

THE RED LETTER LECTURES

NOTES

THE PATH OF DISCIPLESHIP

I. Introduction

- A. The New Testament is a book about disciples, by disciples, and for disciples of Jesus Christ.¹
- B. A disciple is a consistent, life long follower of Jesus Christ whose life is progressively being transformed into the image of Christ. See *2 Cor. 3:18*.
- C. A disciple joyfully walks with Christ, is constantly being informed by Scriptures, by prayer, by the Holy Spirit and other believers, with the chief end of glorifying God.²

II. The Great Commission from Matthew's Gospel:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." — Matthew 28:18-20

A. *All authority in heaven and earth . . .*

1. All (pas) includes the idea of oneness, a totality or the whole. All means all.
2. The word for authority is exousia: Ex (out of) + ousia (being).
3. Refers to something that belongs to someone as part of their substance, nature or essence. Inherent.
4. The power of one whose will and commands must be obeyed by others.³

At its core, discipleship is exclusive attachment to the person of Christ.
— James Montgomery Boice

¹ Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission*.

2 Cor. 3:18: And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

² Dr. Martin Newell, Cross Global Link

³ W.E. Vine, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, p. 45.

5. The first absolute that Jesus sets forth for the early church was to establish His all encompassing power and authority.
6. The authority of His word is to be the measurement for all that we do.

B. *Therefore GO . . .*

1. Lit., "having gone your way."
2. To transport oneself, to go from one place to another. Implying motion from the place where one is, meaning to pass on, go away, depart. ⁴
3. Imperative Command. ⁵

C. *MAKE DISCIPLES . . .*

1. Imperative Command.
2. To instruct with the purpose of making a disciple. A disciple is one who is a learner, a student but with one important distinction. A disciple accepts the instruction given to him and makes it his rule of conduct. See *Lk. 14:26-27*.
 - a. The word "disciple(s)" occurs 282 times in the NT—by far the most common designation of a follower of Jesus.
 - b. "Believer(s)" occurs 26 times.
 - c. "Christian(s)" occurs only 3 times.
 - d. "Convert(s)" to Christianity occurs only 3 times.
 - e. "Saint(s)" is used 45 times but only outside of the Gospels and Acts. Why?
3. The mandate to make future disciples was placed in the hands of His current disciples.
4. Question: What is the most common designation for people who have given their hearts to the

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⁴ Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, p. 1199.

⁵ For a listing of all of the Imperative Commands in the gospels, see Peter Wittstock, *Hear Him!*

Imperative Command Defined

A verb form that expresses action which is to be realized by the exercise of the will of one person upon that of another. (*Summers, Essentials of New Testament Greek*, p. 112). In this case, the expressed will of Jesus upon ours.

Where one will makes a direct, positive appeal to another the imperative finds its most characteristic use. The degree of authority involved is in the command . . . , Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p.175.

An imperative command makes a demand upon the will of the hearer/reader to obey the command.

Everything Jesus taught and spoke is of absolute importance to the believer. However, Jesus emphasized and placed more importance and emphasis on certain things than He did on others. This was accomplished by use of Imperative Commands. They follow the normal sentence structure of subject, verb and object of the command.

Lk. 14:26-27: "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."

Lord and have chosen to follow and learn from Him? See Acts 14:21-22.

D. *baptizing them . . .*

1. Baptism is an ongoing and outward sign of the beginning of the discipleship process.
 - a. From Gk. "bapto" meaning, "to dip, immerse, submerge."
2. Baptism identifies the believer with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. See Col. 2:9-12.

E. *teaching them to obey . . .*

1. Lit., "continually teaching them."
2. Teaching obedience to all of His commands.
3. To obey means to keep an eye on something. To watch and hence guard and keep.

F. *everything that I have commanded . . .*

1. Something that is ordered, enjoined, charged to do something.
2. Where do we specifically find His commands? How do we identify them?
 - a. As pointed out they are grammatically called Imperative Commands or simply Imperatives.
 - b. These commands will be pointed out by CAPITAL LETTERS in the text.
 - c. Our study will find the Imperatives, always using the words of Jesus. We will look for the object of His commands to identify, "*everything that I have commanded you.*"
 - d. That is the goal of this foundational study in discipleship.

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Acts 14:21-22: They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

Col. 2:9-12: For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

Broad areas of the world have been "Christianized" but not discipled. The best place that disciples are made is in the context of the local church.
— Dr. Marvin Newell

G. SURELY . . .

1. Lit., "and look!"
2. An Imperative Command.
3. Calls attention to something external, outside of ourselves.
4. Who is the object of our looking and beholding?

II. Summary of The Path to Discipleship

- A. **Go** into the world around us to share the gospel.
- B. **Make disciples** (enrolling people as Christ's students after sharing the Gospel).
- C. **Baptizing** those who believe (a public display of their new relationship with Christ).
- D. **Teaching them to obey** His commandments.
 1. From baptism to maturity.
- E. Why is it so important that we know and obey our Lord's commands? See *Jn. 14:21, 15:10-11; 1 Jn. 5:2-4; 2 Jn. 1:6; Lk. 6:46; Mt. 7:21-23.*

III. Summary of Imperatives in this section of study:

- A. **GO**, Lit., "having gone your way."
- B. **MAKE DISCIPLES.**
- C. **SURELY**, Lit., "look."

IV. Next Stop

- A. The Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7.
 1. It is the largest block of Jesus' teaching to His disciples in the gospels.
 2. Over 1/3 of all of His commands are found in this one teaching from the Mount of Beatitudes!

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The soul of the believer knows that when we believe we will obey and when we obey we believe. If we believe but do not obey, the believer is laid open to the danger of cheap grace. If we obey but don't believe, we are laid open to the danger of salvation through works. — Shepherd's Notes, *Bonhoeffer's Cost of Discipleship*, p. 20.

Jn. 14:21: "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

Jn 15:10-11: "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

1 Jn. 5:2-4: This is how we know that we love the children God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

2 Jn. 1:6: And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.

Lk. 6:46: "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

Mt. 7:21-23: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

