

Why Is Teaching To Obey Part Of Discipleship?

Matthew 28

What is a disciple?

A Christian disciple is someone becoming more like God in character and actions.

29 For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. (Romans 8:29 NLT)

23 Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.

24 Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. (Ephesians 4:23–24 NLT)

You do not become a god but more of an image-bearer of God.

That was always God's plan. We are created in God's image.

What Does The Bible Say?

3 During the forty days after he suffered and died, he appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. And he talked to them about the Kingdom of God. (Acts 1:3 NLT)

On and off for forty days after the resurrection, Jesus appeared back and forth with His disciples.

16 Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted!

(Matthew 28:16–17 NLT)

12 When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he left Judea and returned to Galilee. (Matthew 4:12 NLT)

23 Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness.

(Matthew 4:23 NLT)

Jesus began and is finishing His earthly ministry on a mountain in Galilee.

18 Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. (Matthew 28:18 NLT)

28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, 29 for he taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law. (Matthew 7:28–29 NLT)

Christ has all authority to give us commands. He is God.

19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

20 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 28:19–20 NLT)

The mission of the church is to make disciples.

Why Is Teaching To Obey Part Of Discipleship?

God does not want us to live in our sinful state. It is not healthy – mentally, physically, or spiritually.

22 Then the Lord God said, “Look, the human beings have become like us, knowing both good and evil. What if they reach out, take fruit from the tree of life, and eat it? Then they will live forever!” 23 So the Lord God banished them from the Garden of Eden, and he sent Adam out to cultivate the ground from which he had been made. 24 After sending them out, the Lord God stationed mighty cherubim to the east of the Garden of Eden. And he placed a flaming sword that flashed back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. (Genesis 3:22–24 NLT)

The more that we take on the character and behavior of God, the healthier we become.

We will finally be utterly healthy in heaven – mentally, physically, or spiritually.

How Can You Obey?

We teach obedience because it leads to a relationship with Christ who gives everlasting joy - on earth and in heaven.

Do you want everlasting Joy?

Give your life completely to Christ.

Additional Notes:

If you would like to use your home to disciple others, check out our training at 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.

Additional Notes:

This week's Deep Dive Into The Bible is from Heiser, M. S. (2014). *I Dare You Not to Bore Me with the Bible*. (J. D. Barry & R. Van Noord, Eds.) (p. 42). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press; Bible Study Magazine.

Explore:

Matthew reported that Judas hanged himself (Matthew 27:5). In Acts, Luke recorded that he fell (Acts 1:16-19). This is no contradiction as some suppose. These two accounts are easily resolved with the understanding that Judas did hang himself, but at some point his body fell from where he hung, which resulted in his body breaking open (Acts 1:18). For more on this see [bit.ly/ AP-Judas](http://bit.ly/AP-Judas) or bit.ly/CARM-Judas.

Some seek to fault Matthew's attribution of this prophecy to Jeremiah instead of Zechariah (Matthew 27:9). Careful study resolves this question as well. The Hebrew Scriptures were in three collections: Law, Prophets, and Writings. The first and largest book of the Writings is Psalms, which could be used in reference to the entire collection. The largest book of the Prophets is Jeremiah. Matthew seems to use Jeremiah as representative of all the prophets—such is the case in Matthew 16:14. It is also appropriate to point out that Matthew said this prophecy was “spoken” by Jeremiah. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Matthew may be informing us that Jeremiah spoke the prophecy that was later written by Zechariah.

Explore:

Having been summoned to a meeting with the risen Lord, the disciples were undoubtedly excited and eager to hear

what He would say to them. They had seen His heart for mankind on display in many situations and with a wide array of people. This same heart and passion came out again in the final words He spoke on this occasion.

Believers Are to Make Disciples Wherever God Sends Us

(Matthew 28:16-20)

This passage contains what is typically referred to as the Great Commission. These words were spoken specifically to Christ's followers who were present that day, but continue to have meaning, relevance, and application for all followers today.

