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become like Jesus by trying to imitate how Jesus lived and His character in their own lives, living in obedience to His instructions (Luke 6:46). For example, the apostle Paul told Christians to imitate him as he imitated Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17). Therefore, you cannot really be Jesus's disciple if you are not actively trying to imitate Jesus in your life!

A disciple of Jesus is one who has agreed to follow Jesus and be trained by Him. Disciples are trained by Jesus through learning from Jesus and imitating Him. Therefore, disciples of Jesus are not just people who believe who Jesus is and claim association with Him. Rather, they are true followers of Jesus who are striving to obey Him in everything!

**Bible Question & Answer Series**

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**Bible Question & Answer**

# What Is A Disciple?



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# What Is A Disciple?

Although followers of Jesus are most commonly called “Christians” today, the word “Christian” is only used three times in the Bible (Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16). One of the most common ways followers of Jesus are identified is by the term “disciple.” This was a common concept to people at that time. For example, some considered themselves to be disciples of Moses (John 9:28) and John the Baptist (John 1:35). Then, when Jesus began His teaching work, we often see people being referred to as His disciples. In fact, the Scriptures say that the disciples of Jesus were the ones to be called Christians (Acts 11:26). Since this is a concept that is often used in the Scriptures, it is important that you properly understand it. And, this concept will have a dramatic impact on how you practice your faith (if you let it).

**1) A disciple receives training from a teacher.** Discipleship requires a teacher. That is, to be a disciple, there must be someone you are a disciple *of*. A follower must follow somebody. In Luke 6:40, Jesus makes it clear that a disciple is not above his

teacher (implying a disciple has a teacher) and should be fully trained to be like his (or her) teacher. So, a disciple is not someone who just associates with another person. A disciple is not someone who is merely fond of another person. A disciple is not someone who roots for another person’s success as a bystander. Rather, a disciple allows himself/herself to be trained by the teacher – with the intent of actively following the teacher.

Because a disciple will receive training to be like the teacher, it is crucial for each person to select the right teacher! For example, if you were studying to be a financial advisor, you would need to carefully select who you would learn economics from so you would be successful in your career and give good advice to your clients. Spiritually speaking, understanding who Jesus is will lead you to determine that He is the Master Teacher and the one you must follow above all others – the one who will lead you to eternal life in Heaven with the Father (John 14:6)!

**2) A disciple is a student of the teacher.** As a disciple selects the right teacher to be trained by, a key part of the training that will be received is through

being a student. So, a disciple learns from the teacher. Concerning disciples of Jesus, they must put in the effort to learn from Jesus. When Jesus was on earth, He spent much time teaching. This implies that people spent time learning from Him. For example, when Jesus encountered some Jews who had believed in Him, He told them that they must continue in His word to really be His disciples and know the truth (John 8:31-32). Today, you learn from Jesus by studying the Bible! Therefore, you cannot really be Jesus’s disciple if you do not take a sufficient amount of time to learn from Jesus!

**3) A disciple is an imitator of the teacher.** Another part of the disciple’s training involves putting the learning into practice so that the disciple will be like the teacher. So, disciples must not just be looking to gain information from a knowledgeable teacher. Rather, the one who wants to truly be a disciple is looking to become an imitator of the teacher. This is what Jesus was talking about when He said that everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher (Luke 6:40). True disciples of Jesus will not take Jesus’s teaching and then become whoever they want to be and live however they want to live. Instead, they will