

# Being a **DISCIPLE**

## Word study: Disciple

- The Greek word *'mathetes'* means literally *a learner*; it denotes *one who follows one's teaching*. A disciple was not only a pupil, but an adherent; they are spoken of as imitators of their teacher.

From this we see that a disciple is:

- 1) A learner – humble & submitted
  - 2) A follower – of what is being taught
  - 3) An adherent – sticks close to the teacher
  - 4) An imitator – lifestyle discipleship
- Disciples abide in the word  
***"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free'"*** Jn.8:31-32.
  - Disciples abide in the Lord  
***"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples"*** Jn.15:7-8.

Scripturally disciples are those who manifest that they are disciples of Jesus by abiding in His word, and by having His word abiding in them.

- **Jesus gave the command to make disciples**

***"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations"*** (Matt.28:19a).

Let us obey the Great Commission and make disciples!

- **Jesus made disciples**

There were many who followed Jesus as disciples and out of them He chose twelve to be trained to be apostles.

***"And when it was day, He called His disciples and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles"*** (Lu.6:13).

- **Peter and the apostles of Jesus made disciples**

The book of Acts shows us that the apostles Jesus raised made many disciples, and even a great number of priests became obedient to the faith. ***"Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith"*** (Acts 6:7).

By the time the persecution came, and Stephen was killed, many of the disciples were expelled from Jerusalem.

***"Therefore, those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word"*** (Acts 8:4).

***"Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word ..."*** (Acts 11:19).

The disciples who had been raised up in the word by the apostles of Jesus, were able to go out everywhere preaching the word. Such is the fruit of discipleship.

Disciples, once they have been taught, are able to go out and preach.

- **Paul and Barnabas made disciples.**

On their first missionary journey they returned through the cities where they had preached the gospel and ***"made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples"*** (Acts 14:21-22).

- **Local churches made disciples**

The local churches that Paul and Barnabas planted made disciples. Timothy is the proof of that. ***"And he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold a certain disciple was there named Timothy ... He was well spoken of by the brethren"*** (Acts 16:1-2).

Paul also followed Jesus' example in choosing certain disciples to be trained for

specific ministry. **"Paul wanted to have him go on with him"** (Acts 16:3a). This was the beginning of Timothy's training to be an apostle.

- **Paul gives some guidelines for a disciple** in his letter to Timothy **2 Timothy 3:10-11**

Timothy had carefully followed:

1. the **teaching** of Paul - doctrine
2. his **manner of life** – his conduct and behaviour
3. his **purpose** – his reason for living and zeal for the gospel
4. his **faith** – how Paul sought God and heard from Him
5. his **longsuffering** – how he bore with saints, teaching them with patience and endurance
6. his **love** (**2 Cor 5:14**) – how he loved the churches (**2 Cor.11:28**)
7. his **perseverance** – how he never gave up despite many trials
8. his **persecutions and afflictions** – how he used these to find more grace (**2 Cor.12:7-10**)

### Characteristics of being a disciple

- **Commitment to Jesus Christ**

Once we come to faith in Jesus Christ there must be a commitment to follow Him. Our commitment to Jesus Christ through believing in Him is the only basis for becoming a disciple. Once we have come to the commitment of faith in Jesus Christ, we then must obey the call.

**"Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.' They immediately left their nets and followed Him"** **Matt.4:19-20.**

Having made a commitment we need to remain faithful to that commitment, being taught and then trained and then sent out.

- **Submitted**

Everybody in the body of Christ is to be in submission. A disciple, biblically speaking, submits to the teacher [rabbi]. Such submission is firstly totally unto God, but then it is through faith in God to the elders that God has placed us with to be discipled.

Further, the submission is to one another in the body. We all submit into the body, fully respecting and appreciating each other (**Eph.5:21; 1 Pet.5:5**).

- **Accountable**

Accountability means being willing to give an account. We are accountable for our time, for our behaviour, for our faithfulness. It means being willing to do as we are asked, including going on practical outreaches and assignments, but then reporting back to the one(s) who sent you (**Acts 14:27; Lu. 10:17-19**).

- **Ready to be sent**

When a disciple has been trained, they are sent out in the work of the ministry (**Lu.10:1; Matt.10:5-40**).

The Lord's vision for His church is that every local fellowship is making disciples of the brethren who are part of the church. Every local fellowship is meant to be linked to other fellowships through a mutual submission and adherence to an apostle or an apostolic team.

**"For this reason, I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church"** **1Cor.4:17.**

### **Discipleship is growing to maturity**

- ❖ Having foundations properly laid
- ❖ growing up in all things (**Eph.4:13-16**)
- ❖ disciples only speak the Word
- ❖ disciples are unstoppable
- ❖ disciples are called to be fruitful and effective

**The world is waiting  
for trained disciples  
to make known the glory  
of the eternal God in the earth!**

**"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of YAHWEH, as the waters cover the sea"** **Hab.2:14**

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