

# ***“DISCIPLESHIP 101”***

## **OUTLINE OF STUDY**

- #1 “The Meaning of Discipleship” (1)
- #2 “The Meaning of Discipleship” (2)
- #3 “The Early Disciples – The Kind of People Jesus Chose”
- #4 “Conditions of Discipleship”
- #5 “Evidences of Discipleship”
- #6 “Tests of Discipleship”
- #7 “Ideal Discipleship”
- #8 “Dangers of Discipleship”
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- #11 “The Demonstration of Discipleship”
- #12 “What Happened to Discipleship in the Epistles?”
- #13 “The Disciples’ Lord”

### ***Dedication***

***To Bill Burk – Brother in the Lord, gospel preacher and friend.  
You imbibe more of the spirit of “the disciple whom  
Jesus loved” than any man I know.***

## ***Sources Consulted***

***The listing of a source does NOT indicate complete agreement with the contents of the work in all matters, nor are the authors to be held responsible for any deficiencies in my own work.***

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# ***“DISCIPLESHIP 101”***

## **Lesson #2**

### ***“The Meaning of Discipleship” (2)***

#### **Introduction**

1. REAL discipleship involves:
  - (1) living \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus
  - (2) being fully \_\_\_\_\_ to His words and ways
  - (3) being willing to \_\_\_\_\_ on His behalf
  - (4) being deeply desirous of reflecting His \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to others
2. If we fail to stress these things in our lives, we are NOT following Jesus in a way that’s pleasing to Him.

#### **I. LOOKING AT “THE DISCIPLE WHOM JESUS LOVED” AS AN EXAMPLE**

1. Most Bible students believe “the disciple whom Jesus loved” in the gospel of John is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A “Case Study in Discipleship” – “The Disciple Whom Jesus Loved”
  - (1) At the Last Supper, He \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus – He longed to be near the Lord (John 13:23-26).
  - (2) The Lord believed He could entrust the care of Mary to this man – The Lord believed this person to be trustworthy, caring and reliable. See John 19:25-27.

- (3) This person \_\_\_\_\_ with Peter to the empty tomb, sees it empty and believes (John 20:1-10). The resurrection made a powerful difference in his life. See Romans 1:3-4.
- (4) This disciple is quick to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord (John 21:4-7). Are we quick to recognize the Lord and His grace?
- (5) This disciple follows Jesus at a close enough distance that he is singled out by Peter for comparative purposes (John 21:20-23). See 1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 4:9; Luke 6:40 – If people REALLY knew you, would they want to be compared to you?
- (5) He gave an inspired account of Jesus for us to enjoy (John 21:24).

**II. 10 TRAITS OF HEALTHY DISCIPLES OF JESUS FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

- 1. Healthy disciples trust that God has given us \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Healthy disciples engage in God-honoring (and God-authorized) \_\_\_\_\_ (John 4:23-24; Matthew 15:8-9).
- 3. Healthy disciples practice the \_\_\_\_\_ out of a desire to lovingly draw closer to the Lord (John 15:4). See 1 Timothy 4:7-8.
- 4. Healthy disciples learn and grow in \_\_\_\_\_. They do NOT isolate themselves from others of “like precious faith” (2 Peter 1:1). See John 21:6.
- 5. Healthy disciples commit to \_\_\_\_\_ relationships (John 15:12-14; 13:34-35).
- 6. Healthy disciples exhibit the spirit of \_\_\_\_\_ (John 13:15).

7. Healthy disciples share the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ generously (John 3:16-17, 36). See Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 5:42; 2 Corinthians 5:14.
8. Healthy disciples manage \_\_\_\_\_ (John 9:4). See James 2:12; Luke 16:10-13; 2 Corinthians 6:1.
9. Healthy disciples constantly reach within the body of Christ to \_\_\_\_\_ others (John 17:21-23). See Romans 12:1-8.
10. Healthy disciples steward a life of abundance recognizing to Whom all belongs (John 10:10; 12:24).

### **Conclusion**

1. Real discipleship is a much more comprehensive theme than many ever think it to be.
2. *This study is given with the loving prayer that YOU will desire to be such a follower of Christ!*

# ***“DISCIPLESHIP 101”***

## **Lesson #3**

### ***“The Kind of People God Chooses”***

#### **Introduction**

1. Illustration: I don't know how MANY times I've heard something to this effect: “If John EVER became a Christian, just think about how God could use him. Why, with his enthusiasm, leadership ability, talent and money, there would be NO STOPPING him.”
2. Such reasoning MAY NOT be in harmony with the teaching of the New Testament. Remember the Rich Young Ruler? (Matthew 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-30). What of the “scribe” who told Jesus that he would follow the Lord “wherever” He went? (Matthew 8:19-20). Both of these examples (and more could be given) indicate that so-called “conventional wisdom” in determining who might make a good follower of the Lord is NOT always right when it comes to the area of discipleship!
3. Jesus did NOT choose His followers SOLELY on the basis of their ability to positively contribute something to His cause. In other words, Jesus did NOT choose the apostles simply for “what He could get out of them.” See Isaiah 55:8-9; 1 Samuel 16:7.
4. REAL Discipleship involves:
  - (1) Living close to Christ
  - (2) Being fully attentive to His words and ways
  - (3) Being willing to sacrifice on His behalf
  - (4) Being deeply desirous of reflecting His love and glory to others
5. How do people pick vegetables and fruit in the produce section of the grocery store? Those who have “perfected the fine art of selection” thump, sniff and squeeze various fruits and vegetables in addition to how those things look to the eyes.
6. What kind of method of selection did the Lord use for picking people who would commence the greatest work of all – spreading His gospel after His death?

## I. THE TECHNIQUE IN SELECTION

1. Jesus chose a few men *with* whom He could build a relationship and *in* whom He could pour His life so that when He was gone they could turn the world upside down (cf. Acts 17:6).
2. Jesus did NOT start some “official program” that lacked heart and relationships. He would reach the world through His relationship with the apostles – through their genuinely learning to follow Him.
3. Notice from Luke 6:12-13 that Jesus spent the entire evening in prayer prior to choosing the 12. Also note Mark 3:14, where the text says that Jesus chose the 12 to “be with Him” and later, to “send them out to preach.”
4. Note the following “basic requirements” in the selection process:
  - (1) They had to be men of **spiritual desire** (see Luke 9:23; John 1:35-51).
  - (2) They had to be men who would be **available** (Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 5:27-28).
  - (3) They had to be men who were **flexible (in the best sense)**. It is likely that some, if not most of the 12, had been disciples of John the Baptizer (see John 1:35-42). John’s message differed radically from what was heard coming from the religious establishment – the Pharisees and Sadducees. See the teaching of Jesus in passages like Matthew 5:20 and 6:1-8.
  - (4) They had to be men who were **teachable**. That’s just an essential of real discipleship! See Luke 6:40. The apostles may not have always understood Jesus, but they at least possessed a willingness to learn.
  - (5) They needed to be men who were **dependable**. See John 6:66-68. For the task at hand, loyalty was a must! See Matthew 10:24-25.

## II. CHARACTERISTICS OF THOSE JESUS FIRST CHOSE

1. They were, by and large, **younger men**. See Psalm 110:3 in both the KJV and NASB, where the KJV implies the youth of the Lord, while the NASB suggests His followers. Certainly, Jesus was a young man when He was crucified, and it is natural to deduce that He would have attracted other such men. Especially is this so when the apostles would be entrusted with getting the message of the gospel out to the world. Consider also 1 Corinthians 15:4-7. 1 Corinthians can be dated approximately 57 AD, some 25 years AFTER Christ's death on the cross. If the "greater part" were still alive at this time, they likely were quite young when they witnessed the resurrected Lord. Consider Ecclesiastes 12:1; 1 Timothy 4:12.
2. They were representatives of the **middle class**. It is NOT accurate to think of the apostles as the dregs of society, or as blundering idiots. They DID lack position and formal training (Acts 4:13). Textual information seems to indicate that at least some of them (like Peter, James, and John) were relatively successful fishermen, while Matthew was a tax collector. They were capable, intelligent men.
3. They were **Galileans**. With the possible exception of Judas, the apostles were Galileans. They were often considered to be less sophisticated and cultured than other Jews.
4. They were **diverse**. This is true in both personality (consider Peter in contrast to Andrew or Thomas) and background (think of Matthew the publican and Simon the zealot – that's opposite ends of the political spectrum!).
5. They were **without formal religious training**. This is NOT a condemnation or a curse of formal religious training – just a biblical observation. Sometimes, "education" is a blessing, and sometimes, the Lord just has to overcome it in us!

