



MBS140

A MESSIANIC BIBLE STUDY FROM ARIEL MINISTRIES



THE SPIRITUAL LIFE AND DISCIPLESHIP



By Dr. Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum



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*beseech you therefore,
brethren, by the mercies of
God, to present your bodies a
living sacrifice, holy,
acceptable to God, which is
your spiritual service. And be
not fashioned according to this
world: but be ye transformed
by the renewing of your
mind, and ye may prove what
is the good and acceptable
and perfect will of God.
Romans 12:1-2*

Discipleship is a very important facet of the spiritual life. This topic will be discussed in two major categories. First is “Dedication,” the means by which one becomes a disciple. Secondly, “Discipleship Proper,” since that is the believer's life which follows dedication.

I. DEDICATION: THE MEANS OF BECOMING A DISCIPLE

The first major category is dedication, and will be discussed in six aspects.

A. The Basis of Dedication

The first aspect of dedication is its basis. “What is the basis given by Scripture to dedicate ourselves to the Lord, to make Him the Lord of our lives?” In Scripture, dedication is always on the basis of blessings received. Because of what we have received from God, we should dedicate ourselves to God. Romans 12:1-2 states: *beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, and ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

Paul's exhortation to present ourselves, to dedicate ourselves, is on the basis of *the mercies of God*. The mercies of God is a one-statement summary of all that Paul wrote in the first eleven chapters of the Book of Romans. In light of what God has done for us, by providing justification, sanctification, and glorification, in light of all these blessings we have received, we should dedicate our lives.

The same truth is found in I Corinthians 6:19-20: *Or know ye not that*

your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body.

Because of the blessing we have received, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and because we have become *a temple of the Holy Spirit*, for these reasons, we should *glorify...God in [our] body*.

The basis of dedication is always on the basis of blessings received. In light of what God has done for us, we should be willing to dedicate ourselves to Him.

B. The Components of Dedication

In the second aspect of dedication, there are three specific components.

1. Surrender

The first component is surrender; this is the initial act of dedication. This is the point of Romans 12:1. It is a decisive presentation of our body, dedicating it to the Lord's use. In the Greek text, the word is in the Aorist Tense (Rom. 6:13; 12:1-2), and that emphasizes a decisive, singular act. It is an irrevocable act of surrender.

2. Separation

The second component of dedication is separation and non-conformity to the age in which we live. That is the point of Romans 12:2. After dedicating ourselves to the Lord, we should not be: *fashioned according to this world*. In others words, we should become “unfashionable” as far as the world is concerned (I Pet. 1:14). This is the key characteristic of the spiritual life. This is the part that emphasizes the outward conformity; we do not conform to the world, we do conform to the Word. So as far as the world is concerned, we are unfashionable.

3. Transformation

The third component of dedication is transformation. That is also the point of Romans 12:2. The means of transformation is: *by the renewing of [the] mind*. The result will be the proving of: *what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God*. This is the inward area, inward conformity to what the Bible demands.

C. The Meaning of Dedication

The third aspect of dedication is the meaning. Simply put, the meaning of dedication is: subjection of one's life to the Messiah. The best verse for this is James 4:7a: *Be subject therefore unto God*.

The meaning of dedication is that we are subjecting ourselves; we are subjecting our lives to the Messiah.

D. The Areas of Dedication

The fourth aspect is the areas of dedication. There are two facets in discussing the areas of dedication. First is the believer himself. The believer must personally be dedicated to the Messiah, which is the

point of Romans 6:13: *neither present your members unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

The second facet concerning the areas of dedication is the body. Not only the individual, but the body in particular needs to be dedicated (Rom. 12:1; I Cor. 6:19-20).

E. The Frequency of Dedication

The fifth aspect of dedication is its frequency. “How often should we dedicate ourselves and our bodies?” The fact that the Scriptures use the Aorist Tense implies that it is only once; we need to make a one-time-only dedication of ourselves and our body to the Lord's use. However, having made this initial once-and-for-all dedication, it does require of us a continuous commitment. The believer now needs to find out what the will of God is in any particular situation.

