

DISCIPLESHIP STUDY

Jesus called men to follow, to imitate him, to become his disciple. This study addresses common misconceptions about following Jesus, describes true discipleship, and inspires us to answer the true call of Jesus!

OPENING QUESTION: How would you define a “Christian”? How about a “disciple”?

Acts 11:25-26

What is the difference, if any, between a disciple and a Christian?

- How many times is the word Christian used in NT (3)? How about disciple (270)?
- A disciple and a Christian are the same!
- Christian, “little Jesus,” or “like Jesus” was meant to be derogatory.

What is the difference between being called “Christians” and “like Jesus”?

- Being a Christian is supposed to mean that you are trying to live like Jesus.

Let’s discover how the Bible describes a Christian by looking at the term “disciple.”

Matthew 28:18-20

What was Jesus’ final command to his disciples?

- *“Go make disciples”* – Jesus commanded his disciples to Go (initiate)... make disciples (replicate).

What were Jesus’ instructions for making disciples?

- *“Baptizing them”* – the journey begins with a decision to be a disciple.
- *“Teaching them to obey everything I commanded you”* – the training component.

Jesus’ plan involved multiplication – disciples make disciples who make disciples.

Who is teaching (discipling) you? Who are you discipling?

Adding or Multiplying?

- Make 10 disciples each year for 30 years = **300**
- Make one disciple who multiplies every year for 30 years = **1 Billion!**

Mark 1:14-18

What was Jesus’ call for the first disciples?

- *“Follow me”* – we are called to imitate the heart, actions, and purpose of Jesus.
- *“I will send you out to fish for people”* – our mission is to make disciples.

Are you a fisher of people (a disciple maker)? Who have you helped make a disciple?

Luke 9:23–26

Who was Jesus speaking to? *“if anyone”* – applies to anyone who wants to follow him.

What was Jesus’ calling for *“anyone”* who wants to be a disciple?

- *“must”* implies that if you don’t do this you are NOT a disciple (Christian).
- *“deny yourself, take up your cross daily and follow me”*

What does this mean for you?

- Denial of sin/selfishness, daily commitment, and following Christ.

Luke 14:25-33

How did Jesus change his message when he was dealing with “crowds”?

- *“If anyone comes to me”* – Jesus had the same expectations for every individual.

What areas of commitment did Jesus address?

- *“hate his father, mother, wife and children”* – unrivaled love. (Matthew 10:37)
- *“even his own life”* – more than you love yourself!
- *“carry your cross and follow me”* – willing to be persecuted and die.
- *“estimate the cost”* – understand what you are getting into.
- *“terms of peace”* – in war, this means absolute surrender.

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- “everything you have” – these are the terms of peace!

Have you ever counted the cost and decided to follow Jesus?

John 13:34-35

What characteristic did Jesus expect his followers to be recognized for?

- “love one another” – our lives are characterized by our relationships with one another.
- “as I have loved you” – Jesus set an example; we are to imitate that level of love.

How does loving others change you?

- We learn how to be like Christ through our relationships with other Christians – we learn to love, forgive, work together, etc.
- We are not called to be alone (no “Lone Ranger” Christians!) but to be in community.

CONCLUSION

Going back over the notes, what characteristics does the Bible use to describe a disciple?

- An initiator, baptized, taught to obey, fisher of people, imitator of Christ...
- Denies self, carries cross daily, gives up everything and known for love of others...

Based on these scriptures, how many true disciples (Christians) are in the world?

- Are you a disciple (Christian) according to the Bible’s definition?
- Do you want to be a true disciple (Christian) of Jesus?
- What do you need to do to become a disciple?

OTHER HELPFUL PASSAGES

Luke 9:57-62 Example of the practical costs of following Jesus.

Luke 11:1-4

- Jesus taught his disciples to pray and have a relationship with God.
- Disciples are always learning.

Disciples live out the greatest commands: *love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:36–40)*