

# Defining Discipleship

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## A Formal Definition

We shall begin with a formal definition which will both narrow our focus and give us direction. Discipleship is not just any-ole-thing that happens to people after they become Christians. It is a very specific thing requiring a very specific focus.

***Biblical Discipleship is the act of one person intentionally impacting the life of some other person in the direction of Christlikeness***

1. Biblical discipleship (and from now on, when I say “discipleship,” I mean biblical discipleship) is **intentional**. It is not accidental. Discipleship has not happened just because a student has learned something. Discipleship is, first of all, a function of the discipler. Someone must intend to do it.
2. Discipleship is also **impacting**. It is not simply a matter of being impressed with a teacher, elder, or mentor. Discipleship brings about a life change in the areas of virtues, values, beliefs, personal habits, and actions. (With the exception of parenting children, it may be the only thing that does produce a life change).
3. Discipleship is also **personal**. It is not just covering material, although material is certainly covered. It is not just being part of a group, or class, or congregation, although that may be part of it. Discipleship is one person building into another person personally.
4. Discipleship is **Christlikeness**. Discipleship is not just a mentee modeling a mentor or a student following a teacher. For it to be discipleship, the development must be in the direction of Christlikeness (Romans 8:29) as defined in scripture (John 8:31).

## Discipleship in the Gospels, Acts, and the Epistles

The word “disciple(s)” is used 269 times in the NASV New Testament. It occurs in all four gospels and the book of Acts but not in the epistles or the Apocalypse. The Greek word μαθητής (*mathetes* – usually translated “disciple”) means “a student, pupil, or learner” (Strong’s). But a disciple is not just a learner in the sense of a student in a classroom. A disciple is a learner who can ask questions and give responses as he or she learns from their teacher in the midst of real life situations. Since the perfect life Jesus lived is the goal of discipleship (Romans 8:29), and the way He carried out His ministry is the primary example of how to do discipleship (1 Corinthians 11:1), and because He commanded His disciples to follow His example by making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20), we will focus on learning about discipleship from Jesus.

So this is primarily a study of discipleship from the gospels, but one important observation must be made about the use of the word for “disciple” in the book of Acts. All true believers in Acts are considered disciples. Luke (the author of Acts) uses the word “disciple” as a synonym for “believer.” His emphasis in Acts is the incarnational (in-the-flesh) nature of the spread of the Gospel. It was done by one person being in person, in-the-flesh, with some other real flesh-and-blood people. The epistles are letters or writings of the apostles and prophets, but the book of Acts is literally “The Acts of the Apostles.” It is a record of their making and nurturing disciples in the flesh. The lesson here speaks to the limit of the use of technology in disciple making. There is certainly nothing wrong with using technology to spread the Gospel and make disciples. Essentially, the New Testament itself is the use of technology for that purpose. But one of the lessons from Acts is that technology is not enough. Discipleship always requires a person-to-person ministry.

The most probable reason the word μαθητής (usually translated *disciple*) is not used in the epistles or Revelation is that the apostles, and their disciples, were not trying to conform people to themselves. The goal was to conform people to the image of Jesus Christ. (For example, in Acts 9:1 believers are called *disciples of the Lord*.) We often use the word “discipleship” to describe the nurturing Barnabas gave Paul or Paul’s personal instruction of Timothy and Titus and Luke and many others. And that’s okay. But Paul called people to: *Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ* (1 Corinthians 11:1). The end or goal was Christ, not Paul. On the other hand, the epistles have many words for teaching: “teach”, “exhort”, “beseech”, “reprove”, “instruct”. But one word for “learn” is μαθετε (used for example in Philippians 4:9) which, as you can see, is similar to the basic word μαθητής for a disciple. So, although the noun “disciple” is not used in the epistles, the verb form of the word, i.e. learning as a disciple, is. The verb form is used in Romans 16:17 *The teaching which you have learned*; Philippians 4:9 *the things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me practice these things*; Colossians 1:17 *...just as you have learned it from Epaphras*; 2 Timothy 3:14 *continue in the things you have learned*. In each case the word *learned* is the verb form of the noun disciple. That is not to say the word learn is always in a discipleship context, but it seems to be in these instances. We can therefore conclude that the word for discipleship does occur in the epistles as a verb.

## Observation, Interpretation, and Application

All analytical Bible study should consist of three steps. Throughout this study, they will be designated by the words (in small caps) OBSERVATION, INTERPRETATION, and APPLICATION. First, I will give you a text to observe. It would be best to read the larger context of the passages from your Bible. But we are limited here in space and focus, so I have selected certain verses for us to consider. The first (or right hand) page of each two-page section will be **inductive**, in the sense that it asks questions and gives you an opportunity to make interpretations and applications from the passage being observed. Then, if you turn the page, the second (left hand) page will be my analysis of the passage being observed. So the second page is **deductive**, in the sense that it is my answers to the questions on the first page.

Now let's review the process a bit.

**OBSERVATION** is the art and science of noticing. It is seeing what is there. In this phase, the Bible student is like a detective looking for clues. Here, we are scouring the text, looking at every detail. We look at the significance of each word, and ask (what I like to call the W<sub>5</sub>H questions): Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How?

**INTERPRETATION** is the art and science of determining an author's intended meaning. The biggest element in INTERPRETATION is the context. In this phase, the student is trying to understand what the author meant and to write out that meaning in his or her own words. It is important to keep in mind that this is a historical statement of what the author meant. There is only one right INTERPRETATION. Try to avoid saying something like: "This is what it means to me." The only relevant INTERPRETATION is what it meant to the historical author. Most students (myself included) find it tempting to go directly from OBSERVATION to APPLICATION. Don't do that. For example, the INTERPRETATION of *you shall love your neighbor as yourself* (Leviticus 19:18) is **not** that I must love my neighbor as myself. That would be an APPLICATION. The INTERPRETATION is that Moses is telling fellow Israelites that part of the Mosaic Law is for them to love fellow Israelites.

**APPLICATION** is putting the meaning of the passage to use. This is like sliding a chair up to the table for the author and asking him what he would say about our situation today. Suppose, for example, I am forced to make a decision between prioritizing love for my physical neighbors next door or my fellow believer friends. How should I apply Leviticus 19:18? What I need to do is slide an imaginary chair up to the table for Moses and say: "Now Moses, I know you were talking about Israelites loving fellow Israelites under the Law. But what should I do? Who are you telling me to love?" You see that we are now searching the mind of Moses, through what he has written, for his intended meaning and how those intentions apply to us. Also, although there is only one correct INTERPRETATION for any passage, there are many possible APPLICATIONS of that passage. Just make sure your APPLICATION applies the INTERPRETATION. Don't skip the historical INTERPRETATION.

In most cases, I have put in a few words to help get started making an INTERPRETATION statement. I have said something like: "INTERPRETATION: Here, Jesus meant \_\_\_\_\_"  
I have begun each APPLICATION statement with the words: "Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_"

On the back of each page, I have given my answers to the questions by completing those statements. Your application will probably be different from mine. For example, I have applied everything to myself as a disciple maker. You may do that too, or you may wish to apply this as a disciple-student of someone else. Even though there is only one correct INTERPRETATION, there are many correct APPLICATIONS. As you answer these questions, I'd like you to think:

1. What did I learn about God?
2. What did I learn about myself?
3. What did I learn about the discipleship process?

Oh, and before we start, there is one other thing: make sure your INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS come from carefully examining the text. It is tempting for most of us to give answers we have learned before from some other place. I hope you enjoy the process as we wrestle together with the concept of discipleship, and try to think through what it means to: ***Go make disciples of all nations—Matthew 28:18.***

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# Discipleship in the Old Testament – Exploring the Subject

## Make some OBSERVATIONS from these Old Testament Examples

**Regarding Moses and Joshua:** Joshua, the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth (Numbers 11:28) ... But charge Joshua and encourage him and strengthen him, for he shall go across at the head of this people, and he will give them as an inheritance the land which you will see (Deuteronomy 3:28) ... Then He commissioned Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "Be strong and courageous, for you shall bring the sons of Israel into the land which I swore to them, and I will be with you" (Deuteronomy 31:23).

**Regarding Moses and his father-in-law:** Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you are doing is not good. You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do. Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens" (Exodus 18:17-21, see also Numbers 11:10-117).

**Regarding Elijah and Elisha:** And it came about when the LORD was about to take up Elijah by a whirlwind to heaven, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here please, for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel." But Elisha said, "As the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel. Then the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he said, "Yes, I know; be still." Elijah said to him, "Elisha, please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to Jericho." But he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." So they came to Jericho. The sons of the prophets who were at Jericho approached Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?" And he answered, "Yes, I know; be still." Then Elijah said to him, "Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan." And he said, "As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you." (2 Kings 2:1-6).

## What INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS can you make from Discipleship in the O. T.?

### Regarding Moses and Joshua:

1. What is it about the relationship between Moses and Joshua that can be called discipleship?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Joshua was a disciple of Moses in the sense that \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the outcome, in the life of Joshua, as a result of his being disciplined by Moses?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Being disciplined by Moses meant that Joshua became \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

### Regarding Moses and his father-in-law:

3. When Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came to visit, he told Moses: *The thing that you are doing is not good.* What was it exactly that was *not good*? And why wasn't it good? What are the implications of this for discipleship?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Moses was \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
4. Can you find 7 things Moses' father-in-law suggested that Moses do which might also be good advice for discipleship?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Moses' father-in-law suggested \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

### Regarding Elijah and Elisha:

5. Three times Elijah told Elisha to stay behind and not follow him, but Elisha followed anyway. What principle of discipleship does this teach us about the discipler? What does it teach us about the one being disciplined?  
**INTERPRETATION:** This incident between Elijah and Elisha teaches us \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

## TO SUMMARIZE:

What principles for discipleship have you learned here from the Old Testament?

# Discipleship in the Old Testament – The Author's Analysis

## Regarding Moses and Joshua:

1. **INTERPRETATION:** Joshua was a disciple of Moses in the sense that: (1) Joshua spent time with Moses observing his character, his calling, his motives, etc. (2) Joshua was *the attendant of Moses from his youth*. Joshua was able to see how Moses did things because, from a young age, Joshua assisted Moses. (3) God told Moses to *charge Joshua and encourage him and strengthen him*. Moses had the responsibility for helping Joshua become a mature leader of God's people. And (4) Moses had *commissioned him*. So there was some official endorsement of him by Moses.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should serve those I disciple by: (1) being available to them, (2) instructing them on a long-term basis, (3) charging, encouraging, and strengthening them, and (4) putting them into active service for God.
2. **INTERPRETATION:** Being discipled by Moses meant that Joshua became the next leader of the Israelites. For Joshua that was primarily the military conquest of the Land of Canaan.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should equip my disciples in such a way that they are qualified for leadership with the people of God. That leadership today will be a focus on the war against the Satanic forces in this world (Ephesians 6:10-12).

## Regarding Moses and his father-in-law:

3. **INTERPRETATION:** Moses was wearing himself out and frustrating the people because he was trying to do it all alone. Apparently, Moses thought he was the only one who could *make known to them the way in which they are to walk*. Specifically, it was not good that the knowledge of the Word of God was being hindered, not by Moses being insincere or disobedient but by his methods. He overlooked the possibility that others could learn much of what he knew and that his time would be better spent using the people he taught, rather than trying to deal with all the people himself.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should think in terms of reproduction as the basis for disseminating the knowledge of the Word of God. It is tempting to think "If I want it done right, I should do it myself," but that overlooks the creative abilities of other godly people. There are many other godly people who can learn what I know.
4. **INTERPRETATION:** Moses' father-in-law suggested seven ways Moses could be a more effective leader: (1) *represent the people to God*, (2) *bring their problems to God*, (3) *teach them God's Word*, (4) *show them how to walk*, (5) *show them what to do*, (6) *choose godly men*, and (7) *make them leaders*.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should: (1) represent those I disciple before God in prayer, (2) bring the problems of those I disciple to God in prayer and look for answers to their issues in the Scripture, (3) teach those I disciple the commandments of the Bible, (4) help those I disciple to apply the Word of God to their daily spiritual walk, (5) help those I disciple to do their work in a godly manner, (6) look for people who are willing to learn to fear God, love the truth, and hate dishonesty, and (7) prepare those I disciple to be leaders morally and theologically.

## Regarding Elijah and Elisha:

5. **INTERPRETATION:** This incident between Elijah and Elisha teaches us that the discipler (Elijah) should not beg a person (Elisha) to be discipled. Elisha stuck with Elijah because he wanted what Elijah had.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should never stop learning. A discipler must be a student among students. He or she must be a perpetual learner. But disciplers must learn in such a way that their new knowledge can be passed along. The danger of continual learning is that everything we learn tends to move us further away from our students. So, as we learn, we must also figure out how to build a bridge back to our disciples. If we don't continue to learn, we will become stagnant and boring. But everything we learn must carry with it the question: How can I relate this to those I am discipling in a manner relevant to their understanding.

