

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

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God bless you,

Oluwatobi S. Adewuyi

Coordinator

Topic:

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

Bible Texts: Matthew 28:19-20

Teacher; Oluwatobi S. Adewuyi

Study

We are all familiar with the word **Christian** so what's discipleship?

It is a derivative of the word "disciple" and according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, it is one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another: such as Christianity : one of the twelve in the inner circle of Christ's followers according to the Gospel accounts. It is a convinced adherent of a school or individual.

Can someone help us with our Bible texts?

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **[20]** Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

If we look carefully into the rate at which Christianity is growing compared to the religion of the children of the bond woman. We would see that it is seriously reclining, Christianity is now only taken as a religion without life and many only bear the word Christian as a title or appellation without knowing the essence of it probably because they were giving birth to in it or they love as others go to church or they followed someone to church and that's all they know about Christianity and their lifestyles are contrary to it. Looking carefully into why other religions are gaining grounds than Christianity, we would see just one major reason which is simply the neglect of The Lord Jesus Christ's command on discipleship because these other religion do not joke with discipleship, that is why they tend to gain grounds than Christianity. Many of their children learn what their religion books teaches from a to z at childhood under serious monitoring, tutorship and compulsion and they are being made to know the

repercussion of forsaking such ways, they imbibe the patterns and ways in the heart of these young ones and they grow in it to avoid becoming radicals. But on the other hand we have those who say they're Christians and go to church yet would complain to the children's teacher in church that the memory verses that were allotted to their children to memorize is too much and beyond their age thereby limiting how well this verses should have sunk into the memory of their children.

Proverbs 22:6 KJV Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. When the scripture says this, it was not only referring to Christians, it's simply saying in which ever way you train your child from the beginning, he will not depart from it, and if you train him in the wrong way, he will walk in it till adulthood and if it is in the ways of God, he will not depart from it. This is why those who are trained well in this false religion are so much grounded and rooted in it to the point that it is not easy to convert them, for this is what has already been imbibed in them and those that would change usually encounter divinity. The Lord Himself is the One that do reveal Himself to them in various ways to grant them conviction that they have been walking in the wrong path. The body of Christ today must go back to the Lord's command on discipleship. Even if there is revival and there is no discipleship, it will be of lesser effects. In short, people who must be carriers of revivals must have been discipled. No man on earth can be an agent of revival without first passing through Christ's school of discipleship. Any revival that comes outside the pure biblical truths will not last and would yield no tangible results. The Lord Jesus Christ commanded in **Matthew 28:19 KJV** Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

The first thing He said was "Go!" the first thing expected of anyone who has been discipled is to go! This instruction was given to Jesus' disciples after His resurrection. They have been well discipled (taught). They lived with Christ who is our perfect example, they talked, eat, related, received teachings directly from the One who is our perfect example, therefore they knew what it takes to be a disciple. They had already gone for "ministerial field training" although learning does not end in Christ's school; but they have already gotten to the level they can now teach others. Therefore The Lord said Go! And the purpose of their going is

to teach all nations, they are to disciple others the way they were disciplined. The Lord gave this instruction because He knew that without discipleship, one's Christianity would not stand the way it ought to. The word "teach" was used in the KJV version because something must be taught, and that is Jesus' way of life and patterns of His ministry, anything taught which is not in accordance to His ways are out of Christianity, He said "make disciples of all", but then did not stop, but went further to make known to them what they are to teach.

Matthew 28:20 KJV Teaching them TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER I HAVE COMMANDED YOU: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" All things! all things! none is to be neglected, none is to be considered unimportant, they are to observe all He had commanded. Those who will disciple others must have first learned from Christ, knowing Him well, those who have not learned from Christ would not teach Christ. **Ephesians 4:20-24 KJV** But ye have not so learned Christ; [21] If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: [22] That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; [23] And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; [24] And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created IN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND TRUE HOLINESS. Many did not learn Christ but are making disciples for the devil. Those who have learned Him, who have been taught and have heard Him will teach people to depart from their old ways of life which is corrupt according to the deceitful lust. Telling them to be renewed in the Spirit of their minds. And also that they put on the new Man which after God is recreated **in righteousness and true holiness** which is the endpoint of any discipleship program that is approved by The Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, false discipleship would not head towards making one live in righteousness and holiness. How to become like Jesus is the aim of true discipleship, it's to learn and know all that Jesus began to do and to teach and applying it to one's life

