

Discipleship

Called to Discipleship by Jesus

Lesson #3 for January 19, 2008

Scriptures: Matthew 4:18-22; 5:46; 9:10,11; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11; 18:10,11; John 1:35-51.

1. This lesson focuses on how Jesus called His original disciples. Who did He call, and why? What were their responses? Why did they respond in those ways? Did they think they were being called to a religious role or a political one?
2. As we noted earlier, the first “disciples” came to Jesus to ask questions. He did not call them. (John 1:35-51) Did these first two “disciples”—John and Andrew—know anything about Jesus prior to that day? There are some who believe that John and James were cousins of Jesus. Did that make a difference in their responses? John the Baptist was also a cousin of Jesus. Ellen White suggests that John the Baptist had had no prior contact with Jesus before He appeared beside the Jordan. That was to prevent the accusation that there was collusion between them. This implies that John’s response to Jesus must have been divinely directed. Or was there something about Jesus that made Him stand out in the crowd? How do you understand Isaiah 53:2,3? John called Him “the Lamb of God.” What do you think that implied?
3. After spending the afternoon and evening with Jesus, Andrew found his brother, Peter, the next day and said, “We have found the Messiah.” What do you think led him to this conclusion? Was it John’s statement or something Jesus said? Or what he saw Jesus do?
4. The Jewish community had been waiting for hundreds of years for the Messiah to show up. Is it surprising that when two people believed they had found Him, they would immediately tell others? What do you think Andrew told Peter by way of evidence? Contrast Nathanael’s call to Phillip recorded in John 1:46,47.
5. Why do you choose to be a Christian? Why did you choose to become a church member? Is being a disciple the same as being a church member? Or a Christian? Is every Christian a disciple? Is every church member a disciple?
6. If someone approached you today at work and said, “I don’t know anything about Christianity. What can you tell me?” What would you say? Would you talk about Jesus? About your church? About Christian principles? Would you attempt to provide evidence beyond your own words?
7. Are you excited about Jesus? When Jesus decided it was necessary to leave His ministry in Judea and go to Galilee, He began to work in the towns and villages. Soon, He went to Nazareth where He was rejected. (Luke 4:16-30) He moved to Capernaum and probably took up residence in Peter’s house. For the remainder of His ministry in Galilee, He considered Capernaum His home. A short time later, Jesus was preaching on the edge of the lake and people were crowding around Him to hear His words. He asked to use Peter’s boat to push out into the water. (Luke 5:1-11) After speaking for some time, He instructed Peter to pull out deeper into the water and let down his fishing nets. Jesus was a carpenter and he was telling experienced fishermen how to fish! Peter was sure it was a waste of time. But, when the fishing nets came up so full they were breaking and the boat was sinking, Peter had to call for help. Obviously, that was a miracle. Did Jesus create those fish at that time? Did He somehow gather the fish together just for that occasion? Or did He just know where the fish were to be found? When they reached the shore, Jesus almost immediately called Peter, Andrew, and

then James and John to follow Him and leave their fish.

