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INTRODUCTION TO DISCIPLINESHIP

Learning and Experiencing
The Essentials of the Christian Life

Introduction

Purpose of the Manual
Before You Start

Part I The Life In Christ

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Part V What Now - The Continuing Disciple

Chapter 13 Continuing The Process Of Discipleship

Addendum:

My Heart Christ's Home

CHAPTER 3

OUR LIFE AS A DISCIPLE

ASSIGNMENTS:

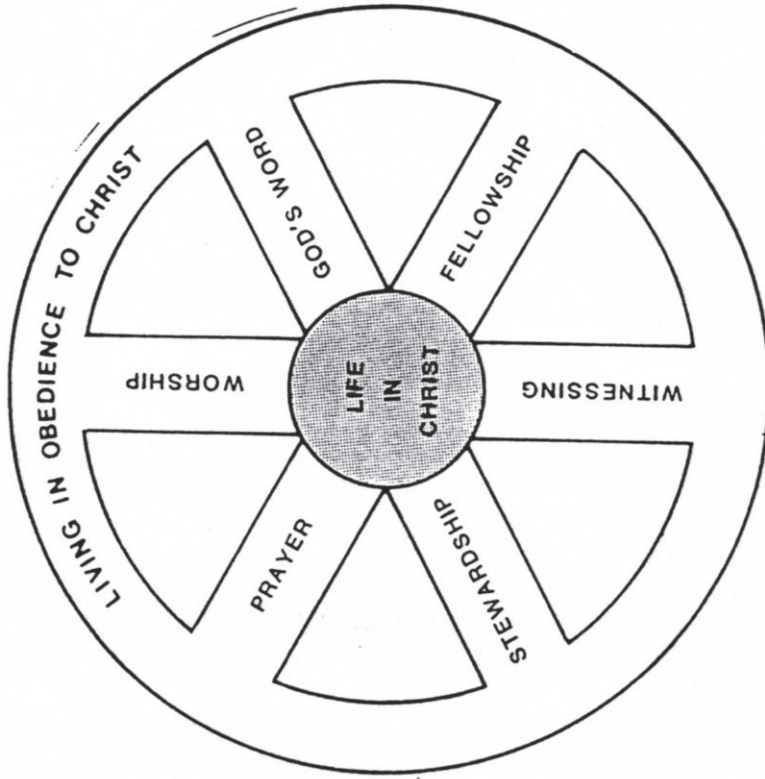
1. Scripture Reading - John 1-7
Read one chapter each day.
2. Prayer - Use the prayer list page to record your requests and answers.
3. Memorize - Luke 9:23
Additional verse - Luke 6:40
4. Study and complete the material in the chapter.
5. Outline the pastor's Sunday sermon.

Outline your daily progress below:

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat

CHAPTER 3

OUR LIFE AS A DISCIPLE



"It all started by Jesus calling a few men to follow Him. This revealed immediately the direction His evangelistic strategy would take. His concern was not with programs to reach multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow. Remarkable as it may seem, Jesus started to gather these men before He ever organized an evangelistic

campaign or even preached a sermon in public. Men were to be His method of winning the world to God." (The Master Plan of Evangelism, Robert E. Coleman)

It is two thousand years later and Christ has the same plan in action. In John 17:20-21, Jesus prays to His heavenly father for His disciples - present and future: "My prayer is not for them alone (His 12 disciples). I pray also for those who will believe in Me through their message, that all of them (us) may be one, Father, just as You are in Me and I am in You. May they also be in Us so that the world may believe that You have sent Me." Jesus was confident that His disciples would carry out His plan to make disciples, and He even included us in His prayer.

