

From Where I Sit . . .

ARE YOU A DISCIPLE OF JESUS?

"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" (Mt 28:18-20).

The above statement was made by Jesus to His apostles shortly before He ascended to heaven. It's commonly called The Great Commission." Notice the main thought of Jesus' command: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations..." To "make disciples," therefore, is the GOAL of evangelizing the world for Christ.

Are you a disciple of Jesus? More than likely you believe in Jesus. You might even be one to attend church services regularly -- But is that what it means to be His disciple? Take a closer look at what is involved in being a true disciple of Jesus Christ. The word "disciple" literally means A LEARNER. According to Vine's Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words, it denotes "one who follows another's teaching." But a disciple was not only a learner, he was also AN ADHERENT to the teachings of Christ. For this reason disciples are often spoken of as IMITATORS of their teachers. Jesus gives us this picture in Luke 6:40. To be Christ's disciple, then, is to strive to be like Him!

According to the apostle Paul, this coincides with God's goal in the redemption of mankind, that they be conformed to the image of His Son - Romans 8:29. Do you have a strong desire to follow Jesus and become like Him? Unless you do, it cannot be said that you are truly His disciple!

A disciple is also one who abides in Jesus' words - Jn 8:31. This would imply being a diligent student of the teachings of Christ. It also requires one to be a "doer" of the Word - Matt. 7:21-27; James 1:21-25. In view of this, a true disciple would not fail to study the Bible diligently, nor would he willingly refrain from opportunities to study with others (e.g., Bible classes, church services, gospel meetings).

A Disciple is also one who loves the brethren John 13:34-35 with a love patterned after the love of Jesus ("as I have loved you"). This is a love that is visible to the world ("by this all will know"). Therefore, a true disciple would make every effort to get to know his brethren and take advantage of occasions to encourage and grow closer to them.

A disciple is, furthermore, one who bears much fruit - John 15:8. Notice the word "much." Jesus is not talking about an occasional good deed, but a lifestyle which prompts people to glorify God! - Matt. 5:16. This is so important as evidenced by the fact that failure to bear much fruit will result in being severed from Christ - John 15:1-2.

The point should be clear: to be a disciple of Jesus Christ means more than being just a casual church member. It requires COMMITMENT, especially in regards to: The teachings of Christ, the love of brethren, and bearing fruit to the glory of God. This kind of commitment involves a "high cost" of discipleship as demanded by Jesus in Luke 14:25-33. This kind of "high cost" of discipleship demanded by Jesus caused many people to turn away from following Him. But Jesus wasn't trying to attract large crowds, He wanted disciples! Is the cost worth it? I believe so when we consider the rewards of such discipleship.

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