

The Twelve: Walk A Mile in Their Shoes

John: A Disciple in Process

Various Texts

Today we'll look at the life of the Apostle John to see a disciple in process. Over the course of his life, we will see many stages and get a picture of what it looks like to walk with Jesus for the long haul! John is a great example:

“Three years with Jesus began to transform a self-centered fanatic into a mature man of balance. Three years with Jesus moved the Son of Thunder toward becoming an apostle of love...John was transformed from a bigoted hothead into a loving, godly elder statesman for the early church.”

John MacArthur

Main Idea: God always meets you where you are, but He loves you too much to leave you there.

Four Stages to Disciples in Process:

I. Stage One: Young & Stupid

“John said to him, ‘Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, & we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.’ But Jesus said, ‘Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. For the one who is not against us is for us. For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.” **Mark 9:38-41**

“When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.” **1 Corinthians 13:11**

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” **Philippians 1:6**

II. Stage Two: A Little Older & Still Not Getting It

“And James & John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him & said to him, ‘Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.’ And he said to them, ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ And they said to him, ‘Grant us to sit, one at your right hand & one at your left, in your glory.’ Jesus said to them, ‘You do not know what you are asking...to sit at my right hand or my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.’ And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James & John. And Jesus called them to him & said to them, ‘You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, & their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, & whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, & to give his life as a ransom for many.” **Mark 10:35-38a, 40-45**

“But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, & whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.” **Mark 10:44**

“...we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.”
Ephesians 4:15b

III. Stage Three: Growing in Humility

“But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother & his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, & Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother & the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, behold, your son!’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Behold, your mother!’ And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.” **John 19:25-27**

“You shall stand up before the gray head & honor the face of an old man, & you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.” **Leviticus 19:32**

IV. Stage Four: The Disciple of Love & Truth

“Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed & in truth.”
1 John 3:18

“It may seem amazing that Jesus loved a man who wanted to burn up the Samaritans. He loved a man who was obsessed with status & position. He loved a man who forsook Him & fled rather than suffer for His sake. But in loving John, Jesus transformed him into a different man – a man who modeled the same kind of love Jesus had shown him.” **John MacArthur**

John was a disciple in process; so are you and so am I. He loved John too much to leave him the way he was, and he loves us too much to leave us the way we are. God has an incredible plan to do something THROUGH you, but His plan for what he wants to do IN you is even more amazing!

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” **Ephesians 2:8-10**

On your own, it’s impossible to get into heaven or follow Jesus. But if you would become a disciple in process, He will change your life!

Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:

- *Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *New Bible Commentary* – D.A. Carson (1994)
- *New American Commentary Series* – Craig Bloomberg (1992)
- *Daily Study Bible Series* – William Barclay (1976)
- *Word Pictures in the New Testament* – A.T. Robertson (1933)
- *MacArthur New Testament Commentary* - John MacArthur (1987)
- *Tony Evans Book of Illustrations* – Tony Evans (2009)
- *Matthew Henry’s Commentary* – Matthew Henry (1994)
- *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* – W.A. Elwell (2001)
- *Twelve Ordinary Men* – John MacArthur (2002)

