

## Jesus Died For You! Are You Dying For Him?

**Matthew 10:38: (NASB) *And he who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.***



Most Christians will tell you that once you are called to Christ, it means you are called to be "footstep followers of Jesus." While this description is easily given, it is not so easily explained. How can we walk in his footsteps when we are really nothing like him? He was perfect, we are not. He gave his life as a ransom for Adam, and therefore bought back the human race from sin. We have no such mission or value. Jesus performed miracles and taught profound lessons. We can just appreciate his miracles and spend our time absorbing what he taught. What is following

Jesus all about? In his own words, Jesus told us to deny ourselves. What does that mean? Are we supposed to live in a way that makes us never do what we want to do? The Apostle Paul said, "I die daily." What did he mean?

Jesus never described discipleship as being easy.

**Here Jesus begins to show Peter what is required. The context is Peter's third conversation with Jesus, right after his boat is overflowing with fish:**

Luke 5:8-11: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>*But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!* <sup>9</sup>*For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken;* <sup>10</sup>*and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.* <sup>11</sup>*When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.*

Peter and others saw Jesus' miracles firsthand. We are different. We can only read the accounts and live by faith. Jesus is not physically in front of us, so this makes it important to understand what discipleship requires.



**Discipleship requires leaving the comfortable way your life has been for a higher call:**

Luke 5:8-11: (NASB) <sup>8</sup>*But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!* <sup>9</sup> *For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken;* <sup>10</sup>*and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men."* <sup>11</sup>*When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.*



**Discipleship requires walking a narrow, difficult and rarely-trodden path:**

Matthew 7:13-14: (NASB) <sup>13</sup>*Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. <sup>14</sup>For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.*



**Discipleship requires far more than outward compliance and works, that seem to many to be glorious and wonderful:**

Matthew 7:21-23: (NASB) <sup>21</sup>*Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven will enter. <sup>22</sup>Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles? (literally, "mighty works") <sup>23</sup>And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness.*



## Discipleship requires the giving up of one's very life and purpose for a higher cause.

**John 12:23-26:** (NASB) <sup>23</sup>And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. <sup>24</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. <sup>25</sup>He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. <sup>26</sup>If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there my servant will be also; if anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.

Discipleship is a challenge that will require us to stretch and grow. Walking in Jesus' footsteps is actually a much more difficult road to walk than most churches ever told us!

## How does discipleship work? Is there a difference between a disciple and someone who loves Jesus?

Most of us would not even think to ask a question that divides disciples from those who love Jesus, because they are very much understood to be the same. However, there is a little more to this than we generally think about. As we will see, discipleship is VERY different than simply loving Jesus.

Who holds the keys to becoming a disciple of Jesus? Is there a test or does it happen because I want to?



Discipleship actually begins with a decision by God to call you.

**John 6:44:** (NASB) No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.

This call is specific and goes out to many. All do not answer or even hear it. God sees value and potential in someone's heart. He is very selective with whom He calls.

This has been the case from among the Jews of Jesus' time as well as down through the entire age of the Gospel message:

**Luke 13:23-27:** (NASB) <sup>23</sup>And someone said to him, Lord, are there just a few who are being saved? And he said to them, <sup>24</sup>Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. <sup>25</sup>Once the head of the house gets up and shuts the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock on the door, saying, Lord, open up to us! Then he will answer and say to you, I do not know where you are from. <sup>26</sup>Then you will begin to say, We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets; <sup>27</sup>and he will say, I tell you, I do not know where you are from; depart from me, all you evildoers.

"We knew you, followed along with you and appreciated you, but did not really follow you."

This seems on the surface to be unfair. Here are people trying to pursue Jesus and are turned away. That contradicts a lot of other Scriptures that say things like, Come to me...I will give you rest (**Matthew 11:28**), and Jesus is the way, the truth and the life (**John 14:6**). How is someone supposed to find life if the door is being shut?



Equating these verses to today, it is as if someone says, "I believe," but nothing changes. They are still the same person doing the same things. This is not discipleship. There is a difference between "I believe" as a life-changing experience and "I appreciate" as something that makes us feel a little better. Many who say, "I believe," are really saying, "I appreciate." Discipleship is bigger than this.

"cqbiblepodcast"



A listener on Facebook writes: I just finished listening to Ep. 1074: Does God Judge Everyone the Same Way? I am curious if you have any more info about who you describe as a true follower of Christ vs. the rest of the human race. Who are considered the "called"? Is this those of us who know about Jesus and have a chance right now to respond or is there more to it than that?

