

# **Qualifications of a Discipleship - Who is a Disciple?**

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## **I. Use of the Word, “Disciple”**

A. It is broadly used in the New Testament to describe the followers of:

1. Moses

John 9:28 (KJV): “Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses’ disciples.”

2. The Pharisees

Matthew 22:16 (KJV): “And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man; for thou regardest not the person of men.”

3. John the Baptist

Matthew 9:14 (KJV): “Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?”

4. Jesus Christ

Matthew 10:1 (KJV): “And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.”

B. The word appears over 250 times in scripture.

## **II. Qualifications for Being a Disciple**

A. A learner

B. Born again

C. Loves God

D. Under Christ’s authority

E. Abides in the Word

- F. Loves the brethren
- G. Bears fruit
- H. Willing to forsake people
- I. Positively identified with Christ
- J. Willing to forsake possessions

### **III. Explanation of the qualifications of a disciple**

#### **A. A learner**

1. It is basically an attitude.
2. A learner is humble.

Romans 12:3 (Phillips): “As your spiritual teacher, I give this piece of advice to each one of you, don’t cherish exaggerated ideas of yourself or your importance, but try to have a sane estimate of your capabilities by the light of the faith that God has given to you all.”

3. A learner is teachable.

Proverbs 10:8 (Living): “The wise man is glad to be instructed, but a self-sufficient fool falls flat on his face.”

Proverbs 10:17 (Living): “Anyone willing to be corrected is on the pathway to life. Anyone refusing has lost his chance.”

Proverbs 12:1 (Williams): “A man who loves knowledge wants to be told when he is wrong. It is stupid to hate being corrected.”

The opposite is:

Proverbs 9:8 (Williams): “Never correct a conceited man - he will hate you for it. But if you correct a wise man, he will respect you.”

4. A learner is hungry.

Nehemiah 9:3 (Berkeley): “They stood in their places for a fourth part of the day while the book of the Lord their God was being read and for

another fourth part of it they made confession and worshipped the Lord their God.”

Proverbs 27:7 (RSV): “He who is sated loathes honey, but to one who is hungry, everything bitter is sweet.”

5. A learner doesn't know it all.

Romans 12:16 (L): “Work happily together: Don't try to act big! Don't try to get into the good graces of important people, but enjoy the company of ordinary folks and don't think you know it all.”

B. Born again

C. Loves God

Matthew 22:34-40 (KJV): “But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. The one of them, who was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

D. Under Christ's authority

Luke 6:40 (KJV): “The disciple is not above his master, but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.”

Matthew 8:5-10 (KJV): “And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

Galatians 5:19-21 (KJV): “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of the which I

tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Romans 3:23 (KJV): “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Acts 26:18 (KJV): “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in me.”

At conversion, God does two works within us:

1. He separates us from our sin nature.
2. He gives us a new nature.

Romans 6:1-4 (KJV): “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer in it? Know ye not that, as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death, that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Philippians 2:13 (KJV): “For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

#### E. Abides in the Word - *Abiding means obeying.*

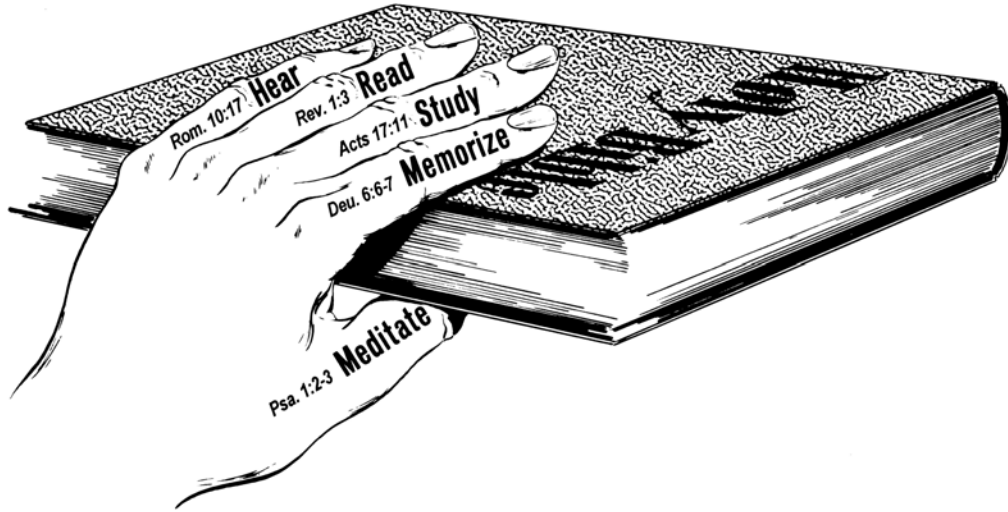
John 8:31, 32 (KJV): “Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

I Peter 2:2,3 (KJV): “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow by it, if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.”

