

## 6. Five requirements of the disciples of Jesus

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If you have been a Christian for sometime, you are familiar with the word 'disciple'. All of us have somewhat vague definitions of disciple, but the majority of us cannot clearly define its meaning if someone asks us to describe it right off our heads.

So what is 'disciple'? According to the dictionary I use, it is:

1. a follower of the doctrines of a teacher or a school of thought
2. one of the personal followers of Christ (including His 12 apostles) during His earthly life

If we accept the first definition, we can apply this to many different areas outside of Christianity as well. The group of people who like a certain philosopher can be called that philosopher's disciples; Or the group who follow a particular political ideology or leader also can be called the disciples of that political leader or ideology – such as the disciples of Marx and Lenin whom we know as communists.

But what does it take to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ? One thing I must make clear is that not every believer is a disciple of Jesus. We should be, but unfortunately a good number of born-again believers choose not to go all the way for their selfish reasons.

I find five requirements that every believer must make in becoming a disciple of Jesus. Let the Word of God speak to us clearly.

### A. TRANSITION

*John 1:35-37 Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. 36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.*

John the Baptist was the real deal when it comes to no selfish ambition of his own. He was happy to point out Jesus as the Lamb of God to his two disciples, John and Andrew. I wouldn't doubt for one moment that John the Baptist even encouraged them to follow the Lord and gave them his blessings. He truly lived up to what he preached. By doing so, he was fulfilling the call he had received from the Lord.

*John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.*

No matter what kind of denominational churches believers attend, they should be disciples of Jesus Christ. It is not unusual for some believers to be concerned about their denominations' traditions and rules over what the Lord says clearly in the Bible. What they do is no different than what the Pharisees did with their own traditions over God's law during Jesus' time in the first century.

Nothing wrong with admiring good Bible teachers. However, those Bible teachers are fallible humans, but infallible is Jesus the Son of God.

Every believer of Jesus Christ should make a transition to be a disciple of Him.

### B. EVALUATION

*John 1:38 Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?"*

It is worth noting that this was the first question recorded in Scripture that Jesus ever asked any person. But it was not just any casual question people throw at each other like, "Whatsup?"

I don't think that these two guys were expecting this question from Jesus. It might have caught them off guard for a few moments. When Jesus asked them, "What do you seek?", He was forcing them to define their purposes and goals. Were they looking for a revolutionary leader to go against the power of Rome or to satisfy their idle curiosity? As I said before they didn't expect it and they didn't realize that this was the new beginning of their spiritual journey.

We can ask the same question ourselves today. The answer some might give would be happiness. Others might say, "I am looking for success." Even others might say, "I am looking to be loved." And some would say, "I am looking for inner peace."

The question Jesus asked was not because He didn't know what they were looking for. It was for these two people's own benefit. It was meant to be a searching, probing, evaluating question dealing with motivation.

We find the same thing from the first question to the first couple that was done in the Garden of Eden.

*Genesis 3:9 Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?"*

Was God playing a peek-a-boo with Adam and Eve and He couldn't find them? Absolutely not. If so, He would not be an all-knowing God. The Lord was giving them one more chance to repent from their sin.

What do you seek in God? We all must evaluate our hearts seriously. Please don't ignore this question God asks us today. Is it our own comfort and convenience in our lives we seek, or the glory of God?

*2 Corinthians 13:5 Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you are disqualified.*

One of my favorite Christian authors, A. W. Tozer articulated it so well in one of his books, "The Pursuit of God":

"Complacency is a deadly enemy of spiritual growth. Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people. He wants to be wanted."

### **C. SUBMISSION**

*John 1:39 He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).*

All the transition and evaluation would be pointless if we don't submit to the Lord. A complete obedience to the Lord is the BEST WAY to keep ourselves in the right track with the Lord.

Can we do it completely? I haven't met or known anyone who has accomplished this, of course with the exception of Jesus Himself. We all struggle because of our sinful nature that gets in our way of total submission to the Lord. But we cannot give up; we must strive.

True disciples submit to the Lord's commandments that are in the Bible with everything they have. When they sin, they quickly ask the Lord to forgive them with sincere repentance. That is where our Lord's mercy and grace come in.

When these two, Andrew and author John who formerly were the disciples of John the Baptist submitted to Jesus' command, they could spend more time with the Lord and learned more about Him.

Let me show an interesting word here. The Greek words for 'staying' and 'remain' are the same word and it is 'meno' which the Lord Jesus also used in His Upper Room Discourse from chapter 13-17 after the last supper.

