

Discipleship

Discipleship has its roots in the ancient Jewish culture in which Jesus was raised. Followers of rabbis (teachers) were called their disciples. Rabbis had vast knowledge of the scriptures and also showed by their example how to live them out. A disciple's goal was to follow his rabbi and gain his knowledge, as well as to take on his purpose and character. After training, disciples went out and made disciples of their own. The Great Commission given by Jesus is a call to build the Kingdom of God in this way, teaching and showing others how to live as his disciples. There are characteristic marks of being a true disciple of Jesus, and a cost to be counted to follow him. There are amazing rewards associated with a life of discipleship, in this Age and the next, that far outweigh the sacrifices involved.

Opening question: In one sentence, how would you describe what it means to be a Christian?

Acts 11:26

- Is there a difference between being a Christian and being a disciple?

Luke 6:40; Colossians 1:28

- What is the goal of being a Christian/disciple of Jesus?

The Marks of Discipleship

John 13:34-35

- What is the defining mark of discipleship mentioned here?
- How would you summarise Jesus' love for his disciples?
- Christianity is a lifestyle of loyal and sacrificial love - this is the signifying mark of true followers of Jesus, and will be noticed by the world.

John 8:31

- Disciples of Jesus hold to/remain in/abide in his teachings. What does this mean?

John 15:8

- What does it mean to bear fruit as a disciple of Jesus?

Luke 14:25-27

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said that his disciples need to "hate" their physical families? (This is the correct translation of the Greek word, rather than "love less") Clue: Read **Malachi 1:1-3**.
- Where do you find your main source of identity? In what do you find your security and hope?

Matthew 28:18-20

- What important mark of discipleship is mentioned here?
- What is involved in making disciples/helping others to follow Jesus and become like him?

1 John 2:6

- This passage summarises what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.
- In what main ways would your life change if you chose to live as Jesus lived?
- No one does this perfectly but we should have the heart to want to imitate him!

The Cost of Discipleship

Luke 14:28-30

- What is the principle from this passage that Jesus wants us to know about following him?
- Why is it so important to do this?

Luke 9:23-26

- What was carrying a cross associated with in Jesus' day?
- What does this say about what followers of Jesus must be willing to do?

The Rewards of Discipleship

John 10:10

- What benefit of being a disciple of Jesus is mentioned here? What do you think this means?
- How does your life currently compare with such a life?

John 10:27-28

- What benefit of being a disciple of Jesus is mentioned here? What do you think this means?

FURTHER STUDY

Mark 10:45. Being a disciple of Jesus means taking on a life of serving others rather than ourselves. How would your life change if this was a priority for you?

Luke 19:10. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and his disciples share this purpose. How would your life change if this was a priority for you?

Matthew 7:21-23. Not everyone who thinks of themselves as religious or having miraculous gifts will be known by Jesus. Who will be known by Jesus and who will he count as his disciples?

REFLECTION

- Are you living as a Christian? Do you bear the marks of a true disciple of Jesus?
- What main changes would you need to make if you wanted to take up the call of discipleship?
- How would your life be different if you completely entrusted your future to God's Kingdom?
- Reflect on the rewards that come with being a disciple of Jesus. How would your life improve for the better if you were to follow him?