

# Module 1: Fundamentals of Discipleship

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## Becoming a true Disciple

We have looked so far in the first chapter what is a true disciple, for a true disciple follows our Lord Jesus and obeys fully and without compromise the teachings, commands and ways of our Lord. A disciple FOLLOWS and LEARNS from the Master.

Remember, a disciple is the one, despite age, upbringing, past, sins or intellect, who accepts Jesus as the one who died on the cross for our salvation and redemption, and then commits to follow God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit with little thought of the self. A disciple is committed to the dying end to the teachings and the truths that has been taught through Jesus Christ.

**THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT POINT TO REMEMBER – A DISCIPLE FOLLOWS NO MAN OR ORGANISATION BUT ONLY JESUS.**

In the Book of Acts, we find the disciple of the Lord moved so powerfully in the Spirit of the Lord because they refused to have no other king except the Lord Jesus. This is again the crux of being a disciple – following Jesus for He is the Way, Truth and Life.

**AT ALL TIMES REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT QUESTION: What is the goal of the disciple?**

Answer: To be just like his master. For the disciple of our Lord, it means being like Jesus.  
*Matthew 10: 24 A disciple is not above his teacher, nor is a servant or slave above his master. 25 It is sufficient for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant or slave like his master.*

The first step on the path of discipleship begins in the exact place where we stand. We do not have to prequalify to take that first step. It doesn't matter if we are rich or poor. There is no requirement to be educated, eloquent, or intellectual. We do not have to be perfect or well-spoken or even well-mannered. You and I can walk in the path of discipleship today. It just takes faith in Jesus.

Nearly two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ spoke the words, "Come, follow me," drawing to himself a group of men that would follow him during the years of his earthly ministry. Those twelve disciples would quickly multiply to thousands in just a matter of years.

So the question that therefore now remains is how do I become a disciple of the Lord?

***You become therefore a disciple of Jesus when you:***

***i) Believe He is "The Christ of God", Luke 9:18-20***

*And it came about that while He was praying alone, the disciples were with Him, and He questioned them, saying, "Who do the multitudes say that I am?" And they answered and said, "'John the Baptist; but others say, Elijah; and others, that one of the prophets of old*

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*has risen again." And He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God."*

Following a time of prayer, our Lord asked his disciples this important question of what people think of Him (this incident is also covered in Matthew 16:13-20 and Mark 8:27-30.) He was seeking to know if the people to whom the disciples had been ministering for the last year in the region of Galilee really understood who He was. Remember that the Pharisees had already denounced him as a law breaker and a Sabbath breaker who performed all his miracles by the power of Satan.

"John the Baptist," was the first answer Jesus received in response to his question. In Luke 19:7, we read that Herod Antipas, governor of Galilee, who had beheaded John, became perplexed when he heard of the miracles of Jesus. He was told that some people thought Jesus was John the Baptist. But why would the people think that Jesus was the deceased forerunner? It was because they were looking for a Messiah who would introduce a physical kingdom, but first they would see the forerunner of Malachi who would come with a message of repentance and judgement. John and Jesus had the same message. The disciples' second reply was Elijah, the prophet and miracle worker who never died but was taken up into heaven by God some 850 years earlier and was prophesied to return to earth as the forerunner of the Messiah. Their third answer was, one of the prophets, like the miracle worker Elisha, or even Moses raised from the dead.

Jesus then asked the disciples a second time, "But who do you say that I am?" This was a very important question. Jesus was facing the cross, and He needed his disciples to clearly understand His person and purpose on earth, and the part they would play in bringing the Kingdom of God into the hearts of men and women after He returned to his Father.

Now it was Peter's turn to answer, and by the power of spiritual revelation he replied, "The Christ of God" (The Son of the living God, Matt. 16:16). John would later write of Jesus' incarnation, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). According to Matthew, Jesus said to Peter, *"Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*

How then do you become a disciple of Jesus? You must believe in your heart that Jesus is the Christ of God, the very Son of the one and only living God, God come in the flesh. *Salvation is found in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved* (Acts 4:12).

### *II. Take up your cross daily, Luke 9:21-23*

*But He warned them, and instructed them not to tell this to anyone, saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day. And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*

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Taking up my cross means I admit that it was my sins such as envy, rebellion, pride, lust, murder, adultery, slander and so on that put Jesus on that cross. But when I placed my faith in Him, I died once and for all to the power of sin, and now because He lives I am able to live a new resurrected life of righteousness by his resurrection power (Romans 6). The cross of Christ is a daily reminder that our flesh needs to be put to death. The apostle Paul said years later to the Galatians, *"Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit"* (Gal. 5: 24-25).

