

# Disciple - Mathetes (Greek Word Study)

"And Jesus came up 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 the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." - Matthew 28:18-20

And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came about that for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers; and the **disciples** were first called **Christians** in Antioch. - Acts 11:26

**Disciples** ([3101](#)) (**mathetes** from **manthano** = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "*mathematics*") describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf **inductive Bible study**) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher. As discussed below **mathetes** itself has no spiritual connotation, and it is used of superficial followers of Jesus as well as of genuine believers.

John MacArthur notes that **mathetes** is derived from **manthano** which "carries the connotation of intentional learning by inquiry and observation."

May the simple words of the hymn writer Phillip Bliss be the continual cry of our heart and our soul and our mind, all for His glory. Amen...

At the feet of Jesus  
Is the place for me,  
There, a humble learner,  
Would I choose to be.  
—P. P. Bliss.

## Related Resources:

- **Word study on [matheteuo - make disciples](#)**
- **Related resource: ["Disciple" in Bible Dictionaries](#)**

A Chinese Proverb is very apropos regarding Jesus call to His disciples to go and make disciples - "Give a man a fish, and he eats for a day; teach him to fish, and he eats for the rest of his life." This is the very reason I strongly encourage you to learn and practice the discipline of **inductive Bible study**, for in so doing you will be equipped to "feed yourself" for the rest of your life on earth!

**Ralph Earle** - As **followers** of Jesus we are to be, first of all, **learners**. We are to learn from Him by listening to Him, learn the truth that will set us free (John 8:32) and keep us from error. But we are also to learn from Him by looking at Him- learn how to live a life of beauty and blessing. (Word Meanings in the New Testament)

**Barclay** writes that "All his life a Christian should be learning more and more about Jesus. The shut mind is the end of discipleship!" ([Matthew 5 Commentary - Daily Study Bible](#))

**Mounce** - Typically in the Jewish world, a disciple would voluntarily join a school or otherwise seek out a master rabbi; however, Jesus seeks out and chooses those whom he wants as his disciples (Mk 1:17; 2:14; Lk 5:1–11; cf. Mt 4:18–21). A dedicated disciple was generally expected someday to become a rabbi himself, yet Jesus teaches his disciples that he will always be their rabbi and they will have a lifetime of discipleship (Mt 23:8; cf. Mt 10:24–25, 37; Lk 14:26–27; Jn 11:16). Jesus' disciples are bound to him and to God's will (Mt 12:46–50; cf. Mk 3:31–45). They are called to a lifetime of work and service (Mt 16:15–19; Mk 1:17; Lk 5:10), (Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old & New Testament words: Zondervan)

**TDNT** - **mathetes** is regularly used in Acts for a Christian as such... As regards the material aspect of the use of **mathetes** for Christians in Acts, the primary point to notice is that the relevant sections of Acts use it in the sense of those who have come to believe in Christ. In this respect the usage is analogous to that of John's Gospel.

**NIDNTT** - A man is called a mathētēs when he binds himself to someone else in order to acquire his practical and theoretical knowledge. He may be an apprentice in a trade, a student of medicine, or a member of a philosophical school. One can only be a mathētēs in the company of a **didaskalos**, a master or teacher, to whom the mathētēs since the days of the Sophists generally had to pay a fee. An obvious exception to this is when mathētēs refers to spiritual dependence on a thinker long since dead. Socrates never wanted to have any mathētēs and never regarded himself as a didaskalos... It is used to indicate total attachment to someone in discipleship (**Ed**: But see distinction below between a true disciple and a pseudo-disciple of Jesus). The secular Gk.

usage of the word in the sense of apprentice, pupil or student is not found... **Mathētēs** in Jn. is often simply a term for "**Christian**" (Jn. 8:31; 13:35; 15:8)... mathētēs has the general sense of "Christian", one who believes in Jesus

**Tony Evans** - The Greek philosopher Plato developed a system of thought that bears his name. Then he trained his young disciple Aristotle in this system of Platonic philosophy. Aristotle built on Plato's teaching and developed his own system known as Aristotelian logic. Aristotle then established schools called academies to train more disciples. This Greek discipleship system was very effective, because even after Rome conquered Greece, the Romans could not eradicate Greek influence. So while Rome wielded military power, the Greeks wielded power over the culture because well-trained Greek disciples were functioning at every level of the society. These people lived under Roman rule, but their thinking was Greek. And in the end, what people think is a lot more important and powerful than what an external power can force them to do. This helps us understand why Jesus commissioned the church to make disciples. When it's done right, the disciple becomes a follower for life because the real battle for souls is waged in the mind. A well-trained disciple can live in a foreign, hostile culture without succumbing to that culture because his mind is fixed on another world. (**God's Glorious Church : The Mystery and Mission of the Body of Christ**)

**Bridgeway Bible Dictionary** - During the lifetime of Jesus there were many who considered themselves his disciples. That is, they followed him and listened to his words, as pupils might listen to a teacher. Although these people may have thought Jesus to be the Messiah, many of them had a wrong understanding of the sort of person the Messiah would be. They expected him to be a political leader who would free the Jews from Roman domination and bring in the golden age (John 6:14-15; John 6:60-64). When they found that Jesus was not this kind of leader, they withdrew from him (John 6:66-68). Yet there were many, probably hundreds, who were true believers, true disciples (Luke 6:17; Luke 6:20). From these, Jesus chose twelve whom he appointed apostles (Luke 6:13; see APOSTLE). These twelve were Jesus' disciples in a special sense, and became known as the twelve disciples or simply the disciples (Matthew 16:13; Matthew 20:17; Matthew 24:3; Matthew 26:17). After the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, all the followers of Jesus became known as disciples (Acts 1:15; Acts 6:1; Acts 9:1), and later as Christians (Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 4:16; see CHRISTIAN). ([Disciple](#))

In simple terms a **disciple** is a **follower** and so we often see Jesus say "**Follow Me!**" (Mt 4:19, 8:22, 9:9, 16:24, 19:21, Mk 1:17, 2:14, 8:34, 10:21 Lk 5:27, 9:23, 59, 18:22 Jn1:43, 10:27, 12:26, 13:36, 21:19, 22) And so in the Bible we see that **John the Baptist** (Mt 11:2; Mk 2:18; Lk 5:33; 7:18; Jn 3:25) had followers or disciples, as did the **Pharisees** (Mk 2:18, Mt 22:16 disciples of Pharisees were sent to test Jesus) and **Moses** (Jn 9:28). It follows that it becomes clear that not every use of **disciple** in the NT describes a genuine believer. On the other hand the NT makes it clear that every genuine believer is a disciple of Jesus Christ. I realize that there are many in the evangelical community who separate believers from disciples, but as shown below clearly Dr Luke equated believers with disciples, the latter being the most common term he used in the Book of Acts to describe Christians. (Acts 6:1, 2, 7; 9:1, 10, 19, 26, 38; 11:26, 29; 13:52; 14:20, 22, 28; 15:10; 16:1; 18:23, 27; 19:1, 9, 30; 20:1, 30; 21:4, 16).

The words of Jesus would also substantiate that our Lord Himself equated a call to follow Him (discipleship) with salvation declaring "with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it." (Mark 8:34-35) I realize that there are some evangelical commentators who tend to "soften" Jesus' words by saying He is referring to loss of rewards, not loss of eternal life, but this is a teaching with which I adamantly disagree as do other evangelical writers.

**Nelson Study Bible** - To preserve one's life eternally, one must surrender earthly possessions and relationships held so dearly (see Matt. 16:24-27).

**ESV Study Bible** - Jesus' paradoxical statement demands two different senses of the word "life": whoever lives a self-centered life focused on this present world (i.e., **would save his life**) will not find eternal life with God (**will lose it**); whoever gives up his self-centered life of rebellion against God (**loses his life**) for the sake of Christ and the gospel will find everlasting communion with God (**will save it**; see v. 38).

**Charles Ryrie** - The verse (Mk 8:35) means this: Whoever would save his life (by renouncing the gospel and thus avoiding the risk of martyrdom) will lose it (eternally, because he has not believed the gospel); but whoever is willing to lose his life (as a martyr for Christ) will save it (i.e., will prove that he is a follower of Christ and an heir of eternal life).

**Alan Carr** - Jesus tells the gathered crowd that there is a high price attached to being His follower. The words of Jesus in these verses strike a death blow to the cheap, easy, feel good religion that is being passed off as Christianity in these days. Many believe they can have Jesus and the world too. Many believe they can claim to be followers of Christ, while they live their lives as they please. Jesus lets us know in no uncertain terms that such notions are utterly false....True salvation, however is not some form of "easy believing" that leaves you unchanged. True salvation, when it happens in your life, will make such a radical change in your life that you will begin to act like a different person. Your desires and habits will change. Your interests and commitments will change....A paradox is a statement that seems contradictory, but is still true. Jesus says that if you believe that having your own way, living life on your own terms and being your own lord is more important than surrendering to His Lordship, you will lose

your life. However, if you will yield your life to Him, giving up total control over all you have and are to Him, you will actually save it. From a human perspective this makes no sense, but from heaven's viewpoint, nothing else makes sense. You have a choice. You can live your life as you see fit. You can refuse to come to Jesus Christ for salvation. You can call all the shots. You can be your own boss. You can do as you please, living your life on your own terms, but in the end, you will lose your life. When you reach the end of your way, you will find that there is nothing but an eternity in Hell waiting for you.

**John MacArthur** - This paradoxical saying reveals an important spiritual truth: those who pursue a life of ease, comfort, and acceptance by the world will not find eternal life. On the other hand, those who give up their lives for the sake of Christ and the gospel will find it. Cf. Jn 12:25.

**NLT Study Bible** - If you try to hang on to (literally save) your life by keeping it from Jesus, you will lose it in the next world. But if you lose it to Jesus and his cause (the spread of the Good News), you will save it forever.

**C D Alexander** rightly stated that "Conversion without discipleship is openly implied in much of our evangelical teaching. It has become strangely possible to be Christ's without taking up the cross."