Verse 16 specifies that eleven of the original twelve disciples were there. This is interesting for two reasons. First, Judas Iscariot is missing. This is not a surprise because he had betrayed Christ for a mere 30 pieces of silver and later hanged himself (Matthew 26:47-50; 27:3-5). A second reason why eleven is significant is because Peter is still in the group, in spite

of the fact that he publicly denied knowing Jesus (Matthew 26:69-75). This was a dismal failure on his part, and yet the Lord, in grace, reached out to him, forgave him, and would continue to use him.

These eleven disciples went to Galilee because the Lord had promised to meet them there (Matthew 26:32; 28:10). The specific mountain upon which He met them is uncertain, although some speculate that it was Mt. Tabor, possibly the site of Jesus' transfiguration. Matthew stated that when they saw Jesus, His disciples worshiped Him. He added that some doubted (verse 17). Scholars disagree on whom these were that doubted. Some believe it was some of the eleven, but that they were hesitant or uncertain about how to react, rather than doubting that Jesus was alive. The Greek word translated "doubted" often spoke of hesitation or indecision, rather than unbelief. Other scholars believe there may have been other followers of Jesus that had gathered there, and that some of them

doubted. After all, in 1 Corinthians 15:6, Paul mentioned that the Lord appeared to more than 500 people in His resurrected state.

Regardless of who “doubted,” Jesus wanted to strengthen the faith of these who would take the message of Christ to the world. The last few days had been an emotional roller coaster for anyone who knew Christ or even knew anything about Him.

Any doubts and hesitation would have been quickly eradicated by what Jesus said in verse 18. All authority is His! This authority was granted to Him by the Father and would now provide the basis for what His followers were to do. Throughout Matthew’s gospel, he emphasized and illustrated Jesus’ authority in various capacities—over the human body, demons, natural elements, sin, the Sabbath, and even death. This same authority would now validate and authenticate what Christ would commission His disciples to do.

The primary command of Christ's commission is to make disciples (verse 19). And they were to do this for all nations and people groups, not just Israel. We are to lead people to Christ and to do so wherever we go. It could be paraphrased this way; "Make disciples as you're going." So while it is important to go to other cultures, the greater point here is that Christ wants us to make disciples of all nations, every day, wherever we find ourselves, in the big events and also in the mundane things like going to the store. We look for every opportunity to share the gospel. When people trust Christ and become His followers, we are to baptize them, and teach them to obey and follow His teachings. He has the authority as God to commission us to do so.

In sharing the gospel, the disciples would be seeking total commitment to Christ. This commitment would be symbolized in baptism and would be further demonstrated in a life committed to obedience to the teachings of the Lord. In this

mission, the disciples could be assured of Jesus' ongoing presence with them until the very end of the age (verse 20). Although the Lord did not remain physically with the Eleven, His spiritual presence was with them until their tasks on earth were finished, and He will be with us as well. The words with you powerfully echo the name Emmanuel, which by definition means, "God with us" as used in Matthew 1:23. It is the Lord's presence that serves as bookends for the Gospel of Matthew.

Explore:

In verse 19, Jesus used the Trinitarian formula of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Another instance in which all three persons of the Trinity were linked together was at Jesus' own baptism in Matthew 3:16-17. Baptism, as presented in Matthew 28, would associate a believer with the person of Jesus Christ and with the triune God. At the very least, the text supports the reality of

the Trinity as it places all three persons of the God-head at the center of Christian allegiance and links them together under a singular reference to “the name.”

Explore:

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, Believers Are to Witness for Christ Across the Street and Around the World

(Acts 1:6-11)

In Acts 1:3-5, Jesus had told the disciples about the kingdom of God and their soon-coming Spirit baptism. For these early followers of Jesus, most of which were Jewish, they assumed this referred to the restoration of Israel’s kingdom. So naturally, they wanted to know when this would occur (verse 6). The Lord’s answer in verse 7, however, implied not only that this was not that time, but also that the question was ir-relevant to their

present task and future plans. These times or periods were set by the Father and would be administered according to His plans.

