

Jesus' Style of Authentic Discipleship

Purpose/Goal: The goal of this web site to bring clarity to what it means to be an adult disciple (talmid) of Christ and to help a church become an **Intentional Disciple Making (IDM)** church. Many others are also doing the same and I refer the reader to www.discipleship.org. This site is meant to compliment the work of others.

Why this Note: To understand what is true authentic discipleship for the present USA culture we must develop an understanding of Jesus' training stages and his "tool box". This understanding must reflect the Palestine Jewish culture of Jesus' day. This article is the first of a series dealing with the components of authentic discipleship and expected outcomes.

Introduction

In the first article we defined "Who is a Disciple (talmid) of Jesus". We define a disciple (talmid) of Jesus as anyone who is a "called born again believer". We start as infants and are meant to grow to become adult disciples that can develop disciple-makers for Jesus. This is a definition that applies for believers from the **Day of Pentecost forward**. We made one basic assumption: That the Bible is the inerrant Word of God (2nd Timothy 3:16-17).

We start as infant disciples and the process to become an adult disciple we call **discipleship**. Jesus was **very intentional** in his discipleship training of his Apostles/disciples. His disciples went through four stages (phases) of training but Jesus was not involved in the first stage. His training tools were very similar to those used by other Jewish rabbis in Israel at that time. The Bible indicates Jesus defined the starting point for discipleship and the outcome he expected of his Apostles/disciples after they were trained. He also promised them the Holy Spirit who would indwell them and fill them with the power needed to serve him.

To understand what is true authentic discipleship for the present USA culture we must develop an understanding of Jesus' training stages and his "tool box". This understanding must reflect the Palestine Jewish culture of Jesus' day. So, we will proceed in the following steps with several articles that will follow this article: (1) Jesus' training stages, (2) Stage one - "the basics", and (3) the religious qualities of Jesus' early followers.

Training Stages of Jesus' Apostles/Disciples

Discipleship or internship is a training process that was prominent in ancient societies. The process that has been used since ancient times is the **TMAA Process** - **T** for teach, **M** for model, **A** for act and **A** for accountability. Discipleship is not an exclusive Biblical term or concept. As an example, Plato disciplined Aristotle and Aristotle disciplined Alexander the Great long before New Testament times. Alexander is known for the Hellenization of most of the world he had conquered in his time which included Palestine and Israel. Today we use the words discipleship, discipling, 'make disciples' and other words for alignment with Jesus' command in Matthew 28:19-20 and these words are common in the religious USA media. The table below list the training stages of Jesus' Apostles/disciples as depicted in the four Gospels and Acts 1. The training stages are:

Jesus' Training Stages

The Training Of the 12 Apostles and Other Disciples							
Stage	Starts	Phase Stops at this Point	Duration	Comments	More Comments	Training Purpose	Location
Stage 1 Jesus had nothing to do with this stage of their Training!	At Birth	John 1:35-51	The Bible does not indicate ages of Apostles as they begin to follow Jesus	Meets future disciples/ Apostles - who begin to follow Him at JTB baptism site	Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, Unnamed (John), Barsabbas, Matthias+ Others	Training in the Basics	Done in Home and Synagogue School
Stage 2 - Come and See, Follow Me	John 1:35-51	Matt. 5:1-2, Mark 3:13-19, Luke 6:12-16, John 6:3	About 14-20 months	Many followed Jesus on a sporadic basis in Galilee . In Matt.5:18-22 He also calls James the brother of John	From the time of John the Baptist baptizing site to just before the Sermon on the Mount	Follow & Service	Traveling around Galilee, Passing through Samaria, Trips to Temple in Jerusalem
Stage 3A Come and Be with Me	Matt. 5:1-2, Mark 3:13-19, Luke 6:12-16, John 6:3	Matt26:17-19 Mark 14:12-16 Luke 22:2-13 John 13:1-20	About 18 months	Chooses 12 - Begins Intentional training of 12	With Him 24/7	Establishing A Kingdom of God Worldview	Walking throughout Israel
Stage 3B Follow Me - Abide in Me	Matt. 26:17-19 Mark 14:12-16 Luke 22:2-13 John 13:1-20	Matt.27:50 Mark 15:37 Luke 23:46 John 19:30	About 3 to 5 days - end of stage 3	Summary of His Training and Prophecy about coming Holy Spirit	Ended at Jesus last breathe on the Cross	Summary - Abide- Bear Lasting Fruit, Love Each Other	Upper Room
Stage 4 Abide in Me- Be my witnesses - Make disciples	Matt.28:1 Mark 16:1 Luke 23:47 John 19:31	Matt. 28:16-20 Mark 16:14-20 Luke 24: 50-53 John 21:24-25, Acts 1:11	40 days up to His Ascension	Validates He Has been Resurrected and Gives very specific commands	Great Command to His Church Matt.20:18-20 Mark 16:15-16 Luke 24: 44-49 John 17:18-19 Acts 1:8	Go make disciples - not converts	Various Places

