

# Jesus and His Disciples

## What is a Disciple?

### Lesson 6

#### Introduction

Jesus' strength came from His relationship with God the Father. He often went to a lonely place where He would seek guidance from God through prayer. After spending a night in prayer, Jesus chose twelve of His disciples who would become apostles. These twelve would carry on His ministry when He was gone.

#### What is a Disciple?

In Jesus' day, a disciple(s) was called a *talmid* or *talmidim* (pl.) in Hebrew. A disciple was a student or apprentice considered to be the best when it came to knowing and understanding God's Law. To be a disciple required dedication of their whole life to their teacher (rabbi). The goal was to learn from and to become like the rabbi. The process began when a student felt confident in his knowledge of Scripture. He would ask the rabbi of choice for permission to become his disciple. The rabbi would test the student on their knowledge of Scripture as well as its interpretation. If everything was answered 100% correctly, and the rabbi felt the student was worthy to become his student then, and only then, was the student accepted to become his disciple. Many who asked, did not qualify.

1. How was Jesus' method of accepting disciples radically different? (John 15:16)
2. What was the "test" or requirement to become a disciple of Jesus? (Matthew 16:24)

#### Jesus Teaches Through His Actions

A disciple spent every moment of the day with the rabbi to learn through teaching as well as by the way the rabbi lived. Jesus' life, as the Son of Man, was not stress free. He experienced the same feelings and emotions all people do. But how Jesus handled the stresses of life and His attitude towards people shaped His disciples differently than anyone else.

3. To be Jesus' disciple meant always traveling. According to Matthew 9:35-38:
  - What did Jesus do when He walked from village to village?
  - What attitude did He have toward the people He encountered?
  - What did Jesus teach His disciples to do when they saw so many people in need?

4. In another story Jesus was traveling through Samaria, a place where no "good Jew" would go because they were outsiders. What was the physical condition of Jesus in John 4:6?
  - What surprised the disciples when they saw Jesus? (John 4:27)
  - What was Jesus teaching His disciples in Samaria? (John 4:34)
5. When it came to the religious leaders, what was Jesus' warning to His disciples about some of the Pharisees? (Luke 12:1)
6. What did Jesus teach His disciples when He was challenged by the religious leaders for healing someone on the Sabbath (God's day of rest)? (Luke 13:10-17)
7. What was Jesus' attitude toward those who would abuse the Temple courts? (Luke 19:45, 46)
8. Knowing the people wanted Him to be their king and bring peace, what emotion did Jesus express when arriving at Jerusalem for His last Passover? (Luke 19:41, 42)

### **Jesus' Teaching on Being His Disciples**

As Jesus traveled through the cities and villages, He taught in the synagogues announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. (Matthew 9:35) *Emmanuel*, God with us, was being fulfilled in the life of Jesus.

9. Jesus' life was centered on God's commandments. When the religious leaders questioned Jesus as to which of God's commandments were most important, what was His answer? (Matthew 22:37-39)

10. From the following verses, what were some other lessons Jesus taught His disciples?
  - Matt. 20:25 - 27:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - John 13:1, 4, 5, 12 - 17:
  
11. What new command did Jesus give His disciples that would differentiate them from everyone else? (John 13:34, 35)
  
  
  
  
  
12. Jesus warned His disciples that life as a disciple of Jesus would not be easy. What encouragement did He give them? (John 16:33)
  
  
  
  
  
13. As the end of Jesus' life drew near, He told His disciples that He was going to be crucified. What encouragement did He give them about His returning to the Father? (John 14:1-3)
  
  
  
  
  
14. What message were His disciples to carry into the world about Jesus?
  - John 3:16, 17:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - John 14:6:
  
  
  
  
  
15. How would it be possible for these young disciples to carry on without Jesus? (Acts 1:8a)
  
  
  
  
  
16. Where were they to take this good news? (Acts 1:8b)

**Reflect**

17. As you reflect on the life of the twelve disciples of Jesus, did anything surprise you?

18. What did you find most encouraging?

**Putting Feet to the Life of a Disciple**

This week we learned that to be a disciple meant dedicating ones entire life to the rabbi. Disciples learned through watching, listening and doing what the rabbi did. As believers in Jesus as the Son, we too are called to be His disciples. We are to live as our Rabbi taught, through His Word, every moment of every day. Because we are unable to do this on our own, He has given us His Spirit to live with us and to guide us.

- Now it is time to put what we have learned into practice. For one day, practice the presence of Jesus in everything you do; talking, reading, watching TV, driving, etc. Force yourself to be aware that Jesus is right with you. Pray silently (carry on a conversation) throughout your day. You might want to set your cell phone to alarm every hour, tie a string around your finger, draw a cross on your hand, wear a rubber bracelet or some other way to remind yourself of Jesus throughout your day.

Learning to acknowledge the presence of God in our lives takes practice and is hard work, but, well worth it. As a disciple, it prepares us to be like Christ.

Jesus' disciples were not the outstanding students of their day, and yet Jesus saw in them the ability to become like Him. Young men that would bring honor to His name and that would carry on His ministry of bringing the Good News of God's salvation to all the world. As you read through the Gospels, The Twelve were sometimes an asset and sometimes a liability to Jesus. During their time with Him they never really understood what Jesus had come to do. But what is so encouraging to all disciples of Jesus is to watch the transformation that happened in their lives and happens in our own as well, when we spend time with Jesus. One of my greatest encouragements comes from watching these young men. After Jesus' death and resurrection, Peter and John were arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin (high court) in Jerusalem and questioned. This is what these religious leaders discovered: *"When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had **been with Jesus**."* (Acts 4:13)

- If you were arrested and questioned about your faith today, would people recognize that you too had been with Jesus?