

## **What is Discipleship?**

### **Series: Why Did God Create Us?**

## **What Does The Bible Say?**

### **What is Discipleship?**

#### **The Gospel changes us.**

17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT)

#### **What does it mean to become a new creation?**

10 Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. (Colossians 3:10 NLT)

#### **Following Jesus means to image Him, to be like Him.**

**We do not imitate Christ for Him to love us. He already loves us!**

8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (Romans 5:7–8 NLT)

**We did not receive salvation due to our performance, therefore, we cannot lose it because of lack of performance.**

**Salvation and discipleship are very different.**

**Salvation is a gift given to us by God when we believe the Gospel.**

**Discipleship is something we do as a result of believing the Gospel.**

**How Can You Obey?**

21 For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps. (1 Peter 2:21 NLT)

**We are to follow Jesus, but Jesus warns about the difficulty of discipleship.**

25 A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, 26 “If you want to be my disciple, you must, by comparison, hate everyone else—your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be my disciple. 27 And if you do not carry your own cross and follow me, you cannot be my disciple. 28 “But don’t begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? 29 Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. 30 They would say, ‘There’s the person who started that building and couldn’t afford to finish it!’ (Luke 14:25–30 NLT)

**To live like Jesus is very hard. What if we fail?**

**We will fail and God will still love us.**

**Why should we live like Jesus?**

**It shows we love Him.**

**Sin is self-destructive and not only harms us, but those around us.**

**Living like Jesus blesses others.**

**Living like Jesus allows us to help others find Christ.**

### **Additional Notes:**

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at [www.crosswaveschurch.com/host](http://www.crosswaveschurch.com/host). Cross Waves has produced short videos to train you how to use your home to reach others for Christ. So please check it out.

### **Explore:**

This series comes from the book, *What Does God Want?*

Michael S. Heiser and Blind Spot Press, 2018.

## **Explore:**

Today's Talking Theology segment comes from the book:

Powell, D. (2006). *Holman QuickSource Guide to Christian Apologetics* (p. 122). Nashville, TN: Holman Reference.

## **Explore:**

Prior to the councils at Carthage and Hippo there had been much discussion on the issue. In a letter dating from 367, Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, was the first to compile a list of the twenty-seven books as we now have them. He was also the first person in the church to use *kanōn* in this sense around AD 353. In *De decretis* 81.3, Athanasius says that the Shepherd of Hermas “does not belong to the canon.” About ten years later, The Synod of Laodicea made a distinction between canonical from non-canonical books. The first appearance of the phrase

“canon of the NT” appears about AD 400 in Macarius Magnes’s *Apocriticus* 4.10. Athanasius was no doubt informed by the work of Eusebius, the father of church history. In 325 Eusebius, spurred by Constantine’s desire for unity and uniformity in Christianity, began investigating the history of the books that were being used as Scripture or had advocates who said they should be used as Scripture. Eusebius had access to large libraries of Christian writings both in Caesarea Maritima, his home, and in Jerusalem. These libraries contained the works of church fathers dating back to the first century. The writings of the church fathers are important because they quoted so heavily from the writings they considered authoritative because of their apostolic origin. For example, Tertullian (c. 150–c. 229) quotes from twenty-three of the twenty-seven New Testament books. In fact, the vast majority of the New Testament can be reconstructed on quotes from the church fathers alone.

Powell, D. (2006). Holman QuickSource Guide to Christian Apologetics (pp. 122–123). Nashville, TN: Holman Reference.

**Explore:**

Peter doesn't leave us on our own to figure out what our submissions looks like. He provides an example for us to follow.

*For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.*

There is perhaps nothing more beautiful in the English language than Milton's depiction of the moment God's Son stood upon the rim of the universe in Paradise Lost. Seeing our need for a Savior, he said to the Father, "I will go." So the eternal Word of God took on flesh. And this one, Jesus, the one who possesses all authority and all power—this one humbled himself and became a servant.

Peter, knowing just how difficult our sojourning in this world will be, says in essence, “I have an example for you to imitate. I have an exile for you to follow. The one who flung the stars into space—this one shall lead you!” We are to imitate the one of whom Peter says:

*He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.*

*When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls.*

Helm, D. R. (2008). 1 & 2 Peter and Jude: sharing christ’s sufferings (pp. 95–96). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

## **Explore:**

### **The cost of being a disciple (14:25–35)**

A large crowd is now heading for Jerusalem with Jesus. Their hope is that his pilgrim's progress will become a military campaign. Jesus spells out the true cost of following him.

To be a disciple, you must prefer Jesus to every member of your family—including yourself! You must estimate the cost, just as you would with a building project. You must assess whether you are able to succeed, just as you would before a battle.

Jesus looks for followers who are like salt—promoting goodness and preventing evil. Without total commitment, they will be useless.

Knowles, A. (2001). *The Bible guide* (1st Augsburg books ed., p. 487). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg.

## **Explore:**

Jesus seems to make a distinction between salvation and discipleship. Salvation is open to all who will come by faith, while discipleship is for believers willing to pay a price.

Salvation means coming to the cross and trusting Jesus Christ, while discipleship means carrying the cross and following Jesus Christ. Jesus wants as many sinners saved as possible (“that My house may be filled”), but He cautions us not to take discipleship lightly; and in the three parables He gave, He made it clear that there is a price to pay.

To begin with, we must love Christ supremely, even more than we love our own flesh and blood (Luke 14:26–27). The word hate does not suggest positive antagonism but rather “to love less” (see Gen. 29:30–31; Mal. 1:2–3; and Matt. 10:37). Our love for Christ must be so strong that all other love is like hatred in comparison. In fact, we must hate our own lives and be willing to bear the cross after Him.

What does it mean to “carry the cross”? It means daily identification with Christ in shame, suffering, and surrender to God’s will. It means death to self, to our own plans and ambitions, and a willingness to serve Him as He directs (John 12:23–28). A “cross” is something we willingly accept from God as part of His will for our lives. The Christian who called his noisy neighbors the “cross” he had to bear certainly did not understand the meaning of dying to self.

Jesus gave three parables to explain why He makes such costly demands on His followers: the man building a tower, the king fighting a war, and the salt losing its flavor. The usual interpretation is that believers are represented by the man building the tower and the king fighting the war, and we had better “count the cost” before we start, lest we start and not be able to finish. But I agree with Campbell Morgan that the builder and the king represent not the believer but Jesus Christ. He is the One who must “count the cost” to see whether we are the kind of

material He can use to build the church and battle the enemy. He cannot get the job done with halfhearted followers who will not pay the price.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). The Bible exposition commentary (Vol. 1, p. 232). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

### **Question 1 of 5**

Why would each book of the New Testament need to be written by an apostle or an associate of an apostle?

### **Question 2 of 5**

How would you explain the inspiration of Scripture?

### **Question 3 of 5**

How would you explain the difference between salvation and discipleship?

### **Question 4 of 5**

What makes discipleship so hard?

### **Question 5 of 5**

How does imaging Christ help lead others to a relationship with Him?