

# 990530 AM DISCIPLES PATH #1 GUIDE

## DISCIPLES PATH PART # 1

### FOLLOWING JESUS EVERY DAY

2000 years ago Jesus offered a group of men the opportunity to follow Him every day. The path He led them down was the disciples path. This morning we need to discover who the disciples were in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, listen what Jesus said to them, and then examine ourselves and see if we are Christ's !

Getting the opportunity to follow Jesus every day! What an unforgettable moment it must forever have been. To wake up early, walk to the beach where your father's boats were tied and set up to go out fishing as you did 6 days a week. But while getting the nets untangled up walked a man who talked like no one ever before or after. He said, "Follow me".

Getting the opportunity to follow Jesus every day! That day it started as those fishermen began as the first of 12 disciples who would follow, listen, learn and obey the Master. What was it like to follow Jesus? Wonderful beyond words. They really never stopped talking about the thrill of following Jesus each day. It was always so exciting. Sometimes He would just talk to them, on site. If they were in a field Jesus used the plants as pictures of spiritual life. Yet the pictures were so real the disciples would become uncomfortable aware He was looking and seeing into their very souls. Have you ever wondered what it would have been like to be one of the twelve disciples? Just think of it:

- to eat breakfast with Christ every day for 3 1/2 years
- to walk all day long and ask Him any question on any truth and have in always correct answer!
- to see Him at work and what work that was.

Getting the opportunity to follow Jesus every day! After three plus years they saw so much. Bread that grew in the hands of Jesus so fast they could only carry it away by the bushel to feed thousands of people. Hands and feet, arms and legs that appeared from no where at the touch of Jesus and made blind, lame and disfigured bodies perfectly new and healthy. Hurricanes silenced, shrieking demons stilled, writhing and convulsing people calmed and whole. All in a days walk. Fever wracked victims raised with a word, dead and cold bodies sprang to life, and all in the presence of the Creator Himself.

Getting the opportunity to follow Jesus every day! Just think of the questions and the answers as Jesus led them step by step on the greatest journey of all. They walked, talked and lived with Jesus. Jesus calls them His disciples.

Turn with me to Mark 8:34-37 and as we stand, put yourself out there in the crowd and hear what it was Jesus preached when He was doing evangelism.

Mark 8:34-37

A “disciple” is a learner, one who attaches himself or herself to a teacher in order to learn a trade or a subject. Perhaps in our culture the nearest synonym is “apprentice,” one who learns by watching and by doing. The word *disciple* was the most common name for the followers of Jesus Christ and is used 264 times in the Gospels and the Book of Acts.

Let’s back up through the scriptures.

Born again Christians are called disciples in God's Word. The message Jesus preached and taught to the 12 became the model for the New Testament church. The words disciple or disciples is found 267 times in New Testament. In the Gospels it refers 229 times to the twelve and 8 times for Christians of all ages. However in Acts it describes all 30 times Christians like you and me.

1 Pet. 4:16 Christian (only 3 times) - that’s us right

Acts 26:28 Almost Christian that’s witnessing and being rejected

Acts 9:1,10,19,25-26,36,38, etc.

- ✓ 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.) 6:2 And 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. 6:7 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 many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith. **(All those people saved at Pentecost are called Disciples)**
- ✓ Acts 9:1 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, 9:19 and he took food and was strengthened. Now for several days he was with the disciples who were at Damascus, 9:25 but his disciples took him by night, and let him down through (an opening in) the wall, lowering him in a large basket. 9:26 And when he had come to Jerusalem, he was trying to associate with the disciples; and they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple. **(Disciples are wary of false disciples)** And since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, entreating him, “Do not delay to come to us.”
- ✓ Acts 11:26 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. **Disciples = Christians** 11:29 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. **Disciples support the church financially**