There is more to this specific call, as we will review today.

The Bible is clear that for those who are not "called out" now, there is still salvation available. Jesus died for ALL, not just the few who are called during a specific time in human history. God has a plan for the rest of the world that has nothing to do with a burning hellfire. For more on the two salvations of the called out ones and the "everybody else," see Ep. 683 "Who Gets Elected? By the Spirit, that is!" and Ep. 1050 "What Does it Mean to Be Saved?"

CQ Team



Trish asks: Why does Luke 13:27 call them *evildoers*? If they were appreciating him, how could they be evildoers?

There is a clear distinction from being "in Christ" as a disciple and those who are Christian in name only. They do not have the robe of Christ's righteousness covering their sinful condition. Therefore, at this point, they fall into the category of the "everybody else."



Now comes our part.

We answer God's call.

To surrender one's will is difficult, but such a decision must be made to begin the process of living for Jesus.

**It is impossible to begin without clear and intentional steps:**

Romans 12:1-2: (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. <sup>2</sup>And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

***It's not the things we give up. It is to offer something precious to God - the act of service. It will cost us. — Tom Gilbert***



## Have no illusions about who we are - we are all average and broken, called to bring glory to God:

**1 Corinthians 1:26-29:** (NASB) <sup>26</sup>For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; <sup>27</sup>but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, <sup>28</sup>and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no man may boast before God.

Why does God choose the weak? *So that no man may boast before God. He does not call us because we are so smart. He calls us if we have the heart He can mold. Our weakness is not relevant to God; He wants a heart willing to walk in the manner of a disciple.*

## Have no illusions about what we are called to be - obedient saints:

**Romans 1:5-7:** (NASB) <sup>5</sup>(Jesus) through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for his name's sake, <sup>6</sup>among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; <sup>7</sup>to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called as saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

## We are told to "count the cost:"

**Luke 14:28-33:** (NIV): <sup>28</sup>Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? <sup>29</sup>For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, <sup>30</sup>saying, This person began to build and wasn't able to finish. <sup>31</sup>Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? <sup>32</sup>If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. <sup>33</sup>In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

This is completely opposite of the Prosperity Gospel. Jesus tells us his true followers sacrifice the things of this life. They do not gain wealth and fame.

...you also are the called of Jesus Christ...called as saints - some churches elevate certain individuals as "saints," but all of the true disciples of Jesus throughout the age of the gospel are called to be saints. It is a holy position to be in.

The decision for who becomes a true disciple of Jesus is twofold. First, God does the calling, then those called must answer *in an acceptable way* for God to bless them.



This call is not common to all people at all times. Knowing this changes the seriousness of discipleship.

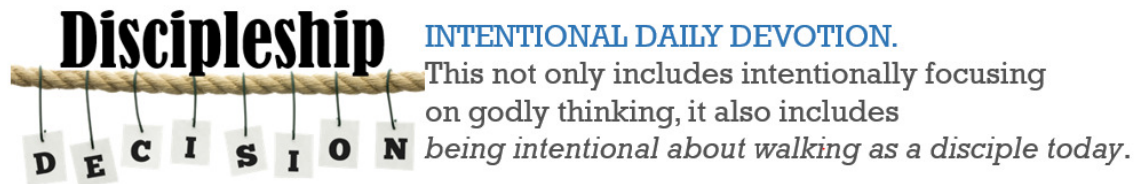




## Now that we clearly see how the beginnings of discipleship work, what do we do to build upon it?

Just because we make an initial decision to answer the call of God to follow Christ does not mean that we are set to go. As with anything worth committing to, discipleship requires our devotion. This required devotion is not an emotion; rather, it is a purposeful mindset that focuses our lives.

Devotion includes prayer, heartfelt communion with God, being open and free to ask questions, looking for His leadings, singing praise throughout the day. It is an attitude, not just setting aside a few minutes in the day to read a Bible verse. Such devotional time is a good thing, but let's look closer at discipleship with intentional daily devotion. *Devotion involves daily action.*



Question: Does the life of a disciple have to be filled with pain and suffering? We have modest homes and cars and are not suffering or being persecuted like the apostles. Are we not good enough if we are not physically wracked with pain during our discipleship?

For more on this, see Ep. 1096 "My Life is Full of Suffering. Am I Cursed?"

