

Disciple Steps  
July 5, 2020

The goal and hope for a person who has a relationship with Jesus is discipleship. In Jesus' day rabbis (spiritual teachers) would have people that they would mentor, and they were called disciples. This process of mentoring would start early on, and the hope of the disciple would be that he would eventually know his rabbi (or disciples) well enough, and would be able to understand what his rabbi would do in any situation that he would be able to speak on behalf of the rabbi.

The disciple's goal of accurately representing the rabbi was not only lofty, but it would have only been obtainable if the disciple would have progressively moved closer to the rabbi, and learned to think like the teacher, and understood how to apply Scripture like the rabbi.

It is our goal that once we have a relationship with Jesus that we would not simply know Him, but that we would draw closer and closer to him. That we would be disciples that will understand Jesus well enough that we can represent him, and speak on his behalf to a world that needs to know him.

So how do we know where we are at in regards to the process of becoming a disciple? What are some identifiers that we can find in Scripture that allows us to gauge where we are in regards to becoming a disciple?

This morning we are going to look at some of the steps of becoming a disciple. Hopefully as we walk through these steps, you will be able to identify where you are in the process of discipleship, what the next step is, and how you can take the next step.

So for us to do this, we are going to look at different passages of Scripture, and each step will highlight where we find these steps in Scripture.

The first group of disciples that we see Jesus interacting with are found within a crowd setting.

1. **The Crowd** Matthew 4:23-25 "And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. **24** So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them. **25** And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan."

We see in this passage that Jesus had a crowd around him. People wanted to be close to him, they wanted the sick healed, they wanted to have an encounter with Jesus.

If you think of it in terms of a concert, this is the people who are going to the concert

What an incredible opportunity. To be close enough to Jesus to not only see him do incredible things, but to have the opportunity to have an encounter with him. For Jesus himself to take notice of you. It is in the crowd that transformation happens.

This is not only when someone is first saved, but also those who have already believed in Jesus, but they continue to follow him in a larger setting, waiting and hoping to have that experience again when God radically moved in their life.

It is never a bad thing to want God to move. And we will never be able to have an encounter with Jesus if we do not get close to him. But keeping Jesus at a distance where you control

when and how you encounter him is pretty good indicator that you find yourself in the crowd when it comes to being a disciple.

However, being in the crowd will leave you unfulfilled. For a child of the KING to be satisfied with a few glimpses of Jesus, and to be a spectator of what He is doing will always lead to a heart that questions why.

You will wonder why other people seem to be having a better relationship with Jesus. You will wonder why God seems distant instead of close. You will wonder why you seem to be distracted when it comes to Spiritual things when being spiritual focused is the heartbeat of a disciple.

So how do we go from being part of the crowd to taking the next step? What is the main thing that is missing from that aspect of our walk with Jesus? The answer is Commitment! We see committed disciples throughout Jesus' ministry.

2. **The Committed** **LUKE 10:1-3** "After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. **2** And he said to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. **3** Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves."

Jesus has just had the encounter with people who were part of the crowd, and they wanted to take the next step, and Jesus very clearly explains that taking the next step would cost something. That there was a greater commitment level, and then in these verses, we see that the cost is worth it.

How do we know who these disciples were? It is obviously not the 12 apostles, there are 72 of them.

These are the people who are following Jesus. Who often are going with him place to place. In this case they are going ahead of him to announce that Jesus is coming. They are actively involved in his ministry. In fact they are able to even heal the sick because Jesus gives them the power to do that.

What an incredible opportunity to be able to not only be close to Jesus, but to do ministry in His name. To be able to be on the front lines of lives being transformed.

I have not been to a lot of concerts in my life, but it kind of reminds me of the roadies at a concert. They are not necessarily part of the band, but they get to be with the band. They are selling their merchandise. They are helping them get set up. They have a unique perspective on what it is like to be in that close of relationship with the band.

Being a committed disciple of Jesus has the same way. You are not Jesus, but you get to be on the front lines of what He is doing.

That sounds great right, but how do you know if you are here. What does it mean to be committed. If the commitment level of someone who is part of the crowd is to just show up, there must be something more.

### **The committed are looking for ways to serve!**

We see these disciples who are wanting to do something for the Kingdom of God. It costs them something for sure. They have to go out and go into these places. They sacrifice time, resources, opportunities, but it is worth it to them because they look more like Jesus.