There are four basic steps to abiding in the Word of God:

1. **Take it in** - Hear, Read, Study, Memorize
2. **Think it over** - Meditate
3. **Live it out** - Apply
4. **Pass it on** - Proclaim

## THE WORD HAND *Abiding in the Word of God*



**Hear** to be informed - Romans 10:17; Jeremiah 3:15

Hearing the Word from godly pastors and teachers provides us insight into other's study of the Scriptures as well as stimulating our own appetites for the Word.

**Read** to be healthy - Revelation 1:3; Deuteronomy 17:19

Reading the Bible gives us an overall picture of God's Word. Many find helpful a daily reading program which takes them systematically through the Bible.

**Study** to be intelligent - Acts 17:11; II Timothy 2:15

Studying the Scriptures leads us into personal discoveries of God's truths. Writing down these discoveries helps us organize and remember them better.

**Memorize** to be skillful - Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 7:1-3

Memorizing God's Word enables us to have it readily available for personal meditation, for witnessing to and helping others, and for overcoming temptations.

**Meditate** to be fruitful - Psalm 1:2-3; I Timothy 4:15

Meditating on God's Word, thinking of its meaning and application to our daily life, enables us to release its transforming power to continually work within us.

**Apply** to be obedient – Ezra 7:10; James 1:22

Application of the Word of God to our daily life is a continual process that enables us to obediently walk in close personal fellowship with Him.

**Proclaim** to be reproductive – Colossians 1:28-29; II Timothy 2:2

Our objective: To know, love and glorify God, to be used of Him to raise up qualified laborers in significant numbers, as fast as possible, to help fulfill the Great Commission.

1. Taking it in. How?

a. **Hearing** - Romans 10:17; Jeremiah 3:15

Romans 10:17 (KJV): “So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

b. **Reading** - Revelation 1:3; Deuteronomy 17:19

c. **Studying** - Acts 17:11; II Timothy 2:15

II Timothy 2:15 (KJV): “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

d. **Memorizing** - Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 7:1-3

2. Thinking it over by **Meditating** - Psalm 1:2-3; I Timothy 4:15

3. Living it out by **Applying** - Ezra 7:10; James 1:22

4. Passing it on by **Proclaiming** - Colossians 1:28-29; II Timothy 2:2

Questions we might ask ourselves to discover possible applications:

a. An example to follow

b. A command to obey

c. A sin to avoid

d. A promise to claim

e. A difficulty to explore

f. Something to pray over

g. New insights about God

Things we must believe in order to abide in the Word:

a. Recognize its authority.

Hebrews 4:12 (KJV): “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the

dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

II Timothy 3:16 (KJV): “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

II Timothy 3:17 (Phillips): “The scriptures are the comprehensive equipment of the man of God, and fit him fully for all branches of his work.”

b. Obey it.

Isaiah 66:2 (KJV): “For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.”

John 14:21 (KJV): “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”

Psalms 119:59, 60 (KJV): “I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.”

Results of abiding in the Word:

a. A progressively increasing knowledge and love for God.

Hosea 6:6 (L): “I don’t want your sacrifices - I want your love; I don’t want your offerings - I want you to know me.”

I John 2:3-5 (L): “And how can we be sure that we belong to him? By looking within ourselves. Are we really trying to do what he wants us to do? Someone may say, I am a Christian. I am on my way to heaven. I belong to Christ. But if he doesn’t do what Christ wants him to do, he is a liar. But those who do what Christ tells them to do will learn to love God more and more. That is the way - to know whether or not you are a Christian.”

b. Abiding in the Word is the key to multiplying.

Acts 6:7 (KJV): “And the word of God increased and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly.”

c. The key to knowing the enemy.

II Corinthians 2:11 (KJV): “Lest Satan should get an advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

II Corinthians 11:3 (KJV): “But I fear lest by any means as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

F. A disciple loves the brethren.

John 13:34, 35 (KJV): “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another; by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

1. A servant heart.

Mark 10:45 (KJV) : “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Luke 22:27 (KJV): “For which is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth.”

II Corinthians 4:5 (KJV): “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

Isaiah 43:10 (KJV) : “Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am He; before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.”

2. A unifying spirit.

Ephesians 4:1-3 (Phillips): “As the Lord’s prisoner, then, I beg you to live lives worthy of your high calling. Accept life with humility and patience, generously making allowances for each other because you love each other. Make it your aim to be at one in the Spirit, and you be bound together in peace.”

II Corinthians 12:25 (F. F. Bruce Paraphrase)

John 17



### 3. Positive action

I John 3: 10 (KJV): “In this the children of God manifest and the children of the devil. Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”

### 4. Fulfills God’s law

Romans 13:10 (L): “Love does no wrong to anyone. That’s why it fully satisfies all of God’s requirements. It is the only law you need.”