## TO SUMMARIZE

Some principles for discipleship from the Old Testament include:

- (a) Discipleship is preparation for spiritual leadership (from the relationship between Moses and Joshua).
- (b) Discipleship is instruction over a long period of time (from the relationship between Moses and Joshua).
- (c) Discipleship is teaching others to know how to do what you know how to do (from the advice of Jethro to Moses).
- (d) Discipleship includes selecting truthful, honest people to be discipled (from the advice of Jethro to Moses).
- (e) Discipleship includes teaching in the midst of real life situations, not just classrooms (from Deuteronomy 6).
- (f) Disciplers should not beg people to be discipled. Instead they should become the kind of person that a disciple will not leave because of the quality of life, knowledge, and wisdom the discipler has to offer (from Elijah and Elisha).



# Choosing the First Disciples – Exploring the Subject

## Make some OBSERVATIONS from John 1:35-47

Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter). The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!"

## What INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS can you make from the Choosing of the First Disciples?

1. Were these first disciples converts of Jesus?  
INTERPRETATION: Andrew and John were \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
2. Does there seem to be a network of some sort of relationship already existing between these first five disciples?  
INTERPRETATION: There seems to be \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
3. How was Simon Peter recruited?  
INTERPRETATION: Historically, \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
4. Why did John the Baptist not become one of the 12 disciples of Jesus? [See also John 3:25-31.]  
INTERPRETATION: John the Baptist \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
5. What can we learn from John the Baptist's act of encouraging Andrew and John to follow Jesus?  
INTERPRETATION: John the Baptist \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
6. What's the significance of Jesus asking them to come and see where He was staying?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
7. Why did Jesus not go to the Temple or the synagogues to recruit His disciples? [See also Matthew 9:17.]  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
8. Were the first disciples of Jesus already true believers (like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc.)?  
INTERPRETATION: The first disciples \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
9. What is the significance that Nathanael was *an Israelite indeed in whom there is no deceit*?  
INTERPRETATION: Since Nathanael was without deceit \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
10. What is the significance of Andrew telling his brother Peter *We have found the Messiah*?  
INTERPRETATION: Both Peter and Andrew \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
11. Does Nathanael reveal any prejudice?  
INTERPRETATION: Historically, \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

## TO SUMMARIZE

What are some of the things these (first five) disciples have in common?

# Choosing the First Disciples – The Author’s Analysis

- 1. INTERPRETATION:** Andrew and John, and possibly all five of the first disciples, were followers of John the Baptist, but none of them were converts of Jesus.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not necessarily expect my disciples to be the people I led to Christ.
- 2. INTERPRETATION:** There seems to be a previously established network of relationships between some or all of these first five disciples.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should notice good networks which make for good discipleship.
- 3. INTERPRETATION:** Historically, Andrew recruited his own physical/natural brother Simon Peter, and *Philip found Nathanael*.  
**APPLICATION:** Disciples will often come by referrals from friends and relatives who know them well.
- 4. INTERPRETATION:** John the Baptist did not become one of “the twelve” because he had a different calling, namely: to baptize people with a message of repentance, introduce the Messiah, and then decrease as Christ and His disciples increased.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should be sensitive to my calling; it may be to decrease while others increase.
- 5. INTERPRETATION:** John the Baptist saw part of his ministry to his disciples as giving away his relationship with them to Jesus.  
**APPLICATION:** Sometimes the best thing we can do for those we disciple is to share our relationship by giving part of that relationship to others.
- 6. INTERPRETATION:** Jesus invited these men to see where He was staying, so apparently He wanted these newly received disciples to see His lifestyle.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should let my disciples see how I live.
- 7. INTERPRETATION:** Jesus received the disciples of John, rather than going to the synagogues or the Temple to get His disciples, because the synagogue/Temple people there were already committed to Rabbinical Judaism or some other *old wineskin* system of thinking (Matthew 9:17).  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not expect to get disciples from people committed to religious institutions because they are usually already committed to a religious format (*old wine in old wineskins*).
- 8. INTERPRETATION:** The first disciples were not new believers. They seem to already be believers in the God of Israel who were looking for the Messiah and in agreement with John the Baptist’s message of repentance.  
**APPLICATION:** My best disciples may not be new believers.
- 9. INTERPRETATION:** Since Nathanael was *without deceit*, we know that he was already pretty mature.  
**APPLICATION:** Mature people should not just be used. They need to be discipled as much as new believers.
- 10. INTERPRETATION:** Both Peter and Andrew had a Messianic expectation, so they knew and believed Old Testament prophecy.  
**APPLICATION:** Good prospects for discipleship will include those who know and believe Biblical prophecy and expect God to fulfill it literally.
- 11. INTERPRETATION:** Historically, the disciples were not without problems. For example, Nathanael seems to be prejudiced against people from Nazareth.  
**APPLICATION:** People who are at first prejudiced against some group can end up being good disciples.

## TO SUMMARIZE

We can conclude that these five were all:

- (1) teachable
- (2) males, who were
- (3) not yet mature, although they
- (4) knew Scripture, and
- (5) believed in the God of Israel,
- (6) with a Messianic expectation. They were
- (7) loosely networked together, but
- (8) they were not involved in any traditional religious organizations.

# Early Training of the Disciples – Exploring the Subject

## Make some OBSERVATIONS from the following passages

**John 2**—On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. ... After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and His brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days. The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the moneychangers seated at their tables. And He made a scourge of cords, and drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables; and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business." ... Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It took forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken (verses 1-2, 12-16, 19-22).

**John 3**—After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He was spending time with them and baptizing ... (verse 22). ... (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were) (4:2).

**John 4**—So He came to a city of Samaria called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; and Jacob's well was there. So Jesus, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food (John 4:5-8). ... At this point His disciples came, and they were amazed that He had been speaking with a woman, yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why do You speak with her?" ... Meanwhile the disciples were urging Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples were saying to one another, "No one brought Him anything to eat, did he?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work" (John 4:27, 31-34).

## What INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS can you make about the Early Training of the 12?

### Regarding John 2:

1. Why do you think Jesus involved the (first five) disciples with His family on two occasions?  
INTERPRETATION: At this early stage, \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
2. What did the disciples learn about Jesus from the incident in the Temple?  
INTERPRETATION: The disciples \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
3. Was Jesus angry?  
INTERPRETATION: Literally, \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is wrong with making the Temple a *place of business*? Is it bad to mix worship and business?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus' response tells us \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
5. Why was Jesus intentionally confusing when He said *Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up*?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

### Regarding John 3:

6. What is the significance of Jesus not baptizing, while His disciples were baptizing?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus did not baptize \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

### Regarding John 4:

7. What was the value for the disciples, i.e. what were they to learn, from Jesus' stop in Samaria?  
INTERPRETATION: Then they went on to Samaria where \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
8. What were the disciples supposed to learn from: (a) *My food is to do*, (b) *the will of Him* and (c) *accomplish His work*?  
INTERPRETATION: The disciples were to learn \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

## TO SUMMARIZE

Review the early training of the 12 with a few basic principles.



# Early Training of the Disciples – The Author’s Analysis

## *Regarding John 2:*

1. **INTERPRETATION:** At this early stage, the contact between Jesus and His disciples was not continual. They were still working and living in their own homes. They would apparently leave to go along with Jesus as He invited them to specific events. Later, they would be called to follow Him continually (Matthew 4:18-22), and sometimes their wives would accompany them (1 Corinthians 9:5). But at this early stage, they seem to be simply invited along on various occasions. Three of these were the wedding at Cana, the family trip to Capernaum, and the longer spring trip to Jerusalem. No details are given about their trip to Capernaum except that Jesus’ mother and brothers went along.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should invite my disciples to be exposed to my family and to see how I relate to my family in casual settings.
2. **INTERPRETATION:** The disciples observed Jesus throwing the moneychangers out of the Temple. Here they learned that the synagogues in the villages were not like the Temple in Jerusalem. No outrage was expressed concerning synagogues. The disciples needed to understand the difference between man-made structures (like the synagogues) and true worship (which, at that time, was centered in the Jerusalem Temple).  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should teach my disciples the true nature of worship and the difference between God-given and man-made practices. Today, the body of each believer is the temple of God and true worship includes presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Romans 12:1-2).
3. **INTERPRETATION:** Literally, the text never says Jesus was angry. However, anger against sin is not wrong if it is expressed in a righteous way (Ephesians 4:26). Whether He was or not, the point was the sanctity of the Jerusalem Temple.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should teach my disciples that there are times to express anger, but we must be sure it is a controlled directive against a biblically stated sin, not an opportunity to express outrage about some personal prejudice.
4. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus’ response tells us He had a strong objection to mixing business and worship.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not mix business and worship. In general, it is best to define business (the making of money) and worship (expressing reverence and adoration to God) separately. When mixed together, one will always detract from the other.
5. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus applied the Temple context to His own death and resurrection, a comparison nobody understood. The point was for the disciples to understand this later on, thus strengthening their faith.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not hesitate teaching truth which my disciples will only fully understand later on, and when they do, it will strengthen their faith.

## *Regarding John 3:*

6. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus did not baptize for the same reason John the Baptist didn’t become an apostle. Jesus had a different calling.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should let those I disciple know my focus, namely, that I may not do many good things simply because they are not my calling (calling defined as: gifts, talents, personality, desires, and life situation).

## *Regarding John 4:*

7. **INTERPRETATION:** They went on to Samaria where the disciples, to their surprise, returned from the city to find Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman. This violated two of their taboos – associating with Samaritans (John 4:9) and talking with unknown women (John 4:27). Apparently, the disciples were to learn that the Kingdom of God has no racial or sexual or cultural or social or economic barriers.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should make it clear to my disciples that the Kingdom of God is conditioned upon a willingness to repent, not upon racial, sexual, cultural, social or economic differences.
8. **INTERPRETATION:** The disciples were to learn that Jesus’ mission was His meat. This meant His life was singular in its focus, to do: (a) the ministry of God the Father, (b) the will of God the Father and (c) the work of God the Father.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should tell my disciples to have a singular focus: (a) If you serve yourself, you’ll be miserable. (b) If you serve others you’ll be happier, but disappointed. (c) If you serve God, you will be fulfilled.

## **TO SUMMARIZE**

Some basic principles here are:

- Discipleship includes involving people with the discipler’s family in casual situations.
- Discipleship teaches the difference between God-given and manmade practices.
- Discipleship may involve expressing anger over sin.
- Discipleship does not mix business with worship.
- Discipleship doesn’t always make things easy to understand.
- Discipleship focuses on one’s calling (defined as one’s gifts, talents, personality, desires, and life situation).
- Discipleship knows no racial, sexual, cultural, social, or economic barriers.
- Discipleship has a singular purpose—to serve God.

# The Call of Levi – Exploring the Subject

## Make some OBSERVATIONS from Luke 5:27-39

*After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow Me." And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him. And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?" And Jesus answered and said to them, "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." And He was also telling them a parable: "No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined. But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good enough.'"*

## What INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS can you make from the call of Levi/Matthew?

1. What is the most basic difference between the call of Levi and the call of the first five disciples?  
INTERPRETATION: What is significantly different about the call of Levi is \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, **some** of the people I invite to be discipled might include \_\_\_\_\_
2. How old do you think Levi was?  
INTERPRETATION: Levi was \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, **some** of the people I invite to be discipled might be \_\_\_\_\_
3. How well off was he financially?  
INTERPRETATION: We can conclude that he was \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, **some** of the people I invite to be discipled might include \_\_\_\_\_
4. What do we know about Levi from the nature of his friends?  
INTERPRETATION: Levi's network \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, **some** of the people I invite to be discipled might include \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is surprising and not surprising about the fact that Levi wrote the Gospel of Matthew?  
INTERPRETATION: We are surprised \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should expect \_\_\_\_\_
6. Is it likely that this was the first time Levi was exposed to Jesus, His healing, or His teaching?  
INTERPRETATION: Since Levi lived in Capernaum \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, **some** of the people I invite to be discipled might include \_\_\_\_\_
7. Since Levi was a Jew who grew up in Israel and later wrote the Gospel of Matthew, what are the most likely conclusions we can make about his knowledge of the Mosaic Law and the Old Testament Scripture?  
INTERPRETATION: Historically, \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, **some** of the people I invite to be discipled might include \_\_\_\_\_
8. From Jesus' answer to the Pharisees, why did Levi qualify as an object of Jesus' discipleship ministry?  
INTERPRETATION: Levi qualified as a prospective disciple because \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, the people I invite to be discipled should include \_\_\_\_\_
9. Why didn't any of Levi's friends (as far as we know) follow Jesus in the sense of becoming one of "the twelve" like the friends of Andrew and John did?  
INTERPRETATION: As far as we know, \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, the people I disciple should \_\_\_\_\_

## TO SUMMARIZE

What conclusions can we come to about those who might become disciples? Write a scenario of the kind of person who would be:

- most likely,
- more likely, and
- least likely,

to become disciples of Jesus Christ.



