

## THE CONDITIONS AND CALLING OF A DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ was not the first, but was by far the most influential person in human history. He passed on His yoke through a form of teaching and mentoring referred to as discipleship. Christ's disciples, unlike their predecessors, were called to a new form of discipleship with a unique set of conditions that would result in a higher and more impactful calling. As a result, the disciples of Christ would turn the entire world upside down and usher in monumental change to revolutionize human existence for the remainder of history. This was not by accident, but rather the culmination of a divine calling and specific life changing conditions.

The first two conditions of discipleship are matters of the heart and/or soul. The first condition, regeneration, is referenced in Ezek. 36:26-27 (also see Col. 3:9-10; Eph. 4:20-24; and Titus 3:4-7). Romans 3:11 states that "there is none who seeks God." Therefore, sinful beings must be regenerated into "new creatures" (2 Cor. 5:17) in order to desire the things of God. The second condition of the heart for a disciple of Christ is self denial, as described in Luke 9:23 (also see Matt. 10:38, 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 14:27). In response to the regeneration of the heart by the Holy Spirit, a disciple of Christ must forfeit his/her right to self and submit to the authority of Christ. As Dr. John Piper once said in a sermon, it is important a disciple of Christ knows not only who he is, but whose he is (2001, 2).

The third and fourth conditions of discipleship in Christ are matters of position. The third condition is a properly prioritized life of worship. With worship defined as, "our response, both personal and corporate, to God, for who He is and what He has done, expressed in and by the things we say and the way we live." (Giglio 2003, 53), and properly prioritized defined as, "You shall have no other gods before Me." (Ex. 20:3). Everything in a disciple's life must come second to God, and must be submitted to His authority. Other verses supporting this condition

are Matt. 8:22, 10:37, 19:21; Mark 10:21, 28; and Luke 9:59, 61, 14:26, 33, 18:22. The fourth condition is a life of humble servant-hood. Christ directly addresses this condition in John 12:26 equating, following Him with serving Him and proclaiming that any who serves Him will be honored by God the Father. Other scriptures that encourage disciples of Christ to live as humble servants include Matt. 10:42, 20:25-28; and James 1:27. Most of all, in Scripture, Christ is seen repeatedly taking time out of His busy and tiring schedule to humbly serve the least of these. So disciples of Christ should seek to model after their Great Teacher and do the same.

The final two conditions of Christ's disciples are matters of the will. The fifth condition is faithful obedience to the teachings of Christ and the Word of God. Christ very plainly stated this truth in John 8:31 and 15:9-10. The apostles also believed and taught this principle as a necessary condition of Christ's disciples in Acts 5:29 and James 1:22. To be a disciple of Christ, one must decide to mentally know, spiritually believe and physically do God's Word. The final condition is the decision to partake in and exhibit divine love. In John 13:34-35, Christ tells His disciples that the world will truly know they are His disciples if they love one another with the same love with which He loved them (see also Rom 5:5; Eph. 5:1-2). Love was the foundation of Christ's life and ministry likewise it should be ours as well.

The Bible does not give a concise, pinpointed definition or description of a disciple of Jesus Christ. Still, by taking the proposed conditions, related scriptures, the Great Commission, the Greatest Commandments and the Acts 2 Church example, a disciple of Jesus Christ can be defined or described as: *a regenerated follower of Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, seeks to humbly love and serve God, love and serve others, spread the gospel, share in life with the family of God, be faithful to the Word of God and aid fellow believers in following Christ for His glory and our good.*

### Bibliography

Giglio, Louie. *The Air I Breathe*. Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishers Inc., 2003.

Piper, John. *Christian, Know Whose You Are*. [online sermon script] (Desiring God, December 2001, accessed 23 March 2009); available from [http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/2001/77\\_Christian\\_Know\\_Whose\\_You\\_Are/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByDate/2001/77_Christian_Know_Whose_You_Are/); Internet.

*Note: All Bible References are from the New American Standard Bible.*