Acts 1:1-3 KJV The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, [2] Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: [3] To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many

infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God: The reason why our Christianity today is being questioned is because most have not learned and applied what Jesus did and taught, many are not discipled. Many churches today lack commitment to discipleship. The importance of discipleship is as evangelism and it is rooted in teaching and doings. It is like a child being taught in school by his teacher, although as small as the child might be in class, his listening to his teacher and may not say anything in the class but will get home to his parents and start saying and demonstrating all the teacher said in school. The child did not only learn by word-of-mouth but also by act that is, the actions of the teacher. In the same way, those who will disciple others must be doers of what they teach and not those who would say do-as-I-say-not-as-I-do. **James 1:22 KJV But be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.**

A church that is committed to disciplining others would grow faster and stronger into genuine and committed Christians unlike the ones that does not have time for that. **Acts 19:4-10 KJV Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. [5] When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. [6] And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. [7] And all the men were about twelve. [8] And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. [9] But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. [10] And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.** We can see the power of discipleship in the verses of the scriptures after Paul preached the Gospel of The Lord Jesus Christ to those who were once baptized with the baptism of repentance (that is, into John's baptism). They were baptized again in the name of The Lord and then received The Holy Spirit, Paul did not just dispatch them saying "it is well with you go and sin no more" as Jesus told that woman. **John 8:11 KJV She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.**

This is because the time has changed, Jesus has died and resurrected and it's time for those who receive His mercy to be saved to live their lives worthy of Him and thus must be taught His life. Paul proceeded into the synagogue preaching concerning the things of the kingdom of God. **Acts 19:8 KJV** *And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.* But some did not believe because their hearts were hardened, and spoke evil, Jesus Christ is the way which means they spoke evil of Christ. **John 14:6 KJV** *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* This they did not do in their own closet but before the multitude. There are those who would not so much take a step towards the path of life and would not allow others to. They spoke evil and because of the way they spoke, those who have been saved can be made to question their convictions and back-out because death and life lies in the power of the tongue. **Proverbs 18:21 KJV** *Death and life are in the power of the tongue:..* but Paul took an immediate step and it is simple that he departed from them, not only did he come out of them, he also withdrew the disciples because he knew the dangers of continuing in the midst of those who would not yield to the ways of Christ but blasphemed, as he was zealous in preaching Christ to everyone, he was also careful to protect the sheep so that they don't feed on poisons. In ministry, we might come to see that there are those who would always speak against the way. (the way of Christ's life as taught). As those whom God has given the Grace to disciple others, we must learn to know when to separate these disciples from those who are harmful and would always kick against the truth. In most cases, it is usually a minority among multitudes that have the Spirit of being disciplined. What it means to have the Spirit of being disciplined is this.

1. Such is ready and eager to learn: Those who are genuinely saved are always eager to learn and are always ready to listen; they seek for where their souls can be well fed with the truth and stay there no matter how hard the teachings are. **John 6:60,66 KJV** *Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? [66] From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* These people who went back did not have the spirit of being disciplined. But those who are eager and ready will always cry to be fed with the words of eternal life, so they will not depart because they

felt the truth is too hard to follow, just like Peter and the other disciples that stayed with Christ. **John 6:67-68 KJV** Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? [68] Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.* Disciples seek the words of eternal life.

2. They put all efforts to seeing that they practice all they are taught: This is another major way to recognise those who have the Spirit of being disciplined, when they learn anything, they try to practice it, asking The Lord for grace, though may not be convenient for them, yet they want to put it into practice as long as they see that it is contained in God's Word. There are those who have the "doing spirit".

3. Changes are seen in their lives: Those who have the Spirit of being disciplined change to the point that people can easily identify that they have left their former ways of life and are now living as changed people. This is observed by all those who know them before.

4. They do not give silly excuses for not learning and doing: This is because they see it as a point of duty to learn the ways of Christ, and because they want to really be like Him, therefore missing a day of study makes them unhappy with themselves and would seem as if they are lagging behind. Among the multitude we minister to, those who exhibit such characters and have believed can be separated for effective discipleship and by this, the gospel would gain grounds not only by what they preach but by their way of lives. I remember when we started this online ministry, we had people from different places, they joined in large numbers because the link was made public, but as we taught the doctrines of Christ, some of those who do not believe started kicking against it. We then created this group, and those who had the Spirit of being disciplined joined and that was how we continued till now. The problem reduced drastically. These set of people almost stopped the work of God but The Lord told us not to go back into that group but maintain this new one.

