

Session 1

WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

STUDY CENTER

Matthew 28:18-20, *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.*

Go and make disciples was one of the last things Jesus said to his disciples before he would ascend into Heaven. If you knew you wouldn't come back to the earth for over 2,000 years you would make sure your final words were some of your most important. Jesus did just that.

It is not enough to be just a Christian, but rather to be discipled. And not just discipled, but to make disciples. There is a vast difference between just being a Christian who is saved and being a true disciple equipped to disciple others.

The difference between salvation and discipleship:

<i>Salvation</i>	vs.	<i>Discipleship</i>
• Is free—Romans 6:23		• Is costly—Luke 14:25-26
• Is in a moment		• Is a life long process John 8:31
• Once received you are a believer 1 John 5:1		• A disciple is a student—a pupil
• Involves trusting—Eph 1:13		• Involves training, Matt 8:19
• Receives what God has done 1 Corinthians 15:3-4		• Receives what God has done and does it for others Luke 14:25
• Discipleship is not needed to be saved		• Is the obligation of every saved person

To truly understand the term *disciple*, we must see that in Scripture there were four words that referred to the concept of discipleship:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. Disciple | 3. Imitate |
| 2. Follow after | 4. Come after |

We will look at each of these more carefully.

1. **Discipleship**. The word for disciple is used in connection in the Book of Acts with the word Christianity. In fact, in Acts 11:26 it says they were first called Christians in Antioch. Other examples are found in Acts 6:1-2, 7, 14:20, 22, 28 and 15:10.

Again, the Great Commission was a commandment from Jesus to His followers. The making of disciples was the main focus and the end result of all we do! Even when Jesus was addressing the churches in Revelation,

Chapters 1- 3, He encourages and admonishes the churches to maturity, faithfulness and purity. Which are the same mandates and requirements of a disciple of the Lord.

Key words of Matthew 28:19 are “*make disciples*”. It is the Greek word “*mathetew*” which appears over 300 times in the Gospels and the Book of Acts to describe a follower of Jesus Christ. It simply means a pupil or learner.

What is a disciple?

The concept of this word should not surprise us as we see in Scripture various examples of those who were disciples and those who had disciples. Some examples are: John the Baptist had disciples who fasted (Matthew 9:14), even the Pharisees had their disciples who were legalistic with lists of religious duties (Matthew 23:13).

Remember, you could have been a part of another church before, or saved for years but that does not qualify you as a disciple or doesn't necessarily mean that you are carrying the spiritual DNA of the father of the house!

Matthew 28:18-20
To be a true disciple:
Go, Be, & Do

John the Baptist had two disciples that eventually became followers of Jesus which led to the conversion of the apostle Peter. In fact, Peter was instructed by Jesus to “*feed His sheep*” (John 21:15-19). This was so they could become genuine disciples who could grow up into Christian maturity through the milk of the Word (2 Peter 3:18, 1 Peter 2:2, Eph. 4:11-13). The job of the five-fold ministry is to equip and produce solid mature disciples for the Lord Jesus.

2. **To follow after** occurs 90 times in the New Testament and usually refers to those who followed Jesus without conversion. It was a physical following without personal dedication or commitment.

Matthew 4:25, And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judaea, and from beyond Jordan.

Matthew 8:1, When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

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WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP? (cont...)

Matthew 21:9, *And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.*

Jesus had four types of followers in His ministry and they are the same for today:

1. *Multitudes* who just physically followed Him for their needs to be met, but gave no commitment.
2. *Followers*—they loved His teachings until they got offended (John 6).
3. 12 *Disciples*—these were mentored by Jesus for discipleship to do the works of the ministry.
4. 3 *Disciples*—these were son's, Peter, James, and John. They followed Jesus more closely than any body.

There is a vast difference between casual, passive Christianity and aggressive, zealous Christianity.

Notice the difference between *passive* discipleship and *aggressive*:

John 6—they chose to follow no more. They became passive, not wanting to be committed or aggressive in discipleship.

Peter said—we have nowhere else to go. In other words, we have no other options but to aggressively commit to you Lord.

Some only like to be committed as long as it doesn't cost them much—that is *passive* discipleship.

To be a true disciple requires following Jesus with conviction and commitment.

