

Characteristics of a Disciple of Jesus – John 15

- **A Disciple Abides in Christ through His Word and Prayer** – John 15:7
*“If you remain in me and my words remain in you,
you may ask for anything you want and it will be granted you.”*

Brother Lawrence, who was a kitchen worker and cook, spent ten years working out what he wrote in his now famous volume, *Practicing the Presence of God*:

“Our sanctification does not depend upon changing our works, but in doing that for God’s sake which we commonly do for our own...It is a great delusion to think that the times of prayer ought to differ from other times. We are as strictly obliged to adhere to God by action in time of action as by prayer in the season of prayer.” A devotional life or a life of devotion?

- **A Disciple Proves His Identity and Glorifies God through Making Disciples** – John 15:8
(Bears Much Fruit!)
*“When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples.
This brings great glory to my Father.”* 15:8
- **A Disciple Demonstrates His Love for God through Obedience** – John 15:9-10
*“I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love.
When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love,
just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love.”* 15:9,10

First, there must be no mistaking the fact that **discipleship to Jesus means primarily learning from him how to do easily and routinely do the very things he said for us to do. Obedience is the only sound objective of a Christian spirituality.** Of course, we do not obey to earn anything earning is out of the question but **we obey because doing the things that Jesus said is what is best for us and for everyone around us.**

Second, we do not become able to obey by trying to obey, **but by becoming the kind of person who naturally does obey. That means our intention is to acquire, by intelligent effort and grace, the inward character of Jesus Christ himself. We think and feel like him; our will has his habits of choosing; our very body is poised toward righteous deeds; and our way of relating to others is governed by his kind of love.**

Third, the activities of our fellowship groups and their leaders are explicitly designed to make disciples not some lesser version of "Christian," but genuine apprentices to Jesus in kingdom living and to teach everyone in the group to do the things Jesus said. Leaders do this by bringing their fellowship groups through effective processes of inward transformation of the dynamics of human life.

Bill Hull. *Choose the Life: Exploring a Faith that Embraces Discipleship* (pp. 6-7).

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- **A Disciple's Life Overflows with Joy** – John 15:11

*"I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy.
Yes, your joy will overflow!"* John 15:11

Joy is experienced in the deepest part of the heart. It is when your heart connects with God's heart. It is a desire to experience what you were created for- if you can't seem to find complete happiness in this life, it is because you were created for something even greater than this life.

C.S. Lewis, Surprised by Joy- you can't plan it, you can't make it happen, you are always surprised by it! Joy does something to your heart. Life is a series of appetizers- Ten course French meal, you are still hungry- like a dirty trick- life without heaven is a dirty trick. Joy won the world- you can argue with a theologian, but not with a saint- Mother Theresa never lost an argument.

- **A Disciple Loves as Jesus Loves** – John 15:12-14

*This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.
There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.
You are my friends if you do what I command.*

Key thought: You can't make disciples without accountability, and accountability requires structure. Structure is the key to breakthroughs that affect attitudes and actions. So what kind of activities should disciples engage in? They should engage in activities that mirror the characteristics listed above.

They should also

- participate in a group of fellow disciples who seek to connect with God through interacting with the Word of God and learning to be people of prayer
 - seek to live among the lost and broken in their spheres of influence and to affect others through their character the way Jesus modeled for us
 - answer God's loving sacrifice for them daily with a response of obedience to his call on their life
 - exercise faith in such a way as to live in inner peace and the joy that comes from an obedient life
 - love others without holding back and find ways for those around them to experience their love
- Disciples develop these characteristics when they choose to submit to the spiritual authority of others in a faith community, such as in a small group.

Bill Hull. *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*

(p. 241).