

## Discipleship Questions

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What is the goal of discipleship?

What will the disciple's relationship be with the world?

What is involved in following Jesus as His disciple?

How must a disciple of Jesus lose his/her life?

Why is it important to count the cost of discipleship?

What is the cost of discipleship?

How does discipleship view Jesus's teachings and examples?

How is producing fruit a critical element of discipleship?

# The NATURE Of Discipleship



The gospel's call of discipleship is critical for you to accept and embrace. Doing this, however, requires you to understand the true nature of discipleship. Yet, rather than defining discipleship in your own terms, you must allow the Scriptures to define it. As you do, remember the framework established in Matthew 4:19. A disciple of Jesus commits to following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and joining the mission of Jesus.

## Matthew 10:21-25

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Jesus sent out the twelve apostles and gave them instructions for their present mission, as well as their future work. In this, we can see that the goal of discipleship is to become like the Teacher (v. 25; Luke 6:40). A disciple attaches himself/herself to a teacher to learn his/her teachings and way of life with the goal of becoming like (imitating) the teacher. So, a disciple of Jesus (who is committed to learning from Jesus) must have it as his/her goal to become like Jesus. Doing such, however, will mean that you should not expect a different outcome for your life than what Jesus experienced (including hardships and persecutions for the sake of the gospel, Matthew 5:10-12; John 15:18-21; 2 Timothy 3:10-12). After all, Jesus's life was like a Light shining in a dark world that did not like to be exposed as darkness (John 3:19-21; 8:12), and His disciples must also shine as lights in the world (Matthew 5:14-16; Philippians 2:12-16).

## Luke 9:23-26

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The concept of following Jesus has often been perverted so that it becomes whatever people want it to mean rather than what Jesus truly expects. For some, it only involves initial belief and obedience to the gospel. For others, it means doing some religious activities (e.g. attendance with a local church, financial giving, Bible study, abstaining from immorality). However, Jesus demonstrates that following Him as His disciple involves much more than these things. First, being a disciple takes your life from being about how you want to live and exchanges it to be about how Jesus teaches you to live (1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Galatians 2:20; 5:24; Philippians 3:7-11). Second, being a disciple includes many burdens, challenges, and persecutions that must be endured in pursuit of living faithfully to Jesus (Revelation 2:8-11; 1 Corinthians 15:57-58; Galatians 6:7-10). Third, being a disciple involves believing, going, doing, and living whatever, wherever, and however Jesus teaches in the pages of the New Testament, no matter how difficult, different, or costly His way is (John 8:31-32; Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 5:17). For, His disciples will be people who have refused to save their lives for themselves (John 12:23-26). Rather, they will have lost their lives by committing and surrendering them to Jesus, with the hope of being blessed by Jesus when He returns. After all, nothing on earth is worth losing your soul to have or experience!

### **Luke 14:25-35**

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Great crowds often traveled with and congregated to hear Jesus teach and experience His miracles. However, there was a difference between these crowds and His disciples. Today, there are also many people interested in Jesus, willing to hear what He says, and want to experience His blessings but will not truly be His disciples. Jesus indicates that discipleship involves more and you must count the cost. Namely, Jesus teaches that being His disciple means you cannot love anyone else (including your own life) more than Him and, therefore, must put His will above your own desires and above pleasing anyone else. Then, you must bear your cross (sufferings and hardships) and follow wherever He leads. And, you must leave your possessions by being willing to part from them and use them however they are useful to the Master. Anyone who is not committed as a disciple of Jesus is like salt that has lost its distinct characteristic and has no value in Jesus's service!

### **John 13:12-17**

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Jesus had just performed the lowly job of a servant by washing His disciples' feet rather than demanding His disciples wash His feet. In this, Jesus demonstrates two powerful lessons about discipleship. First, discipleship is a life of service toward others, not about seeking to be served by others (Matthew 20:20-28; Galatians 6:10). Second, discipleship aims to imitate the teachings and ways of the Master in everything (1 Corinthians 11:1; Galatians 4:19). This will involve both knowing the teachings and ways of Jesus and being committed to doing the same as you see in Him.

### **John 15:1-8**

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Jesus does not just want His disciples to sit at His feet and learn His ways. Instead, Jesus's disciples must learn from Him for the purpose of glorifying God by producing much fruit in His service. However, it is not just about producing fruit in His service at any one point; but about producing a continual harvest of fruit (Luke 8:4-8, 11-15)! For, if you are truly connected to Jesus and have His life flowing through you, you cannot be a branch that fails to produce fruit or be a branch that consistently produces bad fruit (v. 2; Matthew 12:33-37; 1 John 3:8-10). The fruit Jesus's disciples will produce includes eliminating the works of the flesh and establishing the characteristics and disciplines God wants to produce in your life (e.g. Galatians 5:16-26). Then, it also includes putting your abilities, opportunities, resources, relationships, etc. to use in joining Jesus's mission of making disciples (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 12:3-8).

### **Conclusion**

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To be a true disciple of Jesus you must be committed to learning and following His teachings and ways, with the goal of becoming like Jesus and joining Him to be useful and fruitful in His mission. The nature of discipleship, therefore, is never complete while you live on earth. For, it is a lifelong process you must commit to so that you can become more knowledgeable of Jesus's teachings and ways, more like Jesus, and more useful and fruitful in His service each day!

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