

Four Keys to Becoming a Disciple of Jesus Christ – Part 2

Acts 14:20-28

Introduction:

1. The word “*disciple*” is used three times in our text.
2. What is a disciple? Literally, it means “a learner; a pupil” (disciples of science, sports, art, aeronautics etc.). Disciples are those who have made themselves available for spiritual training and have devoted themselves to a lifetime of learning.
3. John 15:8 indicates that God is glorified when we become fruit-bearing disciples of Christ.
4. Just because someone claims to be a believer does not mean that he is a disciple of Christ.
5. We know a person is saved and becomes a child of God by simply placing his complete trust in Christ to save him (not by joining a church, getting baptized, good works, etc.). Romans 5:1 – **This** is how you become a child of God.
6. People become disciples of Christ by learning and growing in their relationship with Christ. Disciples want to grow and learn in their relationship with Christ.
7. This is what we want to focus on this morning. Let's focus on four keys to possessing this growing relationship with Christ - four keys to becoming a disciple of Christ.
8. If you are not saved, God wants to know you in a personal way and have a relationship with you. If you **are** saved, He wants you to have that close, growing relationship in Christ.

First, you must get established in the Word of God. vs. 21-22

1. After Paul gets stoned at Lystra, he and Barnabas travel to the city of Derbe and they did two things. vs. 20
 - They “*preached the gospel to that city*” (“*preached*” literally means “evangelized”). They were sharing Christ.
 - They “*taught many*” (the word “*taught*” comes from the same word meaning “discipled”). Maybe some did not want to learn and grow. But many did, and they submitted to biblical teaching and instruction!
 - Walk Through Bethlehem and outreach events are wonderful. But then discipleship must take place.
2. After this, they traveled back to the cities where they had led souls to Christ. “*They returned again...*”
 - Why would they take time to go back through these cities instead of going to new ones?
 - In verse 22a, “*confirming*” means “to strengthen in the faith.” cf. Acts 18:23
 - Paul was strengthening them in their faith.
3. What do we learn from this?
 - Evangelizing involves the salvation of souls.

- Discipling involves the strengthening of souls through God's Word (cf. Acts 18:11). We see a balance between these two - evangelizing and strengthening.
 - Delivering a child and raising a child are two different worlds. How awesome when people are saved, but...
4. Baby Christians must be fed so they can grow and mature in their faith (1 Peter 2:2; cf. Ephesians 4:14-15). God wants baby Christians to “grow up,” with the idea that they will one day be feeding themselves, digesting God’s Word, applying it to their lives, and teaching others.
- But at first, baby Christians **do** need somebody to feed them and get them rooted in the foundational truths of Scripture. It is a must. **Illustration:** A baby being fed with bottle - but at 5 years old, it isn’t cute any more!
 - At five months old, my boys couldn’t get up from the chair, go to the stove, warm up a bottle, and stick it in their mouths. But, they are good at going to the fridge and feeding themselves now!

Second, you need encouragement from those who are more mature in the Lord. vs. 22

1. Verse 22 says that Paul was “*exhorting them to continue in the faith.*”
2. Simply put, Paul was encouraging these believers to stay in a close relationship with Jesus Christ, even though they were sure to have problems and trials (not **the** Tribulation).
 - We are not appointed to that time of wrath, but we are appointed to afflictions. We are sure to have problems and trials. cf. 2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Thessalonians 3:3-4
 - **Illustration:** Child-rearing - Children are sure to shed tears, and you know that when you bring them into the world. As they grow up, the bumps and bruises get bigger.
 - It is the same way in the Christian life. Christians go through trials, shed tears, have times of sorrow and pain, go through physical problems and ailments, etc.
3. Every new Christian needs a more mature disciple of Christ to be there when the going gets tough - someone who has been through trials in the Christian life, and can explain that this is part of the Christian life.
 - **Illustration:** Paul and Timothy – It warms your heart as you read Paul’s letter to Timothy, and he calls him his “*dearly beloved son.*” He writes and says, “*How I long to see you being mindful of thy tears.*” I have heard about what you’re going through, and I want to see you that I might be filled with joy! Then he encourages him as a dad would his son. 2 Timothy 1:4, 6-7
4. A person will have a much more difficult time growing into a disciple of Christ if he only views other Christians from a distance. **Illustration:** Christ and His disciples – He lived with them, ate with them, they did ministry together, etc.
 - You impress lives from a distance, but you only impact them one on one. **Illustration:** Being in huge crowd at football game - I doubt if you will radically impact anyone's life (L.I.F.E. Groups are so vital to our church.

Jesus had a group, and you need a group. This is how growth and discipleship happens.)

- Biblical discipleship is sharing life with life. 2 Timothy 2:2, 3:10 (“*fully known*”)
- If you want to do something exciting, pour your life into a young fellow believer.
- “He was born a man, died a discipler, but his children live on.”
- I like 1 Timothy 5:1 (“*Rebuke not an elder...*”). Is there someone that was a spiritual father to you, a spiritual mother, a brother, a sister, etc.?
- You won’t find a spiritual father or brother or sister in a crowd, but you will find them in a L.I.F.E. Group. You will find a spiritual family. We need those people who can be there for us when the going gets tough. We need those who can give us godly advice and encouragement, and help stabilize us.