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# Are You A Disciple?

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"Go... make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew 28:19).

"The disciples were first called Christians in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

The word "disciple" appears in some form 255 times in the KJV New Testament. What does the term mean? Here are some definitions: (1) Vine's - "lit. a learner... one who follows one's teaching... A 'disciple' was not only a pupil, but an adherent; hence they are spoken of as imitators of their teacher." (2) Thayer - "a learner, pupil... one who follows one's teaching." (3) B-A-G - "Pupil, apprentice... adherent." (4) Theological Dictionary of the New Testament - Commenting on the words usage in the Greek world said, "It may thus be used in various ways, e.g., for the apprentice to a weaver, a student physician, or the disciple of a philosophical school." The word could be used of a student or learner. It could also be used of one who not only learns, but also practices what he has been taught - that is, a true follower.

What type of disciple does Jesus demand? Is learning what He teaches enough? Or, does He require more? Let us notice that His disciples are to . . .

## **1. Favor Him**

Jesus proclaimed, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26). The word "hate" is sometimes used in the Bible as a hyperbole of comparison (e.g. Genesis 29:30-31). Vine's says that the word is sometimes used of "relative preference of one thing over another." This is how the word is being used here. This is clear from the parallel passage - "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (Matthew 10:37).

He must be first in our lives. While, it is true that we are to love our families (Ephesians 5:25; Titus 2:3-4), and to be without love of family is sin [Romans 1:31-32 (astorgos, without family love); 2 Timothy 3:1-3 (astorgos, without family love)]- true disciples love Him even more.

This has many implications. If I love Him more than others, then I will not compromise His will for anyone. If I love Him more than others, then I will not forsake the assembly of the church to spend time with family. If I love Him more than others, then I will not fellowship sin even if it is in my family.

## **2. Follow Him**

Jesus declared, "Whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:27). Jesus earlier said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).

Following Him means cross-bearing. James Burton Coffman has written, "Cross-bearing is widely misunderstood. It is not old age, poverty, taxes, illness, or bad weather, or any other discomfiture of life that comes unavoidably into the lives of men. It is the acceptance, for the sake of the will of God, of some burden or burdens, otherwise avoidable, but which are undertaken out of a pure

desire to fulfill the Master's purpose" (Commentary on Matthew 16:24). Again, he has written, "Jesus plainly meant that to be His disciple one who have to hate his own life to the extent of willingness to accept crucifixion at the hands of Romans for the sake of fidelity to Christ" (Commentary on Luke 14:27). Christ must be followed and imitated even if it means suffering, even if it means death.

Following Him means denying self and living for Him. Paul admonished, "Those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again" (2 Corinthians 5:15). He said of himself, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Jesus had the attitude before the Father - "not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). Jesus' true disciples have this same attitude toward Him.

### **3. Forsake all for Him**

Jesus stated, "Whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33).

There must be nothing that we would not be willing to give up, if needed, to follow Him. "All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give; I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live. I surrender all, I surrender all, all to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all." (Song: All to Jesus I Surrender by Judson W. Van DeVenter). Just think, this means time, money, things. If Jesus is not Lord of all in our lives, then He is not Lord at all in our lives.

I once heard a young man jokingly say that the best reason not to be a Jew was bacon. However, let me say that if my attitude is what it should be, I should be ready to give up anything if such is required to follow the Master's daily will, including bacon. Don't worry, He has not banned bacon (1 Timothy 4:1-5). Is there anything which you would not give up, if required, to serve Him? A true disciple is not only baptized, but is also taught, "to observe all things... commanded" by the Master (Matthew 28:19-20).