

DISCIPLESHIP: FOLLOWING JESUS

Introduction

1. We believe we exist, both personally and corporately, to glorify God as He works in and through us as we worship, disciple, reach, and serve.
2. Last week: Worship – we are called to be 24/7 – eternally-for-God-people. To that end, it is our hope and prayer that you see more and more of the greatness of God on Sunday mornings and every day in between.
3. This week: This kind of life of worship will lead to a life of greater devotion and commitment to Jesus. Before we start, two foundational questions must be answered:
 - Do you believe all that Jesus says?
 - Are you willing to follow all that Jesus says?

The Call to Discipleship

1. The definition of discipleship → following Jesus. See Matthew 4:18-22. As Jesus called His disciples, His call was to follow Him.
2. The call of discipleship is upon every believer in Jesus Christ. See Matthew 28:18-20. Discipleship is a call to go and make disciples who go and make disciples. All who follow Jesus are called to this pattern of reproduction.

The Nature of Discipleship

1. **Following with and “all in” conviction and commitment.**
 - Matthew 4:20, 22 *“they immediately left the nets... they immediately left the boat and their father...”*
 - Matthew 10:37, *“He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”*
 - Luke 9:62, *“No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”*
 - Revelation 3:15-16, *“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot: I would that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth.”* This is not radical discipleship, this is normal discipleship.

2. **Following at the feet of Jesus.** To follow Jesus, we need to know the heart and mind of Jesus. How will we know His heart and mind? Through His word (Sermon on the Mount follows the call of disciples; Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus; Great Commission – *“teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you...”*).
 - **Action Point:** Pulpit Ministry and Study Fellowships.

3. **Following Jesus to maturity.** There is a continuous, consistent growth pattern in our Christian life. We grow in our knowledge, our obedience, and our love for Him and others. See the commands of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). This is not legalism. This is grace. Jesus expects growth/change/transformation. As we follow Jesus, we become like Jesus.

4. **Following in Christian community.** Jesus not only called them to Himself, He called them to each other. They were called to follow in a group of twelve who would challenge, encourage, cheer, frustrate, sin against, forgive, serve, love each other. We are called to each other. We are not meant to do this alone. We need the body of Christ.
 - **Action Point:** Home groups and small groups are absolutely essential to your thriving at CPC. This is also why we have Men's/Women's Ministries and Stephen's Ministry.

5. **Following to become a fisherman.** Matthew 4:19, *“fishers of men”* and reproduction pattern of the Great Commission. This following is also a going. See Matthew 10:1. What if they weren't ready or didn't know enough or sleep well in another bed? God was going to use their going to make them better followers. OJT vs. classroom. God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies those He calls.
 - **Action Point:** serve in a ministry (CPC ministries make it very easy!).

The Cost of Discipleship

1. **Denying self** – *“If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”* (Mark 8:34). Following Jesus involves a daily dying to self. It is a complete and concerted giving over of our time, talent, and treasure to Jesus (see “All in” principle above). The cost confronts us with the question, “Have I bowed to Jesus as Lord?” Bonhoeffer quote.
2. **Taking up the Cross.** See Mark 8:34 above. Following also involves suffering. The path Jesus walked leads to the Cross. We are called to that same path.
 - *“I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves... when they deliver you up... you will be hated... whenever they persecute you...”* (Matthew 10:16-23).
 - *“And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”* (2 Timothy 3:12)
 - *“...for I will show him how much he must suffer for my name’s sake.”* (Acts 9:16).Those who follow Jesus will suffer for Jesus. Are you willing?

The Reward of Discipleship

1. **In following Jesus we find life.** *“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.”* The Divine paradox – in dying, we find life. Do you trust Him?
2. **In following Jesus we gain much, much more than we lose.** *“And everyone who has left houses or brothers... for My name’s sake, shall receive many times as much, and shall inherit eternal life.”* (Matthew 19:29). See also Hidden Treasure parable in Matthew 13:44. In following... we find Jesus. Is He worth it? Elliot quote.

Quotes from Fellow Pilgrims

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose. ~Jim Elliot

The disciple simply burns his boats and goes ahead. He is called out, and has to forsake his old life in order that he may “exist” in the strictest sense of the word. The old life is left behind, and completely surrendered. The disciple is dragged out of his relative security into a life of absolute insecurity (that is, in truth, into the absolute security and safety of the fellowship of Jesus)... It is nothing else than bondage to Jesus Christ alone, completely breaking through every program, every ideal, every set of laws. No other significance is possible, since Jesus is the only significance. Beside Jesus nothing has any significance. He alone matters.

~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die. ~Dietrich Bonhoeffer

One of the unintended consequences of contemporary church strategies that revolve around performances, places, programs, and professionals is that somewhere along the way people get left out of the picture. But according to Jesus, people are God’s method for winning the world to himself. People who have been radically transformed by Jesus. People who are not sidelined to sit in a chair on Sundays while they watch professionals take care of ministry for them. People who are equipped on Sundays to participate in ministry every day of the week. People who are fit and free to do precisely what Jesus did and what Jesus told us to do. Make disciples.

~ David Platt

Making disciples is not an easy process. It is trying. It is messy. It is slow, tedious, even painful at times. It is all these things because it is relational. Jesus has not given us an effortless step-by-step formula for impacting nations for his glory. He has given us people, and he has said, “Live for them. Love them, serve them, and lead them. Lead them to follow me, and lead them to lead others to follow me. In the process you will multiply the gospel to the ends of the earth.”

~ David Platt

This is the unavoidable conclusion of Matthew 10. To everyone wanting a safe, untroubled, comfortable life free from danger, stay away from Jesus. The danger in our lives will always increase in proportion to the depth of our relationship with Christ. Maybe this is why we sit back and settle for a casual relationship with Christ and routine religion in the church. It is safe there and the world likes us there. The world likes us when we are pursuing everything they are pursuing even if we do put a Christian label on it. As long as Christianity looks like the American dream, we will have few problems in this world. But if we identify with Christ, we will lose much in this world. Jesus said this himself: “Everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher”. These words should frighten us. They should frighten us because our Teacher was mocked, beaten, scourged, spit upon, and nailed to a cross. Do we really want to be like him?

~ David Platt