

Becoming a Disciple of Jesus

A Biblical Mandate

by Don Anderson



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DISCIPLE OF JESUS
A BIBLICAL MANDATE

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DON ANDERSON

Dedicated to my wife, Kathey.
Her encouragement and assistance
have made this book a reality.

CONTENTS

Introduction – A note from the author	ix
<u>Lessons</u>	
1 Deity of Jesus*	1
2 The Bible – <i>rw</i>	5
3 Religion and Righteousness – <i>rw</i>	11
4 Salvation and Witnessing	15
5 Water Baptism	21
6 Discipleship	25
7 Predestination	31
8 Justification	35
9 Sanctification	39
10 Glorification	43
11 Anger*	47
12 Honoring Your Parents*	55
13 Authority*	59
14 Money and Tithing	63
15 God’s Viewpoint on Sex*	69
16 When Life Seems Unfair*	75
17 Be Humble*	83
18 Be Obedient*	87
19 Repentance	91
20 Strongholds	97
21 Marriage – <i>rw</i>	101
22 Parenting – <i>rw</i>	107
23 Who We Are in Christ	113
24 Judgement Day	119

25	Abiding in Jesus	125
26	Walking in the Spirit	131
27	Worship God	135
28	Peace of God	143
29	Armor of God	149
30	Eternal Security	159
31	Work – <i>rw</i>	163
32	Hell	167
33	Trials	173
34	Be Holy	177

*The material discussed in these eight lessons can help those seeking freedom from addictions and bondages.

Lessons followed by *rw* are written by Russ Warren.

A word from Chaplain Don. . .

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
“teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, *even* to the end of the age.” Amen.

Matthew 28:19-20

One summer day in 1983, God called me from farming with my Dad and brother in Iowa. While pulling weeds in a field, I sensed the Lord directing me to leave the farm. He didn't speak audibly, but I knew it was a message from Him to me. He didn't tell me where he wanted me to go or what I was to do. I prayed and kept praying about the matter because all I knew was farming. After some time, He began leading me into prison ministry. My life changed from planting corn and soy bean seeds to sowing the transforming seeds of God's word into the lives of men in jails and prisons. Farming was rewarding and a great means of providing for my family. Laboring in the harvest fields of God's Kingdom has proven of greater joy than anything else I can imagine.

My approach in ministry is: *Scratching where it itches*. Several facets are involved in maturing as a Christian. Jesus spoke of different types of soil and how they affect the growth of seeds sown in them (Matthew 13:8, 23). Likewise, what is sown into a young believer affects his spiritual progress. Discipleship is vital in forming a strong relationship with the Lord. My goal is teaching biblical truths that help believers find freedom from strongholds (habitual sin). This also

encompasses helping converts understand how to become established in the Lord. In the verses above, Jesus' charge to his disciples is, 1) make disciples everywhere, and, 2) teach them to observe all His commandments. Every believer is part of God's plan to capture hearts and souls for Him.

Becoming a Disciple of Jesus is a compilation of lessons I teach in prison ministry. Over the years, I developed these lessons covering God's way for growing strong Christians. I've observed when teaching, that lessons on areas where many men struggle, seem to activate the process for gaining victory. I consider these **core lessons**, vital for overcoming issues and temptations that cause many to stumble. They are identified by an asterisk (*) in the contents page. The questions at the end of each lesson are for enriching personal study or encouraging discussions in small groups.

Several lessons are written by my friend and co-worker in prison ministry, Russ Warren. Russ facilitates groups for men that focus on life skills and the practical aspects of implementing faith in daily life.

My prayer is that everyone who studies the lessons in this book will become a disciple of Jesus, fulfilling the mandate that He gave before returning to heaven. God bless you in your pursuit of knowing and living for Christ and in helping others know and live for Him, also.

Don Anderson

DEITY OF JESUS

Lesson 1

The deity of Jesus is the cornerstone of the Gospel. Deity of Jesus could also be stated that Jesus is God in the flesh: He was totally God and totally man. This is the one issue you cannot be wrong on. If you are wrong on some doctrines it may hurt you, but it will not keep you from going to heaven. If you are wrong on this issue, you have missed everything. Romans 10:9 clearly tells us we have to confess Jesus is Lord to be saved. In the Greek, *kurios* is used for Lord. It means supreme in authority. If you have someone over you that means you are not supreme in authority. Only God can make that claim. In other words, we must believe Jesus is God in the flesh!

