**What Do Disciples Do?**

As you read through the New Testament, the word disciple is used often to describe the followers of Jesus. But Jesus wasn’t the first to have disciples. Many philosophers were known to have disciples, and even John the Baptist had them. The English word disciple came from the Latin word for pupil, thus the relationship is often described as one of teacher and disciple.

Those of us who wear the name of Christ consider ourselves His disciples. In light of that, it is good to pause occasionally and contemplate just what discipleship entails. What does being a disciple of Jesus Christ mean for my daily life?

**A disciple is a pupil**. In His famous invitation, Jesus encourages us to “take My yoke upon you and learn from Me” (Mt. 11:29). When many were deserting Him, Jesus asked His apostles if they, too, planned to leave. Peter replied, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life” (John 6:68). A true disciple of Jesus will spend a lifetime reading and studying the Scriptures with the intent of learning from Him.

**A disciple’s thinking reflects his teacher’s thinking.** Paul admonished the Philippian Christians to “have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus…” (Phil. 2:5). A person who is a lifelong student of the Master Teacher and who internalizes those principles will, over time, reflect more and more the character of the one to whom he is dedicated.

**A disciple lives by his Master’s teachings.** Jesus said as much in John 8:31: “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine.” A person may study the teachings of a historical figure without being their disciple. A true disciple is dedicated to building his life on the foundation of Christ’s teaching (Mt. 7:24).

**A disciple imitates his teacher.** It has been God’s intent all along that His people be conformed to the image of His Son (Romans 8:29). Jesus Himself emphasized this important principle in Mt. 10:25: “It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master.” Paul expressed beautifully the commitment every Christian should make when He wrote, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Gal. 2:20).

We could have learned the will of God through teachings and commands, but the Son became the fullness of Deity in bodily form (Col. 2:9) and gave us both His teaching and His example. We should imitate His deep and abiding love for friend and enemy alike, culminating in His death on a Roman cross for the sins of mankind. We should imitate His humility toward the Father and even toward the very men and women He had created, always weak and often wicked. We should imitate the compassion and empathy He consistently demonstrated as He moved among the suffering masses. We must be a forgiving people as we marvel at His attitude of forgiveness as He hung on the cross.

Discipleship is not to be taken lightly. It is a lifelong commitment that must make a fundamental transformation in our lives. The world should see Christ living in us; that is what it is all about.

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