

Jesus said there will be many on the Judgment Day who will have claimed Him as Lord and did some things in His name, who will still be eternally condemned because they did not obey God (Matthew 7:21-23).

**How to imitate Jesus.** Learning to imitate Jesus begins with gaining the proper instruction from Jesus. Through a committed and thorough study of the Bible, you will gain knowledge about how your Teacher lived – and how He expects you to live. For example, through a study of John 13:1-17, we can learn how Jesus served others. Then, notice that Jesus’s expectation for His disciples concerning His example is that, once they learned from Him, they would do just as He had done (vv. 12-17). Therefore, you must take what you learn from the Bible and find ways to implement the same things in your life. One helpful thing is to find others who are imitating Christ and imitate how they are imitating Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17).

**What to imitate from Jesus.** Look back at the principle of Luke 6:40 concerning discipleship. You are not above your Teacher (Jesus Christ). So, you have no right to call yourself a disciple of Jesus Christ and then act as though you are exempt from following a particular teaching or example that you do not like, that is difficult/inconvenient, that is costly, etc. Instead, your goal should be to become fully trained so that you can be like your Teacher (Jesus Christ)! Although it is true that no one will ever perfectly walk in Jesus’s footsteps, this is no excuse not to try – or to pick and choose the areas in which you will follow Him (James 2:10-11). Rather, the only way for you to build your life upon the solid foundation that will stand and result in eternal life in Heaven is if you hear and then act on all the teachings of Jesus Christ in the pages of Scripture (Luke 6:46-49)!

### Conclusion

Being in Christ (a Christian) means that you must be a disciple of Jesus Christ. But, as we have seen, this is not an empty title or merely a way of describing yourself. Instead, this means that you have whole-heartedly committed to following Jesus Christ throughout your life and being trained by Him. This training involves you giving yourself to learn from Jesus and then striving to imitate Him in every aspect of your life!



## You Are A Disciple Of Jesus Christ

The Bible demonstrates that those who are in Christ have a rich spiritual identity. This involves being a disciple of Jesus Christ. Yet, while it is common for people to identify as a “Christian,” many may be unfamiliar with what it means for Christians to be disciples. Still, we see this concept plainly taught in the pages of Scripture (Acts 11:26). Therefore, if you are going to fulfill your true purpose in Jesus Christ, you must embrace your identity as a disciple of Jesus Christ and all this involves.

The purpose of this lesson is to learn what it means for a Christian to be a disciple of Jesus Christ so you can embed this into your identity in Christ.

### Jesus Christ Is Your Teacher

**Jesus Christ wants disciples.** Jesus knew that His earthly ministry would be limited. He had a short time and a specific mission. So, not long after Jesus began His earthly ministry, we see Him calling people to be His disciples (Matthew 4:18-22; 5:1). But, this was just the beginning of what Jesus had in mind concerning people being His disciples. For, He did not come to earth and sacrifice Himself on the cross for sin so that only the original disciples who physically saw Him would be His disciples and be saved from sin. Instead, He instructed that these original disciples devote themselves to the work of spreading the gospel so as to make disciples of people throughout the entire world (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16)! This work has now been passed down to those who are Jesus’s disciples today (2 Timothy 2:2).

**Choosing Jesus as your teacher.** Having disciples is not something that is exclusive to Jesus. For example, there were disciples of Moses (John 9:28), disciples of the Pharisees (Matthew 22:15-16), and disciples of John the Baptist (Luke 11:1). For, a disciple simply refers to one who is trained by

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another. So, a person can choose to receive training from any number of sources. In John 6, there is an interesting exchange concerning some who chose not to be Jesus's disciples, while others chose Jesus. For example, some who were called Jesus's disciples did not accept His hard teachings and turned away from accompanying Him (vv. 60, 66). However, when Jesus asked the Twelve if they also wanted to turn away, they refused because they had come to believe and know that He really is the Holy One of God (vv. 67-69)! Today, you are faced with this same choice: Will you choose Jesus as your teacher because you have come to believe and know that He truly is the Holy One of God – or will you choose another? While there are many hard things about following Jesus, He really is the only one who is the way, the truth, and the life; who will lead us to the Father in Heaven (John 14:6)! As a Christian, you must have made this firm decision to follow Jesus, just like Peter made in John 6!

