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A Disciple Is ...

By

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A Disciple Is A Learner

People who follow Jesus Christ are called disciples.

“And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.” Matthew 5:1

His disciples came to Him. That’s what disciples do — they go where the Lord goes. They follow Him. They want to be with Him. Their every thought is surrounded by the desire to follow Him. Their highest goal in life is to be with Him.

“Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him.” Matthew 8:3

One of the primary messages of the New Testament is that people who believe in Jesus Christ follow Him. They watch, listen, think, learn and follow.

The word “disciple” means a learner. The original word in the New Testament is the Greek *mathetes* — “a learner, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor.” A disciple of Jesus Christ learns about their Lord and what He wants them to do, then does something about what they

learn. A disciple is not someone who just knows. Disciples hear, learn and do.

I used to think Christians were not thinkers; that they just did what they were told to do without using their brains to search and consider what is truth. I thought of Christians as non-thinkers. I took pride in my atheism believing it made me a “free thinker.” Then I became a Christian and found out my brain did not turn to mush when I believed in God. In fact, I learned for the first time in my life I really could think for myself. I wasn’t following what the world believed, said and did. God placed His Holy Spirit inside of me and spoke to me through His Word. I heard from God, caught His wisdom and lived a life far better than anything I could have ever come up with by myself. Talk about being a free thinker!

Hearing from God is just the start of what it means to be a disciple of Christ. Hearing should lead to thinking. Thinking should lead to learning.

Learning should lead to doing.

1. Hearing
2. Thinking
3. Learning
4. Doing

It's a simple process, but it's not easy — and it's not quick. It takes effort and time to grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ. However, I can't think of any better way to spend my time on earth. Jesus gives us the “gift of eternal life” when we become His disciple. Our short time on earth is just the beginning of an everlasting love song with Jesus on the throne of our heart.

A Disciple Is Obedient

A disciple listens to what Jesus says and seriously consider His words of wisdom and direction. But it doesn't stop there.

A disciple of Jesus Christ is also a doer. They hear what God says and then obey His commands. Jesus made it clear to His followers that obeying Him was a vital part of being a disciple.

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.” Matthew 28:18-20

Before Jesus said anything about the process of discipleship, He pointed them to the power of discipleship: “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.” We can be as busy as we want to be in the process of following Jesus Christ, but our efforts are nothing without His Power. Jesus has ALL authority in Heaven and earth. The Greek word is *exousia* and means “the right to act, the power to act, permission to act, freedom of action.” The idea here is that Jesus Christ has the right and the might to do as He pleases. Jesus has the authority to do whatever He wants to do and receive from His followers anything He wants. What does Jesus want us to

do? “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.” Jesus wants us to go in His authority and disciple people from every nation. How do we disciple people? We teach them to observe everything He’s commanded us.

Did you see what Jesus wants us to become? Teachers! “Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” A disciple is one who knows based on learning and obedience. Jesus did not say, “Teaching them to observe all things that I have asked you to do.” He said “Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” A teacher is one who has obeyed the commands of their Lord and Savior and instructs others to do the same.

Jesus wants us to first follow Him in complete obedience, then teach others how to follow Him in complete obedience.

1. Jesus leads — we follow.
2. Jesus teaches — we learn.
3. Jesus commands — we obey.
4. Jesus gives us His authority to disciple nations — we teach others how to follow and obey Him.

So simple, yet so complex. The idea is magnificently simple, but it takes a lifetime of devotion and obedience to complete the task. Are you up for the challenge? I can't think of anything better to do with our lives than to trust and obey Jesus Christ.

A Disciple Is Not Alone

“Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.” Matthew 28:16-20

Have you ever wondered why some of the 11 disciples doubted? They are in the presence of the risen Christ. They’ve all seen Him, they’ve walked with Him, talked with Him, listened to Him, prayed with Him, eaten with Him, and touched Him. They know that Jesus died and they know He rose from the dead. So, why did they doubt? What did they doubt?

The Greek word translated “doubted ” is *edistan*. It means “double standing, to stand in two ways” and implies uncertainty and hesitation about which way to go. It’s the picture of a person standing where two paths meet and not knowing which one to choose. The word “hesitation” would be a better translation than “doubted.” All of the disciples worshiped Christ, but some “hesitated.”

Think about what they had just been through. The last five weeks of their life had been traumatic. Jesus was arrested. All the disciples ran for their lives. Jesus was tried, beaten and crucified. He died and was buried in a tomb guarded by Roman soldiers. They feared for their own lives. Their hopes and dreams for a Messianic Kingdom had been crushed. They didn't know what their future held for them and their families. Then, Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples many times. He told them about their mission on earth and that He was going back to Heaven to rule and reign.

Is it any wonder that some of His disciples would “hesitate” at the path Jesus was calling them to follow? Could they do it? Were they up to the challenge? Would they have the strength? Would they have the wisdom? How could they accomplish the great task placed before them? They stood where two paths met and they hesitated.

Where do we hesitate in our discipleship? What double paths are we facing right now that are causing us to pause in following God's Son? I doubt that many of us are facing the depth of challenges that caused some of the 11 disciples to hesitate, so why can't we move forward in our faith?

Hear what Jesus is saying to you. He has all authority, all power, so go — go and disciple your family, your neighbors, your school, your workplace, your community. And don't forget His wonderful promise: “and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

That reminds me of what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:9. He said that followers of Jesus Christ may be persecuted, but they will never be forsaken. Jesus has been with you, is with you, and will be with you, even to the end of the age. You are not alone. Jesus will never leave you. He will never forsake you. Take the path He wants you to walk and He will be with you. Always.

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