

# THE DISCIPLES MANUAL

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**By the Book™** A Chapter by  
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from **Jerry Vines Ministries**

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## Let's Begin

*If you're a computer user, you know about the thick manual you received from that new "user-friendly" software you just purchased. The box promises it's just a couple of mouse clicks and you've got it made. How many times have you fallen for that? In fact, you first have to get a good understanding of the program logic from the training manual included in the box. More often than not, it is quite demanding to be proficient in the "simple" software.*

*Similarly, chapter 10 is a training manual for disciples of Jesus. It is also demanding to be a disciple. And though in many ways this chapter is a bit harder to understand than others in Matthew, if you look at chapter ten as a training manual, the following outline will assist you in understanding it better.*

### **I. Section One: The Eras of Different Disciples (vv. 1-23)**

### **II. Section Two: The Equipment for all Disciples (vv. 24-42)**

## **I. Section one: The Eras of Different Disciples (vv. 1-23)**

In the opening section of the disciples' manual, Jesus said some things that are apparently not in our commission today. **First, look at the instructions for the era of the past disciples** (vv. 1-15). Matthew is clear that Jesus is speaking of the particular group of disciples Jesus called "apostles" (v. 2). The term actually means "ones sent forth" (v. 5).

In the narrow sense, apostles were the ones who were with Jesus from the beginning and were witnesses to His resurrection. They were given special powers and unique authority (cp. 2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:1-4). Also, it means the apostles were originally commissioned to go only to the "House of Israel" (v. 6). However, this changed drastically after Jesus was crucified and rose from the dead. We now have a new age with a new commission (28:18-20).

**The second era of disciples is the prospective disciples** (vv. 16-23). These are not the original twelve, but ones whom the twelve would win to faith in Jesus. The book of Acts speaks of a partial fulfillment of this era, which will have a different atmosphere

from the former one, as it will be during the end times. One difference will be the world-wide persecution of these disciples (vv. 17-22), but they are encouraged with mention of the return of the Lord (v. 23). For Great Tribulation disciples these words are especially important.

**The third era of disciples in our training manual is the present disciples** (vv. 24-42). This is the era that especially pertains to us, for it is between the past disciples who were the original apostles and the future disciples who witness Jesus during the Great Tribulation. Thus, this section tells us what to expect as disciples of Jesus in the twenty-first century.

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## **II. Section Two: The Equipment for all Disciples (vv. 24-42)**

Jesus was always open and upfront with people. He never got disciples to follow Him by using manipulation or false pretenses. Some churches seem to emphasize all the positive factors of being a Christian and never mention the demands of discipleship. How unlike Jesus many modern churches are! He always laid out what every disciple could expect.

In addition, being a Christian is not a life insurance policy that keeps one from going to hell. Rather, the real Christian is a disciple of Jesus and



### Reflection Connection

*Think about the function of a training manual. How is the Bible different from a manual? How is it similar? Do you think God has given us everything we need in our manual? Why or why not?*

### Reflection Connection

*How are our roles as disciples today different from Jesus' disciple then? How is the demand of discipleship different from being a works-based salvation? Do you think there is confusion in the church today about this? Why or why not?*

### Reflection Connection

*If the original disciples were sent only to the "House of Israel," how is Jesus the Messiah of the whole world? Is Jesus still the Messiah of the Jewish people? Why do they still reject Him as their Messiah? Should Christians witness to Jewish people?*

understands the demands placed on him. Jesus offers His disciples three pieces of equipment to assist in meeting the demands of discipleship.

**The first piece of equipment is to realize the fear that exists** (vv. 24-31). Discipleship always demands the best from Jesus' followers. And sometimes, the best includes following Jesus into untamed territory. Like a jungle, it can be a scary place to be. Three times in this section Jesus tells His disciples to "fear not" (vv. 26, 28, and 31). For Jesus to focus so much on fear should have told the naïve disciples just how demanding being His disciple can be.

