



The simplest answer is this: knowing Jesus is the key to biblical discipleship.

Who is a disciple? In the first century, the disciples of a rabbi understood his teachings, could explain his teachings, and lived out those teachings. The disciple, focused on those goals, became like the master. Knowing Jesus is key to becoming like him.

At the center of the abundant life described in the Gospels stands Jesus. His disciples imitate his ethos (behavior), his pathos (compassion), and his logos (his understanding and teaching). At the heart of the Gospel is who Jesus was. What he

did and what he taught flowed out of who he was.

He calls disciples to follow him in the way of the cross. "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life?" (Mark 8:34-37)

Discipleship as described by Jesus is radical discipleship. The call to radical discipleship is described in Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*. "Whatever profit might accrue by someone's worldly associations or accumulation of wealth will in the final analysis turn out to be loss, while any loss of family relationship or material possessions will be richly rewarded in God's kingdom. [Discipleship] involves self-denial, even self-sacrifice, love, humility, and service."

Discipleship is lived out most easily and naturally in the footsteps of Jesus by one who knows Jesus well. Discipleship is best lived "beneath the cross of Jesus." Knowing Jesus is the way of resurrection – a way that is only available to those who have died. Living with Jesus because we have died with Jesus. Willing to die with Jesus because we get him! And we want everyone else to get him too!

[Image: Heartlight]