The growth of discipleship comes in a lot of different ways. Just because one is not physically suffering does not mean we are not being tried, tempted and tested. Many Christians go through hard experiences that are not visible on the outside.

***Denials liberate us from self-interest.*** – Tom Gilbert

This is part of the process of walking towards God.



Hebrews 4:14-16: (NASB) <sup>14</sup>Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Intentional daily devotion to prayer is not just praying in the morning or before we eat. Without prayer as a basis, any other daily devotion can be easily short-circuited. If we are not plugged into our source of energy, our battery will die.

1 Thessalonians 5:17: (NASB) *Pray without ceasing.*



## INTENTIONAL DAILY DEVOTION to PERSEVERANCE

### Jesus gives final words of inspiration on the night before his crucifixion:

John 15:18-21: (NASB) <sup>18</sup>*If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. <sup>19</sup>If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. <sup>20</sup>Remember the word that I said to you, A slave is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. <sup>21</sup>But all these things they will do to you for my name's sake, because they do not know the One who sent me.*

Intentional daily devotion will help us persevere through whatever our circumstances. Jesus told us what would be coming our way to help us prepare to stand firm through it all. Our trials are all different but no less important.

## INTENTIONAL DAILY DEVOTION to PROVIDENCE

Romans 8:28: (NASB) *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

Our calling to His purpose is a guarantee of His providence! Many people only quote the first part of that text and omit *to those who are called according to His purpose*. There is a special attention given to these "called out" ones to help them in their walk. They are different from just the "fans" of Jesus. We want to live within God's providence daily.

## INTENTIONAL DAILY DEVOTION to PEOPLE

Galatians 6:10: (NASB) *So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*

What would Jesus do?

***Do we have the capacity to love the world around us like God and Jesus do? – Tom Gilbert***

How are we devoted to other Christians? Our focus needs to include building up the body of Christ.

## INTENTIONAL DAILY DEVOTION to PERSPECTIVE

2 Corinthians 5:16-17: (NASB) <sup>16</sup>*Therefore from now on we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him in this way no longer. <sup>17</sup>Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

To see through spiritual eyes is to see as Jesus did. When dealing with difficult people or those we do not naturally get along with, we need to use our



spiritual eyes and see how God sees them. They have their own struggles as they try to walk as a disciple. We need a better, higher perspective.

None of us is perfect, so we need to look at their heart intent. If they are trying to praise the Lord and follow in Jesus' footsteps, we love them and give them the benefit of the doubt.



Ephesians 2:19-22: (NASB) <sup>19</sup>So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, <sup>20</sup>having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the corner stone, <sup>21</sup>in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, <sup>22</sup>in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.



This is the highest privilege we can be offered. We change our perspective to see things in a higher way.

To have intentional daily devotion is to realize the profound importance of each day. It is to realize we have the power to choose whom and what to follow every day.



Now when we think of having our "daily devotions," we can also think about being *thoroughly daily devoted*.

**So, we have decided to answer the call and we are daily devoted to its accomplishment. What is next?**

Because discipleship is such a broad and life-altering state of being, what follows "decision" and "devotion" should be obvious. Think about the word disciple - it comes from the word discipline. What better way to describe the core of a disciple's life than to see it through the lens of discipline?

In our world, discipline is not a welcome ideal. The prevailing world view is, "It should be about me." Discipleship is, "It should be about the higher cost." This requires discipline to transform ourselves and to stay away from self-serving thinking.

How much leeway is there when we are a disciple of Jesus? Can we ever do what we want? God calls us where we are - with families, jobs and responsibilities. We need to live in the context of spirituality.



# Discipleship

## DECISION

Spiritual discipline is expressed in the intentional reordering of our thoughts and actions so the most important spiritual things always remain the most important things.



Sometimes the most important thing is playing with your kids. Or earning a living. Or date night with your spouse. Or dropping everything and being by the side of a person who is suffering. Sometimes the most important thing is responding to an email or even playing baseball. Our lives need to be built around spiritual discipline first.

Natural earthly thinking

We achieve spiritual discipline when we work to disrupt our natural earthly thinking:

2 Corinthians 10:3-5: (NASB) <sup>3</sup>For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup>for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. <sup>5</sup>We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,

It is not just following along, but following to BECOME. We are to become a *new creature in Christ*. Earthly thinking attacks all of the spiritual parts of our lives. We have to figure out how to step up and replace our thinking. With each decision in our day, what is the best, higher use of our moments?



