

DISCIPLESHIP

(What Does It Mean To Follow Jesus?)

Introduction

This study focuses on what it means to follow Jesus. You may have already studied about how to become a Christian or this may precede that study, in either case this material is crucial in discovering what God expects from your life when you wear the name “Christian.” May God bless this time in His word.

Discipleship: Following Jesus

Acts 11:19 - 26

Who are called Christians in this text?
What does it mean to be a disciple?

Points to discuss.

Christians are Disciples.

If you are not a disciple of Jesus you are not a Christian.

If you are not a disciple of Jesus you are not saved

The importance of being a disciple.

How many times do you think the word “Christian” is used in the Bible? _____

The word “Disciple”? _____



began on Pentecost in Acts 2.

To be a true Christian you must be a disciple



The word “Christian” only occurs 3 times in the New Testament.

The word “disciple” occurs over 270 times in the New Testament.

This shows the emphasis the New Testament places on being a “disciple”. The term “Christian” was not used until about seven years AFTER the Church

There is no such thing as one level of commitment being a disciple and ANOTHER level of commitment being a Christian.

“The Disciples were first called Christians in Antioch” (Acts 11:26).

Luke 9:23 - 26

Who is Jesus speaking to?

What would it mean to “deny yourself?”

What was a cross used for in the times of Jesus?

What does Jesus mean to “take up your cross?”

What does it mean by the fact that Jesus adds the comment “daily?”

What does it mean to follow Jesus?

Points to discuss.

He said to them ALL: “If ANYONE...” Jesus is not speaking to a select few, to those who wanted to be extra committed; the call to be a disciple is the same for all people of all times.

HE MUST DENY HIMSELF - A person is not to go by feelings but by commitment to God. Most parents do not get up at 3:00 A.M. to look after a crying baby because they feel good about it **BUT BECAUSE THEIR LOVE FOR THE CHILD CARRIES WITH IT A DEEP COMMITMENT.**

Sometimes it is difficult to carry out ones commitment to God. A person may not feel like “going to church”, praying, etc. Yet, we need to carry out our commitment to God whether we feel like it or not.

We need to follow the example of Jesus in Gethsemane - Matt. 26:36 – 46: He did what He needed to - **NOT WHAT HE FELT LIKE.**

TAKE UP CROSS DAILY - Most people think a person is really committed if they attend church services regularly each week. **BUT**, the Bible says we must be followers of Jesus every single day - not merely on Sunday.

Luke 14:25 – 33

What does Jesus mean when he says “hate?” Matthew 10:37-38

List the three things necessary to be Jesus disciple.

Does Jesus say you are a disciple, a Christian, or saved if you aren't willing to make a commitment to Him in these three areas?

What kind of relationship does Jesus demand with you?

What does Jesus say needs to happen with sin, self and your selfish desires?

What does Jesus mean when he says that we must give up everything to be His disciple?

What is the point of the tower?

What is the point of the two kings?

Points to discuss.

IF ANYONE COMES...Jesus is not talking to a select few, but to ANYONE who wants to follow Him. Three times, in verses 26, 27, 33, Jesus says that if ANYONE refuses to accept these conditions HE CANNOT BE HIS DISCIPLE!!

Verses 28 - 30 - Counting the Cost

1. This is a parable about a man building a tower.
2. How foolish to start to build and then be unable to finish, how people ridicule such a person. Jesus is making this parable analogous to a person making the decision to become a Christian. A person needs to COUNT THE COST BEFORE THEY MAKE THE DECISION TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN.



Verse 31, 32 - Considering the alternatives of not building the tower (following Jesus)

1. This is a parable of two opposing armies.
2. The King with 20,000 represents God and Jesus.
3. The king with 10,000 represents you.
4. The person with 10,000 is going to get wiped out!!
5. Jesus is saying a person must consider the alternatives.



6. If a person chooses to make war with God (refuses to submit to His will) that person will be wiped out. But if a person makes peace (unconditionally surrenders to His will) then that person will be saved.

7. In parable one (THE TOWER) a person is urged to count the cost of FOLLOWING JESUS.
8. In parable two (THE TWO ARMIES) a person is asked to consider the consequences of NOT FOLLOWING JESUS.

Three Things Necessary to be Jesus' Disciple

UNRIVALED LOVE - Verse 26 - A person's love for Christ must be greater than for any other individual or thing. The word "hate" sometimes bothers people. The word in its context means, "to love less" (NOT ANIMOSITY). This concept is clearly set forth in Matt. 10:37 - 38. Jesus is saying in comparison to Him, we must love others less. The reason he chooses father, mother, brothers, sisters, wives, etc. is that these are the people who normally will have the greatest influences in our lives. A person must consider the reaction of their close family and friends to their decision to follow Jesus. Because people may find this a heavy concept when you share it with them, you need to consider the following:

1. One is not always called upon to make such a priority decision - in fact, becoming a Christian usually improves family relationships.
2. BUT ONE MUST BE WILLING TO MAKE SUCH A DECISION IF NEED BE!
3. This complete commitment to Christ should not be a strange concept to our thinking. In a wedding ceremony the bride and groom agree to a complete and exclusive relationship with one another. I know of no bride or groom that would be happy with even a 95% commitment with 5% of the exclusive relationship being shared with other individuals.

