

# THE WHY OF DISCIPLESHIP

Although it is common to hear people refer to believers in Jesus Christ as “Christians,” the term “disciples” has been largely forgotten. It is, however, used over 200 times in the New Testament compared to three times for the word “Christian.” Clearly, it is a critical concept God wants His people to embrace. Therefore, we need to consider what discipleship (the state/condition of being disciples) is all about. As we do, we must begin with *why* being a disciple of Jesus Christ is so critical. Without a clear understanding of the reason for being a disciple of Christ, the sacrifices and work involved in discipleship will never be fully embraced.

### **MATTHEW 11:28-30**

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Jesus invites you to come to Him, be yoked together with Him, and learn from Him. However, you will only choose to do this if you consider yourself wearied and burdened by your sins and desire the salvation, forgiveness, and eternal life He alone provides. For, you will only choose the path of being Jesus’s disciple when the pain of *not* being His disciple (e.g. burden of sin) is seen as being greater than the pain of *being* His disciple (e.g. sacrifice)! When you come to Him, you will be yoked together with Him in His purpose and mission. Compared to other teachers and the burden of sin, though, Jesus’s yoke is easy and light. Although this does *not* mean following Jesus will always be easy, He does not leave you alone in serving Him and He promises rest for your soul!

### **JOHN 1:29-42**

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Jesus was not the only One to have disciples in New Testament times (e.g. John the Baptist). Disciples spent time learning from and following a rabbi (teacher). John, however, demonstrated there was

Someone else who would be a far greater Teacher than he (vv. 29-34). This was Jesus, the Lamb of God, the Son of God, and the One God’s Spirit rested on! He was, after all, the Messiah! The Messiah was the One the Jews had eagerly anticipated, as He would rule over an everlasting kingdom (Isaiah 9:6-7), suffer for the sins of the people (Isaiah 53), and bring great blessings of favor from God (Isaiah 61:1-3). Like Andrew, you must consider who Jesus is and be excited to have found the Messiah, the great King, Deliverer, and Savior promised by God!

### **JOHN 6:26-27, 32-40, 48-58, 66-69**

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After Jesus had performed the miraculous feeding of the 5,000, the crowd followed Jesus so they would be continuously fed (like the Israelites received manna in the wilderness, Exodus 16). However, Jesus was the Bread of Life sent from Heaven that would result in eternal life for those who eat His flesh and drink His blood (a symbolic reference to sharing and partaking in Jesus). Just as the vitamins, nutrients, and minerals in food become part of you when you eat, the true believer in Jesus will have Jesus impact every aspect of his/her life (v. 56)! Although many will only desire to follow Jesus if it positively impacts them physically, those who fully commit to following Jesus will do so because they believe He has the words of eternal life and is the *only* One who can lead them to such (vv. 68-69)!

### **JOHN 10:11-18, 27-30**

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Although there are many presenting themselves as shepherds to guide and lead people today, none of these lead in the same way as Jesus. For, Jesus is the Good Shepherd in that He laid down His life for the sheep to give His followers the opportunity to live eternally! So, Jesus is the loving Shepherd who truly cares for the spiritual well-being of His sheep. When anyone considers why they should follow Jesus as opposed to others, then, His love and sacrifice sets Him apart. For, no one else has proven such love for you or gives you the opportunity to be saved from the consequences of

your sins (Romans 5:6-11). If you want to be part of Jesus's flock, though, you must recognize Him as your Shepherd and follow Him (be His disciple)!

### **JOHN 14:1-7**

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Jesus was about to be physically separated from those who had followed Him during His earthly ministry but they were not to be troubled. For, Jesus promised that His followers could one day come to the same place He was going since He was going to prepare a place for them! When questioned about the way to get there, Jesus responded that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life – and the only Way to the Father. So, while many claim to have the answers about life, Jesus is the only One who leads to eternal life with the Father in Heaven. Your decision to follow Jesus, therefore, must be made by considering where you are trying to go. If your aim is to know the truth, go to Heaven, and live pleasing to God, Jesus is the only Teacher who can lead you there! All others are blind teachers who will lead you to Hell (Matthew 15:13-14; Luke 6:39-40)!

### **MATTHEW 13:44-46**

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If you are going to decide to follow Jesus (the Messianic King), you must see what He offers in His kingdom as the greatest treasure available! Jesus wants you to follow Him and experience these things, but you must now decide whether you want the same things Jesus wants for you. If you do and see it as being the greatest treasure, you will give everything to follow Jesus! If not, you will not give your all to being His disciple (Luke 14:15-24).

### **CONCLUSION**

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Jesus is the only Teacher who can lead you to eternal life in Heaven, forgiveness of sins, and reconciliation with God. There is no other teacher or master who has the words and knows the way to eternal life with the Father in Heaven. Therefore, if the things Jesus promises are truly the most important things to you, you will give yourself to learn from Jesus and do whatever being His disciple requires, no matter how difficult it may be at times.

## **DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS**

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How often is the term “disciple” used in the New Testament compared to the word “Christian”?

Why is it critical to understand the reasons for being Jesus's disciple?

What is the pain involved in *not* being Jesus's disciple?

Why should recognizing Jesus as the Messiah encourage you to be His disciple?

Why should recognizing Jesus as the Bread of Life who has the words of eternal life encourage you to be His disciple?

Why should recognizing Jesus as the Good Shepherd encourage you to be His disciple?

Why should recognizing Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life encourage you to be His disciple?

Why is it critical to see the treasure Jesus offers in His kingdom as being the greatest treasure available in your life?

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