

# μαθητής

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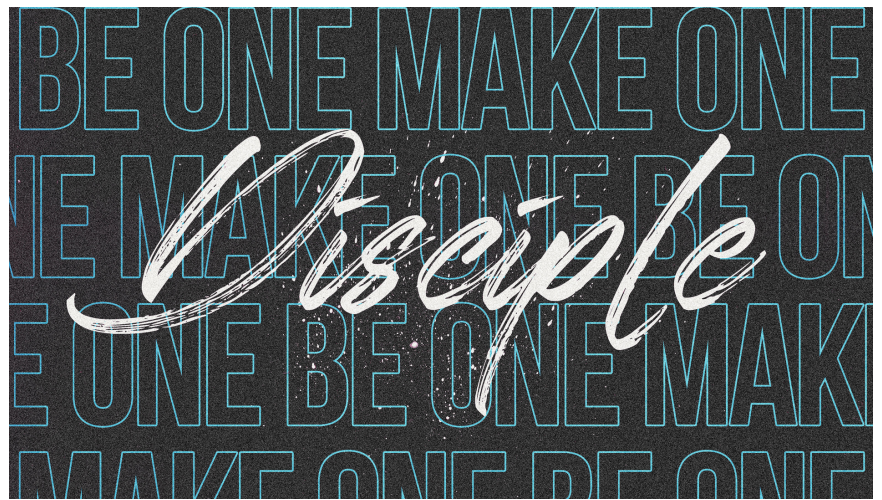
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Question & Answer 91

Q: What is the duty which God requires of man?

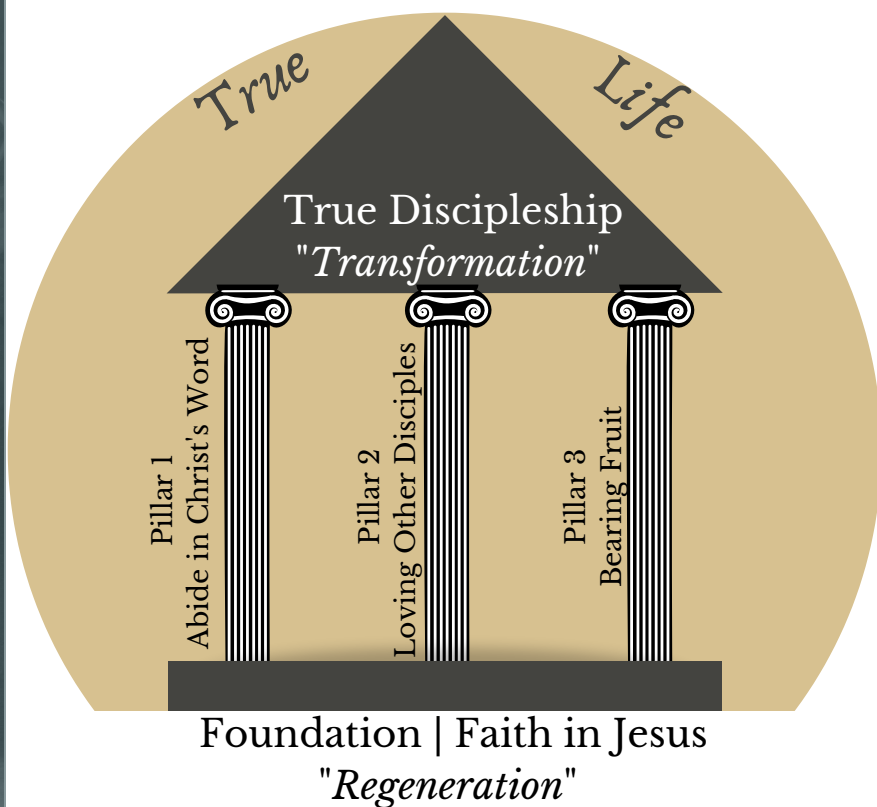
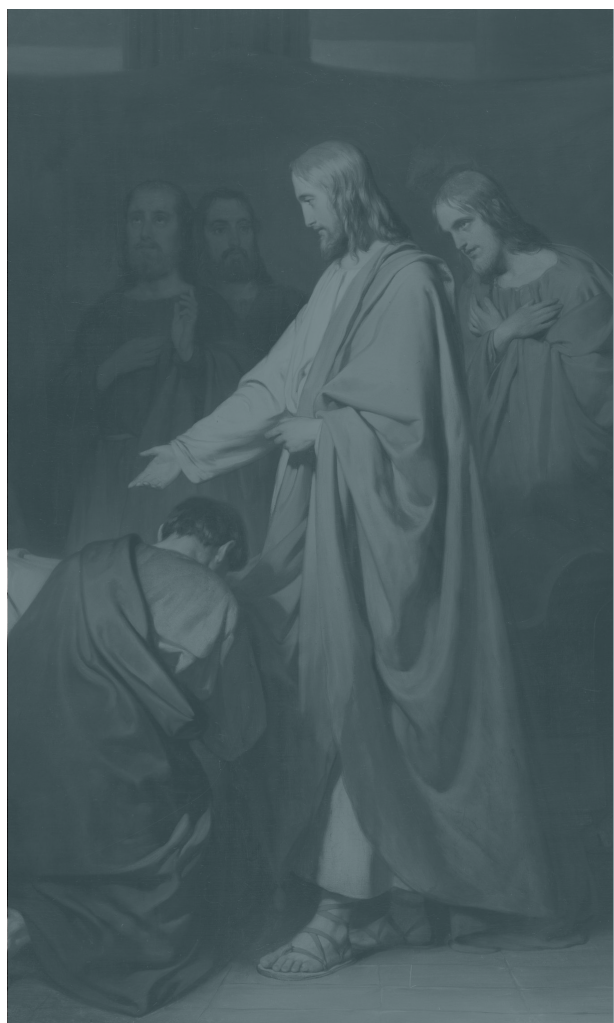
A: The duty of which God requires of man is obedience to His revealed will.



