

Preface

I confess that reading the Apostle Paul's letters to troubled churches seems to be easier to handle in my devotional life; I often look pretty spiritual when I read 1 Corinthians! However, when I read Jesus' teachings, I am reminded that He primarily taught the Disciples who were already more committed to the life of faith. Sure, they made plenty of mistakes and said unseemly, untimely things often—but they were committed. When I read Jesus' teachings, I feel that I have not even gotten a good start in my walk toward Him. I feel like one of the stumbling Disciples.

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Jesus was obviously intentional in all He did while walking on this earth in flesh and blood. The focus of this book is to be a primer of what Jesus taught His Disciples as He mentored them to think, teach, and work like He did. Following after the Disciples, each Christian is supposed to grow in their understanding of the Lord's ways and respond to life the way He did. This takes quality time (devotion) and consistent commitment to deeply understand what it means to be a committed follower of the Lord, to seriously apply what we learn, and then in turn to teach others what it is to be a committed follower.

Many Christians know that Jesus' last command to His Disciples, recorded in the Book of Matthew, was The Great Commission. It's in the continuation of the Great Commission that the Church gets its mandate to be a disciple and to disciple others. The main point of the Commission is taken from the verb "make." The exact procedure that the Twelve Disciples experienced through Jesus' ministry was to be repeated for others. That is, the Disciples were to

accomplish “the making” as they interacted with others (the “go” in the Great Commission), as they baptized people, and as they taught *all of the very same things* that Jesus taught during His earthly ministry. Jesus instructed them to repeat the ministry *exactly* as the Disciples had experienced. Thus, there is an exact way of discipleship.

What were the Disciples to teach? Everything. Many Christians are missing a keyword in the Great Commission—“everything.” He commanded a purposeful thoroughness in the teaching. Much “discipleship” material that has been written is not thorough. Many Bible study guides are noticeably deficient in the hardest things Jesus taught on (e.g., die to live, carry your cross, suffering, the extreme and radical following of Christ above all other relationships and pursuits). When an author writes about carrying a cross, that author must come face to face with his own mind, heart and life. “Am I carrying my cross?” he must ask. “Since suffering is an honor, do I avoid it at all costs?” he must continue.

What to Expect

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In this book, one will find guided study questions to selected Bible passages. If you are a brand new Christian and you have never interacted with the Bible before, I recommend you start with a wonderful little Bible study by NavPress, *Growing in Christ*.

The comments and explanations to the principles that follow in the book are not exhaustive; for the Word of God is infinitely profound. Instead these words are intended to be starting places for one’s self-examination and depth of commitment to Jesus, The Way of Discipleship. Also, I hope it adds some insight as to what to expect in life due to one’s relationship with God as well.

The first part of the book deals with the foundations of the faith. The middle addresses sins that have a tendency to be a part of our lives and therefore, keep us from being fully committed to Jesus. The third part of the book will challenge any Christian to follow Christ to the highest degree.

May you maximize the potential that is yours in Christ!