## III. DISCIPLESHIP AND ASSOCIATION

1. Remember Mark 3:14's emphasis that the 12 were appointed "that they might be with Him." From a practical perspective for us today, we can't expect to be "long-distance" disciples of Jesus! We have to be willing to open up our lives, to be with other followers of the Lord on a regular basis, and to give one another attention and

encouragement. This was true of Jesus and His followers, and it also will be true of the Lord's followers today.

2. **Association May Have Threatening Moments and Reveal Inadequacies.** Mark Twain once said, "Everybody is a moon, and has a dark side which he never shows to anybody." There are certain fears associated with being part of a group that follows Jesus – fear of ignorance being exposed, fear of rejection, fear of being exposed for failing, etc.
3. The Lord had to deal with 5 basic inadequacies in His earliest followers – inadequacies that ALL followers of Christ **STILL** deal and wrestle with.
  - (1) **A Lack of Spiritual Understanding** (see Matt. 15:15-16; 16:21-23; John 13:2-17).
  - (2) **A Lack of Humility** (Mark 9:33-37; Matt. 20:20-28).
  - (3) **A Lack of Faith** (Matt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; Mark 4:40; 16:14).
  - (4) **A Lack of Endurance** (Luke 22:31-32; John 15:18-21).
  - (5) **A Lack of Power** (see Matt. 17:14-21).

## **Conclusion**

1. See 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 – Sometimes our talents and experiences may need to be "redirected" before we can really work for the Lord (remember Moses?).
2. Discipleship is a **PROCESS** – it is NOT instant.
3. Ineptitude and failure may well be part of the process – but God **STILL** believes in you!
4. There is something of a "loose" sequence to discipleship: (1) **KNOW** the Lord first (and have a rich and rewarding relationship with Him – Philippians 3:10; Matt. 6:33) and, (2) **SERVE** and encourage others (see 1 Timothy 4:6, 16).

# ***“DISCIPLESHIP 101”***

## **Lesson #4**

### ***“Conditions of Discipleship”***

#### **Introduction**

1. Count the cost! It seems only “natural” to want to keep OUR cost to a minimum, doesn’t it? We want to pay a comfortable, affordable price.
2. Shallow, superficial Christianity can always be “bought” for the price of a little loose-change commitment – but REAL discipleship cannot (see 2 Timothy 3:5; Luke 9:23). To paraphrase – “the window shoppers are many, but the real buyers are few.”
3. REAL DISCIPLESHIP involves:
  - (1) Living close to Christ
  - (2) Being fully attentive to His words and ways
  - (3) Being willing to sacrifice on His behalf
  - (4) Being deeply desirous of reflecting His love and glory to others
4. Too many people want about \$3.00 worth of God – a pound of the Eternal in a paper sack. They don’t want enough of God to explode their soul or disturb their sleep – just enough to be “comfortable.”
5. ***Is it possible that WE sometimes cheapen the cost of discipleship, desiring to make it easier, more comfortable and cheaper than God intends?***
6. Luke 14:25-35 is a great passage dealing with the **TERMS** or **COST** of real discipleship.
7. Luke 14:25 reveals that “great multitudes” followed Jesus at this time. Like bees to honey, the Lord’s ministry attracted a following so thick He could hardly catch His breath. However, Jesus was **COMPLETELY HONEST** about what following Him would actually involve.

## **I. THE COST OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS (14:26)**

1. The stress in this verse is on *priority* of love and relationship. See also Matthew 10:37.
2. NOT enough the dearest people on earth to us can rival or take priority over our relationship with God! If this occurs, it is just another form of idolatry (See 1 John 5:21).
3. The thought quite simply is that of *Unrivaled Love* (Mark 12:30).
4. “Hate” in context has to do with “to love less” – the Lord obviously is NOT contradicting what He has taught elsewhere (Matt. 5:44-48; 22:36-40; Genesis 39:30-31).
5. Jesus MUST have priority of place – preeminence (See Colossians 1:18). It’s about *Devotion*.

## **II. THE COST OF PERSONAL GOALS AND DESIRES (14:27)**

1. This is the “negative version” of what is positively stated in Luke 9:23.
2. There must be *Unceasing Cross Bearing*.
3. See Romans 12:1-2 and 15:1-2. Sometimes what seems “best” for us may NOT be best for our family or the church.
4. Do we REALLY take our goals and desires to the Lord to actually see if they are His will? Do we feed our own egos or truly seek to honor the Lord? If we were to believe that our goals and desires were NOT in God’s will, WOULD WE REALLY BE WILLING TO CHANGE?
5. See Galatians 2:20; Psalm 40:8; Luke 22:42.
6. This aspect of discipleship has to do with *Loyalty*.

## **III. THE COST OF PERSONAL POSSESSIONS (14:33)**

1. Three times now, the Lord has used the expression, “cannot be My disciple” (26, 27, 33). **HE IS SERIOUS! ARE WE?**
2. The Lord is NOT saying that His disciples cannot own anything; rather, He is saying that no possession should own a disciple.
3. This is about *Unreserved Surrender*. See Galatians 5:24; 6:14.
4. This aspect of discipleship has to do with *Self-Denial*. As much as we are thankful for God’s good gifts (James 1:17; 1 Timothy 6:17-19), the gifts must NEVER become idols that take the place of God (Matthew 6:19-24).

#### **IV. THE COST IS LIKENED TO BUILDING OR BATTLING (28-32)**

1. Both of these illustrations deal with *the reason* behind counting the cost of following the Lord.
2. The basic lesson is, “Look before you leap!” DON’T make RASH decisions.
3. In view of Jesus and His purpose in coming to earth, how am I really living my life?
4. The waste in cost and work, the embarrassment, and logistics foolishness of failing to take the cost fully into account of building a tower or conducting a war are likened to that of a disciple who doesn’t really count the cost of following Christ.
5. See Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 11:28; James 1:21-22.

#### **Conclusion**

1. Verses 34-35 state that to fail to count the cost of following Jesus is to be tasteless salt – to be good for nothing. “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”
2. When you really think about it, Jesus is NOT asking us to do ANYTHING that He has NOT ALREADY DONE HIMSELF!

# ***“DISCIPLESHIP 101”***

## **Lesson #5**

### ***“Evidences of Discipleship”***

#### **Introduction**

1. The word “disciple” is simply defined as *“a learner of Jesus who accepts the teaching of His master, not only in belief but in lifestyle.”*
2. Examining the New Testament quickly reveals that real discipleship involves several factors:
  - (1) Living close to Christ.
  - (2) Being fully attentive to His words and ways.
  - (3) Being willing to sacrifice on the Lord’s behalf.
  - (4) Desiring to reflect His love and glory (greatness) to others.
3. The KJV records Peter as being asked the question, “Art thou not also one of this man’s (Jesus) disciples?” (John 18:17). ***And Peter denied that he was!***
4. “Evidence” refers to “ground for belief; that which tends to prove or disprove something.” ***Is there REAL EVIDENCE to indicate that we are truly disciples of our Lord?***
5. In His teaching ministry, Jesus affirmed 3 fundamental principles to guide His followers as evidence of REAL DISCIPLESHIP.

#### **I. THE CONTINUANCE PRINCIPLE – JOHN 8:31-32**

1. This is an “INWARD” view of discipleship – continuing (abiding, holding to His teaching) in His word and enjoying the freedom to be found in Christ.

2. In one sense, “My word” in John 8:31 is indistinguishable from Jesus Himself, for He is the living Word (John 1:1-4). Here it refers to the spoken word of God (Luke 24:27; John 12:48; 15:7). See also Matthew 4:4 and John 7:17.
3. This has to do with the whole tenor and substance of His teaching, the truth, whole truth and nothing but the truth. It deals with His message in its entirety, NOT just our “favorite” passages or “pet” subjects.
4. *Continuance* in the word also has to do with *obedience* to Christ’s will (1 Peter 1:22). It involves the *mind* (2 Corinthians 10:5), the *heart* (Romans 6:17-18) and the *will* (Luke 22:42; Philippians 2:8).
5. Notice the connection between “truth” (8:32) and the person of Christ (John 1:17; 14:6). Truth is NOT merely a philosophical concept. It finds its center and personification in Christ. It reveals life’s true values. We experience true freedom only when our hearts are entirely dominated Christ and His word. The more this occurs, the more sin’s power over us is broken.
6. Also consider that the *experience* of real freedom is the outcome of continuing in “My word” (*revelation*). It is the spiritual atmosphere in which we are to live – it saturates our thoughts and governs our lives *because we love and have yielded to Jesus!*

## II. THE LOVE PRINCIPLE – JOHN 13:34-35

1. This is an “OUTWARD” view of discipleship – in how it relates to others. See Colossians 3:14; 2:2.
2. Love is a *doctrinal* matter – it IS commanded (John 15:12, 17; 1 John 3:23). See also 1 John 3:14; 4:7, 11. It is “new” (see Leviticus 19:18; Deuteronomy 6:5) in the sense that it is new in quality or freshness. Love for one another is based upon the standard of “as I have loved you.” The Lord NOT ONLY gave a command; He gave the EXTENT and REASON behind it!
3. Love is a *functional* matter. See 1 Peter 1:22 and 4:8. A group of players playing the same sport does NOT necessarily constitute a team (in the best sense of the word). The same is true with Christians.