The question this raises is, “What if a believer falls away from his dedication? What if there is a violation of the dedication vow? Would that not mean that now he must re-dedicate his life all over again?” The answer is, “No.” The remedy to a violated dedication vow is not re-dedication, because we do not need to do again what was done at the initial act of dedication. We do not automatically “start from scratch.” Rather than thinking in terms of re-dedication, we should think in terms of restoration. It means we are to get back on track at the very point where we got off and then go on living a dedicated life even though sin will always leave its mark on our lives. When we fall off track, we do not go back to the beginning. We simply need to get back on track from the point where we left off and carry on. When a person falls from his dedication vow, it does not mean all is lost. Because all is not lost, we do not need to start from scratch, where re-dedication is required.

The question now is, “On what side of the line of dedication do you now stand?” As a believer, if you have never made this dedication of yourself and your body, now that you realize what God expects of you, now is the time to do it. On the other hand, if you have at one point in your life dedicated your body to the Lord, made Him the Lord of your life, you now need to examine where you stand on this line of dedication. It is restoration and not re-dedication that is necessary.

F. The Results of Dedication

The sixth aspect of dedication is its results. Chiefly, you will know, you will do, and you will enjoy the will of God (Rom. 12:2). Dedication allows the Holy Spirit to fill the believer because dedication is the prerequisite for filling in the spiritual life. That becomes the beginning of the road to discipleship.

II. DISCIPLESHIP PROPER

The second category of “The Spiritual Life and Discipleship” is

Discipleship Proper, and will be discussed in eleven segments.

NOTES

A. The Meaning of Discipleship

The first segment is meaning of discipleship. The Greek word for “discipleship” means “to make one a learner or a pupil.” The term “disciple” is used of a learner or a pupil, and the word is used in the New Testament of three different categories of learners.

1. The Curious Disciple

In the first category of learners, there are those who are curious disciples: those who show curiosity about the words, the teachings, and the doctrines concerning Yeshua (Jesus). They may even call themselves disciples at this point, though Yeshua may discount them.

An example of the first category of learners is in John 8:31: *Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples.*

The group in this context is those who were merely curious. Jesus pointed out that they would prove to be true *disciples* when they go from curiosity to truly accepting that which He is teaching.

2. The Convinced Disciple

The second category of learners are the convinced disciples. These start out as being merely curious, but they have now become convinced of the truth of what Yeshua has been teaching. They are convinced that what Yeshua says of Himself is true. What they are not willing to do is make a commitment to it; they are not willing to risk their lives on it. The second category of learners is found in John 2:11: *This beginning of his signs did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him.*

These disciples were convinced disciples. They were convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, but at this point, they were not willing to risk their lives on it.

They are also mentioned in John 6:60-66: *Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, This is a hard saying; who can hear it? But Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples murmured at this, said unto them, Does this cause you to stumble? What then if ye should behold the Son of man ascending where he was before? It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who it was that should betray him. And he said, For this cause have I said unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it be given unto him of the Father. Upon this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

This, too, is the second category of learners, the convinced disciples. They were thoroughly convinced that Yeshua was the Messiah, but were not willing to risk their lives on it. When He taught them some deep truths, they were unable to accept them and chose to leave Him at that point.

3. The Committed Disciple

There is the curious disciple and the convinced disciple. Neither one of these two categories actually deals with what we mean by discipleship in the spiritual life, but the third one does. The third type is the committed disciple. The committed disciple is the one willing to follow the truth no matter where it leads, no matter what he must suffer. It means to identify with the Messiah's rejection, to "bear the cross" of total commitment in order to attain this commitment.

This kind of disciple is spoken of in John 6:67-69: *Jesus said therefore unto the twelve, Would ye also go away? Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? you have the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that you are the Holy One of God.*

Here, Peter and ten of his fellow-disciples were expressing the third category of learners. They had started out as being curious, they became convinced, and now they were committed. It is the committed disciple that we are speaking of when we talk about discipleship and the spiritual life. This category is spoken of again in Luke 9:23-26; 14:27-33.

