serve** rather than demand to be served
- **to trust God** rather than live for self

So what happens when we Follow Jesus:

John 10:27-28 ESV

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. [28] **I give them eternal life**, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

Following Jesus means:

- Trusting Him
- Obeying Him
- Walking with Him every day

"Are you merely preaching about Jesus, or are we/you/I **following Him** today/everyday?"

2. GROW TO BECOME LIKE JESUS

That comes to our 2nd question... **How Does a Disciple Grow?**

Jesus said, "I will make you..." Notice... Jesus changes us. We do not change ourselves. The Holy Spirit changes us as we obey Christ.

Romans 12:1-2 ESV

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, but **be transformed by the renewal of your mind**, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

2 Corinthians 3:18 ESV

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed into the same image** from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-24 ESV

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. [17] For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. [18] But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. [19] Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, [20] idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, [21] envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. [22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. [24] And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

How does God change us? How is our mind transformed? How do we grow as disciples? Through...

- God's Word
- Prayer
- Fellowship
- Obedience
- Trials
- The Holy Spirit

Example of a tree: Think about the image of a tree. Year after year... the tree grows slowly. And everyday you look at it... it looks the same. However... after many years of growth... most individuals **can see the difference**. So it is with Christians. As we study God's word... as we pray... as we fellowship with each other... as we obey God's commands... as we go through trials... and we walk by the Spirit and not by the flesh... **we grow to become like Jesus!** And people will notice this... and see it.

3. MAKE DISCIPLES

And the last question is... **How does a disciple make disciples?**

A disciple who never helps others grow... is not completing Jesus' mission.

The Great Commission... Matthew 28:16-20 ESV

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. [17] And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some **doubted**. [18] And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] **Go therefore and make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

2 Timothy 2:1-2 ESV

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, [2] and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, **who will be able to teach others also**.

Ask: "Who are you personally discipling?" This is not... "Who attends your church?" but... "Who are you intentionally helping become like Christ?"

We state we would like to grow spiritually. We talk about individuals being "spiritually mature"... Here is a way you can determine this in your on life.

Ask yourself these 3 questions...

Am I Following Jesus?

- Am I obeying Him?
- Am I spending time with Him?
- Is He first in my life... or is He the priority in my life?

John 14:15-17 ESV – Where Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to His followers...

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. [16] And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, [17] even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

A 2nd question you can ask yourself to help determine if you are growing spiritually is...

Am I Becoming Like Jesus?

What do people see of you in your life? Meaning... when people see you each day do they see...

- love?
- patience?
- humility?
- holiness?

Galatians 5:22-23 ESV

[22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. [24] And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

And the 3rd question you can ask yourself... to determine your personal spiritual growth...

Am I Helping Others Follow Jesus?

- Who am I praying for?
- Who am I teaching?
- Who am I encouraging?

2 Timothy 2:2 ESV

and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses **entrust to faithful men**, who will be able **to teach others also**.

Challenge

"God has not only called us to preach sermons. **He has called us to make disciples**. Churches become strong when ministers/Christians make disciples... and disciples make more disciples."

Ephesians 4:11-16 ESV

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, [12] to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, [13] until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, [14] so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. [15] Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, [16] from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Colossians 1:24-29 ESV – Paul is speaking of his Ministry to the church... I want you to think about yourself here... instead of Paul...

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, [25] of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, [26] the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. [27] To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. [28] **Him/Jesus we proclaim**, warning everyone and **teaching everyone with all wisdom**, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. [29] For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

What do we think Paul was saying here in this passage... what was his goal as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

I read that these passages show us... that the goal of ministry... is not simply gathering crowds... but **presenting every believer mature in Christ**. Helping others come to know Jesus... and partake in the mercy and grace He has given to us... so that we may have eternal life.

As we close here today... I want to thank each and everyone of you for your work... and your **ministry** in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ!

Three statements to remember today... and I challenge myself... and each of you as we grow spiritually...

1. **Follow Jesus.**
2. **Become like Jesus.**
3. **Help others follow Jesus.**

I pray for you... and I ask that you pray for me as well. I pray for you as a disciple of Jesus... and you grow closer to Him everyday... and that you share and help others to learn about... know about... and to follow Him.