The big lie in the world today is this: All religions are the same and we all worship the same God. That simply is not true. Jesus declared, "I am the way," not a way (John 14:6). Every religion believes in Jesus but there are different beliefs about His identity. Some religions claim He was merely a prophet. If one group says He is just a prophet and the other group says He is God in the flesh, then one has to be wrong. They cannot both be right. Jesus' identity is the key difference.

Many people refer to Jesus as the Son of God. This statement is biblically correct. Unfortunately, many religions acknowledge Jesus is the Son of God, but they do not mean the same thing. When you question them further, you will find that they believe Jesus was a created being of some sort (Mormonism, Jehovah Witness, and Christian

Science). In today's spiritual climate, it is incomplete to say Jesus is the Son of God. *To clearly convey what the Bible says about Jesus, we must believe He is God in the flesh.*

The Old Testament taught the deity of Jesus. Isaiah 9:6-7 refers to Him as Mighty God! In Isaiah 7:14 He was to be called Immanuel, which means God with us (Matthew 1:23). Micah 5:2 refers to the coming ruler (Jesus) and states, "Whose goings forth are from of old from everlasting." In Psalm 45 David refers to the King (Jesus) in verse 1. In verses 6-7 he said, "Your throne O God is forever and ever." Hebrews 1:8-9 quotes this passage and plainly tells us that it is speaking of the Son! Psalm 98 talks about the Lord. Verse 9 says that He is coming to judge the earth (Matthew 25:31-41). This is a clear reference to Jesus.

In the Gospels, Jesus is referred to as Lord (supreme in authority) 108 times. In John 8:58 He referred to Himself as I AM, the same term that God used about Himself when He talked to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). Jesus referred to Himself as the Messiah in John 4:25-26, which fulfills all the Old Testament prophets that said He would be God. In Acts 20:28 we are told that God purchased the church with His own blood. The only way that could be true is if Jesus was God.

In the Gospels, several incidents reaffirm His deity. In Mark 2:5-7 He forgave sins, in Matthew 12:25 and Luke 6:8 He knew people's thoughts. He exhibited power over nature in Luke 8:24 and Matthew 14:25. Matthew 14:15-20 and Matthew 15:33-37 state Jesus created food. These are powers, abilities, and authority belonging only to God.

In Exodus 34:14 we are commanded to “worship no other god.” Jesus received and approved of others worshipping Him (Matthew 14:33 and John 9:38).

In John 2:18-22 Jesus prophesied that He would raise Himself from the dead. This is the most astonishing prophecy of all time!

In the entire New Testament, many scriptures refer to Jesus as being God. Verses stating this are 2 Peter 1:1, Hebrews 1:8-9, Titus 2:13, Colossians 2:9, Colossians 1:15-16. Some more are 1 Timothy 3:16, Revelation 1:8, and Philippians 2:10-11. In the New Testament, Jesus is referred to as Lord (supreme in authority) over 700 times

In many places, the Bible refers to Jesus as being the Son of God. Some think this means He is less than the Father. Son of God, God the Son, both mean the same thing! Jesus and the Father are equal (John 5:18, John 10:30). In John 14:28 Jesus said “...My Father is greater than I.” Some use this verse to teach that Jesus was not God. We must remember He was totally God and totally man. In His humanity, His Father was greater. You cannot take it any further than that. The Bible does not contradict itself. We have discussed this topic to great lengths to show the deity of Jesus.

In 1 John 2:22-23 we read, “Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ.” We pointed out that Christ and Messiah are synonymous, and that the Messiah was going to be God. If we deny that, we are a liar. If we are ashamed of Him, He will be ashamed of us (Mark 8:38).

