

PREPARING TO SERVE



What Does It Mean to be a Disciple of Jesus? In Matthew 28:18-20 we read: “**And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**”

The word disciple literally means “learner.” But in Matthew 28, Jesus isn’t just calling for a group of students from all nations. He is asking for “doers” who will observe all that he has commanded. While there are many possible definitions for becoming a disciple of Jesus, let us use this one:

“A disciple of Christ is one who has obeyed the Gospel, surrendered his whole life to God, and is daily striving to be like Jesus in all he says, thinks, does, and desires as he seeks to make new disciples for Christ.”

1. What does Luke 6:40 teach us about discipleship?

What Do You Want to Do for Christ?

We enter this study with the desire to serve God with our lives and to be fruitful in His work.

Some of us want to be effective communicators of the Gospel. Others want to work with youth and to positively impact their lives for Christ. Some want to plant new churches. We all want to share our faith effectively with those who are lost. Maybe you want to serve God, but just don’t know “what” you want to do (or should do).

- ▶ What do you want to do for God?
- ▶ What do you think you need to be better equipped to serve God?

**God Has Spoken In
His Word and His
Word Is Truth**



God Is Creator

Foundational Truths

The foundations upon which we build our lives as disciples of Christ begins with the conviction that God is Creator and He has spoken to us in his Word. We also recognise God and His Word to be authoritative.

God created all that is by His spoken Word. **Genesis 1:1** tells us, “***In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.***” The Bible says that God created out of nothing, with the spoken word, in six days. If God is not Creator, He is not God.

Isaiah 42:5 adds, “Thus says God, the Lord, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it.”

Hebrews 11:3 describes how God made all that is out of nothing. “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.”

God created because God wanted to create and when He created man, He shared his great love. We understand that God was under no compulsion to create. He did not create man because He lacked in any way. It is because of His grace God created man; in fact, this is His first act of grace towards man.

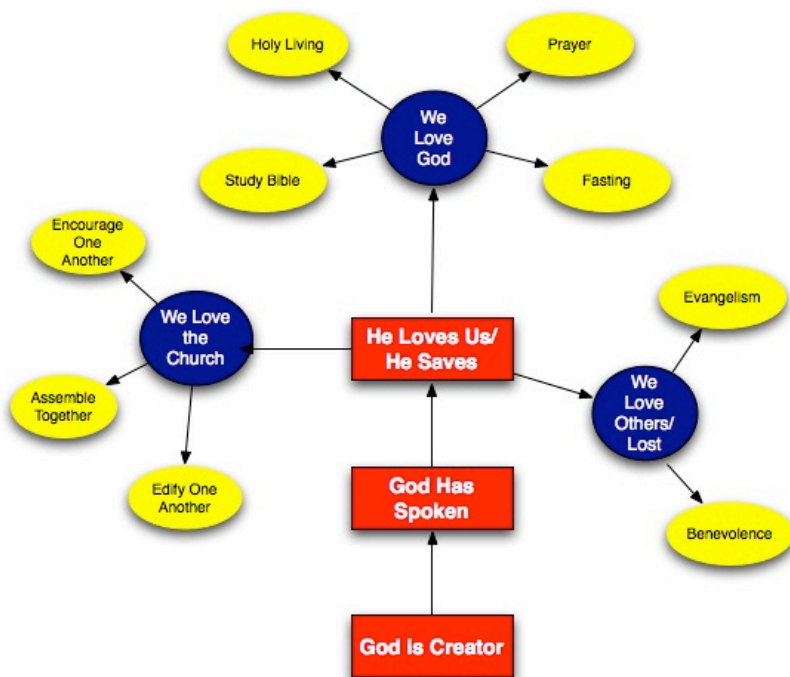
2. Why do we begin a study of discipleship with Creation?

3. What does John 1:1-3 and Colossians 1:15-16 tell us about the role of Christ in Creation?

4. What does creation have to do with authority?

God’s Word, the Bible claims that God “breathed out” or *inspired* the Bible writers (1 Peter 1:16-21; 2 Timothy 3:14-17). If this is true then every word contained in the Bible must be true because **Titus 1:2** tells us that God **never** lies and in **John 17:17** Jesus says, “...*your word is truth.*”

The foundations of God as Creator and His Word as truth allow us to build our faith on solid footing. The chart at the right graphically illustrates how all our lives and service to God rest on these foundations.





5. What does it mean to you, to say that God has spoken to us in His Word? What does the inspiration of Scripture have to do with authority?

If we believe the Bible to be true, then we must believe that God is the Creator. Since the Bible continuously makes that claim for itself. If God is our Creator then He has the inherent right to set the standards of our behaviour. The Bible alone explains how the world came into being and why we have sin and suffering. Likewise, the Bible alone explains how man can respond to God and find forgiveness.

The illustration on page 1, shows us that the foundations of our faith are that God is Creator and God has spoken to us in His Word. In His word He has: 1) Revealed Himself and His Will; 2) Instructed us about our problem of sin and the consequences it brings; 3) Described how He sent His Son to this world to die in our place. Our response to God's revelation is to love Him. Our love is expressed as we love God for who He is, as we love the Lord's church; and as we love people.

God's love compels us to love Him, the Church, and others. **1 John 4:19**, *"We love because he first loved us."* **Romans 5:8** adds, *"but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

The apostle Paul writes how this love motivates us in **2 Corinthians 5:14-15**, *"For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised."*

6. After looking at the chart on page 2, please name some additional ways in which we appropriately respond to the love of God?

7. What are some of the reasons why one loves another?

In preparation for the next lesson please answer as completely as possible the following questions.

1. How would you define the terms “disciple” and “discipleship?”

2. Memorise Matthew 28:18-20 and answer the following questions about this text.
 - a. What is the meaning of Matthew 28:18-20?

 - b. What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?

 - c. What method does Jesus give for the of making disciples?

3. Why did Jesus concentrate His efforts while on this earth on 12 men?

4. Has the church always been successful in “making disciples” and how has the church sometimes failed in this task?

5. List any questions that arise in your mind from a study of these verses.