

## Module 1: The Fundamentals of Discipleship

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### **The heart of a disciple**

In order to understand what it means to be a disciple in nature, we need to study Matthew 10 which reads like a manual. This is like a guidebook of sorts for any disciple who truly follows Jesus.

When we read Matthew 10, we get a very good understanding of what it means to be a disciple of God. Jesus thus sums up the 'heart' or the essence of what it means to be a disciple when He speaks to his disciples as captured in this Scripture.

In the very first sentence we read: *Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.* Jesus therefore deals swiftly with the authority of the disciple when He says that He has given the power and authority to the disciple to counter the works of the unclean spirit, and to drive and to cast them out. He has given the disciple the authority to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease, all in the Name of Jesus. Jesus granted this authority not only to the 12, but also the 70 and also to us who follow in His footsteps.

A disciple therefore walks in authority. A disciple has the authority to loosen and to bind, to tear down strongholds (2 Corinthians 10) and to bring the Light where darkness exists.

*Take note: We will discuss the matter of authority later on in the course.*

We then find a list of names of the disciples ... *2 These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.*

Why is this important? You see, a disciple is known by God. A true disciple is even known by Satan. A true disciple is known by name. We can fool man by our clever words and being very pious in our behaviour, but only the Lord knows if we are truly His children or not. Only the Lord knows if we truly know Him, and serve Him and love Him. A true disciple is therefore KNOWN in the spiritual realm and will thus walk by such authority. *2 Timothy 2: 19 But the firm foundation of (laid by) God stands, sure and unshaken, bearing this seal (inscription): The Lord knows those who are His, and, Let everyone who names [himself by] the name of the Lord give up all iniquity and stand aloof from it.*

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So many “believers” try to fool the spiritual realm and pretend to be walking in the anointing and authority, but the spiritual realm KNOWS whose heart is sold out for the Kingdom. This is the truth of the matter. God knows it, the devil knows it, and every angel and demon is aware of it. A true disciple walks in authority because he has a legal standing in the spiritual dimension, while someone who is not walking with God is an imposter and such an imposter is always quickly exposed when it comes to the matters of the spiritual.

The Lord is looking for true disciples, but such a disciple will be known for they walk in Truth and they walk in God’s Glory and they walk by the Spirit. For a disciple, there is no pretence and no need to be hypocritical – they simply exist in Christ and therefore their entire life is about Christ.

So when we find a list of names of disciples, it is a declaration that these disciples are known, they are real and they serve the true Master. Unto such disciples the Lord grants all authority by His Name so that the disciple can serve the purpose and plan of the Kingdom.

It is these days easy to be known by people. Question is, are we known in the heavenlies and regarded as a friend and a disciple by the Lord? If so, we walk in authority, for the power comes from high, not from below.

The quickest way to also test of someone is a true disciple is if you put him or her in a confrontation with a demonic presence. The presence will know the true sons and daughters of the Lord. But these days the Church is running away from such confrontation because it exposes us to be disciples only by name and not by our heavenly recognition.

A true disciple is not formed by all kinds of titles gained through education, or through money or status – a true disciple is formed by his relationship to God, how much he submits and yields and is willing to lay down the crown of the self. A true disciple only serves God and none other.

But these are the days that the true and the fake disciples will be exposed, for the one walks in God’s true power, truth and authority [accompanied by real signs, wonders and miracles] and the other by deception, spiritual frailty and flesh. The fake disciples operate by the metaphysical, by the pseudo spiritual and by religion, not relationship.

To illustrate this point, read *Acts 19: 11 Now God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. 13 Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon*

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*themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." 14 Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" 16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.*

The evil spirits knew Paul as a disciple and so Paul walked in authority. The Jewish exorcists were not known by the demons, for they were not true disciples and so were exposed.

