

Discipleship: What is Involved in Following Christ?

Constructing a Study of Discipleship

- What is a *disciple*? Blue Letter Bible (type 'disciple'). ISBE & Vine. And Greek words translated 'disciple' (Thayer).
- **Search references** to 'disciple'. x273 (Bible). x1 (**OT**), Hebrew word (Isa. 50). **NT**: John (x81). *All in Matthew-Acts. Categorise the references. Groups (Moses/John/Pharisees). Individuals (Ananias). Character. Cost.*
- **Search** repositories of sound material. *BM (Ray Dawes). Precious Seed. STEM. Books: MacDonald.*
- Disciple = *mathetes*, 'a learner'. *Luke 6.40: Students (disciples) are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher. Learning from Him to become like Him. Manifest His life. What He values, I value. His priorities are my priorities. Total devotion to His will.*
- **Christ** is the True Disciple. Isa. 50.4. Ear to *listen* to His Father that He might *speak* His words and *do* His will. John 12.50. He is not *like* the Father (exact impress of Divine nature). *He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.*
- 'disciple' = *often* refers to the twelve (apostles). But there was a *wider circle* of adherents (John 6.66-69). Christ was an *exciting new* teacher and miracle worker. Loose attachment (commitment). For bread. Easy life.
- 'went back' (renounced). Not appealing to follow a rejected Christ going to Calvary. **[Evan Hopkins quote]**
- Why no mention after Acts? Acts 11.26: 'Christians' – distinguishing name given to the disciples by the Holy Spirit (called = as by an oracle). Disciples = a *particular* name to describe believers when Christ was on earth. Imitation.

Character of True Disciples

- **Love** the Son of God. John 15.8: We prove to be true disciples by bearing fruit, and that by *abiding* in Him (v.5). *More than knowing Christ as Saviour. Captivated with Him. Draw life from Him. Communion. John 1.39: (Andrew, John). Where dwellest thou? Come and see. Abode with Him that day. Desire for His presence.*
- **Love** the children of God. John 13.34-35. High standard. As I have loved you. Unconditional self-sacrifice for the benefit of others. *Received one another (socially). Greeted one another. Edified one another. Served one another. Carried one another's burdens. Endured and forgave one another. Did not bite and devour one another.*
- **Love** the word of God. *John 8.31: Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue (abide, remain, persevere) in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. True disciples love, value and obey Scripture.*
- Martha: *distracted* with serving. *Beware of the barrenness of a busy life.* Mary: *Sat at His feet. Do you read it? Do you study it? Do you attend teaching meetings? Acts 2: Received his word were baptised.*

Cost of True Discipleship

- **Sacrifice.** Luke 9.23. 'let him (at once) deny himself' = dethrone self; enthrone Christ. No seeking of personal ambitions, but His glory. Not self-denial (food). But foregoing what is legitimate for the sake of Christ. *St John: Conference. Warm. Teenage girl swimming. Lose a precious opportunity. Deny yourself a little thing... Moses: offered position, pleasure and prosperity in Egypt. Heb. 11.25-26: Choosing rather to suffer affliction...*
- **Suffering.** 'take up his (own) cross' = hundreds of insurrectionists crucified in Galilee. Under sentence of death. Shame. Condemnation. Take a daily place of association (shame) with a rejected (despised) Lord and Saviour.
- **Stamina.** Luke 14.26. Great multitudes with Him. Uncompromising. Severe. Challenging terms of discipleship. 'hate not' = Matt. 10.37 uses 'love more than'. Christ must have *supreme* place in our affections.
 1. Building. Consider the *cost*. Do you have the commitment to *finish*? Incomplete building = failure. Shameful.
 2. Warfare. Consider the *enemy*. Do you have the commitment to *fight*? No compromise with the enemy.
- v.33: Cost = **everything**. Christ is not interested in superficial, self-seeking, half-hearted (committed) disciples. He demands all. All a man *has* and *is*. Anything less is good for nothing (v.34). Did Christ give less?

Comparison of Two Disciples [Failing and Faithful]

- **Peter.** v.15: 'lovest thou me more than *these*' = the disciples. *Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.* Self-confidence (arrogance) = root of his failure. He thought he was stronger, better, more devoted than others. *1 Cor. 10.12: Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed (beware) lest he fall.* Christ *prayed* for Him. He was *penitent*. He made *private* confession and *public* restoration.
- **Mnason** (Acts 21.16). An 'old disciple'. Old = early; a disciple of long-standing; one of the original band. 'with whom we should lodge' = hospitality. Value the presence (experience) of such. [*Mnason* = remembering]
- Disciple of long-standing. Many have disappeared. Will ye also go away? Lord to whom shall we go?