Consider Philippians 1:27; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.

4. Love is a *relational* matter. 3 times John 13:34-35 mentions that we are to love “one another.” The fellowship of love **MUST** not be a “one way street” (Philippians 2:1-2). The various “one another” passages of the New Testament are probably the clearest teaching regarding this reciprocal aspect of love (cf. 1 Peter 4:9; Hebrews 10:24; Hebrews 3:13; Romans 12:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:18).
5. Love is a *motivational* matter. See Romans 12:9; 1 Corinthians 16:14; The love we *share* in Christ must be *shown* to others. Think about 2 Corinthians 5:14 and how it relates to this thought. When members of the church are lacking motivationally, there likely is a love problem that must be addressed. We **CAN** be selfless, forgiving and sacrificial, because the **VERY SON OF GOD** was this way for us!

### **III. THE FRUIT PRINCIPLE – JOHN 15:7-8**

1. This is an “UPWARD” view of discipleship (See Matthew 5:13-16).
2. Abiding in the “Vine” will keep Christians from having an “identity crisis.” We **KNOW** who we are, to Whom we belong, and why we are here. **THERE IS A LIVING, VITAL UNION THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE VINE (JESUS) AND THE BRANCHES (CHRISTIANS)!**
3. In John 15, the word “abide” (or something like it) occurs at least 15 times. Notice how an “If . . . then” can be seen in all 3 of these passages (John 8:31-32; 13:34-35; 15:7-8).
4. The word “fruit” occurs some 70 times in the New Testament, with a variety of usages. “Fruit” naturally expresses itself in the life of one who, in loving and humble obedience, serves the Lord.
5. “Fruit” is positively used of **souls brought to the Lord** (Romans 1:13), **of holy living** (Romans 6:22), **of good works** (Colossians 1:10), **of the Godward praise of our lips** (Hebrews 13:15), **of our giving** (Romans 15:25-28) and **of the character God desires to be seen in each of His children** (Galatians 5:22-23).

6. Consider our Lord's words in Matthew 13:23 with reference to what we have been examining concerning "fruit."

### **Conclusion**

1. In these passages, our Lord clearly indicates that EVIDENCE should indicate whether we truly are His disciples.
2. Consider what Jesus said of Himself in John 12:24. Then think about the implications for discipleship as found in passages like Matthew 10:24-25.
3. The path of discipleship (Luke 9:23) is *Universal, Perpetual, Personal, Painful and Practical* (See Lesson #1). Yet the price to be paid for REAL DISCIPLESHIP is MORE THAN WORTH IT!

# ***“DISCIPLESHIP 101”***

## **Lesson #6**

### ***“Tests of Discipleship”***

#### **Introduction**

1. The New Testament (especially the Gospel accounts) is full of instruction about discipleship and its implications.
2. Examining the New Testament quickly reveals that real discipleship involves:
  - (1) Living close to Christ.
  - (2) Being fully attentive to His words and ways.
  - (3) Being willing to sacrifice on the Lord’s behalf.
  - (4) Desiring to reflect His love and glory (greatness) to others.
3. As beautiful and as “up front” as Jesus was in His teaching about what it means to follow Him, no teaching of the Lord was more unpopular with the people in general (See Luke 9:23; John 6:60, 66-68). To a great extent, the same principle is true today.
4. In the religious realm today, there is a tendency to “scale down” the cost of discipleship in order to “win” a larger crowd (see 2 Timothy 3:5, 7; 4:2-4). However, Jesus intentionally did just the opposite!
5. The “Come unto Me” (Matthew 11:28) and the “Come after Me” (Luke 9:23) of Jesus are vitally related.
6. The Lord indicated there would be things that would put discipleship to the test. In Luke 9:57-62, He deals with 3 particular tests that might cause people to no longer follow Him. This section of Scripture also helps us realize specific reasons why Christians might fall away (see Hebrews 3:12).

## I. PHYSICAL HARDSHIP AND DEPRIVATION (9:57-58)

1. As a general rule, scribes were hostile to Jesus (Luke 5:21, 30; 6:7; 9:22; 11:53-54; 15:2), but NOT THIS ONE! As a scribe (see Matthew 8:19), most people would have considered this man to be an “excellent catch.”
2. He actually VOLUNTEERS to follow Jesus (so does the third man in verses 61-62). In fact, his words are very similar to the words of Ruth to Naomi in Ruth 1:16-17.
3. This individual’s sincerity should NOT be questioned any more than we should question what Peter said BEFORE denying the Lord (see Matt. 26:69-75) in Matthew 26:33.
4. But Jesus KNOWS what is within ALL men (John 2:25; 1 John 3:20).
5. So the Lord’s words in verse 58 are striking. The Lord basically is saying, “Do you realize where your enthusiasm may lead?” “Are you willing to make the sacrifice?” “Are you willing to deal with rejection?” “Are you willing to deal with a much lower standard of living?”
6. See Hebrews 11:8, 10 and Matthew 19:29-30.
7. Many religious people are “experience-oriented” – they are motivated spiritually primarily by the impulse of the moment. Surely there is a place for zeal and for properly responding to the moment (see Luke 24:32; Romans 10:1-2, 12:11), but some are SO centered on “feeling” and “experience” that holiness and hard thinking have been shoved into the religious background if they are present at all. ***BLESSED ARE THE BALANCED!***

## II. TEMPORARY, BUT SEEMINGLY MORE PRESSING OBLIGATIONS (59-60)

1. Jesus *personally* asked this man to “follow” Him. Think of what this would have meant! (see Matthew 11:28 again).

2. Matthew 8:21 informs us that this man was already a disciple of the Lord.
3. If the man in verses 57-58 was too quick (and impulsive) to follow Jesus, this one is too slow. He is guilty of dragging his feet.
4. “I will . . . but.”
5. In this case, the man speaks of “first” going home and burying his father.
6. At first glance, the Lord’s response in verse 60 may seem to be cold and uncaring. Such simply cannot be the case because of what Scripture teaches about the character of Christ. 2 responses are worth noting to this statement:
  - (1) If this man’s father had died, the culture of the time would have him at home mourning the loss. Why isn’t he? Remember the Lord’s teaching in Luke 14:26 about priority of love in discipleship?
  - (2) It is possible that the man’s father was near death but had not died – his death could occur at any time. The Lord’s statement in Luke 14:26 would STILL have application here.
7. Notice also in verse 60, “Let the dead bury their own dead.” The idea is that of something that is temporary, but seemingly more pressing at the time. The man is instructed to “go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” By so doing, he would be blessing the lives of others as well as helping himself.
8. This passage is NOT indicating that Christians are forbidden to attend the funerals of unbelievers, including those of their own family. Such a position is unwarranted and ridiculous.
9. The problem is one of sacrificing the eternal for the seemingly immediate – it’s about procrastination. Surely many people NEVER really intend to delay following Christ. Yet how quickly a week becomes a month, and a month becomes a year, and a year turns into years! See Psalm 89:47; 90:10-12.

### III. DETERMINATION TO SET ONE'S TERMS (61-62)

1. Compare this with Elisha's request in 1 Kings 19:19-21, yet KNOW that it is obvious in the case of Elisha that there would be NO TURNING BACK!
2. The request made in verse 61 may sound "reasonable," but amounts to what is very common in religion today – MANY want to follow the Lord, but want to do so ON THEIR OWN TERMS!
3. This is a "limited" surrender – a partial denial of self, a partial taking up of our cross, and a partial following of the Lord (see Luke 9:23).
4. Apparently (based on the Lord's response in verse 62) this man had 2 failings:
  - (1) He had NOT made a clean break with the past – else this would NOT have been such a "big issue" for him.
  - (2) There was a lack of obedience. He was NOT complying with the will of Jesus. Many want to "pick and choose" what they'll do when it comes to the area of discipleship. This CANNOT be done!

