

I. TWO CONNECTIONS OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

1. True discipleship leads to (is rooted in) joy (v.6)

We see a picture of Paul's doctrine on display in his life

- The Thessalonians followed the example of Paul and Timothy and Silas. This is a great picture of what discipleship should look like in the local church. Yes, Paul taught them good doctrine, even if just for a short time, but his example, and the way they saw him endure persecution, gave them an example of doctrine and conviction and belief in action.

We see that discipleship is rooted in Joy

- It is significant that he uses the word "joy" here to describe the way, or the attitude, in which they imitated Paul. It wasn't out of begrudging acceptance or teeth-gritting duty. It was with "the joy of the Holy Spirit."
- We desperately need to see this connection in order to pursue obedience biblically, the way Jesus did. Two examples of this in Hebrews, one from the life of Moses, one from Jesus:
 - Hebrews 11:24-26-24 , Hebrews 12:1-3

Jesus is not the means to an end

- Any teaching that presents Jesus as merely the means to gain here in this life is a false gospel. We're not just talking about the health and wealth charlatans on TBN that plead with you to send them money so that God will open up the windows of heaven and give you a financial blessing. No, for most of us in the room it is much, much more subtle, but just as dangerous and false. It's the seeing the Christian life as a means to something you want. Jesus alone is the end and reward of the Christian life
 - Matthew 13:44-46-44

2. True discipleship leads to evangelism (vv.7-8)

Their discipleship produced evangelism

- Often times we pit discipleship and evangelism against one another, as if these aspects of the Christian life are at opposite extremes of the scale and a person or a church can only be good at one of them.
- You've heard this dichotomy, right? That church may be good at discipleship, but they are terrible at reaching out to others. Or, that church has such a heart for evangelism, but they're not very good at growing people once they get in the church. Paul makes no such distinction here.

Collective effort, collective responsibility

- "sounded forth" – only place this word is used in the NT—echo
- 2 Corinthians 2:14-17
- Burning flesh smells strangely attractive to those whom God is drawing to life.

II. THREE ACTIONS OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP (vv.9-10)

1. Turn to God from idols

This word turn is so important!

- It means you were going in one direction, and then you turned and started going in another.
- What are the idols we need to turn from? (see Keller quote below)

2. Serve the living and true God

3. Wait for the return of the risen King

A counterfeit god is anything so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living. An idol has such a controlling position in your heart that you can spend most of your passion and energy, your emotional and financial resources, on it without a second thought. It can be family and children, or career and making money, or achievement and critical acclaim, or saving "face" and social standing. It can be a romantic relationship, peer approval, competence or skill, secure and comfortable circumstances, your beauty or brains, a great political or social cause, your morality or virtue, or even success in Christian ministry. When your meaning in life is to fix someone else's life, we may call it "co-dependency" but it is really idolatry. An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, "If I have that, then I'll feel my life has meaning, then I'll know I have value, then I'll feel significant and secure." There are many ways to describe that kind of relationship to something, but perhaps the best one is worship.

-Tim Keller, Counterfeit Gods