Check out our two-minute Moments that Matter video series at [ChristianQuestions.com/youtube](https://ChristianQuestions.com/youtube). Rick gives brief biblical thoughts to consider for your profitable use of time!



The New York Yankees are my team. Baseball is a long season. They play 162 games, and I would love to sit and watch every single inning and every single pitch of every single game. I don't. I can't. If I can watch three or four innings of a game three to four times a week, great...after I am done with everything else. Why? The "everything else" is more important. I love that it is a great diversion, but it is not where I belong. Do I sometimes check the score while I'm studying? Yes, I do. And then I put it aside and go back to work. It is a matter of choice. I love this, but is it something I need to be spending time and money on? My daughters take me once a year to a Yankees game because we love to do it together. Is that the best use of my time? Absolutely. I spend time with my daughters and grandson. It is a family tradition and I love doing that. Do we have season tickets? No.







## Natural earthly habits

### **We achieve spiritual discipline when we work to disengage from natural earthly habits:**

**1 Corinthians 10:23-24:** (NASB) <sup>23</sup>All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. <sup>24</sup>Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.

Just because something is naturally good does not mean it is spiritually healthy. Disciples need to know the difference.

**Romans 6:1-4:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup>May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup>Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

**Walk in newness of life** – we walk with a different objective for everything we are supposed to be doing. Our being *raised from death to life* is a present-day, already-in-progress experience.

We want to examine our thoughts, words and actions and compare them with the Scriptures. Are we in line with what God wants us to be thinking, saying and doing?



I consider myself a very busy person and yet I always seem to have leftover time to waste. We all make time to do the things we want to do. The question for me was, how do I do what I **SHOULD** do and not just what I **WANT** to do? My answer came with volunteering for Christian Questions. I have committed to dedicating a large portion of my every day to researching, prepping for programs, working on typing out the CQ Rewind Show Notes every week, working on our new app that we will be announcing very soon, and more. There is always work to do in the Lord's service, even if it is only writing out encouraging cards or emails to those who are sick or isolated. If we are intentional and disciplined, we can form good habits as easily as we can form bad ones.

We can always make ourselves a warrior of prayer for those we know need the help. There is always something we can do to disengage from our natural earthly habits of wasting time and engage in spiritual efforts to bring forth fruitage in His service.

## Natural earthly ambitions

### **We achieve spiritual discipline when we work to dissolve our natural earthly ambitions:**

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20:** (YLT) <sup>19</sup>Have ye not known that your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit in you, which ye have from God? and ye are not your own, <sup>20</sup>for ye were bought with a price; glorify, then, God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Because we have already been purchased by Jesus' ransom, we owe our ambitions to God. A true disciple has already been bought with a price, therefore, God owns us. Why don't we spend our efforts trying to please Him?



If God values sacrifice, then wouldn't more sacrifice be more pleasing? God created the whole earth for us. What is wrong with taking advantage of everything He created for us?

Is the Christian supposed to be in a perpetual state of giving things up and being miserable in order to be pleasing to God? Do the Tibetan monks have it right - should we sell everything and sit on a mountaintop somewhere with nothing but the clothes on our backs?

Enjoying the creation of God is wonderful, but the disciple is called to do more than that. Being a monk and having no one around us is the opposite extreme. We have been called to do more than that. We have been called to contribute to the lives of others. Our sacrifice is not to isolate; it is to engage. Why? Because the Scriptures tell us to. We are supposed to be building the body of Christ through appropriate spiritual discipline.

There are unlimited things we can spend our lives doing, but for a Christian disciple, our time is limited. However, when put in proper perspective, this is the most blessed experience possible.





## Our disciple-driven ambitions are now focused on the building up of the body of Christ:

**1 Peter 4:8-11:** (NASB) <sup>8</sup>Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup>Be hospitable to one another without complaint. <sup>10</sup>As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. <sup>11</sup>Whoever speaks, is to do so as one who is speaking the utterances of God; whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

What happens if we love God to this degree but do not know others in our church who are sincere and dedicated? How can we find those who are in harmony with these same principles? Support for the body of Christ is important, as we all need help.



**Rick, Howie and Jonathan**

We have a wonderful example to answer this question. We have a listener named Howie who lives in New Zealand. He was in exactly the position of being in church but did not feel he was being "of" the church in the highest spiritual way. He searched and found Christian Questions. We are now personally connected and we have introduced him to others who feel the same way he does. He is connecting to a wider electronic fellowship. He shares our same sense of what discipleship is drawing us to and away from.