We must recognise that those who have the Spirit of being disciplined would seek for the truth and would release themselves for discipleship no matter what people may say against the way of Truth. Those who do not want to hear the truth would not make those who want to do so hear, which is why it is advised that

each church has a discipleship class that must be strict, and those who are ready to be discipled are to be systematically taught God's Words, So that those who have nothing doing will not pollute them. In the passage, we read about Paul withdrawing the disciples from the multitude, we read that he took them to a school owned by Tyrannus and taught them daily. Which he continued for two years. **Acts 19:10 KJV** And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Some manuscripts reads that he taught them every day from **11 a.m - 4 p.m.** and by disciplining these people, all those who were in Asia heard the word of The Lord Jesus Christ both Jews and Greeks. Sometimes, when we see that we do not have members in our church, it is simply because we are not doing it the way we ought to. When true disciples are made for The Lord Jesus Christ, wherever they get to, they would preach the gospel, win souls for Christ and advise them to come over to the church to also be discipled and by this, true sheep will be added to the fold and not the multitude of goats which we seek after these days.

IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLESHIP

1. It helps in preparing others for Heaven
2. It helps to live an exemplary life
3. It helps in the spread of the gospel
4. It helps to increase the number of those in the body of Christ.
5. It helps to know pretending believers and followers (they cannot pretend for long because the teachings would be too hot for them)
6. It ignites the fire of revival within and outside the church
7. It helps in building radical Christians
8. Soldiers of Christ are trained who would be uncompromising.
9. It aids the gathering of true believers which would allow the easy flow of God's spirit.
10. It helps to build believers who would stand firm even in the midst of a

perverse world.

REASONS WHY DISCIPLESHIP IS WEAK AND MISSING TODAY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST.

1. **Lack of call into ministry:** Most people who are into ministry today are not called into it, they probably loved titles or money, so they are not concerned about souls, in as much as their motives for entering the ministry is met.

2. **Quest for increments of members:** This is one of the major reasons why many ministers and churches have failed in the aspect of discipleship. They want sudden and rapid membership, they want to be leading millions as soon as possible because of fame and wealth. So that's their aim, as such they cannot preach the truth because if they do, members would run away and if such people create a discipleship school/group, they would not feed them with the truth which is equivalent to them not disciplining people at all.

3. **Ignorance:** Some ministers are ignorant of the truth about discipleship, they do not know how important it is, so they push it aside and think on focusing on other things they think is more important. Whereas, discipleship should be the priority of every Church of God after evangelizing to souls.

4. **Lack of trained and knowledgeable teachers:** Not everyone can teach and should teach others. Some are already into ministry but have not been trained, they do not have what it takes to teach/disciple others because they were not disciplined, they lack necessary knowledge. A person who is not living a victorious life from sin cannot teach others how to. As such, because they are not trained to do so, they themselves neglect it.

5. **Inappropriate knowledge:** Some read books more than they read the scriptures. Anyone who will disciple others must read and search the Bible more than other books. (NB: I'm not saying reading good books are bad, but read the scriptures more.) The Bible is the direct source of all, which all teachings should come from. So, many of them who are to disciple others do not have adequate knowledge of the Word of God. By this, they make themselves unfit for discipling others, which has made it weak and non-functional in their ministry.

6. Lack of the right focus: The true focus of every ministry should be Heaven and the moment that is not the focus, then discipleship will be weak, since its essence of discipleship is to prepare souls for Heaven. But is neglected. For anyone who would disciple others, such must have total focus on his Heavenly race and such must have been living the life of Christ to the knowledge of others. .

From our study, it is clear that any church that would fulfill Christ's mandate especially in this end time must go back to discipleship or else, she would only be rotating in a circle. It must be noted that discipleship takes time, it cannot be rushed, it takes patience and endurance. Those who have been well taught (discipled) can teach others. **2 Timothy 2:2 KJV** *And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.* Bible studies and discipleship programs look alike, but one of the ways that can be used to differentiate them is that discipleship is more intense than just once in a week Bible study. Discipleship opens the disciples to the Way of Life of the one disciplining them so that they can emulate him.

Elisha was discipled by Elijah, Samuel was discipled by Eli, Timothy was discipled by Paul, any minister that suddenly comes into limelight without having been discipled, must be well checked in the Spirit. **1 John 4:1**, and such may not last long. Although The Lord Himself discipled Paul, and still does so today, but those who are discipled by Christ are raw eaters of God's Word, guided and directed by The Holy Spirit, yet do not still stand alone like one man soldier, they still submit to others. Paul said, **1 Corinthians 11:1 KJV** *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* He was simply talking to those whom he was discipling, it requires everyday work or almost everyday work. It is not like Bible study where one spends maximum of 2 hours, some would not even come early for Bible study and would only attend for 30 minutes. Discipleship is more rigorous than Bible study, although in discipleship programs, it's the scriptures that is still being studied but this time, it's explicitly explained and interactive for better understanding. In conclusion, every ministry must have discipleship classes inculcated into it if it must fulfill the purpose to which God has founded it.

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