

December 2, 2012

The Discipline of Discipleship

Luke 9:23; 57-62

I am convinced that the average Christian across America thinks that “knowing about” Jesus Christ is the same as actually “knowing” Jesus Christ. There is, however, a vast difference between the two. The difference is heaven and hell. Judas Iscariot shows us that it is possible to know about Jesus without actually ever knowing Jesus. Could it be that’s where many church attendees are in America? Unlike the modern church today, Jesus was not looking for a crowd. He was looking for commitment. He was not looking for decisions. He was looking for disciples.

“Discipleship” and “discipline” have the same root word. I sometimes wonder whether people understand that when Jesus calls us to Himself, it’s not just until we become senior adults. It’s not just until we retire from our physical jobs. Discipleship never ends for the child of God.

Jonathan Edwards:

“During my ministry [the first *Great Awakening*] 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.”

John MacArthur:

“Anyone who has done much personal witnessing has encountered persons who make a profession of faith in Christ but whose subsequent lives show no change in attitudes or behavior. And when they indicate no love for God and Christ, no interest in the Bible, in prayer, or in the fellowship of God’s people, there is no good reason to believe they were ever saved.”

Ten Spiritual Disciplines that every leader or teacher should model...by 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.

Arthur W. Pink:

“Our Lord gave this young man a test. He had to make a choice between Christ, possessions, and his sin, and he failed the test. No matter what he may have believed, because he was unwilling to forsake all, he could not be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Salvation is for those who are willing to forsake everything.”

I. The Disciples Cross

Luke 9:23 (NKJV) *Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."*

- Discipleship is a matter of daily discipline. We are to follow Jesus one step at a time, one day at a time.

II. The Disciples Call

Luke 9:58-59 (NKJV) ⁵⁸ *And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." ⁵⁹ Then He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."*

- If we are going to follow Jesus the only certain time we have to follow Him is now.

Warren Wiersbe:

"Let the spiritually dead bury the physically dead. Jesus was not asking the man to be disrespectful to his father (who was not yet dead), but to have the right priorities in life. It is better to preach the Gospel and give life to the spiritually dead than to wait for your father to die and bury him."

Three things that we must have to make an impact in the kingdom:

1. The **Word** of God
2. The **Spirit** of God
3. The **People** of God