# The Call of Levi – The Author’s Analysis

1. **INTERPRETATION:** What is significantly different about the call of Levi is that he did not come by referral. Jesus singled him out and called him, apparently while he was sitting in the tax office. His call was entirely at Jesus’ initiative. Unlike the two sets of brothers who were fishermen, Levi seems to have left his occupation behind from the beginning.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, **some** of the people I invite to be disciplined might be from the secular world.
2. **INTERPRETATION:** Levi was not real young. Although all of “the twelve” seem to have been adult businessmen, Levi was old enough to be established in a prominent Roman position.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, **some** of the people I invite to be disciplined might include older adults in the business community.
3. **INTERPRETATION:** We can conclude that he was pretty well off financially because he was a tax collector with the Roman government and he owned a house large enough to throw a *big reception*.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, **some** of the people I invite to be disciplined might include people in powerful positions, who have a lot of money and possessions.
4. **INTERPRETATION:** Levi’s network, ... *of tax collectors and other people*, was also quite different from the first five. So we can be pretty sure Levi was not a religious conservative. Before he followed Jesus, he was not involved with John the Baptist or any message of repentance.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, **some** of the people I invite to be disciplined might include those who are secular liberals.
5. **INTERPRETATION:** We are surprised at first that one with such a background would later write the Gospel of Matthew. But on second thought, it may not be so unreasonable. When he became a believer, he received new spiritual gifts but his talents remained. His job required that he be talented in taking notes, keeping records, making proofs, and paying attention to details.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should expect **some** of the people I invite to be disciplined to surprise me in what they do with their natural talents, as their spiritual gifts are added to those talents when they become believers.
6. **INTERPRETATION:** Since Levi lived in Capernaum, he would have heard about Jesus (His teaching and His healing).  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, **some** of the people I invite to be disciplined might include those who have heard the Bible but not responded.
7. **INTERPRETATION:** Historically, Levi was no Gentile pagan. Like all Jewish boys, he would most likely grow up learning the Old Testament. We see evidence of this in the details of the Gospel of Matthew.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, **some** of the people I invite to be disciplined might include people who have ignored their biblical background.
8. **INTERPRETATION:** Levi qualified as a prospective disciple because he saw himself as a sinner, one who needed to repent. Repentance is a change of mind, resulting in a change of life.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, the people I invite to be disciplined should include those willing to do what Levi did—repent, changing their minds about Christ, resulting in a changed life.
9. **INTERPRETATION:** As far as we know, none of Levi’s tax collector/sinner friends became one of “the twelve,” whereas the friends of Andrew and John did. Apparently, a sinful past does not help in preparing one for discipleship. There is no virtue in sinfulness and no value in worldliness.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, the people I disciple should come to see no value in their past sins or worldly living.

## TO SUMMARIZE

Jesus wanted different kinds of people to be His disciples, but only a few like Levi, and none of the Pharisees, Sadducees, Chief Priests or Elders responded.

(1) We can, therefore, expect the social context **least likely** to contain prospective disciples is the administrative leadership of religious organizations—new wine needs new wineskins. Actually, the Pharisees themselves point that out, saying: *No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him* (John 7:48). There will be exceptions like Nicodemus (John 3:1; 7:50; and 19:39), but they are few and far between.

(2) We can expect that secular/worldly people, such as Levi and his friends, are **more likely** to see themselves as sinners, but we should not expect many of them to leave that lifestyle behind and follow Jesus. If we look at the initial outreach of Jesus and the apostles, it was usually reasoning and persuading in synagogues (Luke 4:16; Acts 17:2-4) and places of prayer (Acts 16:13), not spending time in bars or participating in secular activities to make friends of secular people. Certainly they approached some, like Levi and the woman at the well (John 4). These were definitely part of, but only a small part of, their discipleship outreach.

(3) We must conclude those **most likely** to become disciples of Christ would be the godly-minded people who see themselves as sinners in need of repentance and are self-motivated to learn more (and more accurately) about God and His kingdom. This was the case with the 12, Stephen, Philip, the Ethiopian eunuch, Paul, Barnabas, Timothy, Titus, John Mark, Apollos, the uninformed disciples of Acts 19, Priscilla and Aquila, and most of the converts from the synagogues.



# The Sermon on the Mount – Exploring the Subject

## Make some OBSERVATIONS from Matthew 5 – 7

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying, “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (5:1-3). ... “Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished” (5:17-18). ... “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You shall not commit murder’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell” (5:21-22). ... “Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you” (6:1-4). ... “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (6:19-21). ... “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me all you who practice lawlessness’” (7:21-23).

## What INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS can you make from the Sermon on the Mount?

1. What did Jesus want His disciples to know at this stage in their training? Why did they need to know this now?  
INTERPRETATION: After about two years of ministry \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
2. What does it mean to be *poor in spirit*? Why is being *poor in spirit* something the 12 needed to know?  
INTERPRETATION: Being *poor in spirit* was \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
3. In what sense did Jesus **not** *abolish the Law or the Prophets* when Paul said: *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness ...* (Romans 10:4) and *the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor* (Galatians 3:24-25)?  
INTERPRETATION: Historically, \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
4. Why did Christ’s disciples have to know: *not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law*?  
INTERPRETATION: Literally, \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
5. Six times in this passage Jesus says: *You have heard... But I say to you*. How do these clarifications fulfill the law?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
6. Why were the disciples told that calling someone *You fool* makes a person *guilty enough to go into the fiery hell*?  
INTERPRETATION: The 12 were told this because \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
7. In the context of Matthew 6, how does Jesus explain *practicing your righteousness before men*?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
8. Apparently, all of the 12 were family men (1 Corinthians 9:5), how does a man or woman with family responsibilities *not store up for yourselves treasures on earth*? Why is Jesus so against that?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
9. Does Matthew 6:19-21 describe a profit motive?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
10. Why does Jesus warn His disciples about those who call Jesus *Lord, Lord*, but will not *enter the kingdom of heaven*?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus wants His disciples to \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

## TO SUMMARIZE

Why did Jesus teach the 12 the Sermon on the Mount?

# The Sermon on the Mount – The Author’s Analysis

1. **INTERPRETATION:** After about two years of ministry with His disciples, Jesus went up to a mountain somewhere north of Capernaum in order to escape the crowd and focus on the 12. All three of the great discourses of Jesus (this Sermon on the Mount, the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24, and the Upper Room Discourse of John 13–16) were given to the 12 disciples. Unlike the other two, for this first sermon the crowds apparently followed Him, since they were present at the end (Matthew 7:28–29). After some time of casually following Jesus, watching Him heal and interact with people, the disciples now received some formal teaching on specific moral/theological issues. The godly life that Jesus lived before His disciples was crucial, but there came a point where it was time to sit down and teach some specific doctrines, morals, and attitudes about the Kingdom of God. These were apparently necessary for them to move forward in discipleship.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should make time to formally teach moral and theological truths to my disciples.
2. **INTERPRETATION:** Being *poor in spirit* was the opposite of being proud in spirit. The Bible consistently condemns pride (James 4:6). The focus here is not on physical poverty (as it is in Luke 6:20) but on humility. This was a crucial Beatitude for the disciples to learn since it would define their whole ministry and distinguish them from the world.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should emphasize humility with those I disciple. I need to teach them that there is no such thing as good pride, not even being proud of their country, church, or children. Pride is the belief in value independent from God, and it is always opposed by God. Instead, we should be thankful, grateful, and appreciative.
3. **INTERPRETATION:** Historically, the **death** of Jesus did end the Mosaic Law as a rule of order for today (Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:24–25). But the **life** of Christ did not do that. Jesus came to fulfill what we call the Old Testament by perfectly keeping the heart of God the Father, who revealed the Law to Moses and the prophesies to the prophets. So His life did not abolish the Law. He kept not only its letter but its spirit. There is another sense in which the Law and the prophets will not pass away. All the prophecy given in the books of the Law and the prophets will be fulfilled literally.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should teach what it means to apply the Mosaic Law today. The Mosaic Law was for Israel but, like all Scripture, it reveals the heart of God. Therefore, even if it is not performed today, it is to be applied today.
4. **INTERPRETATION:** Literally, this means that every letter and every piece of a letter is important. Every letter of the Law reflects the heart of God, so even though the specific commands were for another age, we fulfill them by **APPLYING** them to our age today. For example, the Israelites were to wipe out the Canaanites from the land. They were to kill every last one, leaving no one alive. The reason was that the Canaanites would tempt the Israelites to worship other gods. We are not to kill the foreigners in our land. But we can apply this by attempting to utterly wipe out all the sin in our lives, not leaving any of it left alive to tempt us to sin (Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:15–16).  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should teach my disciples the verbal infallibility of the Bible (Matthew 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16).
5. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus illustrates the previous statement of fulfilling the Law by saying six times something like *you have heard ... but I say to you*. In these examples, He is not contradicting the Law but applying it with the intention that God the Father had in mind when He revealed it. In each case, He increases the requirements of the Law.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should teach my disciples to have a sensitivity to the intentions of God.
6. **INTERPRETATION:** The 12 were told this because they needed to be aware of the judgments of a righteous God. For example, when God said *you shall not murder* (Exodus 20:13), He did not mean it’s all right to hate someone and call them a fool as long as you don’t murder them. Hatred is also offensive to a holy God. Thus, Jesus illustrates His point about fulfilling the Law with applications reflecting intentions, attitudes, and thoughts from the mind of God.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should use applications that reflect the intentions, attitudes, and thoughts from the mind of God when I disciple people. I need to tell my disciples that God’s expectations go beyond keeping laws and traditions.
7. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus also warns His disciples against *practicing your righteousness before men*. In Matthew 6, that is described as not getting earthly acclaim for giving, prayer, and fasting. The point being: if you do it for earthly praise, you are forfeiting heavenly rewards.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should warn my disciples against doing things for earthly praise because earthly praise negates heavenly rewards. Seeking earthly praise does not characterize the disciples of Jesus Christ.
8. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus consistently taught against storing up treasures on earth. Of course, family responsibilities require saving to pay future bills. But that is about responsibility, not treasuring earthly things. The challenge is to not allow responsibilities to become an excuse for acquiring earthly treasures.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should help my disciples distinguish between earthly responsibilities and earthly treasures. Living in luxury does not characterize the disciples of Jesus Christ.
9. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus does indeed teach a profit motive here, but it is a heavenly profit, not an earthly profit.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should teach my disciples to have a heavenly profit motive.
10. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus wants His disciples to be sensitive to those who call Him “Lord” and yet are not true believers. These would not be the Pharisees or the Sadducees but those who are following Jesus for personal benefits.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should warn my disciples about those who call Jesus “Lord” but do not obey Him.

## TO SUMMARIZE

Jesus taught the 12 the Sermon on the Mount to give them God’s standard for moral excellence.



# Sending Out The 12 – Exploring The Subject

## Make some OBSERVATIONS from Matthew 10

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: [The names are repeated] (vv. 1-2). ... These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: "Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give" (vv. 5-8). ... "Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues" (vv. 16-17). ... "A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebub, how much more will they malign the members of his household!" (vv. 24-25). ... "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (v. 28). ... "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law" (vv. 34-35). ... "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it" (vv. 38-39).

## What INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS can you make from Sending Out the 12?

1. What specific authority did Jesus give the 12? How were they supposed to use this authority?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Jesus gave them the power they needed to \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
2. Where were the 12 to go with this gift and this message? What is the significance of not going to the Gentiles and the Samaritans?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Jesus wanted them to \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
3. What does it mean to be *shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves*? [See also Romans 16:19.]  
**INTERPRETATION:** Jesus meant \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
4. Why were they to *beware of men*? From the context, what kind of men were they to beware of?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Jesus meant \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
5. Why does Jesus tell the 12 that *a disciple is not above his teacher*? How does He apply that idea?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Jesus wanted the 12 to \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
6. What does Jesus mean when He says, *Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword*? In what sense is this true generally? Compare this to Jesus' statement, *Blessed are the peacemakers* (Matthew 5:9; see also Romans 12:8). How was this supposed to impact the apostles' ministry? How was it to govern their view of politics, religion, and the ordering of society? How about relating to family members?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Jesus is telling the 12 \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the *cross* in *take up his cross*? Why were the disciples to take it up and follow Him? How is that different from what they were asked to do before? Why is this a requirement for being *worthy of Me*? How does that relate to he who *has found* or *lost his life* in the next phrase?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Historically, \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

## TO SUMMARIZE

Why did Jesus send out the 12?



