

"BE THOU FAITHFUL"

INTRODUCTION

..."Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth..."
Luke 15:7

We are so thankful, _____, on this great and wonderful step you have taken in becoming a disciple of Christ.

Already now, an elder or preacher, or a close friend, has asked that you take this program home with you. They have done this because they love you and are interested in the welfare of your soul. They have prayed for you, and maybe even with you. And now they have asked that you listen to the truths found in this series, knowing that the things you will hear will help you as you start the greatest adventure of your life - following the footsteps of your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

HOW TO USE THE PROGRAM

Before we begin, it will be helpful to understand a bit about this series and how it should be used in order that you might gain the most from it.

I am sure that you already know the great power of repetition and how we remember best what we hear repeated most often. Take for example the commercials on television. You listen to them day after day until it isn't long before you are singing and repeating the jingles. Another example is the way in which our children learn to talk by hearing the words consistently repeated over a period of time. And so it is even with our convictions and conduct. They too are molded by the things which our minds have repeated most often.

This program uses this great power of repetition through cyclic replay. Which means that you will listen to each recording more than once or twice. How often? Listen carefully to these instructions and fix them clearly in your mind.

- (1) Listen to Side 1 of this record or tape for the next 7 days. (This is cyclic replay.)
- (2) Read the manuscript along with the record or tape each time you listen.
- (3) Listen and read at the same time, if possible, each day.
- (4) After you listen to side 1 for 7 days then repeat the same process with side 2 and so on through the rest of the program.

DON'T STOP

At first you may not get too much from what you hear, but do not become discouraged. Tomorrow listen to it again and read the manuscript, along with the narration. You will find that each time you listen you will hear something that you did not hear the time before. It will be a

different day; you will be in a different mood; and you will think of different things. Remember: the more you listen the more you will gain. Let the power of repetition work for you through cyclic replay!

THE PURPOSE

You may be wondering why you have been given this program and what the purpose is behind it. This series, which is called "BE THOU FAITHFUL," was developed in answer to a need expressed by the leaders in the church throughout the brotherhood. The need being to help the new convert to Christ to:

- (1) Understand more fully what it means to be a disciple of Christ.
- (2) Grow into loving allegiance to Christ.
- (3) Live Christ and give Christ.
- (4) Emphasize the necessity for, and show the way to, faithfulness unto death.

Every part of this series is intended to contribute to this end.

This then is the purpose of these recordings and their relation to you. We pray that you will use them as requested, for we know that they will help you in reaching the new goal of your new life - living eternally in Heaven with God the Father and Jesus Christ, His Son and our Savior!

And now, for the next few minutes - thoughtfully and prayerfully - listen to what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST HAS HEARD AND ANSWERED THE CALL OF JESUS

"And Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets and followed him." (Matthew 4:17-20)

Thus began the invitation that has passed down through the ages to all men of every tongue, tribe, and nation. "Whosoever will may come," and you my brother or sister in Christ have. You heard and answered the invitation of Jesus. By simple obedience to the gospel; by complete submission to the Christ, you have become a child of God and a disciple of Jesus. All your past sins have been forgiven. "Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new." (2 Cor. 5:17)

THE WORD "DISCIPLE"

You may already know the meaning of the word "disciple," but let's refresh our memory on it.

Around the middle of the 5th century B.C. in the country of Greece, there were traveling teachers called Sophists, or "men of wisdom." There were no classrooms where the teaching or learning went on, but rather the students would live with and observe the teacher; asking questions of him as he went about his daily task of living. And these students were called disciples which came from the Greek word meaning "a learner." And this is what it means in the Bible. When Christ called men to follow him he said, "Come learn of me." Those following Jesus then, are his students, his pupils - his disciples.

MORE THAN A LEARNER

But being a disciple of Christ is more than merely learning about Christ. Learning about him is not an end in itself but means to an end. "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ...." and grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:15,15).

We are following Jesus for the purpose of growing up in him that our lives might fulfill the desire of God that we "be conformed into the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). We are learning about him, not in order to become informed scholars, but in order to become transformed sinners.

DISCIPLESHIP MEANS GROWTH

We do not become like Christ immediately upon surrender of our lives to

him. Rather, we begin the Christian life as a spiritual babe. The apostle Peter said that we are "newborn babes," and that we should desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may GROW thereby. HOW CAN WE GROW LIKE CHRIST

The answer to that question is: Obey the laws of growth, First, there is:

(1) FOOD: Your physical body requires food in order to grow. So does your spiritual body - your soul. Christ said, "Man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4) So, we must feed upon the word of God.

(2) EXERCISE: Not only food, but exercise is necessary for the body to grow properly. The same is true of the soul. Paul said, "Exercise thyself rather unto godliness." (1 Tim. 4:7) We must put into practice what we learn from God's word.

(3) TIME: It took time for the acorn to become an oak. It took time for the boy to become a man. And it takes time for the disciple to learn and grow up into Christ. But of all the time that is taken to do things, no time is so well spent as this - learning and becoming like Christ.