What causes the fear Jesus mentions so often? One clear cause for fear is persecution (vv. 24-28). His disciples should expect persecutions. After all since Jesus was persecuted on earth, why would it be surprising that His disciples face persecution as well? The ultimate cause of persecution facing Jesus' disciples is Satan himself. Though this passage does not mention Satan, Jesus does refer to "Beelzebub" (v. 25). "Beelzebub" literally translates "lord of the flies". Those who torment Christians swarm like flies, striving to overcome the disciples of Jesus. None of us like persecution. But the disciples of Jesus "know it will come." Being forewarned is being forearmed.

Another cause of persecution against disciples of Jesus Christ is the display of moral courage (vv. 26-28). Every Christian should understand that whenever a strong stand is made against sin, the enemies of Christ will oppose, persecute and destroy. If Christians are silent and go along with the world, that is a sure way to avoid persecution. It is also a sure way to break the heart of Jesus. It may even be a way to prove oneself to not be a genuine follower of Christ.

If we live for Jesus openly and honestly before a watching world, inevitably it will take not only moral courage but also physical courage (v. 28). Jesus spoke about the possibility of a man's body being killed. He noted, however, that the body dying is not the worst that could happen. No enemy of Christ can touch your soul!

What is the remedy for a disciple's fear? The protection Jesus promises (vv. 29-31). Here our Lord spoke of birds which fall to the ground in mid-flight. God attends the funeral of every sparrow! And if He cares that much for his feathered creatures, why should a disciple fear that God would not watch that carefully over him? In fact, Jesus indicated that God watches so closely over His disciples that "the very hairs of your head are numbered" (v. 31).

**The second piece of equipment our disciples manual offers is a familiarization with the foes that attack us** (vv. 32-39). Jesus spoke directly of the disciples' foes (v. 36). We've looked at one of those foes already (v. 25). Additionally, we've observed the fierceness of the persecution they bring against the disciples of Jesus.

So, just how is a disciple of Jesus to view the foes who come against him? There are three filters the disciple must use to view his foes.

*The first filter to use is your loyalty to Christ* (vv. 32-33). Jesus spoke of those who would "deny" Him as well as those who would "confess" Him. To "confess" means to acknowledge Him as Lord of your life and agree with Him as He governs your life. When a disciple "confesses" Jesus, the disciple is identifying with Jesus (cp. Romans 10:10). What your heart possesses, your mouth is eager to tell.



**Reflection Connection**

*Share a time in your life when you feel you were persecuted for your faith in Christ. Allow others time to share as well.*

**Reflection Connection**

*Name some different competing loyalties that attempt to gain your allegiance. How can a Christian learn to discern which loyalty is primary? How are loyalties in the church decided? Explain.*

**Reflection Connection**

*When Jesus divides one family member from another, what do you think that means? How can true peace reign in a family if the family has foes living under the same roof?*

On the other hand, to “deny” Jesus is to take oneself out of the circle of Jesus. This is completely at odds with who Jesus is as Lord and actually demonstrates being ashamed of Jesus. The disciple takes his stand for Jesus, never denying Him and always confessing Him as Lord.

According to Jesus, when a disciple stands with Him and for Him, He also stands with the disciple (v. 33). One needs only think of Stephen, who stood for Jesus in the face of persecutors, which ultimately led to his death. And as Stephen stood for Jesus, so Jesus stood for him (Acts 7:55). What a heartfelt picture of standing strong in the face of persecution.

*The second filter through which to view your foe is your love for Christ (vv. 34-37). We must see ourselves as in a war. Why? Because of Who Jesus is. According to the Bible, Jesus is a divider of men (v. 34). The entire globe can be divided into two basic camps—those who are disciples of Jesus and those who are deniers of Jesus. The world contains those who possess faith in Jesus and those who refuse to follow Jesus. In which camp do you pitch your tent?*

***We must see  
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Jesus spoke a sad but true word, “A man’s foes shall be those of his own household” (v. 36). I’ve known some dear godly women who would come to church and bring their children even though their husbands were home or at the lake or in the woods hunting deer. These men had no interest in spiritual things. The women were disciples, the men deniers. Their wives will be going to heaven. The husbands are headed to hell if they do not change. Jesus makes a great division sometimes even in the home.

