

OUR VISION OF EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP

What does it mean to follow Jesus?

Matthew 9:9

A disciple means a student, a learner. Jesus had 12 who became disciples. Before believers were Christians they were referred to as disciples.

If we are going to have a ministry, it needs to fulfill the Great Commission in the spirit of the Great Commandment.

I. To be a disciple I must spend time with Jesus.

A. It's a vocation in life.

1. It requires a lot of time where I build my schedule around His, not the other way around.
2. A disciple is with his numbers a lot.

***"If you want to be my disciple you must come and follow me because my servants must be where I am. And if they follow me, the Father will honor them."* (John 12:26, NLT)**

B. Spiritual growth:

1. Is a choice.

"If you want to be my disciple..."

You can grow old without growing up! Right; it's a choice. You are as close to God as you choose to be.

2. Is a commitment.

"You must come and follow me..."

You can't set on your rear; you must get it in gear. Making commitments gives place for growth.

- Getting married.

- Having kids.
- Taking a new job.
- Going to college.

If you never make commitments you will never grow. Your commitments define your life. You are what you commit to. No one can be committed to everything so selection is the name of the game. One who says they are committed to everything is committed to nothing.

We need to be intentional to spiritual growth by making deeper and deeper commitments.

Jesus said:

- Come and see (very little commitment)
- Come and follow (Matthew 4)
- Come and take up my cross.
- Come and eat of my flesh and drink of my blood. Give up everything.

3. It is a relationship.

“My servants must be where I am.”

“The plan was that they would be with him and then he would send them out to proclaim the word.” (Mark 3:14, The Message)

- The more you grow spiritually the more you hear God’s voice.
- The more I talk to God the more I grow.

II. To be a disciple I must love Jesus supremely.

“If you want to be my disciple you must love me more than your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters; yes more than your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:26, NLT)

A. We are to worship God.

1. To worship means to ascribe worth or value.
2. If it were not for God we would not have families. They are a gift from God.

B. Spiritual growth is measured by how much you love.

1. Not by how much you know.
2. Not by how much you do.
3. Not by how much you say.
4. The Great Commandment is we love God and others.
5. The first is that we love God with devotion.
6. Our greatest value is a relationship with God.

III. To be a disciple I must love other believers.

“If you have love for one another, then everyone will know you are my disciple.”

A. The proof of discipleship is we love our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

1. The church is the only organism that will last.
 - Not US government.
 - Not political parties.
2. The church is His bride, His body.
3. You can't be a disciple and not love the church.

“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” (1 John 3:16)

B. Spiritual growth happens in the community of believers.

1. The phrase “one another” is used over 50 times in the New Testament.
2. Life is not about listening to sermons, but living with people.

***NOTE** With the exception of Christianity; the belief is the more you isolate yourself from people, the holier you become. The holies are the people who separate themselves from people and earth. Jesus broke traditions; He lived

among the people so much. One of the charges the Jewish religious leaders brought was, "He is a party animal; a glutton and a wine boozier."

3. You learn to love by being around unlovely people.
4. We are committed to Christ and to His children in commitment.
5. That's why Sunday School is so important; it's where you get to practice loving others.

IV. A disciple must always do what Jesus says to do.

A. I must obey God's Word.

***"If you continue to obey my teachings, you are truly my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."* (John 8:31-321)**

1. Spiritual growth is an ongoing process. It is life-long "If you continue." It's gradual and incremental. Just going to church is no guarantee.

***NOTE** We forget 90% of everything we hear within 72 hours. It takes more than sermons. If you take notes you reinforce what you learn.

2. Spiritual growth is measured by obedience. It's not what you know; it's what you practice. Knowledge without love is pride. I only believe the part of the Bible I practice!
3. Spiritual growth is based on God's Word. At conferences a common question is "how many books have you read?" That's not it.

B. Spiritual maturity is marked by freedom and fruit bearing.

“If you continue to live in me and what I say lives in you. Then ask for anything you want and it will be yours. You give glory to my Father when you produce a lot of fruit and therefore show that you are my disciples.”
(John 15:7-8, GN)

1. Therefore you need a plan or process.
2. It starts where you are.
3. He loves you at every state, but He wants you to grow.
 - Know Him.
 - Love Him.
 - Serve Him.
 - Share Him.

***KEY** Spiritual growth demands good spiritual habits or disciples. Successful people do what unsuccessful people are unwilling to do. If you do it you will glorify God and you will bear a lot of fruit.

V. A disciple must serve others unselfishly.

“If you want to be the most important person you must take the last place and be a servant to everyone else.” (Mark 9:35, GN)

A. How do you serve God in this world?

1. By serving people. (Matt. 25:31-46)
2. Godly leadership is not about being served, but serving.

“Forever I, the Son of Man, came here not to be served but to serve others, and to give my life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:28)

B. The world says live for yourself; God says give your life away.

1. Why?
2. Because significance is only found in service.
 - Not salary.

- Not success.
 - Not sex.
3. God wants you to be unselfish because that is what He is like.

“If anyone wants to be my disciple, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.”

4. I don't care how healthy you eat; if you don't exercise it's not good.

***NOTE** For some all they do is take in and never give out. They are spiritually fat babies; they are really holy rollers because you have to roll them from one point to the other.

5. You will never know spiritual growth without sacrifice.
- Deny self: God, I set my plan aside for your plan and purpose.
 - Take up your cross: Be willing to die to your dreams for God's path.

VI. A disciple passes on the good news.

“Jesus called out to them, ‘Come, be my disciples and I will show you how to fish for people!’ And they left their nets at once and went with him.”
(Matthew 4:20, LB)

A. Who will be in heaven because of your witness?

“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³ You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” (2 Timothy 2:2-3)

1. Jesus has commissioned us personally.
2. What's our plan?
 - Identify.
 - Intercede.

- Invest in.
- Invite.

“If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the good news, you will find true life.” (Mark 8:35-36, LB)

B. God gives His disciples a story.