

# Real Discipleship

It is important to ask “What is a real Christian?” Often we say that a real Christian is simply a “disciple”; but what is a real disciple? Our text today wonderfully answers this question.

## John 1:35-42

**35** The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, **36** and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” **37** The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. **38** Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, “What are you seeking?” And they said to him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?” **39** He said to them, “Come and you will see.” So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. **40** One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. **41** He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). **42** He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John. You shall be called Cephas” (which means Peter).

Let us make some observations from this text about genuine discipleship:

### I. Discipleship is sparked by hearing the simple message of Christ (vv. 35-36).

Andrew and the other disciples began to follow Jesus simply because they heard the message from John the Baptist, “Behold the Lamb of God!” Preaching is important! Notice that John’s preaching was not overly creative. In fact, it was repetitive (see vs. 29); but it was Christ-centered and it was cross-centered. Let us never forget the power of this message to move us toward faith in Jesus Christ.

### II. Discipleship begins when we genuinely seek Jesus (vs. 37).

They heard and *followed*. The word “followed” is normally simply a word for genuine discipleship, but it can simply denote walking after somebody. In this case, we know that it ultimately leads to genuine discipleship, because of what happens next.

### III. Discipleship flourishes only when we abide in Jesus Christ (vv. 38-39).

Many will follow Jesus, but only some will answer His invitation. Notice that He asks them this profound question: “What are you seeking?” Just as God did in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8), He continually searches for us, even when we hide. Jesus continually challenges every one of us who go to worship, join a church, hang out with other Christians, asking us what we really want out of life. Their answer is a good one:

- a) They call him “Rabbi.” When we are serious in our discipleship, Jesus becomes the teacher, we the students.
- b) They abide with Him. The word “staying,” is the same Greek word for “remaining” or “abiding.” This concept obviously becomes very important to the reader in John 15, but here John is showing that real discipleship leads to intimate fellowship with Jesus Christ. Scot McKnight, a New Testament professor, puts it this way, “Those who aren’t following Jesus aren’t His followers. It’s that simple. Followers follow, and those who don’t follow aren’t followers.”

### IV. Discipleship multiplies when we boast of Christ (vv. 40-42a).

Notice that just as Andrew found Jesus, he also found his brother, Simon, to share with him the good news. This is integral to genuine discipleship. We want to share our discovery of Christ with those we love the most. (See, for example, Mark 5:19-20). Notice also that Andrew did not *send* Simon to meet Jesus, but rather *brought* him to Jesus.

**V. Discipleship is sealed when Jesus names us (vs. 42b).**

In order to name someone, we must have authority over them (note that Adam names all the animals in Genesis 2). Here Jesus names Simon and gives him a new name, "Peter," which means "rock." Anyone who knows Peter from the accounts in the gospels knows that he is, by nature, anything but a rock! But when Jesus names us, He transforms us. As one scholar said about this verse, some people think that Jesus' first miracle in John's gospel is found in chapter two when He changes water to wine, but the real first miracle is here when he changes Simon to Peter. He does the same for all of those who come to Him!

**Discussion Questions**

1. What is it about the simple Gospel message that compels us to start following Jesus? Why does the Gospel not have the same effect on everybody who hears it?
2. What happens to us when we hear and agree with the Gospel message, but do not act upon it?
3. How do we abide/stay/remain with Christ?
4. Why is abiding in Christ essential to genuine discipleship?
5. What should we learn from Andrew's behavior in verses 40-42?
6. What did it mean for Jesus to rename Simon? What does it mean for Him to rename us?

**Going Deeper**

1. In what ways does your Christian discipleship need to become more genuine?
2. How can your discipleship multiply and be more "contagious"?