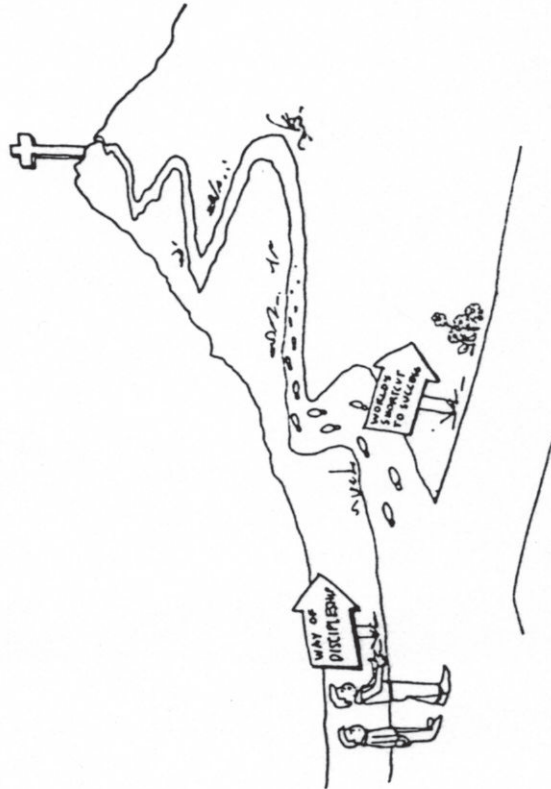
What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? If you look up the word *disciple* in a dictionary, you find that its basic meaning is a *follower of or adherent to*. The biblical meaning for *disciple* is *learner or imitator*. The biblical concept also carries with it the idea of apprenticeship, similar to an apprentice in a trade like carpentry. Jesus was a carpenter. He had learned the skill by spending time listening, watching, following, and finally imitating the exact movements of His teacher. Now He was using the concept of apprenticeship as the plan to pass on His gospel message.

Read Luke 6:40. What will be the result of the person that is fully trained?

A disciple of Jesus, then, is one who follows Him to learn His ways in order to become like Him. We have to be sure that we are apprentices of Jesus just as Paul wrote to the Corinthian believers in 1 Corinthians 11:1, "Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ."

Jesus knew that true disciples would not only grow in the likeness of their teacher, but they would in time, by His Spirit, reproduce His life in others. This strategy brings the thrust of Jesus' ministry within the vocation of every Christian. To be sure, not many are called to preach or even teach a Sunday School class, but everyone is called to participate in the making of disciples. Christ's commission to His followers to "make disciples" is not a special gift; it is a command. All who believe and follow Christ have no option but to obey (more will be discussed on the Great Commission in a later chapter). Before we can do His work to make disciples, we must be Christ-like disciples. We must know God before we can make Him known.

Discipleship is choosing to follow Jesus:



The life of a disciple can be further illustrated by the carpenter - apprentice analogy. A good carpenter must possess both the skill (ability) and the necessary tools to produce the desired product. So it is in our life as a

disciple, we need to develop both attitudes and actions that are like Jesus so we can reproduce. Just as tools without skill make a poor carpenter, so right actions (service) without proper attitudes (character) leads to poor discipleship. What are some attitudes that lead to right actions?

ATTITUDES - HAVING CHRIST-LIKE CHARACTER

Attitudes are formed by our character. Our Christian character consists of those qualities that are the evidence of the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our life (Galatians 5:22-23). Three character qualities which marked the life of Christ were submission, humility, and love. These describe Christ's relationship to His heavenly Father. Our character is built by following His example. These are the very standards He describes in His call for us to follow Him and be His disciples.

What does Luke 9:23 say about submission?

What can we learn about humility from the life of Christ as seen in Matthew 11:28-30 and Philippians 2:5-11?

Why is love important in John 13:34,35?

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How does Jesus describe a disciple in these Scriptures?
John 8:31

John 15:8

Luke 14:26-33

Matthew 16:24-26

The life of a disciple is a costly venture. Attending church for an hour on Sunday, trying to live a good life, completing this discipleship manual, and being kind to others may make us look like good Christians, but it does not make us disciples. Jesus says that a disciple must not allow anything or any person to come before our relationship with Him. When Jesus talks about putting God first in our lives, he brings us to a place where there is a cross. On that cross we must put to death our self-centered dreams and aspirations and replace them with His will. God can then redirect our lives so that He can live out His will for us in our bodies. For some people this is more of a cross than it is for others. To some it means a radical change, while to others it is only a minor correction. But to each it represents a cross because it means the death or our will and the doing of His will.

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Discipleship cost Jesus His life to redeem us and make us His disciples. He asks us to give up ourselves for His sake and follow Him. But discipleship is even more costly if we choose not to obey Christ and choose the temporal rather than the eternal values. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but only he who *does the will of My Father who is in heaven*" (Matthew 7:21).

ACTIONS - DOING THE WILL OF GOD

Our actions demonstrate our attitudes. If we are submissive in attitude, our actions will prove our obedience to God's will. If we are humble in attitude, we will show a concern for others, and if we are filled with God's love, we will serve others. This is God's will for us.