1. How important is knowing Jesus’ true identity?

John 14:6, 1 John 2:22-23

2. Is Jesus less than God?
3. Does the Old Testament talk about Jesus?
4. How did Jesus show His deity in His earthly ministry?
5. If someone says they believe in Jesus, does that always mean they are saved? Romans 10:9

THE BIBLE

Lesson 2

One of the more controversial subjects that should be discussed in any Believer's Guidebook is the question of the authenticity or validity of the Bible. Is it really God's inspired word, as claimed by many Christians, or not? Many people today do not look upon the Bible as God's word. It is popular to criticize the Bible and dispute its authenticity. Some of the more popular criticisms are:

1. The Bible contains a lot of "contradictions"
2. The Bible is a group of writings created by men
3. The Bible is no longer relevant in today's culture
4. The Bible has too many translations and has lost any hope of being accurate
5. The Bible is just a collection of stories and myths

Followers of Jesus Christ believe the Bible is the inspired word of God, and is certainly inerrant in the original texts. The Bible was not written as a single book. Rather, it was written over some 1,500 years by a number of authors. Though today it is one Book, it is actually a collection of 66 books and letters.

The Bible is called God's word even though God did not physically write it Himself. Instead, God worked through everyday people, inspired by Him, to record what Christians accept as the Bible. The Old Testament is primarily a record of God's dealings with His chosen people, the Hebrews or Jews. The New Testament continues with a record of the first

century accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus and His early disciples. It documents the struggles faced by new Christians in a hostile culture. Interestingly, there was no printed Bible as we know it today until over 300 years after Jesus Christ walked on this earth. This means that early believers did not become followers of Jesus Christ because of what they read in the Bible. Instead, the Bible came about when inspired men wrote down their experiences with Jesus and His followers.

Three tests that are used to authenticate ancient manuscripts are:

1. The amount of time that exists between when the original document was written and when the copy was written (originals did not last long because the material they were written on easily deteriorated over time)
2. The number of copies that exist
3. Agreement between all the copies that exist

Many of the ancient documents for which we currently have copies, often have a large gap of time, sometimes several 100 years, between when the original was written and when the copy was written. Yet, many experts often attest to the accuracy of the document while struggling with the accuracy of the Bible. The shortest gap for Biblical documents is 25 years for some New Testament copies. This means that these copies were most probably written by someone that was closely associated with Jesus or His disciples. Therefore, it is highly likely that these copies would be accurate.

In 1947 a young boy threw a stone into a cave near the Dead Sea and heard what he thought sounded like a clay jar breaking. He climbed up to the cave and discovered numerous clay jars filled with ancient documents. Upon investigation by authorities, it was discovered that these documents, as well as others discovered in adjacent caves, contained thousands of copies of Biblical passages and fragments of passages of both the Old and New Testament. Upon examination, it was discovered that these copies of portions of Scripture were extremely accurate and were over 98% in agreement with copies previously discovered. The minor disagreements were found in form and in punctuation, but there were no disagreements in teachings or in doctrine. Because the volume of copies was so great, it gave a big boost to the authenticity of the Bible as we know it today. Notoriously, scribes that were responsible for making copies of Scripture were meticulous in their efforts and this was verified by the high degree of accuracy in all the copies that were found.

One of the interesting things about this authenticity process is the somewhat “double standard” that is applied when it comes to verifying Biblical documents and documents written by ancient historians or philosophers. Typically, people do not pick up one of these later documents and say, “I doubt that the author really said this.” Yet with Scripture, skeptics and cynics regularly challenge the veracity of the Bible, based on its age, authorship or content. These are often the same individuals that claim there are many contradictions in the Bible. When they are confronted, frequently they have great difficulty identifying any specific passages.

Some facts that bolster the credibility of the Bible are the multitude of historical references and archeological statements found in the Bible. Time and again, the Bible proves to be accurate and in total agreement with modern-day historians and archeologists. Rulers governed when the Bible said they did. Events and places have been discovered to have been reported accurately in the Bible. Another consistency is the message of the Bible – it has never changed! There are numerous prophecies recorded in the Bible, many that were spoken hundreds of years before they were to occur, and yet they happened just as the Bible prophesied. A significant number of these prophecies relate to the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ. They have been proven to be extremely accurate.

The Bible tells us in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be equipped for every good work.” This certainly makes it very clear where the Bible came from (inspired by God) and what it is to be used for as stated directly above. While this clearly speaks to the authenticity and validity of the Bible, ultimately the reason we believe that all Scriptures are inspired by God is that the Holy Spirit dwells within us. He provides us with this assurance and conviction as we prayerfully read, study, meditate on and memorize the truths we find in the Bible, which is God’s guide for our lives.

