

## Discipleship in the Gospels

### Topical Message (10 Passages)

Title

**Topic:** Discipleship  
**Subject:** You may be a Christian, but not be a disciple  
**Complement:** without commitment, obedience, and discipline-making.  
**Purpose:** The listeners will participate in a small group to increase their commitment and obedience, or identify another person with whom they can disciple.  
**Reading:** Luke 14:25-35

#### Introduction

1. Interest: [We have many misconceptions regarding biblical discipleship today.]

Confused

a) Ask the average Christian what a disciple is, and you'll get a tremendously varied response today. We have many misconceptions regarding biblical discipleship.

What is a disciple?

b) What is a disciple?

(1) I once heard someone say that a disciple is something like an icicle! Well, they sound alike!

Follower

(2) Some argue that "disciple" means "follower," so anyone who follows Christ, regardless of the level of commitment, is considered a disciple.

Define biblically

(3) Some think that every Christian is a disciple, but others disagree.

2. Need: What do you think? How can you determine if someone is a disciple? More importantly, are *you* a disciple?

3. Background: The reason we are confused about biblical discipleship is that we rarely consult the primary source in the Scriptures, especially in the Gospels.

10 Times

a) We have ten statements by Christ recorded in the gospels about being and making disciples.

b) These are the only 10 times Jesus used the word "disciple" to describe the characteristics of those who follow Him as disciples. It may surprise you that there are only ten declarations, but each one is potent and full of force.

3 Traits

4. Preview: Today, we'll examine these statements under three categories to understand the true nature of a disciple, followed by a strategy for implementing them in our lives. So we'll discern three primary characteristics of a disciple and how to obtain them.

5. Subject: Let's explore these three traits of a disciple to answer the question, "What is a disciple?" First of all...

MP I I.

**A disciple is totally committed to Christ.**

**[A disciple shows complete allegiance to Jesus with Him first in their life.]**

Christ said that we must renounce four hindrances to following Him:

Family

**A. A disciple renounces *his family* to follow Christ (Luke 14:26a).**

Lk 14:25-26a

1. Here Christ stated, "If anyone comes to me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters... he cannot be my disciple."

2. Apparently, Jesus never read "*How to Win Friends and Influence People*." We are commanded elsewhere to love and care for our families, but Christ came right out and demanded that we love Him more than the members of our own family.
3. After living overseas for years, I still had relatives who told me I should move back to America. Once, two emails from my brother and dad arrived within a month, telling me to follow my family instead of Jesus.

(Yet Jesus said that a disciple renounces *his family*. What else does he renounce?)

Own Life
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**B. A disciple renounces *his own life* to follow Christ (Luke 14:26b-27).**

Lk 14:26b-27
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1. To qualify as a disciple, we must hate even our own life (14:26b) and follow Jesus' demand in verse 27, "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."
2. What does it mean to hate your own life to the point of carrying your own cross? It means to be so concerned that Christ's desires for your life be fulfilled that you hardly even think about **your** desires! How long has it been since you heard someone say, "I hate doing what I want to do!"?
3. We live in a day of self-fulfillment: "looking out for number one," "you deserve a break today," "go ahead, you're worth it!" Christ demands a radical commitment to Himself as our number one priority.

(Not only does a true disciple demonstrate commitment to Christ by renouncing his family and his own life, but just a few verses later in verse 33, you'll see that...)

Possession
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**C. A disciple renounces *his possessions* to follow Christ (Luke 14:33).**

Lk 14:33
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1. After explaining that a genuine follower of Christ counts the cost, verse 33 provides the application: "So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his possessions."
2. Does this mean that we must sell all our possessions and give the money to the poor? Christ demanded this of some, but not the majority. Here's the difference between giving **away** all our possessions and giving them **up**.
3. The real question is, "Do you possess things or do things possess you?" A true disciple does not own any possessions of his own. Jesus Christ owns every possession we have, and we are only stewards of them.