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer** said that "Salvation without discipleship is 'cheap grace'."

**John Drummond** asks a pithy question - Did you ever stop to ask what a yoke is really for? Is it to be a burden to the animal which wears it? It is just the opposite. It is to make its burden light. Attached to the oxen in any other way than by a yoke the plough would be intolerable. Worked by means of a yoke it is light. A yoke is not an instrument of torture; it is an instrument of mercy. It is not a malicious contrivance for making work hard; it is a gentle device to make hard labor light. It is not meant to give pain, but to save pain. And yet men speak of the yoke of Christ as if it were a slavery and look upon those who wear it as objects of compassion.

**David Watson** was spot on when he said "If we were willing to learn the meaning of real discipleship and actually to become disciples, the church in the West would be transformed and the resultant impact on society would be staggering."

In the ancient world a **disciple** would attach himself to another person in order to gain practical or theoretical knowledge by instruction or experience. It was a word used of apprentices learning a trade as well as students learning a teacher's philosophy. Discipleship was a popular concept among the Jews of Jesus' day. It was often the custom for the disciples to leave their natural home and move in with their teacher, who would provide their food and lodging. The disciple would become his servant and be completely under their teacher's authority. Their goal was to learn all that their teacher knew so that they might become like him in character and later be able to faithfully transmit his teachings to others.

Jesus, I my cross have taken,  
All to leave and follow Thee;  
Destitute, despised, forsaken, Thou, from hence, my all shalt be:  
I will follow Thee, my Saviour  
Thou didst shed Thy blood for me,  
And though all the world forsake Thee,  
By Thy grace I'll follow Thee.  
-H. F. Lyte

**G Campbell Morgan** in his helpful little book **Discipleship** writes that...

**Disciples** is the term consistently used in the four Gospels to mark the relationship existing between Christ and His **followers** (**Ed:** In fact "**followers of Christ**" is a synonym for disciples of Christ.). Jesus used it Himself in speaking of them, and they in speaking of each other. Neither did it pass out of use in the new days of Pentecostal power. It runs right through the Acts of the Apostles (**Ed:** **Disciples** is the most common term for the believers in Acts!). It is interesting also to remember that it was in this way that the angels thought and spoke of these men -- the use of the word (disciple) in the days of the Incarnation is linked to the use of the word in the apostolic age by the angelic message to the women, "*Go, tell His Disciples and Peter*" (Mark 16:7).

It is somewhat remarkable that the word is not to be found in the Epistles. This is to be accounted for by the fact that the Epistles were addressed to Christians in their corporate capacity as churches, and so spoke of them as members of such, and as the "**saints**" or separated ones of God. The term **disciple** marks an individual **relationship** (which is a state of being related by kindred, association by blood or marriage - believers are both His both by blood of the New Covenant and by virtue of being His Bride!), and though it has largely fallen out of use, it is of the utmost value still in marking that **relationship** existing between Christ and each individual soul, and suggesting our consequent position in **all** the varied circumstances of everyday living...

The word **mathetes** signifies a taught or trained one, and gives us the ideal of **relationship**. Jesus is the Teacher. He has all knowledge of the ultimate purposes of God for man, of the will of God concerning man, of the laws of God that mark for man the path of his progress and final crowning. **Disciples** are those who gather around this Teacher and are trained by Him. Seekers after truth, not merely in the abstract, but as a life force, come to Him and join the circle of those to whom He reveals these great secrets of all true life. Sitting at His feet, they learn from the unfolding of His lessons the will and ways of God for them; and obeying (**Ed**: Now enabled by His indwelling Spirit) each successive word, they realize within themselves, the renewing force and uplifting power thereof. The true and perpetual condition of discipleship, and its ultimate issue, were clearly declared by the Lord Himself to those Jews which believed on Him. "If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples ; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free " (John 8:31). ([Discipleship - a worthy read](#))

## FALSE VERSUS TRUE DISCIPLES OF JESUS

As used in the NT, **mathetes** was not a guarantee that the person called a **disciple** was truly saved. There are two excellent examples of this caveat among those who ostensibly at first glance were classified as disciples of Jesus. The most obvious false disciple of Jesus was **Judas Iscariot**, a man who masqueraded for 3 years as a disciple or follower of Jesus but was never truly saved for he failed to remain with Jesus, John recording that "after receiving the morsel he went out immediately and it was night." (Jn 13:30)

**John** describes another, larger group of "*disciples*" in John 6 writing that...

Many therefore of His **disciples**, when they heard this (**Ed**: Jesus' teaching on salvation in Jn 6:51, 53-58) said, "This is a difficult (Greek = skleros = rough, stiff or figuratively something harsh, unpleasant or hard to accept) statement; who can listen to it?" (**Ed**: Not because it was *incomprehensible* but because it was *unacceptable*! It was dawning on these "pseudo-disciples" that following Jesus meant far more than just "hanging around" Him looking for miracles!)... 66 As a result of this **many** of His **disciples** withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore. (Jn 6:60, 66)

**Comment:** Those who were called **His** (Jesus') **disciples** in John 6:60 had simply attached themselves to Jesus, their attachment implying nothing about their sincerity or devotion (see their action in Jn 6:66!). As an aside, note the critical importance of the **context** in determining the actual meaning of a specific Greek word. Whenever you are performing Greek or Hebrew word studies, you must always examine the context lest you arrive at an incorrect interpretation of the meaning of the word in that specific passage.

And so we observe that in the preceding context Jesus had been teaching the crowds about genuine salvation using metaphors of **bread**, His **blood** and His **body**. While the interpretation of the exact meaning is somewhat difficult, what is not difficult is that many so-called "**disciples**" who heard Jesus rejected His teaching of salvation through His blood. They had apparently been attracted to Jesus the "miracle worker" and had the hope that He would deliver them from Roman rule (Jn 6:14-15). However, they were not sincerely devoted to Jesus. John 6:66 uses Greek language (eg, the word for "not" is the strongest negative and speaks of complete and permanent change) which makes it clear that their withdrawal was not temporary but as **MacArthur** says an "*abandonment (that) was decisive and final* (cf. 1Pe 2:6-8; 1Jn 2:19)." Or as the **ESV Study Bible** says "*Their initial "faith" was not genuine.*" That's an interesting statement about "faith" because it implies that there is a type of "faith" that does not save a person, a mere intellectual belief is the idea (see study of Greek word for faith - **pistis**). In short these **disciples** in John 6:60 were not genuine believers or genuine disciples of Jesus. As **F F Bruce** succinctly stated (quoted by MacArthur)...

*"What they wanted, He would not give;  
what He offered, they would not receive!"*

**John MacArthur** on the "**disciples**" who permanently withdrew from Jesus: Their reaction is typical **offalse disciples**: as long as they perceived Jesus to be a source of healing, free food, and deliverance from enemy oppression, the self-serving disciples flocked to Him. But when He demanded that they acknowledge their spiritual bankruptcy, confess their sin, and commit themselves to Him as the only source of salvation, they became offended and left. Like countless other false disciples throughout the history of the church, they followed Jesus for what they thought they could get from Him. True disciples, on the other hand, come to Christ poor in spirit (Mt 5:3), mourning over their sin (Mt 5:4), and hungering and thirsting for the righteousness that only He can supply (Mt 5:6). Our Lord left nothing to doubt when He identified the elements of true

discipleship (see Luke 9:23, 24, 25; cp Mt 10:34-39)

**Vance Havner** - Our Lord had no confidence in **superficial disciples** who did not count the cost. Crowds did not deceive Him. We measure a minister by the size of his crowd, but in the sixth chapter of John the Lord Jesus preached a crowd away! They could not bear His sermon on the bread of life and fell away until only the irreducible minimum of **faithful disciples** remained, and even they were puzzled. Again in Luke 14:25-33, another multitude followed Him, but He knew they did not mean business, so He turned upon them with that terrific challenge to forsake everything, and with the two illustrations of not counting the cost: the foolish builder, and the king going to war. Sifting church members through that sifter, one finds plenty of chaff today!

**Vance Havner** - Our Lord made discipleship hard and lost many prospective followers because he called them to a pilgrimage, not to a parade—to a fight, not to a frolic.

**J C Ryle** - As the soldier follows his general, as the servant follows his master, as the scholar follows his teacher, as the sheep follows its shepherd, just so ought the professing Christian to follow Christ.

## THE TEST OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

If John 6:66 illustrates one aspect of **false versus genuine discipleship** (false disciples depart and no longer walk with Jesus), John 8:30-32 illustrates another aspect, defining the mark of **genuine faith** and the test of a **true disciple**. John records that...

As He spoke these things, many (He is speaking to a Jewish audience) came to **believe** in Him (**Ed**: If we stopped here, we would conclude that these Jews were not genuine believers in Jesus Christ. But Jesus knows the heart and does not desire for anyone to be deceived by a superficial faith that does not save). **31** Jesus therefore (**Ed**: Why "therefore"? Because He is assessing their "belief" - is it genuine saving faith or superficial spurious faith?) was saying to those Jews who had **believed** Him, "If ("**If**" introduces the Condition) you abide (**present tense** = as your lifestyle, not **perfection** but **direction** is the idea) in My word, then (Now we see the promise) you are truly disciples of Mine **32** and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (Jn 8:30-32)

**Comment**: In this passage notice that the Lord Jesus clearly associates **belief** with **discipleship**. The verb translated "**abide**" means to remain or stay (in a given place, state or relation) and introduces a conditional statement which can be paraphrased "**If you continue...**". As noted the **present tense** pictures abiding as the habitual practice of one's life, as the general direction of one's life (not perfection because no one except Jesus abides perfectly). In other words Jesus is saying this is something that remains to be seen. He is saying in essence that if they are truly genuine believers (if they are truly "rooted" in Him so to speak), their "fruit" will demonstrate that they are "the real thing!" What is the "**fruit**" in this passage? Abiding or remaining in His Word. Jesus is saying that if these "believers" remain or continue in His teaching, **then** (this is the fulfillment of the conditional sentence) it proves they are genuine disciples, genuine believers. The authentication of a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ is that they will not depart from the Word of God but instead continue in His Word. To continue to abide in His Word in turn means they keep on believing the Word, keep on following the Word and keep on ordering their life according to His Word. Does this sound like works based salvation? One might misread it that way. Jesus is not saying that they merit or gain their status as a genuine disciple by their self effort but that the general pattern of their life of abiding in His Word (including obeying His Word) is made possible because they are new creations, with a new desire for holy things including especially His Holy Word. In other words Jesus is saying that their endurance shows that they are genuine believers, "truly disciples" Jesus.