Verse 8 begins with the word, “but.” This is a term of contrast that builds on the question of the previous verses. Rather than the Jews simply being concerned with their homeland being restored, Jesus informed them that they would receive power after the Holy Spirit came upon them and consequently, they would then be witnesses. This is a key word in the book of Acts and is used 29 times there. A witness is someone who merely tells what he or she has seen and heard. One modern day example of this would be a witness in a court of law. The judge expects witnesses to share what they know, not personal ideas or opinions. Our English word “martyr” comes from the Greek word translated witness. How fitting considering the fact that many of these witnesses were martyred for sharing what they knew about Christ and His resurrection.

At this point, Christ's disciples were inwardly focused as far as nationality. They wanted to restore the kingdom to Israel. But Christ emphatically corrected that. They were to begin at home, but then to take the gospel to the ends of the earth in the power of the Holy Spirit. This empowerment by the Spirit would enable them to be witnesses for Christ in their own city and homeland, but also throughout Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth. This expression referred to the farthest extensions of the Roman Empire, and beyond.

This revolutionized the covenant. Instead of just being kind to the immigrant who lived among them and allowing them to adopt the Jewish religion, Jesus' followers were to go everywhere intentionally with the good news of what Christ had done to actively seek converts.

Very few details are given about the ascension of Christ in verse nine. The reason is simple—this was not the emphasis of the

text. The emphasis was again on the instruction of the disciples. This is, however, a historical event, often celebrated on the fortieth day after Easter. The perspective in the text is from the disciples' point of view as they watched Jesus ascend from earth to Heaven. The expression, he was lifted or taken up, is a passive verb indicating that God the Father was doing the activity of taking His Son back to Heaven.

As the disciples gazed into the sky where Christ had gone, two men suddenly appeared beside them. Their attire makes it obvious that these were angels. Two similar angels were dressed in white robes in Luke 24:4. The angels then gave the disciples the assurance that Jesus would one day return, just as they had seen Him being taken from them (verse 11).

The disciples watched Christ go with the promise that He would come back one day. This is part of the motivation for doing what

Christ commissioned. He will come back to reward those who follow Him and punish those who have rejected Him.

Explore:

Some Bible scholars equate this “mountain meeting” in Galilee with the appearance of the Lord to “more than 500 brethren at one time” (1 Cor. 15:6). The fact that some of the people present doubted His resurrection would suggest that more than the eleven Apostles were present, for these men were now confirmed believers. Our Lord’s ascension did not take place at this time, but later, after He had ministered to His disciples in Jerusalem (Luke 24:44–53).

Matthew 28:18–20 is usually called “the Great Commission,” though this statement is no greater than that in any of the other Gospels, nor is it the last statement Jesus made before He

returned to heaven. However, this declaration does apply to us as believers, so we should understand the factors that are involved.

Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*
(Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 107.

Explore:

Jesus commissions his disciples to continue his work. They are to go to all nations now—not just Israel, as in the past. The gospel is for the Gentiles too. They are to baptize all people, as a sign that they belong to Christ and are clean and ready for his return. This baptism is to be in the name of the one God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This is the first time that Jesus has included himself in the name of God.

The disciples are to teach everyone to obey Christ's commands.

The good news is to be expressed in good lives—lives which show truth, purity and love.

Finally, Jesus promises to be with his disciples in this great task.

Just as God promised Moses and Joshua that he would always be with them, so Jesus promises to strengthen his disciples. Their mission is to continue to the end of the age—that is, until he returns. The Lord of all will be with them always.

Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide*, 1st Augsburg books ed. (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 443.

Question 1 of 5

Why was Solomon so adept at writing proverbs? Why was he so knowledgeable in zoology and botany?

Question 2 of 5

What is a disciple?

Question 3 of 5

Why do we need the power of the Holy Spirit to spread the gospel?

Question 4 of 5

We are to witness until Christ returns. Why should the future return of Christ motivate us to share the gospel?

Question 5 of 5

In what ways can we support those who are taking the gospel to people in other places and nations?