### Conclusion

1. See 2 Timothy 2:21.
2. The ground of life will be rocky – so it's important to keep our hands on the plow and to look ahead to keep from your lines (life) straight!
3. *Keep me from turning back!  
My hand is on the plow,  
My faltering hand.  
The wilderness and solitary place,  
The lonely desert with all of its space,  
O God, keep me from turning back!*

# ***“DISCIPLESHIP 101”***

## **Lesson #7**

### ***“Ideal Discipleship”***

#### **Introduction**

1. The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) probably is *best known* part of the teaching of Jesus, though arguably it is the *least understood*, and certainly it is the *least obeyed*.
2. The sermon is a message to His “disciples” (Matt. 5:1-2) concerning what citizens of the kingdom of God should look like. Jesus in this sermon is saying, “This is how MY followers should live.”
3. There is a REAL contrast between a follower of Jesus and one who is in the world (cf. the contrast in the way we love / hate (Matt. 5:44-48); our performing religious acts (Matt. 6:7-13), and our emphasis (Matt. 6:32-33). Also there is a contrast between Christ’s followers and those who are religious (like the Pharisees and scribes – see Matt. 5:20; 6:8).
4. REAL discipleship involves:
  - (1) Living close to Jesus.
  - (2) Being fully attentive to His words and ways.
  - (3) Being willing to sacrifice for Christ and His cause.
  - (4) Desiring to reflect His love and glory to others.
5. The 8 qualities presented in the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:3-12) are a description of what an ideal disciple of the Lord looks like.
6. “Blessed” signifies a deep joy which is independent of changing circumstances because it has within it the source of joy itself – God.

We find and fulfill ourselves ONLY in relation to Jesus! The idea behind “blessed” is that of being holy and happy.

7. The exact opposite of the qualities found in the Beatitudes is only too common:
  - (1) Instead of poverty of spirit (5:3), there is pride.
  - (2) Instead of mourning (5:4), there is pleasure seeking.
  - (3) Instead of meekness (5:5), there is arrogance.
  - (4) Instead of hungering and thirsting for righteousness (5:6), there is hungering for the material.
  - (5) Instead of mercy (5:7), there is a mentality that is merciless.
  - (6) Instead of purity (5:8), there is corruption and pollution.
  - (7) Instead of peacemaking (5:9), there are quarrelsome and resentful attitudes.
  - (8) Instead of suffering for righteousness’ sake (5:10-12), there is the demanding of one’s “rights.”
8. The first 4 of the Beatitudes primarily describe a disciple’s relationship with God, while the second 4 deal with our relationship and duty to others.

### **I. SPIRITUAL INADEQUACY (5:3)**

1. The way to rise in God’s kingdom is to sink to ourselves! James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:5.
2. This statement has to do with a humble and complete dependence upon God – we are spiritually bankrupt! See Revelation 3:17; 2 Corinthians 3:5. See Isaiah 66:2.

### **II. SPIRITUAL CONTRITION (5:4)**

1. In realizing our inadequacy and inability to deal with sin, there SHOULD be sorrow! To acknowledge sin is one thing; to truly grieve over it is another (see 2 Corinthians 7:10).
2. There IS such a thing as Christian tears, and perhaps too few of them have really been shed through the years.

3. See Psalm 119:136; Ezra 10:1; Philippians 3:18; Romans 7:24; 1 Corinthians 5:2; 2 Corinthians 12:21. See especially Psalm 51:10.

### **III. SPIRITUAL HUMILITY (5:5)**

1. This has to do with a humble and gentle attitude toward others determined by a true estimate of ourselves. See Matthew 11:29; 2 Corinthians 10:1.
2. It's relatively easy to acknowledge our need of God and to say that we are sinners in His sight, but it's much more difficult for other people to indicate such things are true about me without my resenting it! Most of us prefer to condemn ourselves and would prefer for others NOT to do it to us.
3. Meekness has to do with "force and strength held in check, under strong control." It does NOT mean weak and mild (see Numbers 12:3 and Matthew 11:28-29 – where the expression is used of both Moses and Jesus – certainly NO WEAKLINGS!).
4. The godless may boast and throw their weight around but real possession eludes their grasp. Not so with the follower of the Lord! See 1 Corinthians 3:22; 2 Corinthians 6:10; 2 Peter 3:10-12.

### **IV. SPIRITUAL APPETITE (5:6)**

1. How there needs to be an insatiable craving for God and His righteousness! The hunger and thirst Jesus speaks of in this verse will NOT be satisfied by a light snack and a soft drink!
2. This has to do with the creation of a holy appetite – an appetite for the things of God. See Job 23:12; Jeremiah 15:16; 1 Peter 2:2; Matthew 4:4. Think of Psalm 107:9 from a spiritual perspective.
3. Real joy and happiness are strongly related to holiness and righteousness.

## **V. SPIRITUALLY COMPASSIONATE (5:7)**

1. Mercy is compassion in action for people in need. It deals with the pain, misery and mercy of sin and bad choices.
2. It is possible to have a passion for righteousness, and yet to lack compassion for other people in need. See Matthew 18:21-35.
3. See the example of Jesus in Matthew 9:36 or of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:36-37.

## **VI. SPIRITUALLY PURE (5:8)**

1. Cleanness of heart brings clearness of vision (see Hebrews 12:14), because sin is really good at obscuring one's sight of what is right.
2. We can regard this purity of heart as inner purity (See Psalm 24:3-4; 51:6, 10; Acts 15:9; 1Timothy 1:5; Matt. 23:25-28).
3. We can also see this as sincerity – the desire to be transparent and open before God and men.
4. Are our thoughts and motives unmixed with anything that corrupts and pollutes?

## **VII. SPIRITUALLY CONCILIATORY (5:9)**

1. Compare Matthew 5:9 with Matthew 10:34-37. Matthew 10:34-37 reveals that we should NEVER seek conflict or be the sinful cause of it, but we need to understand that it WILL occur when one truly follows the Lord.
2. See 1 Peter 3:11; Hebrews 12:14; Romans 12:18. See especially Colossians 1:20 and Ephesians 2:15. How would such verses apply in daily living?

## **VIII. SPIRITUALLY LOYAL (5:10-12)**

1. It's interesting that Jesus goes from peacemaking to persecution, from reconciliation to the experience of hostility. **NOT ALL ATTEMPTS** at reconciliation succeed.
2. Persecution is simply the result of when the Christian value system clashes with another value system that is not of God.
3. See Acts 5:41; John 15:18-19; 1 Peter 4:12-16; Acts 14:22; 2 Timothy 3:12; Luke 6:26; Hebrews 13:13.
4. Notice the qualifiers attached to this:
  - (1) The persecution must be for righteousness' sake (10).
  - (2) There should be **NO JUST CAUSE** behind the persecution (11).
  - (3) It must be for Christ's sake (12).
  - (4) It should be met with joy! (12)

### **Conclusion**

1. The Beatitudes describe the essential character of those who really belong to the Lord.
2. Is this passage a pretty good description of YOU?

# ***“DISCIPLESHIP 101”***

## **Lesson #8**

### ***“Dangers of Discipleship”***

#### **Introduction**

1. REAL discipleship involves:
  - (1) Living close to Christ.
  - (2) Being fully attentive to His words and ways.
  - (3) Being willing to sacrifice on His behalf.
  - (4) Desiring to reflect His love and glory to others.
2. ***As essential and wonderful as these things are in following God – they are NOT an end within themselves!*** If we are not careful, these things can become the **BASIS** for our salvation rather than the **NECESSARY** loving and humble **RESPONSE** to the grace of God as seen in Christ (See 1 Corinthians 13:1-3; Luke 17:10; Isaiah 64:6).
3. One may be zealous and knowledgeable of the Scriptures, scrupulous in their giving, dedicated to living “untainted” by the evil in the world, and conscientious in obedience to God’s commands – yet **STILL NOT BE RIGHT WITH GOD!** Such terms would well describe the Pharisees at the time of Christ, and this could be one of the biggest dangers we face regarding discipleship (that we become latter-day New Testament Pharisees). See Matthew 5:20; 23:23.
4. The Pharisees were a relatively small but highly significant group of strict, religious Jews that probably came into being about the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century B.C. The name “Pharisee” likely derives from a word meaning “separated.” The basic concerns of the Pharisees were two-fold: (1) to preserve and to maintain the old paths of Judaism; and, (2) to answer the questions and issues of the day through application of the Law of Moses. Such things sound **REALLY GOOD!**

5. Yet even one with only a slight acquaintance with the New Testament understands that the Lord reserved some of His very strongest words for these people. See for example, Matthew 15:7; 22:18; 23:13, 15, 23, 27, 29; Mark 7:6; Luke 12:1; 15:1-2; 18:9-14.
6. For the most part, the Pharisees were NOT really conscious of their spiritual condition (Matthew 13:13-15), and we may share a similar spirit today without being conscious of it too.
7. Let's notice some of the dangerous characteristics of the Pharisees that we might suffer from in following the Lord today.

