

Topic 3: A Disciple Learns: The Bible Guides Us

“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” ² Timothy 3:16-17

The goal of a disciple of Christ is to become Christ-like.

A Definition of Christian *Disciple*: A Christian disciple is a person who follows Jesus—to *know* Jesus and his teaching; to *grow* more like Jesus; and to *go* for Jesus, serving others and making new disciples.

We get our English word “disciple” from the Latin word *discipulus*, which means “pupil.” This corresponds to the New Testament noun *mathētēs* (from a Greek verb that means “to learn”). In short, the most basic and literal meaning of “disciple” is “student.” *A disciple is first and foremost a learner.*

In the time of Christ if you wanted to know what your teacher was thinking and saying, you had to tag along behind him.

The gospels show the first disciples following Jesus—

to *know* Jesus and his teaching,



HEAD

to *grow* more like Jesus and



HEART

to *go* for Jesus.



HAND

Two thousand years later, that’s still a good definition of discipleship. So discipleship involves *knowing*, *growing*, and *going*. We can compare these three areas of discipleship to the head, heart, and hands of a disciple. The idea of “Knowing” is symbolized by the head, while “growing” is symbolized by the heart, and finally, “going” is symbolized by hands. These categories bleed over into, build upon, and depend on each other.

Looking At the Text

1. Consider these passages from the gospels. They all show Jesus helping his followers grasp God's eternal truths. He did this largely through teaching:

“Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them” (Matthew 5:1-2).

“Jesus answered, ‘My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me’” (John 7:16).

After an extended time of teaching in the Upper Room the night before his death (see John 13-16), Jesus looked toward heaven and prayed *to his Father for his disciples*, “Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth” (John 17:17, nlt).

What did Jesus want his disciples to know about his teaching? From whom did it come?

Jesus taught his followers God's Word. Why? Because the ancient Scriptures are a revelation of God. They reveal:

- ◆ what God is like (Isaiah 46:8-10)
- ◆ why the world is broken (Genesis 3)
- ◆ how we can know God personally (Acts 17:27, 1 John 4:10)
- ◆ how broken people like us can find wholeness and enjoy lives full of significance and purpose (John 10:10, 2 Corinthians 5:17)
- ◆ power against sin (Ps. 119 vss. 3, 11, 101, 165)
- ◆ freedom (Ps. 119 v. 45)
- ◆ direction and guidance (Ps. 119 vss. 105 and 130)
- ◆ stability (Ps. 119 v. 89)
- ◆ peace (Ps. 119 v. 165)
- ◆ hope (Ps. 119 vss. 114 and 147)
- ◆ delight (Ps. 119 vss. 16, 24, 35, 47, 77, 92, 174).