

# Discipleship

## Chapter 1

### *Introduction to Discipleship*

**INTRODUCTION:** When the Lord Jesus chose a name to call His followers, He did not call them *assistants*, or *followers*, or *pupils*, or *teachers*, or *lieutenants*, or *leaders*, or *trainees*, or even *students*. Jesus called those who would follow and learn from Him by the name - **DISCIPLE**. Jesus knew that learning does not take place nearly as much by sitting in a classroom listening to a lecture as it does by watching a teacher's life and observing his manner of living as he walks through life. This is the truest meaning of **DISCIPLESHIP**. Being disciplined toward godliness is not accomplished by a twelve-week course. It is accomplished by spending time with a godly individual - walking with him, hearing him speak, seeing him pray, feeling his heartbeat, and watching him at work. This is how Jesus taught His disciples. It is a model for how we can best disciple another Christian to a life of godliness.

#### **I THE MEANING OF DISCIPLESHIP**

**DEFINITION:** Disciple - (Greek - "*mathetes*") - "*a learner; a follower, a pupil; a student who seeks to imitate his teacher*"

- A. What does it mean to be a *disciple*?
- The word *disciple* in English comes from the word *discipline*. Discipline is a state of order maintained by training and control. Thus, a *disciple* is one who has been trained to act a certain way. A disciple of Jesus Christ is one who has been taught to do right so often until he finally does not even have to think twice about it. He gets into the habit of doing right until he just does right by reflex. A person who is a true disciple of Christ will become a person of character. Character may be defined as "*the subconscious doing of right.*"
- B. There is both a general sense of the word *disciple* and a specific sense.
- 1) A disciple in the general sense is a *student* - The word disciple is found 270 times in the Bible but only one of those times is found in the Old Testament. (Isaiah 8:16)
    - a) Followers of various teachers in the Bible are called disciples:
      1. **Moses had disciples** - John 9:28- the Pharisees said ". . . *we are Moses' disciples.*"
      2. **the Pharisees had disciples** - Matthew 22:16 - ". . . *they sent out unto him their disciples. . .*"  
Mark 2:18 - ". . . *the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast. . .*"
      3. **John the Baptist had disciples** - Matthew 9:14 - "*Then came to him the disciples of John saying. . .*"  
Matthew 14:12 - "*And his disciples came and took up the body. . .*"

- Acts 19:1 - “. . . *finding certain disciples. . .*” (disciples of John)
- b) In the general sense, a person could be physically a disciple but not spiritually a disciple of Christ
1. Judas Iscariot was called a disciple but he was not saved - Matthew 26:47 - “. . . *Judas, one of the twelve. . .*”  
Luke 6:12-16 - “. . . *he called unto him his disciples. . . and Judas Iscariot which also was the traitor.*”
  2. large crowds of disciples followed Jesus, many of whom were not saved - John 6:66 - “*From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*”
- 2) A disciple in the specific sense is one who is saved and fully committed to Christ - Luke 14:33 - “. . . *whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*”
- a) many true disciples were openly bold for Christ - Acts 6:7 - “. . . *the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly. . .*”  
Acts 11:26 - “. . . *the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.*”
  - b) a few true disciples followed the Lord secretly - John 19:38 - “. . . *Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews. . .*” John 19:38 - “. . . *there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night. . .*”

## II THE MEN WHO WERE CALLED DISCIPLES

- A. The four lists of the twelve disciples  
The twelve disciples were chosen by Christ Himself out of the multitude of followers who were called disciples. Luke 6:13 - “. . . *he called unto him his disciples; and of them he chose twelve. . .*”
- 1) there are four lists of the twelve disciples found in the New Testament - Matthew 10:2-4; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16 and Acts 1:13
  - 2) Simon Peter’s name is always listed first in these four lists of disciples. Judas Iscariot is always listed last along with a note that he was the “*traitor.*”
- B. The names of the twelve disciples
- 1) Simon (whom Jesus named “*Peter*”)
  - 2) Andrew (Simon Peter’s brother)
  - 3) James (the son of Zebedee)
  - 4) John (the son of Zebedee and brother of James)
  - 5) Philip
  - 6) Bartholomew
  - 7) Matthew
  - 8) Thomas
  - 9) James (the son of Alphaeus)
  - 10) Judas (the son of Alphaeus and brother of James)
  - 11) Simon (called “*Zelotes*”)
  - 12) Judas Iscariot

## \*Disciple Song

Tune: *Bringing in the Sheaves*

(to help remember the disciples by name):

There were twelve disciples Jesus called to help Him;  
Simon Peter, Andrew, James, his brother John;  
Philip, Thomas Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus,  
Thaddaeus, Simon, Judas, and Bartholomew.  
He has called us too, He has called us too.  
We are His disciples, I am one are you?  
He has called us too, He has called us too.  
We are His disciples, and His work must do.