## Sending Out the 12 – The Author's Analysis

1. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus gave them the power they needed to declare the Kingdom of God on this journey by increasing their ability to heal and cast out demons. They were to freely give what they had freely received.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should encourage my disciples to freely give whatever gifts God has given them (finances, education, wisdom, etc.) to anyone who wants to hear about the Kingdom of God.
2. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus wanted them to go only to the Jews and not to the Gentiles because the church age had not yet begun (see Matthew 28:18-20, Ephesians 3:3-9). At this time, Jesus was offering Himself as the Messiah to Israel.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should follow the specific directives given in the Bible for my age, which today is the Age of Grace or the church (the body of Christ). These directives include all the instructions for the body of Christ in the New Testament. But not every command is for the whole body of Christ. (For example, Paul told Timothy to *remain on in Ephesus*—1 Timothy 1:3). So, like the rest of Scripture, the Gospels have some general commands (like John 1:12), and some just for the twelve. As always, the context determines which are which. Remember, the whole Bible should be applied (2 Timothy 3:16) by looking for the heart of God revealed in the passage.
3. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus meant that the disciples were to increase their ability to judge the difference between the Kingdom of God and the values of this world (to be shrewd is to have good powers of judgment). But they were to be innocent (i.e., not experienced) when it came to sin.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should increase my shrewdness by sharpening my powers of judgment to discern truth from error and good from evil. But, at the same time, I must remain innocent of the evil and false teaching I am discerning. Past sin may make me more aware of the need for some particular ministry, but it does not make me better equipped to meet that need.
4. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus meant that the *men* the apostles were to *beware of* were the scribes, who controlled the courts, and the Pharisees, who controlled the synagogues.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not entrust my ministry to those who control our courts or religious institutions.
5. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus wanted the 12 to follow Him, not to use Him as a springboard to jump into their own ministry or theology. Specifically, He said that the 12 could expect the same kind of persecution He was experiencing.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not create new theology beyond the Scripture, and I should expect (when I conform myself to the ways and teachings of Christ) that I will receive the same rejection from the world that He received.
6. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus was telling the 12 that He came to declare war, not peace, with this satanic controlled world. That war was manifested in His attack on the Judaism of His day. It would not be waged in a military or political arena but on a person-to-person theological level. This is the balance to the commands Jesus gave the 12 to be peacemakers. They were not to cause trouble, as an objective or over personal issues. The war would be waged against them because of their morality and their theology.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not see discipleship as making peace with the world but going to war with it. That war is not fought by involvement in politics or social change, it is fought with the belief systems of everyone I meet. But it should not be because I am offending their personalities or because of my selfishness. It should be because of my unwillingness to compromise with sin or tolerate false teaching.
7. **INTERPRETATION:** Historically, the cross was the most cruel means of Roman execution. The cross was carried to the place of execution (as we see in the crucifixion of Christ). So *take his cross* is seemingly an exhortation to take up one's life situation, or one's burdens, and follow Christ. It is to die to self and to live for Christ on a daily basis (1 Corinthians 15:31). The one who *has found his life* is the one who *does not take his cross and follow after Me*. Both these phrases point to the one who is not dying to self.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should take whatever life situation or life sufferings I have and follow Christ. This does not mean I don't try to fix my problems, but many are not resolvable. Those (family situations, health issues, personal handicaps, etc.) are not just unfortunate problems but are a laboratory for my discipleship.

### TO SUMMARIZE

Jesus sent out the 12 to motivate them to learn.

# Teaching the Fear of God – Exploring The Subject

## Make some observations about the fear of God

**Luke 12:1-5**—He began saying to His disciples first of all, “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops. I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell; yes, I tell you, fear Him!”

**John 3:19-21**—... This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.

**1 John 2:3-5a; 4:18**—... 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 keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. ... There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

## What INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS can you make about the Fear of God?

### Regarding Luke 12:

1. In this context, what is the hypocrisy, which is the leaven of the Pharisees?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Here, hypocrisy is \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I must \_\_\_\_\_
2. How does Jesus define *fear*? Is it as awe, reverence, and respect or is it as being afraid of? Who is in control with the “awe respect” definition of fear? Me or the one I fear? Who is in control with the “being afraid of” definition of fear?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Jesus defined *fear* as \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I must \_\_\_\_\_
3. Jesus told His disciples to fear God and not men. What is the hope of the people who fear men (who can kill the body)? What is the hope of those who fear God (who can cast them into hell)? How is fear connected to hope? Do our fears reveal our hopes? Is a person without fear a person without hope?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Our fear is connected to our hope in that \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I must \_\_\_\_\_

### Regarding John 3:

4. According to John 3, why does the world avoid the God of the Bible and the truth about Jesus? Since God is light, and according to Jesus (in John 3) evildoers avoid the light, why do so many unbelieving sinners today feel comfortable talking about God and approaching God—say, in prayer or worship?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Unbelievers feel comfortable praying to God and talking about God because \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I must \_\_\_\_\_

### Regarding 1 John 2 and 4:

5. John says: *perfect love casts out fear* (1 John 4:18). How is John defining *love* in 1 John 2? What love casts out fear?  
**INTERPRETATION:** John defines love as \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I must \_\_\_\_\_
6. So if the perfect love, which casts out fear, is perfectly keeping His commandments, and many post-modern “Christians” don’t keep His commandments, then why are they so comfortable talking about God and approaching God—say, in prayer and worship? Does the Gospel allow us to approach God without fear? Why or why not?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Many post-modern Christians \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I must \_\_\_\_\_
7. Why do we sin? How does our fear of God affect our choice to sin?  
**INTERPRETATION:** We sin because \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I must \_\_\_\_\_

## To Summarize

What’s the difference between a Christian who comes to God in **love** and one who comes to God in **fear**, when, for example:

- A woman elder reads 1 Timothy 2:11-14?
- A Christian seeking revenge reads Romans 12:17-21?
- A Christian homosexual reads 1 Corinthians 6:9-10?
- A Christian living in luxury reads Luke 16:19-25?
- A Christian tolerating other religions reads Acts 4:12?
- A proud Christian reads James 4:6?



# Teaching The Fear of God – The Author’s Analysis

## Regarding Luke 12:

1. **INTERPRETATION:** Here, hypocrisy is the Pharisees’ tendency to cover up their sin, keep it a secret—in the darkness away from the light. The point is, they feared people and not God. They felt they could get away with it if they kept it from people. Jesus warned the disciples not to do that because God will reveal it.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I must warn my disciples not to think they can keep secrets from God.
2. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus defined *fear* as “be afraid of.” When we define fear as “awe, reverence and respect,” then we are in control of the fear. Obedience is done on our terms. We get to decide when to do it and what it looks like. When we define fear as “being afraid of,” then it is done on the terms of the one we fear. When I am afraid of someone, then they are dictating the terms of my obedience and defining what that looks like. So I can have a reverence for God and still be in charge of my relationship with God. Only when I am afraid of God is He in control of my life.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I must teach my disciples to be afraid of God or they will not define obedience to God on His terms.
3. **INTERPRETATION:** Our fear is connected to our hope in that we will fear in the same direction as our hope. The hope of people who fear men is that they hope they won’t lose whatever those men provide. Someone without fear is someone without hope.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I must tell my disciples to check out their fears because that will be an indication of where their hope lies. For example, if you fear men who can kill the body, then your hope is in your body. If you are afraid of losing your money, then your hope is in your money.

## Regarding John 3:

4. **INTERPRETATION:** Unbelievers feel comfortable praying to God and talking about God because they have created their own god. Theirs is not a righteous God, a God who is just, holy, unchanging and sovereign but rather a tolerant, forgiving god who makes few demands of them. He is a god who hopes they can soon come up with more social, political, and scientific answers, which will erase the consequences of their sins. They avoid the God of the Bible because their deeds are evil, so they fear the light. But they have no fear of the idolatrous god they have created.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I must show my disciples that the world’s god is not the God of the Bible. When they say we are all worshiping the same God, it’s a lie. Their god is not a righteous, just, holy God to be feared.

## Regarding 1 John 2 and 4:

5. **INTERPRETATION:** John defined love as keeping the commandments of God. He said: *whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected*. So, according to John, the perfect love that casts out fear is perfectly keeping God’s commandments. If we kept all of the Word of God perfectly, we would have nothing to fear from a holy God, but since none of us do that, our only approach to a holy God must be one of fear.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I must teach my disciples that to love God is not to presume upon His holiness but to fear Him because of our lack of holiness.
6. **INTERPRETATION:** Many post-modern Christians have done the same thing that non-Christians have done; they have changed the definition of God to a god that accommodates their sin and tolerates their rebellion. Therefore, they don’t have to fear approaching their god because he is tolerant and forgiving in the sense that he overlooks their sins. Another common answer is to say the Gospel covers our sin so we don’t have to fear God. The problem is, the Gospel does not say God forgives sins. It says God forgives sinners of their sins when they repent. But sin must always be paid for. That is why Christ had to die on the cross. The just character of God demanded it. But this payment is only available to those who receive it by faith (John 1:12).  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I must warn my disciples not to be casual in their approach to God. The Gospel does not negate the need to fear God.
7. **INTERPRETATION:** We sin because we have a sin nature. But we choose to sin because we think we can afford it, we can get away with it. We think we have a “get-out-of-jail-free” card called 1 John 1:9. If we come to God with love and not fear, then His commands become suggestions, i.e., we will keep them only when we agree with them and they don’t conflict with our lifestyle.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I must love God and fear God. “God is like a fire on a cold night. You want to get close, but the closer you get, the more you realize your need to fear” (**Error! Contact not defined.**).

## To Summarize:

Christians who come to God in love but without fear are usually thinking of love in terms of God being tolerant. So they are not just coming to God with love, but they are assuming God is coming to them the same way, with a love defined by tolerance. People who come to God with love alone, or with fear defined only as “awe, reverence, respect,” will compromise the Word of God when it contradicts their lifestyle. We promise according to our hopes, but we perform according to our fears. In the examples given, these Christians who come to God without fear will tend to find reasons (like, ancient culture, post-modern relevance, or “Love Wins”) to ignore the clear teaching of the Word of God.



# Jesus and the Sabbath Day – Exploring the Subject

## Make some OBSERVATIONS about the following passages

**Mark 2**—And it happened that He was passing through the grainfields on the **Sabbath**, and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain. The Pharisees were saying to Him, “Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the **Sabbath**?” And He said to them, “Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry; how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?” Jesus said to them, “The **Sabbath** was made for man, and not man for the **Sabbath**. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the **Sabbath**” (verses 23-28).

**Luke 13**—And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the **Sabbath**, and stood up to read (Luke 4:16). ... And He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the **Sabbath** (Luke 13:10). ... But the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus had healed on the **Sabbath**, began saying to the crowd in response, “There are six days in which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the **Sabbath** day.” But the Lord answered him and said, “You hypocrites, does not each of you on the **Sabbath** untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead him away to water him?” (verses 13:14-15).

**John 5**—Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the **Sabbath** on that day. So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, “It is the **Sabbath**, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet” ... But he answered them, “He who made me well was the one who said to me, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk.’” They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk’?” But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you.” The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the **Sabbath**. But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.” For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the **Sabbath**, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God (verses 9-18). [All emphases mine.]

## What INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS can you make about Jesus and the Sabbath Day?

1. First, define the Sabbath day with some detail from the Old Testament (see Exodus 16:29; 20:10-11; 31:14; 35:2-3; Leviticus 16:31; 23:3).  
**INTERPRETATION:** In the Old Testament, the Sabbath day was \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
2. Based on Jesus’ response to the Pharisees, were His disciples breaking the Sabbath when they were *passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath* and began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain? And what about the man He healed and then told *Pick up your pallet and walk*. Was that breaking the Sabbath?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Jesus’ argument was \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
3. What do Jesus’ two statements: (1) *The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath* and (2) *So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath*, add to what we understand about the Sabbath from the Old Testament?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Jesus claimed 2 things about the Sabbath \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
4. What was Jesus’ custom on the Sabbath, and why did He do that?  
**INTERPRETATION:** On the Sabbath, Jesus’ custom was \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
5. Why did Jesus consistently provide His disciples with an example of intentionally healing on the Sabbath? What was the basic difference between Jesus’ view and the Pharisees’ view of the Sabbath? What were the disciples to learn from it?  
**INTERPRETATION:** Jesus’ explanation as to why He healed on the Sabbath was \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
6. From the statements above and the apostles’ understanding of Sabbath keeping throughout the New Testament, what should be our position on Sabbath keeping, and what should we communicate about that to our disciples? [See Acts 2:46; 18:4; 20:7; Romans 14:5; Colossians 2:16-17; and Hebrews 4:9.]  
**INTERPRETATION:** The apostles \_\_\_\_\_  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

**TO SUMMARIZE:** Answer these two questions:

- Why did Jesus heal people on the Sabbath?
- How should we apply Sabbath keeping today?

# Jesus and the Sabbath Day – The Author’s Analysis

**1. INTERPRETATION:** In the Old Testament, the Sabbath was:

- a. The seventh day of the week (Saturday not Sunday) and other special annually designated days (Exodus 20:11; Matthew 28:1),
- b. Originally, a day the Israelites were not to go out of their dwellings (Exodus 16:29), which changed to,
- c. Doing no work, as part of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:10-11),
- d. A commandment which carried the death penalty for breaking it (Exodus 31:14),
- e. A *holy day of complete rest* where you were not to even *kindle a fire in any of your dwellings* (Exodus 35:2-3),
- f. A day of *solemn rest for you, that you may humble your souls* (Leviticus 16:31),
- g. A covenant between God and Israel in the land of Israel (Exodus 31:16; Leviticus 25:2),

**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should understand the Sabbath day was a covenant of rest between God and Israel.