1. Commitment/discipleship even, at times, above family members. *Matthew 8:21-22.*
2. Commitment/discipleship should be more than your job. *Matthew 9:9.*
3. Must have commitment with sacrifice. *Matthew 10:38.*
4. To be a disciple requires self denial. *Matthew 16:24.*
5. Commitment even above all worldly possessions. *Matthew 19:21.*

3. ***Imitate.*** The term imitate in scripture refers to another individual or Christ himself that we are to follow. It means ones character, behavior or personality based on biblical standards.

The requirement of a true disciple is to imitate Jesus Christ and also the one who is their teacher as they follow them to “imitate me”, 1 Corinthians 11:1, 4:16, Philippians 3:17. He was expecting his disciples to imitate the character and lifestyle of the Lord in him into their own lives as well. The result was to produce the Christ like nature and character in every disciple and bring them to Christian maturity as there may be times not to imitate someone else especially if they are not emulating Jesus and His Word.

- 1 Cor. 4:16 - followers (imitate), *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.*
- 1 Cor. 11:1 - follower (imitate), *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*
- 2 Cor. 4:7 - followers (imitate) *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

The disciple must continue to examine their own lives to make sure they are following the teaching and imitating the character of Jesus Christ. The disciple must see a credible life of integrity and godly character in the earthly mentoring they are learning from.

Some things to imitate in our earthly mentors:

1. Fruit of the spirit - Galatians 5
2. Love for God, love for people - Mark 12:29-31
3. Winning and reaching the lost - Luke 15
4. A life of sacrifice - Luke 14
5. The believers ministry - Mark 16
6. A lifestyle of Godly repentance - Luke 11:32
7. A lifestyle of faith and commitment - Hebrew 11

4. ***Come after.*** The last word that we will review is the word *come after*. This word is mentioned 36 times in the New Testament and refers to *come behind or follow after and serve in the Lord's kingdom*. This is done with sacrifice, a willingness to forsake all. A definite requirement of one who must come after was not looking back to the old life that they came out of before they were born again! *Luke 9:62*

The disciple of the Lord was to make their lifestyle be one of coming after the things of God. This would better enable them to become mature believers equipped to do the work of the ministry! The New Testament disciple, which we are expected to be, must aggressively follow after the Lord and be willing to be disciplined to make disciples for Jesus Christ.

Remember a true disciple is expected to do the works of Jesus Christ and the believers ministry of Mark 16.

Rise up, be a disciple, and aggressively follow after and imitate the Lord. Allow yourself to be a disciple so you can grow and mature in the Lord and accomplish powerful things in the lives of others!

To Be a True Disciple:

1. We must be willing to *give up the old life* of sin—*Mark 1:16.*
2. We must have a *daily commitment* to follow Jesus. *Luke 9:32.*
3. We must have a *life of obedience* to the Lord, doing what He says. This is the mark of a true disciple.

WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

ACTIVATION CENTER

EXERCISE 1

As a group, discuss some ways you can better organize yourself this month so that you can become a more effective disciple (for example, purchase a calendar/planner). Write the ones you plan to implement here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

EXERCISE 2

A. Pair off in groups of two or three.

B. Share with your group members the names of 4 people you see as mentors/role models. Name 2 you are in *close personal relationship* with and 2 others whom you look to as more *non-personal* role models.

Write them down here:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

C. Lastly in this exercise discuss briefly with your group why you see these people as role models in your life (i.e. their newsletter in the mail has changed your life, they were a second “mom” since you were in grade school etc.)

Write some of these reasons down for your own reference later.

EXERCISE 3

Then lastly at group night, time permitting, each disciple may find a private corner in the house, by a chair or in another room to pray for 5 minutes and talk to the Lord about why they want to become a true disciple, asking the Lord for His help and guidance.

Resource/Study Suggestion



- ◆ Do a word study on all the Bible references where you find the words ‘*follow after*’.
- ◆ Book suggestion: *Leaders that Conquer* by Guillermo Maldonado (available through the LOH church bookstore).

WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

WORK CENTER

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. From the study center, list three Scripture references that talk about discipleship. Try to memorize where these verses are located.

2. Name three characteristics that make discipleship different from salvation.

3. List the four types of followers of Jesus' ministry.

_____ Do we find these same types of followers today? Y N

4. Just because a person has received discipleship training by someone else or another ministry, why is it important for them to learn discipleship principles again when they become a part of a new church?

Can you give a Scriptural example? _____

5. Name three biblical requirements needed in order to be a true disciple.

6. Define the meaning of the word *disciple*. _____

7. How many times do the words '*follow after*' appear in the New Testament?
