

DISCIPLESHIP IS....

By Bob Young

[Seven lessons that provide a fresh look at discipleship development. Introductory lesson plus seven outlines]

In this series, we will take a fresh look at the Gospel story with a focus on one great truth – what does it mean to accept Jesus as our Master and Teacher alters the way we live. What does it mean to be a disciple? In New Testament words, teachers have students and masters have disciples. If we are serious about being Jesus' followers or disciples, we must answer his call and claim on our lives. Seven truths flesh out the biblical description of discipleship. After an introductory overview, I will unwrap the details in the next seven weeks.

Discipleship requires -- Choosing, Listening, Yielding, Imitating, Committing, Relating, Sharing.

-1- CHOOSING. I have to make a choice. Who will be my master? Choosing a master means I completely give up control of my life. When one speaks of "being a Christian," often the understanding is that it depends on us. "Being a disciple" makes clear that my life depends on my relationship with my master. I choose new priorities. Since Jesus has all authority, no one else can better instruct me, guide me, protect me. Who will be my master? (Key texts: Matt. 6, 10, 11, 28)

-2- LISTENING-LEARNING. As a disciple, I must listen to the Master, I must learn how to listen. How can a disciple listen to Jesus? Students listen to their teacher. This is a primary question—since I have chosen Jesus as my master, am I really listening to Jesus? (Key texts: Matt. 3, 17; John 12)

-3- YIELDING-SUBMITTING. Learning to lean! Life's burdens, problems. The Master knows, understands. Jesus is the answer. The disciple follows the lead of the Master. Am I willing to let him have enough control to lift my burdens, solve my problems, and correct my course? (Key texts: Matt. 11; Rom. 6)

-4- IMITATING. Students learn and teach what the teacher teaches. Students speak the words of the teacher. Disciples become like their Master. Following Jesus means we are imitators. We become like Jesus by changing our nature (not through masks, the basic meaning of the word "hypocrisy"). Disciples—followers—imitators, what a challenge! Do I look like Jesus? Am I an authentic disciple? (Key texts: Luke 6; John 13)

-5- COMMITTING. By definition, disciples are "all in." No half-hearted discipleship! The word "Christian" has become so impotent that we hear talk about uninvolved Christians, non-attending Christians, etc. Discipleship is whole-hearted—by definition! (Key texts: Matt. 10; Luke 14)

-6- RELATING. Students who enjoy the same teacher spend time together—camaraderie, talking about the teachings, focused on points of commonality. Disciples spending time together because they are disciples—remembering, sharing, encouraging what unites them. A bane of the modern church—too many activities that say nothing about and have nothing to do with our common allegiance! The earliest disciples assembled specifically—time, activities, why, how. The modern church has a lot of learn because too many "Christian groups" have altered the definition of shared discipleship. (Key text: Acts)

-7- SHARING. A primary characteristic of disciples—a disciple makes other disciples. If I am not actively involved in making other disciples, I must ask myself if I am an authentic disciple. (Key texts: Matt. 28; Acts 2)