From verse six in Matthew 10, we get a clear indication of what it means to be a disciple. It reads: *6 Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. 7 As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' 8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, and cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.*

A true disciple therefore has a heart for the lost. For the needy. For the sick. For the downtrodden. For the oppressed. Why? Because Jesus has such a heart – He came to save the sinners, lift up the weak, set the captives free from spiritual and emotional bondage and He came to give hope to those who have lost all hope. The disciple after all is like the Master, just so the disciple now needs to follow Jesus who has such a heart for the lost and the troubled.

John the Baptist was the voice in the wilderness that cried repent for the kingdom of God is at hand. Still today, there should be a similar cry of the disciple and it should be the cry of the follower of Jesus to the lost world. We need to go to those who do not know Jesus and to cry that it is time to repent of our ways for indeed, the Kingdom of God is at hand.

The Kingdom of God is already at hand because Jesus came 2000 years ago and He has already established His kingdom in heaven. The kingdom only has to manifest in its fullness at the end of all time with the coming of the New Jerusalem.

In the Great Commission, Jesus told His disciples that they must go into the entire world to preach the Good News and to teach all the things that Jesus taught them. One of the key mandates of the disciple is to preach and to go and teach the Good News. It is the mandate, the purpose and the calling of all disciples to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is at hand and that we need to repent and turn to Him. *John 20:21 New International Version (NIV):*

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*Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."*

In verse eight, Jesus continues with the mandate of the disciple when He says they are called to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. Again, we are talking about authority, but then this is authority which flows from God unto His true followers.

Jesus also speaks about freely receiving and freely giving, for this should remain the heart of the disciple. The disciple is not somebody who lives for his own glory and he does not love the self or live for his own pleasure or for his own fame. In Matthew 5, Jesus emphasises in the Beatitudes that blessed are the poor in spirit, the meek, the kind and the kind.

The disciple lives for God, and only for the Glory of God and so the disciple will go into the world for the simple reason to glorify God. The disciple lives for the Beatitudes.

Let us then read the following out of the chapter: 9 *"Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts— 10 no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep. 11 Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. 12 As you enter the home, give it your greeting. 13 If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. 14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. 15 Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of Judgment than for that town. Jesus then speaks how the disciples should not to take anything on their journey, like gold or silver and that they must not take any provisions or any clothes.*

Jesus reminds us in Matthew 6 that a disciple must first seek the Kingdom of God and its righteousness and then the rest will be added. That is the heart of a disciple – God's Kingdom and the Glory of such a Kingdom above self-glory and self-enrichment or glorification. This is what Jesus was emphasising - a disciple of God must first and always put his trust and faith completely into the hands of God, and that a disciple must not worry about the things of the world like food or clothing because the Father will provide for the disciple.

So therefore in Matthew verses nine and 10, we are reminded that a disciple must always and in all things trust and rely upon God. Jesus tells them not to take sandals, food or clothing, not even gold or silver, because He was

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teaching them that they must have trust and they must have faith – like a mustard seed - in the living God.

Jesus was teaching His disciples that they must first seek the Kingdom of God and wherever they go the Lord will take care of them. A disciple must rely and trust and lean upon God. A disciple's will is subjected and submitted to the will and way of the living God. The heart of the disciple is thus God's Kingdom, and the Kingdom is his source, his strength, his joy, his hope and his love. A disciple lives for God and God alone.

We then read the following: *12 And when you go into a household, greet it. 13 If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. 15 Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment than for that city!*

Jesus provides us with a truth to ponder. For Jesus is sayings to his disciples that wherever they are going, they must leave their peace whenever welcomed, but if a house or town doesn't welcome them then they must let the peace return to them.