- C. There are three sets of brothers among the twelve disciples
- 1) Simon Peter and Andrew (sons of Jonas) - Luke 6:14
  - 2) James and John (sons of Zebedee) - Mark 3:17
  - 3) James and Judas (sons of Alphaeus) - Luke 6:16

By comparing three passages of scripture, it appears that Zebedee's wife was Salome who was a sister to Mary, the mother of Jesus. (Matthew 27:56 - ". . . *the mother of Zebedee's children*"; Mark 15:40 - ". . . *Salome* . . ."; John 19:25 - ". . . *his mother's sister* .") That would mean that James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were cousins to Jesus.

### III THE MINISTRY OF THE TWELVE DISCIPLES

Mark 3:14 - "*And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.*"

- A. The conversion of the twelve disciples  
The salvation experiences of several of the twelve disciples are recorded in the Bible:
- 1) **Andrew and John** - These two early disciples of John the Baptist were saved after they followed Jesus home the day after Jesus' baptism. (John 1:35-40)
  - 2) **Simon Peter** - Peter was led to the Lord by his younger brother Andrew. (John 1:41-42)
  - 3) **Philip** - Jesus found Philip in the city of Bethsaida in Galilee - John 1:43-44
  - 4) **Nathanael (Bartholomew)** - Nathanael was led to the Lord by Philip - John 1:45-51
- B. The baptism of the twelve disciples
- 1) John the Baptist was the only man of his day sent by God with the authority to baptize. (John 1:6; Matthew 21:24-25) He insisted that those whom he baptized had repented of their sins. (Matthew 3:8) This group, prepared by

John, were some of the people with whom Christ started the first church. (I Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 2:20)

- 2) Andrew and John, as well as Christ Himself, were baptized by John the Baptist. (John 1:29-40)
- 3) All twelve disciples were baptized by John the Baptist. This is seen by the fact that the disciple who would take Judas Iscariot's place had to be one who had been a disciple since "*the baptism of John.*" (Acts 1:21-22)

C. The twelve disciples were sent forth as "*apostles*"

Luke 6:13 - ". . . *he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.*"

DEFINITION: Apostle - "*one sent forth with a special high mission fully authorized as the representative of the sender*" An

*apostle* was different from a *disciple* in several ways:

- 1) An apostle was chosen directly by the Lord Himself. Mark 3:13-14 - ". . . *he ordained twelve. . .*"
- 2) An apostle was given signs and gifts which were the divine credentials of his office. Matthew 10:1 - ". . . *he gave them power against unclean spirits. . .*" II  
Corinthians 12:12 - "*Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you. . .*"
- 3) An apostle had to have seen the Lord Jesus in His resurrected body.  
Acts 1:22 - ". . . *a witness with us of his resurrection. . .*" I  
Corinthians 9:1 - ". . . *have I not seen Christ. . .*"

All the apostles were disciples, but not all the disciples were apostles. The office of apostle was necessary in the foundational days of the early local church.

(Ephesians 2:20) However, when the apostles passed off the scene, they were replaced with elders (pastors). (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23; 16:4; then Acts 20:17) Some false teachers claim to be modern-day apostles but they are not.

Revelation 2:2 - ". . . *thou has tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.*"

D. The leadership duties of the twelve disciples in the early local church

- 1) they were teachers of God's Word - Acts 2:42 - ". . . *they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine. . .*"
- 2) they were overseers of the church's offerings - Acts 4:35, 37 - ". . . *laid them down at the apostles' feet. . .*" Acts 5:2 - ". . . *laid it at the apostles' feet.*"
- 3) they represented the church in legal matters - Acts 4:19-20 - ". . . *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*
- 4) they delegated the daily duties of the church's ministry - Acts 6:2-6 - ". . . *the twelve called the multitude of disciples. . .*"
- 5) they resolved doctrinal disputes - Acts 15:1-2 - ". . . *go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.*

E. The twelve disciples in prophecy

- 1) their names will be written upon the twelve foundations of the new Jerusalem - Revelation 21:14 - ". . . *twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*"
- 2) they will sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel during the

Millennial Reign of Christ - Matthew 19:28 - “. . .ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.