In summary, Jesus states that **genuine disciples** will in fact continue or remain in His Word, whereas **false disciples** ultimately will reject His word as actually did happen in John 6:66 and later in this same encounter recorded in John 8:30-59. Their "rotten fruit" in Jn 8:37, 43, 47, 58 proves they had only a superficial and non-saving faith! Clearly these Jews who "believed" in Jesus were not true believers or true disciples because they did not continue in His Word. James would have said they needed to show him their faith by their works and their works were evil not good (See James 2:14-26-**notes**). These "believing" Jews in John 8:30 would be like those individuals Jesus warned about in Mt 7:21-23 who

**Leon Morris** - John is speaking of people who had made an outward profession, but a profession that did not go very deep. Jesus' words, then, are meant to drive home to formal and casual adherents the **meaning of true discipleship**. If people in any sense believe in Jesus it is important that they come to see what real faith

means... The key word here is "abide" (NIV paraphrases with "hold to my teaching"; the Greek means "abide in my word"). It is easy enough to be superficially attracted to Jesus, but the test is "abiding." It is only those who continue who are genuine disciples.

This section of discourse is addressed to those who believe, **and yet do not believe**. Clearly they were inclined to think that what Jesus said was true. But they were not prepared to yield Him the far-reaching allegiance that real trust in Him implies. (The Gospel According to John. The New International Commentary on the New Testament)

**John MacArthur** - Saving faith consists of three elements, commonly referred to by theologians with the Latin terms *notitia*, *assensus*, and *fiducia*. *Notitia* (knowledge) is the intellectual component of faith. It involves an understanding of the basic biblical facts regarding salvation. *Assensus* (assent) goes one step beyond *notitia* and confidently affirms those facts to be true. *Fiducia* (trust) acts on them by personally appropriating Jesus Christ as the only hope for salvation.

**John Piper** - What this phrase "truly my disciples" implies is that there are disciples who are not truly disciples. The word "truly" means "really"—"really my disciples." In other words, there are real and unreal disciples. There are authentic and inauthentic disciples. There is discipleship that is merely outward, and discipleship that goes down to the root. The world is not just divided into two groups: disciples of Jesus and non-disciples. It is divided into three groups: non-disciples, unreal disciples, and real disciples—people who make no pretense of following Jesus, people that say they follow him and have a surface connection with him, and people who truly follow him. Why did Jesus bring up this distinction? It's disturbing. It makes us squirm and ask ourselves the question which one we are. He brought it up because verse 30 says, "As he was saying these things, many believed in him." There had been a large response to what he was teaching. And whenever there is a large response to anything you may guess that some are being carried along by the crowd. If your friends are going, it's easy for you to go, even if you wouldn't go on your own. You are along for the ride. So Jesus doesn't assume that all this belief is real. What he does is give a test that we can use to see if we are real. And in giving us this test Jesus helps us be real. It is not just a test of reality. It is a pathway to reality.

What then is a true disciple? Or what does Jesus mean by saying in John 8:31, "you are truly my disciples"? Let's be really clear here:

**For Jesus "true disciple"  
is the same as "true Christian"  
or "true believer."**

**Jesus is not saying that "true disciple" is a second stage in the Christian life. First believer, and then later you attain the level of disciple. There have been ministries who talk that way.**

First, you're an unbeliever, then you are a believer, then you grow into a disciple, and then you are a disciplinemaker. That is not the way Jesus thought. And one piece of evidence for saying this is to notice the words he uses here in verse 31: "Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.'" He did not say to these professing believers, "If you abide in my word, you will become truly my disciples." **In other words, He did not teach that being a true disciple was a later stage after simple belief.** No. He said, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples." Now that you have believed, here is how you can know what you now are. You can know if your belief is real: You are now my true disciples if you go on abiding in My word. **So there is no thought here about "true discipleship" being a second stage of Christian maturity.**

**True disciple means  
true believer  
or true Christian  
or true follower.  
It means, for example,  
truly forgiven for your sins.**

Look at Jn 8:24: "I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am He you will die in your sins." So he says, if you do believe in me, you won't die in your sins." ([If You Abide In My Word, You Are Truly My Disciples](#))

**C H Spurgeon** - "Jews who believed Him"... reminds me of those of you who believe the Gospel and still remain worldly, impenitent, prayerless. You fear the Lord and serve other gods! **You are not infidels in name, but you are atheists in life!** To you there is urgent need that I speak. The Master turned round and spoke to those who were **Believers and yet not Believers**—holding with Jesus—and yet really opposed to Him. Oh, you that halt between two opinions, my Lord looks on you with a pitying hopefulness and He speaks especially to you at this time! May you have Divine Grace to hear and obey His Word!... He says, "if." A great, "if," hovered over them like a threatening cloud. Wisely does our Lord commence His word to them with, "if." **"If you continue in My Word, then are you My disciples, indeed."**

### **Continuance is the sure test of the genuine Believer .**

Our Lord does not say, "Go your way, you are not My **disciples**." He, in effect, says, "I stand in doubt of you. The proof of your **discipleship** will be your persevering in your faith." If we say that we believe in Jesus, we must prove it by abiding in believing and by still further believing! The Word of Jesus must be the object of our faith—into that Word we must enter—and in that Word we must continue. Beginning to believe is nothing unless we continue to believe! The Word of Jesus must be the object of our faith—into that Word we must enter—and in that Word we must continue. Beginning to believe is nothing unless we continue to believe!... Your home and refuge must be the Word of the Lord Jesus and in that refuge you must abide! Believe what Jesus says in His New Testament of Love. Whatever you find that He reveals by Himself or by His Apostles, receive it without question!

### **Hold fast His Word and let it hold you fast.**

First, believe Him, believe Him to be true, believe Him to be sent of God for your salvation—and then put yourself into His hands. When you have committed yourself to Him, continue to do so. Do not run away from your faith because of ridicule. Mind that you so believe in Jesus as to practice what He commands—you cannot continue in His Word unless you learn to obey it.

### **The test of faith is obedience .**

What He bids you, do it. Let your life be affected by the Truth He teaches. Let your whole mind, thought, desire, speech, bearing and conversation be colored and savored by your full faith in Jesus! Enter into His Word as a man into a stream and live there as a fish in the water! "Continue in My word." Get into Christ's Word as a sinking sailor would get into a lifeboat and, once there, keep inside the boat—do not throw yourself out into the stormy waves through despair—but continue in the place of hope. This is Christ's gracious counsel to those in whom there seems to be some hopeful sign.

My Hearers, we never preach the saving power of temporary, unpractical, unsanctifying faith! If a man says, "I believe in Christ and, therefore, I shall be saved, his faith will have to be tested by his life. If, sometime after, he has no faith in Christ, that faith which he claimed to have is proven to be good for nothing! The faith of God's elect is an abiding faith! It is precious faith and, like precious metal, it survives the fire! "Now abides faith, hope, charity, these three." Thus true faith is classed among the abiding things—it is undying, unquenchable. If you truly believe in Jesus, it is for life! Saving faith is a life-long act. It is the relinquishment of all trust in self, once and for all, and the trusting in Jesus forever. He is and always shall be our only confidence. That is the faith which saves... next our Lord sets before these people inducements to continue in His Word... the first was certified discipleship—"Then are you My disciples, indeed." That is to say, if they persevered in obeying His Word, they would be disciples, not in name only, but in truth. **It is a small thing to be called Christians, but it is a great matter to truly be Christians.** (Dear reader, if you are struggling with this vitally important passage, let me strongly encourage you to read John Piper's message [[reference](#)] and Spurgeon's sermon on [John 8:30-32 Believing On Jesus, And Its Counterfeits](#))

**Wayne Grudem** - Jesus is here giving a warning that one evidence of **genuine faith** is continuing in His word, that is, **continuing to believe what he says and living a life of obedience to his commands** (**Ed comment:** Note that continuing in His Word does not save a person but demonstrates that the individual is genuinely saved.)... Jesus is here giving a warning that one evidence of genuine faith is continuing in His word, that is, continuing to **believe** what he says and living a life of **obedience** to his commands. (**Ed:** Again "obedience" does not save but proves one is saved). Similarly, Jesus says, "He who endures to the end will be saved" (Matt. 10:22), as a means of warning people not to fall away in times of persecution (**Ed:** Genuine

disciples are shown to be real because they do not fall away.). (Systematic Theology)

**Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary** - The measure of any **disciple** is whether or not one holds to the master's teaching (cf. 2 John 9 - see below). The perfect follower of a Jewish rabbi was one who had "fully absorbed his master's teaching" and "was drawing on it to spread it abroad"

Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son.

**Hendriksen** - One abides in the word of Christ by making it the rule of one's life. In other words, **obedience is the same thing as abiding in the word**. This makes one a **true disciple of Jesus** and leads to genuine knowledge of the truth (God's special revelation which has its heart and center in the work of Christ).

