

## **A CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP** *Facilitator: Chinedum Isiguzo, CAPRO Missions SA*

The course will cover the following:

1. Differences between disciples and multitudes
2. Jesus' demands on the men and women He calls
3. Personal discipleship in the Christian walk and work
4. The implication of 'denying self' ('dying to self')
5. The cross in the life of a believer

**Texts** - Matt. 11:28-30; 4:19; 28:19-20; Luke 9:25,26

**What is discipleship?** Discipleship is the process of transformation a convert undergoes as he is being conformed to the image of His Master, the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 6:40; Rom 8:29). It is a lifelong (training) process of following the Master (His teachings and examples) in order to become like Him in both character and conduct. God's call to a discipleship life is a call to relationship, learning and service. His call had a threefold nature:

- Is a call to relationship- Mk 3:14; Matt 4:18-20
- Is a call to a compulsory training program- Matt 11:28; Luke 9:57-62.
- Is a call to serve- to "Make Disciples" -Matt. 4:19; Matt 28:18-20

**God's Goals of Discipleship:** Call to follow in life & service (Matt. 11:18-20; 28:18-20)

- 1) To have rest (salvation) from Satan/sin (Matt 11:28)
- 2) To be fully trained to be like the Master (Luke 6:40; Matt 11:29)
- 3) To take the master's yoke & burden (Matt 11:30)
- 4) To conform to Christ's likeness (Rom. 8:28,29)
- 5) To produced matured ministers of Christ (Eph. 4:11-13)
- 6) Chosen to be 'fishers of men' of ALL nations (Matt. 4:19; 28:19,20 Mark 1:17,18).

These are God's goals for all Christians, so discipleship is for all believers (Rom 8.29), not just for a few, select, super-spiritual Bible students or Missionaries.

Let us examine few issues with regards to Christ's call to discipleship:

### **1. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DISCIPLES AND MULTITUDES**

Raising disciples who will walk like Jesus Christ was one of the reasons Christ came to the earth. He lived and was tempted like us, yet without sin (Heb 4:15) in order to show humanity how God wants His children to live. A disciple is a learner and a follower of the Lord Jesus. There are many that say that they follow Jesus Christ, but Jesus does not recognise them (Matt 7:21-23). How do we know the true disciples from the crowd/multitudes? (Read John 6:48-69).

Genuine salvation: Saved by faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ as the Crucified One and the Source of life. Receiving Him by faith as God's appointed sacrifice (John 3:16,17; 1 John 3:6,9).

Being a '**professing Christian**' is not what following Christ Jesus is because Jesus condemns/rejects that from these: (a) a man who buried his talent (Matt. 25:30), (b) five foolish ladies waiting for the bridegroom (Matt. 25:11-12), and (c) People who failed to do good (Matt. 25:41-46).

Disciples follow Jesus Christ because He is their Saviour and Lord. Multitudes follow Jesus Christ for Bread, prosperity, rich/wealth, good life, etc. Focusing on earthly blessings.

## **2. JESUS' DEMANDS ON THE MEN AND WOMEN HE CALLS – Luke 14:25-35**

True Christianity and discipleship is an all-out commitment to the Lord Jesus. So, He makes demands on those who would be His disciples- 2 Cor 5:15.

### **a. Supreme love: JESUS must come first - Luke 14:26; Matt 10:37; Deut 6:5**

- i. Before anyone else, including members of our own family - **Mt 10:34-37**
- ii. Even before one's own self. Self love is the most stubborn to this demand.