## **I. THEY WERE CRITICAL AND DISRESPECTFUL OF JESUS**

1. Something is wrong with a religion that resorts to sinful “name-calling” and turning others into objects of ridicule rather than as individuals who deserve love and whose views ought to be honestly and sincerely examined in the light of Scripture.
2. The Pharisees used *sexual innuendo* (John 8:41), *racial slurs* (John 8:48), *social stereotyping* (Matthew 11:18-19), *psychological labeling* (John 10:20), and *spiritual putdowns* (Matthew 9:34; 12:24) against Jesus. They did this to the SON OF GOD! See also Luke 6:7.
3. By our attitudes and actions, ***MIGHT WE NOT BE GUILTY OF THE SAME THING TODAY?*** (Consider these examples).
  - (1) Are we critical and disrespectful of “putting the kingdom of God and His righteousness first?” (Matthew 6:33).
  - (2) Are we critical and disrespectful of Jesus in the way that we give? (Acts 20:35; 2 Corinthians 8:5).
  - (3) Are we critical and disrespectful of Jesus in the way we observe the Lord's supper? (1 Corinthians 11:23-29).

## **II. THEY WERE SELF-RIGHTEOUS**

1. See Luke 18:9-14 and Luke 15:1-2, 11-32, where the older brother in the story of the Prodigal Son represents the Pharisees and others.

2. We can easily become SO blind to self-righteousness. We can be blinded by:
  - (1) What society says (see Luke 16:14-15).
  - (2) What morality says (“I’m a good, moral person so . . .”).
  - (3) What religion says (Luke 18:11-12).
  - (4) What our knowledge says (Because we know the Bible, we automatically know God) – see Matthew 7:24-27; James 1:22.
  
3. “Warning lights” of self-righteousness:
  - (1) We tend to look down upon others with contempt (openly or secretly). Luke 18:9.
  - (2) We don’t recognize the need for forgiveness in our own lives (see Luke 7:36-50).
  - (3) We have a shallow sense of grace and mercy like the older brother with the Prodigal (Luke 15:11-32).

### **III. THEY PERFORMED RELIGIOUS ACTS TO BE SEEN OF MEN – FOR “SHOW”**

1. It is easy for our relationship with God to become nothing more than a public show. See Matthew 23:5; 6:1-18.
  
2. A person may be sincere without being a faithful Christian, but a person cannot be a faithful Christian without being sincere!
  
3. *Why do I serve God anyway?* Do I feel insulted if I’m not recognized for what I do as a Christian? Am I ready to quit if I am not appreciated as much as I think I should be? Am I ready to serve if it’s in public, but not if it isn’t? Am I ready to serve at any time and at any place regardless of how lowly or “menial” the task may be?

#### **IV. THEY WERE BOUND BY TRADITION AND CUSTOM**

1. See Mark 7:6-15; Matthew 15:3-14.
2. There is such a thing as tradition that is equal to the authoritative word of God (2 Thessalonians 2:15), but that is NOT under consideration here.
3. There is a kind of tradition that enables us to function effectively in community and is helpful in serving God and others – but is NOT put on a par with Scripture. This is NOT what these passages are talking about either.
4. These passages deal with putting tradition and custom on a par with, or above God’s word. Here are some problems with this practice.
  - (1) Such tradition fosters false religion (Mark 7:6-8). The Lord’s treatment here would NOT be considered the best way to “win friends and influence people,” would it? (Alludes to Isaiah 29:13). Traditions can foster an “auto pilot” form of Christianity that loses intimacy with God.
  - (2) Such traditions can supplant Scripture (Mark 7:9-13). Everything MUST be filtered through God’s word, not just “we’ve always done it that way,” or “we’ve never done it that way.”
  - (3) Such traditions can twist truth (Mark 7:14-15, 21-23). Things are often the way they are on the OUTSIDE because of the way they are on the INSIDE. People ultimately do not sin because of “genes” or “environment.” They sin because they choose to within.
  - (4) Such traditions can contribute to spiritual blindness (Matthew 15:12-14).
5. What are some “traditions” (even good ones) that people in the Lord’s church have come to think of as being “the right way of doing things?”

## **V. THEY MAJORED ON MINORS**

1. See Matthew 23:23-24.
2. How we need to properly emphasize and prioritize the things God does!
3. Do I give, yet refuse to forgive? Do I give, but really fail to give thanks? Have I been baptized, but know nothing of real love and joy? Something is terribly wrong in these scenarios!

## **CONCLUSION**

1. Other things could be added, but these serve well as reminders that the spirit of Pharisaism **STILL** may be among us.
2. In many ways, the Pharisees were models of morality and religion, yet there was a **REAL LACK OF RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD! WE NEED TO BEWARE OF THIS TODAY!**

# ***“DISCIPLESHIP 101”***

## **Lesson #9**

### ***“Hallmarks of Discipleship”***

#### **Introduction**

1. Our Lord believed in the value of repetition in teaching. Like every good teacher, He often taught the same truths, but used a variety of approaches, formats and circumstances to get His point across.
2. *Jesus certainly utilized repetition in getting across the necessity, value and meaning of discipleship during His earthly ministry.*
3. Real discipleship involves:
  - (1) Living close to Christ
  - (2) Being fully attentive to His words and ways
  - (3) Being willing to sacrifice for Him and His cause
  - (4) Desiring to reflect His love and glory to others
4. This particular study deals with “Hallmarks of Discipleship.” A “hallmark” is “a mark of special indication of genuineness; a distinguishing feature or characteristic.”
5. In Matthew 10:24-42, Jesus gives what amounts to 6 hallmarks of discipleship.

#### **I. A DISCIPLE EMULATES HIS MASTER (24-25)**

1. 3 comparisons are given in these verses: teacher / disciple, master / servant, head of house / member of house.

2. First the negative is stated, then the positive – NOT above master. We should truly submit ourselves, and seek to learn from Christ (cf. Luke 6:40; 1 John 2:6).
3. The RESULT of such submission and desire to learn will be to be treated like Jesus was! Too many Christians today actually expect to be treated BETTER than the Lord. See Philippians 3:10.
4. Beelzebul – “lord of flies” or “lord of corruption.” This name had been used by the Jews of Satan for some time and is fitting.
5. See John 15:18-19; 16:2; Matthew 10:22 – “for My name’s sake”; 1 Peter 4:12-16.

## **II. A DISCIPLE DOES NOT FEAR THE WORLD (26-31)**

1. 3 times in 6 verses reference is made to “do not fear” (26, 28, 31).
2. 3 reasons are given in this section why followers of Jesus should NOT be afraid of what the world might do:
  - (1) God will one day set the record straight and the truth will come out (26-27). See Matthew 16:27; Romans 2:6; 1 Corinthians 4:5. Jesus told the apostles many things in private, some of which they did not understand until AFTER His death and resurrection – then they would teach fully and publicly His message.
  - (2) Death is NOT final (28). “Fear” may be used in two senses in the Bible. One sense refers to “fright” or to “terror.” The other refers to “awe” and “reverence.” Compare Proverbs 9:10 with Proverbs 29:25 for this thought. A contrast is being made between Satan’s limited and temporary power and God’s permanent and unlimited power. See Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:10-15.
  - (3) Remember God’s providential care (29-31). God’s providential care is SO embracing that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge. A “cent,” “penny,” or “farthing” amounted to about 1/16 of a day’s wages. The use of

“Your Father” is especially assuring. “Hairs of your head” are numbered. The average hair count on a human head has been figured to be approximately 140,000 (some way more, some considerably less). The point is – God is NOT just concerned about the BIG things – He knows and cares about “little” things too! See Matthew 6:30.

### **III. A DISCIPLE CONFESSES THE LORD (32-33)**

1. The Lord makes the entire position of men in the world to come (eternity) depend on their attitude and relationship with Him in the present world (right now). See John 14:6; Acts 4:12.
2. “Confess” means “to affirm, to agree with.” See Romans 10:9-10; 1 Timothy 6:12; 1 John 4:15; Revelation 2:13 – See 2 Timothy 1:8 for NOT being ashamed.
3. The negative aspect of the Lord’s statement needs to be thought about to – to “deny” Him results in being denied BY HIM. How might we “deny” Him today? (by our silence, actions, adopting an “unnoticed” form of “Christianity,” our words). See Matthew 7:21-23.

### **IV. A DISCIPLE FORSAKES HIS OWN FAMILY (34-36)**

1. Most Jews in Christ’s time thought the Messiah’s coming would bring them political peace and material prosperity. Many Christians through the years have thought Christianity would ONLY bring them such things, along with inner tranquility too.
2. The way of Christ DOES bring inner peace (John 14:27; 16:33; Philippians 4:6-7), but NOT at the TOTAL ELIMINATION of trouble and difficulty.
3. The way of Jesus and the ways of the world are ALWAYS on a collision course! And sometimes this may even involve our families!
4. This does NOT give us liberty to be un-Christlike and offensive to our families. There is a difference between the “offense of the Cross” (Gal. 5:11) and offensive Christians!