**J Oswald Sanders** - What is the significance of "my word" in the passage? In a sense it is indistinguishable from Himself, for He is the living Word. The sense here, however, is that of the whole tenor and substance of His teaching. It stands for His message as a whole, not favorite passages or pet doctrines but the whole range of His teaching. (cp Lk 24:27) To continue in His Word (or "to hold to his teaching," as the New International Version has it) was to make it their rule of life in daily practice. Our discipleship begins with the reception of the Word. Continuance in the Word is the evidence of reality. (Spiritual discipleship : Principles of Following Christ for Every Believer)

**J Vernon McGee** - Faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone. It will produce something. After a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, he will want to "continue in His Word." The proof of faith is continuing with the Savior (**Ed**: From John 8:31 continuing with the Savior means to continually "abide in My Word" and this is the "descriptive definition of a disciple. **Are you a genuine disciple of Jesus?**). As the pastor of a church, I learned to watch out for the person who is active in the church but is not interested in the study of the Word of God. Such a one is dangerous to a church.

**Borchert** - The believer who is committed to abide in Jesus and His word is in this Gospel to be designated as an authentic (alēthēs) disciple (cf. Jn 6:64–66; contrast Jn 5:38). (New American Commentary)

**Barna Report** - In a survey of what people placed as priority in their life George Barna found that the relationship between a person's perception of their religious commitment and their unwillingness to make faith their top priority, point to a serious disconnect. Barna notes "Spirituality is in vogue in our society today. It is popular to claim to be part of a "faith community" or to have a spiritual commitment." He says the research indicates, "Many Americans are living a dual life—one filled with good feelings about God and faith, corroborated by some simple religious practices, and another in which they believe they are in control of their own destiny and operate apart from Him." Barna notes, "It seems as if God is in, but living for God is not." In contrast Jesus said "If you want to be My disciple, you must hate everyone else by comparison—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26-27NLT)

**Jeff Carroll** has the following illustration in his excellent resource "6000 Plus Illustrations" - You Mind if I Look Over these Crosses? Well, here I am, Lord. You said "Take up your cross," and I'm here to do it. It's not easy, you know, this self-denial thing. I mean to go through with it though, yes sir! I'll bet you wish more people were willing to be disciples like me. I've counted the cost and surrendered my life, and it's not an easy road. You mind if I look over these crosses? I'd kind of like a new one. I'm not fussy, you understand; but a disciple has to be relevant these days. I was wondering—are there any that are vinyl padded? I'm thinking of attracting others, see? And if I could show them a comfortable cross, I'm sure I could win a lot more. Got to keep up with the population explosion and all. And I need something durable so I can treasure it always. Oh, is there one that's sort of flat so it would fit under my coat? One shouldn't be too obvious. Funny, there doesn't seem to be much choice here. Just that coarse, rough wood. I mean that would hurt. Don't you have something more distinctive, Lord? I can tell you right now, none of my friends are going to be impressed by this shoddy workmanship. They'll think I'm a nut or something. And my family will be just mortified. What's that? It's either one of these or forget the whole thing? But Lord, I want to be your disciple, I mean, just being with you; that's all that counts; but life has to have a balance, too. But you don't understand—nobody lives that way today! Who is going to be attracted by this self-denial bit? I mean, I want to; but let's not over do it. Start getting radical like this, and they'll have me off to the funny farm. Know what I mean? I mean being a disciple is challenging and exciting and I want to do it; but I do have some rights, you know. Now let's see—no blood—OK? I just can't stand the thought of that, Lord... Lord? Jesus? Now where do you suppose He went?



**Oswald Chambers** - "I will make the place of my feet glorious"—among the poor, the devil-possessed, the mean, the decrepit, the selfish, the sinful, the misunderstood—that is where Jesus went, and that is exactly where he will take you if you are his disciple.

**Oswald Chambers** - It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master." At first sight this looks like an enormous honor: to be "as his Master" is marvelous glory—is it? Look at Jesus as he was when he was here, it was anything but glory. He was easily ignorable, saving to those who knew him intimately; to the majority of men he was "as a root out of a dry ground." For thirty years he was obscure, then for three years he went through popularity, scandal, and hatred; he succeeded in gathering a handful of fishermen as disciples, one of whom betrayed him, one denied him, and all forsook him; and he says, "It is enough for you to be like that." The idea of evangelical success, church prosperity, civilized manifestation, does not come into it at all.

**Robert J Morgan** ([click for full message on discipleship](#)) - In the Gospels, Jesus spent three years wadding up the paper and the pages of the Word of God. He taught them line upon line, precept upon precept. He taught them the Law and the Writings and the Prophets. He was the walking personification of the Old Testament. He was the Seed of Woman in Genesis, the Passover Lamb in Exodus, the Captain of the Lord's Hosts in Joshua, the King of Israel in the Psalms, the Man of Wisdom in Proverbs and the Suffering Servant in Isaiah. He taught the Old Testament as though He were its Author, which He was. Then He layered the Scriptures with the twigs and timbers of His own teachings, building up a stack of highly flammable firewood in the hearths and hearts of His disciples. He drenched it with the kerosene of His own sweat and blood. And then He returned to heaven, having finished His earthly work. And then on the Day of Pentecost, He struck an original match, dropped it from heaven and it fell like a fireball into the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost, and the room where they had gathered detonated with a spiritual force that has radiated and reverberated down through history and is still blazing today. But sadly, a lot of churches are like big stacks of waterlogged firewood that will never catch blaze on their own. The big backlog of their church membership has grown cold and the coals have nearly gone out and the fire in most churches is burning very low. But God is looking for some men and women to serve as kindling wood, and if He can set them on fire He might be able to bring about revival to the church and set the world on fire with the Gospel. Jesus is still looking for kindling wood. I met someone like that last week. She was an Asian lady who was attending a gathering I was at in Washington. She was on fire. She was a fireball. She had a purpose in life—and it was making money. This is what she said to me: "I'm into investments and equity and global trade. I'm going to Hong Kong tomorrow. The market in China is exploding." She told me about her business deals and about her involvement in motion pictures and distribution and manufacturing and publication and everything else. Then she said: "I spend eighty percent of my time making money, and the other twenty percent figuring out how to give one hundred percent of it away. I don't need it. My family doesn't need it. My purpose is to generate funds for ministry." She is generating millions of dollars to fund ministries. In fact, that's why she was at the conference I attended, and I have no doubt she left a very substantial check behind. **We can't all be international equity investors, but we can all be disciples.** We can all be on fire. We can all be burning out for Jesus. It begins when you decide to give yourself exclusively and unconditionally to Jesus Christ. He can lead you into the unique and wonderful purpose that He has for your life—and it flows out of discipleship.

- A disciple is a learner.
- A disciple is a New Testament Christian.
- A disciple is someone who has been baptized and who is learning and obeying our Lord's teachings.
- A disciple is someone who is committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and actively learning and obeying His teaching, and is involved in His church and its mission of making more disciples – someone who has found freedom, purpose, and fulfillment in Christ.
- A disciple is a Christian on fire.

So we say:

Lord, revive us again; fill each heart with Thy love;  
May each soul be rekindled with fire from above.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior. Hallelujah! Amen."3

It is notable that Luke uses **mathetes** repeatedly to describe believers in the book of Acts. In fact the most common term used for believers in Acts is **mathetes** or **disciples**, not believers or Christians. Those who teach that disciples of Jesus were a special class of believers and that not all believers are disciples need to explain the book of Acts (Acts 1:15KJV, Acts 6:1, 2, 7, 9:1, 10, 19, 25, 26,

38, 11:26, 29, 13:52, 14:20, 14:22, 28, 15:10, 16:1, 18:23, 27, 19:1, 9, 30, Acts 20:1 Acts 20:30 Acts 21:4 Acts 21:16.

And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the **disciples** continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith. (Acts 6:7)

**Comment:** Observe that the mark of a disciple according to this passage is one who is **obedient to the faith**. This is not saying their salvation was works based as if their obedience merited salvation. The phrase "obedient to the faith" simply means they were becoming believers. They accepted "**the faith (see note on pistsis)**" (the Gospel). (cp similar description in Jn 3:36 where "believes in the Son" is paired with "obey the Son"). Note also that in this context the word "faith" is synonymous with the Gospel of Jesus Christ (compare Acts 13:8). Thus the term faith in this context "*means the objective faith embodied in doctrinal teaching and not the subjective faith of the believer.*" (Kistemaker)

Luke in fact specifically labels the **disciples** as **Christians**...

And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And it came about that for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers; and the **disciples** were first called **Christians** in Antioch. (Acts 11:26)

**Pastor Robert Morgan** writes that "a disciple is a Christian, that is, a Christ-follower. In the New Testament there was no difference between the word "disciple" and the word "Christian." In fact, for the first few years of the church the word "disciple" was the primary way of designating Christians (Acts 9:1, 10, 19, 26, 36, 38, 11:26)." ([Ref](#))

**J Oswald Sanders** writes although **mathetes** means a "**learner**"...

Jesus infused into that simple word a wealth of profound meaning. As used by Him and by Paul, it means "a learner or pupil who accepts the teaching of Christ, not only in belief but also in lifestyle." This involves acceptance of the views and practice of the Teacher. In other words, it means learning with the purpose to obey what is learned. It involves a deliberate choice, a definite denial, and a determined obedience. Today one may be regarded as a Christian even if there are few, if any, signs of progress in discipleship. **It was not so in the early church.** (**Spiritual Discipleship: Principles of Following Christ for Every Believer**)

**A W Tozer** wrote that "True discipleship is obeying Jesus Christ and learning of Him and following Him and doing what He tells you to do, keeping His commandments and carrying out His will. That kind of a person is a Christian—and no other kind is."

**Mathetes** - 261x in 245v - [see all uses below](#). Here are a few uses with comments to help us understand the meaning of this great word.

A **pupil (mathetes** - the only place the NAS does not translate mathetes as disciple) is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher. (Luke 6:40)

**Comment:** Here Jesus gives His clear instruction on how we are to **make disciples**. A disciple is to learn from his teacher, so that when his training is complete, he will be like his master. Notice that **likeness**, not simply **greater knowledge**, is the goal of discipleship. Ultimately the likeness should be to Jesus, Who Himself is the goal God desires for all His children in training (Ro 8:29, cp 2Pe 3:18).