"What is discipleship among those who are the committed disciples?" The best way of defining discipleship is by II Timothy 2:2: *And the things which you have heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit you to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

Notice the three-stage progression. First, Paul discipled Timothy and Timothy learned many truths from Paul. Secondly, Timothy was to find other people whom he could disciple and he would teach the same truths to them. Thirdly, they in turn will find others to disciple and teach them. That is discipleship: being willing to commit oneself totally to the Lord, to the study of Him and to follow the truth, no matter where it leads. That is the meaning of discipleship in the context that we will be discussing in this study.

B. The Call to Discipleship

The second segment of discipleship proper is to discuss the call to discipleship. The best passage that portrays this is Matthew 11:28-30: *Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

In this context, the call to discipleship meant "submission to Yeshua as the Messiah, in contrast with submission to Pharisaism." This point is also made in Matthew 23:1-12 and Mark 2:18-22. Therefore, a would-be disciple was faced with the issue of which yoke to follow. Will it be the yoke of the Pharisees or the yoke of the Messiah? That was the same option given to the Gentile believers in Acts 15:7-11. In the context of Matthew 11, it means, "to free oneself from the yoke of the Law of Moses and the yoke of Pharisaism in order to take on the new yoke, the yoke of the Messiah." The means is: *learn of me*. Again, the basic meaning of "disciple" is "learner." One who is willing to make that dedication, to become a disciple, to take on the new yoke of

the Messiah, will, then, learn of Him. This involved learning the Law of the Messiah, and being willing to obey those laws, no matter what they may entail.

This is the call to discipleship. It is a call that goes out to every believer. If you are a believer, but all you have ever done in your life is to accept the Lord, then you are a regenerate, saved person, but you are not a disciple. To become a disciple, you must make that act of dedication, and then become a learner of the Messiah and His Law.

C. Becoming a Disciple

The third segment of discipleship proper is becoming a disciple, and the best single passage is Luke 9:23-26: *And he said unto all, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose or forfeit his own self? For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he comes in his own glory, and the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels.*

Becoming a disciple involves two elements; a negative one and a positive one. Negatively, the commitment is: *let him deny himself*. That means, “Let him say 'no' to himself,” and that is what happens when one dedicates himself and his body to the Lord. Then, positively, the commitment is: *take up his cross daily*. To “take up the cross” means to identify with the Messiah, specifically with His rejection. Positively, take up his cross daily means, “being willing to be despised and rejected.” This happens by means of Romans 12:1. Becoming a disciple is the same as dedication, though we are using a different passage to bear out the same truth. There must be that once-and-for-all dedication of the person and his body to the Lord. That means: letting *him deny himself, and take up his cross daily*.

D. Obedience and Discipleship

The fourth segment of discipleship proper is obedience and discipleship. Two passages will be discussed here.

1. Luke 9:57-62

This is the main passage on discipleship and obedience and Yeshua teaches three principles.

a. Count the Cost: Luke 9:57-58

And as they went on the way, a certain man said unto him, I will follow you whithersoever you go. And Jesus said unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of man has not where to lay his head.

The first principle is: count the cost. In the first example, a man offered to become a disciple of Yeshua. He was probably offering himself as such for the possible material benefits because he had seen some of the miracles of Yeshua and the material benefits that came from them. Yeshua said that these things are not the ordinary expectation of a disciple. This disciple was too hasty; he did not count

the cost. It may mean living a very uncomfortable life. So first of all, you should count the cost before you become a disciple.

b. Do Not Delay: Luke 9:59-60

And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But he said unto him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go you and publish abroad the kingdom of God.

