

STRENGTHENING YOUR GRIP

Strengthening Your Grip on Discipleship

Matthew 28:16–20; Mark 3:13–14; Luke 14:25–33



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Time for a pop quiz. What is a disciple?

- a. Someone who has completed a ten-week Bible study course
- b. A Christian leader
- c. A knowledgeable Christian
- d. A zealous Christian
- e. A Christian who listens to spiritual CDs

Answer? None of the above. Surprised? Don't be! Never has a word been so overused yet so misunderstood. Although the topic of discipleship has been overworked, it is an under-applied concept. We all have probably heard a lot about discipleship. But if the truth were known, most of us still are not discipling others or being disciplined ourselves. Most of us are still spectators when it comes to ministry. That is not only unwise and unhealthy, it is unbiblical. Let's focus our attention on what the Lord said in His Great Commission in Matthew 28:16–20 and learn what it means to live as a true disciple.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. The Cornerstone of Discipleship (Matthew 28:16–20)

Discipleship is more than just another program in the church. Jesus Christ has established discipleship as the method by which He plans to fulfill His mission to grow His church. And how does He plan to grow His church? Through Christians as they live out Jesus's command in Matthew 28:16–20 to *go*, *baptize*, and *teach* others all that Jesus said while He lived on earth.



Quotable

“You can come to church, sit, leave, and NEVER be impacted by another life. That’s tragic, you know?”

— Charles R. Swindoll



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2. The Choosing of the Disciples (Mark 3:13–14)

In order for Jesus's plan to multiply disciples to come to fruition, He chose to invest His life and teaching into twelve men. And they, in turn, were to pass His teachings on to others—to disciple others. So choosing these men could not be left to a random recruiting project. Jesus needed to select each one personally. And He didn't pick the brightest, most well educated, or wealthiest men. He chose common, humble laborers to walk with Him and learn from Him. But before these men could begin ministry, they had to spend time with Jesus. That's where discipleship, and all of ministry, begins. And the disciples—unsophisticated and coarse in the eyes of the religious leaders—could speak with boldness and conviction because they had been in the presence of the Lord (Acts 4:5–12).

3. The Cost of Discipleship (Luke 14:25–33)

How much does following Christ as His disciple cost? Everything! In Luke 14:25–26, Jesus expects disciples to hate their families in comparison to their love for Him. Our relationship with God and our obedience to Him must trump every other relationship and priority in our lives. We must love Him more than anyone else, even more than our own lives. Discipleship demands that we surrender our very lives to Christ's leadership. Just as Jesus carried His cross to His death, He demands that we do the same—not to our literal deaths but to the death of our own goals, dreams, and possessions. We must surrender these priorities to the Lord and allow Him to use them for His glory (Luke 14:17–33).



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GETTING TO THE ROOT

Becoming a Learner

The Greek word for “disciple” is *mathetes*, which comes from the verb *manthanō*, meaning “to learn.” A disciple is one who consistently lives by and can be identified with the teachings and points of view of his or her teacher.¹ So, Jesus’s disciples, by way of extensive time spent with Him and His people, must embody His priorities and values. In other words, a disciple has developed the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:14–16) and has been transformed into a living sacrifice by His Word (Romans 12:1–2).

Though biblical knowledge plays a crucial part in our faith, we must remember that discipleship is relational. Disciples not only learn *about* their Master, they grow closer *to* Him. We must spend time with our Master, as well as with other believers who are more mature and who can teach what it means to follow Christ. And we should take time to teach younger Christians what we have learned from walking through trials, tests, and joys with our Savior.



LET’S LIVE IT

Discussions about discipleship often revolve around form instead of function. Memorize a verse a day . . . Study a chapter a week . . . Meet one-on-one . . . Complete this course . . . Check off that activity. Diligent study, fellowship, and church involvement all contribute to growing in Christ. But sometimes we see these activities as an end in themselves. Remember, the goal of discipleship is to know Christ better, to be like Him, and to make Him known.

Do you feel that you know Jesus Christ better now than you did when you started your spiritual journey? Or has your walk come to a standstill? Do you prioritize time with Jesus over other important things in your life?

ENDNOTE

1. Frederick William Danker, ed., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 609, 615.



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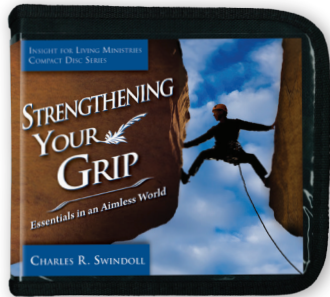
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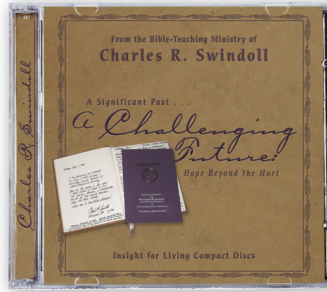
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Tools for Digging Deeper



**Strengthening
Your Grip**
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compact disc set



**A Significant Past . . .
A Challenging Future**
by Charles R. Swindoll
compact disc set



**Attitudes Quote
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