- ✓ Acts 13:52 And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. **Disciples happy and spirit-filled**
- ✓ 14:20 But while the disciples stood around him, he arose and entered the city. And the next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe. **Disciples identify with Christ at all costs** 14:21 And after they had preached the gospel to that city and had many more disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, **Disciples respond to gospel** 14:22 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." **Disciples respond to the word** 14:28 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? **Disciples not under ceremonial law!**
- ✓ Acts 18:23 And having spent some time (there,) he departed and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. **Disciples are involved in the ministry of the Word of God** 18:27 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 helped greatly those who had believed through grace; **Disciples are saved by grace**
- ✓ **Disciples contrasted as only of John Baptist not of Jesus Christ** Acts 19:1 And it came about that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper country came to Ephesus, and found some disciples, 19:9 But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the multitude, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 19:30 And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him.
- ✓ Acts 20:1 And after the uproar had ceased, Paul sent for the disciples and when he had exhorted them and taken his leave of them, he departed to go to Macedonia. 20:30 and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.
- ✓ Acts 21:4 And after looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem. 21:16

And (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.

## **HAS THE MESSAGE BEEN DILUTED?**

Have you ever picked up an iced tea or coke that sat too long...the ice melted...and it's diluted? Have you ever had a sneaking suspicion something just isn't right; that it's lost a bit in the delivery?

Diluted, it's lost something hasn't it? Open to Mk. 8:34-37 (read).

What a message: Note the elements:

- Following Christ
- Self-denial
- Crucifixion of self
- Secret of eternal security

Have you ever listened to the straight talk Christ gave to anyone considering becoming a follower of Him (disciple that is) or Christian as we call it today? Jesus never makes a distinction between salvation and discipleship. Salvation is open to all who will come by faith, and salvation begins a life of costly discipleship. Salvation is coming to the cross and trusting Jesus Christ, as well as carrying the cross and following Jesus Christ. Jesus did not give two different messages of salvation.

There is an amazing confusion going on in Christ's church across the world this morning. It is a belief that Jesus has two types of children that can be born again into His family. One type are the saved only, the second type are the disciples who really get into their Christian walk. All of us from time to time have either thought, heard of or even discussed this concept.

## **TWO WAYS OR ONE?**

The question we need to ponder this morning is, did Jesus present two different ways of salvation in the Gospels? The answer is of course no. So what do some people do with the calls of Jesus to unreserved surrender and obedience? They make these a second decision for later in a believers walk. But is that what Jesus and the Apostles taught? Again the answer is no, they did not.

Discipleship is for all Christians in all ages: not for apostles only, but for the humblest disciples; not for priests or preachers, but for the laity as well; not for monks living in cloisters, but for men living and working in the outside world. The

King and Head of the church here proclaims a universal law binding on all His subjects, requiring all to bear a cross in fellowship with Himself.<sup>1</sup>

The noted German pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer was imprisoned for several years by the Nazis and was executed just before the close of World War II. In his book *The Cost of Discipleship*, he described this deadly two part salvation notion he called the gospel of cheap grace:

[Cheap grace] amounts to the justification of sin without the justification of the repentant sinner who departs from sin and from whom sin departs.

Cheap grace is not the kind of forgiveness of sin which frees us from the toils of sin. ...

Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ. ...

[Costly grace, on the other hand] is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him. ... When [Martin Luther] spoke of grace, [he] always implied as a corollary that it cost him his own life, the life which was now subjected to the absolute obedience of Christ. ... Happy are they who, knowing that grace, can live in the world without being of it, who by following Jesus Christ, are so assured of their heavenly citizenship that they are truly free to live their lives in this world. ([New York: Macmillan, 1959], pp. 47, 53, 60)

We know the Scriptures teach that only the Son of God could have paid the cost of salvation. But He calls His followers to pay the cost of discipleship. "If anyone wishes to come after Me," Jesus said, "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 shall find it" (Matt. 16:24-25).

- ✓ Jesus Christ is not looking for people who want to add Him to their sin as insurance against hell.
- ✓ He is not looking for people who want to apply His high moral principles to their unregenerate lives.
- ✓ He is not looking for those who want only to be outwardly reformed by having their old nature improved.