8. Try to imagine the thoughts that were going through the minds of those four disciples as they were being called to follow Jesus. Was it easier for them to leave their fishing business after making that huge catch than it would have been earlier in the day when they had caught nothing? Was that a demonstration by Jesus that He would provide for their daily needs? All four of these disciples had known Jesus for at least a year and a half. Some of them—and perhaps all of them—had spent some time with Him in Judea during His ministry there. What did they think of Jesus at the time when He called them?
9. This is not the first time in biblical history when people were given unusual calls. Compare Abraham (Genesis 12:1-4; Hebrews 11:8); Moses' call from God (Hebrews 11:24); and Elijah's call to Elisha (1 Kings 19:19-21).
10. How did Abraham get to know God? How did Moses get to know God? They had no Scriptures, they had no church, they had no pastors! Did God speak to them directly and personally on a regular basis? Elijah had some records on which to base his trust. Could we, in our day, have the kind of relationship with God that these giant men of faith had? Think how many advantages we have over them with respect to having the opportunity to know about God and to know God.
11. What does your relationship to God mean to you? Are you afraid of God? Or are you comfortable? Are you only comfortable at a distance? Are you happy that you know God? Are you excited about knowing God? Do you think it is possible to know God intimately in our day? (Genesis 4:4; Hosea 6:6; John 17:3)
12. Have we, as 21st century Seventh-day Adventists, really gotten to know God? Are there some important things we could learn from Abraham, Job, and Moses? What could we teach them?
13. How many things do you “enjoy” in your life that tend to separate you from God? Is there really anything in this world that is worth hanging on to at the risk of losing our relationship with God?
14. Think of all the stories you know about Christian martyrs. Did they know something about God that we do not? Would we truly be willing to die for our faith? What teachings, beliefs, or ideas associated with your church would you be willing to die for?
15. Try to imagine what kind of “picture” of God was worshiped by Abraham, Job, Moses, and the disciples whom Jesus called. Compare your own picture of God. Is it the same?
16. What does it mean to you that Jesus “died for you”? The disciples had no idea whatsoever that Jesus would be dead a couple years after He called them. In the beginning what were they looking forward to as followers of Jesus?
17. Think of all the promises that are found in the Bible. Are some of those promises very important to you? What is it that you hope God will do for you? Do you worship God because of what you hope He will do for you, or do you worship God because of the kind of Person He is? Are there people who actually exist in our world who worship God just because of who He is—because they appreciate His character and His story and they are excited about knowing Him?
18. When Jesus came back from the wilderness after His temptations and appeared once again at the Jordan where John was baptizing, He must have looked awful. Would you think John had made a mistake if He pointed to a haggard, skinny Person who looked like He had not had a meal for 40 days and said, “That is the Messiah”? Would your first question to Jesus have

been, “What in the world happened to you?” Did Jesus tell them about His time in the wilderness and about His temptations? If not, how did the information get in the Bible? If they chose to follow Him looking for some political position, what do you think this evidence would say to them? Is there any evidence that Jesus urged them to follow Him? Was He looking for disciples at that point in His ministry? Why? Or, why not? When those first two “disciples” approached Jesus, His response was, “What are you looking for?” And when they inquired further, He just said, “Come and see.” What is implied by those simple expressions?

19. Jesus began His process of collecting disciples by picking out hard-working, ordinary, but devout Jewish followers. They certainly did not have the public status of Pharisees or Sadducees, nor did they have the education of scribes. They were plain middle-class citizens. But then, Jesus called Matthew! Matthew was a traitor to Jewish society, a tax collector—he collected taxes for the Romans and for Herod—considered to be among the worst in society along with prostitutes and lepers. Why would Jesus invite a “moral outcast” to join Him as a disciple?
20. It was about that same time that a large group of women began to follow Jesus wherever He went. (Luke 8:1-3) Among them was Mary out of whom seven demons were cast and who had been known as a prostitute. Also in the group was Simon the Patriot (or Zealot) who belonged to a group whose avowed goal was to eliminate all Romans and Roman sympathizers from the land of Palestine! How much time did Jesus have to spend stopping their fights?
21. But Jesus went way beyond calling social outcasts to be His disciples. He took His entire group of disciples with Him and He ate with such people! If Jesus were alive today, would He eat meals on skid row? Would He walk the streets at night, talking to the “ladies of the night”? If you saw Him doing that, how would you feel? What would you think?
22. There is much evidence that up until after the resurrection, the disciples did not understand the mission of Jesus. Can we really be disciples if we do not even understand what our Rabbi/Teacher/Master is trying to accomplish? Read Mark 10:35-40; Luke 18:34; John 18:10; and Acts 1:6. How could it be possible that the greatest Teacher this world has ever known could live with, eat with, sleep with, talk with, walk with, discuss with, preach with, and individually counsel a small group of people for at least two years and still have them not understand what His mission was about?
23. How many of us today really have any idea about how God is going to wrap up His mission on this earth? Could we be as ignorant and ill-informed as were the original disciples of Jesus?
24. What is it that keeps us from growing closer to Jesus? Is our faith weak? What should we do each week to get to know God better? How many things do we do each week that obscure our relationship with God? Do we need to change our priorities?

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