UNCEASING DYING - Verse 27 - ANYONE who does not carry his cross. A person must be willing to die to self and selfish desires and even be willing to suffer persecutions and hardships for their Savior, Jesus.

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER - Verse 33 - A person must be willing to give up EVERYTHING, not just ANYTHING. This is a good place to discuss what specific areas need to be turned over to God's control.

1. A Christian ought to be the best employee or student they can be.
2. A Christian ought to strive for excellence in whatever they do.
3. But a person cannot compromise their Christian commitment; Christ must be the NUMBER ONE PRIORITY of their lives.
4. **Jesus becomes the owner** of your life, relationships, possessions and future. You are now the manager under God's ownership.

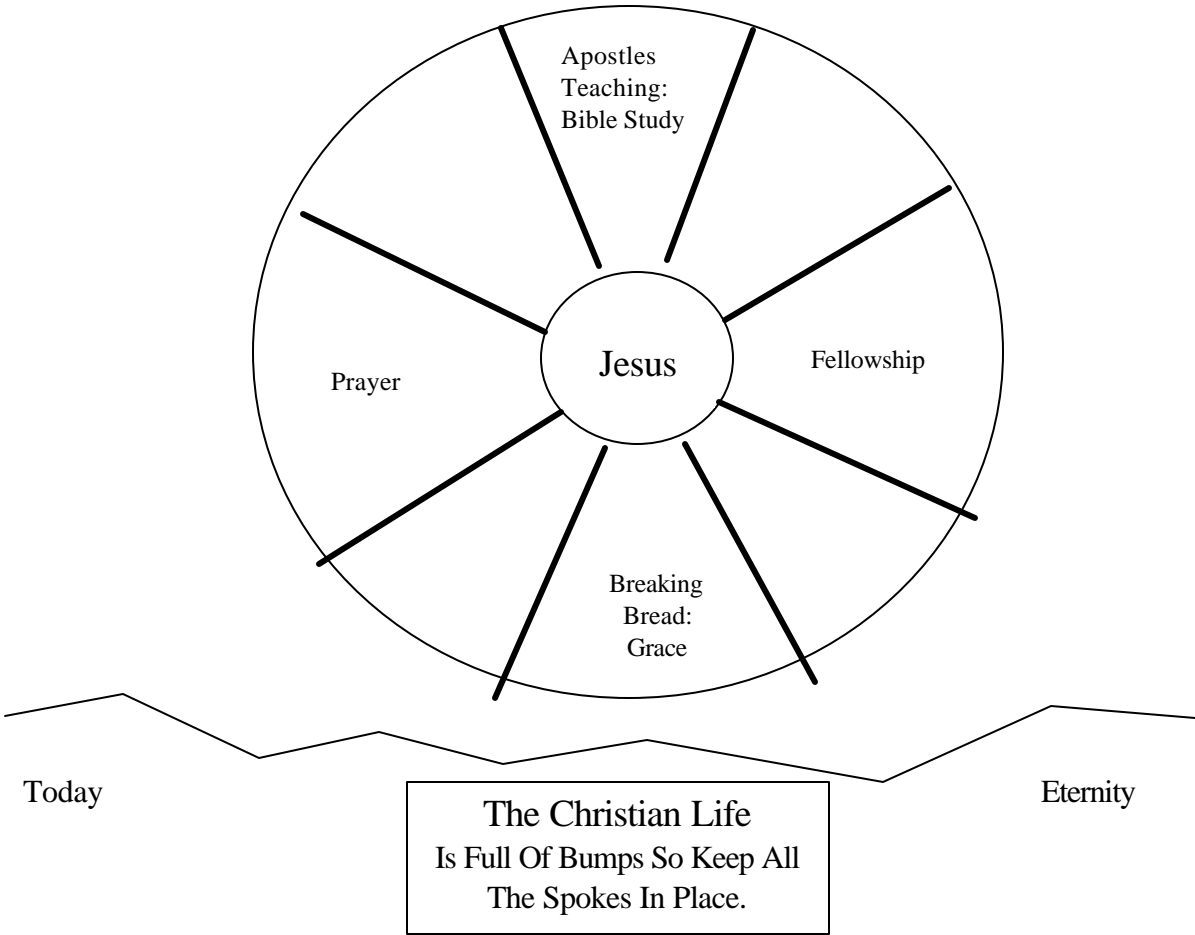


Example of the first disciples: Acts 2:42-47

- Who is being talked about in this text?
- What does it mean to devote yourself to something?
- What four things did they devote themselves to?
- What do each of these four areas mean?

Points to discuss.

Since the first Christians, disciples, devoted themselves to the apostles teaching (Bible study), fellowship (Christian relationships), breaking of bread (Lord’s supper and the concept of grace), and prayer we should devote ourselves to the same things. Consider the following illustration:



We must be willing to devote ourselves to the same degree and the same commitments that our brothers and sisters in the Bible did if we are to truly be a disciple, a Christian.

Are you biblically a disciple of Jesus? If “NO” then what will you do to become a disciple? How can those in this study help you be a true disciple of Jesus?