**2. INTERPRETATION:** Jesus’ argument was based on David breaking the Law without guilt. Jesus was making the point that those things did not violate the heart of God (1 Samuel 13–14; Acts 13:22) or His intent for the Sabbath. The Pharisees had no way to deal with any sense of morality that pursued the heart of God; they could only deal with the Law.

**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should teach my disciples to pursue the heart of God from the Word of God.

**3. INTERPRETATION:** Jesus claimed two things about the Sabbath not specified in the Old Testament. First, at least one purpose for the Sabbath was to serve man, not the other way around. Man is to serve God, not the Sabbath. The Sabbath is not some eternal deity that man was created to serve. Second, the Son of Man, the Lord Jesus Christ, is Lord of the Sabbath. He, not the Sabbath, is the Lord. The question Jesus forced was: Who is Lord, Jesus or the Sabbath?

**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should understand that laws (even God’s laws) are something which come **from** God. They are **not** something **above** God, which dictate holiness to God. For example, suppose I give my children a law: **DO NOT PLAY SOCCER IN THE STREET**. Then suppose later in life they become missionaries to a third-world country, where kids constantly play soccer in the street (because it is the only place they have). There, it isn’t actually dangerous because there are very few cars. My adult missionary children might even coach some of those kids playing soccer in the street in order to reach them with the Gospel. Would they be violating my law? Yes. Would they be violating my heart? No. They would actually be violating my heart if they kept my law when it interfered with their ability to do evangelism.

**4. INTERPRETATION:** On the Sabbath, Jesus’ custom was to speak in the synagogues of the Jews. The reason seems to be that it was an appropriate place for Him to speak about Himself and the Kingdom of God. His teaching and healing in those synagogues also forced the Jews to decide between Him and the Pharisees.

**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should use every opportunity to present Christ and His claims in socially acceptable places where people are likely to listen, such as in local churches on Sundays.

**5. INTERPRETATION:** Jesus’ explanation as to why He healed on the Sabbath was *My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working*. So the reason for healing on the Sabbath, which the disciples heard (or overheard), was that it was the work of both God the Father and the Son. Jesus was giving the 12 a standard that was determined by the heart and the character of a holy God. Jesus was not teaching a standard below law keeping but one far above it. The Pharisees believed God was unknowable, only His laws were knowable. Jesus was not teaching law-breaking but law-exceeding. What He was proclaiming was greater than the Sabbath, not less.

**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not impose, on others, laws not given to the church age. And I should not break the laws that were given to the church by Christ and the apostles in the New Testament. But neither should my righteousness be confined to laws. Those laws are my path to the mind of God. For example, we are told not to be *forsaking our own assembling together* (Hebrews 10:25). To say: “that means everybody should go to a local church meeting twice on Sunday” would be to create a law which is not in the Bible. To say: “we don’t need to gather together with other believers” is to break a biblical law that came from the heart of God. But that does not mean it’s okay to gather together but live like the world when we are not gathered together. That would be to keep the law of God but not the heart of God.

**6. INTERPRETATION:** The apostles seem to have the same custom as Jesus —they were *reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath* [Saturday] *and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks* (Acts 18:4). But believers were also *day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house* (Acts 2:46). The church in Troas also met on Sunday (Acts 20:7). But what Paul taught was: *One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind* (Romans 14:5). *Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or ... a Sabbath day things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ* (Colossians 2:16-17).

**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should teach my disciples that for the church age there is nothing specifically sacred in keeping a special day. However, God has designed most of creation to rest for a period of time, so a weekly rest day is advisable (especially since it’s the example God gave us at creation). But there is no command from Christ or the apostles in the New Testament to keep the Sabbath (Saturday) or Sunday as a special day. Sabbath keeping is the only one of the Ten Commandments not repeated for the church.

**TO SUMMARIZE:** Jesus healed on the Sabbath to reveal the heart of God, the perspective of God, and that He was the Messiah of God. It’s a good idea to rest one day of the week (where we cease from laborious work) because God rested after creation and He designated a rest day for Israel, but we should do it without thinking that it is, in and of itself, a sacred act.



## Intermission – What We Have Learned

I'm a pilot, so allow me to use an airplane analogy to describe our study of discipleship. First, we took off by defining discipleship and discussing it a bit (in the first two pages). After a quick flight over the Old Testament, we flew low over the beginning of Jesus' ministry. We did not land and get out and walk with Him through His whole ministry. That would take something much bigger than this study book. But we did circle around and take a pretty close look at a few instances of Jesus discipling the 12. Using OBSERVATION, INTERPRETATION, and APPLICATION, we immersed ourselves in the details of analysis. This process is usually stretching but rewarding, since we see more of the text than we would with a casual study.

Here, we will climb up and soar over the subject of discipleship from about 40,000 feet and take a broader look at the landscape we have learned. After this two-page intermission, we will once again dive down and look at the details, circling around some key instances in the last part of Jesus' discipleship of the 12. Then, at the end of this study, we will briefly fly back over the whole course and summarize what we have learned. Okay—we have reached 40,000 feet now, so let's have a look.

1. **Discipleship is one person intentionally impacting the life of another in the direction of Christlikeness.** This is the definition we began with. It is when one person intentionally impacts the life of someone else, not by conforming them to their own ideas but by conforming them to the image of Christ.
2. **Discipleship is a continual process of learning for both the discipler and the learner.** As soon as either stops learning, the discipleship process begins dying. The discipler keeps the attention of his learner(s) not by telling them to be disciplined enough to continue the program but by being someone the student wants to stay with because of what the discipler has to offer. So a discipling teacher is a perpetual learner.
3. **Discipleship is a multiplication mentality.** It is simply not about addition. When someone says: "Did you have a good *turnout* for your meeting?" Or "*How many* are in your church (or Bible study, or organization, or whatever)?" they are not interested in discipleship. Disciplers just don't think that way. They often see large gatherings as a hindrance, getting in the way of the multiplication process. Disciplers think about how they can get their learner to reproduce his life in others, not how to get him to hear a great speaker or become a great speaker. They are asking themselves how to find a guy for their learner to work with, not what meetings he should attend, or how many attended their meetings.
4. **Discipleship is incarnational.** It's one person working with another person *in the flesh*. Technology provides fantastic tools to help us. This study book is an attempt to be such a tool. I am typing it on a computer, getting my Bible information from a software program, and downloading things off our web site and others. But all this is not discipleship. It is only when I meet with the guys I see face-to-face, in-the-flesh, that discipleship actually happens. Jesus lived with the 12 in-the-flesh. When He died, He asked the Father that they be with Him forever. All of the apostles, no matter how many letters or messengers they sent to people, desired most of all to come and see them and spend time with them personally, physically, in-the-flesh.
5. **Discipleship is individual.** It simply does not see people collectively. It is not interacting with the masses. It does not deal with society or social problems. Here's an example. Jesus described "giving" with the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). This was one person helping one other person who he came across on the road. That is how a discipler thinks. A non-discipler thinks about giving as the social redistribution of wealth. It's curing poverty, saving the homeless, curing AIDS, and so forth. The discipler is not callous to those needs, but he just doesn't think that way. A discipler thinks about the one individual he can help individually. One more example. When a speaker speaks to an audience, he is usually thinking of that audience collectively, as if they were one entity. But when Jesus spoke to the multitude, He knew what was in the heart of every person, and He addressed those hearts individually. This is seen whenever someone from the crowd questioned Him about something. His answer was not some politically correct response which gauged the impact it would have on the masses. It was a specific pointed answer aimed directly at the heart of the individual who asked the question. So, even in a crowd Jesus was thinking individually.
6. **Disciples are connected by a network of relationships.** Disciples are not tied together by an organization or a meeting or a location. If we read the end of almost any of the epistles of the New Testament, we will find a network of people, strung across the whole universal church from Jerusalem to Antioch to Ephesus to Corinth to Rome, who are the foundation of the apostles' ministry. Those involved in the discipleship process today may not know the people sitting next to them at church, but they may know people all around town and in other towns, or even across the world, who they are personally involved with, learning, helping, writing, teaching, modeling, correcting, giving, praying, equipping. These networks of relationships have gone all the way through the centuries down to today. The structure of the organized church and that of our missionary organizations change (as it should), but all the while these individual networks have been there. The secular media is unaware of them, the church leaders tend to ignore them, and the analysts overlook them. That's because their meetings are often small if not one-on-one. No organization contains them



(although they are typically in many organizations, groups, and gatherings). Their meetings are specifically targeted at some subject (like family, finances, evangelism, missions, manhood or womanhood), and their gatherings are irregular. If an analyst heard they met last weekend and showed up next weekend to gather some statistics about their group, they may not be there. And these networks are the highways for discipleship.

7. **Disciples are people who want to be disciplined.** They cannot be grouped in any other way. They are not necessarily the people in my church. They are not necessarily the people I led to Christ. They are not necessarily pastors, or elders, or missionaries. I was at a meeting once where a man was speaking about discipleship and someone asked the question: "Why not just disciple everyone in church? They all need it!" The speaker answered by saying: "Did it ever occur to you that maybe they don't want it?" When the meeting was over someone asked me what I thought about that answer. An illustration came to mind. If I go to a concert to hear a philharmonic orchestra play, I am not going there to learn to play one of those instruments. If in the middle of the concert someone got up and said: "We will now all learn to play the violin," I'd say, "I'm out of here. I didn't come to learn to play the violin. I came here to listen to you do it." This is not to criticize those attending a church. It is only to say that people gathered for one thing are not necessarily interested in another thing. We saw this clearly in the choosing of Christ's first disciples. They didn't come from those Jesus cast demons out of, preached to, healed, or fed. They came from John the Baptist, and then by referral from a network of personal relationships. But not everyone involved in John the Baptist's ministry became a disciple of Jesus either, including John himself. All ministry, including discipleship, requires three things: (1) a need, (2) someone ready willing and able to meet that need, and (3) a willingness for the need to be met on the part of the one with the need.
8. **Discipleship is life long.** There is an interesting commentary on the life of King David (second, of course, to the fact that God called him a man after His own heart). When David was young and first gathered a rag tag army around himself in the cave of Adullam, there was among that group some guys called "David's mighty men." David was probably in his early to mid-20s at the time. When David was 70 years old and laying on his death bed, we find those same "mighty men" still there. They were with him his whole life. That is the discipleship context. Jesus and His disciples were together to the end, Paul's disciples, men like Timothy and Titus and Luke, were still with Paul at the end of his life. Peter was a life-long discipler of John Mark, the Apostle John never stopped discipling his friend Gaius, even though he moved to a different city, and so on. Discipleship is not indigenous in the traditional missionary sense of training people for leadership then leaving. The apostles never abandoned their disciples. They were not, of course, always physically with them. But they always longed to be with them, and they were never unavailable to them. The discipling relationship continued in some way all their lives.
9. **Discipleship is narrow—restricted to the Word of God.** Discipleship is not tolerant, or compromising, or open to the world's wisdom. Discipleship is a study and application of the truth of the Word of God as found in the text of the Old and New Testament. Plus nothing! Discipleship is not interested in getting its truth from psychology, philosophy, the natural sciences or any of the world's noted authors, scholars, or religious leaders. Even Christian leaders are only relevant to the extent that they are talking about the Bible. Disciplers are sinners like everybody else. But their focus is on the righteous character of God revealed throughout Scripture and the incarnated person of Jesus Christ, not on the wisdom of the world.
10. **Discipleship has an eternal perspective.** There is a sense in which the ministry of Christ and the apostles can be summed up by saying: they gave people an eternal perspective. Their message was for people to take their focus off of this earth and put it on heaven. It is a heavenly focus that puts everything into its proper perspective. Discipleship has no appeal to those who desire to be healthy wealthy and wise on this earth. If you want to fix the world, be involved in solving the world's problems, or influence its politics, you will not be very interested in discipleship.

Okay, we have been looking around the subject of discipleship from 40,000 feet. It's really valuable to look at the big picture and get some perspective. But Jesus is not finished discipling the 12. He is beginning the long road, which will lead to His crucifixion. So we shall go back down to a lower altitude and use our OBSERVATIONS, INTERPRETATIONS, and APPLICATIONS to zero in on some particulars of the latter half of His ministry.

# Understanding the Kingdom of God – Exploring the Subject

## Make some OBSERVATIONS from Matthew 13

*That day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea. And large crowds gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach. And He spoke many things to them in parables (vv. 1-3) ... And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand (vv. 10-13).*

*"Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away. And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty" (vv. 18-23).*

*Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away" (vv. 24-25) ... "Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, 'First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn'" (v. 30).*

*He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all other seeds, but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches" (vv. 31-32).*

## What INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS can you make from Matthew 13?

1. What was the setting for the presentation of the parables of Matthew 13? From their question, *Why do You speak to them in parables?*, how do you think Christ's disciples expected Him to address the crowd?  
INTERPRETATION: It seems the disciples expected \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
2. *Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted."* Why did Jesus speak these parables to the crowd if it had not *been granted* for them to understand?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus spoke in parables the crowd could not understand because \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
3. What does it mean: *For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him?* What does this say about social welfare programs? What were the disciples to learn from this with respect to discipling others and beginning the church?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus was telling His disciples \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the one main point to the parable of the sower/soils? What is meant by each of the soils?  
INTERPRETATION: The main point of the parable of the soils is \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the meaning of the parable of the wheat and the tares? What is its significance for discipleship?  
INTERPRETATION: This parable is significant for discipleship because it means \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
6. What is the meaning of the parable of the mustard seed? What is its significance for discipleship?  
INTERPRETATION: This parable is significant for discipleship because it means \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

### To Summarize:

- What should we learn from the fact that the Kingdom of God was presented in the form of parables?
- What should we learn about the Kingdom of God from the parables themselves?



