

Lesson 7 – How Does a True Disciple of Christ Walk?

In Lesson 5, we studied repentance. Sometimes when we think about repentance, we only think about leaving the sin. Of course, you have to leave the sin. But there are positive issues that we have to put into practice. You have to leave the bad in order to do the good.

(Read Matthew 28:19-20) (Ask the student if they know what a disciple is.) A disciple is a student, a pupil. Therefore, biblically an infant cannot be baptized. Baptism is for someone who is learning about Christ. You don't have to know everything. However, a person needs to know a few basic things before baptism. (Ask the student, what does the text say about what comes after baptism?) "Teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you." In other words, one has to learn about Christ both before and after baptism.

But being a disciple of Christ involves more than learning. The broader meaning of "disciple" is to be a follower. One learns from Christ to put into practice what He teaches. It is a growth process. One learns and puts into practice more and more. One decides to be a disciple for life.

Well, what are the characteristics of a true disciple of Christ? In the Gospel of John, Christ clarifies this important matter three times.

Stay in the Word of Christ

(Read John 8:31-32) (Ask the student how one will be a true disciple of Christ.) Staying in His word. Not in the word of parents, neighbors, or preachers. Not even in the word of our own mind. No. We must remain in the word of Christ. Since Christ is not physically with us, we have to open our Bibles to know His word. We have to do as the Jews of Berea did. (Read Acts 17:11) (Ask the student what they did) They searched the scriptures every day to find out the truth of the preacher.

Nor is it learning and following the Word for a moment. Jesus said "remain." The Bible in no way teaches the false doctrine of "once saved, always saved." (Ask the student: According to Revelation 2:10, how long do we have to follow Christ?) Until death. By surrendering one's life to Christ, one promises to follow Him throughout life. One makes a firm decision to remain in Him and in His Word – come what may.

Love the Brothers and Sisters

(Read John 13:35) (Ask the student how the world will know that one is a disciple of Christ.) Having love for one another. On another occasion, when Jesus was asked which was the most important commandment, He answered with two. (Read Matthew 22:36-40) (Ask the student what the second commandment is.) "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." One cannot be a disciple of Christ without loving others.

Returning to John, Christ says that when the world observes people who profess a religion, they can know if they are indeed followers of Christ through the love they have for one another. Being a Christian is not a private matter. It is not a path that one walks alone. When one is a son of God and another is a son of God, the two are brothers or sisters. They have to live in brotherhood.

There is no room for jealousy, prejudice, bitterness. You will see them put forgiveness into practice for offenses large and small. They will help each other, be it with physical or material needs. They will worry about each other. They will live as a family. A true disciple of Christ loves the brothers and sisters.

Produce Fruit

(Read John 15:8) (Ask the student what a disciple of Christ will be like.) Bearing much fruit. In a previous study, we saw that the third element of repentance is bearing fruit of repentance. True disciples of Christ produce fruit.

To live the Christian life, it is necessary to leave sins. But that is not enough. Also, you have to do good. You have to practice good deeds. This is the theme from verse 1 of chapter 15. (Read verse 5) (Ask the student what we need in order to bear much fruit.) We need Christ in our lives to bear much fruit.

But John 15 does not offer details of that fruit. (Read Galatians 5:22-23) (Ask the student to name the nine elements of the fruit of the Spirit.) "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control." How beautiful is a life full of all these characteristics! (You can talk about all or some of them, depending on the time.)

Questions

1. What is a disciple? (a student and a follower)
2. In the Gospel of John, what is the first characteristic of a disciple of Christ? (remain in the word of Christ)
3. What is the second characteristic of a disciple of Christ? (to love the brothers and sisters)
4. What is the third characteristic of a disciple of Christ? (to bear much fruit)
5. When baptized, does one now know everything? (no, one has to continue to learn "all things" that Christ has commanded)
6. What does one need to know to become a Christian? (truths about Jesus in Lessons 1, 2, and 4, and truths about one's life in Lessons 5, 6, and 7. This is a good time to review the important points of these lessons, as time permits)