

## LESSON ONE THE CALLING

All Jews were to make an annual pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover Feast and Jesus' family was no exception. But as Mary and Joseph began their return trip home, they soon discovered their adolescent son wasn't among their group and hurried back only to find He had returned to the Temple. It's in this setting that Jesus speaks His first recorded words found in Luke 2:49, "*...I must be about My Father's business.*"

We read no more of Jesus until Luke 3:21 where we find Him coming from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the Baptist. It was at Jesus' baptism that God sent His Spirit in the likeness of a dove that rested upon Him and declared, "*This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*" (Matthew 3:17). This symbolically showed to all those present that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. John's prophetic statement regarding Jesus, "*Behold, The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*", (John 1:29) was truly fulfilled as Jesus began His public ministry. It was at this time that Jesus selected and called His disciples to come and follow Him.

Over two thousand years have passed since Jesus and His disciples lived and ministered, but He continues to seek out those who will answer the call to discipleship. And so begins our own personal journey to discover some key elements about what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

### **Day One – The Called**

Read Matthew 4:18-22

If you were going to seek out disciples, where might you begin? Jesus began with a walk alongside the Sea of Galilee.

1. Who are the first four men called by Jesus according to verses 18 and 21-22?

2. What do you learn about them?

a. Based on only their occupation, what kind of conclusions can you make about them?

3. It is recorded that Jesus specifically told Peter and Andrew, "*Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.*" (Matthew 4:18-19) What do you think Jesus meant by this statement? How do you think this statement might have helped these particular men understand the purpose of His call for their lives?

a. In what ways could being a "fisher of men" also play an active part in your own Christian walk?

4. According to verse 20, how did the brothers, Peter and Andrew, respond to Jesus' call?

a. Additionally, who did the brothers, James and John, leave behind according to verse 22?

b. What kind of consequences could this have had on their lives?

c. Put yourself in their sandals and share how you think you might have responded.

d. In your current life situations, when you hear the Spirit leading you, do you immediately respond as the disciples did or is there hesitation in your obedience? Explain.

*From the very beginning we see that following Jesus would become the main priority in the disciples' lives, which is the essence of discipleship.*

## Day Two – The Useable

Jesus went on to ultimately choose 12 men that He would train, mentor and instruct in His ways and who would become His loyal followers.

1. Read Matthew 10:2-4 along with Mark 3:16-19 to learn their names and any of their background information. Complete the chart below. Note: You may or may not find details on all of them.

Disciple's name	Details given about him

a. Overall, how would you describe the group of men that Jesus called?

It is interesting to note the type of people that Jesus did not choose: those who were wealthy, the ones with power and authority, or those who were well known.

b. If you were looking for twelve qualified people to do something of great magnitude, would you have chosen these men? Why or why not?

2. Based on what you learned of the disciples as a group, are you any different than these men? Write your thoughts below.

3. How did Jesus know who to pick to be His twelve disciples? Luke 6:12-13 teaches us a very important lesson that we need to adhere to as well. Write down what you learn.

a. How should this relate to our everyday lives regarding decision making and knowing the will of God?

## Day Three — The Disciple

Read John 1:43-51

1. Both Philip and Nathanael responded to Jesus with profound statements. What does Philip declare about Jesus in verse 45?

2. Who does Nathanael say Jesus is according to verse 49?

a. Explain how this corresponds to John the Baptist's declaration in John 1:29-34.

3. Both Philip and Nathanael's faith-filled statements concerning Jesus were grounded in their knowledge of the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. How do you think this would have impacted their decision to follow Him?

a. What about you? When you are confronted with a choice to follow Jesus or to go your own way, what do you base your decision upon? Please explain.

*Note: If knowledge of the Scripture is new to you or you haven't studied much, please know that it's never too late to start! Read your Bible daily, especially the four gospels, and learn all you can about our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.*

## Day Four – The Walk

As Jesus began His earthly ministry, He called specific men to come alongside Him. Even though each responded positively by following Him, they had no real idea as to what this new relationship would be like. They also had no idea what would be required of them, where they would travel to as they followed Him, or even how long their commitment would last. These men were going to have to learn what it meant to be a true disciple and follower of Christ, just like we must do.

1. To help you gain a better understanding of what the word disciple actually means, use a dictionary to define it. For the most accurate definition, use the online version of Webster's 1828 Dictionary or a Greek dictionary such as Vine's Dictionary of the New Testament.

2. After reading this definition, do these characteristics describe you as a follower of Christ? If so, in what ways?

a. In what ways might you need to become a more intentional student of your Master?

3. There is a cost in following the Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke 14:26-33. Record the three "cannot" statements that Jesus makes regarding discipleship and share your thoughts on each.

Verse 26:

Verse 27:

Verse 33:

*Note: To understand the startling statement made by Jesus in Luke 14:26, we need to understand what the word **hate** means. Hate in the Greek language means preference for one thing over another by expressing either aversion from or disregard for the claims of that person or thing above those of another. So, for us to hate our family requires a commitment and faithfulness to Jesus in a way that shows He is number One in our life, even above our earthly relationships.*

4. Evaluate yourself by the threefold test laid out in the above verses. Do you consider yourself to be a disciple? Why or why not?

a. What needs to change based on the above?

5. Read John 21:20-22 and consider the following: Followers of Jesus Christ are to have but one focus - pleasing Him who called us. Sadly, we have the tendency to look at others and become jealous and complain, just as Peter did. What does Peter ask of Jesus in verse 21? What lesson was the Lord was teaching him?

a. How do you think this might apply to us today?



6. As you recall the definition of disciple, you should be able to see there is a difference between being a true disciple and one who just says they are a Christian and living according to their own ways. Look up the following verses in the chart below to help you understand the difference.

	True Disciple	Claims to be a Christian
1 Corinthians 3:1-3		
Ephesians 4:14, 20-24		
Hebrews 5:12-6:1		
1 John 2:3-6		

a. Write your own conclusions about the difference between a disciple and one who claims to be a Christian.

b. Based on your conclusions, do you consider yourself to be on the right path in following Him in the ways of discipleship? Why or why not?

7. Take some time to prayerfully journal your answers to the following questions.

In the three years of Jesus' ministry, the twelve disciples lived intimately with Jesus, witnessed His amazing works, constantly being instructed by Him, as they were molded into the strong leaders of the faith that we read about today. How about you? Are you willing to look closely at His life and the way He ministered to others so that you might be instructed just as they were?

Are you willing to be a diligent student of His Word and obediently follow Him?

Are you willing to be molded into the disciple He desires you to be?

8. If you answered affirmatively to all three, well done! Choose one of the above statements to prayerfully focus on this next week. In what areas do you need to surrender or become more active to make this a reality in your daily life? Write a prayer below and make it a commitment.

*“We never become disciples in crowds or even in twos;  
discipleship is always a personal matter.”*  
Oswald Chambers



