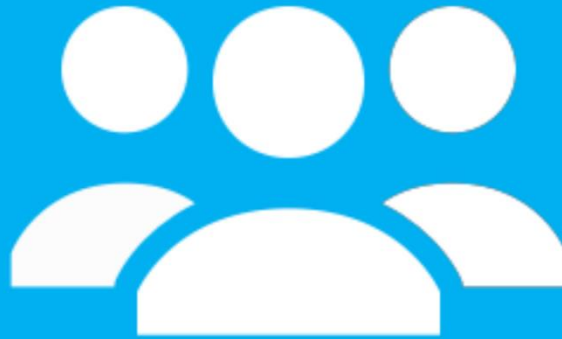


DISCIPLE



LIFE SEMINAR

DISCIPLE[®]

Bobby Howell

Session One: Who is a Disciple?

What passage of Scripture provides the Church with her mission?

What is the Church's mission?

What are common ways you have heard *disciple* defined?

What is the context of the word disciple?

The Hebrew word for disciple is תלמיד (*talmid*). The main idea behind *talmid* is

_____.

“One who sought to be a *talmid* in Jesus's day wanted not only to follow the rabbi and be just like him in all aspects of his life but also to be just like him in his relationship with God and in his view of God's Word. In this pursuit, he was willing to give up everything—even his life—to be like the rabbi.

This commitment was a big investment of time and relationship. Typically, for several years the *talmid* lived with the rabbi twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred sixty days a year (the Jewish calendar has five fewer days in the year). He observed how the rabbi answered certain questions, how he handled various situations, how he presented himself, how others saw him, and whether people were drawn to him. The *talmid* learned intimate details about the rabbi's personality and character. It was not just following the rabbi but actually being the rabbi, reproducing or replicating him. That was the goal.

The *talmid* didn't attend class and then go home. The scenario was as if you, the reader, followed a particular teacher of the next three or four years. You would live with him and watch his every move, see how he described the Bible to you, and observe how he lived his life. The goal would be to be just like the teacher, becoming him in every way.

Eventually, the *talmid* was ready, and the rabbi said, 'Okay, the time has come. Now you go and make *talmidim* (pl. of *talmid*) of your own.' He was called to reproduce. Note the pattern. The *talmid* left his family, left his *insula*, left his trade, left all. He paid any price to be like the rabbi. When he was ready, the rabbi told him to go and make *talmidim* of others. You would make other disciples of your own who would be like him because they would be like you."¹

The thoughts about *talmidim* can be summarized in two ways:

- The *talmid* left everything to be with the rabbi all the time.
- After several years the rabbi would deem the *talmid* mature and would send him off to make his own *talmid*.

"To be a Christian means to be a disciple. There are no Christians who are not disciples. And to be a disciple of Jesus means to follow Jesus. There are no disciples of Jesus who are not following Jesus. Ticking a box on a public opinion poll, or sincerely labeling yourself with the religion of your parents, or having a preference for Christianity as opposed to other religions—none of these things make you a Christian."²

What is the biblical entrance of the disciple?

In Greg Gilbert's book, *What is the Gospel?*, Greg sums up the Gospel with four words.

¹ Craig Hartman, *Through Jewish Eyes* (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2010), 46-47.

² Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 15.

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1. God the Righteous Creator
 2. Man the Sinner
 3. Jesus Christ the Savior
 4. Response—Faith and Repentance

Following Jesus—what does it mean?

Everything a disciple is, is based on that individual's salvation (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38; and Romans 5:1-11).

1. A disciple is an individual that is _____ (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38)

2. A disciple is an individual who _____:
 - a. A disciple _____ the Word of God (Luke 8:21; 11:28; Romans 10:17; and 1 Timothy 4:13)
 - b. A disciple _____ the Word of God (Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:16; and Psalm 119:18)

- c. A disciple _____ the Word of God (Psalm 1:1-3; Joshua 1:8)
- d. A disciple _____ the Word of God (John 14:15; James 1:22)

The *ESV Systematic Theology Bible* summarizes Psalm 119, and the delight believers have of God’s Word, in the following way:

"How do we thankful humans respond to such words from their Maker and Redeemer? We value the Word as much as riches (vv. 14, 72, 127); we obey the law of the LORD whole-heartedly (vv. 1-8); we desire it strongly, both loving (vv. 97, 113b, 127) and longing for it (vv. 40, 131). We say, 'How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!' (v. 103). Each of us delights in God's testimonies (vv. 14, 47), saying, 'They are the joy of my heart' (v. 111), and in doing so find deliverance (v. 92). We meditate upon God's precepts until they become a part of our lives (vv. 15, 97, 99), as God's promises and rules lead us to worship him (vv.38, 62)."³

- 3. A disciple is an individual _____
(Matthew 6:5, 6, 7, 9; Luke 18:1; Colossians 4:2)
- 4. A disciple is an individual _____
(Ephesians 4:13)

The goal for the disciple is to be like Rabbi Jesus.

Avoth 5:21, “He [Yehudah ben Teima] used to say: Five years [is the age] for [the study of] Scripture, Ten [is the age] for [the study of] Mishnah, Thirteen [is the age] for [observing] commandments, Fifteen [is the age] for [the study of] Talmud, Eighteen [is the age] for the [wedding] canopy, Twenty [is the age] for pursuit, Thirty [is the age] for [full] strength, Forty [is the age] for understanding, Fifty [is the age] for [giving] counsel, Sixty [is the age] for mature age, Seventy [is the age] for a hoary head, Eighty [is the age] for [superadded] strength, Ninety [is the age] for [a] bending [stature], One hundred, is [the age at which one is] as if dead, passed away, and ceased from the world.”⁴

³ Crossway, *The ESV Systematic Theology Bible*, ESV Bible (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 700.

⁴ https://www.sefaria.org/Pirkei_Avot.5.21?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en, accessed 14 June 2018.

The *talmidim* of Jesus's day would approach rabbis to request them. Rabbis would either accept them or reject them.⁵ Jesus chose his disciples (Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9).

A disciple is one who follows Jesus and helps others follow Jesus. Are you a disciple?

Recommended Resources:

Recommended Books

Crossway, *The ESV Systematic Theology Bible*, ESV Bible (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017)

Mark Dever, *Discipling: How to Help Others Follow Jesus* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016)

Craig Hartman, *Through Jewish Eyes* (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2010)

Michael Horton, *Ordinary: Sustainable Faith In a Radical, Restless World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014)

Robby Gallaty, *Rediscovering Discipleship: Making Jesus' Final Words Our First Work* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015)

Donald S. Whitney, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991)

Recommended Articles

John Piper, "How to Read the Bible for Yourself," *Desiring God*, 17 March 2015 (available on the Desiring God website.)

Andy Naselli, "Three Tips for Better Bible Reading," *Desiring God*, 24 January 2014 (available on the Desiring God website.)

Recommended Sermons/Lectures

John Piper, "The Ultimate Goal of Reading the Bible," *Desiring God*, 23 September 2016 (available on the Desiring God website.)

John MacArthur, "The Word of God in Spiritual Growth," *YouTube*, 9 April 2015 (available free through Ligonier Ministries on YouTube.)

⁵ For a brief treatment of this, I recommend Craig Hartman, *Through Jewish Eyes* (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 2010), 53-56.