A DISCIPLE HAS A NEW NAME

As we read the New Testament we see that the disciples of Christ were given a name which distinguished them from the rest of men. It is recorded that, "The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch." (Acts 11:26) This name described a peculiar people. Not that their appearance was so different, but that they lived in a different way. They did not desire the idle pleasures and sins that those living around them engaged in. They were often seen giving to those in need when they themselves had very little. Their love for each other was so strong that they were willing, if necessary, to die for one another. They sang when persecuted - rejoiced while suffering - loved their enemies - prayed for those who despitefully used them - and went into all the world preaching that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. They could hardly talk to a neighbor, or a friend, or even a stranger, without mentioning the name of Christ. Every thought and every deed revolved around that NAME. And so we read. "The disciples were called Christians," which meant - those who adhere or bind themselves to Christ.

This then, is the significance of the name given to the first disciples of Christ - the name which you yourself now wear CHRISTIAN!

A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST IS A MEMBER (OR ORGAN)

OF THE BODY OF CHRIST - THE CHURCH

The Bible pictures the church as the body of Christ with Christ as its head and each individual Christian as a member which makes up the body. Paul, speaking of Christ, said, "And He is the head of the body, the church." (Col. 1:18) Referring to individual Christians he said, "Now ye

are the body of Christ." (Rom. 12:4,5) The disciple of Jesus becomes a member of the church immediately upon obedience to the gospel. (Acts 2:41 & 47).

A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST DENIES SELF

DESIRES CHRIST

Someone said that when Christ calls a person he bids him "come and die." In his own words, Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Luke 9:23).

This gives us another insight into discipleship. But what does it mean for you and me? Does Christ mean that his disciples must actually die on a cross the same as he? Although some of the first century Christians were nailed to crosses by persecutors, this is not what he meant. From the verse we can see that actual physical death is not what Christ was speaking of, for one is to carry the cross and follow Jesus daily. This a dead man cannot do. What then is the answer? The answer is found in these words of the Master: "Not my will, but thine be done." (Luke 22:42).

The death of the disciple is the death of his will. The death of the desire to live for Self and to please Self, or in two words, Self-denial: the will of the servant merging with the will of the Master. And never is one following so closely to Jesus as when he is denying himself in order to do the will of God. Paul wrote, "For even Christ pleased not himself" (Rom. 15:3). And Jesus said, "I do always those things which please him (God)" (John 8:29).

Therefore, to be a disciple of Christ means permitting Christ to lead by total surrender of our desires to his desires for us: to be Christ-led rather than Self-led. (To see how this should work, be very sure that you study and fill in the Action page which accompanies this script).

DISCIPLE OF CHRIST IS HOLY

The word "HOLY" brings to mind different thoughts to different people. One may think of a building where worship is given. Another may recall a certain day of the week. While someone else remembers a pious man or woman. Others think of God.

The word originally meant "SEPARATENESS" or "TO SEPARATE." For example a man's foot was holy in relation to his hand - it was separated. Then the word grew to include the CAUSE for the separateness. In other words, God was separated from man, but why? Was it because of his great power or wisdom? No, for after God, through His power and wisdom, had created the world and man, he walked and had fellowship with man in the Garden of Eden. But, when Adam sinned God separated himself from man. Why? Because God is all pure and He can have no fellowship with impurity with sin. He is perfectly good and completely pure. Now listen to these words written by apostle Peter. "As children of obedience, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in time of your ignorance: but like He who called you is holy be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living: because it is written, Ye shall be holy: for I am holy." (1 Peter 1:14,15).

Peter says that the standard, or pattern, of conduct for the disciple's life is the purity and goodness of God. But, someone may say that no man can be as pure and good as God! This is true, but obviously this is not what the writer meant. He is saying that God is our standard. If it were possible to become pure as God, then we would become the standard ourselves. Only one has ever accomplished this, Jesus Christ, who became the "express image of the invisible God," and thus the standard of conduct for those who would be holy

as HE is holy. Yes, a disciple of Christ can be pure, and good, in all manner of living. He not only can he must.

Consider these words of the apostle Paul, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification (or holiness.) For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but into holiness." (1 Thess. 4:3-7). It is God's will and the purpose of His calling that his children separate themselves from all that is evil, sinful, wrong, and impure and devote themselves to being pure and good in all manner of living.

The manner in which the Christian lives is dominated and directed by the constant thought that his aim is to someday enter into the presence of God and to have the fellowship that once was broken by sin, but now has been restored by Jesus Christ. It is for this reason that the disciple must keep himself unspotted from the world, for becoming holy is the preparation for the presence of God. The Hebrew writer said, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14). Therefore, as a disciple of Christ, seek, pursue, aim to be pure, good, and righteous. Prepare yourself for the presence of God.