So often we are afraid of the opinion of the world, afraid to offend, and so often as disciples we want to please the world and we want to please man, but we forget that the mandate of the disciple is to stand for God's Truth and to uphold such Truth. We are not here to please man, but God. After all, it is all about God and His honour, and such honour the disciple must uphold and fight for. *Luke 12: 8 "Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. 9 But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God."*

Jesus makes it clear to his disciples what is important is His word and His very presence that abides and dwells in His disciples. For in John 15 Jesus says that if you abide in Him then He will abide in us. Therefore, for the disciple, the truth of God and the presence of God should and must be their desire and they must revere and fear God and not man. A disciple would rather be a fool in the eyes of man than a fool in the eyes of God.

In Luke 10, Jesus sends out the 70 disciples. *17 Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." 18 And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20*

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*nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”*

The lesson we learn from Luke 10 is that a disciple always carries the concerns of God on his heart. He must never glory in his own flesh, own achievements, abilities or the favour he finds. It should remain of utmost importance for the disciple that he always rejoices because his name is written in heaven.

Let us now read verses 16 to 20: 16 *“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. 17 Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. 18 On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. 19 But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, 20 for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.*

Here, the Lord reminds the disciples that He is sending them out like sheep in the midst of the wolves. He tells them to be weary and to be wise as serpents and to be innocent as doves. The Lord reminds the disciples and us that we need to be humble and kind and contrite at heart, but we also need to remain vigilant, we need to be alert as warriors and watchmen. We must always be willing to act according to the inner strength and inner guidance of the Holy Spirit. Still today the Lord sends us out as disciples like sheep in the midst of wolves and still today we need to be very careful. We have to remember that Satan roams like a devouring lion.

In verse 17, Jesus tells His disciples to be on guard against men whose ways or nature is to act in opposition to God for they will seek to destroy the work of the disciple. The Lord also tells the disciples to beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. Jesus warns the disciples that they will be brought before governors and kings for the sake of Jesus so that they can bear witness and to act like a testimony for God. Jesus, however, encourages them not worry about what they will say for it will be given to them in the very hour and the moment when needed. After all, it is not they who speak, but the Spirit of their Father who speaks through them.

This again reminds us that it is by the might and power of the Holy Spirit that a disciple should be operating. A disciple cannot operate according to his own flesh, strength, wisdom or insight. A disciple is reborn in Spirit,

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worships in spirit and truth, and seeks and is led by the Holy Spirit. Only then will a disciple succeed in the Great Commission.

*We will discuss the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the disciple later on.*

Still today we have to realise as disciples that we are called to preach and teach a word and a message that confronts the ways of the world. Jesus says He did not come to bring peace on the earth. Many men and women in history have come against the Gospel of God for it is a Truth that they don't want to hear or listen to and they will fight it and they will resist and even revolt against the Truth. After all, the Truth is a double edged sword that exposes the darkness.

As disciples of God we will always be persecuted and there will always be opposition. Did not Jesus say in Matthew 5 in His Beatitudes that blessed are those who are persecuted? We think sometimes it is all about God's blessing to be a disciple and yes, the Lord will bless those who follow Him and who abide in Jesus. But the Lord makes it clear it is not always going to be easy.

Disciples of God are involved in a spiritual war (Ephesians 6), for they are part of God's army. We are involved in spiritual battles every day, as we fight for the lost, the spiritual dying and the spiritual needy. Satan is waging a war since the beginning of time but we have been called to be warriors, watchmen and we are called to be servants. Just like in the days of Nehemiah when the walls were built by men who carried the sword in one hand a construction tool in another, so we are called to both warriors and builders of God's Kingdom. Such is the way of the disciple.

We are called to go to a broken world and we are called to go to a people who are resisting and even rebelling against God. The Lord thus reminded His disciples and He is reminding us today that we must not fear and we must trust and have faith in Him. When Jesus said to His disciples that they do not have to worry about what they are going to say, He was reminding them to have faith and to put their trust in His divine wisdom.

Then we read in our chapter of study: *21 "Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 22 And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved. 23 When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.*

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How the Lord reminds us of the challenges and obstacles that we will face as disciples, for this is not an easy ride, since this world belongs to the devil for a while. The disciples are reminded they will be hated by all for His Name's sake but they need to persevere and endure.

