

## BEING A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

**Matthew 28:18-20**

**(Not entirely original with me)**

**Introduction:** The word "disciple" appears many times in the New Testament and Jesus called His followers "disciples." Some of the last words Jesus spoke to His "disciples" were instructions to go out into the world and make more "disciples." Just what/who is a "disciple" according to Jesus' expectations?

### I. WHAT/WHO IS A DISCIPLE?

1. The definition of "Disciple:"
  - The word literally means a "learner."
  - In today's understanding it would mean "one who follows another's teaching."
  - A disciple not only learns, but also supports that which is learned.
  - Disciples are to be imitators of their teachers.
2. The purpose of one being a "Disciple."
  - Jesus said that a "disciple" was to imitate his/her teacher. (Luke 6:40)
  - To be a disciple of Jesus Christ is to work at being like Him.
  - Paul reminds believers that it is God's plan for believers in Jesus to be conformed to His Son's image, likeness. (Romans 8:29)
3. How strong is YOUR desire to be like Jesus? Remember, all TRUE disciples of Jesus work at being just like Him.

### II. WHAT ARE THE SIGNS THAT ONE IS A DISCIPLE?

1. A true disciple is a person who remains faithful to what Jesus says. (John 8:31)
  - A disciple is one who steadily studies the teachings of Jesus.
  - A disciple not only studies the teachings of Jesus, but actually puts into practice in his/her everyday life what he/she has learned about Jesus. (Matthew 7:21-27; James 1:21-25)
  - There are some things that a real, genuine disciple would not do:
    - Fail to study God's Word steadily.
    - Deliberately refrain from the opportunity to study God's Word with others, such as Sunday School classes, hearing sermons, attending revival services, etc.
2. A true disciple is a person who loves his/her fellow Christians. (John 13:34-35)
  - True disciples love each other after Jesus' example.
  - They love each other with a love that is clearly visible, not some secret thing.
  - Some things a true disciple would do for his/her fellow Christians:
    - Make every effort to get to know that fellow brother/sister.
    - Try to encourage them and get to know them as well as possible.
  - A true disciple wants to become just like Jesus in all ways.
    - Jesus was willing to sacrifice time and effort for others.
    - If Jesus sacrificed time and effort for others, so will true disciples.
3. A true disciple produces much "fruit." (John 15:8)
  - "MUCH" fruit
  - Not just now and then doing something worthwhile.

- A lifestyle in which others are encouraged to also live for Jesus. (Matthew 5:16)
- Failure for the disciple to not bear a lot of fruit will bring separation from the Lord. (John 15:1-2)
- How can one be a true disciple if he/she isn't in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ?
- Being a true disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ requires COMMITMENT:
  - Commitment to the teachings of the Lord Jesus.
  - Commitment to loving all other Christians.
  - Commitment to bearing fruit to the glory of the Lord all the time.

### **III. IT COSTS TO BE A TRUE DISCIPLE**

1. Jesus has to be one's priority, He must come first. (Luke 14:16)
  - Jesus must come before one's own family and anyone else. (Matthew 10:34-37)
  - Jesus must come even before one's own self. (Luke 9:23-25)
2. One must be willing to suffer for the Lord Jesus. (Luke 14:27)
  - In trying to live like Jesus in this ungodly world, one will often find ridicule and even persecution. (2 Timothy 3:12)
  - No matter what happens or does not happen, one must always be willing to spend time and effort in promoting the cause of the Lord Jesus in every positive way possible.
3. In plain language, one must forsake everything in order to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. (Luke 14:33)
  - Jesus must be KING and LORD of one's life at all times.
  - Nothing whatsoever can be more important than Jesus and what His will is for one.
4. The cost of being a true disciple of Jesus is high and therefore many turn away and are weak, puny disciples, if a disciple at all.

### **IV. THERE ARE REWARDS FOR BEING A TRUE DISCIPLE**

1. There is the promise of blessings to come in the future.
  - Disciples will be saved from God's wrath which is yet to come. (Romans 5:9)
  - There is joyful anticipation for the disciple of the coming eternity free from sorrow, pain and death. (Revelation 21:1-8)
2. There are blessings to be had every day.
  - Jesus gives peace which the world just cannot give to one with a troubled heart. (John 14:27)
  - Jesus' words inspire and fill one with joy and lifts one's spirits out of any depression. (John 15:11)
  - Jesus offers His disciples the continuing love of God which casts out one's fears. (John 15:9; 1 John 4:18)
  - Jesus makes it possible for disciples (believers) to be members of God's family. (Mark 10:28-30)
  - There are countless other blessings which true disciples of Jesus enjoy.

### **V. HOW DOES ONE START BEING A DISCIPLE?**

1. Obviously the first step is to become a Christian and that is believing in the Lord Jesus Christ and then comes BAPTISM. (Matthew 28:19)
  - Why be baptized?
    - The goal of being a disciple is to be like Jesus.
    - Jesus was holy and sinless, yet a true disciple still tries and wants to be like Him.

- Baptism is described as an act of obedience, of faith by which one publicly declares his/her belief in and identification with the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4)
  - Baptism also symbolizes one "putting on Jesus Christ." (Galatians 3:27)
  - What exactly is Baptism?
    - It is an act of obedience which is of course preceded by faith in Jesus and repentance of one's sins. (Acts 2:36-38; 8:36-37)
      - No infant baptism is recognized for infants are incapable of believing and repenting.
    - It is an act of submission which involves a "burial" in water, in which one then rises out of the water and then begins to walk in a new life empowered by God. (Acts 8:38; Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12)
    - Pouring or sprinkling IS NOT baptism.
    - "Baptidzo" is the Greek word used in the New Testament for baptism and the word means to bury, immerse, submerge.
  - Baptism, according to the New Testament is an act of faith on the believer's part which begins that person's new life empowered by God.
    - One's sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus. (Acts 22:16; Ephesians 5:25-27)
    - One is "regenerated" and "renewed" by the Holy Spirit who indwells the believer so he/she can live for the Lord Jesus.
    - Baptism is a "rebirth" that involves both water and the Holy Spirit. (John 3:5)
2. After Baptism, teaching and obedience must follow. (Matthew 28:20)
- Jesus clearly says:
    - Believers are to be taught how to be learners.
    - Believers are to watch, observe, listen, and be "doers" of what Jesus did and says.
  - True disciples work at living a life devoted to learning and doing all that Jesus did and commanded.

## CONCLUSION:

1. Sadly, not every person who says "I'm a Christian" is a true dedicated disciple of the Lord Jesus.
2. True Disciples can look forward to the rewards of being a sincere, loyal disciple of Jesus and know for certain that Jesus "...will be with them always, even to the end of the age..." (Matthew 28:20)
3. What kind of a Disciple of Jesus are YOU?