

## **Introduction**

The first three studies are about our response to God and the next nine are about God's response to us. We need to lay a good foundation for God to build on, so to do this we need to talk about being a disciple vs being a convert, about our sinful nature and repentance. The foundation is the hardest to build and the most important for any building to stand.

I pray as you go through this study on what a disciple is, that the Father will show Himself to you and that your desire to know the Father more, will increase.

## **What is a Disciple?**

The Greek word for disciple is 'mathetes' which means one who learns instruction from another. The disciple not only hears the words of his Master, but also makes a commitment to obey his/her Master. Every Christian is called to be a disciple. This means that he follows Jesus. The disciple makes His words, His call and commission, the priority in his life no matter what it costs.

## **What do we need to do?**

### **We need to Obey the Word of God**

A disciple lives in and through the words of Jesus.

Jesus wants us to hear His Word, obey His Word and live by His Word

( John 8:31)

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine".

The Christian life is not an easy way out; it involves showing our love for Jesus by obeying Him, regardless of the cost.

A disciple puts into practice what is revealed to him in the Word.

Obedience to God's word is the foundation to discipleship. If we don't live by His Word, we will be influenced too easily by self - making choices by our feelings and not by the Word of God.

Spiritual obedience to God's word is out worked by our love for God

John 14:15

"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments".

1 John 5:3

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome."

Our hearts are the rich, fertile soil where God's Word grows and we grow strong.  
(James 1:21-22 ; Mark 4 : 1-20 ) .

Isaiah 55:10-11

[10]"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;

[11]So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

## **Our responsibility is to open our hearts and obey Him**

Luke 1:37-38

[37]For nothing will be impossible with God."

[38]And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her

Acts 5:32

[32]And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him."

The founder of the World Evangelisation Crusade said  
' If Jesus Christ is truly God and He gave His life for me, then my sacrifice for Him can never be too great. '

Jesus is completely committed to us and He wants the same commitment in return. He wants us to trust Him in every step as He takes our lives and moulds them in accordance with His will Matthew 16:24 , 25 ; John 10 : 1-18

Matthew 16:23-24

[23]But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on God's interests, but man's."

[24]Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.

[25]For whoever wants to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.

## **We need a fruit - bearing relationship with Jesus**

Waylon Moore writes ,

“When we are one with Christ His life flows through us. The Jesus in us then begins to show to others so they can be saved . When a tree is so full of sap that it can no longer hold it, the result is fruit ! When a Christian is full of Christ, Fruit begins to show and others see Christ in us.”

Without this sort of fruit - bearing in our lives , the Kingdom of God will not be expanded and the Body of Christ will not grow .

## **Unconditional love for others**

A disciple is one who has chosen to give himself to others in unconditional love.

Matthew 22:37-40

[37]And He said to him, " 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

[38]This is the great and foremost commandment.

[39]The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

John 13:33-35

[33]"Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'.

[34]A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

[35]By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

This love is the kind of love which God has demonstrated towards us through the sending of His Son. It is selfless love that does not look for return to stimulate its action . The Greek word used in the New Testament for this kind of love is agape: a love for God and others are more important to us than our own selfish desires

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

[4]"Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

[5]does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

[6]does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;  
[7]bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things”.

## **Fulfilling the Great Commission**

The goal of a disciple must not be to make converts to Christ, but to make other disciples

( Matthew 28 : 18-20 : Mark 16:15 ) .

Matthew 28 : 18-20

“And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Mark 16:15

“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.”

Converts may change their minds , but disciples change their whole lives and follow their Master .

Jn 20:21

So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you; just as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”

Sent out in God's authority, a disciple lives and acts - not on his own authority but in Christ, who has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matthew 10 : 1-8 ; Matthew 28:18 ; Acts 3:12 , 16 ) .

## **A disciple knows his God**

Disciples know God intimately just as Jesus knew His Father

( John 10 : 14-15 )

Knowing God the Father in this way is fundamental to the life of a disciple .

Above everything, God's desire for His disciples is that they know Him personally and love Him.

Hosea 6 : 6

“For I desire loyalty rather than sacrifice, And the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.”

God reveals Himself in the Bible as a personal God . God desires a relationship with man - a love relationship . He created man for this very purpose

Isaiah 43 : 7

“Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, whom I have formed, even whom I have made.”

Ephesians 1 : 5

“He predestined us to adoption as sons and daughters through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.”

In the Old Testament the verb ‘Yada’ - ‘to know’ is used . Part of the meaning of Yada is getting to know in an experiential way . This is knowledge which involves all the human senses . It always expresses a personal relationship . Getting to know God is getting to know Him personally and experiencing His power, love, wisdom, grace, patience and holiness. In the Old Testament knowing God always involves the heart , it is never a matter of the mind only . Yada expresses a personal relationship that involves a person's whole being . The New Testament goes even further by showing exactly how it is possible for a person to get to know God in this way, by becoming part of His family through rebirth in His Spirit . In John 3 Jesus shows Nicodemus that he must be born again if he wants to know God.

Paul writes to the New Churches that he is praying fervently for them . He prays that they may come to know God in this deep way that is fundamental to the spiritual life of the disciple

Ephesians 1 : 15-17

“For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.”

Eph 3 : 14-19

“and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled to all the fullness of God. may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and height and depth, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner self, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, For this reason I bend my knees before the Father.”

Colossians 1 : 9 , 10

“For this reason we also, since the day we heard about it, have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.”

We need more love, more obedience, more hope, more faith, more trust. Getting to know God always has practical implications.

1 John 2 : 3-6 ,

By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever follows His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says that he remains in Him ought, himself also, walk just as He walked.”

1 Jn 4 : 7-8

Beloved, let's love one another; for love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, because God is love.