

# May 4, 2025

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**BIG IDEA** – We are influenced by those we spend time with. And similarly, we influence those we spend time with.

**Scripture Focus** – “Students are not greater than their teacher. But **the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher.**” Luke 6:40 NLT

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One of the mysteriously funny things about being human? **We shape each other—whether we mean to or not.** Hang around someone long enough, and you'll start to pick up their quirks. **That disappointed grimace your mom makes? Now it's yours. That overused word your friend says? You say it too.** God wired us this way. It's how Jesus lived, loved, and discipled—and it's how we're formed as His followers and form others in return.

We are influenced by others, and we influence others – **all the time!**

Monkey see, monkey do.

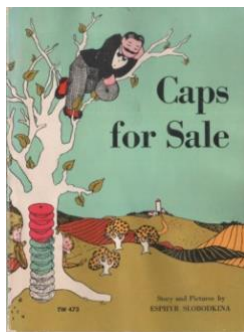
**“Learning a process without understanding why it works.”**

The original folklore tale was told in [The Wilmington Centinel in 1789](#), of a sailor who wanted to sell off extra red hats to the indigenous people in the village on the Labrador Coast.

A sailor once went ashore to sell a bunch of red wool caps. It was hot, so he walked through the jungle until he found a shady spot under a tree. He put one cap on his head and laid the rest beside him, then dozed off. When he woke up, he was shocked—**monkeys in the trees had stolen all the caps and were wearing them, mimicking him!** He tried everything to get them back, but nothing worked. Frustrated, he ripped the cap off his own head and threw it on the ground, shouting, “Fine! Just take this one too!”

To his surprise, the monkeys copied him again—each one pulled off their cap and tossed it to the ground. He quickly gathered his caps and went on his way.

**A woman, Esphyr Slobodkina wrote and illustrated a children's book in 1940 called, [Caps for Sale](#) based on an old folklore. She sold more than two million copies.**



**The technical word is mimicry**, the act, practice, or art of mimicking. As a parent or grandparent of a newborn, you might know it better as [mirroring](#). It is **a behavior in which one person subconsciously imitates the gesture, speech pattern, or attitude of another.**

It's really how discipleship works!

**Watch how a master hunter teaches two much younger men how to [steal meat from lions](#)!**

#### **VIDEO STEALING MEAT FROM LIONS**



**Followers of Jesus are becoming like him as well as fostering faith forward in others!**

**It's really all about the basics and fundamentals.**

**Often, as we grow older and discover more about our faith, the bible itself and the people of God who gather – we become exposed to far more than the basics of following Jesus.**

**Some of it is okay!**

**We begin to discover all the different ways that can distract us from Christ's commands.**

We find out about all the denominations and their differences. We find out about popular theories of theology such as words like **Calvinism or Arminianism** (see notes below).

We obsess with end-times scriptures and theories of Christ's return discussing things like **pre, post or pan millennial!**

We deep dive into modern discoveries, numerology or the mysteries of God and want everyone to be just as excited as we are about it.

In the **DIG DEEPER** notes, I've listed **Ten tangents that take us away from Christ.**

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**The best of the best put in the effort and constantly come back to the basics, the fundamentals of their field.**

In sports, elite athletes—LeBron James, Serena Williams, or Tom Brady—**continue to drill basic skills daily. Shooting form, footwork, or throwing mechanics aren't "beginner stuff"—they're the foundation of greatness.**

**Kobe Bryant reportedly used to make 500-1000 shots per day in workouts—including layups, free throws, and footwork drills. Similarly Stephen Curry makes 500-1000 shots in practice.**

In business, great Leaders stay grounded in core values. No matter how large a company grows, visionary CEOs like Warren Buffett or Tim Cook emphasize clarity, integrity, communication, and focus—basic leadership principles that guide decisions at every level.

**The greatest in their field never graduate from the basics. Because they know greatness is built on the foundation of fundamentals. The same is true in our faith.**

I'm not an athlete, as you can tell. But when it comes to **spiritual disciplines in the basics it is non-negotiable** in being formed to image of Christ.

Let's put it this way. We are either being **formed (inner character)** to be like Christ or **we are conforming (outward copy)** to the image of this world. We cannot have both!

For those God foreknew he also predestined **to be conformed to the image of his Son**, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. **Romans 8:29 NIV**

- (summorphos: Conformed, to resemble - In the Greco-Roman world, the concept of "form" (morphē) was significant in philosophical discussions about **the nature of reality and identity, sharing the same inner essence.**)  
**Copying to take on and share the inner, unseen qualities of character.**

**Do not conform to the pattern of this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. **Romans 12:2 NIV**

- (suschématizó: To conform, to resemble - In the Greco-Roman world, **conformity to societal norms and expectations was a common practice, as social harmony and order were highly valued.** The concept of **conforming to the image or pattern** of something was well understood in a culture that emphasized public behavior and appearances – **the outward form (expression) by following the same pattern (model, mold).** Copying to look similar, but not having the same internal qualities or character.

