

Discipleship Workshop

Reigniting the Heart of Discipleship in Your Church

Devotions

By

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Devotion 1

We have substituted innovation for obedience.

From denominational headlines to justifying our disobedience, discipleship and evangelism are often simply neglected. Not only neglected but omitted from our lives. It is so easy for people to buy into the idea that anything done with a heart to reach people is Great Commission obedience. It is so easy to fall prey to consumerism in the pew, choosing what you like and do not like about a church, choosing where you want to be, being taught and fed as an observer but never proclaiming the Gospel and mentoring others in the faith.

Today, Read Matthew 28:18-20. Work carefully through the passage, what is it saying? How are you obeying? What does Jesus tell you to do?

Have you fallen pray to innovation in ministry rather than obedience in ministry for Christ?

Are you growing in observing everything our Lord has commanded us? If you love Him, you will obey Him (John 14:15), when you fail you will repent (1 John 1:9). Who is your Timothy? Pray. Ask the Lord to show you who He wants you to disciple.

Devotion 2

Tradition is holding us from sincere, childlike obedience.

In Jesus' day, there were several religious factions among the Jews. Two of them you probably know of: the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Pharisees began during the Jewish Exile it seems, with a noble purpose of seeking to teach and hold on to God's Word. Over time, respected rabbis' (teachers) commentary and interpretive teachings became a religion in and of itself. Jesus often clashed with the legalistic Pharisees; and the Sadducees, also, who were essentially the "liberals," made up of elitists. The Sadducees did not believe in the supernatural and rejected parts of the Old Testament Scriptures. Both the Pharisees and Sadducees held to the teaching of men or traditions, rather than a heart of childlike-obedience to the Lord. And both groups resisted Jesus and sought His death.

Are there traditions you are holding on to?

Do you consider the Bible to be misunderstood or outdated today? Like the Sadducees, are there things in the Bible that you don't believe are true?

Do you believe in the inerrancy (truthfulness) and sufficiency (methodology) of the Scriptures?

Are you growing in childlike-obedience right now, during this season of your life?

We need not only to believe what the Bible says is doctrinally and theologically true but that the Bible is sufficient to tell us how to obey the Lord as well.

"Those who aren't following Jesus aren't His followers."¹ Such following demands more than liking.

¹ Jonathan Hayashi, *Ordinary Radicals: A Return to Christ-Centered Discipleship* (Houston, TX: Lucid Books 2018), 45.

Devotion 3

The Master Question:

Who do you serve? leads to the Ethical Question: How do we now live for Christ?

Study Matthew 5-7. This may take you more than one day. That is why this devotional set is not divided into days but into devotions. Take your time working through this one before moving on.

The Lordship question of the Gospel makes demands upon our morals, our worldview, our politics, our ethics—everything. The Lordship question determines the ethical question and demands that we live wholly for God’s will and nothing else.

Write down what you learn in studying Matthew 5-7. Take your time.

“There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!” — Abraham Kuyper

Devotion 4

Your View of Grace Matters

"Cheap grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves.

Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession, absolution with personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.

Costly grace is the treasure hidden in the field; for the sake of it a man will gladly go and sell all that he has. It is the pearl of great price to buy which the merchant will sell all his goods. It is the kingly rule of Christ, for whose sake a man will pluck out the eye which causes him to stumble; it is the call of Jesus Christ at which the disciple leaves his nets and follows him.

Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which must be asked for, the door at which a man must knock.

Such grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner. Above all it is costly because it cost God the life of his Son: "ye were bought at a price," and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us. Above all it is grace because God did not reckon his Son too dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered him up for us. Costly grace is the Incarnation of God.

Costly grace is the sanctuary of God; it has to be protected from the world, and not thrown to the dogs. It is therefore the living word, and not thrown to the dogs. It is therefore the living word, the Word of God, which he speaks as it pleases him. Costly grace confronts us as a gracious call to follow Jesus, it comes as a word of forgiveness to the broken spirit and the contrite heart. Grace is costly because it compels a man to submit to the yoke of Christ and follow him; it is grace because Jesus says: "My yoke is easy and my burden is light." - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, The Cost of Discipleship, pp. 44-45

Devotion 5

A Oft-forgotten Component of Discipleship

Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

James 5:16 (NKJV)

An often-forgotten component of discipleship is transparent confession. To follow Christ, we must be humble. We are called to seek His will and daily take up our cross in following Jesus. We will falter and ask for forgiveness. But to confess sin to another person is something we would rather not do. You need a fellow Believer that you can be honest with and confess your struggles.

Sin is powerful as long as it remains hidden. It loses much of its power when it is brought into the open. Now, I do not believe that Scripture is advising us to declare to everyone we meet and from the rooftops every struggle that we have. But the Bible calls us to confess our sin to another Believer. The Lord is the one who forgives us, we confess not in order to be forgiven but in order to experience healing.

We have looked at much together about the call to follow Jesus and the full-surrender that biblical discipleship entails. But we end now with a key component. We are called to individual surrender to Christ, to individually become disciples of Christ, to learn and grow and mentor others to help them grow. But we are not called to do all this alone. The Lord intended for the Disciples life to be part of the church. The church is a body. You cannot survive as a body-part disconnected from the body. You cannot live in isolation and worship privately only and be obedient to the Lord.

Transparency is risky. But it is freeing. It is also accountability. All of us have blindspots. As a disciple, who in your life will call you out? Who can you trust to confess your sin and know they will pray for and walk alongside you?