One of the hardest sayings our Lord uttered was captured by Matthew, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (v. 37). Jesus recalled that ultimately, human love must be placed on the altar of God. As precious as our human relationships are—even family relationships—all must be sacrificed on the altar of our love for Christ.

*The third filter through which to view our foes is our life in Christ (vv. 38-39). If one is not willing to take up a cross with Jesus, one is not a disciple of His (v. 38). A cross for Jesus is a cross for a Christian.*

What does it mean to take up a cross? Some see the cross as a trial or tribulation they go through in this life. But that is not what Jesus meant here. He had already spoken about a disciple’s persecution (vv. 19-22). What Jesus was speaking of here is death. The cross meant death to Jesus; thus, the cross means no less to us. Taking up a cross means taking up our death. We are to die to our desires; we are to die to our plans; we are to die to our own directions. Jesus becomes number one in a person’s life. That is what it means to take up a cross. That is the deepest, most searching question one will ever ask oneself: “Am I taking up my cross?”

When it comes down to it, there really are only two alternatives for one to consider: A person can spare his life and die or a person can sacrifice his life and live. That’s what Jesus meant when He said if you find your life, you’ll lose it; but if you lose your life, you’ll find it (v. 39).



### Reflection Connection

*Jesus indicates that if we are to save our lives, we need to give up our lives. What does giving up our lives mean?*

*Discipleship is demanding; it involves a crisis.* The crisis is all about a cross. Will you take your cross and live? Or, will you refuse the cross and die? In addition, taking the cross should be viewed as a process. It's not a one-time thing. Jesus made clear elsewhere that one must take up his cross daily and follow after Him (Luke 9:23).

**Let's now observe the third piece of equipment in the disciple's manual: our friends show support** (vv. 40-42). Even though being a disciple is demanding, causing much fear around us, and our foes advance against us, the fight is not lost. We have friends who support us and will even join with us as we live for the Lord Jesus.

Not everyone will reject our witness. In fact, they receive us as they receive the Lord. Jesus said, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth Him that sent me" (v. 41). They're not just receiving us but receiving Him. They are welcoming the King because we are His representatives. We cannot all be prophets but all of us can share the ministry as one. Whatever is done for the servant of God is done for the servants God.

*When we help others, we're actually helping Jesus.*

Notice also those who welcome servants of God are rewarded by the Lord. (vv. 41-42). Those who assist others in ministry have a significant part of that ministry. When we help others, we're actually helping Jesus. It's not just the large and lucrative ministries Jesus talked about here (v. 42). Rather it's the simple Christians who love Jesus that receive the reward even of a prophet (v. 41).

### Golden Greek Nugget

The term translated "apostles" in v. 2 means "one sent on a mission." Another Gospel tells of Jesus' forerunner: "There was a man sent from God, whose name was John" (John 1:6). John the Baptist is seen as an "apostle" in the broad sense. The more strict sense placed restrictions upon the term (Acts 1:22).

### Wrap Up

*Every movement needs a manual of actions in order to go forward. Matthew offers this in chapter ten. In section one, he looks at the disciples of Jesus as they march through the ages; he presents three major eras—past, prospective and present.*

*In section two, he names the equipment which transcends the eras of being a disciple of Jesus. After acknowledging the fear that exists to discourage disciples, he moves on to the foes that attack His disciples. Thankfully, followers of Jesus need not fear their foes. God watches over his own for the entire journey and makes sure they have friends who support them and even signs up to serve with them. What an awesome God we serve!*