Jesus Christ calls to Himself those who are willing to be inwardly transformed by Him, who desire an entirely new nature that is created in His own holy likeness. He calls to Himself those who are willing to exchange their sinfulness for His holiness. He calls to Himself those who are willing to die with Him in order to be raised with Him, who are willing to relinquish slavery to their sin for slavery

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce, Alexander Balman, *The Training of the Twelve*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1995.

to His righteousness. And when men come to Him on His terms, He changes their destiny from eternal death to eternal life.

Have you ever picked up an iced tea or coke that sat too long...the ice melted...and it's diluted? Have you ever had a sneaking suspicion something just isn't right; that it's lost a bit in the delivery?

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What a message: Note the elements:

Following Christ  
Self-denial  
Crucifixion of self  
Secret of eternal security

**3:35** Jesus made a decisive and comprehensive statement on true Christian discipleship. Such discipleship involves a spiritual relationship that transcends the physical family and is open to all who are empowered by the Spirit of God to come to Christ in repentance and faith and enabled to live a life of obedience to God's Word.

**8:34 deny himself.** No one who is unwilling to deny himself can legitimately claim to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. **take up his cross.** This reveals the extent of self-denial—to the point of death, if necessary. The extent of desperation on the part of the penitent sinner who is aware he can't save himself reaches the place where nothing is held back (cf. Matt. 19:21, 22). **and follow Me.** See *notes* on 1:17; Matt. 10:38.

**8:35 loses his life ... will save it.** 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 (see *note* on v. 34) for the sake of Christ and the gospel will find it. Cf. John 12:25.

**8:38 ashamed of Me and My words.** Those who reject the demands of discipleship prove themselves to be ashamed of Jesus Christ and the truth He taught, thus not redeemed from sin at all.

## A DISCIPLES PATH TO FOLLOW

### RENOUCING SELF AS THE AUTHORITY OF MY LIFE

- ✓ Mark 8:34-37 When He had called the people to [Himself,] with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 35 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole

world, and loses his own soul? 37 "Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (NKJV)

- ✓ *Renouncing self as the authority and focus of my life...*

## **CHOOSING A LIFE OF DEVOTION TO CHRIST**

- ✓ Matthew 10:37-39 "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. 38 "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it. (NKJV)
- ✓ *Building a relationship of supreme and incomparable love for Jesus Christ...*

## **HUNGERING FOR THE WORD**

- ✓ John 8:31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. (NKJV)
- ✓ *Committing to regular study and devotion to God's Word...*

## **FOLLOWING THE WAY OF THE CROSS**

- ✓ Matthew 16:24-27 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 "For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. (NKJV)
- ✓ *Unquestioning allegiance to our Lord Jesus Christ's captivating leadership...*

## **YIELDING MY LIFE TO CHRIST**

- ✓ Luke 9:23-27 Then He said to [them] all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. 24 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. 25 "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? 26 "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His [own] glory, and [in His] Father's, and of the holy angels. 27 "But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God." (NKJV)
- ✓ *Recognizing the true owner of my time, money and talents...*

## **LIVING IN THE LOVE OF JESUS**

- ✓ John 13:34-35;
- ✓ *Reflecting the love of Christ in my attitude and actions*

## **CHRIST'S MESSAGE OF SALVATION!**

Remember Matthew 7:13-23:

- ✓ True believers are those who ENTER GOD'S WAY [v. 13-15 it is narrow, small and they are few]
- ✓ True believers are those who BEAR GOD'S FRUIT [v.16-20]
- ✓ True believers are those who DO GOD'S WILL [V. 21]
- ✓ True believers are those who KNOW GOD INTIMATELY [v. 22-23]
- ✓ True believers are those who ACT ON THE WORD OF GOD [v.24a if God says it they believe and obey]
- ✓ True believers are those who BUILD THEIR LIVES UPON THE ROCK [v. 24b]