Jesus knew and obeyed God's will - so can we. How is obedience defined in John 14:21-24:

We can relate this idea of obedience to the illustration of carpenter apprentices. We see that their actions of building a house or making a chair show that they really are becoming a carpenter. They have learned the skills and have taken on the attitudes and mentality of their master carpenter, but it is not until they actually do the work of a carpenter that they are considered one. Being a disciple of Christ means we must maintain a focus on what we do with our lives on a day to day, moment by moment basis. It means we desire to please God and bring Him glory by what we say and do. The word *Christian* in the Bible means *little Christ*. To bring God glory, people need to see "Christ in us." Disciples of Christ live in such a way

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that people should see their actions as a reflection of the actions of Christ.

What does Matthew 5:16 say about our actions?

In John 17:4, Jesus makes this statement, "I have brought You glory on earth by completing the work You gave Me to do." What had Jesus done to bring His father glory? The rest of the seventeenth chapter of John describes some of His earthly actions of *concern and service*.

How does Jesus use Matthew 5:1-16 to teach us how a disciple can demonstrate godly attitudes that lead to right actions?

If we are to be learners, followers, apprentices, and disciples - then we will imitate Christ's attitudes and do the actions that He did.

It is only through a life of discipleship that we glorify God. It is only by following Christ fully that we can find our true self and be totally fulfilled and satisfied. In Mark 8:24-25 Jesus said, "... if anyone wishes to come after Me,

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let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it."

THOUGHT QUESTIONS:

1. How would you describe what a disciple is?

2. Discipleship is the process of becoming Christ-like. How long should it take?

3. What are some of the attitudes of a Christ-like character that mean the most to you?

4. What has becoming a disciple of Christ cost you?

5. What does it mean to do the will of God?

6. Can you find actions to match the attitudes listed in Galatians 5:22-23?

7. Use the following list of characteristics of a disciple as a check list to see where you are and what areas you may want to grow in. There is one characteristic listed per chapter to make up the profile. Re-check your answers after you have completed this manual.

Doing Well	Needs Improving	A Biblical Profile Of A Disciple
		Chapter 1: A disciple is secure in his/her relationship to Christ. (Romans 8:16-17; 1 John 5:11-12).
		Chapter 2: A disciple experiences first hand the riches available in Christ. (Romans 8:32; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:3-7).
		Chapter 3: A disciple is a learner, one who desires to imitate Jesus. (Mark 8:34-35; Luke 6:40; 9:23).
		Chapter 4: A disciple demonstrates an eagerness to learn and apply the Word of God to one's daily life. (Psalms 119:9-11; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17).
		Chapter 5: A disciple understands communication with God and is developing a meaningful prayer life. (John 16:24; Philippians 4:6-7).
		Chapter 6: A disciple worships God corporately and privately by discovering the attributes and names of God. (Psalm 46:10; John 4:23-24).
		Chapter 7: A disciple enjoys fellowship with other believers and demonstrates love by caring for and serving others. (Ephesians 4:16; Hebrews 10:24-25).
		Chapter 8: A disciple has both the heart and vision for witnessing and can clearly present the gospel, sharing it as a way of life. (Matthew 4:19; 1 Peter 3:15).
		Chapter 9: A disciple is a trusted steward who honors God by wisely managing His entrusted resources. (1 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Peter 4:10-11).
		Chapter 10: A disciple is an obedient to God's will and is becoming victorious over sin and temptation. (John 14:21; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 2:3-6).
		Chapter 11: A disciple evidences the fruit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit by living a victorious lifestyle through abiding in Christ. (John 15:5-8; Galatians 5:16,22-23; Ephesians 5:18).
		Chapter 12: A disciple is committed to living out the Great Commandment to love others and the Great Commission to share Christ's love with the lost. (Matthew 22:37-39; 28:18-20; John 13:34-35).
		Chapter 13: A disciple continues the process of discipleship by having an ongoing plan for spiritual growth and a strategy for spiritual reproduction. (John 8:31; Colossians 1:28-29; 2 Timothy 2:2).

Life as a Disciple

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Disciples Are Made Not Born, Walter A. Henrichsen

Essentials of Discipleship, Francis M. Cosgrove, Jr.

The Making of a Disciple, Keith Phillips