Main Sources:(1) ESV Bible-2004 & 2016, (2) "*The Training of the Twelve*", Alexander Balmain Bruce, 4th Edition, Keats Publishing 1979 (originally published in 1871), (3), "The Lost Art of Disciple Making," Leroy, Eims Zondervan Publishing House, 1978, (4) "*The Disciple Making Church*" Bill Hull, Chosen Books, Baker Book House, 1990. (5) "*Discipleship Essentials*" Greg Ogden, expanded edition, Intervarsity Press, 2007. (6) "*Following The Master-A Biblical Theology of Discipleship*" Wilkins, Michael J., Zondervan Publishing House, A Division of HarperCollins Publisher, 1992.

Stage 1 covered their basic spiritual disciple training prior to following of Jesus. Some of the 12 Apostles began to follow Jesus at John the Baptist baptism site (see John chapter 1). ***Jesus had nothing to do with this Stage 1 of their training.*** Jesus probably went through this same training as his parents were very strict Jews. This covers the time from the disciple's birth until they began to follow Jesus. I call this the "**basics**" phase. This phase will be discussed in a later article regarding the Jewish education of young boys. This stage of discipleship training is the **cornerstone** of

becoming an adult disciple of Jesus but is seldom intentionally pursued by most churches. Dallas Willard (ref.1) and Richard J. Foster (ref.2) are well known for stressing this key stage of our spiritual life.

Stage 2 covered the time- about 14 to 20 months- from Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist to just prior to the Sermon on the Mount as shown in the attached table or what Jesus' called the "**Come and See or Follow Me**" phase. They followed Jesus on a sporadic basis in Galilee and some attended the celebration of Passover in Jerusalem with Him (John 2:13). Through his teaching and miracles of healing he validated in many that he was the promised Messiah. It could be called an evangelistic outreach period for his disciples and the nation Israel.

Stage 3 covered the time – about 18 to 24 months- from His choosing 12 Apostles just prior to the Sermon on the Mount to His Resurrection. Jesus called this '**come be with me**' phase. The 12 were with him full time. **This is the equivalent of the rabbi- talmid training methodology of Jesus' time.** Actually, there are two parts to this phase. **Phase 3A (intentional training)** which lasted many months while **the summary Phase 3B** lasted but 3 or 4 days as covered in John 13-17. During this stage Jesus was working to change their Jewish nationalistic worldview to a Kingdom of God worldview. This would be the equivalent of the disciples growing from an infant to an adult disciple as discussed in a previous article.

Stage 4 covered the time from His Resurrection to His Ascension or about 40 days. Prior to His crucifixion he urged them to "**Abide in me or Remain in me.**" So, this stage is the "**abide in me/remain in me**" phase. Jesus validated himself to his disciples as having been resurrected. They touch him, ate with him, and talked with him and knew he was resurrected or alive. Their belief or faith became solidified in Jesus. In obedience to Christ and enabled by the Spirit's power they initiated the church age and forever changed world history.

Application

- Have you been trained in **stage one** "the basics" and do you practice them? (See following articles after this for more details.)
- Does your church have training in "the basics"?

Verse to memorize: John 15:8 *"By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples."* (ESV)

Upcoming

- Stage one - "the basics"
- "Built-in" Virtues of Jesus' Disciples

References:

1) *"The Spirit of the Disciplines, Understanding How God Changes Lives"* By Dallas Willard, HarperSanFrancisco, 1991.

2) *"Celebration of Discipline, The Path to Spiritual Growth"* by Richard J. Foster, HarperSanFrancisco, 1978.

For comments or feedback send email to: **ChurchBMP@gmail.com**