

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE! – LESSON 7

By Jon Quinn

A Christian has put a new "Captain" in control of his life. Jesus is Lord. Jesus once asked some people, *Why do you call Me Lord and not do the things which I say?* Luke 6:46. Jesus told His disciples to *let their lights shine* Matthew 5:13-16. This lesson deals with what it means to be a disciple of Christ.

DISCIPLESHIP IS DEMANDING

Following Jesus has its costs. To be successful one must truly love Him and learn to depend upon Jesus for the strength necessary to endure. Jesus urged all who think about becoming His disciples to carefully count the cost!

Luke 14:27-33 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Jesus said that His kingdom must take priority in life. While many are content to let their religion to play a minor role in their lives, Jesus' disciples know it must take first place!

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

The word "disciple" means "one who follows" The disciple does not merely learn from his teacher but imitates Him. Jesus invites all to learn of Him

Matthew 11:29 Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

1 John 2:6 He that saith he abides in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

A disciple of Jesus abides in Him by keeping His commandments

John 15:10 *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.*

1 John 2:14 *I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.*

1 John 3:24 *And he that keeps his commandments dwells in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit which he has given us.*

A disciple is not ashamed of Jesus or His word. In the name "Christian" he glorifies God even if others mock

Luke 9:26 *For whoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.*

1 Peter 4:16 *Yet if any man suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.*

Jesus taught that His disciples must be willing to say "yes" to Him even when we must deny self to do so.

Mark 8:34 *And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, whoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.*

Luke 14:27 *And whoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.*

Galatians 2:20 *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Our Lord said our loyalty to Him must be so great that He becomes more precious than life itself. Disciples have had to make the choice between Jesus and life at times! But remember, He has the power of resurrection and eternal life.

Luke 12:15 *And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life does not consist of the abundance of the things which he possesses.*

John 12:24-26 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone: but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. 25 He that loves his life shall lose it; and he that hates his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. 26 If any man serves me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serves me, him will my Father honor.*

ACTIVITIES OF DISCIPLESHIP

Discipleship means participation. A disciple conforms to his Teacher's example and makes decisions based on His will

Romans 12:1-2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

A disciple fills his life with praise of our Creator and Savior. Early Christians joyfully praised God for His blessings; especially for His redemptive work in Christ. Even when suffering hardship, early Christians could be found praising God

Acts 16:25 *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.*

Hebrews 13:15 *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*

Jesus' disciples follow His example in talking with God. Prayer is an important part of the Christian's day.

Philippians 4:6 *Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

Colossians 4:2 *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.*

Every disciple becomes a teacher by example as well as in word. He is eager to share the good news with others because he realizes the benefit it has been to him

2 Timothy 2:2 *And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

Hebrews 5:12 *For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.*

Disciples are unselfish. This involves being hospitable and ready to help those in need

Romans 12:13 *Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.*

Galatians 6:10 *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto those who are of the household of faith.*

Disciples assemble with other disciples to worship God and to encourage one another.

Acts 20:7 *And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.*

Hebrews 10:24-25 *And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching.*

ATTITUDES OF DISCIPLESHIP

Disciples love God. This love is not some mere mushy feeling, but an expression of will. Even if one "feels good" about God, he does not really love Him unless he is willing to obey Him

Matthew 22:37 *Jesus said unto him, you shall love the Lord thy God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.*

John 14:15 *If you love me, keep my commandments.*

1 John 5:3 *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not burdensome.*

Disciples love others. Again, this entails more than the way we feel. It means that we seek for what is best for others

Matthew 22:39 *And the second is like unto it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

1 John 3:16 *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*

Disciples are humble. This does not mean that they think of themselves as inferior. It simply means that they recognize God's place in their lives, and they are willing to submit to His will

James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will lift you up.

Disciples have both joy and sorrow in life

Romans 12:15 Rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Through it all they have the confidence Jesus gives them as they walk by faith

Ephesians 3:11-12 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: 12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

Philippians 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Disciples hate sin because of the awful effect it has had on our world and its people. It is because of sin that Jesus died on the cross

Ephesians 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.

Disciples are reverent people who look upon God and His will with respect and treat others with dignity

Romans 11:20-21 Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Be not high minded, but fear: 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, take heed lest he also not spare you.

1 Peter 1:17 And if you call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

THE DEATH OF THE DISCIPLE

Death is an enemy that some believe unbeatable, but death loses its despair as the disciple puts his trust in the One who has died and lives again forevermore. Jesus has the *"keys of death and Hades"*

Revelation 1:17-18 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: 18 I am he that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

A good example of this confidence is Paul. He talked of a resurrection which drives grief away

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

He summed up the disciple's attitude toward death: *"Death is swallowed up in victory!"*

1 Corinthians 15:54-57 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

All these things are easy to say when preaching about death. The real test of Paul's words came as he faced his own execution! Were they mere words or did he really believe his message? Had he really seen the resurrected Lord? The answer is yes!

As Paul sat in a dungeon, he saw his own death approaching. He had been in prison before, but he knew that this would be the last time. He would shortly be beheaded by order of Nero. In his last writing he said,

2 Timothy 4:6-8;18 *"I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award unto me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing ...The Lord will deliver me from every evil deed, and bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."*

No regrets, no fear; only peace and hope in these final words. The disciple lives his life to bring glory to the One whom he knows will deliver him from death.

CONCLUSION

A disciple has made the decision to follow Christ. He is determined not to look back, slow down, back away or be still. He has been redeemed from his past, his present makes sense and his future is bright. His goal has been set upon the gate at the end of the narrow road. When Jesus comes again, He will have no trouble recognizing every true disciple which He has; they are bright lights shining forth in a dark world.

LESSON #8 is entitled "IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH." It deals with worship: what makes it acceptable, and for what reasons might God reject it. We will notice how the early church was taught to worship.

QUESTIONS FOR LESSON SEVEN

DISCIPLESHIP IS DEMANDING

What story did Jesus use to show the wisdom in "counting the costs" before becoming His disciple Luke 14:27-30? _____

What does Jesus' disciple seek first Matthew 6:33? _____

What does the word "disciple" mean? _____

Who is it that "abides in Jesus" 1 John 3:24? _____

ACTIVITIES OF DISCIPLESHIP

Disciples are not to be conformed to what? _____

What are they to do instead? Romans 12:2 _____

What are disciples told not to forsake doing Hebrews 10:25? _____

ATTITUDES OF DISCIPLESHIP

What does Jesus say about loving Him John 14:15? _____

1 John 5:3 says, *For this is the _____ of God, that we keep his _____ and his _____ are not grievous.*

What does it mean to be "humble"? _____

DEATH OF A DISCIPLE

Who has the "keys of death and Hades" Revelation 1:17-18? _____

In what four ways does the Bible describe the body that is buried 1 Corinthians 15:42-44? 1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____

In what four ways does the Bible describe the body that will be raised 1 Corinthians 15:42-44? 1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____

Why did Paul face his execution with such courage and peace 2 Timothy 4:6-8; 18? _____