**In this series — 7 Dimensions of Discipleship —these aren't beginner moves; they're championship habits.**

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As we go over the 7 habits and practices of discipleship –

1.  **Worship**
2.  **Bible**
3.  **Prayer**
4.  **Missions**
5.  **Holy Spirit**
6.  **Generosity and**
7.  **Service**

We will discover the natural rhythms that God created for us to experience here in this life, helping us both **BE** and **MAKE DISCIPLES**.



### **WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?**

**Accepting Christ as the Lord and leader of your life is only the beginning of your Christian journey.**

**A new life requires a new journey. We call this journey discipleship.**

**It's a process, not a destination.**

**The title Christian appears only three times in the New Testament, but the word disciple in its various forms is used nearly 300 times.**

**Scripture reveals various aspects of what it means to be a disciple, and three key ones are:**

1. **Follower** (Matthew 4:19) "Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" Matthew 4:19 NLT
2. **Learner** (Matthew 11:29) "Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Matthew 11:29 NLT
3. **Imitator** (Luke 6:40) – "Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher." Luke 6:40 NLT

**A disciple is simply a learner, follower, and imitator of a teacher. As believers, we are Jesus' students in His school of discipleship. That means we imitate Him, gradually becoming more like Him.**

**Jesus told His disciples to both be and make disciples (Matthew 28:19–20).**

**And having come to them, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "All authority in heaven and on the earth has been given to Me. Therefore having gone, disciple all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things, whatever I commanded you. And behold, I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age." Matthew 28:18-20 Berean Literal Bible**



[Bible Study Tools](#) and [Bible Hub](#)

The word Jesus used is **mathēteusate**, disciple. Which this tense or form of the word **mathéteuó** is only used once.

The word **Matheteuo** (math-ayt-yoo'-o) is a verb *not* a noun. *It's active, not passive.*

### **Matheteuo Definition**

1. to be a disciple of one
  1. to follow his precepts and instructions
2. to make a disciple
  1. to teach, instruct



### **HOW DO WE IMITATE JESUS?**

**Three images can guide us as we explore how Jesus wanted us to imitate him.**

1. **A Yoke** of Submission (Matthew 11:29)

- a. "Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls."
  - b. Tandem Bike with Jesus.
2. **A Cup of Suffering (Mark 10:38–40)**
    - a. Jesus told two of the disciples' they would also drink the cup of suffering. For us, Jesus warned us we would have our own **Affliction, Distress, and Persecution.**
    - b. John 16:33 NLT "I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. **Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.**"
    - c. Chemotherapy Infusion Bag.
3. **A Towel of Servanthood (John 13:3–4, 14–15)**
    - a. "And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, **you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.**"
    - b. Waiter's towel.

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As we started this conversation, the best way **to be influenced and to influence others** is to spend time with them.

**What practices will help us become more like Jesus?**

**Over these next several weeks we will talk about what it looks like to spend time with Jesus directly, but also how to spend time being and doing the kinds of things Jesus did while he was here on this planet.**

It is important not to think of these practices as a "Todo" list or that we are **adding more to our lives** than we can handle. It feels like a **contrarian** statement, but **God's way is much easier than our own!**

**Remember, Jesus even said, in the verse right after saying that we should "take his yoke," "For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."**  
**Matthew 11:30**

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## SCRIPTURES

### **Luke 6:40 NLT**

Students are not greater than their teacher. But the student who is fully trained will become like the teacher.

### **Romans 12:2 NIV**

**Do not conform to the pattern of this world,** but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

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### **Matthew 11:29**

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I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.

### **John 13:14-15**

And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.

### **Matthew 11:30**

For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.

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## **NOTES**



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    1. to follow his precepts and instructions
  4. to make a disciple
    1. to teach, instruct
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### The word "Christian"

The word "Christian" has undergone significant changes in meaning, usage, and cultural perception throughout history. Here's a brief overview of how it evolved:

#### 1. Early Church (1st–3rd centuries)

Origin: The term Christian (Greek: Christianos) first appears in Acts 11:26 in Antioch. It was likely coined by outsiders as a label for followers of Jesus Christ.

**Connotation:** Initially, it was possibly a derogatory term, used to identify a sect distinct from Judaism. Early Christians preferred terms like "**disciples**," "brothers," or "**followers of the Way**."

