

Discipleship: A Starting Place Part 1. In the Beginning was the Word. This document was rather long so it has been split into parts 1 and 2. - Undated. Unsure when shared with SCF*

What is a Disciple? One who follows a teacher, Christ and His teachings.

A disciple is a person called by God to follow Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. A person who is born again by the Spirit of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

John the Baptist had his disciples.

John 1 verse 35-36

Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"

Jesus had His disciples.

John 2 verse 1-2

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; 2 and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.

Moses had his disciples.

John 9 verse 27-28

He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen; why do you want to hear it again? You do not want to become His disciples too, do you?" 28 They reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are disciples of Moses.

Characteristics of a Disciple

The characteristics of a disciple are repentance, obedience and fruitfulness.

1. Repentance: They have truly repented from dead works and now have faith towards God.

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Matthew 3 verse 4-8

Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; 6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins. 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

What was John looking for? What are dead works? Dead works are things that we do to try to earn God's free gift of salvation; being religious, doing good deeds and church attendance.

Then we see Paul's attitude to his own capabilities.

Philippians 3 verse 1-21

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. 2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; 3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, 4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. 7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

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8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

2. Obedience: They are willing to do the things that Jesus taught, recognising that the disciple is never above his teacher.

Matthew 10 verse 24

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master.

John 8 verse 31 -32

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

The scriptures speak clearly to us concerning Jesus' expectation of each of His disciples.

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3. Fruitfulness

This comes from obedience and faithfulness to God's Word.

John 15 verse 1-17

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

Hebrews 6 verse 1-3

Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do, if God permits.

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Fruitfulness is the result of obedience and of discipline or pruning, we need to realise that He expects us to mature but that maturing is dependant on Him granting us the growth that will please Him. We shall go on to maturity *if He permits*. This means that we are to not only know about the things of Christ but we are to have them formed in us; *formation not information!* Remember the tree of knowledge of good and evil? We are to live from the tree of life, Christ Himself. What areas are we to change in? The answer is that we are to be changed into the image of Jesus, this means that I am to become that *new creation* that He has promised in His Word, I have to be *transformed* by the renewing of my mind. You can look at the **Helm of Life** to see how to do it. This already appears on the **Peacemakers website**.

Controlling influences are to be removed, Jesus is either *Lord of all* or He is not *Lord at all!* We are to always be pursuing *excellence*.

1 Corinthians 5 verse 1-9

It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. 2 You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst. 3 For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

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6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? 7 Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

No immorality is acceptable in the Kingdom of God, single people are not to have sex out of marriage.

1 Corinthians 6 verse 1-8

Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? 2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? 3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life? 4 So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? 5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, 6 but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? 7 Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? 8 On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren.

We should not take fellow Christians to court over any matter, we shall settle it through the church which is equipped to deal with such things.

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1 Corinthians 6 verse 9-11

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, 10 nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Our body belongs to the Lord; we cannot just please ourselves anymore.

1 Corinthians 6 verse 12-20

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. 13 Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. 14 Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! 16 Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." 17 But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

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19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Being lawful means I can do what I like, not everything is profitable - they will bear their own fruit. I will not be mastered or enslaved by anything. Paul is saying that anything that controls my life is not good for God or for a person, our discipleship is only as good as our willingness to put down these things. That is, compelling my fleshly desires to be subject to the Holy Spirit, that is, going to the cross (dying) daily, demonstrating that we mean business with God and having repented (had a change of mind in these areas). Now I have faith in Him to enable me to overcome that which controls my life outside of Him.

There are two kinds of adultery, two kinds of unfaithfulness.

1. Physical or Natural

That is to disregard the Word of God, which may lead to mental and physical damage to our body, this happens when we do not walk in the Spirit.

Galatians 5 verse 16

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

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2. Spiritual

That is to separate myself from the presence of God and join myself to the spirit of this world. When this happens we walk under the influence of the unholy spirit (satan).

Romans 6 verse 15-23

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! 16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? 17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. 20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. 22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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To be faithful to one is to be unfaithful to the other, there is no middle road.
Verse 23 refers to spiritual death.

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