**Illustration - Making Disciples, A Perishable Art** -- After a distinguished performing career, virtuoso violinist Jascha Heifetz accepted an appointment as professor of music at UCLA. Asked what had prompted his change of career, Heifetz replied: "Violin playing is a perishable art. It must be passed on as a personal skill; otherwise it is lost." We need to listen to this great musician. Living the Christian life is a highly personal experience. We can't pull it off merely by watching skilled veterans "perform." We need hands-on instruction.

This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. (John 2:11)

**Comment:** Observe the two-fold purpose of Jesus' signs - (1) To make His glory apparent (revealing that He was truly God) and (2) To create belief in Himself. This is the first miraculous sign in John's Gospel and as stated in John 20:30, 31 His signs were intended to get persons to put their faith in Christ. These "disciples" had been following Jesus and learning from Him (following and learning being a good "working definition" of a disciple) but apparently up to this point they had not yet expressed or experienced "belief" in Him as the Messiah. John's Gospel is interesting in that it describes various levels of "belief" in Christ. The disciples trusted Jesus (Jn 2:11) but even they seem to have come to a deeper understanding in their faith after the resurrection (Jn 2:22-**note**). The crowds believed He had Messiah's powers, but they did not have faith

which Jesus trusted and thus their belief was not a saving faith (Jn 2:23-25). ( ) The Disciple Study Bible notes that "*John warned against temporary faith resembling hero worship. He sought life-changing faith ready to feed Christ's sheep and share Christ's death.*" (For more discussion read subtopic entitled "**A Disturbing Passage: Two Types of Faith**"; see related discussion of [Jn 8:30-31](#))

By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My **disciples**. (Jn 15:8)

**Comment:** A fruitless disciple of Christ is a contradiction in terms. If there is no real fruit in our lives (eg Gal 5:22, Gal 5:23), we cannot claim to be disciples of Jesus for fruit-bearing demonstrates that we are one of His disciples (cp Mt. 7:20; Luke 6:43, 44). The purpose of our fruit bearing is to give a visible picture if you will which points clearly to the invisible God. As MacDonald puts it "*People are forced to confess that He must be a great God when He can transform such wicked sinners into such godly saints.*" Note the progression in John 15 - no fruit (John 15:2), fruit, more fruit, much fruit (John 15:5, 8).

When he (Barnabas) had found him (Saul), he brought him to Antioch. And it came about that for an entire year they met with the church, and taught considerable numbers; and the **disciples** (mathetes) were first called **Christians** in Antioch. (Acts 11:26)

**Comment:** The most common designation for a genuine believer in the book of Acts was "disciple" (Acts 6:1, 2, 6:7, 9:1, 9:10, 19, 25, 26, 38, 11:26,

To the Jews in Jerusalem, the name "Christ" was a title, meaning "the anointed one," the Jewish Messiah. However, the Greek-speaking believers in Antioch were called "disciples" more often than believers and they soon became known as **followers of Christ**, or Christians, and this has been customary ever since.

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love (**agape** = unconditional, supernatural, Christ-like love) for one another. (Jn 13:35)

**Comment:** This is one of the great (if not the greatest) evidences of **a true disciple of Jesus** and also one of the greatest witnesses to the lost world. Given that this quality of love is supernatural, it follows that it can only be produced by a supernatural source or power and in fact is the fruit a disciple bears as they are **filled with** (~ "controlled by" like wine controls the one it fills! = Eph 5:18-note) **and walk by the Spirit** (Gal 5:16-note) (believing this truth, submitting to this truth, acting on this truth), for that is the way the Master Teacher walked, not in His own power (He "emptied" Himself - cp Phil 2:5, 6, 7-note= We are to "empty" ourselves of our self reliance,) but in the filling with, leading by and power (dunamis = inherent ability and in this context ability to accomplish a supernatural task) of the Holy Spirit. (see Luke 4:1, 2, 14). In Jn 8:31 Jesus gives "abiding" as a requisite of a disciple and in 1John 2:6 we read that "*the one who says he abides in Him ought Himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.*" (1Jn 2:6). How did Jesus **walk** (live, conduct His life, behave)? In submission to the Father and empowered by the Holy Spirit. We can do no less, if we expect to bear God glorifying, Christ exalting supernatural agape love which is the defining mark of Jesus' disciples. This begs the question dear follower of Christ, are you walking in your strength or are you learning to walk in the strength of the Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9-note), Who indwells you continually, Who is Jesus' promised "Gift" to help us in our time of need (and we are **always** in need of His power to live a supernatural life)?

**Leon Morris** - Now we have the other truth that God is also glorified in the work of believers who abide in the Son. There is an air of completeness and of certainty about it. The disciples will surely glorify the Father by their continual fruit-bearing; since they cannot bear fruit of themselves (Jn 15:4) their fruitfulness is evidence of the Father at work in them and thus it glorifies him... It is not without its significance that the disciples are to be known by their love, the world by its hatred (Jn 15:17, 18).

In one of Jesus' hard sayings He called on all who would desire to follow after Him (this verse does not actually use the word "disciple" but the concept is clearly presented) to count the cost...

And He summoned the multitude with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him **deny** (aorist imperative) - say no or disown. Same verb used by Peter to "deny" of Christ three times!) himself, and **take up** (aorist imperative) his cross (Speaks of death), and **follow** (present imperative = make this your lifestyle) Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mark 8:34-37)

**Comment** - The phrase "come after Me" is clearly used in the sense of becoming a disciple of Jesus, following His instruction and entering into fellowship with Him. To deny self is a command to lose sight of one's self and

one's own interests.

## **It costs to follow Jesus Christ, but it costs more not to!**

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer** - When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow Him, or it may be a death like Luther's, who had to leave the monastery and go out into the world... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

The Lord's so called "**Great Commission**" was

**Go** therefore and **make disciples** (the only specific command in Jesus' commission)... **teaching** (**didasko** in the present tense = continually instructing) them to **observe** (tereo in the present tense = continually keeping Jesus' teaching in view with the nuance here of to *keep*, just as in Jn 14:15 [where *keep* = tereo]) all that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20).

**Comment:** Jesus' "Magna Carta" command was to **make learners** by going, baptizing, teaching. As noted above, the Greek word **mathetes** ("disciple") is from the verb **manthano** ("to learn") emphasizing that the essence of a disciple is a pupil or learner. In Greek culture prior to Socrates, **manthano** described the process by which a person sought knowledge. A **mathetes** was one who attached himself to another to gain some practical or theoretical knowledge, whether by instruction or by experience. The word came to be used both of apprentices who were learning a trade and of adherents of various philosophical schools. After the time of Socrates, the word lost favor with the philosophers, who were not at all happy with its association with labor.

The concept of discipleship was popular in Jesus' day for most rabbis had **disciples** who studied with them in a well-defined and special relationship.

### **Illustration of the Modern Church's Abandonment of Jesus Command to Make Disciples**

In 1983 a fifty-year-old tradition was quietly dropped by the U.S. House of Representatives. The tradition involved the annual reading of George Washington's farewell address on the occasion of his birthday. Democratic and Republican leaders decided it was useless to continue to read the lengthy address to a mostly empty chamber. "It's too bad," said GOP aide, "but it's time for this to be consigned to the dustbin." Stated "The Calgary Herald": "In past years, it was almost holy writ that the address must be read. Through war and storm for half a century, a member of each chamber has been chosen to read the address." Declared the newspaper heading, "Nobody listens to **Washington's farewell address.**" We are afraid that something parallel to this is taking place in the Christian church. Fewer and fewer believers are listening to **Christ's farewell message.** To His disciples Christ gave clear instructions - to go to all nations with the Gospel and there to **make disciples.**

That means that the mission of the church and the goal of evangelism is to **make disciples.** "**Disciple**" in the book of Acts (Acts 6:1-2, 7 11:26 14:20, 21-22 15:10) virtually always refers to a saved person.

Jesus warned all who thought of becoming disciples to count the cost carefully. (Lk 14:28-30). The call to discipleship explicitly demands full commitment, with nothing knowingly or deliberately held back.

**John Piper** wrote that one of the most important teachings Jesus ever gave about becoming His disciple was in the following passage...

Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My **disciple.** (Lk 14:27).

**Comment:** Bearing a cross does not mean primarily having hard times. It means going to Golgotha. It means dying with Christ—dying to the old attitudes of envy and strife and jealousy and anger and selfishness and pride; and turning to follow Jesus in newness of life. When we make disciples, we bid people to come and die to their old, destructive ways and to live for Jesus, Who loved them and gave Himself for them... When a person becomes a disciple of Jesus, he relates in a new way to the entire Godhead. The Father becomes our heavenly Father, the Son our Lord, the Spirit our indwelling enabler. (**Ed comment:** Clearly Dr Piper sees a **believer** and a **disciple** as synonymous terms).

The highly respected Bible expositor **James Montgomery Boice** (now with the Lord) writes...

I once was asked to do a series of messages on Christian discipleship, and the first question I dealt with was

this: "Is discipleship *necessary*?" I began by explaining the way the question needs to be interpreted. It should not mean, "Is discipleship necessary if we are to be obedient to Jesus?" That is obvious. Nor should it mean, "Is discipleship necessary in order to live a full and happy Christian life?" That should be obvious, too. What the question should mean (and the sense in which I treated it) is, "**Is discipleship necessary for one to be a true Christian? Can you be a saved person without it?**" The answer I gave, the answer that should be given by any true Bible expositor, is, "**Yes, it is necessary! It is mandatory to follow after Christ to be a Christian.**"

**Comment:** Note Boice's use of the phrase "**follow after**" - at the church I now attend I have been struck with the fact that all of the pastoral staff routinely refer to believers as "Christ followers."

The salty expositor **Vance Havner** phrased it this way...

Salvation is free. The gift of God is eternal life. It is not cheap for it cost God His Son and the Son His life, but it is free. However, **when we become believers we become disciples** and that will cost everything we have... our Lord was after disciples, not mere "joiners."

Although **mathetes** is not used in the NT after the book of Acts, clearly the concept of **discipleship** is taught. Here are some passages that illustrate the truth that believers are all called to be "learners"...