5. “Not worthy of Me” – identifies the person who will NOT remain faithful Jesus because other intimate and meaningful relationships might be affected. Such a one is “against” Jesus.

#### **V. A DISCIPLE OFFERS HIS OWN LIFE (37-39)**

1. The appeal in these verses is NOT to negativism, gloom and martyrdom, but to God’s grace and Jesus our Savior.
2. The “finds” / “loses” terminology has to do with the temporary and the eternal and is all about COMMITMENT and SACRIFICIAL SURRENDER.
3. The MOTIVE in verse 37 is love, which forms the BASIS for the cross-bearing of verse 38.
4. There is NO MIDDLE GROUND! One either “spares” his life or sacrifices it.

#### **VI. A DISCIPLE RECEIVES HIS REWARD (40-42)**

1. This passage indicates that the smallest or least courtesy does NOT go unnoticed by God (see Hebrews 6:10-12). It is encouraging to know that NOT ALL will reject the message of the Master or us!
2. It was commonly understood in the days of Jesus that a man’s agent or emissary must be received just as the man himself (Luke 10:16; John 12:44-45).
3. Whether “prophet,” “righteous man” or “little one” – whoever acts in the name of the Lord in helping others to “receive” more of Jesus will bless others and be blessed too.

#### **Conclusion**

Based on the Lord’s teaching in this passage, would Jesus consider YOU to be His faithful follower?

# ***“DISCIPLESHIP 101”***

## **Lesson #10**

### ***“Rewards of Discipleship”***

#### **Introduction**

1. With the **requirements** of discipleship SO demanding (Luke 9:23; 14:25-33), in one sense it is NOT shocking that “few” (Matthew 7:13-14) choose the way of Jesus.
2. However, the **rewards** of discipleship make its requirements pale in comparison! See **especially Matthew 10:42; Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 10:29-30** and **THINK** about their meaning.
3. Real discipleship involves:
  - (1) Living close to Jesus
  - (2) Being fully attentive to His words and ways (because we love Him and are so drawn to Him)
  - (3) Being willing to sacrifice on His behalf
  - (4) Desiring to reflect His love and glory to others
4. In this study, we’ll consider some ***attitudinal principles*** that ought to help us to appreciate more fully what it means to follow Christ. Then we’ll examine some of the ***specific blessings*** of following Jesus.

#### **I. ATTITUDINAL PRINCIPLES FOR POSITIVE DISCIPLESHIP**

1. ***We must all have a master, and none is comparable to our God!***
  - (1) See Matthew 6:24; Romans 6:16-18
  - (2) When your master and what you really treasure is God – life is NOT a burden but a blessing, NOT drudgery but delight! Psalm 43:4; 37:4; Colossians 2:10; 3:4, 11.

2. *Although the demands of discipleship are great, God NEVER requires anything of us that His grace does not enable us to accomplish.*
  - (1) See 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; 1 Peter 5:10; Ephesians 2:4-7.
  - (2) Consider the example of **Abraham** in Hebrews 11:8-19, of **Moses** in Hebrews 11:23-28, of **Paul** in 2 Corinthians 11:24-28 and 1 Timothy 1:13-15.
  
3. *There is NOTHING which the Lord denies His disciples that is not for their ultimate good (and His ultimate glory!), and there is nothing He takes away that He doesn't replace with something better.*
  - (1) See Romans 8:28; Psalm 34:10; Psalm 84:11; Philippians 4:19.
  - (2) See Mark 10:29-30.
  
4. *The development of an intimate, deep and lasting relationship with God is the highest of all pursuits.*
  - (1) See Proverbs 9:10; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Matthew 6:33; Philippians 3:8-14.
  
5. *God bases rewards NOT merely on our talent and deeds, but on our motives and willingness to wisely use opportunities when they come.*
  - (1) See 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 1 Peter 4:10; James 2:17; Ephesians 5:16. See especially Matthew 25:31-46.

## **II. SOME SPECIFIC BLESSINGS OF POSITIVE DISCIPLESHIP** (Many could be given, but consider these 8 from the book of 1 John)

1. *Sharing the joyful fellowship of God and other Christians as we walk in the light of His word* (1 John 1:4, 6-7; 2:1). There is a sense of **BELONGING** in **BELIEVING!**
  
2. *Having a deep awareness and understanding of sin's awfulness and of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf* (1 John 1:8-10; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Real disciples are honest and sincere about dealing with sin!

3. *Living in conscious obedience to the word of God – a standard beyond any other* (1 John 2:3-5; 12:48).
4. *Developing a greater love for God and the eternal than for the things of the world* (1 John 2:15-17; 1 Peter 4:3-4).
5. *Longing for the return of Jesus and desiring to be more like Him* (1 John 3:2-3; 1 John 2:6; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
6. *Loving other Christians, and showing a willingness to be with and to sacrifice for them* (1 John 3:14-18; 4:20-21).
7. *Enjoying listening and learning God's truth* (1 John 4:1, 6). See also Matthew 4:4; Colossians 3:16-17.
8. *Believing what Scripture says about Jesus and gaining assurance from it* (1 John 5:1-5, 13, 14-15).

## **Conclusion**

1. The relevance of these things is almost too obvious to mention, but some areas of application **MUST** be stated:
  - (1) We should **NEITHER** underemphasize nor overemphasize the demands of discipleship. Balance is required here, and so we must also emphasize the **BENEFITS / BLESSINGS** involved in such surrender and commitment to Christ.
  - (2) We should see the foolishness of those who suppose they are getting “the best of both worlds” by straddling the spiritual fence. Does anyone really think that they can please God and go to heaven by soaking up the pleasures of sin for the present and failing to stress real discipleship?
  - (3) No one but the real follower of the Lord is **ACTUALLY** living their life with the greatest of purpose and to the fullest! See John 10:10.
2. People **DO** need to properly consider the cost of following Jesus, but they also need to properly consider the rewards and blessings.

# ***“DISCIPLESHIP 101”***

## **Lesson #11**

### ***“The Demonstration of Discipleship”***

#### **Introduction**

1. Real disciples of the Lord seek to consistently demonstrate the meaning of discipleship. In the midst of spiritual tsunamis, moral earthquakes and leadership landslides, true followers of Christ seek to show others what discipleship is actually all about (See Paul’s words to Timothy in 2 Timothy 1:15; 2:1 – “You therefore”). See also 2 Timothy 3:13-14. Consider 2 Timothy 3:1 and “perilous times,” – hard to bear and hard to deal with.
2. Real discipleship involves:
  - (1) Living close to Jesus
  - (2) Being fully attentive to His words and ways
  - (3) Being willing to sacrifice on His behalf
  - (4) Desiring to reflect His love and glory to others
3. How can we demonstrate discipleship during difficult days? 2 Timothy 2:1-13 gives 5 principles to implement as followers of Christ when the days seem especially hard and tough.

#### **I. BE STRONG IN GOD’S GRACE (1)**

1. We are to be inwardly strengthened by means of the grace that is in Christ (Ephesians 6:10; Philippians 4:13; 2 Timothy 4:17). This is NOT merely a “grin and bear it” type of attitude! See 1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; 1 Peter 5:10, 12. We must seek to actively appropriate the grace that is “in Christ Jesus.” In the valleys and difficulties of life, how we need to cling to the amazing grace of God!
2. It is not only for **salvation** that we depend upon grace (2 Tim. 1:9), but for **service** too.
3. The truth of the gospel is to be **preserved at the present** (2 Tim. 1:13); it is also to be **passed on intact** to the next generation (2 Tim. 2:1-2).

4. Why be “strong in grace?”
  - (1) Such strength will help see us through times of heartache and trouble.
  - (2) Grace will breathe life into relationships where there has been disappointment and hurt.
  - (3) Grace also will deal with extremes that threaten the beauty and purity of Christianity – like loosing what God has bound on what hand (liberalism) – Jude 4; 2 Corinthians 6:1; Romans 6:1; and binding what God has not on the other (legalism) – Galatians 5:4.