Reputation
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**D. A disciple renounces *his reputation* to follow Christ (Matt. 10:24-25).**

Mt 10:24-25
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1. After explaining that the twelve disciples would undergo persecution for the sake of the gospel, Christ made an interesting statement in verses 24-25, "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become as his teacher, and the slave as his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebub, how much more the members of his household!"
2. What does this difficult statement convey? The Pharisees accused Christ of being controlled by Satan, or Beelzebub. Our Lord warned His followers here that if the world thought that of Jesus, they would not consider His followers highly either, since "a disciple is not above his teacher." A genuine disciple is willing to be demeaned like this because his chief concern is to please God, not men.

MP I
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(These four things, which disciples must renounce, mean a disciple demonstrates commitment. There's yet a second primary characteristic of the faithful follower of Christ...)

## II. A disciple obeys Christ.

[True discipleship involves following Christ in the specifics.]

How do we obey to prove our loyalty to Christ as followers? We'll look at passages 5-7 for the answer.

Word

### A. A disciple obeys by remaining in God's Word (John 8:31).

1. This means that the guiding force in his life is the Bible. In John 8:31, it is written, "Jesus therefore was saying to the Jews who had believed in Him, 'If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine.'" The NIV translates this word "abide" as "if you remain..." capturing the idea very well.
2. What is the real authority in your life? When faced with a difficult decision, when people tell us one thing but the Bible says something else, what does it take to get you to go against the Word?
3. While I was in seminary, my wife's Christian boss fired her. Another brother in Christ recommended that we get a good lawyer and take him to court. Such counsel is totally contrary to 1 Corinthians 6. A faithful follower of Jesus remains in God's Word -- knows it, believes it, and obeys it.

Jn 8:31

Love

### B. A disciple obeys by loving other Christians (John 13:34-35).

1. Our Lord proclaimed in John 13:34-35, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." A faithful follower shows selfless commitment to other believers.
2. Shocking as it may seem, oftentimes there is more love shown at the local bar than there is in the church. We're mistaken if we think people go to the bar only to get drunk. Often, there's a genuine sense of fellowship at a bar where people can take their masks off, share problems, hurts, and concerns, and get counsel, while at the church, one finds backbiting, division, self-centeredness, and hypocrisy.
3. Christ said that true disciples love other believers to the much that the world marvels at their love for one another.

Jn 13:34-35

Helpless

### C. A disciple obeys by showing compassion to the helpless (Matt. 10:42).

1. Christ is recorded as saying in Matthew 10:42, "And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."
2. "Little ones" can also be translated as "humble folk" in this context. So, the idea is that genuine believers obey by meeting the needs of the humble, whether that be giving cold water, their time, their abilities, or whatever.

Mt 10:42

(So far, we've seen that a disciple demonstrates commitment (shown in four things he renounces) and one who demonstrates obedience (in the three ways just described). The final three statements Christ made about disciples fall under the third primary characteristic of a disciple: disciplemaking!)

MP & MP

MP III

## III. A disciple disciples.

[A disciple develops other followers of Jesus.]

[That may seem obvious, yet how easy it is to convince ourselves we're His committed followers without ever multiplying ourselves!]

Disciple

**A. A disciple makes disciples (Matt. 28:19-20).**

Mt 28:19-20

1. Jesus commanded us, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
2. The only command here is to "make disciples," as the other verbal forms are participles. Obviously, to **make** disciples, you need to **be** a disciple.

Only command

Evangelize

**B. A disciple brings others to Christ (John 15:8).**

Jn 15:5 Fruit

Jn 15:8

1. We are branches connected to Jesus as the vine and produce fruit. But what is "fruit"?
2. Christ said, "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."
3. The fruit is the reproductive part of the plant that contains the seeds, so Jesus is saying that we prove ourselves as His followers when we reproduce, or bring others into the family of God.

