

Discipleship

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Scriptures:

Matthew 28:16-20

John 4

Luke 6:12-13

John 16:33

Matthew 6:19-21

Before His ascension Jesus told His disciples,

"..... Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you....." (Matthew 28:18-20)

Jesus spent His entire earthly ministry teaching his disciples by word and example until they were well grounded in how to make disciples by doing the things He did.

Newly born-again Christians are often eager to share the good news of salvation. They frequently prove to be great evangelists by sharing what Jesus has done for them. (John 4). However, before anyone can become a disciple maker they need to receive teaching from those who have walked with Jesus over a period of time.

Jesus is our greatest role model and the Apostle Paul has left us a wealth of teaching in His letters to the early churches. We can find no greater pattern for becoming a true disciple, capable of discipling others, than looking at the earthly life of Jesus and His first apostles.

True discipleship teaching began when Jesus chose and called the twelve to follow Him. His first priority was not with multitudes, but with His twelve chosen men. He called these before He preached in public. His method was to train and equip them by word and example.

'..... Jesus called to *Him* those He Himself wanted..... Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons...' (Mark 3:13-19)

Jesus chose carefully. Indeed the only record of Jesus praying throughout the night was before He chose His disciples. (Luke 6:12-13). This teaches us that discipleship doesn't just happen, but is the result of prayer and a willingness to invest time in training others.

It is worth noting that in Jesus' day, all Jewish men were grounded in the Scriptures before they came to Jesus. Today, the majority of people know little of the Scriptures. Therefore, teaching Scripture is an important place to begin discipleship training today.

Jesus teaches us how to become both a disciple and a disciple maker. His disciples learned their greatest lessons by being alongside Him, and this is all recorded to teach us likewise today. He teaches us the importance of developing a vertical relationship with the Father, and horizontal relationship with others.

Jesus took His disciples on mission before He sent them out. He also shows us that good discipling takes time and patience. He spent the whole of His earthly ministry teaching the twelve. They messed up many times, but Jesus allowed them to learn through their mistakes. Even Judas Iscariot was instrumental in bringing God's plan of salvation to all mankind!

I find it interesting that what Jesus asks of us is to 'follow' Him along the narrow path, willing to take up our cross. He warns disciples that in this life we will face tribulation (John 16:33) and He teaches us to store up treasures in Heaven..... (Matthew 6:19-21)

Prayer: Lord help me to always follow You along the narrow path, even when the going is hard. Help me to become a disciple worthy of my calling, and willing to walk with new believers, helping them to grow and become disciple makers too. I ask that Holy Spirit will continue to guide my thoughts, words and actions. In Jesus' Name I pray, Amen