And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. (2Ti 2:2-note)

But you **followed** (accompanied him side by side, followed him closely, attended to his belief and behavior carefully) my teaching (notice the preeminent status given to sound doctrine), conduct (next - sound behavior that backs up what one says they believe!), purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord delivered me! And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus (a great description of a disciple of Christ) will be persecuted (This is part of the disciple's "job description" we would rather not hear! Notice that it is a guaranteed promise from God!). (2Ti 3:10, 11-note, 2Ti 3:12-note)

Brethren, **join** in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. (Phil 3:17-note)

I exhort you **therefore** (term of conclusion = forces us to look back at the previous passages ~ a great aid to enable us to practice the powerful discipline of Biblical [not mystical] Meditation), **be** (present imperative = command calling for this to be our lifestyle, the habitual practice of our life, not just an occasional occurrence! How are you doing? Has discipleship become your lifestyle or are you an "episodic" [at irregular intervals] disciple?) **imitators (mimetes** = see comment below) of me. (1Cor 4:16)

**Comment:** Webster says that to imitate means to follow as a pattern, model, or example; to be or appear like. The 1828 Webster's (I highly recommend this edition as the definitions are very "bibliocentric") even says in the definition of **imitate** that "*We should seek the best models to imitate, and in morals and piety, it is our duty to imitate the example of our Savior.*" One who **mimes** acts a part with mimic gesture and action usually without words. One application is that as disciples of Christ we should let our actions speak louder than our words! How are you doing?

Teachers based their whole educational procedure on imitation, as students imitated the behavior of teachers. Slowly the idea developed that people should imitate the gods, a concept Plato taught his disciples. The basic meaning of **mimetes** is seen in a mime. An English woman went to France to study under the famous mime artist, Marcel Marceau. All day he taught his students how to make the movements of mime, and each evening they went to see him perform. Their performances were marked indelibly by the style of the master. This is an excellent picture of a Christian who imitates the Lord by exposure to Him. As an African chief once said "A good example is the tallest kind of preaching." **Jonathan Edwards** was so concerned about the **example** which he set which others might imitate, that he framed the resolve to "never to do anything which I would be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life."

You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. (1Th 1:6, 7-note, 1Th 1:8-note)

Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, **show** yourself

(present imperative - command to continually do this) an **example** of those who believe. (1Ti 4:12)

**John MacArthur** - The single greatest tool of leadership is the power of an exemplary life. The Puritan Thomas Brooks said, "Example is the most powerful rhetoric"

**Remember** (present imperative - command to keep remembering - what they were taught and how those who taught them lived out what they taught!) those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, **imitate** (present imperative - command to keep remembering) their faith (clearly not just what they believed but how their belief impacted their life). (Hebrews 13:7-note)

**John MacArthur** illustrates what it means to **love like a disciple** - I heard about a man sitting before a fireplace lost in thought. The drapes had been closed and the room was dark except for the flickering light of the dying fire. Finally the flames themselves disappeared, leaving nothing but a heap of gray ashes topped with glowing embers. One burning coal stood out brilliantly from all the rest because it was white hot. The man's gaze was transfixed upon it. Suddenly that brilliant white-hot coal turned completely black. The man was startled. What had caused the instant change? As he looked around, he noticed that the drapes had parted slightly and a shaft of brilliant sunlight had shot into the study and landed directly on the burning coal. The greater light had made the lesser light look black by comparison. That is what Christ demands of us. Our love and devotion for Him must be so complete that the deepest love we have for our dearest loved one fades in comparison. Do you love the Lord Jesus like that? If you don't—or aren't willing to—you cannot be His disciple.

**Make disciples** (3100)(**matheteuo**) This is the verb form of **mathetes** and is found 4 times in the NT. Intransitively, the verb means to be the disciple of another, to follow his precepts and instruction, to be a pupil of another implying one is an adherent of the teacher. Transitively, **matheteuo** means to make a disciple of someone, to cause them to be a pupil, to teach or instruct them.

Here are the 4 NT uses

[Matthew 13:52](#) And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has **become a disciple** of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

[Matthew 27:57](#) When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also **become a disciple** of Jesus.

[Matthew 28:19](#) "Go therefore and **make disciples** (command) of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

[Acts 14:21](#) After they had preached the gospel to that city and had **made many disciples**, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

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## MATHETES - ALL USES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

**Mathetes** - 261x in 245v translated as - disciple(26), disciples(233), disciples'(1), pupil(1)

Matthew 5:1 When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him.

Matthew 8:21 Another of the disciples said to Him, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father."

23 When He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him.

Matthew 9:10 Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples.

11 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?"

14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"

19 Jesus got up and began to follow him, and so did His disciples.

37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

Matthew 10:1 Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.

24 "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master.

25 "It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household!

42 "And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."

Matthew 11:1 When Jesus had finished giving instructions to His twelve disciples, He departed from there to teach and preach in their cities.

2 Now when John, while imprisoned, heard of the works of Christ, he sent word by his disciples

Matthew 12:1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat.

2 But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath."

49 And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers!

Matthew 13:10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

36 Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

Matthew 14:12 His disciples came and took away the body and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus.

15 When it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and the hour is already late; so send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

19 Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food, and breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds,

22 Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.

26 When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear.

Matthew 15:2 "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

12 Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?"

23 But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us."

32 And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, "I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way."

33 The disciples said to Him, "Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?"

36 and He took the seven loaves and the fish; and giving thanks, He broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

Matthew 16:5 And the disciples came to the other side of the sea, but they had forgotten to bring any bread.

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"

20 Then He warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was the Christ.

21 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

Matthew 17:6 When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified.

10 And His disciples asked Him, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

13 Then the disciples understood that He had spoken to them about John the Baptist.

16 "I brought him to Your disciples, and they could not cure him."

19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not drive it out?"

Matthew 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Matthew 19:10 The disciples said to Him, "If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry."

13 Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them.

23 And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

25 When the disciples heard this, they were very astonished and said, "Then who can be saved?"

Matthew 20:17 As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, He took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way He said to them,

Matthew 21:1 When they had approached Jerusalem and had come to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,

6 The disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them,

20 Seeing this, the disciples were amazed and asked, "How did the fig tree wither all at once?"

Matthew 22:16 And they sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any."

Matthew 23:1 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to His disciples,

Matthew 24:1 Jesus came out from the temple and was going away when His disciples came up to point out the temple buildings to Him.

3 As He was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things happen, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

Matthew 26:1 When Jesus had finished all these words, He said to His disciples,

8 But the disciples were indignant when they saw this, and said, "Why this waste?"

17 Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"

18 And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, "My time is near; I am to keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.'""

19 The disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

26 While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body."

35 Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You." All the disciples said the same thing too.

36 Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to His disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray."

40 And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour?"

45 Then He came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners."

56 "But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets." Then all the disciples left Him and fled.

Matthew 27:64 "Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, otherwise His disciples may come and steal Him away and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' and the last deception will be worse than the first."

Matthew 28:7 "Go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going ahead of you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you."

8 And they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy and ran to report it to His disciples.

13 and said, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.'"

16 But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated.

Mark 2:15 And it happened that He was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many of them, and they were following Him.

16 When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, "Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?"

18 John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and they came and said to Him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"

23 And it happened that He was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain.

Mark 3:7 Jesus withdrew to the sea with His disciples; and a great multitude from Galilee followed; and also from Judea,

9 And He told His disciples that a boat should stand ready for Him because of the crowd, so that they would not crowd Him;

Mark 4:34 and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.

Mark 5:31 And His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"

Mark 6:1 Jesus went out from there and came into His hometown; and His disciples followed Him.

29 When his disciples heard about this, they came and took away his body and laid it in a tomb.

35 When it was already quite late, His disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and it is already quite late;

41 And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food and broke the loaves and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; and He divided up the two fish among them all.

45 Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side to Bethsaida, while He Himself was sending the crowd away.



Mark 7:2 and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed.

5 The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?"

17 When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable.

Mark 8:1 In those days, when there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples and said to them,

4 And His disciples answered Him, "Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?"

6 And He directed the people to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people.

10 And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha.

27 Jesus went out, along with His disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way He questioned His disciples, saying to them, "Who do people say that I am?"

33 But turning around and seeing His disciples, He rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind Me, Satan; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

34 And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

Mark 9:14 When they came back to the disciples, they saw a large crowd around them, and some scribes arguing with them.

18 and whenever it seizes him, it slams him to the ground and he foams at the mouth, and grinds his teeth and stiffens out. I told Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not do it."

28 When He came into the house, His disciples began questioning Him privately, "Why could we not drive it out?"

31 For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, "The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him; and when He has been killed, He will rise three days later."

Mark 10:10 In the house the disciples began questioning Him about this again.

13 And they were bringing children to Him so that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked them.

23 And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"

24 The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

46 Then they came to Jericho. And as He was leaving Jericho with His disciples and a large crowd, a blind beggar named Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, was sitting by the road.

Mark 11:1 As they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany, near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples,

14 He said to it, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again!" And His disciples were listening.

Mark 12:43 Calling His disciples to Him, He said to them, "Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the contributors to the treasury;

Mark 13:1 As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!"

Mark 14:12 On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb was being sacrificed, His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare for You to eat the Passover?"

13 And He sent two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him;

14 and wherever he enters, say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is My guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?"'

16 The disciples went out and came to the city, and found it just as He had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

32 They came to a place named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here until I have prayed."

Mark 16:7 "But go, tell His disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see Him, just as He told you.'"

Luke 5:30 The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?"

33 And they said to Him, "The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the disciples of the Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink."

Luke 6:1 Now it happened that He was passing through some grainfields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the grain.

13 And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:

17 Jesus came down with them and stood on a level place; and there was a large crowd of His disciples, and a great throng of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon,

20 And turning His gaze toward His disciples, He began to say, "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

40 "A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.

Luke 7:11 Soon afterwards He went to a city called Nain; and His disciples were going along with Him, accompanied by a large crowd.