# Understanding the Kingdom of God – The Author's Analysis

1. **INTERPRETATION:** It seems the disciples expected Jesus to make it simple for people to understand. The setting was a crowd who spontaneously gathered. [Neither Jesus nor the apostles ever organized, or invited people to attend, a large meeting anywhere in the New Testament.] Jesus then got into a boat to address them. These were probably mostly Galilean Jews living near Capernaum. This crowd knew what they knew from the Old Testament and the teaching of the rabbis but were unable to understand much beyond that. The disciples seem surprised that Jesus did not make His message simple and acceptable to the understanding of the crowd.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should expect most people to want my message to be simple or something a general Christian audience would already understand. They will want me to reinforce the existing prejudices of crowd. Their assumption will be that my message should be for the masses. So I need to re-orient my disciples away from a reach-the-masses mentality to a focus on the truth of the message and those God is calling to Himself.
2. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus spoke in parables the crowd could not understand because God had not chosen for them to understand. The mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven were those things that changed the focus from the Jewish people living in the Land of Israel to a people of God from all nations going to heaven. Jesus spoke these things because they were true, and the truth honored God, whether the crowd understood it or not. If He had spoken these parables only to the disciples while they were alone somewhere, they would not have understood that the crowd could not understand.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not be primarily people-oriented but be primarily God-oriented. If my focus is on what people think they need (or want), then I will sooner or later warp the truth of the Kingdom of God. The goal of my ministry is not for all people to understand the Kingdom of God, but to help those who God is calling to Himself understand it. For example, I should present the Gospel to everyone I can (like the crowd gathered on the shore), but not make the Gospel acceptable to everybody. The truth of the plan of salvation will only be available to those the Holy Spirit is convicting to receive it (John 16:8).
3. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus was telling His disciples that those who have understanding will have more understanding, and those without understanding, what little understanding they do have will be taken away from them. The disciples were to learn that their ministry of discipleship was not to give a Christian ritual to replace a Jewish ritual but to change people's understanding.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should realize that change in people will not come without giving them understanding. This is why all social welfare programs must be only to aid the afflicted with no hope of solving their problems. Solutions require an increase in understanding. Discipleship is a process which changes a person's understanding of the heart of God, the Kingdom of God, and the purposes of God for our generation. (See the example of David in Acts 13:36.) When understanding replaces habitual religion, then those who have understanding (which is only granted by God) can increase to an abundance of understanding.
4. **INTERPRETATION:** The main point of the parable of the soils is that the good soil is the person who understands the Word of God. The evidence for this is that the one who understands reproduces that Word in others. The other three soils for various reasons (the devil took it away, persecution took it away, riches took it away) could not understand.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should be sensitive to things that can keep me, or those I disciple, from understanding the Word of God. Satan may interfere by, say, attacking the credibility of the Bible. Persecution from other Christians may pressure disciples to conform to a ritual. The lure of luxurious living may sideline them.
5. **INTERPRETATION:** This parable is significant for discipleship because it means tares (unbelievers who look like believers and claim to be believers) will grow up among the wheat (the true believers). Jesus instructed His disciples not to try to judge the motives of those claiming to be believers. That sort of thing would also disrupt the growth of believers. Of course, immoral actions must be disciplined (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5). But motives, as to the sincerity of one's faith, were not to be judged.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not judge the motives or challenge the sincerity of someone's claim to faith. Sometimes I may even find myself discipling someone who is an unbeliever claiming to be a believer (like Judas Iscariot). Immoral actions must be dealt with according to the biblical mandate, but I should not try to figure out who the false believers are and throw them out, if their claims and lifestyles are consistent with the Scripture.
6. **INTERPRETATION:** This parable is significant for discipleship because it means the Kingdom of God starts small and grows without any help from us. Jesus wanted the disciples to know that their efforts would seem insignificant, but God would multiply their work to a worldwide kingdom, from which even unbelievers (*the birds of the air*) would benefit.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should understand two principles here: first, the Kingdom of God multiplies with one person discipling one other person. It is not even noticeable by the crowds of this world. Second, the expansion of my mustard seed efforts will not be something I will engineer. Its expansion is not something I am to do or even concern myself with. Jesus told the disciples *I will build My church* (Matthew 16:18). He never suggested that was something they should do. What they were to do was to *make disciples of all nations* (Matthew 28:18). Our job is to disciple mustard seeds.

## TO SUMMARIZE:

- The Kingdom of God should be presented as it truly is, not in such a way that the masses will accept it.
- The kingdom parables teach that the Kingdom itself grows and develops by the hand of God without our knowledge or involvement, but understanding the Word of God will allow us to be used by God as He builds His Kingdom.

# Many of the Disciples Leave – Exploring The Subject

## Make some OBSERVATIONS from John 6

After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick. Then Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat down with His disciples. Now the Passover, the feast of the Jews, was near (vv. 1-4). ... Jesus said, "Have the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. Jesus then took the loaves, and having given thanks, He distributed to those who were seated; likewise also of the fish as much as they wanted (vv. 10-11). ... [Next, Jesus walked on the water, and the crowd followed Him to Capernaum.] Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled (v. 26). ... I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst (v. 35). ... Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven." They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?" (vv. 41-42). ... "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh." Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves (vv. 51-53). ... Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?" But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble?" (vv. 60-61). ... As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God" (vv. 66-69).

## What INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS can you make about the disciples who leave?

1. There seems to be 3 groups: the "large crowd," the "disciples," and "the twelve." Who are the "disciples"?  
INTERPRETATION: The disciples are \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
2. Why did Jesus criticize them for following Him because they *ate of the loaves and were filled*?  
INTERPRETATION: He criticized them because \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
3. What does Jesus mean when He says: *I am the bread of life*?  
INTERPRETATION: Calling Himself the bread of life meant \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
4. When Jesus said: *if anyone eats of this bread*, what did He mean by *eats*?  
INTERPRETATION: Eating this bread is symbolic of \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, to be a disciple of Christ, I should \_\_\_\_\_
5. What was *difficult* about this (eat His flesh, drink His blood) statement, and why did it *cause them to stumble*, and withdraw so that they *were not walking with Him anymore*? And why did Jesus intentionally make a statement that caused them to stumble and withdraw from Him?  
INTERPRETATION: This was a difficult statement because \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, there comes a time when I should \_\_\_\_\_
6. Why did Jesus ask the twelve if they *want to go away also*?  
INTERPRETATION: It was because \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should ask my disciples \_\_\_\_\_
7. From his answer here, why was Peter a true follower of Christ?  
INTERPRETATION: Peter was a true disciple of Christ because \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should be a disciple of Christ because \_\_\_\_\_
8. What did Peter mean when he said: *We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God*? What is the relationship between *believed* and *come to know*?  
INTERPRETATION: Peter is saying \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should understand \_\_\_\_\_

## TO SUMMARIZE:

This long chapter (which should be studied completely, not just from the excerpts taken from it here) represents a sort of turning point in Jesus' discipleship ministry. His disciples had increased from the five, which He originally received by referral from John the Baptist and a network of their own relationships, to twelve, to a crowd that followed Him. Now He reversed that trend by driving the crowd away and even challenging the commitment of the twelve. Why did He do that at this point in His ministry?



## Many of the Disciples Leave – The Author's Analysis

1. **INTERPRETATION:** The disciples are learners and followers, which is the general definition of a disciple. But it does not mean they were all true believers. They believed Jesus could heal and feed them but not necessarily in who He was.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should realize that if I have a public service ministry, that ministry may attract some people who are only there to get what can benefit them in this life. They may believe some things about Jesus but not others.
2. **INTERPRETATION:** He criticized them because they came only for earthly benefits. Unlike the later feeding of the 4,000 (Matthew 15:32-38), Jesus did not feed the 5,000 because they were starving or because it was too far for them to go get food (John 6:5). He fed them because He wanted to set up the illustration which He would give later (the next day to generally the same group) about His being the bread of life.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should make sure there is a clear opportunity for people to leave. Some people will be attracted to my ministry because of only personal, physical, earthly, or political reasons. For example, there may be people who come to the ministry I am involved in only to get a house built or to receive medical treatment or enjoy the preaching or music. I need to set up an exit strategy for those people.
3. **INTERPRETATION:** Calling Himself the *bread of life* meant that He was the most basic element of life, not just the whipped cream on the top of life. As bread was the basic food of the day, so also Jesus was the basic foundation, creator, and sustainer of *life*.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should help my disciples to look closely at the life and work of Jesus Christ as the model for life here and for all eternity.
4. **INTERPRETATION:** Eating this bread is symbolic of **believing** in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. Eating this bread is believing in Christ (John 1:12).  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, to be a disciple of Christ I should not just look at what He can do for me in this world. I could get “this world” help from secular organizations or unbelievers. A disciple must be a believer in the deity of Christ.
5. **INTERPRETATION:** This was a difficult statement because if taken as prose it would require cannibalism. Obviously, that is not what Jesus meant, and, obviously, the unbelieving “disciples” didn’t take it that way either. But it did confuse them because they didn’t know how to take it. One thing was clear: they were being asked to place their faith in Jesus, even though they didn’t understand what He was talking about. It is not that they were to place blind faith in Him. He had already given them sufficient evidence that He was the Messiah, the Son of God. What they were being asked to do was to take that faith to another level. They had faith in Him as a miracle worker, but not as a Messiah.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, there comes a time when I should give those in my ministry an opportunity to demonstrate their true faith in Christ. They need to be given an opportunity to trust Him when what He says cannot be clearly understood, or what He is doing in their lives is not clear. This trust is, however, not to be presented in a blind faith vacuum. It needs to be in a context of the many convincing proofs in Scripture that He is who He claimed to be—the eternal Son of God.
6. **INTERPRETATION:** It was because the other disciples had failed their test of faith, and now it was time for the twelve to respond. They could either follow the “this-world disciples” or continue with Christ into the realm of eternal life.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should ask my disciples if they are willing to follow Christ when what He requires of them goes beyond what they understand to be a benefit to them in this life, or beyond what they understand at all.
7. **INTERPRETATION:** Peter was a true disciple of Christ because he was willing to believe beyond his understanding but not contrary to it.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should be a disciple of Christ because I trust what is recorded in the Scripture, plus nothing! Since the Bible has never been proven to be untrue, I can trust it when it goes beyond what I can prove to be true.
8. **INTERPRETATION:** Peter is saying something like, “I have no idea what you mean by the statement about eating Your body and drinking Your blood, but I believe if I hang around long enough, I’ll find out.”  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should understand that, if I trust the Scripture, I will not be disappointed.

### TO SUMMARIZE:

The reason for this pivot was that the beginning of the church would require a focus on the twelve. It was now time to concentrate on training these men for the task that would consume the rest of their lives. I should also recognize a time in my discipleship ministry where the most important focus is not on more people but on a higher commitment from a few and a concentration on those few.

# Requirements for Discipleship – Exploring the Subject

## Make Some OBSERVATIONS from Luke 9 and 14

*As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:57-62).*

*Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So then none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions. Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned? It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out" (Luke 14:25-35).*

## What INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS can you make from these Requirements for Discipleship?

1. What discipleship requirement do we learn from Jesus' statement ... *the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head*?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus is telling the scribe (Matthew 8:19) \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
2. In Jesus' statement *Allow the dead to bury their own dead*, what does *dead* mean and what does the statement mean?  
INTERPRETATION: From the context \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the significance of the metaphor *No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*, and what does plowing represent?  
INTERPRETATION: Historically, \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
4. What does it mean that we must *hate* our parents, our spouse, etc., and our own life in order to be Christ's disciples?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the significance of the illustrations about the builder and the king?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus is giving these examples to \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
6. How does the king/builder illustration lead Jesus to the conclusion: *So then none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions*, and what does it mean to give up all our possessions?  
INTERPRETATION: Historically, \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

### TO SUMMARIZE:

How many requirements for discipleship can you list from this passage?