## **Opening Questions**

- What would you say are the most important characteristics of a true Christian?
- What would people point to in your life that would mark you as a Christian?
- If the apostle John visited us right now, what evidence would he find that the members of our Life Group are truly abiding in Jesus' words, loving each other, and bearing fruit?
- What can you point to in your own life of these three evidences of discipleship?
- Is discipleship an event or a process?
- What is the difference between a discipleship program and a disciple-making culture? What are the benefits of one or the other? Can you see drawbacks or negative aspects? Explain.
- How has this series challenged, encouraged, or offended your understanding and practice of discipleship?

# The Apostle John & His Discipleship



If you were to boil down the message of the Gospel of John to one word, what would that word be? John tells us what that word should be. John gives his purpose statement in 20:30-31. He says *"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."* There we have it - LIFE - Life is the word that we can boil it down to. John wants us to know that true belief in Jesus results in life. And not a physical life that we all have but a spiritual life that brings meaning, purpose, and makes a difference in our day-to-day existence.

John's distinctive view of discipleship has a foundation built upon a true belief in Jesus. A theological way of saying that the person who expresses trust in Jesus for salvation, experiences regeneration by the Holy Spirit to become a new creation. Once a person is regenerated, they are then able to build upon that foundation with three pillars. The first pillar is learning to abide in the words of Christ (John 15:1-11). The second pillar is loving other disciples (John 15:12-15; 17). And the third pillar is bearing fruit (John 15:16). It is through these three pillars, built upon faith in Jesus, that results in building a temple where true LIFE takes place. The purpose of discipleship, for John, is that a person who trusts in Jesus is then transformed into His image so that they can live, love, and serve like Jesus.

Adapted from *Following the Master* by Michael J Wilkins

# John 15:1-17

**1** “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. **2** Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. **3** Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. **4** Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. **5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. **6** If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. **7** If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8** By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. **9** As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. **10** If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. **11** These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

**12** “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command you. **15** No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. **16** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. **17** These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

## Discussion

1. According to Michael J Wilkins, the apostle John highlights three important areas in the life of a true disciple. They are abiding in Christ's words, loving other disciples, and bearing fruit. The passage above highlights all three of those areas. Identify in the passage above where each of those pillars are found. (i.e. verses)
2. Last week we learned why we need to abide in Jesus' words. As a result, where have you been abiding in Jesus' words lately? How would you like to improve? Does abiding in Jesus' words confuse you?
3. Why is it important for Jesus' disciples to love other disciples? How have you been loving others lately? Does loving others come easily to you? How would you like to improve?
4. Why is it important for Jesus' disciples to bear fruit? Where have you been bearing fruit lately? Can you bear fruit on your own? Why is that? Where would you like to see growth in your life?

