

Marks of a Disciple

***Main Point:** The primary purpose of the Gospel is to make disciples not to save from hell. *Illustration:* It would be like giving someone an iPhone. They open the gift and say, “you got me a flashlight! Wow! I don’t have to be afraid of the dark anymore.”

*The gift of salvation, by way of the Gospel is so much more than avoiding hell.

The primary purpose of the Gospel is to make disciples. In order for the Gospel to make disciples it must be the “true Gospel” and if it is the true Gospel it will be powerful. Romans 1:16 *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.”*

There are Five Truths in regard to the Gospel and its making of disciples.

1. The Gospel presented and received must be authentic.

I brought a message recently about how the Gospel must be presented and received. In EE there is a section called the “Clarification of Commitment.” Would you like to receive the gift of eternal life? If yes, let’s clarify the decision you are making:

- a. Transfer your trust to what Jesus has done for you on the cross.
- b. Receive the resurrected and living Christ. John 1:11-12; Romans 10:9-10
- c. Receive Christ as your Savior. Revelation 3:20 (KJV) *“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”*
- d. Receive Christ as your LORD. Romans 10:9 *“Jesus is LORD.”*
- e. Repent – To repent means a change of direction. It means turning from the sin that has separated you from God and seeking to live in righteousness before God.

You will never be perfect, but the desire of a disciple will be to please His Lord. Acts 2:38 (NIV) Peter replied, *“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”*

*This clarification is the essence of what it means to receive the gift of eternal life.

These five things cannot be negotiated away by the presenter of the Gospel. If they are, the Gospel ceases to be the Gospel.

***Important Point** – Salvation is not some subjective event that we must manipulate to bring about eternal life. Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world is a divine directive that we cannot mess up by some miscalculation. Those God draws will come to faith and will become His people.

***Important Point** – The watered down Gospel does not produce babes in Christ, but still born “Christians” who will eventually fall by the wayside. We will examine that in more detail next week. The sower and the soil.

The Result of negotiating the Gospel is 2 Timothy 3:5 *“having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.”* These are people who identify totally with the world in their mind and heart. They want nothing to do with the things of God. They would be totally out of place in heaven. They desire to rule their own lives – which is what causes them to choose eternity without God and matches how they have lived their lives.

2. A Disciple will show signs of life for the things of God.

* 1 Peter 2:2 *“Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. Cry out for this nourishment.”* There will be a desire to know more about the things of God. Matthew 28:20 *“... and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”*

* Spiritual infants, like physical infants, will need care. They will need to be taught and disciple. * New parents fear that their little ones will stop breathing so they continually check on them and worry over them. But babies are stronger than you could ever imagine. The same is true for those whom God brings to life in Christ. They need care, but they will survive and continue to grow in their new life in Christ.

3. A Disciple will desire to obey their LORD.

* *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* Matthew 28:19

A Disciple will follow Christ and His commands. I try to make this truth clear. A person I lead to Christ is not obligated to follow my commands for their life, but they are to be committed to following the commands that Christ has given them.

They will seek to know what the purpose of their life is in Christ. What does the Lord desire of them?

4. A Disciple will mature in their walk with Christ and will ultimately reproduce what God has done in their life.

Each person who has come to faith in Christ and commits to grow in Him should desire to reproduce themselves. The “go” in the great commission is a universal command to every true disciple. Does it mean you will, by direct action, lead someone to Christ? It can, but the truth is that each disciple is called to share their faith with others in so many ways. The work of reproduction is a kingdom thing. Some plant, some water but God gives the increase. Erén loves to water!

5. A Disciple will produce “a long obedience in the same direction.” True disciples are not a “flash in the pan!”

Eugene Peterson wrote a book entitled, “A Long Obedience in the Same Direction” In this book is takes an in-depth look and the Psalms of Accent. Psalm 120 -134.

His title is taken from a statement made by Fredrick Nietzsche, “God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?”

"The essential thing in 'heaven and earth' is that there should be a long obedience in the same direction; there results, and has always resulted in the long run, something which has made life worth living." -Friedrich Nietzsche Peterson said he would suppose that Nietzsche would not have appreciated his key statement be used in regard to being faithful to God. But that “long obedience” will be true of those who become disciples of Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 4:10 “ ... or Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica.” 2 Timothy 1:13-14, “Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.”

Application: We are called to be disciples and to make disciples. How do you see yourself? We are tempted to make our identity our job, or our family. The truth is that our identity must be our disciple position in Christ. When we truly follow Christ, live as a disciple, everything else will fall in place.