# Requirements for Discipleship – The Author’s Analysis

1. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus is telling the scribe (Matthew 8:19) that he needs to understand that Jesus has even less of a home than the animals have. Apparently, this scribe was thinking of some earthly benefits to following Jesus, so Jesus lets him know that He has no earthly home, not even a place to sleep.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not see following Christ as something that will gain me anything on this earth. I should not see myself as having an earthly home. This does not mean I should sell my house and live in a monastery. My marriage and family ministry responsibilities may require my providing them with a house. But I should only see it as part of fulfilling my ministry responsibilities, not as a basis for security or an opportunity to live in luxury.
2. **INTERPRETATION:** From the context, Jesus is using the word *dead* to refer to those who do not *go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God*. So the statement *Allow the dead to bury their own dead* means that the man who asked to bury his father should leave worldly activities (even necessary ones) to those who are interested in this world, which are those who are **not** interested in the Kingdom of God. [By the way, I don’t think it means the spiritually dead should bury the physically dead, since there is nothing about that in the context. Also, I take it the man’s father is literally dead, and he actually wants to physically bury him because of Jesus’ use of the word *dead*. Jesus’ metaphor seems to assume a recently deceased father who needs to be physically buried.]  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not make activities that deal with this world’s problems a priority.
3. **INTERPRETATION:** Historically, if you are plowing with a single-blade plow and look back, you will go crooked and not turn the furrow over. So, if we do that with the Kingdom of God, we will have a crooked message. Plowing is following Christ.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not make a half-hearted decision to follow Christ. If I decide to begin the discipleship process, there will constantly be things that pull me in the direction of the world I live in and came from, and away from Christ. I should never look back to those things as a basis for my pleasure, peace, or security.
4. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus does not define *hate*, but in Malachi 1:2-3, love and hate are defined as a choice. The point here would be to choose Jesus over family, self, or anyone. Self-hate for the apostles included martyrdom.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should practice self-denial. To “hate” myself would be to: (a) do things that are not pleasing to me but pleasing to God and (b) to not do things I am doing when those things are pleasing to me but not pleasing to God. [Self-hate is an area where the world sharply disagrees with Jesus. The world says we should love ourselves, Jesus says we should hate ourselves. But the reality is that people already love themselves (Ephesians 5:29). For example, socially depressed people are down because they love themselves. If they hated themselves, or were apathetic (apathy being the opposite of love), they wouldn’t care about their circumstances and would, therefore, not be depressed. So it would seem that self-love is natural, and self-hate requires a moral effort.]
5. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus is giving these examples to tell those thinking about following Him to first count the cost. The point is for them to think it through to the end to see if they really want to go there.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should think through the idea of self-sacrifice if I want to be a disciple, or make disciples, of Jesus Christ. There are two general areas to consider: (a) accepting the things I can’t change and (b) not changing the things I could change by sinning (by, say, divorce, cheating, lying, etc.).
6. **INTERPRETATION:** Historically, Jesus had no possessions except the clothes He wore. Apparently, He owned no house or land or animals or means of transportation or anything that might be called wealth. On-the-other-hand, many (probably most) of His closest followers owned houses, like Lazarus, Peter, Levi, Joseph of Arimathea, Priscilla and Aquila, Mary the mother of John Mark, and Lydia. Their wealth varied (Philemon even owned slaves), but they all considered their possessions expendable. The cost of discipleship meant they were not to consider their possessions as something of personal value but only what was needed for ministry.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should be willing to give up all luxury and retain only what is needed in ministry for Christ.

## TO SUMMARIZE:

Some of the requirements for discipleship here include:

- Seeing my possessions as expendable
- Avoiding a focus on this world and its problems
- Putting my family second
- Seeking happiness and security in Christ alone
- Practicing self-denial
- Living without luxury
- Counting the cost in terms of self-sacrifice

# The Upper Room Discourse – Exploring the Subject

## Make some OBSERVATIONS from John 13 – 16

Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end (13:1). ... Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded (13:5). ... So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet" (13:12-14). ... "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 all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (13:34-35). "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also" (14:3). ... "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit" (15:1-2). ... "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples" (15:8). ... "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you" (15:18-19). ... "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment" (16:7-8). ... "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you" (16:13-14). ... "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (16:33).

## What INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS can you make from the Upper Room Discourse?

1. What main thoughts were in Jesus' mind as He began the Last Supper with His disciples?  
INTERPRETATION: In John 13:1, it seems Jesus was thinking about \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
2. What was the significance of Jesus' statement, *you also ought to wash one another's feet*?  
INTERPRETATION: The foot washing example \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
3. Why did Jesus say the command to *love one another* was a new commandment? Why is this new, in light of the fact that Leviticus 19:18 says: *you shall love your neighbor as yourself*?  
INTERPRETATION: In the upper room, Jesus told His disciples \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
4. Consider the statement: *By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another*. Why is their love for one another to be their identification as Christ's disciples rather than, say, love for a lost world?  
INTERPRETATION: In the upper room, Jesus was telling His disciples \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is the main point of the vine/branches' illustration in John 15:1-2? It seems one of two things happen to branches: either they are taken away or they are pruned. What does Jesus mean by *He takes [it] away*, or *He prunes it*?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus told His disciples \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
6. What does Jesus mean by *the world would love its own* and *the world hates you*?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus meant \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
7. Jesus said: *if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you*. Why is that? Why couldn't they have both of them?  
INTERPRETATION: The reason Jesus had to physically leave \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_
8. Jesus says five things about what the Spirit of truth will do when He comes. What are they and what do they mean?  
INTERPRETATION: Jesus said the Spirit of truth will \_\_\_\_\_  
APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

## TO SUMMARIZE:

What principles for discipleship can you list from John 13 – 16?

- |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| (1) _____ | (4) _____ |
| (2) _____ | (5) _____ |
| (3) _____ | (6) _____ |



# The Upper Room Discourse – The Author’s Analysis

1. **INTERPRETATION:** In John 13:1, it seems Jesus was thinking about His upcoming death and His love for His disciples.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should focus on the significance of the death of Christ and a love for those I am discipling.
2. **INTERPRETATION:** The foot-washing example was probably not meant to be a repeated ordinance, like baptism or the communion meal, because we see no evidence that the apostles ever taught or practiced it as a ceremony (although there is certainly nothing wrong with such a practice). The point seems to connect their love for one another to serving one another as a humble slave would wash the feet of his master or household guests. The apostles were to follow Jesus’ example and serve each other as if they were slaves of one another.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should see myself as a servant to all believers, especially those in my close network.
3. **INTERPRETATION:** In the upper room, Jesus told His disciples their love for one another was a new commandment because the Old Testament command was to love fellow Israelites. This was a new command to love fellow disciples and an announcement of the upcoming church age (which began in Acts 2) where love was not racially or nationally focused.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should understand this church/grace age is different from, not an extension of, God’s purpose for Israel. God has a future program for Israel (Romans 11:1), but all believers today (including Jewish believers) are in the church (Galatians 3:28).
4. **INTERPRETATION:** In the upper room, Jesus was telling His disciples that the way anyone would identify them as belonging to Him was their love for one another, not their love in general. Love of others was good, but it would not identify them. Identification comes only with restriction and focus.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should focus my love on fellow believers or I cannot be identified as a disciple of Christ. God loved the world in the sense that He gave to them (John 3:16) but not in the sense that He chose them (Malachi 1:2-3; Romans 9:13; John 15:16, 19). If a man tells his wife, “I love you,” but then says, “and I love all women,” that probably wouldn’t go over too well. Love is significant when it is selective.
5. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus told His disciples that God the Father is like a gardener who does one of two things with branches: if they are not fruitful He cuts them off, if they are fruitful, He prunes them so that they will be more fruitful. Being cut off is probably not a warning that the disciples could lose their salvation because this passage is not about salvation, it’s about the disciples producing fruit for God. Also, the 12 and all the saints, were chosen by God from eternity past (Romans 8–9; Ephesians 1:3-11). Those who are fruitful will be pruned, i.e. cut back from becoming what they would otherwise be. Pruning restricts natural growth in favor of fruitfulness for the vinedresser.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should focus on producing fruit for God. But I should also understand that if I am focused on being fruitful, God will prune my life in such a way that I will not be able to be all that I can be. Some of my assets, talents, and abilities will be cut off so that I can bear more fruit for God. For example, I have transplanted some trees from the forest and put them around my house. Now they get care they wouldn’t get in the forest (regular watering, spraying for bugs, etc.), but they are also pruned from their natural growth so they will look the way I want them to look.
6. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus meant the world would treat the 12 the way it treated Him. The context is: *If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you.* The more the disciples identified with Christ (His character, His message of repentance, and His being the only way to God), the more the world would hate them.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should understand that, if the world likes me, it may be an opportunity for evangelism but it also may indicate that I am misrepresenting Christ to the world. Those who represent the real historical Jesus will be hated by the world. For example, C. S. Lewis was denied a professorship most of his life because of his biblical Christianity.
7. **INTERPRETATION:** The reason Jesus had to physically leave the earth in order for the Holy Spirit to come is not given. But the fact that this is necessary is given. It seems that God ends one era before He begins another one. The age of the Law of Moses (from approximately 1500 B.C. to the time of Christ) was ended when Israel rejected their Messiah. This would be followed by the church age, which would be different in that each believer would be indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). This age could not begin until the past one ended, which happened with the death of Christ (Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:23-25).  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not try to blend the two ages together, living half under the Law and half under grace—for example, keeping the dietary laws of Moses or thinking of my country as Israel.
8. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus said the Holy Spirit will: (1) convict the world of sin, (2) guide the apostles into all the truth (such as in their writing the New Testament), (3) not speak on His own initiative (not act independent of the Father and the Son), (4) disclose what is to come (reveal future prophecy to the apostles), and (5) glorify Me (Christ, not Himself).  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should teach my disciples the work of the Holy Spirit includes: (1) conviction of sin, (2) inspiring the New Testament, (3) oneness with God, (4) revealing future prophecy, and (5) glorifying Christ.

## TO SUMMARIZE:

John 13-16 tells us that a disciple of Christ should:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| (1) Have the attitude of a servant-foot-washer.          | (4) Be willing to be pruned to produce more fruit.     |
| (2) Focus on loving fellow disciples as a priority.      | (5) Be willing to be hated by the world.               |
| (3) Have a heavenly perspective and heavenly priorities. | (6) Realize the Spirit, not the Law, governs this age. |

# The High Priestly Prayer – Exploring the Subject

## Make some OBSERVATIONS from John 17

Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You” (v. 1).

“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You; for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me. I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are. While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me” (vv. 6-21).

## Make some INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS from the High Priestly Prayer

1. In the High Priestly Prayer, Jesus prayed for two things: first, He briefly asked God the Father to restore the glory which He had before His incarnation. Then, for the bulk of the prayer, He spoke about the disciples. The first sentence about the disciples has three statements: *I have manifested Your name [to them], they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word*. How do these three phrases reveal Jesus’ perspective for discipleship?

INTERPRETATION: Jesus saw discipleship as \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the significance of ... *the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received them*?

INTERPRETATION: Jesus was saying \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

3. Why does Jesus say *I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world*?

INTERPRETATION: Jesus said that \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the significance of the point: *I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition*?

INTERPRETATION: Jesus is making the point that \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

5. Explain: *that they may have My joy made full in themselves*.

INTERPRETATION: The joy Jesus requested for the disciples was \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the significance of *I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one*?

INTERPRETATION: Jesus was asking the Father to \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

7. Comment on the statement: *Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth*.

INTERPRETATION: This statement is significant because \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

8. What is the significance of the request: *I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word*?

INTERPRETATION: This is significant because \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

9. What does Jesus mean when He says: *that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You*?

INTERPRETATION: This means \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

## TO SUMMARIZE:

What was the basic prayer request of Jesus for the disciples in the High Priestly Prayer?



# The High-Priestly prayer – The Author's Analysis

1. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus saw discipleship as manifesting, or making known, the name, or character, of God the Father. So, as we have seen so often, discipleship was not relating some religious laws or ceremonies but revealing the heart of God. Second, Jesus recognized that discipleship was caring for those who belong to God the Father. They were a gift from the Father to the Son. Third, discipleship was all about keeping God's Word. It was instructing, nurturing, and equipping people who are willing to keep the Word of God.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should see discipleship as: making known the character of God, to those who belong to God, in such a way that they keep the Word of God.
2. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus was saying that what He taught the disciples were not some vague ideas, or even His own ideas, but the very words of God. He took the words of the Father and gave them to the disciples. And the disciples received those words.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should also describe discipleship as giving the words of God to those willing to receive the words of God.
3. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus said that God the Father did not choose the whole world. Although He gave His life for the sins of the whole world (John 3:16; 1 John 2:2), He did not choose the whole world (Romans 9:13). He chose the disciples out of the world. So Jesus did not pray about the world He died for but about the disciples the Father sent Him to live for.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should live for and pray for those God has chosen out of the world, not the world they were chosen out of (even though Christ died for that world).
4. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus was making the point that part of His discipleship of the 12 (minus Judas Iscariot) was that He guarded (or kept) them. This had two aspects to it: one, He protected them from the world, especially from the Pharisees, Sadducees, rabbis, priests and scribes of their Jewish world. And two, He did that until the end of His life. Their protection was not a short-term program. This, by necessity, changed the focus of Christ's ministry from the crowds to the few.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should see discipleship as keeping, guarding, and protecting those I disciple as long as I am able to do so. It is not a program or set of material to be covered so that I can press on to somebody else. It is a life-time commitment to the few God has given me.
5. **INTERPRETATION:** The joy Jesus requested for the disciples was reflected in the oneness that Christ had with God the Father (*even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You*). It is *the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension* (Philippians 4:7). And it was the joy which Jesus had in the midst of being *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief* (Isaiah 53:3).  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should help my disciples seek a godly, not an earthly, joy. They will probably be looking for joy from their family, friends, toys, money, or social esteem. It is not just that these things won't bring lasting joy, they won't bring the kind of joy Jesus is talking about at all. The joy Jesus prays for is related to an inner confidence, not to outer circumstances. It's the confidence that one is living in the truth of the plan of God.
6. **INTERPRETATION:** Jesus was asking the Father to protect the disciples from Satan while they lived in Satan's world. Jesus specifically made the point that He was not requesting that they be taken out of the world. This would prevent their basic calling, to start the church by making disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not think that the solution to the temptations my disciples will face is to take them out of the world. This would only eliminate the laboratory in which they are to grow and minister. The significant thing is that they be kept from the influences and the pitfalls of the devil, since their laboratory is controlled and operated by him.
7. **INTERPRETATION:** This statement is significant because it is the way God brings about the Christlikeness of His people. To sanctify them is to set them apart. So the prayer was for the disciples to be set apart in the Truth, defined as the Word of God.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should see that **the process of discipleship is setting people apart from the world and into the Truth of the Word of God.**
8. **INTERPRETATION:** This is significant because Jesus was praying for others (beyond the first century) who would become disciples because of the reproductive ministry of the Twelve.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should be thankful. This is good news because it includes me.
9. **INTERPRETATION:** This means the unity between the Father and the Son is the model for the unity of the church. This is a unity not based on tolerance, or compromise, or being on the same team. This is a unity based on agreement.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should seek (for fellowship and discipleship) those who are trying to conform themselves to the Truth of the Word of God.