### **b. Denial of self – Mark 16:24; Luke 14:27; 9:23**

### **c. Willingly choosing of the cross - Mark 16:24; Luke 14:27; 9:23**

- i. Trying to live godly lives in an ungodly world, we may find that following Christ sometimes involves ridicule and persecution - **2Tim 3:12**
- ii. Even if we are blessed to escape such things, we must still be willing to expend time and effort in promoting the cause of Christ in positive ways

### **d. Forsake all to follow CHRIST - Luke 9:23-26; 14:25-33**

- i. In other words, Jesus must be KING and LORD of our lives
- ii. Nothing can take precedent over Him and His will for us

### **e. Loving others - Jn 13:34-35; 1 John 3:16**

- i. With a love patterned after the love of Jesus ("as I have loved you")
- ii. With a love that is visible to the world ("by this all will know")
- iii. Therefore, a true disciple would...
  - a. Make every effort to get to know his brethren -1 Cor 13
  - b. Take advantage of occasions to encourage and grow closer to them.
- iv. Remember, a disciple is one who wants to become like his teacher
  - a. Was Jesus willing to sacrifice time and effort for His brethren? (Jn 3:16; 1Jn 3:16)

## **3. PERSONAL DISCIPLESHIP IN THE CHRISTIAN WALK AND WORK**

- a) Intimacy with God- Phil 3:7-14 (Growing in personal intimacy)
- b) Spirit- controlled life: fruit & gifts of the Holy Spirit- Rom 6-8; Gal 5:16-18;1 Cor 12
- c) Living as Salt & light of the world: Agent of Transformation- Matt 5:13-16
- d) Witness & Ambassador of Christ - Act 1:8; 1 Cor 5:17-20
- e) Disciple Maker – Matt 4:19,20; 28: 19-20

## **4. THE IMPLICATION OF 'DENYING SELF' ('DYING TO SELF') – Luke 9:23; Gen 3:5-7; 1 John 2:15,16**

- a) Only one Master: Lordship of Christ- 2 Cor 5:13-15; 2 Tim 2: 4
- b) Crucified life: Identifying with Crucified Christ–Persecution, suffering, shame, etc.
- c) Following Jesus- 1 Pet 2:21; Col 3:1,2; Rom 12:1-3
- d) Absolute surrender: Living to please God- John 20:15-17; Acts 20:24

## 5. THE CROSS IN THE LIFE OF A BELIEVER – Gal 2:20

- Our problem- Self- life : Rom 7:13 -25
- Our Remedy – Gal 2:20; 6;14,15; John 8:31
- Result: Christ-contrlled life- Phil 2: 5-8; 1 Cor 2:2-5; 1 John 2:15-17.

**CONCLUSION:** There are "high costs" of discipleship demanded by Jesus which caused many people to turn away from following Him. But Jesus was not trying to attract large crowds, He wants disciples! Is the COST worth it? I believe so, for consider some of the REWARDS of discipleship...

### THE REWARDS OF BEING A TRUE DISCIPLE

#### a. THERE ARE "PRESENT BLESSINGS"...

1. Jesus offers a PEACE the world cannot give to calm the troubled heart - **Jn 14:27**
2. His words inspire JOY to lift our spirits out of any depression - **Jn 15:11**
3. He also offers to those who follow Him the ABIDING LOVE OF GOD, which can cast out fear - **Jn 15:9; 1Jn 4:18**
4. And He makes it possible for us to be members of THE FAMILY OF GOD, which is able if need be to replace our physical family- **Mk 10:28-30**

#### b. THERE IS THE PROMISE OF "FUTURE BLESSINGS"...

1. We shall be saved from the wrath of God which is yet to come upon the world for its sins - **Rom 5:9**
2. We can look forward with joyful anticipation of eternity with God, free from sorrow, pain and death – **Rev. 21:1-8**

There are many other blessings we could mention that are enjoyed by disciples of Jesus; but these suffice to demonstrate that though discipleship is costly, the rewards far exceed the cost!

### Questions

1. What is Christ's call to discipleship means to you?
2. Are you Christ's disciple and can people testify to that?
3. Study carefully Luke 9: 23,24. What is the meaning of each of the following steps?  
(a) "let him deny himself", (b) "take up his cross daily" (c)"follow Me"
4. Why do 'Christians' take the name of Christ without undergoing the radical transformation of life that true conversion implies?

### Books to Read

- **The Calvary Road** by Roy Hession
- **Discipleship** by Peter Maiden
- **True Discipleship** by William Macdonald
- **Christ's Call To Discipleship** by James Montgomery Boice.
- **In His Steps** by Charles M. Sheldon