

## Discipleship series

### The purpose of discipleship

A man came to a construction site, where stonemasons were working. The man said to one, "What are you doing?"

The stonemason said, "You can see, I'm chipping a stone."

The man walked over to another mason and said, "What are you doing?"

He answered, "I'm building a wall."

The man walked over to a third mason and said, "What are you doing?"

This mason answered, "I am building a cathedral." Ha! All three were doing the same thing, but what a difference perspective makes!

Gordon Johnson

Everything we do in life has a purpose. When someone cleans the church it's not just to keep themselves busy; it's to have a clean church for all to enjoy. When a mechanic repairs a car, it has the purpose of having a repaired and reliable car as its end result. In the same way Jesus calls us to a life of discipleship with a purpose.

Romans 8:29-30 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. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

#### 1) The present purpose of discipleship

- Romans 8:29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son.
- The present purpose i.e. the purpose of discipleship in this life, is to be conformed to the image of Jesus; it's to be changed to become like Jesus
- When God created Adam, He created him in His image and likeness
  - Genesis 1:27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
- When man sinned, that image was marred and the image of God in man was distorted almost beyond recognition.
  - Genesis 6:5 The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.
- When God saves us, He doesn't save us merely to go to heaven as we are, but to change us into the image of Jesus.
  - In salvation God starts the process of reversing the effects of the fall
  - Some things are immediate: justification, forgiveness of our sins, assurance of salvation, the adoption as children of God
  - Others take time: sanctification – us being changed back into the image of Jesus, glorification – the day when we will finally be as He is
- The spiritual realities of justification, forgiveness and judgment of sins, and atonement took place on the cross, but transformation takes place within the context of discipleship
  - If Jesus saw only the cross as necessary for every aspect of life, He wouldn't have called us to a life of discipleship
  - However, without the cross true discipleship isn't possible as it's based on the works of the cross

## 2) The process towards the purpose

- Being changed into the image of Jesus doesn't happen immediately at the time of our salvation.
  - 2 Corinthians 3:18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.
  - If we are going to behold the glory of the Lord we have to spend time with him. This makes following Him and being with Him in discipleship essential in order to be transformed into His image from glory to glory
- The process of transformation starts when we heed Jesus' call to come to Him
  - Come to Him for life
    - John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
  - It's a fact that only something that's alive can grow, change, transform.
  - We receive and abide in His life to become all that He is.
  - We abide through faith, prayer, and rest in Him
- Transformation takes place through the renewing of the mind by the Word of God
  - Jesus constantly taught His disciples
    - Matthew 5:1-2 Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them.
    - Romans 12:2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.
- Transformation takes place when we are filled with the Holy Spirit
  - Galatians 5:22-24 The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
- Transformation takes place through trials
  - Jesus never keeps us from trials, but leads us through them to test our faith and refine us
  - 1 Peter 1:6-7 In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
  - Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.

## 3) The future purpose of discipleship

- Jesus is preparing us, His Bride, for our eternity with Him and He wants us to be as He is.
- Romans 8:30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.
- 1 John 3:2-3 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.
- When we submit ourselves to discipleship, we ought to have this ultimate purpose in mind as that will enable us to persevere through the process of the present no matter how tough it may be