Would you like to email us? [Inspiration@ChristianQuestions.com](mailto:Inspiration@ChristianQuestions.com)

To have spiritual discipline is to continually turn our thoughts, words and deeds towards godly and humble service of the body of Christ and away from personal satisfaction.



**Adopting decision, devotion and discipline is definitely a Christlike approach. What is left to do?**

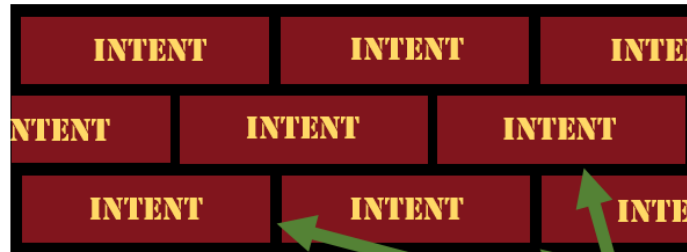
The only thing left is consistency - the hardest of all our discipleship qualities. Often we are inspired to do God's will and to sacrifice ourselves for it. While inspiration is necessary and powerful, it is lost without its less popular "brother" - perspiration. The disciple needs both to succeed.

The foundation of consistency requires repeated intent held together by discipline. Picture a brick wall. Every brick is our intent, so we continually add intent over and over. This is what we know we should be doing, as we want to do what is pleasing to God. Discipline is the mortar that holds our good intentions together. Building that stable wall with intent and discipline makes consistency.

Consistency is what made Jesus and the Apostle Paul faithful. The Apostle Peter made mistakes but kept being consistent and getting back up.

Why aren't we consistent? Where is the lack coming from? Inevitably, it comes from our inability to either be intentional or to apply discipline to those intentions.

## CONSISTENCY



The foundation of **CONSISTENCY** requires repeated **INTENT** held together by **DISCIPLINE**

Is true discipleship to Jesus reflected in the majority of churches that surround us? The example of discipleship is difficult and not attractive to the masses. It is a calling to a higher purpose because that is what Jesus was called to.



Deliver what we have promised with consistency. This is what separates the "adults" from the "children" in Christ. Walking in Jesus' footsteps is a lifelong marathon.

**We can only deliver what we have promised with consistency if we are properly outfitted to do so:**

**Ephesians 6:10-13: (NASB)** <sup>10</sup>Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. <sup>11</sup>Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup>Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

The Apostle Paul, in describing his ministry, often used the words "toil" and "struggle." Toil means to grow weary, tired, exhausted. It is ironic that for all of the leisure time we have in today's society, we all seem to be weary, tired and exhausted! In Colossians 1:29 (ESV), in talking about the fundamental principles of discipleship, he said, *For this I toil, struggling with all His energy that He powerfully works within me.* Paul fought to the point of exhaustion, but God gave him strength to do everything he needed to do. We also need to ask for strength and focus, using God's energy and power beyond our own.

We have answered the call from God. We need to live a life of devotion which requires discipline. We need to deliver our all through difficulty.





**Discipleship is not about saying the right words; it is about giving God everything you have.**  
— Tom Gilbert

**Paul encouraged us to deliver our all in a disciplined fashion:**

**1 Corinthians 9:24-27:** (NASB) <sup>24</sup>*Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. <sup>25</sup>Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable (so he watched out that his own efforts might not wane)...* <sup>26</sup>*Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; <sup>27</sup>but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.*

The Apostle Paul had to watch out that after all of his work, he could still be disqualified. This gives us a sense of the depth of requirement of discipleship. Our "all" is required.

**Paul encourages us to deliver a life that reflects the doctrines of truth daily, to live what we speak:**

**1 Corinthians 15:29-34:** (NASB) (Because Jesus is raised and God will be over all.) <sup>29</sup>*If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them? <sup>30</sup>Why are we also in danger every hour? <sup>31</sup>I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. <sup>32</sup>If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus (if I had been thrown to the lions), what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. <sup>33</sup>Do not be deceived: bad company corrupts good morals. <sup>34</sup>Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.*

Paul encourages us to live a life that reflects what Christianity actually stands for. We need to focus and stop sinning because the knowledge of God carries us to this higher level.



We all need to keep our "why" before us. Why did we answer the call? This helps us continue to strive in our Christian walk. Why am I following after Christ? What is our strongest driving force?