1. Jesus quoted the Old Testament when speaking to followers. Did this validate the Bible as God's word?
2. Which of the reasons above had the greatest influence on your acceptance of the Bible as God's word?
3. What are your thoughts about the Bible's authorship and accuracy?
4. If someone asked you why you believe in the Bible, how would you reply?

NOTES

RELIGION AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

Chapter 3

In almost every culture known to man, past or present, there exists some form of religion. It appears that God has created us with an “empty place” in our lives that can only be adequately filled by a relationship with Him. Mankind needs someone or something to look to for an explanation of why we are here and how life works. Of course, the one true God has made Himself known to man in several ways. In Romans 1:18-25 the Bible tells us that God has been “clearly seen” in His creation and that “we are without excuse.” This passage goes on to say that mankind has not honored God and that we have exchanged the truth about God for a lie. Additionally, we have served creatures and idols rather than our Creator, the one true God. Also, the Bible is filled with God’s revelation of Himself. Jesus told His disciples that if anyone had seen Him (Jesus), they had actually seen God.

Basically, there are but two kinds of religion. 1) The religion of human achievement, referred to as a “Do” religion and 2) the religion of divine accomplishment often referred to as a “Done” religion. There are many variations of the first kind of religion, which includes every religion other than biblical Christianity. Within the religions of human achievement there are two basic approaches: *Head* religion, which trusts in creeds and religious knowledge, and *hand* religion, which trusts in good works. The only true religion, however, is heart religion, which is based on God’s implanted purity or righteousness. By faith in what God has done through His Son, Jesus Christ, “we have redemption

through His blood and the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 1:7). When God imputes His righteousness to us, He imputes His purity to us as well.

As we look at Scripture, we discover six types of purity, or righteousness. The first type is called *primal* purity. It is the kind of purity that exists only in God. The second type is called *created* purity which existed in God’s original creation before the fall of man and some angels.

The third type of purity is called *positional* purity. This is the type of purity that is given to each believer the moment he trusts in Jesus Christ as his Savior. When we trust in Him, God imputes to us Christ’s purity – Christ’s own righteousness. From that day forward, God sees the believer just as He sees His Son, perfectly righteous and without sin.

The fourth type of purity is called *actual* purity. This purity is manifested in the “new nature” of the believer – the “new creation” Paul speaks of in 2 Corinthians 5:17. The Bible tells us that when a believer sins, it is not caused by the pure new self. Sin is from the old sinful flesh, with which man continues to do battle until he returns home to be with the Lord.

The fifth type of purity, or righteousness, is *practical* purity. This is the most challenging type for believers because it requires our supreme effort. Paul tells us in Philippians 2:12 that we are to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling.” Though this type of purity also comes from God, it requires our participation in a way that other types of purity do not. This is why in 2 Corinthians 7:1, Paul also tells us, “Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit,

perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” Paul is telling believers that this is something we must continually be involved in with the Holy Spirit. This means recognizing our sin and handling it through confession and repentance. 1 Peter 1:14-16, reminds us of this truth, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves. . . in all your behavior, for it is written, ‘You shall be holy for I am holy.’”

We are not saved just for future heavenly purity, but also for present-day earthly purity. At best, it will be gold mixed with iron and clay; a white robe with some interwoven black threads. God wants us to be as pure as we can be. If purity does not depict our living, we either do not belong to Jesus or we are living in sin. We will often face temptations, but God has promised in 1 Corinthians 10:13 to, “provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.” It is the believer’s responsibility to pursue that way of escape. For believers there will be a day of *ultimate* purity. This is the refined, perfected purity God’s redeemed people will experience when they are glorified. All sins will be removed forever; we will be like Him and will see Him just as He is!

1. Why do you think almost every culture known to man has had some kind of god?
2. What does it mean to say that all religions could be classified as either “Do” or “Done” religions?

3. What are the two ways “Do” religions try to find salvation or righteousness?
4. Why is the Bible’s plan for salvation unique?
5. What is the believer's part in achieving, or living out, *practical* purity?