18 The disciples of John reported to him about all these things.

Luke 8:9 His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable meant.

22 Now on one of those days Jesus and His disciples got into a boat, and He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So they launched out.

Luke 9:14 (For there were about five thousand men.) And He said to His disciples, "Have them sit down to eat in groups of about fifty each."

16 Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and broke them, and kept giving them to the disciples to set before the people.

18 And it happened that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, "Who do the people say that I am?"

40 "I begged Your disciples to cast it out, and they could not."

43 And they were all amazed at the greatness of God. But while everyone was marveling at all that He was doing, He said to His disciples,

54 When His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"

Luke 10:23 Turning to the disciples, He said privately, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see,

Luke 11:1 It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples."

Luke 12:1 Under these circumstances, after so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, He began saying to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

22 And He said to His disciples, "For this reason I say to you, do not worry about your life, as to what you will eat; nor for your body, as to what you will put on.

Luke 14:26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

33 "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.

Luke 16:1 Now He was also saying to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and this manager was reported to him as squandering his possessions.

Luke 17:1 He said to His disciples, "It is inevitable that stumbling blocks come, but woe to him through whom they come!

22 And He said to the disciples, "The days will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it.

Luke 18:15 And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them.

Luke 19:29 When He approached Bethphage and Bethany, near the mount that is called Olivet, He sent two of the disciples,

37 As soon as He was approaching, near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles which they had seen,

39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

Luke 20:45 And while all the people were listening, He said to the disciples,

Luke 22:11 "And you shall say to the owner of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, 'Where is the guest room in which I may eat the

Passover with My disciples?"

39 And He came out and proceeded as was His custom to the Mount of Olives; and the disciples also followed Him.

45 When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow,

John 1:35 Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples,

37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

John 2:2 and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

11 This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him.

12 After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and His brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days.

17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME."

22 So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken.

John 3:22 After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing.

25 Therefore there arose a discussion on the part of John's disciples with a Jew about purification.

John 4:1 Therefore when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John

2 (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were),

8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

27 At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why do You speak with her?"

31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

33 So the disciples were saying to one another, "No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?"

John 6:3 Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples.

8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him,

12 When they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the leftover fragments so that nothing will be lost."

16 Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea,

22 The next day the crowd that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other small boat there, except one, and that Jesus had not entered with His disciples into the boat, but that His disciples had gone away alone.

24 So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they themselves got into the small boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus.

60 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?"

61 But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble?"

66 As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.

John 7:3 Therefore His brothers said to Him, "Leave here and go into Judea, so that Your disciples also may see Your works which You are doing.

John 8:31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;

John 9:2 And His disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?"

27 He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?"

28 They reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.

John 11:7 Then after this He said to the disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

8 The disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone You, and are You going there again?"

12 The disciples then said to Him, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover."

54 Therefore Jesus no longer continued to walk publicly among the Jews, but went away from there to the country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there He stayed with the disciples.

John 12:4 But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said,

16 These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him.

John 13:5 Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

22 The disciples began looking at one another, at a loss to know of which one He was speaking.

23 There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 15:8 "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

John 16:17 Some of His disciples then said to one another, "What is this thing He is telling us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father '?"

29 His disciples said, "Lo, now You are speaking plainly and are not using a figure of speech.

John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the ravine of the Kidron, where there was a garden, in which He entered with His disciples.

2 Now Judas also, who was betraying Him, knew the place, for Jesus had often met there with His disciples.

15 Simon Peter was following Jesus, and so was another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest,

16 but Peter was standing at the door outside. So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in.

17 Then the slave-girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not."

19 The high priest then questioned Jesus about His disciples, and about His teaching.

25 Now Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. So they said to him, "You are not also one of His disciples, are you?" He denied it, and said, "I am not."

John 19:26 When Jesus then saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!"

27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" From that hour the disciple took her into his own household.

38 After these things Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate granted permission. So he came and took away His body.

John 20:2 So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

3 So Peter and the other disciple went forth, and they were going to the tomb.

4 The two were running together; and the other disciple ran ahead faster than Peter and came to the tomb first;

8 So the other disciple who had first come to the tomb then also entered, and he saw and believed.

10 So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

18 Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.

19 So when it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and when the doors were shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you."

20 And when He had said this, He showed them both His hands and His side. The disciples then rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

25 So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

26 After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you."

30 Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

John 21:1 After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested Himself in this way.

2 Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.

4 But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

7 Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord." So when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put his outer garment on (for he was stripped for work), and threw himself into the sea.

8 But the other disciples came in the little boat, for they were not far from the land, but about one hundred yards away, dragging the net full of fish.

12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples ventured to question Him, "Who are You?" knowing that it was the Lord.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.

20 Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; the one who also had leaned back on His bosom at the supper and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?"

23 Therefore this saying went out among the brethren that that disciple would not die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but only, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?"

24 This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and wrote these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

Acts 6:1 Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food.

2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables.

7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

Acts 9:1 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest,

10 Now there was a disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and the Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." And he said, "Here I am, Lord."

19 and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus,

25 but his disciples took him by night and let him down through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a large basket.

26 When he came to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

38 Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him, "Do not delay in coming to us."

Acts 11:26 and when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. And for an entire year they met with the church and taught considerable numbers; and the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

29 And in the proportion that any of the disciples had means, each of them determined to send a contribution for the relief of the brethren living in Judea.

Acts 13:52 And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 14:20 But while the disciples stood around him, he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe.

22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."

28 And they spent a long time with the disciples.

Acts 15:10 "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear?"

Acts 16:1 Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek,

Acts 18:23 And having spent some time there, he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

27 And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace,

Acts 19:1 It happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples.

9 But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus.

30 And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him.

Acts 20:1 After the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples, and when he had exhorted them and taken his leave of them, he left to go to Macedonia.

30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Acts 21:4 After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.

16 Some of the disciples from Caesarea also came with us, taking us to Mnason of Cyprus, a disciple of long standing with whom we were to lodge.

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Here are the 4 NT uses

Matthew 13:52 And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has **become a disciple** of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

Matthew 27:57 When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also **become a disciple** of Jesus.

Matthew 28:19 "Go therefore and **make disciples** (command) of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

Acts 14:21 After they had preached the gospel to that city and had **made** many **disciples**, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch,

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## PURPOSE IN LIFE

### Matthew 28:18-20 by Robert Morgan

There's a therapist and a personal coach in San Francisco named Nico Iglesias who recently wrote an article that appeared in the San Francisco Examiner. His subject was finding your life's purpose. Mr. Iglesias said that almost everyone needs to know their life's purpose, but most people don't. Some people are not even sure there is a unique and individual purpose for them. Mr. Iglesias has a very simple practice for helping clients find their life's purpose. He advises his them to find a quiet place where they can sit without interruption and close their eyes and be still. He tells them to travel back in time to all the moments when they felt most fulfilled, happy, and aligned with their inner selves. What were they doing when they felt that way? What experiences were most meaningful to them? What made them feel the most passionate and the most fulfilled? What core values were behind those experiences? If you'll spend some time pondering those things, you'll be more likely get some clues as to your life's purpose.<sup>1</sup>

I think that can be a helpful exercise, but I think there's bit more to it. We also need to pray and to delve into the Scripture and to seek the will of God. And from time to time we need to hit the refresh button on our lives and churches to make sure we're still doing what God has called us to do. A good time to do that is during moments of transition, and I've been so excited about the fresh energy and vision that Tommy Swindol and I and our staff and our leadership want to emphasize. What a great time to look backward and to look forward and to say, "How can we rekindle our vision? What does God want us to do next?" Well, of course, whatever we do, it's grounded in the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So as we think about the subject of our purpose for being here, let's turn once again to Matthew 28:18-20:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, even to the very end of the age.

The word I want to emphasize is **disciples**. Jesus said: "Go and make disciples." That's what He told us to do, so that's our purpose. He said, "Go and do this," so that defines our purpose. We want to be disciples and we want to make disciples; and we want to make disciples who make more disciples. So what, then, is a disciple? That's the question. How do you know if you're a disciple? Today I want to give you five definitions of that word—and all of them are true and accurate.

#### 1. A Disciple is a Learner

First, in its simplest form, a disciple is a learner. The Greek word that was used in the New Testament is a word that means "Learner." In general, a disciple is someone who follows a particular teacher and learns the teachings of that particular rabbi. It refers to one who listens, learns, and follows the teaching of another. If we're disciples of Jesus, then we are His learners—and He has so much to teach us. He teaches us how to live. He teaches us how to think. He teaches us how to love. He teaches us how to have eternal life.

- Jesus taught us that He is the way, the truth, and the life. "No one comes to the Father," He said, "except

through Me” (John 14:6).

- He said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).
- Jesus taught us that our lives do not consist in the abundance of the things we possess, but in possessing the abundant life He came to impart (Luke 12:15; John 10:10).
- He taught us to let our light shine before others, that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).
- He taught us to pray, “Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name” (Matthew 6:9).
- He said, “Pray that you will not fall into temptation” (Luke 22:40).
- He taught us to always pray and not to give up (Luke 18:1).
- He said, “Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you” (Luke 8:39).
- He said, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).
- He said, “Render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s” (Luke 20:25).
- He said, “Whoever wants to be My disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Me” (Mark 8:34).
- And He taught us, of course, as we’ve said, to go into all the world and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all He has commanded us.

The teachings of Jesus are not limited to the red letters of the four Gospels. It’s not just the actual words of Christ in Scripture. It’s all the Scripture. The whole Bible is His Word for us. And if you’re a disciple, you should be learning more and more from Him every day, every week, every month, and every year.

## 2. A Disciple is a Christian

Second, a disciple is a Christian, that is, a Christ-follower. In the New Testament there was no difference between the word “disciple” and the word “Christian.” In fact, for the first few years of the church the word “disciple” was the primary way of designating Christians. I’ll give you an example from one chapter of the Bible —

Acts 9:1 says: Saul (who would later become the apostle Paul) was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples.