The second principle is: do not delay. In the second example, Jesus called a man to discipleship, but the man said, "Let me first go and bury my father." Jesus replied, "Let the dead bury their own dead." This passage is problematic to many, for it appears a little bit insensitive of the Messiah not to let the man bury his father. But this must be understood in the Jewish frame of reference in which it was written. This is not a case where the father had already passed away, the father was still living. The Pharisaic teaching of that day was that a son had to stay at home until the father died so that he can say the Kaddish Prayer, the special prayer for the dead, for the father for one year. Then he may leave. In this case, the father was still living, and the man was not willing to become a disciple while his father was living.

Whereas the first one was too hasty, this one was too slow. The point is: once you are faced with the call to become a disciple, do not delay in making your decision.

c. Do Not Turn Back: Luke 9:61-62

The third principle is: once you have made the commitment, do not turn back; once you have put your hand to the plow, do not turn back again.

And another also said, I will follow you, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house. But Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

2. John 14:23-24

The second passage states that obedience is the mark of discipleship: *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loves me not keeps not my words: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.*

The mark of a disciple is obedience to the commands of the Lord, to the commands of Scripture. A believer who is not obeying the Lord is not a disciple. The evidence of discipleship is obedience to the commands of Scripture. Without that obedience, there is no discipleship.

E. The Word and Discipleship

The fifth segment of discipleship proper is the Word and discipleship. John makes three main points in the key passage, John 8:31-47: *Jesus therefore said to those Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

They answered unto him, We are Abraham's seed, and have never yet been in bondage to any man: how say you, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that commits sin is the bondservant of sin. And the bondservant abides not in the house for ever: the son abides for ever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed: yet ye seek to kill me, because my word has not free course in you. I speak the things which I have seen with my Father: and ye also do the things which ye heard from your father. They answered and said unto him, Our father is Abraham. Jesus said unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that has told you the truth, which I heard from God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the works of your father. They said unto him, We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. But because I say the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convicts me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God hears the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God.

1. Controlled by the Word

First, a disciple is one who is controlled by the Word of God. He is not controlled by his feelings. He is not controlled by denominational loyalties. He is not controlled by materialism. He is controlled by the Word of God, which means being filled with the Word of God. That means to know the Word well. That means that we study the Word with a willingness to conform to it, no matter where it may take us.

2. Continuously Abiding in the Word

Secondly, a disciple is the one who abides in the Word. The word *abide* means “a relationship from which nurture and sustenance are drawn.” So to abide means “to draw from something that sustains life.” Our spiritual life is sustained by means of the Word of God. That is why Colossians 3:16 encourages us to let the Word of God *abide* in us; to let the Word of God make its home in the believer. Abiding in the Word means that we live in the Word. Furthermore, it means the Word abides in us as well. On the one hand, we get into the Word; on the other hand, we must allow the Word to come into us.

3. Continuously Submitted to the Word

Thirdly, according to John 15:7, there must be a continuous control. That means that we are to continually submit to its demands as we learn new truths from it.

F. The Mark of Discipleship

The sixth segment of discipleship proper is the mark of discipleship. The key passage is John 13:34-35: *A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this*

shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

In this passage, the mark of a disciple is love. Someone who has dedicated himself and his body to the Lord and has been exercising these various facets of discipleship will show *love*, love for the brethren, especially for those who are also fellow-disciples, who have made the same act of dedication.

John 15:9-13 points out that this love is to be continuous. Just as the love of God the Father for God the Son is continuous, so should our love of the brethren be continuous. Other Scriptures that make the same point are Ephesians 3:18-19; 4:2-3.

G. Authority and Discipleship

The seventh segment that discusses discipleship proper is authority and discipleship. The key passage is Luke 14:16-27: *But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many: and he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray you have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray you have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame. And the servant said, Lord, what you did command is done, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper. Now there went with him great multitudes: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man comes unto me, and hates not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever does not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

The issue of authority and discipleship is not in the realm of the emotions, but in the realm of the will. There must be a submission of the will and the areas of authority in a disciple's life. All our will, all our authority, must be submitted to the Lord, so that He becomes the Lord with full authority over our lives.