Many years ago, I went through the personal exercise of trying to define my "why" in a very succinct manner so it would be easy to remember. My "why" is two words: Honor God. These mean a host of things: spending time with my children, raising them with morals and ethics. It means doing my job at work the best I know how. It means participating in fellowship activities, being a good human being, lending my umbrella to someone who is walking in the rain getting wet. This is all of what "honoring God" means to me. We all need to have the "why" to drive us. If we have been called, and we answer the call, and God gave us His Spirit (His power and influence) to help us, what are we going to do with it? How are we going to get up every day and apply ourselves in true devotion and discipline so we can deliver what I am supposed to deliver?





**Paul wrote this epistle while in prison in Rome, and his death seemed imminent:**

Philippians 1:20-21: (NASB) <sup>20</sup>*according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.* <sup>21</sup>*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

**Once we have fully delivered our discipleship, even unto death, we will then be with Jesus:**

Revelation 17:14: (NASB) *...the Lamb...is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with him are the called and chosen and faithful.*

*The called and chosen and faithful - the true disciples of Christ.*

**The consistent delivery of our daily lives in sacrifice to do the will of God is what true discipleship is all about. We are to do what Jesus did!**



If we have been called of God, we want to answer the call and not waste the opportunity. We want to be Christ-centered and not self-centered. We have to measure our discipleship beyond just going to church on Sunday and ask what drives us all seven days of the week. We want to be the called, the chosen and the faithful.

Jesus' death was of merit. It changed the world. Our sacrifice is a gift to God. We have nothing to offer but a willing heart. God can take the potential of that heart and turn it into something immortal and powerful in His service. This is the goal of the life of a true disciple.

*So, Jesus died for you! Are you dying for him?  
For Jonathan and Rick (and Julie!) and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*



**Join us next week for our podcast on October 21, 2019:  
Ep. 1096: My Life is Full of Suffering - Am I Cursed?**

## Bonus Material!

***I gave up all for Christ and what have I found? Everything in Christ. — John Luther***

Let's look at the questions of following greatness through the eyes of Jesus' own 12 apostles.

The context takes place just weeks before Jesus' death. The miracles have been performed, the teachings have been given and Lazarus was recently raised from the dead. The raising of Lazarus dramatically accelerated the Pharisees' desire to trap and destroy Jesus.

**Matthew 20:20-21:** (NASB) <sup>20</sup>*Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of him. <sup>21</sup>And he said to her, What do you wish? She said to him, Command that in your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on your right and one on your left.*

What a question! Clearly there is no thought of any serious price of discipleship to be paid. What would have provoked such a question, by your mom no less?

### The previous verses:

**Matthew 20:17-19:** (NASB) <sup>17</sup>*As Jesus was about to go up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and on the way he said to them, <sup>18</sup>Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, <sup>19</sup>and will hand him over to the Gentiles to mock and scourge and crucify him, and on the third day he will be raised up.*

Did the apostles listen to what Jesus said, or did they only hear about the coming kingdom?



### Observation:

- Sometimes we only hear what we want to hear, which causes our reactions and responses to be based on something that is less than reality. This is not following Jesus.

**Jesus knew their hearts, and he knew their limitations. He addresses this immature question with compassion, tact and a dose of reality:**

**Matthew 20:22-23:** (NASB) <sup>22</sup>*But Jesus answered, You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink? They said to him, We are able.*

**Again, they hear Jesus' words but really do not understand his meaning:**

<sup>23</sup>*He said to them, My cup you shall drink; but to sit on my right and on my left, this is not mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.*

With his reality check answer, Jesus also settles the matter - no more need for discussion here.

### More on being called:

**1 Thessalonians 2:12:** (NASB) *So that you would walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.*

**2 Thessalonians 2:13-14:** (NASB) <sup>13</sup>*But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. <sup>14</sup>It was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*



**1 Thessalonians 5:23-24:** (NASB) <sup>23</sup>Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

**More on what discipleship actually requires:**

**Luke 14:28-30, 33:** (NIV) <sup>28</sup>Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? <sup>29</sup>For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, <sup>30</sup>saying, This fellow began to build and was not able to finish. <sup>33</sup>In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple.

**Matthew 10:37-39:** (NASB) <sup>37</sup>He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. <sup>38</sup>And he who does not take his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. <sup>39</sup>He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for my sake will find it.