This doesn’t refer to the twelve apostles, but to all the Christ-followers in Jerusalem and elsewhere. He went to the high priest and asked for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners. Jesus-followers were disciples who belonged to the Way (Acts 9:2) – the Way to God, the Way to Life, followers of the one who said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” Saul wanted to destroy these disciples, starting in an area that, to this day, is dangerous to Christ-followers—Syria. He headed toward Damascus.

Acts 9:10 says: In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias.

Then we have an account of Saul’s dramatic conversion on the Damascus road, and look down at Acts 9:19: Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. This isn’t referring to the Twelve, but to all the Christ-followers in Damascus. They were referred to, not as Christians, not as church members, but as disciples.

Look at

Acts 9:26: Saul returned to Jerusalem and tried to join the **disciples**, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a **disciple**.

Meanwhile Peter went down to [Joppa](#) and we read in

Acts 9:36: In Joppa, there was a **disciple** named Tabitha

Acts 9:38 says, When the **disciples** heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him...

So you see that the early believers didn’t think of themselves as anything except disciples. The first time the word “Christian” occurred in history was two chapters later, and it was coined specifically to describe people who were disciples. It was in the city of Antioch.

Acts 11:26 says, The **disciples** were called Christians first at Antioch.

Until this moment in [Antioch](#), there was no universal term to describe Christ-followers except **disciples**.

Aristotle had **disciples**.

Socrates had **disciples**.

John the Baptist had **disciples**.

Jesus had **disciples**.

The followers of Christ were described as “**disciples**,” but the early believers wanted a word that would more specifically describe whose disciples they were. They wanted to be distinguished from all the other disciples of all the other teachers. So they coined a word that meant “Christ’s disciples” or “Christ’s followers” or “Christ’s ones” – Christians. So in a sense the word “disciple” and “Christian” are biblical synonyms. There’s a mainline Protestant denomination called the Christian Church, and they are also called the Disciples of Christ. My brother-in-law grew up in that denomination in Indiana. When I met him I asked him, “Are you a Baptist?” He said, “No, I’m a Christian.” Well, the founders of this denomination understood that the word “Christian” meant someone who was a “Disciple of Christ.” So if you are truly a Christian, you are a disciple. I think it’s helpful to get back to the word “disciple.” Our churches are filled with people who call themselves Christians or who think of themselves as church members or church attenders. But they don’t really think of themselves as disciples. But in a biblical sense, the terms are one and the same.

### **3. A Disciple is Someone Baptized and Taught**

Let me give you a third definition of discipleship. If we go back to the Great Commission – the last words Jesus gave as Matthew recorded His ministry – we can easily hammer out a biblical definition. In fact, Jesus Himself gave us the definition. He said: Therefore go and make disciples of all nations – that’s our purpose. But how do we go about it? What’s the plan? He went on to say we do it by... ..baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. That’s it. A disciple is someone who has been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – which means he or she has professed Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior – and is learning and putting into practice our Lord’s teachings. That seems simple, doesn’t it? A disciple is someone who has been baptized and taught.

### **4. A Disciple is Someone With Freedom, Purpose, and Fulfillment**

That leads to my fourth definition, and this has been our working definition at TDF for many years. Over the decades, I can’t tell you how many staff meetings and staff retreats I’ve attended. Somehow about every three or four years we end up spending several hours trying to define or re-define what a disciple is. We get hung up on it. After all, if our great purpose is to make disciples, we want to make sure we know what a disciple looks like. Our ministry programming depends on that. For many years, we used a simple definition based on the Great Commission. It’s not original to me. It emerged out of the church growth movement of the 1970s and 1980s. We adapted a version of what was essentially a working definition for the church growth movement. It was something like this:

“A disciple is someone who is committed to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, who is actively learning and obeying His teachings, and is involved in the church’s mission of making other disciples.”

That comes right out of the Great Commission. It’s so simple and straightforward we actually put it in our church bylaws. At the beginning of our church constitution are these words: The purpose of our church is to extend and strengthen the Kingdom for Christ and His glory. The goal of our church is to make disciples—those who love God passionately, learn and obey His word consistently and actively involve themselves in His body, the church. That’s so biblical that we don’t want to discard it, but we do want to simplify it. We’ve taken this definition and reduced it three simple words – Freedom, purpose, and fulfillment.

- When you’re committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and love Him passionately—that’s FREEDOM.
- When you’re actively learning and obeying His teachings— that’s PURPOSE.
- When you’re involved in His mission of making other disciples—that’s FULFILLMENT.

We want to be a church of people who have freedom, purpose, and fulfillment. We want to be a Great



Commission church that finds people needing Christ and brings them into discipleship. Let me just say if you want to become more deeply involved in the disciple-making process, enroll in LifeTrack, our one-month, four-session introduction to discipleship here at TDF. And start attending one of our LifeGroups where you can learn God's Word and build relationships with His people. This isn't the totality of discipleship, but it's a pretty tangible step in that direction.

### **5. A Disciple is A Christian On Fire**

But now, let me give you a fifth definition. A disciple is a Christian who is on fire. When Jesus disciplined His followers, He spent three years teaching them all these things we've talked about today. Then He died on the cross for them and for us, rose again, met with them a few more times, and ascended back to heaven. But they still were not ready to set the world on fire. They still were not ready to go into all the world and make other disciples. Something was missing. The last words of Jesus in Luke's Gospel are: "I am going to send you what the Father has promised; but stay in the city (of Jerusalem) until you have been clothed with power from on high." Ten days later as the early believers gathered in the Upper Room, the Day of Pentecost came, the fire of heaven fell on them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit came like a ball of fire into that room and set each one of those people on fire.

Acts 2 says: When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.... They were on fire and they set the world on fire. Let me talk a little about building fires. I grew up in the mountains where we used fire a lot. My grandparents had a cast iron stove they cooked on, and you had to know how to build a fire inside of it to heat the oven and the eyes. I have some very early memories of my grandmother, dressed in her apron, slicing potatoes. She would lay them directly on those hot cast-iron eyes, and they would get blistered and black on one side and then on the other, and they were her version of potato chips. At our own house, we didn't have a wood-fire cooking stove, but we always had a fireplace, and we knew how to build a good fire. The first thing you need is kindling wood. To build a good fire, you have to crumple up paper, if you have it, and make a bed for the fire. Then you gather twigs and small pieces of wood and make a nest over the paper. Then we'd take some larger pieces of dry wood and maybe shave them off on one side so there would be some splinters or exposed shards. Then we'd strike a match to the paper; the paper would set fire to the twigs; and the twigs would set fire to the shards. And the shards would set fire to the dry sticks. And then, once the fire was going, you put on the heavier pieces of firewood. Our Lord understood the architecture of fire.

In the Gospels, Jesus spent three years wadding up the paper and the pages of the Word of God. He taught them line upon line, precept upon precept. He taught them the Law and the Writings and the Prophets. He was the walking personification of the Old Testament. He was the Seed of Woman in Genesis, the Passover Lamb in Exodus, the Captain of the Lord's Hosts in Joshua, the King of Israel in the Psalms, the Man of Wisdom in Proverbs and the Suffering Servant in Isaiah. He taught the Old Testament as though He were its Author, which He was. Then He layered the Scriptures with the twigs and timbers of His own teachings, building up a stack of highly flammable firewood in the hearths and hearts of His disciples. He drenched it with the kerosene of His own sweat and blood. And then He returned to heaven, having finished His earthly work. And then on the Day of Pentecost, He struck an original match, dropped it from heaven and it fell like a fireball into the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost, and the room where they had gathered detonated with a spiritual force that has radiated and reverberated down through history and is still blazing today. But sadly, a lot of churches are like big stacks of waterlogged firewood that will never catch blaze on their own. The big backlog of their church membership has grown cold and the coals have nearly gone out and the fire in most churches is burning very low. But God is looking for some men and women to serve as kindling wood, and if He can set them on fire He might be able to bring about revival to the church and set the world on fire with the Gospel.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus is still looking for kindling wood. I met someone like that last week. She was an Asian lady who was attending a gathering I was at in Washington. She was on fire. She was a fireball. She had a purpose in life—and it was making money. This is what she said to me: "I'm into investments and equity and global trade. I'm going to Hong Kong tomorrow. The market in China is exploding." She told me about her business deals and about her involvement in motion pictures and distribution and manufacturing and publication and everything else. Then she said: "I spend eighty percent of my time making money, and the other twenty percent figuring out how to give one hundred percent of it away. I don't need it. My family doesn't need it. My purpose is to generate funds for ministry." She is generating millions of dollars to fund ministries. In fact, that's why she was at the conference I attended, and I have no doubt she left a very substantial check behind. We can't all be

international equity investors, but we can all be disciples. We can all be on fire. We can all be burning out for Jesus. It begins when you decide to give yourself exclusively and unconditionally to Jesus Christ. He can lead you into the unique and wonderful purpose that He has for your life—and it flows out of discipleship.

- **A disciple is a learner.**
- **A disciple is a New Testament Christian.**
- **A disciple is someone who has been baptized and who is learning and obeying our Lord's teachings.**
- **A disciple is someone who is committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and actively learning and obeying His teaching, and is involved in His church and its mission of making more disciples – someone who has found freedom, purpose, and fulfillment in Christ.**
- **A disciple is a Christian on fire.**

So we say:

Lord, revive us again; fill each heart with Thy love;  
May each soul be rekindled with fire from above.  
Hallelujah! What a Savior. Hallelujah! Amen.”<sup>3</sup>

Endnotes

- 1 “What’s Your Life Purpose?” by Nico Iglesias in [www.sfexaminer.com/whats-life-purpose-2-simple-methods-get/](http://www.sfexaminer.com/whats-life-purpose-2-simple-methods-get/).
  - 2 The concept of kindling wood isn’t original to me. Many years ago I heard evangelist Vance Havner talk about revival in these terms.
  - 3 Adapted from the hymn, “Revive Us Again” by William Mackay, 1863.
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