*John 15:4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.*

This is such a simple truth and many believers ignore it. It is impossible for any one of us to know the Lord Jesus without spending time with Him through His Word, the Bible and speaking to Him in prayers.

How can you remember the Word without making an effort to memorize them from the Bible? You may, "I forget." Join the club, we live in Green Valley or next door. Using the Bible as your pillow won't help. The more we learn about Him, the more desires we have to be right with Him by becoming holy and sanctified.

Jesus said, "Come and see." Now we don't know where Jesus was living at this time, but we do know from other verses of Scripture that He had no home to speak of. So Jesus was speaking to them on a deeper level. He was not just saying, "Come and see where I rest," but, "Come and see who I am. Come and see what I am all about."

And they saw indeed. Through his years with Jesus, John saw so many things as he had the privilege of personally walking and talking with the Lord for three years. And then of course, God gave John a great vision that became what we know as the Book of Revelation. Oh, he saw! Jesus said, "Come and see," and John saw so much.

Jesus is saying to you today, "Come on! Come see for yourself. Come investigate for yourself." You will see so much, too.

The rewards of knowing the Lord are phenomenal – His blessings, not necessarily in a monetary way, but abundant blessings from the Lord. The Lord will use you more and more to minister, to comfort, to encourage others and to bring glory to Himself. Isn't that the reason we exist?

#### **D. MISSION**

*John 1:40-42a One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.*

When I am ready to buy a certain product, I usually do quite a bit of research regarding that product through the internet. I read the reviews by other consumers more than what the manufacturers tell me. If I like what I see and heard, then I purchase it. After I receive it, I do my own 'hand-on' review. If I like it, I tell others about it.

After I received Jesus into my heart in 1987, I couldn't wait to tell others about Him. Though I didn't have tactfulness, nor any good method and knowledge of how to evangelize to other people about the Lord Jesus, I was just excited to tell them where they could find eternal hope and life.

Disciples of Jesus want to make other disciples.

Whenever we see Andrew in the Gospels of the NT, he always brought people to Jesus. His way was not complicated or fancy, but very effective and simple. He literally brought people to the Lord.

How we need more Andrews today! If we had more Andrews, we would have more Simon Peters. And it is so neglected. God's primary way of reaching people is through people. It always has been. And it always will be, more than massive evangelistic crusades in football stadiums.

Do you know someone who does not know the Lord Jesus? Of course, who doesn't, right? You may not know how to evangelize effectively, but do you have willingness, a car, and time? Guess what, you can do what Andrew did. Invite them to the church, pick them up from their home and bring them to the church. Let God speak to them. You do what Andrew did, and let the Lord do the rest.

## **E. TRANSFORMATION**

*John 1:42b Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).*

I love this verse. When I was saved, if someone told me that one day I would be a pastor, I would not believe it. Because a couple of years before I got saved, my wife Karen told me about the upcoming end of the world and showed me a book "Late Great Planet Earth" by Hal Lindsey. I brushed off her comment and told her that it will never happen. Guess who is laughing now?

The word 'look' in Greek is 'emlepo' which means 'gazed, look intently.' You might say He stared at Simon Peter. Just like when the Lord Jesus saw Simon, he also saw what he was going to be, He sees each believer's potential if we choose to obey Him.

Our Lord doesn't want His disciples to remain as they were, but grow and transform in Him.

Out of twelve disciples, Simon was the only one who got to have a new name from the Lord – Cephas. No, it is not 'Que Pasa'. Cephas means a small stone, I guess you can call him "Rocky."

If you know Peter from the Gospels, you know that he was not always a rock solid guy. He went from getting A+ in answering Jesus' question "Who do you think that I am?" in Matthew 16 to flunking right after that commendation by being called "Get behind me, satan." He totally went from Rocky to Sandy.

But the Lord Jesus saw Peter, empowered and filled by the Holy Spirit, preaching to the multitude in Acts 2. He saw Peter as a leader in the early church, the author of two NT epistles, the source for the Gospel of Mark, and displaying a rock solid faith in Christ to his death.

Disciples of Jesus bring forth transformation as they follow the Lord.

### **F. QUESTION**

Which one would you like to be? A believer who received a salvation from the Lord Jesus, but doing nothing and barely making into heaven or becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ who makes a transition to be a better believer in Him; evaluates oneself clearly and seriously; submits to the commandments of the Lord through the Bible; carries out missions to tell others about Jesus; and transforms by the power of the Holy Spirit to bring glory and honor to Him?

No one can answer for you except yourself. You don't have a whole lot of time, because Jesus is coming back soon. Redeem the time and live for the Lord.