## TO SUMMARIZE:

Jesus wanted the disciples to be with Him eternally, yet He was sending them into the world to start the church age. So He was asking the Father

- to keep them from Satan while they are on this mission in his world
- to keep them united as He and the Father are united
- to bring them to Him in glory when their mission in this Satanic world is finished

# The Resurrection Appearances – Exploring the Subject

## Make some OBSERVATIONS from the following passages

**Matthew 28**—But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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" (verses 16-20).

**John 21**—But when the day was now breaking, Jesus stood on the beach; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus (verse 4) ... This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead. So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep" (verses 14-17).

**Acts 1**—The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight (verses 1-9).

## What INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS can you make the Resurrection Appearances?

### Regarding Matthew 28

1. What is the significance of Jesus' statement *All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth*?

INTERPRETATION: The statement of Jesus' authority was significant for the 11 because \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the relative significance of the commands to *Go, make disciples, baptize, and teach*?

INTERPRETATION: For the 11 \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

### Regarding John 21

3. What is the main point for discipleship we should learn from the John 21 passage (by the Sea of Galilee)?

INTERPRETATION: The main point for Peter to understand \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

### Regarding Acts 1

4. The 11 were asking Him, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" What does that question reveal about the understanding of the 11? What is the significance of Jesus' answer for discipleship?

INTERPRETATION: The 11 needed to understand \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the significance of Jesus' statement *you shall be My witnesses*? How does that differ from, say, convincing someone to become a Christian? How does that statement shape the nature of discipleship?

INTERPRETATION: The significance of the statement *you shall be My witnesses* for the 11 was \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is the significance of the locations: *Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth*? Is the order of these places important for an appropriate philosophy of discipleship?

INTERPRETATION: The locations were important for the 11 because \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

## TO SUMMARIZE:

Why did Jesus appear to the 11 after He rose from the dead?



# The Resurrection Appearances – The Author’s Analysis

1. **INTERPRETATION:** The statement of Jesus’ authority was significant for the 11 because it meant this authority came from God the Father, was delegated to God the Son, and the Son was going to use it to do one thing—make disciples. [There is an old fictitious story which makes this point. In the story, when Jesus returned to heaven, some angel asked Him: “What is your plan for spreading the Kingdom throughout the earth?” Jesus answered: “For the disciples to make other disciples.” The angel then said: “Yeah, but these guys are a bit shaky, what’s another plan if they fail?” Jesus said: “There is no other plan.”]  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should disciple others, realizing this is where Jesus placed the authority given to Him by God the Father. Making disciples is a mentality which focuses on building the Word of God into the people of God the way Jesus did with the 12. I need to be careful not to replace the authority of God with the authority of some group of people.
2. **INTERPRETATION:** For the 11, hearing this in the Greek language, they would understand the central command to be the imperative verb, *make disciples*. The other 3 commands are participles. They would be heard as something like “as you go” and “be baptizing” and “be teaching.” The other 3 are indeed commands because a participle takes the force of the main verb of the sentence. Nevertheless, the guiding command is to *make disciples*. So the 11 would not have understood going, baptizing, and teaching, apart from a context of discipleship.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not center my ministry on going, baptizing, or teaching, as ends in themselves. Nor should I use them to sustain some other sort of ministry. On-the-other-hand, going to people where they are, baptizing them as or after they become believers, and teaching them all that Jesus commanded, is part of the discipleship process.
3. **INTERPRETATION:** The main point for Peter to understand from the discussion recorded in John 21 was that he was to feed the sheep which belonged to Jesus. Jesus asked the question: *do you love Me?* He asked it 3 times, apparently for emphasis. Not too much should be made of the fact that the word for *love* changed from *agape* to *phileo*. The first emphasizes giving and second emphasizes affection, but the two words are often used interchangeably. The main point is: if Peter loves Jesus, that love should be reflected in feeding, shepherding, and tending Jesus’ sheep.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should see discipleship as shepherding, feeding, and tending to the people Jesus is calling to Himself. I am not to go and find my own sheep, or do things which attract those who are not Christ’s sheep.
4. **INTERPRETATION:** The 11 needed to understand that the restoration of the kingdom to Israel was not next. The timing of it was that *which the Father has fixed by His own authority*. They should realize that there will be a restoration of the kingdom to Israel, and the timing of it has already been established by God the Father, but the church age was next.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should understand that I should teach a future restoration for Israel, but it is not about guessing when that restoration will take place. Some groups use this to ignore teaching prophecy altogether. But the apostles taught the facts of prophecy. It’s the dating of prophetic events that are not our concern.
5. **INTERPRETATION:** The significance of the statement *you shall be My witnesses* for the 11 was that being a witness is communicating (what the Apostle John later describes as) *what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands* (1 John 1:1). They were to tell what they saw and heard, not to invent some creative means for drawing people into a new religion. They were not even responsible for convincing people they were right. Their only assignment was to be a witness to what they had seen and heard (Acts 4:20).  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should restrict my message to that of being a witness to the revelation of God—which for me is the Old and New Testament Scripture. I should not mix that revelation with, say, what I know from philosophy, or psychology, or successful business practices. I am to tell what I have witnessed from the Bible, not add or take away from it.
6. **INTERPRETATION:** The locations were important for the 11 because they indicated the order of the development of the church. The 11 were to start where they were (Jerusalem) and expand outward, following the lead of the Holy Spirit.  
**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should begin the discipleship process where I am. Then I can get involved on a broader scale—and all this with a global perspective. For example, some think they will retire and go do some missionary work somewhere, but they have not done anything in their own hometown. We need to start with our own Jerusalem and then move outward with a global mindset.

## TO SUMMARIZE

Jesus’ appearances offered the apostles *many convincing proofs* (Acts 1:3). But the primary reason seems to be about giving them the Great Commission of witnessing (Acts 1), shepherding (John 21), and making disciples (Matthew 28).

# The Discipleship Ministry of Paul – Exploring the Subject

## Make some OBSERVATIONS from the Discipleship Ministry of Paul

**1 Thessalonians**—You [Thessalonians] also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit, so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything (1:6-8) ... But we proved to be gentle among you, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. Having so fond an affection for you, we were well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us (2:7-8) ... just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a father would his own children, so that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory (2:11-12).

**2 Timothy**—Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, according to the promise of life in Christ Jesus, To Timothy (2:1-2) ... You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also (2:1-2) ... Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth (2:14-15) ... I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths. But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry (4:1-5) ... Make every effort to come to me soon; for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service. But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus (4:9-12) ... Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. Be on guard against him yourself, for he vigorously opposed our teaching (4:14-15).

## Make INTERPRETATIONS and APPLICATIONS from the Discipleship Ministry of Paul

### Regarding 1 Thessalonians

1. What comments in chapter 1 indicate that Paul had a reproductive focus to his ministry in Thessalonica?

INTERPRETATION: Paul revealed his reproductive attitude when he said \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

2. What can we learn from chapter 2 about Paul's discipleship methods with the Thessalonians?

INTERPRETATION: Paul's discipleship methods included \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

### Regarding 1 Timothy

3. Paul told Timothy: *entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*. How many principles for discipleship can you find in this statement?

INTERPRETATION: Paul told Timothy \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

4. What discipleship principles can you discern from 4:1-5?

INTERPRETATION: In 4:1-5, Paul's discipleship of Timothy included \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the significance, for the discipleship process, of the personal names mentioned in 4:9-12?

INTERPRETATION: These were \_\_\_\_\_

APPLICATION: Therefore, I should \_\_\_\_\_

### TO SUMMARIZE

From the passages above, what are the similarities between Paul's discipleship methods and those of Jesus?

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# The Discipleship Ministry of Paul – The Author's Analysis

## Regarding 1 Thessalonians

1. **INTERPRETATION:** Paul revealed his reproductive attitude when he said three things: (1) *You [Thessalonians] also became imitators of us and of the Lord.* Here we see Paul complimenting them for reproducing what they learned from him about the Lord. (2) *You became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.* Here we see Paul complimenting them because of the example they gave, which influenced the believers in the larger region. (3) *For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you ... so that we have no need to say anything.* Here we see Paul complimenting them because it was the Word of God, not their own opinions, which they imitated and exemplified. So much so, that Paul didn't have to correct what they said or add anything to it.

**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should minister to people in such a way that they are encouraged to: (1) imitate what I teach them about Christ, (2) be examples to those outside of their local context, and (3) have a complete message of the whole council of God.

## Regarding 1 Timothy

2. **INTERPRETATION:** Paul's discipleship methods included being *well-pleased to impart to you not only the gospel of God but also our own lives, because you had become very dear to us.* This tells us Paul taught the Gospel in a context of sharing his own life with them and becoming close personal friends with them. For Paul, friendship and discipleship went together.

**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should not separate my ministry from my friendships. I may have some peripheral unbeliever friends, but, for the most part, my disciples should be my friends and my friends should be my disciples. The professional attitude, which stays aloof from people, has no place in the ministry of the Gospel.

3. **INTERPRETATION:** Paul told Timothy four things in this statement: (1) To *entrust* (the Greek word is *παράθου*, it means "to set before"). I should see discipleship as setting the truth before people. (2) To entrust *these*, that is, *the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses.* (3) To entrust these things to *faithful men*, not just any men but men of faith. (The Greek word for "men" here is *άνθρώποις*, which is the word for mankind or humans, not only males.) And (4) these faithful men should be those who can *teach others also.* The expectation is that these men will reproduce by teaching.

**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should give the biblical instruction I have received to men of faith who will reproduce that by teaching others also. In other words, my ministry should focus on finding and teaching reproductive men and women.

4. **INTERPRETATION:** In 2 Timothy 4:1-5, Paul's discipleship of Timothy included 3 basic things: (1) A charge to preach the word. The Greek word here is *κήρυξον*, which means *proclaim*, not just preach in the sense of what is done in a pulpit (there were no pulpits then). Doing it in season and out of season could mean "whether or not people are open to it," or possibly "whether you feel like it or not." (2) A charge to correct people as well as instruct them, doing it with patience and in a context of instruction. (3) A warning against a time (possibly like today) when people will not want sound teaching but teachers who will tell them what they want to hear rather than the Truth of the Word of God.

**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should proclaim the Truth of the Word of God in every life situation, correcting believers who are in error with patience and sensitivity. But as we approach the end of the church age, I should also realize the tendency will be for people to reject the Truth in favor of false teaching which gives them what they want in this life here on earth.

5. **INTERPRETATION:** These were both Paul's disciples and his enemies. The significance is that Paul sees ministry in terms of people, not structures. Paul seems to be continually dispatching people, who he has discipled, to various places where help is needed. He was also constantly plagued by enemies, and they would also be the enemies of his disciples.

**APPLICATION:** Therefore, I should see my ministry as serving people, not serving the organizations I belong to. I should be constantly discipling people, sending them out to be teaching and correcting other people in other places or situations.

## TO SUMMARIZE:

From the passages above, here are some similarities between Paul's discipleship and the discipleship of Jesus.

Both taught the Word of God to faithful men with the objective of those men discipling others.

Both focused on equipping men. They encouraged the discipleship of women by other women, but the foundation of their work was establishing an army of biblically-equipped men.

Both gave their disciples the Word of God, and their own lives, as examples and as friends.

Both gave their disciples challenging responsibilities that stretched them to grow as they taught others.

Both were constantly threatened by enemies, and their enemies became the enemies of their disciples.

Both focused their disciples on Christ.

## **So, Discipleship Is ...**