

## WORDS ON DISCIPLINE & DISCIPLESHIP

Or, "Why we do what we do the way we do it!"

When Jesus saved us, He ultimately called us **to be** disciples and **to go** and make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20). These things are spoken of often in Christian circles, but it seems very few know what it all means.

What a person believes a disciple is will completely change his/her life. Why? Because of a creed that is true in life: "Tell me what a person **believes** and I will show you how **they will act**. Show me how a person **acts**, and I will tell you what they **really believe**." (John 14:15, 24; Luke 6:46)

What we see as true Biblical discipleship is the guiding force of the nature, character and practice of this ministry/cell/Bible Study.

What is a disciple and how will that affect us?

First, a literal definition of the term in the Bible:

The word used in the NT that is translated "disciple" is the Greek word, "mathetes", which means "**to learn**", but it more specifically applies to one who professes to **have learned** certain principles from another **and maintains** them **on that other's authority**.

Hence, a disciple of Christ is one who (1) believes His **doctrine**, (2) rests on His sacrifice, (3) **imbibes His spirit**, and (4) **imitates** His example (Matt 10:24; Luke 14:26,27,33; John 6:69).

Because this is what a disciple is here is the purpose and plan of our study/cell/ministry:

- 1) **...believes His doctrine**: we must study the Bible and be challenged by its revelation of God and His demands of us. Hence, we will go through **every book** of the Bible and see and answer the following questions: what are the key verses, chapters and concepts/words in each book; how do Jesus and the Holy Spirit appear in the book; what teaching points came out of the book? **But we will do more**. We will study some of the fundamental doctrines that are not open to question in Christianity. We will be able to know the difference between solid Christianity and cults.
- 2) **...rests on His sacrifice**: we will know what salvation is and isn't and we will take time to do salvation studies where we will lead people to Christ and then ask you to do those same studies and lead people to Christ.

- 3) **...imbibes His Spirit:** we're fully Pentecostal and will teach about the power, moving, gifts, callings and infilling of the Spirit. Also, we are unabashedly into radical prayer. We will pray before, during and after studies and our prayer times will reflect the prayer times in the Bible: loud, passionate, and lots of praying in tongues. As a note to all: throughout the years it has been our continual experience of seeing neighbors and invitees come to Christ, regardless of the "radicalness" of the sound of tongues, etc., from our home.
- 4) **...imitates His example:** we will hold each other to high standards and get into each other's lives! The only basis for real fellowship with God and man is to **live out in the open** with both. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." (1 John 1:6-7) To walk in the light is the willingness **to know and be known**. As far as God is concerned, this means that we are willing to know the whole truth about ourselves and are therefore open to **conviction and correction** with a teachable spirit. Everything He shows us to be sin, we will deal with as sin- we will hide or excuse nothing. But we will do all with a merciful, loving attitude. We will possess the "armor of light": **true transparency** and be willing to be open with each other.

### **A Word on Discipline**

It should be obvious from above that a true disciple needs to be disciplined and it is no coincidence that the word "discipline" comes from "disciple". In the Word, there are several ways "discipline" is used. For this quick study, it is important to note that the word means **"to train by instruction and self-control"** (1 Cor 9:27). The biblical concept of discipline has both a positive side (instruction, knowledge, and training) and a negative aspect (correction, punishment, and reproof). Those who **refuse to submit** to God's **positive** discipline by obeying His laws will experience God's **negative** discipline through His wrath and judgment.

**Knowing the above, what follows are some rules, expectations, and things you need to know:**

Carol and I are missionary evangelists, Carol is also a practicing dentist, and hence, we are very busy! But we have made major sacrifices and done A LOT of changing to our schedule to make ourselves available not only to do the study, but to help coach you in any way. In other words, feel free to call, email, or come over!

Each week we will give you the assignment for the next week. Some weeks, that assignment will be EXTREMELY challenging. But we will be doing exactly what you are doing along with you! This is a nice way of saying: **No Excuses!** ☺

The Study starts at 7 PM and will meet every Friday unless otherwise noted. We do have off days scheduled. But here are non-negotiables to consider:

1. Only 2 unexcused absences are permitted or you will not be allowed to come back. This is not a “whenever I feel like it, I’ll go” group. We will accommodate people’s ministry/work schedules or things we deem to be exceptional circumstances.
2. We will start at 7 and keep going **until done**. If anyone has issues with duration, or seem to struggle with attention span, there are other ministries better suited for them.
3. Everyone must have completed their homework and reading. If a person demonstrates a lack of ability/time to do it in the time prescribed, they will not be part of this study.
4. We expect intelligent, well-informed participation from everyone. A lack of it is a sign to us of a lack of preparation. See number 3!
5. We don’t mind having children. But they must be well-behaved, non-disruptive, and their parents must have them under control. If they don’t discipline their children, we will, and we will also discipline the parents. And no one will like that!

**On a positive side:**

6. Everyone who is committed to the study will be required to go on a radical, overseas trip at some time where they will help plant a church, heal the sick, cast out devils, etc.
7. We will make ministry opportunities available where you can be altar workers, lead worship, or do whatever God has put in you to do.

Our first real study will be next week Friday, January 20 at 7 pm and we'll cover "The Bible the Word of God". No prep necessary on your part- so rejoice while you can!

**Miscellaneous:**

We believe in feeding people and will have food for everyone. But we are hoping that someone will take the burden open themselves to get others to sign up and provide food each week.

Be aware of our neighbors- we want to be a great witness!

We will be continually providing materials to you. Also, our desire is for all of you to learn to invest in missions. Consequently, we will take an offering every week. Checks can be made payable to G.O.F., and we will have an offering container available rather than "passing the hat".