

New Believers Bible Study

13. Discipleship : Exploring what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and how to grow in our relationship with Him.

Discipleship is the journey of exploring what it truly means to follow Jesus Christ and to deepen our relationship with Him. It involves not only believing in Him but also actively learning from His teachings and emulating His character. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commands his disciples to go and make more disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything He has commanded. This underscores the importance of discipleship as a foundational aspect of the Christian faith. Additionally, in Luke 9:23, Jesus says, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." This verse emphasizes the sacrificial nature of discipleship, as it requires believers to prioritize their allegiance to Jesus above all else and to be willing to endure hardships for the sake of following Him. Therefore, discipleship involves both learning from Jesus and actively living out His teachings in our daily lives, as we continually grow in our faith and obedience to Him.

Matthew 28:19-20

Is commonly referred to as the Great Commission, where Jesus gives his disciples a final instruction before ascending to heaven. The verses state: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

This passage is pivotal for understanding the mission of the Christian church. It highlights the universal scope of the discipleship mandate, encompassing all nations. The command to make disciples involves not merely converting individuals but nurturing them into mature followers of Christ. Baptism symbolizes entrance into the community of believers, signifying a commitment to follow Jesus. The teaching aspect emphasizes the importance of instructing new believers in the teachings of Jesus and guiding them in obedience to His commands. The promise of Jesus' continual presence assures believers of His

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support and guidance as they engage in the task of discipleship. Therefore, Matthew 28:19-20 serves as a foundational scripture for understanding the commission and responsibility of every Christian to participate in the process of making disciples and advancing the kingdom of God.

Matthew Henry's commentary on Matthew 28:19-20:

"Here is the carrying on of the divine plan for man's redemption. The Son of God came into the world to bring mankind back to God, and to make a way for the admission of the Gentiles into the church; now, that work being finished, He sends his disciples, as His Father had sent Him, John 20:21. He is the Father's representative, and acts by commission from Him, with the authority of an ambassador. Christ had sent His apostles on a limited commission (Matthew 10:5), but now they are sent out to the Gentile world at large. They are here authorized and commanded to convert and disciple all nations, Jews and Gentiles alike, according to the utmost extent of their commission. Baptizing them, not by an immediate application of water (Christ baptized not, John 4:2), but by a ministry of baptism, by a spiritual application of the seal of the covenant, the initiating of them into the church, and so into a personal covenant and communion with God. It is by baptism that they are admitted into the school and family of Christ, and registered among his disciples. Baptism is put first, because it is first in order; teaching them is added, for according to Christ's institution, they must be first baptized, and then taught, not only what the gospel teaches, but what Christ has commanded, all that he has made known to be the will of God. Those that are brought into the church of Christ are added to it, not that they may be there idle, but that they may be there taught. They must be taught to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. The end of gospel teaching is to bring people to obedience."

Henry emphasizes the continuation of the divine plan of redemption through the discipleship mandate given to the apostles by Jesus. He underscores the universal scope of this commission, emphasizing the inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles in the discipleship process. The act of baptism is seen as a significant initiation into the Christian community, while teaching encompasses the ongoing instruction in

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the teachings and commands of Jesus. Overall, Henry's commentary highlights the comprehensive nature of the discipleship mandate and its importance in fulfilling God's plan for salvation.

Luke 9:23 states: "And he said to all, 'If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'"

This verse is a key component of Jesus' teaching on discipleship. It emphasizes the self-sacrificial nature of following Him. Here's a breakdown of its significance with references:

1. **Deny Himself:** This phrase underscores the necessity of self-denial for discipleship. It involves surrendering one's own desires, ambitions, and priorities to the will of God and the teachings of Jesus. Jesus calls for a radical reorientation of one's life away from selfishness and towards devotion to Him. This concept is also echoed in Matthew 16:24 and Mark 8:34.

2. **Take Up His Cross:** Taking up one's cross symbolizes embracing suffering and hardship for the sake of following Jesus. In Jesus' time, carrying one's cross was a vivid image of the willingness to endure persecution and even death for the sake of faith. It signifies a willingness to endure whatever trials may come in the journey of discipleship. This idea is also reiterated in Matthew 10:38 and Mark 8:34.

3. **Daily:** The inclusion of "daily" emphasizes the ongoing, continuous nature of discipleship. It's not a one-time decision but a daily commitment to follow Jesus, deny oneself, and embrace the challenges and sacrifices that come with it. This aspect highlights the perseverance and steadfastness required in the Christian walk. This concept aligns with the idea of daily renewal and dependence on God's grace, as mentioned in passages like Psalm 68:19 and Lamentations 3:22-23.

4. **Follow Me:** Ultimately, discipleship involves following Jesus as the ultimate example and model. It means imitating His teachings, lifestyle, and character. Following Jesus implies not only physical

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Quiz: (Fill in the blanks)

82. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commands his disciples to make disciples of all _____, baptizing them in the name of the _____ and of the _____ and of the _____, and teaching them to observe all that he has commanded.

83 In Luke 9:23, Jesus instructs anyone who wants to come after him to deny himself, take up his _____, and follow him _____.

84. In Matthew 10:5, Jesus sends out his disciples, instructing them to go to the lost sheep of the house of _____.

85. John 20:21 records Jesus saying, "As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending _____."

86. According to John 4:2, Jesus himself did not _____, but only his _____.

87. Mark 8:34 challenges followers to deny themselves, take up their cross, and _____ Jesus.

88. In Psalm 68:19, the Psalmist acknowledges God's daily _____ and recognizes Him as our _____.

89. Lamentations 3:22-23 celebrates the Lord's steadfast love and _____, which are new every _____.

90. In Mark 8:34, Jesus says, "If anyone would come after me, let him _____ himself and take up his _____ and follow me."

91. Psalm 68:19 declares, "Blessed be the Lord, who _____ bears us up; God is our _____."

92. Lamentations 3:22-23 states, "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his _____ never come to an end; they are new every _____; great is your _____."