

TWELVE MARKS OF DISCIPLESHIP

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1. **DISCIPLES ARE CALLED** - Luke 5:1-11 perfectly illustrates this. God always acts first! Jesus came to the fishermen and gave them an invitation. It was only after this invitation to discipleship that our choice matters. Jesus has called each of us. The next step is...
2. **DISCIPLES INTENTIONALLY RESPOND TO JESUS' CALL** - After we are called, then a disciple must respond positively to the call! If Peter had not dropped his nets and followed Jesus, he would not be a disciple. You can't follow, if you don't make a choice. Discipleship is never inherited or accidental!
3. **DISCIPLES LOVE** - This is a primary mark of a disciple. Love of God and love of others. Jesus says that others will know we are disciples by our love for one another. (John 13:35).
4. **DISCIPLES ARE FRUITFUL** - In fact, Jesus says that being fruitful **PROVES** that you are his disciple. *"By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciples"* - John 15:8.
5. **DISCIPLES ARE OBEDIENT** - Go a little farther in John 15 and you find in verse 14 - *"you are my friends if you do what I command"*. Notice, we can't be intimate with Jesus and be disobedient. It is a non-starter.
6. **DISCIPLES ARE TAUGHT** - In Scripture, we constantly find the disciples of Jesus learning from Him. They listen and then implement the teaching in their lives (or at least attempt to). We too have to follow this model. The life of a Christian disciple is one of lifelong learning.
7. **DISCIPLES FOLLOW** - The word, "disciple", means "follower". All of our life of discipleship starts with following Jesus. We must do as he did. Love as he loved. Choose what he chose. *"Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him"* - Luke 8:1
8. **DISCIPLES KEEP AN EYE ON HEAVEN** - The life we live now is not our final home. In fact, we are made to live with God forever in eternal bliss. Still, this heavenly home is determined by our decisions in this life. The prize of heaven is a gift we must keep our eyes on, so that we don't lose the eternal perspective of God.
9. **DISCIPLES CARRY CROSSES** - Discipleship isn't easy. Jesus puts it this way, *"If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."* - Luke 9:23. We should never forget that suffering is a part of discipleship. It isn't merely about feel-good emotions and good times.
10. **DISCIPLES SPEND TIME WITH JESUS IN PRAYER** - If we do what Jesus did, then we need to live in intimate relationship with God. *"He was praying in a certain place, and when he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples."* - Luke 11:1
11. **DISCIPLES LOVE AND SERVE GOD (AND OTHERS)** - Think of the many times the disciples were called to serve. Jesus commands his 12 to be the ones to serve the crowds at the breaking of the loaves and fishes, to heal the sick, to drive out demons, etc. The life of a disciple isn't about you!
12. **DISCIPLES MAKE OTHER DISCIPLES** - Ultimately, we need to do what Jesus did, which means to "make disciples". This was his final command and the one we cannot avoid personally.

The life of a disciple can be a challenge and one that we all need to grow in. How can you better follow our Lord today?