Jesus reminds us in verse 23 (second part of the sentence) *For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel before the Son of Man comes.* It has been a problem that for the last 2000 years there has been far too few disciples of the Lord. This is why Jesus said that the harvest is great but the labourers are few. There have been many Christians following a religion but not disciples following God as a living faith.

Indeed, the harvest is expanding {there are about 7 billion people on the planet} but the workers aren't really multiplying in the same strength to keep up with the demand and to fulfil the Great Commission.

Now look at the following verses: 24 *“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they call those of his household!”*

How the Lord reminds us that he is God and that we are man, and that He is Jesus and we are His disciples. In church today we want to be the demi-gods and we want to be greater than the master, because so often we think our way and our programmes and our methods is greater than the purpose and plans of God. Indeed, many are the plans of man but the plan of God prevails!

Verse 24 speaks of pride, for pride was the fall of Satan. In order to be a true disciple we need to remain humble, to know our place in the spiritual realm, to remain pure of heart, and we need to manifest His holiness and righteousness to the Glory of God.

How verse 25 should strengthen our resolve, for if the world called Jesus a demon [Beelzebub], how much more will they then mock the disciples of God! This is the way of the disciple. A disciple is an enemy to the ways of the world, and we will often be ridiculed, mocked, persecuted and even rejected.

To be a disciple means to follow God and not the world. It means to follow the truth and not the lies and the deceptions of the world. Jesus therefore encouraged His disciples to stand strong in the Truth and to remain standing upon the rock of Jesus. Glory to God!

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In verse 26, we read: *Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. 7 “Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops.*

We do not have to fear mankind or the world or the devil because God is with us. God has given us His Spirit by which we operate in the gifts of wisdom, knowledge and discernment. God gives us wisdom and insight and the anointing to walk in authority to be victorious and to overcome! A disciple walks in authority and operates on a supernatural level, living a life of the supernatural for our God is a supernatural God for whom nothing is impossible!

Indeed, a disciple lives and operates in the supernatural, and the Lord reveals to His disciples deeper truths and He speaks about the deeper meanings and secrets. To His disciples He shares His heart so that the disciples can act and move and pray according to what Jesus teaches us and what Jesus reveals.

We therefore do not have to fear because God is with us and He will show us all things to his Glory so that we can expose all things that are hidden in the Name of Jesus. The Lord will reveal all things that are in the darkness and in the shadows because God is Light. Jesus teaches us that we must as disciples be the light unto the world (Matthew 5) because when our light shines it shines upon the darkness and upon the shadows and it shines upon the ways of the enemy and it shines upon the things that are forbidden, evil and corrupt.

That is why we need to let our light shine so that God will be glorified, so that evil can be exposed, so that strongholds can be exposed, which will lead to deliverance and freedom for many who are held as spiritual slaves. Indeed, God has called the disciples to walk in victory and power and in authority so that the ways and the schemes of the devil can be revealed once and for all.

The disciple can never be ashamed of God! A disciple needs to constantly fight the good fight of faith, and a disciple will stand with God no matter what, and a disciple will pursue the will of God no matter the terrors or the threat. This is the mark of the disciple, for a disciple will openly declare the word of God to a broken world no matter the persecution and the trouble that waits upon one's path. A disciple believes in Psalm 91, for we are under the shadow of the wing of the Almighty! Why shall we fear when God is with us?

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Yes, a disciple loves God, loves His Kingdom, loves His people, loves the broken world, and because of that love, will not shy away, be ashamed or be reluctant, but press on and seek God's Glory.

Lastly, let us take to heart the concluding words of this chapter as spoken by Jesus: *40 "Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. 41 Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. 42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward."*

Discipleship is all about God, about His Love, His Truth, His Glory and serving Him. For then we shall walk in His Presence and in Spirit and Truth. For then we shall walk as true disciples.