Bearing a cross does not mean primarily having hard times. It means going to Golgotha. It means dying with Christ—dying to the old attitudes of our sinful ways. Such ways are of course described in *Galatians 5: 19 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

It is about turning to follow Jesus in newness of life. When we make disciples, we bid people to come and die to their old, destructive ways and to live for Jesus, who loved them and gave himself for. It is all about giving up your old life so that you can live new.

It says in *Matthew 9: 16 "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. 17 Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."*

In this teaching of Jesus, He reminds us that the new wine is the wine of the New Covenant, sealed by the Blood of the Jesus, and we cannot abide in the Lord as His disciple is we hold onto our old ways (which is the old wineskin). We must become 'new' in the image of the Lord so that as new wineskins we can carry the glory of the Lord as His disciple.

To follow Jesus means we are not to coddle or cuddle our flesh, nor give it any encouragement or even tolerate it. Instead we are to reject it together with its selfish desires. We are to nail the flesh to the cross daily.

Paul tells us that if Jesus is Lord, then *"...we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you"* (2 Corinthians 4:11-12).

We cannot compromise with this world. We are either follow Jesus or the world. Remember these words of Jesus – *Luke 16:13: "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."*

It should also be noted we must take up the cross DAILY. Why? Because daily we stumble in the ways of the world. Daily we need to come to the Lord, repent, learn from our mistakes, grow spiritually and seek our strength in His majesty and power. There is no such thing as being saved and always saved, but more on that later on in the course.

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How then do you become a disciple of Jesus? You must believe that he is the Christ; take up your cross daily, and ...

### *III. Be willing to lose your life, Luke 9: 24-27*

*"For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. But I tell you truly, there are some of those standing here who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."*

The disciples were aware that John the Baptist had "lost" his life daily from the time he was a youth up to the time of his physical death at the hands of Herod and Herodias. Over the following 30 years, 11 of the 12 disciples would be placed into circumstances in which they would day by day have to give up their hopes and dreams in order to remain faithful to their Lord and their calling.

They would be persecuted, arrested, tried, placed in prisons, beaten, suffer cold, hunger, loneliness, fear and abandonment for the sake of Christ. *"Remember the word that I said to you," Jesus said in the upper room, "a slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you..." (John 15: 20).*

Paul would tell his spiritual son, Timothy, some 30 years later that, *"...all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12).*

*"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His glory, and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels" (9:26).* Matthew adds, quoting Psalm 62:12 and Proverbs 24:12, *"and will then recompense every man according to his deeds."*

Also consider the trials that Paul endured for the glory of the Kingdom: *2 Corinthians 11: I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? 30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.*

Indeed, to follow Jesus is not easy. To follow Jesus means opposing the carnality of the world, opposing the religious ways of man, opposing sin, opposing the ways of the devil and opposing all and everything contrary to the Word and the Kingdom of God.

To be a disciple calls for strength in the character. It calls for holiness and purity.

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How do you become a disciple of Jesus? Believe he is "the Christ of God" (Luke 9:18-20); take up your cross and follow Him and then ...

### *iv) Be baptized in water and in Spirit*

Why must we be baptized? Because Jesus was baptized. *Matthew 3: 13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan [River], to be baptized by him. 14 But John tried to prevent Him [vigorously protesting], saying, "It is I who need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" 15 But Jesus replied to him, "Permit it just now; for this is the fitting way for us [k]to fulfill all righteousness." Then John permitted [it and baptized] Him. 16 After Jesus was baptized, He came up immediately out of the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he (John) saw the [l]Spirit of God descending as a dove and lighting on Him (Jesus), 17 and behold, a [m]voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased and delighted!"*

It says on *Matthew 28: Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age."*

In verse 19 of this Scripture, our mission is to "make disciples" for Jesus. "Go and make disciples." The meaning of baptism develops out of this meaning of discipleship. If becoming a disciple of Jesus means dying to your old life and walking in newness of life with Christ as Jesus taught, then it's almost inevitable that the symbolic act of that conversion should come to signify a death and resurrection. And that's just what happened. Paul says in *Romans 6:3, 4, "All of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death. We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; we too might walk in newness of life."*

So Jesus commands baptism as a normative part of disciple-making because baptism signifies in an outward way what it means to become a disciple—death to self-reliance and a new life of faith following Jesus.

We will be discussing in greater detail the baptism later on in the course.

So to sum up, you become a disciple when you firstly believe He is the Son of God, when you are willing to die to the Self, willing to follow Him and when you are willing to be baptized as a sign that you are laying aside the old man for a new life in Jesus.