

## RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 11)

Warren Wiersbe gives a comprehensive summary of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus in his comments on Matthew 28:19-20:

The Greek verb translated “go” is actually not a command but a present participle (going). The only command in the entire Great Commission is “make disciples” (teach all nations). Jesus said, “While you are going, make disciples of all the nations.” No matter where we are, we should be witnesses for Jesus Christ and seek to win others to Him (Acts 11:19-21).

The term “disciples” was the most popular name for the early believers. Being a disciple meant more than being a convert or a church member. “Apprentice” might be an equivalent term. A disciple attached himself to a teacher, identified with him, learned from him, and lived with him. He learned, not simply by listening, but also by doing. Our Lord called twelve disciples and taught them so they might be able to teach others (Matthew 13:13ff).

A disciple, then, is one who has believed on Jesus Christ and expressed this faith by being baptized. He remains in the fellowship of the believers that he might be taught the truths of the faith (Acts 2:21-47). He is then able to go out and win others and teach them. This was the pattern of the New Testament church (II Timothy 2:1-2).

In many respects, we have departed from this pattern. In most churches, the congregation pays the pastor preach, win the lost, and build up the saved – while the church members function as cheerleaders (if they are enthusiastic) or spectators. The “converts” won, are baptized, and given the right hand of fellowship, then they join the other spectators. How much faster our churches would grow, and how much stronger and happier our church members would be, if each one were discipling another believer. The only way a local church can “be fruitful and multiply” (instead of growing by “additions”) is with a systematic discipleship program. This is the responsibility of every believer, and not just a small group who have been “called to go.”

Jesus had opened the minds of His disciples to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:44-45). They knew what He wanted them to teach to their own converts. It is not enough to win people to the Savior; we must also teach them the Word of God. This is also a part of the Great commission.”