

**Series: Life on Life Discipleship**  
**Discipleship, the Key to Spiritual Growth**  
*Selected Scripture*

Introduction:

As a church, it is my desire to lead us to live out the truth of the gospel and the Great Commission. The church of Jesus Christ in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has been mistakenly defined...it is not a building that we simply go to.

To be a Christian – to join the family of God – is to enter a whole new world. The goal of the church – for His people – is for us to become disciples. God’s goal for us is not simply salvation, His goal is that once we are saved that we would become disciples.

Jim Elliot:

"God, I pray Thee, light these idle sticks of my life that I may burn for Thee. Consume my life, my God, for it is Thine. I seek not a long life but a full one like You, Lord Jesus."

Jonathan Edwards:

"I claim no right to myself, no right to this understanding, this will, or these affections that are in me. Neither do I have any right to this body or its members, no right to this tongue, to these hands, feet, ears or eyes. I have given myself clear away and not retained anything of my own. I have been to God this morning and told Him I have given myself wholly to Him, I have given every power so that for the future I claim no right to myself in any respect. I have expressly promised Him, for by His grace I will not fail. His law is the constant rule of my obedience. I will fight with all my might against the world, the flesh and the devil to the end of my life. I will adhere to the faith of the gospel however hazardous and difficult the profession and practice of it may be. If I murmur in the least at affliction, if I am in any way uncharitable, if I revenge my own case, if I do anything purely to please myself or omit anything because it is a great denial, if I trust myself, if I take any praise for any good which Christ does by me, or if I am in any way proud, I shall act as my own and not God's. But I purpose to be absolutely His."

**Three-fold goal in "Life on Life" discipleship:**

1. To get people into the Word of God.
2. To get people into the Church of God.
3. To get people into fellowship with the people of God.

**Definition of discipleship:**

Discipleship is the developmental process of the local church that develops spiritually immature Christians into mature saints that, in turn, reproduce themselves into someone else.

- A disciple is a 'student' or 'learner' of the things of God. Discipleship is a process of the local church that brings people from spiritual infancy to spiritual maturity. The local church is God's school for making disciples.

## I. The Meaning of Discipleship

**Matthew 10:24-25 (NKJV)** <sup>24</sup> *A disciple is not above his teacher (I thank God for my spiritual teachers), nor a servant above his master.* <sup>25</sup> *It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they call those of his household!*

Jonathan Edwards:

“During my ministry many people made professions of faith in Jesus Christ, but many years later those same people showed no fruit of genuine salvation. There was no change and no transformation in many of these people’s lives.”

- In response, Edwards wrote his sermon, “Treatise on Religious Affections,” to address the issue of deficient discipleship, of authentic faith. In his writing, he coined the phrase, “holy affections” as the distinguishing mark of true discipleship.

Jonathan Edwards:

“The supreme proof of true conversion is holy affection, zeal for holy things, longing after God, longing after holiness, and desire for purity.”

- The defining mark in a Christian’s life is a transformed heart. True biblical discipleship brings with it a radical change of tastes and appetites.

**Ten spiritual disciplines for every leader or teacher:** (Thom Rainer)

1. Bible engagement.
2. Obedience to our God.
3. Self denial.
4. Service and ministry to God and to others.
5. Sharing our faith.
6. Exercising faith in everyday life.
7. Personal stewardship.
8. Hungering and thirsting after God.
9. Building relationships.
10. Unashamed transparency.

## II. The Cost of Discipleship

**Mark 8:34-35 (NKJV)** <sup>34</sup> *When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and*

*take up his cross, and follow Me. <sup>35</sup> For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it.*

- While it is true that salvation is a free gift of God, the opposite is true when it comes to discipleship. Discipleship is a process that will cost you your entire life.

Tony Evans:

“The difference between a defeated and a victorious Christian is not a defect in their salvation but a difference in the quality of their discipleship. It costs to be a disciple.”

- Salvation and discipleship are different, salvation is an act of God, but discipleship is a process that many Christians never begin. Discipleship also makes radical demands that some Christians are not ready to meet. I believe there are people who are truly saved, but never become devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Many people boast of our salvation being free – and it is... But fewer people boast of losing their lives and giving everything up in order to follow Jesus Christ.