Verse 26 tends to be problematic to many who do not understand it from the Jewish frame of reference. This verse states that “if you do not hate your father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters, and your own life, you cannot be a disciple of Yeshua.” Did He really mean that we have to have this emotional animosity and hatred towards our family members in order to become His disciple? Not at all!

The expressions “love” and “hate” were not only used in the realm of the emotional, but also in the realm of the will. In the realm of the will, “to love” meant “to choose,” and “to hate” meant “not to choose.” It was used in Jewish literature of that day in a mundane way, such as a man going to a shoe store. Of all the shoes available to him,

only two pairs would fit his feet. Of those two pairs, he was going to buy only one, and so he “loved” one and he “hated” the other. Obviously, he did not fall emotionally “in love” with one pair of shoes and develop this animosity and emotional hatred towards the other pair. He loved one pair in the sense that he chose one. He hated the other pair in the sense that he did not choose the other.

As believers, we are called to discipleship, and discipleship means a total submission of the will and of the person's life to the Lord. Now, if a family member, be it a parent, a wife, children, a brother or a sister, is a hindrance to our becoming a disciple, if there is a choice to be made between Yeshua and family members, we must choose Yeshua, and in that way we love Him. We do not choose our family members, and in that way we hate them.

H. Sacrifice and Discipleship

The eighth segment of discipleship proper is sacrifice and discipleship. The key passage regarding this is in Luke 14:28-35: *For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Lest haply, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, as he goes to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an ambassador, and asks conditions of peace. So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounces not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple. Salt therefore is good: but if even the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill: men cast it out. He that has ears to hear, let him hear.*

This passage points out two things. First, discipleship means “our willingness to forsake all.” We must be so totally identified with the Messiah, His sufferings, and His rejection that we are willing to forsake all.

Secondly, this passage emphasizes the Messiah's lordship over every penny that we have. The question that this passage raises is, “How much of his resources is a man willing to commit to become a disciple? How much of your material resources are you willing to commit to become a true disciple?” The Messiah demands it all. If you wish to give only a part, and not all of it, you cannot be a disciple. Therefore, we must be willing to sacrifice everything to become a disciple.

I. The Ministry of a Disciple

The ninth segment of discipleship proper is the ministry of a disciple. “What is a disciple to do, what is his ministry?” The key passage for this is John 6:1-14: *After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias. And a great multitude followed him, because they beheld the signs which he did on them that were sick. And Jesus went up into the mountain, and there he sat with his disciples. Now the passover, the feast*

of the Jews, was at hand. Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude comes unto him, said unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread, that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, Two hundred shillings' worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said unto him, There is a lad here, who has five barley loaves, and two fishes: but what are these among so many? Jesus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. Jesus therefore took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down; likewise also of the fishes as much as they would. And when they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the broken pieces which remain over, that nothing be lost. So they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with broken pieces from the five barley loaves, which remained over unto them that had eaten. When therefore the people saw the sign which he did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that comes into the world.

In the miracle of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, Jesus is teaching the nature of the ministry that was entrusted to the disciples. Based on this passage and by comparing the accounts in Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-45; and Luke 9:10-17, four ministries can be pointed out. To get the full picture however, all four Gospel accounts must be put together. The second, third, and fourth ministries are not based upon the Feeding of the Five Thousand, but are from other passages.

1. Feed the Sheep

The first ministry is to feed the sheep. In Mark 6:34, Jesus views the multitudes as: *sheep not having a shepherd*. It is not the job of the *sheep* to look for food, but for the *shepherd* to feed the flock. There are three teaching points: first, they are to feed the people or the sheep (Lk. 9:13). Secondly, they must realize that they are incapable of doing it themselves (Jn. 6:5-9). Thirdly, they are merely to distribute what Jesus has already provided (Mat. 14:19). A disciple is one who is willing to feed the sheep.

2. Teach the Word

The second ministry of a disciple is based on John 14-16. This ministry is to reveal the Father by teaching the Word. They are instructed that what they have learned about the Father from Yeshua they are also to pass on to the others. Since a disciple is both a learner and a teacher, he should be willing to reveal the Father by teaching the Word of God.