## II. BE CONSTANTLY INVESTING IN THE LIVES OF OTHERS (2-6)

1. How we need to be sensitive and alert to opportunities to impart Christ and His will to others! And then to do it naturally!
2. Notice 4 stages in the transmission of truth to others:
  - (1) “The faith” entrusted to Paul (as an apostle) by Christ (2 Tim. 1:12-14). It came to Paul by deposit, not by invention (See Galatians 1:11-12).
  - (2) What had been entrusted to Paul (the gospel) had been “committed” to Timothy (1:14). It is “the things you have heard from me among many witnesses” (2:2).
  - (3) What Timothy heard from Paul he is to “commit” to “faithful men” (See 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; Titus 1:7).
  - (4) Such men are to be able to teach others also (See 2:24).
3. There are **NO** apostles living today on earth. However, the **MESSAGE** of the apostles (and the Holy Spirit) lives on whenever God’s word is accurately taught and lived. See Ephesians 2:19-20; 3:5.
4. Paul goes on to illustrate what it means to invest in others by using 3 metaphors: the **dedicated soldier** (2:3-4), the **law-abiding athlete** (2:5) and the **hard-working farmer** (2:6).
5. **Soldier.** The follower of Jesus is often likened to a soldier in the New Testament (Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Timothy 1:18; 6:12; 2 Corinthians

6:7; 10:3-5; Romans 6:13-14). Here the emphasis is on a “good soldier.” He is a “good soldier” because of his *dedication in his willingness both to suffer and to concentrate*. Soldiers on active duty do NOT expect a safe or easy time. Anything that may hinder our being effective fighters would be an “entanglement.” There is a spirit of selflessness as they serve their “commanding officer.” A good follower of Christ shows similar characteristics. He’s at war, knows he must suffer hardship, is on active duty, must avoid entanglements, and seeks to please his leader.

6. **Athlete.** Great athletes show *uncommon commitment and discipline as they compete according to the rules* of their sport or event. See 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. A disciple of the Lord must manifest this attitude too. There must be maximum effort, a goal in mind, self-sacrifice, and abiding by God’s will (rules). See 1 Corinthians 9:21.
7. **Farmer.** *Hard work and patience are indispensable to good farming.* He depends as much on sweat as skill. However bad the soil, inclement the weather, or disinclined the farmer, he must keep at his work. Unlike the soldier and athlete, the farmer’s life often is NOT one of applause. Farmers tend to be an underappreciated lot, yet they feed the nation! The “crops” or “fruits” for disciples of Christ will be things like holiness (Gal. 6:7; Rom. 6:22) and souls (Rom. 1:13; 1 Cor. 3:6-7). ***Following Christ DOES involve HARD WORK and PATIENCE to reap real blessings!***

### **III. BE DILIGENT TO PERSONALIZE THE TRUTH (2:7)**

1. The Greek word translated “consider” means “to think over,” “to ponder,” or “understand.” Paul wanted Timothy to pause and think over whether his life reflected these qualities. That’s a question we ought to be asking ourselves. ***Do our lives genuinely demonstrate to others what discipleship is all about?***
2. Notice the point of the passage. If WE are to receive understanding from the Lord, WE must truly CONSIDER what the APOSTLE (God’s messenger) is SAYING (the message).
3. Many Christians have robbed themselves (and the cause of Christ) by failing to demonstrate the very habits Paul has just mentioned.

#### IV. BE WILLING TO ENDURE (2:8-10)

1. “No pain / No gain.” “Nothing that is easy is ever worthwhile.” “Nothing that is worthwhile is ever easy” -- These statements often DO reflect something of the nature of Christianity. See Acts 14:22.
2. Having **illustrated** the nature of discipleship by metaphor (2:2-6), Paul now goes on to enforce the point by **experience** (2:8-10). He first deals with the experience of Christ (2:8), then his own experience as an apostle (2:9-10).
3. He begins this section by saying, “REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST.” This is SO fundamental, but so easily forgotten. **Always keep your eyes on, and encourage others to keep their eyes on, Jesus.** If others get distracted from the Lord by keeping their eyes only on you, something is NOT right. See the example of Paul in remembering Jesus in Acts 20:19-20.
4. The expressions “of the seed of David” and “raised from the dead” powerfully indicate both the humanity and deity, the person and the work of Jesus (See Luke 1:32-33; Romans 1:3-4). He is Savior and King!
5. When we are tempted to avoid pain, humiliation, suffering, or death in our walk with God, remember Jesus Christ and think again. **JESUS DID NOT SEEK TO AVOID SUCH!**
6. Paul is also suffering for the gospel. He is wearing chains as though he were a common criminal (2:9 – see Luke 23:32-33 for the only other occurrence of this word in the New Testament).
7. Today some seem to think that the only reason we can freely share the gospel in America is because America is a land of religious freedom. So they spend large and inordinate amounts of time in political action to maintain this freedom. **While this certainly IS a blessing to be cherished, the gospel is UNBOUND regardless of the political system in America.** It is possible to spend more time seeking to insure this freedom than actually exercising the freedom and necessity of getting the message of Christ out! Blessed are the balanced!
8. Through Paul’s preaching (even while in prison), and through his suffering, people were being influenced toward heaven. Verses 9-10

give something of the **WHY** and **HOW** of suffering for the cause of Christ.

**V. BE SURE TO KEEP THE “BIG PICTURE” IN VIEW (2:11-13)**

1. Paul begins by using an attention-getting device: “This is a faithful saying” (cf. 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; Tit. 3:8).
2. Verse 11 and the first part of verse 12 go together, while the second part of verse 12 and verse 13 go together. **The first pair relates to those who are faithful and endure. The second pair to those who lose faith and deny.**
3. **ONLY** if we share in Christ’s suffering and endure shall we reign with Him in the hereafter (Romans 8:17-18; 2 Cor. 4:17; Matt. 10:32-33; 2 Tim. 4:10).
4. The Christian life is depicted as a life of dying, a life of enduring here on earth. **NO PAIN / NO GAIN!**
5. The opposite is also true as the last part of verse 12 and all of verse 13 attest. “If we are faithless, He remains faithful” means that He will carry out His word with justice and holy hatred against sin.

**Conclusion**

1. 2 Timothy 2:1-13 is a powerful passage about our actually demonstrating (no matter what) that we are followers of the Lord.
2. Throughout the section, Paul insists that blessing comes through pain, fruit through toil, life through death, and glory through suffering. **THIS IS JUST THE WAY IT IS!**
3. Why should we then expect things to be easy for us or promise an easier time than Jesus did to others?
4. **NO PAIN / NO GAIN, NO CROSS / NO CROWN** (Luke 9:23; 57-62).

# **“DISCIPLESHIP 101”**

## **Lesson #12**

### ***“What Happened to Discipleship in the Epistles?”***

#### **Introduction**

1. At birth, we receive the give of *bios*, biological life; at our spiritual birth, we receive the greater gift of *zoe* – spiritual life.
2. Just as we seek to mature and reproduce on the biological level, God wants us to “be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Genesis 1:28) on the spiritual level.
3. Real spirituality involves a lifestyle of discipleship and evangelism, and these two processes are related and reinforce the other. ***Evangelism has to do with bringing people to salvation in Christ, while discipleship has to do with nurturing Christians to become more like Jesus in their thoughts, words and deeds.*** See Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 1:28-29; 2 Peter 3:18. One deals with bringing people to Christ for salvation; the other with encouraging spiritual growth and development after having come to Christ.
4. One of the more interesting aspects regarding the entire theme of discipleship is, “What Happened to Discipleship in the Epistles?” In other words, why do the terms for discipleship occur so frequently in the gospel accounts, but virtually disappear in Acts and the Epistles? How can this be so in light of the Great Commission with its imperative to “make disciples of all the nations?” (Matthew 28:19).

#### **I. DISCIPLESHIP AND THE GREAT COMMISSION**

1. In Matthew 28:19, there actually are 3 participles (going, baptizing, teaching) that modify the imperative – “make disciples of all the nations.” For some reason, most translations do NOT acknowledge this!

2. Also the King James Version rendering does not make fully clear the distinction between “make disciples” and “teaching” in the passage (they translated both *matheteuo* – make disciples and *didasko* – teach as “teach”).
3. As a result, many have placed more emphasis upon “going” (a participle) in the Great Commission than upon “make disciples” (the imperative in the verse). While “going” is an important part the command to “make disciples,” it is ONLY one part (and the going can be next door or across the street).
4. In the book of Acts, the term “disciple” seems to be used as a synonym for “Christian” or “believer” (Acts 6:1-2; 9:1, 26; 11:26; 26:28; etc.).
5. In Matthew 28:19 --
  - (1) “Going” emphasizes the **invitation** to discipleship – following Jesus by hearing and understanding His message of salvation.
  - (2) “Baptizing” emphasizes the **initiation** into a life of discipleship. See Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12; Acts 2:38.
  - (3) “Teaching” stresses the constant obligation of the church in the area of **instruction** of its members in the way of the Lord.

## II. WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS THIS COMMISSION TO “MAKE DISCIPLES?”

1. It IS true that EVERY Christian has a role in “making disciples” of others (going, baptizing, teaching). However, one may take liberties with this passage that the context SIMPLY DOES NOT ALLOW!
2. Sometimes Christians are given the distinct impression that if they are NOT going to certain places, to so many people, and teaching such-and-such a number that they are NOT complying with the Great Commission. *It may well be that what we expect of others, the apostles themselves did NOT do!* See Acts 8:1 – why hadn’t they already “gone” if “going” elsewhere was commanded? The Great

Commission does have an individual application – but especially as time, talent and opportunity allow!