So for us to be committed in our discipleship process, we need to be ready to serve when Jesus asks. When there is a ministry that is in need of our gifts and abilities, we are ready to say yes, even if it costs us something.

Isn't that the best ways we can serve. Isn't that the test for a disciple that if they are serving, they must be doing all they can right? Well if you are serving, and you are thinking there is something more when it comes to being close to Jesus. To looking like Jesus where do you go?

You become one of the Called.

**3. The Called (Disciples) LUKE 9:1-6** "And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, **2** and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. **3** And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. **4** And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. **5** And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." **6** And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere."

The called, much like the committed, can be identified by their service, but there is a distinction that sets them apart. He does not send the 12 necessarily where he was about to go. They were not going so they could tell others that Jesus was coming, they were the ones who were representing Jesus.

How do you know that you are one of the called, and simply one of the committed? You are not looking to do a ministry that someone else is asking you to do, but instead you are taking your own calling from Jesus and leading out in a ministry that is yours.

For the illustration of the concert, you are in the band. You are on the stage. You don't have a microphone in front of you, and you are not playing one of the "key" instruments, but you are on the stage.

You are the one who is responsible for telling others about what Jesus is doing. And you are the one who is responsible for what your calling looks like. There is a deeper sense of acknowledgement and drive.

So how do you get there? You look for the unique opportunities that God has laid on your heart, and has wired you to complete, and you figure out how you are supposed to do that. It is at this step of discipleship that you are not looking to tell someone else something that you think needs to be done, but instead you are taking the ownership.

As a pastor, there is no way that I can implement all of the great ideas that other people want me to implement. Even the ones that they are wanting to help out with. What I would love to tell people when they ask me why we as a church, or a ministry that I am in charge of, are not doing something they think would be a great idea, is that someone needs to be called to that. Someone needs the ownership over that. Where they are not looking for someone to give them every direction, but if they are walking close enough to Jesus to represent Jesus, then make it theirs.

That is a scary proposition, because it is now fully on you!  
As scary as it is, it is very much worth it.

But we need to know that when we are called, it will disrupt the normal pattern of life. It will be different than what others look like.

For the disciples it was three years of walking with Jesus, then a lifetime marked by being the leaders of the church. By being the very ones who took the Gospel of Christ to the World.

It is a huge proposition, but it allows us a closeness to Jesus that few others have. I would say it is what the part that most people long for, but are not willing to make the sacrifice to get to this part of development with Jesus.

If your heart is being stirred for something to be done. For a ministry to start, for a group of people to be ministered to, for a set of people to the Gospel intentionally shared with them, then it may be that Jesus is calling you to take the next step in your discipleship journey with him. It may be that Jesus is moving you from being committed, to being called (or called out) for a purpose.

So isn't this the last step? No! There is one more step in the pathway of discipleship. It is a step that few get too, because it is so costly, but it is also one of the most unique opportunities.

It is for those who are Close!

4. **The Close** Matthew 26:37 "And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled."

In this passage, we know that the called ones (The Disciples) were with Jesus in the garden, but he takes these three men and brings them into a deeper journey with him. In doing so, there is an incredible accountability that happens for these people. They get a chance to hear Jesus pray, not my will but yours LORD. They get to see the sweat turn into blood. They get to hear the way that Jesus talked to the Father when he withdrew to be by himself.

Being close is not for the faint of heart. Being close means that Jesus is going to trust you with more, and because of that you can feel isolated at times.

You are not just part of the band, but you are THE BAND. Make no mistake, Jesus is the headline, but you are right there with him. You are playing the drums (or lead guitar whatever you think is the cooler instrument). You may even be recognized as being part of the band out in public.

But when it comes to being close, there is a cost that has to be understood. It is a huge cost, but it is a worthy cost. It is your life.

Being close to Jesus means that you are willing to give everything up, to do what HE calls you to do.

**"When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die." Bonhoeffer**

In order to take this step of discipleship, you must take the spotlight to every aspect of your life and soul, and ask the question, "If Jesus asked me to give up this, would I" Job, friends, comfort, country, family, opportunity, etc...

Saying that is terrifying for most of us, but once you have been called out by Jesus, and walked with him that way for long enough, then this step is not nearly as big of a leap.

We need more people who are committed to get to this step of discipleship. It does not come easy, but until we realize where we are at on the path, and what our next step is, we will never get to his kind of closeness with Jesus on our own. It will take an intentional leading to where Jesus wants us.