3. Be an Evangelist

Third, the ministry of a disciple means that he is sent by the Messiah, just as the Messiah was sent by the Father. This is the point of John 17:18: *As you did send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world.*

4. Make Disciples

The fourth ministry of a disciple is the Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. The Great Commission is to make disciples. Not

only are we to become a disciple, we are to *make disciples*. There is one command, one imperative in the passage, make disciples.

Making disciples involves three facets. First, evangelizing by preaching the gospel, since a person must first become a believer in order to qualify to be made into a disciple. Secondly, baptizing the new believer in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Thirdly, teaching them all that Jesus commanded, because obedience is the evidence of discipleship. Until all three facets are present, evangelizing, baptizing, teaching, we are not making disciples. We may be only evangelizing or we may be only evangelizing and baptizing, but until we are also teaching, we are not making disciples. All three facets are necessary. That is the ministry of a disciple.

In John 6:11-12, the third and fourth ministries describe the fulfillment of the prophecy found in Isaiah 6:9-13. Isaiah is told about a wave of judgment that was fulfilled in A.D. 70 in which the land became desolate *without inhabitant*. During the reign of King Uzziah, Rome was founded; during the reign of King Uzziah, Isaiah was called to be a prophet. Rome would be the one to fulfill Isaiah's prophecy.

J. The World and Discipleship

The tenth segment of discipleship proper is the world and discipleship. "What is the relationship of the disciple to the world?" The key passage is John 15:18-25, which makes three points.

1. Hatred of the Disciple: John 15:18-19

First, the world will hate the disciple because he is no longer of the world: *If the world hates you, ye know that it had hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.*

Because the disciple is no longer *of the world*, this tends to convict the world. The world does not like to live with this sense of conviction and, therefore, will hate the disciple.

2. Hatred of the Messiah: John 15:20-21

Secondly, he points out that the world will hate the disciple because the world hates Yeshua the Messiah: *Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

But because Yeshua is no longer on this earth, He is now in Heaven seated at the right hand of God the Father, the world has no way of reacting physically against Him. Since they can no longer do any harm to Him, they will try to harm His followers, His disciples. That is why the world will hate His disciples: because the world hates Yeshua the Messiah Himself.

3. Hatred Because of Conviction: John 15:22-25

Thirdly, the world will hate the disciple because the walk of the

disciple convicts the world of its sin: *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hates me hates my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this comes to pass, that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.*

The world does not like to be convicted of its *sin*, therefore, it turns against those who convict, the disciples. The world will, therefore, hate the disciple because the work of a disciple tends to convict the world of its sin. Take note at how the world reacts to believers demonstrating against abortion, reminding the world of one of its key sins today. But that is the role of the world and discipleship. A disciple cannot continue being friends with the world.

K. Discipleship and Accountability

The eleventh segment of discipleship proper is discipleship and accountability. There are two key passages that bring out this relationship.

1. Accountable for Material Possessions

The first passage is Luke 16:1-13, which is the story of the unrighteous steward, one who used his position in an unrighteous way. The main point of this passage is that there will be an accounting of believers for their material possessions. In order to become a disciple, we must be willing to commit all our material possessions to Him. Therefore, disciples are accountable for their material possessions.

2. Accountable for Spiritual Blessings

The second passage is Luke 19:11-27, which deals with accountability and spiritual gifts. Not only are we going to be held accountable for the use of our material possessions, but we are also going to be held accountable for whether or not we have used our spiritual gifts. Since spiritual gifts can be misused, we will be held accountable for using them correctly or incorrectly. We need to invest our spiritual gifts by using them to build up the local body (I Cor. 12:13-14). According to Luke 19:11-27, our future rewards will be determined by how we have used our spiritual gifts. These rewards will in turn determine our degree of authority in the Kingdom. Working out our discipleship in this world today will also put us in good respect when the Kingdom is established.✠

NOTES

**IF YOU ENJOYED THIS
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142, and 143.*