3. The bottom line is this: The Great Commission is the **collective** responsibility of the church. Each Christian can and should contribute to its fulfillment in some way as their individual gifts and opportunities allow. **Such matters ought to be carefully and prayerfully considered by individual Christians.** See 1 Corinthians 12:27; Romans 12:4-8.
4. To be obedient to the Great Commission is NOT necessarily to quit your job, leave your loved ones, and become a full-time missionary in a foreign land (although it may be for you). It DOES involve your using your time, talent and opportunities in a conscious effort to draw others closer to Christ!

### III. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS OF MATTHEW 28:19?

1. *We must be followers of the Lord ourselves in order to “make disciples.”* The MORE we know Christ ourselves, the better we can make Him known (1 Corinthians 2:2; Philippians 3:10). We generally do NOT impart what we do NOT have / possess ourselves.
2. *Discipleship is a DEPENDENT process* (See 2 Timothy 2:1; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; Philippians 4:13). Our natural tendency is to depend more on our skill, programs and abilities than upon God. As a result, there may well be a lack of brokenness, humility and understanding of our own weaknesses. Yet these are critical qualities of real discipleship! See Proverbs 16:3, 9. We need Matthew 28:20 to comply with Matthew 28:19!
3. *People are not OUR disciples.* They are followers of **Christ**. There is an ever-present danger that those we teach, nurture and encourage may be more of a follower of us than a follower of the Lord (See 1 Corinthians 1:10-17). They may become inappropriately possessive of us, or we may become inappropriately possessive of them!
4. *Discipleship is MORE than a program.* Teaching and training are important components, but they must be done in the context of

personal relationships and community with the express desire of growing in Christ (See Galatians 4:19).

5. ***Focus is CRUCIAL to growth.*** Are we focusing on the development of our talents, opportunities and time to “make disciples” of others and to “know Christ” better ourselves? See Philippians 3:1-11.
6. ***Discipleship requires a servant’s heart.*** See John 3:29-30 (consider John the Baptizer in this context); Luke 17:10; Matthew 25:40. See Galatians 5:13.
7. ***We must make ourselves personally available and transparent to those we seek to influence to follow Christ.*** See 1 Thessalonians 2:7-12. This means we must get beyond the “Hi, How are you?” stage with others to the point where we can be open with one another and to God’s purposes in our lives. Unfortunately, some Christians have not even gotten to the “Hi, How are you?” stage with lost friends and neighbors.
8. ***Effective discipleship requires MORE than one method.*** “One size does NOT fit all” when it comes to reaching people with Jesus or to helping them grow in Christ. There is a tendency in the church to turn methods into masters. Discipleship is NOT necessarily about making people LIKE US; it’s about making them in their individual uniqueness MORE LIKE CHRIST! Let’s not reduce discipleship to a “spiritual cloning” process of ourselves.

#### **IV. WHAT ABOUT DISCIPLESHIP IN THE EPISTLES?**

1. The fact that something is NOT mentioned specifically does NOT mean it doesn’t exist. Surely the concepts dealt with in this study existed throughout the Epistles and will until the end of time.
2. Passages like 2 Timothy 2:2-4, 1 Corinthians 11:1 and 1 Peter 5:4 (among others) DO deal with the matter of discipleship.

#### **Conclusion**

**May we constantly pray for the desire to be more like Him, and make being like Jesus the real aim of our lives!**

# ***“DISCIPLESHIP 101”***

## **Lesson #13**

### ***“The Disciple’s Lord”***

#### **Introduction**

1. When Saul of Tarsus was confronted by Jesus, he asked 2 questions:
  - (1) “Who are You, Lord?”
  - (2) “What would You have me to do?” (Acts 9:4-6)
2. These are excellent questions, and they are asked in the precise order in which they should be asked. ***It is possible to tell people what they NEED to do BEFORE they even REALLY KNOW Who Jesus is!***
3. The question, “Who is Jesus?” is one of the most controversial and most common questions ever asked? The question is often asked during Christ’s own earthly ministry, and by a variety of people – both friend and foe (See for example Luke 7:49; Luke 9:9; Mark 4:41; Matthew 21:10; John 9:35-36).
4. So much depends upon the answer to the question – “Who are You, Lord?” Not until people REALLY have some sense of WHO He is will they be all that interested in WHAT He would have them to do!
5. See Acts 2:36; 1 Corinthians 12:3 – The Lordship of Jesus IS a matter of divine revelation. He is either Lord, Liar, or Lunatic! There’s simply NO OTHER POSSIBILITIES.
6. The Greek word for “Lord,” *kurios*, occurs many times in the Bible. The apostle Paul uses it over 200 times in his letters. It is SO FREQUENTLY used of Jesus that it almost has become a synonym for His name.
7. The word “lord” (*kurios*) had a variety of uses, but in whatever way it was used, it ALWAYS carried with it the idea of authority and power that was due respect and obedience. Let’s notice several different

ways the word is used in the Bible, and then apply these ways to Jesus.

## **I. TITLE OF RESPECT**

1. The word was used in addressing some elder or superior. See John 12:21; John 4:11; 4:15; 4:19 where “sir” is *kurios*. See also Matthew 21:30.
2. When applied to Jesus, certainly it means this, but it means much, MUCH more.

## **II. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

1. *Kurios* was also used as a title for the legal owner of property or possessions. See Galatians 4:1; Matthew 20:8, 21:40; Luke 16:5.
2. Does this not also apply to our Lord? The church belongs to Jesus (Matthew 16:18). It was purchased by His blood (Acts 20:28). He is said to be “over” His house (Hebrews 3:6). He speaks of “My church” (Matthew 16:18), “My sheep” (John 10:27), “My kingdom” (John 18:36) and “My house” (Matthew 21:13).

## **III. HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD**

1. The title “lord” was used of a husband in relation to his wife (1 Peter 3:6) -- \*Jokes here are permitted!
2. In this sense, is NOT Jesus also entitled to be “Lord,” since the church is His bride? (Romans 7:1-4; Ephesians 5:25-27).
3. See also Colossians 1:18 and Ephesians 1:21-23.

## **IV. MASTER OF A SLAVE**

1. The master of a slave was called “lord” (*kurios*). See Matthew 6:24; 10:24.
2. See also Luke 17:10; 12:37.

3. This is frequently employed of a Christian's relationship to Christ throughout the New Testament – He is Lord / we are willing servants (cf. Philippians 1:1; 1 Peter 1:1; James 1:1; Jude 1; especially 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

## **V. ONE WITH THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE DECISIONS**

1. *Kurios* was also the term given to one who had authority to make military or governmental decisions, or to a judge that would pass sentence on someone.
2. How appropriate this usage of the word “lord” is to Christ! (Matthew 28:18; Colossians 1:18; John 5:22, 27; 12:48).

## **VI. TITLE OF THE KING**

1. Festus referred to Caesar as “lord” in Acts 25:26). As a matter of fact, “Caesar worship” eventually became compulsory in the Roman Empire (the book of Revelation was written at a time in history when the worship of Caesar was demanded from all in the Empire – this, of course, Christians could NOT do).
2. Jesus IS the REAL King! (Revelation 19:16; 1 Timothy 6:15; Ephesians 1:21; John 3:31, 35; Ephesians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 8:6).

## **VII. STANDS FOR GOD**

1. See verses like Exodus 6:7 and Psalm 8:1. Jesus IS Jehovah (compare Revelation 22:13 with Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12). As a matter of fact, the primary Hebrew words for “God” (Jehovah, Adonai, Elohim) also are used with reference to Jesus (Matthew 4:7; 1:22; 1 Peter 2:25).
2. See Colossians 2:3, 9-10.
3. See Matthew 1:23-25 and Isaiah 9:6.
4. Consider Acts 3:22-23; Acts 17:31; John 6:68.

## **Conclusion**

1. We have seen how “Lord” is a title of respect, used for the owner of property / possessions, for the head of a household, for the master of a slave, for one with the authority to make decisions, a title for the king, and for God Himself.
2. Whatever way the word “Lord” is used, IT APPLIES to Jesus.
3. People need to know WHO He is before they can reasonably be expected to truly FOLLOW Him!
4. People MUST believe that Jesus IS Lord (Acts 16:31).

People MUST call on the name of the Lord to be saved (Acts 2:21; Romans 10:13).

Christ Jesus MUST be preached as Lord (2 Corinthians 4:5).

People MUST confess that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9-10).

People MUST obey Jesus because He is Lord (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46).

At the end of time, the Lordship of Jesus WILL BE ACKNOWLEDGED by all (Philippians 2:9-11; Romans 14:10-12).