Disciple

**C. A disciple teaches others (Matt. 13:52).**

Mt 13:52

1. We find this truth in Matthew 13:52, "And He said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old.'"
2. This verse teaches that disciples know about heavenly things and then share this knowledge with others, teaching what they have previously known, as well as the new truths they have recently discovered. If you're not passing on what you've learned to someone else, then you're not fulfilling God's requirements of a disciple.

**Conclusion**

Disciple

Main Idea

MPs  
(3 slides)How to  
disciple?

• Group

• Disciple

1. So, what's a disciple? Here is the question we have sought to answer today. We have examined ten statements of Christ on discipleship that summarize three main traits of a disciple. A disciple shows commitment, obedience, and discipling (MI). A genuine follower of Jesus puts Jesus first, obeys Him, and multiplies.
2. How can we have these qualities Christ described? Here are two ideas:
3. Allow me to make two practical applications to help make these ten statements of Christ a reality for us, as those who desire to be His disciples.
  - a) First, **join a small group** to hold you accountable each week in your commitment and obedience to Christ. This is what Christ did with the Twelve. He spent time with them, they shared their lives, and they ministered to and with one another. We're no different today. There's nothing like setting individual goals in a small group and having the group hold you accountable in specific areas of commitment and obedience.
  - b) Also, **commit to discipling** at least one other individual to multiply yourself. Be involved in his or her life regularly to pray together, to dig into the Scriptures, and to impart skills such as how to have a quiet time and how to witness. Remember that a true disciple is involved in discipling! A person who's **not** involved in fulfilling the Great Commission is fooling himself if he thinks he's a disciple.
4. Let's not fool ourselves that we're **disciples** just because we're **Christians**. There's a vast difference between the two that the world needs to see. Let's let them see it in us.

## Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)

The listeners will participate in a small group to increase their commitment and obedience, or identify another person with whom they can disciple.

### **Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

#### **Introduction**

1. We have many misconceptions regarding biblical discipleship today.
2. The reason we are confused about biblical discipleship is that we rarely go to the real source in the Scriptures, especially in the gospels. Although a wealth of material does not exist in the gospels, we have ten statements by Christ about being and making disciples.
3. Today, we'll examine these statements under three categories to understand the true nature of a disciple, followed by a strategy for implementing them in our lives. So we'll discern three major characteristics of a disciple and how to obtain them. Let's look at these three characteristics to answer the question, "What is a disciple?"

#### **I. A disciple is committed totally to Christ.**

Commitment is shown by renouncing hindrances to following Christ:

- A. A disciple renounces his family to follow Christ (Luke 14:26).
- B. A disciple renounces his own life to follow Christ (Luke 14:27).
- C. A disciple renounces his possessions to follow Christ (Luke 14:33).
- D. A disciple renounces his reputation to follow Christ (Matt. 10:24-25).

#### **II. A disciple obeys Christ.**

- A. A disciple obeys by remaining in God's Word (John 8:31).
- B. A disciple obeys by loving other Christians (John 13:34-35).
- C. A disciple obeys by showing compassion to the helpless (Matt. 10:42).

#### **III. A disciple disciples.**

- A. A disciple makes disciples (Matt. 28:19-20).
- B. A disciple brings others to Christ (John 15:8).
- C. A disciple teaches others (Matt. 13:52).

#### **Conclusion**

1. We have examined ten statements of Christ regarding discipleship, which summarize three main characteristics of a disciple: commitment, obedience, and discipling.
2. How can we align with the qualities Christ described?
  - a) Get involved in a small group to hold you accountable in your commitment and obedience to Christ. (This is what Christ did with the Twelve.)

- b) Disciple at least one other individual to multiply yourself.
3. Let's not fool ourselves into thinking that we are disciples just because we're Christians. There's a huge difference between the two that the world needs to see.

## Discipleship in the Gospels

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#### III. A disciple is a disciplemaker.

- A. A disciple makes disciples (Matt. 28:19-20).
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## Thought Questions

1. Which of the ten passages covered speaks most to you? Read that passage aloud.
2. Why is this text most meaningful to you today?
3. What change will you make today in your own Christian experience?