#### 2. Post-Constantinian Era (4th–5th centuries)

Legalization and Institutionalization: After Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity (Edict of Milan, AD 313), and especially after Theodosius I made it the state religion, being a "Christian" became associated with citizenship and cultural identity.

**Cultural Shift:** The term broadened to mean anyone within the Roman Empire who adhered to the state religion, regardless of personal faith.

#### 3. Medieval Period (5th–15th centuries)

Christendom: "Christian" became synonymous with "Western civilization" or "Christendom." It was a geopolitical, religious, and social identity.

**Crusades and Division:** The label was used even during violent acts (e.g., Crusades), leading to debates about what "true" Christianity meant.

#### 4. Reformation Era (16th century)

Fragmentation: Protestant reformers challenged the Roman Catholic Church's authority, each group claiming to be the "true" Christians.

**Denominational Identity:** "Christian" began to splinter into different denominational meanings—Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, etc.



## 5. Modern Era (17th–20th centuries)

Colonial Expansion: Missionary work spread Christianity globally, but the term also became entangled with colonialism and Western imperialism.

**Cultural Christianity:** In Europe and America, being "Christian" often meant being born into a culturally Christian society, not necessarily having personal faith.

## 6. Contemporary Usage (21st century)

**Diverse Interpretations:** Today, "Christian" can mean many things:  
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- A personal follower of Jesus Christ (faith-based).
- A cultural identity (e.g., "Christian nation").
- A political label (especially in the U.S. context—"Christian right").
- A nominal affiliation (someone who celebrates Christmas but doesn't follow Christ).

Skepticism and Reclamation: In post-Christian or pluralistic societies, **the word is sometimes viewed with suspicion, and some believers now prefer terms like "Jesus follower" or "disciple" to avoid baggage.**

In short, **"Christian" began as a radical identity of allegiance to Jesus but has at times become diluted, politicized, or misused.** Many modern believers are actively working to reclaim its meaning as one who authentically follows Christ in word and deed.



**Sports and Business illustrations:**

## THE BASICS – THE FUNDAMENTALS

### Athletes: The Power of Fundamentals

#### Champions Master the Basics

Even elite athletes—LeBron James, Serena Williams, or Tom Brady—continue to drill basic skills daily. Shooting form, footwork, or throwing mechanics aren't "beginner stuff"—they're the foundation of greatness.

#### Slumps Often Reveal Neglect of Fundamentals

When an athlete starts to struggle, coaches often revisit the basics: posture, grip, stance, mindset. Getting those right often restores performance.

#### High Pressure Exposes Weak Fundamentals

In the clutch moments—final seconds of a game—athletes don't have time to overthink. They rely on muscle memory formed through faithful repetition of the fundamentals.

### Business Executives: Why the Basics Matter

Great Leaders Stay Grounded in Core Values

No matter how large a company grows, visionary CEOs like Warren Buffett or Tim Cook emphasize clarity, integrity, communication, and focus—basic leadership principles that guide decisions at every level.

### **Failure Often Traces Back to Neglecting Basics**

Many business collapses aren't due to innovation problems but forgetting simple truths: overpromising, ignoring cash flow, poor communication, or lack of accountability.

### **Scalability Depends on Strong Foundations**

You can't build a successful company without getting the basics right—trust, teamwork, time management, and clear goals. Just like faith, growth comes from depth, not just expansion.

**"Whether you're on the field or in the boardroom, greatness starts with the basics. And in our walk with God, the fundamentals—prayer, Scripture, obedience, trust—aren't optional; they're essential. Without them, we don't just slow down—we break down."**

Some of the greatest basketball players of all time are known not just for their talent, but for their relentless commitment to practicing fundamentals—especially free throws and layups. Here are a few legends and insights into their training habits:

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#### **1. Michael Jordan**

- **Known for:** Six-time NBA Champion, relentless work ethic.
- **Training:** Jordan was famous for arriving early and staying late, often shooting **hundreds of free throws and layups** during practice.
- His trainer, Tim Grover, noted that Jordan would "practice like he played"—every rep at full intensity, including **basic layups and mid-range shots**.

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#### **2. Kobe Bryant**

- **Known for:** "Mamba Mentality," insane discipline.
- **Training:** Kobe reportedly made **500 shots per day** in workouts—including layups, free throws, and footwork drills.
- He once showed up at 4 AM to train before a Team USA practice, staying until he made **800 jump shots**—many of which were layups or shots off the dribble.

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#### **3. Stephen Curry**

- **Known for:** Greatest shooter in NBA history.
- **Training:** Curry regularly shoots **500–1,000 shots per day**, with a large portion being layups, floaters, and free throws.
- His warm-up routine (pre-game) alone includes **100+ shots**, including many high-rep free throws and close-range shots to build rhythm.