**A disciple of Jesus Christ must be trained by Jesus.** Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is not an empty “title” that you wear as a Christian. Instead, a true disciple is one who is trained by the teacher so as to become like the teacher (Luke 6:40). Therefore, your goal as a disciple of Jesus Christ must be to receive training from Jesus so that you can be like Him. This training involves both learning from Jesus as well as imitating Jesus. Certainly, such a commitment to being Jesus's disciple requires you to put following Him above everything and everyone else in your life (Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 9:23-26, 57-62; 14:25-33). Yet, the reward for being His disciple is much greater than the cost (Matthew 19:27-29; Romans 8:16-18)!

### **You Must Learn From Jesus**

**Why learn from Jesus.** There are many reasons people choose who they want to learn from (i.e. popularity, eloquence, ease/convenience, etc.). However, the real criteria that should be used in deciding who you will learn from is authority! While others may claim to be an “authority” in some particular area of expertise, Jesus is the one who possesses complete authority over everything (Matthew 28:18)! In fact, Jesus's authority is one of the things people noticed about His teachings (Matthew 7:28-29). As the Creator, Jesus has both the power to control and the right to control literally everything (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17). So, whatever you learn from Jesus is *guaranteed* to be the absolute truth (John 8:31-32; 14:6). And, Jesus's words of truth are so authoritative that they will be the standard (criteria) by which your life will be evaluated on the Judgment Day (John 12:48). Therefore, true disciples of Christ commit themselves to learning

from Jesus because they believe and know He is the Holy One from God who has all authority and speaks the words of eternal life (John 6:67-69)!

**How to learn from Jesus.** Whenever Jesus walked on this earth, His disciples would literally follow Him, watch His life, listen to Him teach, ask Him questions, etc. Yet, we cannot do these things in the same ways they did because Jesus is not literally walking and teaching on this earth today. Still, we can learn from Jesus today. This happens by learning from the teachings of Scripture. For, it was the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal all the truth of Jesus's teachings to the apostles and prophets (John 14:25-26; Ephesians 3:3-5). Thus, when we read the words of the Bible, we learn several things from Jesus. We learn His commandments, His example of how He lived on earth, how He answered many questions, and how others who followed Him lived. Because of this, true disciples of Jesus Christ will be diligent Bible students (1 Peter 2:2-3; Acts 17:11)! For, it is impossible to be a true disciple of Jesus Christ and not make serious and regular efforts to learn from Jesus. In fact, if you do not grow in your knowledge of Jesus's teachings over time, you fail to please Him (Hebrews 5:12-14).

**What to learn from Jesus.** Some seem to fall into the trap of trying to be Jesus's disciple while only learning from Him in certain areas of their lives (i.e. areas considered important to “religion”). Yet, being a disciple of Jesus Christ involves learning from Jesus in every area of your life and submitting to His authority in all these areas (Colossians 3:17)! There is no area of your beliefs or your life that should be considered “off limits” to what Jesus teaches in the Scriptures (particularly, the teachings of the New Testament). For, these teachings reveal everything that is pleasing to God (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3). A true disciple of Jesus Christ will, therefore, be committed to learning from Jesus in all these areas (2 Peter 3:18).

### **You Must Imitate Jesus**

**Why imitate Jesus.** True discipleship does not stop at gaining an understanding of the things Jesus taught. Instead, true discipleship involves living a life that puts those truths into practice (just as Jesus did Himself). For, Jesus provides the perfect example of living to please God because He never sinned (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:21)! Consider Luke 6:46 (also James 1:22-25). So, a disciple of Jesus Christ is more than a student who claims Jesus as Master. Instead, a disciple of Jesus Christ is expected to become like His teacher (Luke 6:40). This means that the real measure of discipleship is not just in how much you know or can teach about what Jesus taught; but in whether you walk just as He walked (1 John 2:3-6)! For,