

Discipleship
Preparation for Discipleship

Lesson #7 for February 16, 2008

Scriptures: Matthew 5-7; 10:1; 10:5-11:1; Mark 3:1-19; Luke 6:12-16.

1. This lesson discusses the preparation for becoming a “true disciple.” We will discuss how Jesus called His original disciples and how He goes about calling disciples today. What methods are best for bringing people into the church today? Challenging them to become Christians? Inviting them to attend our church? Inviting them to attend our Sabbath School class?
2. Christianity was never intended to be a spectator sport! What would happen to us if we had a true “New Testament Pentecostal-type” experience in our church or in our Sabbath School class?
3. What would have happened if Jesus had given a full job description with a full disclosure when He called His first disciples? What might He have said?
 - a. You must learn a whole new way of thinking about almost everything,
 - b. You must give up your national prejudice and your “superiority complex” toward foreigners, Gentiles, and Samaritans.
 - c. You will learn by following my example. You will be expected to teach others by your example.
 - d. You will learn to practice the “presence of God” on a day-by-day basis.
 - e. You will be on the Devil’s most-wanted list.
 - f. You will be privileged to live with Jesus for a period of time; but you will also have to associate with prostitutes, tax collectors, former-lepers, formerly-demon-possessed individuals, even people formerly-dead.
 - g. You will travel the world. I will give you the ability to speak any language fluently.
 - h. You will be beaten, shipwrecked, imprisoned, tortured, and most of you will be martyred.
 - i. You will associate with the most loving, caring people in the world; but you will be hated and hunted down by the authorities of the world.
 - j. Multitudes will love you, but larger groups will hate you.
 - k. People will either bless you or curse you.
 - l. You will be leaving your family and your home more or less permanently.
 - m. There will be no telephones, no public transportation, no mail of any kind to let them know how you are doing.
 - n. You will often have to go without food or a nice place to sleep.
 - o. You will be thronged by people wanting even to touch your garments because you will be healers, exorcists, even life-givers.
 - p. You will spend the rest of your life loving, caring for, and serving others.

- q. You will be constantly in training for teaching.
 - r. You will not receive a salary.
 - s. You will be living in other peoples homes for most of the rest of your life.
 - t. You will be expected to love everyone—even your enemies. No pretending!
 - u. Every human being will be a “brother” or “sister” to you.
 - v. You will be expected to teach, heal, and preach constantly—morning, afternoon, and evening.
 - w. Everything you do will be scrutinized by friends and enemies day and night.
4. At the end of their lives, did any of the disciples except Judas regret being called by Jesus?
 5. Do you think the “Sermon on the Mount” recorded in Matthew 5-7 was originally given as one single sermon? If so, how much of the sermon do we actually have recorded? Does it fit the picture you have of Jesus as a teacher to suddenly launch into a sermon in which, one after another, He attacks or contradicts many of the most cherished religious traditions of the Jews of His time? Do you think His hearers were amused, annoyed, disturbed, shocked, or angry? Did Jesus on that occasion overlook the fact that one cannot antagonize and persuade at the same time? Or did Jesus have some way of saying those things in a way that would not be upsetting? How many of Jesus’ teachings in the Sermon on the Mount were actually “new” (not taught in the Old Testament)?
 6. Does this sermon seem to present an impossible standard? Do you know of anyone who consistently lives up to all of the principles set forth in this “sermon”? Or is this just supposed to be an “ideal” that no one is really expected to reach?
 7. How do you interpret the teachings of this sermon in your personal life? How do you put those teachings into practice? If you “love” your enemies, are they still your enemies? (Matthew 5:43-48) When people watch you in your daily living, do they see the good things you do and praise God? (Matthew 5:16) Do you consistently practice the “golden rule”? (Matthew 7:12) Jesus seemed to imply that this “golden rule” is the teaching of the Old Testament. Where do you find it in the Old Testament?
 8. While it is true that Jesus may have given much of this material on a single occasion, it is also true that the Greek of this passage makes it very clear that this is a summary of the consistent, repeated teachings of Jesus which He gave every day. No doubt, Jesus repeatedly illustrated every one of those points with stories and parables.
 9. Those of us who adhere to the broader, larger, “great controversy” perspective of the plan of salvation as we see it presented in Scriptures and the writings of Ellen White are only a small group of people by the world’s standards. What would we do if Jesus walked into our Sabbath School class and said, “I’m looking for a group of 21st-century disciples! Are you ready to give up everything and follow Me?” What attracts you to that view?
 10. Historically, our church has been unusually successful at winning new converts. But, we have not done nearly as well at keeping them in the church. Why do you think that is?
 11. Some of you have left the church for a period of time. Why?
 12. In Jesus’s original plan, every person who joined the church was trained to serve as a disciple and to bring others into the church. Why are we failing at that plan today?

13. Look at the church experience as you have known it in your life. Why do you think people choose to join your church? Why do some people soon leave? What programs do we have in place to “disciple” new members? Are new members truly treated as “brothers” and “sisters”? Do you personally adopt them into your family?
14. How good are we at explaining what we believe? Could you clearly and distinctly explain the major points of the “Larger View” to a friend?
15. Each one of us is given different talents. Have you clearly identified your own talents? Have you thought about how they could be used for promoting God’s cause? Or are you embarrassed to speak about your Christianity? How often have you spoken about the second coming to friends or neighbors?
16. “Everyone who wants to live a godly life in union with Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” (2 Timothy 3:12, *GNB*) Is that still true? If we are doing our job correctly and successfully, will we suffer persecution? Do we expect to be opposed even by the members of our own families. (Matthew 10:34-39; Luke 12:51-53; 14:26,27)
17. If we are committed to doing all of these things, we will become very valuable to God. We will be blessed in ways that we cannot imagine. We will have experiences that we will want to tell others about. God may send us to groups and places that are strange to us. In order to work successfully, ideally, we should do this work in association with at least one other Christian who can encourage us and help us.
18. Remember that what we are offering people is salvation—the “ultimate healing.” And while many aspects of the job may seem intimidating and scary, the retirement package is “out of this world.”
19. Do you think we can make the “disciple experience” real in our day? We may not be able to literally walk with Jesus in Palestine, but we have our Bibles and we can pray. What is holding us back? Are our barriers real or just imaginary?
20. If we were truly His disciples today, would Jesus “walk with us,” bless us, and care for us as He did for His 1st-century disciples?

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