# 2 Timothy 2:1-7

- 1 You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus,
- 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.
- 3 Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.
- 4 No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.
- 5 An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.
- 6 It is the hard-working farmer who ought to have the first share of the crops.
- 7 Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.

## Discussion

1. Why is it important that Paul encouraged Timothy to be strengthened by the grace that is found in Jesus? What does this imply about life in general, and ministry & discipleship specifically?
2. What is Timothy supposed to teach others?
3. Why is it important to teach these things that have been taught in the presence of "many witnesses"?
4. Why does Timothy need to entrust the faith to faithful people? Why is it important that these faithful men and women are able to teach? What happens when faithless (or unorthodox) people seek to teach us about the Christian faith?
5. Paul uses three illustrations in verses 3-6. The soldier must not be entangled with lesser goals or activities. The athlete must follow the rules that have been prescribed. And the farmer must be patient in waiting for the fruits of his labor. When it comes to discipleship, do you find yourself entangled by lesser goals or activities? Or do you find yourself wanting to write your own rules or maybe even rejecting the way God has prescribed discipleship? Maybe you are impatient when it comes to results and want to see change now? Explain your answers to these questions. How can you begin adjusting your attitude, desires, and expectations when it comes discipleship?
6. On Sunday, Pastor Kevin encouraged us to "Always be in 3". Those three relationships are -  
**Paul** - One who is pouring into you, helping you grow in spiritual maturity.  
**Timothy** - One who is younger in the faith and you're helping them grow in spiritual maturity.  
**Barnabas** - One who is walking alongside of you and is a maturing, spiritual friend.  
  
Who is your Paul? Who is your Timothy? Who is your Barnabas? Share with the group who these individuals are so that the group can encourage you and hold you accountable. Still struggling with identifying these individuals? Spend some time encouraging and suggesting who might fit these roles.
7. What do you need to feel more equipped to disciple someone? What can our group do to help encourage you towards making disciples constantly? How can we as a group continue to grow as disciples in addition to having these Paul, Timothy, and Barnabas relationships?



# Pastor Patrick's Discipleship Philosophy

## Patrick Iga | Missions Pastor

### 1) How do you define “discipleship”?

The way I define "discipleship" is helping, guiding, teaching, mentoring, and preparing people with their walk and relationship with Christ so they can live a continual growing life in Christ.

### 2) Briefly describe how and/or who you were discipled by?

I was discipled by many people in the body of Christ. When I was a new believer there were 3 men that discipled me and helped me shape my perspective of pursuing a life with Christ. They helped me realize that in order to understand what this whole lifestyle is about I would need to commit myself to be a student in the word. They encouraged me to read the bible from front to back, and as I was accomplishing that, they helped me in the areas I was confused about.

Additionally, I was discipled by 4 more men when I decided to answer the call to ministry. They helped guide and teach me as I was pursuing vocational ministry. They encouraged me in the midst of gaining my education in theology, helped me with practical ministry advice, and prepared me for ministry opportunities as they proofed my sermons or my ideas. They even corrected me when I wasn't up to par on the call to ministry.

The men who stand out to me mostly is a Sunday School teacher Allen Ward, and Pastors Randy Sims, Jim Hennesy, and Mike Connaway. They helped guide me in a way that effects my life to this day.

### 3) Briefly describe how you make disciples in your area of ministry.

Currently in my role as Missions Pastor I utilize the monthly newsletters to help in discipleship. I intentionally use language that I believe calls for us to act in reaching those who don't know Christ. It can be encouraging, instructional, challenging, and inspiring which can help guide and teach us in the response to Missions. We currently have a Missions Action Team, which will be another avenue of teaching and discipleship as we get in the right head space of reaching the world. We are pursuing an opportunity with Emily's Place to have bible studies with the women living on campus. As we do more external work we are looking to have teaching moments on Evangelism, Church Planting, and God's Heart on Missions. This will give us more opportunities to disciple anyone who wants to be used in this capacity because it will make us more effective.