

May 5, 2024

## Discipleship Is Fundamental

by Ken Weliever

There's an old story of a fellow walking through a cemetery of by gone days reading the epitaphs. Many were familiar sayings. "Rest in peace." "A friend to all." "Loving Mother." "Gone but not Forgotten."

Then he spotted a most unusual epitaph.  
Remember me as you pass by,  
As you are now, so once was I,  
As I am now, so you must be,  
Prepare for death and follow me.

As he contemplated the message, he took a notebook from his pocket, penned these words and left them on the tombstone.

"To follow you  
I'll not consent,  
Until I know  
Which way you went."

Everyone is following someone or something. A philosophy. A creed. An ideal. A person. A family tradition. Or maybe just their own personal feelings and intuition.

Christian discipleship in its most fundamental form is faithfully following Jesus. When Jesus called His first disciples, Peter and Andrew, He simply said, "Follow Me" (Matt. 4:19). Later Jesus would issue this challenge, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Lk. 9:23).

### Discipleship Defined

By definition a disciple is "one who is a pupil or learner, the adherent of the doctrines of another." Bill Hull wrote that discipleship is "the intentional training of

disciples, with accountability, on the basis of loving relationships." In his book the Antioch Effect, Ken Hemphill reminds us that "Discipleship is an ongoing process, not quick fix."

The word "disciple" is the most often used word in the Bible to describe New Testament Believers. It's found over 270 times in the New Testament. 30 times in the books of Acts. Contrast this with the almost exclusive name "Christian," used only 3 times in the Bible.

In Matthew's account of the Great Commission Jesus instructed, "Go, and make disciples of all nations." So, we read in Acts 14:20-21 that Paul and Barnabas went into the city of Derbe and "preached the gospel to that city." The result was that they "made many disciples."

### Discipleship Demonstrated

We learn a lot about discipleship just by reading about the first disciples in Jerusalem in Acts 2:42-47. Discipleship...

- Requires attachment of the body of Christ.
- Involves learning.
- Engages in Christian fellowship.
- Issues itself in worship.
- Earns the respect of the community.
- Calls for an evangelistic outreach to the lost.

Discipleship cannot be fully exercised alone. It's accomplished the community of fellow Christians, which the Bible calls the

## Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.

## Important Dates

**Ladies' Class** - Tuesday, May 14 at 10 a.m.

*If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.*

local church. We need each other. Preachers, pastors, Bible teachers and all Christians contribute to the discipling process.

### Discipleship's Task

Simply put, discipleship is accomplished through spiritual edification. Literally this means "to build up." It was commanded of the church (Eph. 4:11-16). And it is the duty of individual Christians. "Edify one another" (1 Thess. 5:11). We are built up through the Word (Ax. 20:32).

Preaching, teaching, Bible classes, special seminars, small group studies, targeted weekend topics for men, women, and young people all contribute to edifying disciples. However, you must involve yourself in these activities to experience the benefit. No matter how many functions a church may sponsor, they won't help, if you fail to participate.

### Discipleship's Goal

Being a disciple is not just a name or title to be worn, but the description of the kind of person we are to be. In bulleted form for your consideration are 6 goals of discipleship.

Obedience (Matt. 28:20)

Abiding in the Word (Jn. 8:31).

Love for One Another (Jn. 13:34-35).

Bearing Fruit (Jn. 15:8).

Becoming Like Christ (Lk. 6:40; 1 Pet. 2:21).

Spiritual Maturity (Col. 1:28).

In short, disciples seek to emulate the one they follow—Jesus Christ. Disciples imbibe the character of Christ. As one writer warned, "It's possible to be straight in creed, but crooked in character." Bill Donahue put this way, "Turning irreligious people into fully devoted followers of Christ has always been at the heart of God and His church." Then he added, "Disciples are people who act like Christ, who are willing to train to be like Him..."

Always remember that discipleship is a process. Not an event. It's a life time endeavor.

So, who are you following? And where

are you going?

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## Prayer Requests

**Jack Wilson** is still struggling with pain and limited mobility.

**Jerry Richardson's** had a very good report this week. The tumor is almost completely gone & no more suspicious things in his scan. His blood work was excellent

**Dinah Williams** continues to have mobility issues.

**Don Simmons** is at home and still on constant oxygen.

**Debbie McMurray** has received good test results but is still under treatment.

**Terry Behrns** is recovering at his sister's home

**Margaret Vanaman** is being treated for melanoma.

**Lisa Trammel** is home from the hospital and trying to regain some strength.

*If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.*

**"praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,"**  
**(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)**

The Oaks West church of Christ is a group of individual Christians who have been added to the Lord's body through baptism (Acts 2:38, 47; Gal 3:26, 27), and have joined themselves together (Acts 2:42ff) in an effort to do the Lord's will.

We are not a part of any larger organization - we do not follow any man-made creeds and we do not answer to anyone other than the Lord.

Our standard of faith and practice is the Word of God. We believe in the God of revelation (Eph 3:1-7; 2 Tim 3:16-17) and follow his instructions in an effort to have an ongoing relationship with him (1 John 4:7-11; 5:3).

Our times of study and worship are open to all, and our members are happy to meet with interested individuals or families for study.

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