A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST BEARS FRUIT

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." (John 15:8)

Fruit is the product of plant growth. And each plant produces after its own kind. On one occasion Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (Lk. 15:5). If, then, Christ is the vine and disciples are the branches what will be the product or fruit? The answer is obvious, isn't it. The fruit of each branch will be other disciples or Christians.

When Jesus called the first disciples he told them that if they would follow him he would make them into something. That something, as he put it, was "FISHERS OF MEN." The same thing is true today. As a disciple of Christ you are to bear fruit in the Lord's vineyard by catching souls" for Christ. It becomes the responsibility of each disciple to tell the gospel of salvation to those who are outside the kingdom of God, and lost. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost" and the purpose of those who follow him must be the same.

A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST LOVES HIS

BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE LORD

The love that disciples of Christ had for each other during the first century is something which men still marvel at today. Never in the history of the world has there ever been anything to compare with it. The Bible records that:

"The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common... Neither was there any among them

that lacked: For as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and laid them down at the apostles feet and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts 4:32,34,35)

Some of them sacrificed so much in helping others that Paul said they gave "beyond their power." (1 Cor. 8:3). The world marveled then and it marvels today at such love. We wonder where this kind of love could come from? For the answer we go to one of the last commands that Jesus gave his disciples before he left this earth.

"A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. (John 13:34)

The early Christians were imitating a love that they had seen a love that Jesus had shown them. So much did they imitate the love of Christ in their relationship to each other that one of the historians of that day wrote, "See how they love one another, and are ready to lay down their lives for each other!"

This love became proof to the world that they were truly the disciples of Christ. As Christ had said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:35).

A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

DWELLS IN THE WORDS OF JESUS

In the gospel of John we have the summation what it means to be a disciple of Christ:

"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." (John 8:31).

To stay and dwell, to lodge and abide in the words of Jesus this is discipleship.

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit." (John 15:14-16).

BE THOU FAITHFUL!

ACTION PAGES
FOR
WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

I. Scripture reading for the week:

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23).

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." (John 15:8).

"A new commandment I give unto you that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:34,35)

"Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." (John 8:31)

(Read these passages through once each day for the next seven days.)

II. WHERE I STAND AS A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

1. How long have I been a Christian?

2. Is my knowledge of the Bible () Poor () Good

3. Can I tell someone the gospel plan of salvation which I have obeyed?
() Yes
() No

4. Do I pray every day?
() Yes
() No

5. Do I attend worship services and Bible studies faithfully?
() Yes () No

6. Do I put God's will first in my life? () Yes () No

7. Am I determined to be a Christian regardless of the circumstances or consequences?

() Yes () No

III. SOME THINGS TO DO:

1. Meet and learn the names of your Elders, Deacons, Preacher, and Bible Teacher. (Also, meet and learn the names of as many of the members as you can. Do not wait for them to meet you - meet them.)
2. Sit up close to the front of the auditorium during worship services. You will gain much more by doing so. Encourage others to do the same.
3. Study your Bible lesson in advance, and not only answer questions in class but ask questions of the teacher. It will help you learn and will encourage others.
4. Enter each service to worship and learn. Leave each service to work and serve. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only."

IV. The follower of Jesus denies himself of his own will and desires and replaces them with the will and desires of Christ. Here are a few examples. Notice that the will of Jesus for the disciple is always something which he himself practiced. The disciple is following Jesus.

1. When someone becomes our enemy our desire is to take revenge.
1. Christ's desire for us
is "Love your enemies, bless
them that curse you. Do good
to them that hate you, and
pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute
you." (Matt. 5:24)

Example of Christ: On the
cross he prayed for his enemies
"Father, forgive them, for they
know not what they do." (Lk.23:34)

2.
When someone is in trouble and needs our
help, etc., many times
our desire might be not to become involved or be
inconvenienced.
2. Christ desire for us is "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the
law of Christ (Gal. 6:2)

Example of Christ: He bore the Cross, and our sins. "We then that are
strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please our-
selves. Let everyone of us please his neighbor for his good and to edifica-
tion. For even Christ pleased not himself."
(Rom. 15:1-3)

3. Our desire may be to place ourselves in a position of power where other
must serve us.
3. Christ's desire for us is,
"Whosoever will be great among

position of power where you, shall be your minister, and
whosoever of you will be chiefest will be servant of all." (Matt.20:26,27)

Christ's example: "Even as the Son of man came not to be
ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for
many." (Matt. 20:28)

4. Our desire often is find fault with our neighbor or brothers and sisters
in Christ.

4. Christ's desire for you is

"Confess your faults one to another that ye may be healed."
(James 5:16)

Example of Christ: "He came not
to condemn, but to save. (John 12:47)

5. Our desire is to seek material things in this life.

5. Christ's desire for us

is, "Seek ye first the
kingdom of God and his
righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt.6:33)

Christ example: "I seek not mine own will, but the
will of the

Father which hath sent me." (John 5:30)

IT IS THE WAY THE MASTER WENT SHOULD NOT HIS SERVANTS TREAD
IT STILL?

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