I Timothy 1:5 (20th Century N.T.): “The object of all instruction is to call forth that love which comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience and a sincere faith.”

### I Corinthians 13

I John 3:18 (Phillips): “My children, let us love not merely in theory or in words - let us love in sincerity and in practice!”

## G. Bears fruit

John 15:8 (KJV): “In this is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

What do we mean by “bearing fruit”?

1. The outward manifestation of God’s inner working.
2. The invisible working of God in a man’s life gradually producing God-like character.

#### a. The outward manifestations:

##### 1. Good works

Matthew 3:2, 8 (bluest): “Be having a change of mind which issues in regret and a change of conduct. Produce therefore fruit weighing as much as the repentance you profess.”

##### 2. People

John 4:36 (KJV): “And he that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.”

Proverbs 11:30 (Amplified): “The fruit of the uncompromisingly righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise captures human lives for God as a fisher of men: He gathers and receives them for eternity.”

### 3. Giving

Romans 15:25-28 (KJV): “But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints who are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them, verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. When, therefore, I have performed this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.”

II Corinthians 9:10 (Phillips): “He who gives seed to the sower and turns that seed into bread to eat will give you the seed of generosity to sow and for harvest the satisfying bread of good deeds done.”

b. The God-like character is found in Galatians 5:22, 23.

#### 1. Love

Matthew 4:8-10 (KJV): “Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceedingly high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

#### 2. Joy

Philippians 4:4 (KJV): “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say rejoice.”

Philippians 4:11 (20th Century New Testament)

Nehemiah 8:10 (KJV): “Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared. For this day is holy unto our Lord. Neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Joy is a response to the situations of life which is really helped by basically believing four things:

a. God is sovereign.

Daniel 4:35

Isaiah 14:24

Job 23:12, 13

b. He knows what is going on.

Hebrews 4 :13

Proverbs 15: 3

c. He is all-powerful.

d. He loves you.

### 3. Peace

Psalm 112:7 (L): “He does not fear bad news nor live in dread of what may happen for he is settled in his mind that Jehovah will take care of him.”

Isaiah 26:3 (KJV): “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee because he trusteth in Thee.”

Philippians 4:6, 7 (KJV): “Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Psalm 119:165 (KJV): “Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.”

### 4. Longsuffering

### 5. Gentleness

Psalm 18:35 (KJV): “Thou hast also given me the shield of salvation; and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.”

## 6. Goodness

Ephesians 5: 9, 10 (20th Century New Testament): “For the outcome of life in the light may be seen in every form of goodness, righteousness and sincerity, always trying to find out what is pleasing to the Lord.”

## 7. Faith

Hebrews 11:6 (KJV): “But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

### a. Three aspects of faith: past, present, future.

II Corinthians 1:10 (KJV): “Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.”

### b. Growing in faith.

I Thessalonians 3:5 (NAS): “For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the temptor might have tempted you, and our labor should be in vain.”

I Thessalonians 1:2,3 (P): “We are always thankful to God as we pray for you all, for we never forget that your faith has meant solid achievement, your love has meant hard work, and the hope that you have in the Lord Jesus Christ means sheer dogged endurance in the life that you live before God, the Father of us all.”

### c. Produces a positive outlook.

Philippians 4:8 (KJVJ): “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

Philippians 2:5 (Phillips): “Let Christ Himself be your example as to what your attitude should be.”

### d. Prayer.

Luke 18:1 (KJV): “And he spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”

e. How to grow in faith:

1. The Word

Romans 10:17 (KJV)

“So, then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

Romans 15:4 (Phillips): “For all those words which were written long ago are meant to teach us today; so that we may be encouraged to endure and to go on hoping in our own time.”

2. Praising God.

Romans 4:20 (KJV)

“. . . yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God.”

3. Exercise.

8. Meekness.

This is strength under control.

9. Temperance (Self-control).

H. Forsaking people.

Luke 14:26 (KJV): “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and his mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.”

Matthew 6:33 (KJV): “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”

I. Positively identified with Christ.

Luke 14:27 (KJV): “And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.”

Luke 9:23 (KJV): “And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”

Galatians 5:11 (KJV): “And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offense of the Cross ceased.”

I Corinthians 1:18 (KJV): “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.”

#### J. Forsaking possessions.

Luke 14:33 (KJV): “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple.”

Luke 12:15 (KJV): “And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a mans life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”

Mark 4:19 (KJV): “And the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches and the lusts of other things entering in choke the Word and it becometh unfruitful.”

Many relationships with other people are not simply a teacher-pupil relationship but one of mutual sharing and becoming.

Proverbs 27:17 (KJV): “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”

Joel 2:25 (KJV): “And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer worm, my great army which I sent among you.”