

RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP (LESSON 7)

The Greek word for disciple is “mathetes,” meaning learner. W. E. Vine points out that it is “from a root “math” indicating thought accompanied by endeavor...hence it denotes one who follows one’s teaching as the disciples...A disciple is not only a pupil, but an adherent; hence they are spoken of as imitators of their teacher (cf. John 8:31; 15:8).” It would be incorrect to call a person a disciple just because he believes in Christ and reads the Bible. A disciple acts upon what he is reading. Truth is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end. We are not to merely believe the truth. We are to do it. “If we say that we have fellowship with Him , and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth” (I John 1:6 KJV). James warns that we are to be “doers of the Word, and not hearers only...” (James 2:22 KJV). These are serious verses. They indicate a person could think he is a disciple and be deceived. He could be lying to himself. Disciples begin with belief and continue in obedience. William MacDonald comments on James 1:22: “It is not enough to receive the implanted word; we must obey it. There is no virtue in possessing the Bible or even in reading it as literature. There must be a deep desire to hear God speaking to us and an unquestioning willingness to do whatever He says. We must translate the Bible into action. The word must become flesh in our lives. There should never be a time when we go to the Scriptures without allowing them to change our lives for the better.” A disciple is one who lives under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. There is no way to be a disciple unless one makes Jesus Lord. “And why call you me Lord, Lord, and not do the things which I say” (Luke 6:46)? Lordship and discipleship go together. There is no separation in the two ideas. When a man told Jesus, “Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father” (Luke 9:59 KJV), Jesus turned down his request. A disciple cannot use “Me first” and “Lord” in the same sentence. Both discipleship and lordship are linked to the idea of authority.