



Christian Discipleship - The Making of a Disciple of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ gave the Apostles, his eleven closest followers, the following commission:

"I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20

NLT)

In current times the word "disciple" has come to almost exclusively mean one who follows the teachings and example of Jesus Christ. However, during the years in which the Bible was written the culture was dominated by all things Greek. At that time, every student instructed in any particular school of thought was considered a *disciple* of that schoolmaster or philosopher in the manner of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. Although modern academia doesn't use that once cherished but now almost pejorative terminology, the reality is that every human being is a disciple of someone else - whether that person is a parent, teacher, professor, author, politician, broadcaster, corporate executive, etc... there is a coach, mentor, or role model to emulate. Even free-spirited, independent types can't honestly claim originality - it's been done before, and frequently! The question follows then: whose disciple am I, and **whose disciple are you?**

If, in the olden days of lore, an Epicurean had professed to be a Spartan one could have quickly examined their alternative lifestyle and correctly surmised the truth of the matter. Unfortunately, words have lost their meaning in this age of doublespeak, and lines have become blurred into opacity. The ideas of Classical Liberalism are now best personified by those who call themselves conservatives. Political parties of all persuasion change agendas with each election. Clerics, politicians, advertisers, lawyers, and the media distort meaning with a mere twist of a word or phrase. The concepts of right and wrong, truth and lie are considered to be relative if not passé. And while you can quickly distinguish the adherents of some religious sects from their outward appearance, the vast majority is often indistinguishable from those who claim atheism. Can anyone tell me what a Christian looks like from observing all those who claim to be one?

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Examine the fruit

Still I contend that, similarly to those of the Grecian culture, today's disciples of myriad disciplines can often be distinguished by either one or more of the following: their location, companions, clothing, grooming habits, manner of speech, daily routine, and the way they perceive and relate to the world around them. In particular, the above holds true for Christianity. But don't simply take my word for it — consider the words of Jesus Christ within the Sermon on the Mount:

"You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them." ([Matthew 7:16-20](#) NKJV)

Consider the costs

When a person enters the military, the first step after enlistment is to go to basic training. He has to leave the comforts of home with all of the pleasures of modern culture, and yield his life into the hands of very compassionate and leisurely Drill Sergeants! At the end of the training, the soldier may get to enjoy his material possessions once again, but the manner of his lifestyle and even the pattern of his thinking will have been forever changed.

"...what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple." ([Luke 14:31-33](#) NKJV)

"So don't worry about these things, saying, 'What will we eat? What will we drink? What will we wear?' These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs. Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need." ([Matthew 6:31-33](#) NLT)

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