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#### **4. LeBron James**

- **Known for:** All-around excellence and longevity.
- **Training:** LeBron's shooting reps are part of an intense, structured routine that includes **hundreds of makes** from various spots—free throws and layups included.
- Emphasizes body control and fundamental finishes to stay efficient.

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### Summary Point for Sermon:

"Even the greatest don't graduate from the basics. They drill layups and free throws—shots they've taken thousands of times—because they know greatness is built on repetition, not hype. The same is true in our faith: prayer, Scripture, worship—these aren't beginner moves; they're championship habits."

### Kobe Bryant

*"I have nothing in common with lazy people who blame others for their lack of success. Great things come from hard work and perseverance. No excuses."*

Use this to emphasize: **discipline in the basics is non-negotiable**—in sports and in faith.

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### Michael Jordan

*"You can practice shooting eight hours a day, but if your technique is wrong, then all you become is very good at shooting the wrong way."*

Use this to teach: **the right foundation matters**. It's not just repetition—it's faithful, intentional practice.

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### Stephen Curry

*"Success is not an accident, success is actually a choice."*

This reinforces that **commitment to the fundamentals of faith is a daily decision**, not just an emotional moment.

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### Optional Sermon Tie-in:

"Like Jordan said, practicing the wrong way doesn't help. The same goes for our walk with God. If we pray with wrong motives, read without applying, or serve without love, we might just be getting better at doing it the wrong way. Faith that grows is faith that's grounded in truth and practiced with intention."



## Calvinism vs Arminianism

### ◆ Calvinism (Think: God's Choice)

**Key Idea:** *God chooses who will be saved.*

Often summed up with the acronym **TULIP**:

1. **T – Total Depravity:** We're all born sinners and can't choose God on our own.
2. **U – Unconditional Election:** God chooses (elects) some people to be saved, not based on anything they've done.
3. **L – Limited Atonement:** Jesus died only for the people God chose to save.

4. **I – Irresistible Grace:** If God chooses you, His grace will change your heart—you *can't* say no.
5. **P – Perseverance of the Saints:** If God saves you, you'll stay saved—you *can't* lose your salvation.

**Summary:** In Calvinism, **God is fully in control of who is saved, and His decision is final.**

#### ◆ Arminianism (Think: Our Choice)

**Key Idea:** *God offers salvation to everyone, but we have to choose to accept it.*  
Here are the main beliefs:

1. **Free Will:** God gave people the ability to choose or reject Him.
2. **Conditional Election:** God chooses to save people who choose to trust Him.
3. **Unlimited Atonement:** Jesus died for everyone, not just a select group.
4. **Resistible Grace:** People can say “no” to God’s grace.
5. **Possibility of Falling Away:** A believer *can* turn away from faith and lose salvation.

**Summary:** In Arminianism, **God invites everyone to be saved, but we must choose Him—and keep choosing Him.**



#### **Ten tangents that distract Christians from true discipleship.**



##### **1. Overemphasis on End Times (Eschatology Obsession)**

Constant speculation about the Antichrist, rapture timelines, or decoding current events.

Distracts from living faithfully today and loving others.



##### **2. Prosperity Gospel**

Teaches that faith guarantees wealth, health, and success.

Turns God into a tool for personal gain rather than a Savior to follow.



##### **3. Intellectualism Without Obedience**

Over-focus on theology, doctrine, or debate without actually doing what Jesus said.

Knowledge becomes the goal, not transformation.



##### **4. Mysticism & Experience-Chasing**

Pursuing emotional highs, visions, or spiritual experiences as proof of maturity.

Replaces faithfulness with feelings.

### 5. **Legalism** (Rules Over Relationship)

Makes faith about strict behavior, dress codes, or performance.

Misses grace, love, and the heart of the Gospel.

### 6. **Conspiracy Theories**

Mixing faith with political or cultural conspiracies, giving more attention to "hidden agendas" than the Gospel.

Can breed fear, pride, and division instead of love and truth.

### 7. **Christian Nationalism**

Ties spiritual identity too closely to patriotism or political party.

Confuses the Kingdom of God with earthly power structures.

### 8. **Hyper-Calvinism / Hyper-Arminianism**

Becoming so consumed with theological systems that one forgets the simple call to follow Jesus daily and make disciples.

### 9. **Works-Based Religion**

Believing you're accepted by God based on good deeds instead of by grace through faith.

Leads to guilt, pride, or burnout.

### 10. **Internet "Prophets" and Social Media Christianity**

Following influencers or charismatic voices over Scripture and local church accountability.

Chases trends instead of truth.