

# “We Go WITH Jesus”

Matthew 28:18-20

September 10, 2017

## INTRO:

- Welcome back to our **Journey with Jesus...**
- Last 4 wks: **Why Jesus Came** (seek/save/serve/suffer/die)
- Next 3 weeks: **Divine Disciples & Discipleship**

**T/S:**     **QUOTE:** "Making disciples is a COMMAND, not a suggestion... In the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20), Jesus sent out His disciples for a specific mission & purpose. He also gave them (and us) a comforting reminder: *'and remember, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, even to the end of the age.'* We don't carry out this God-given mission without the presence & power of Christ." – **DisciplesPath**

## TEXT:

### Matthew 28:18-20

**18**Then Jesus came to them and said, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. **19**Therefore go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20**and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

## BIG IDEA:

“We Go With Jesus”

Jesus sends us out **as disciples to make disciples!**

**PREVIEW:** 12 *DIVINE* Discipleship Distinctives

1. God's *Authoritative Word*
2. God's *Gospel Inspiration*
3. God's *Truth & Theology*
4. God's *Character & Ways*
5. God's *Saving Grace*
6. God's *Life-long Transformation*
7. God's *Call to Holiness*
8. God's *Power*
9. God's *Purpose*
10. God's *Promise*
11. God's *Presence*
12. God's *People*

**T/S:** Ask the Holy Spirit to give you His eyes & heart...

I. God's **AUTHORITATIVE WORD**

**See 2 Timothy 3:16-17**

**QUOTE:** “The Bible records Jesus’ mission in several passages. In each case, it’s clear that Jesus’ mission offers a worthy & inspirational vision for His followers – one that will require enormous sacrifice, hard work, & courage on our part.” - **DisciplesPath**

**VIDEO:** Piper - “*God Wrote A Book*”

## II. God's INSPIRATION

**See Romans 10:17 & Psalm 119:105**

*Faith comes by hearing the Word...*

*Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.*

## III. God's TRUTH & THEOLOGY

**A person's theology is their personal faith-filter.** - JDP

**VIDEO:** Anyabwile - *"Why Theology Is Important"*

*Both ignorance and arrogance are enemies of the faith!* - JDP

## IV. God's CHARACTER & WAYS

**See John 17:17**

**Sanctification means to be separate from sin**

**1 Thess. 4:1,3,7-8 = A Life Pleasing to God**

...we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God... **do so more and more...** **3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification...** **7**For God has not called us for impurity, but **in holiness.** **8**Therefore **whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God...**

***“Almost every natural man that hears of hell, flatters himself that he shall escape it. He depends upon himself for his own security.”*** - JONATHAN EDWARDS

“Jonathan Edwards understood the nature of God’s holiness. He perceived that unholy people have much to fear from such a God... Edward’s consuming need was to preach about God’s holiness; to preach it vividly, emphatically, convincingly, and powerfully. He did this not out of a sadistic delight in frightening people but out of compassion. He loved his congregation enough to warn them of the dreadful consequences of facing the wrath of God. He was not concerned with laying a guilt trip on his people but with awakening them to the peril they faced if they remained unconverted.” - **R. C. Sproul.**

## V. God’s SAVING GRACE

**See Ephesians 2:8-10**

**VIDEO:** MacArthur - *“God’s Order of Salvation”*

## VI. God's TRANSFORMATION

“Faith is not what some people think it is. Their human dream is a delusion... it is a human imagination and idea that never reaches the depths of the heart, and so nothing comes of it... (Genuine) Faith, however, is a divine work in us. It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God (John 1:13)... It changes our hearts, our spirits, our thoughts, and all our powers, and brings with it the Holy Spirit. And thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, as it is to separate heat & light from fire.

Beware, therefore, of your own false notions and of idle talkers who think themselves wise enough to define faith and works, and yet are the greatest fools. Pray to God to work faith in you, else you will remain forever without faith...

- **Martin Luther**

**VIDEO:** Piper - *“Justification vs. Sanctification”*

### **John 3:16 & 14:12**

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also **do the works** that I do; **and greater works** than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.*

**“Hard work is not the opposite of grace. It is the result of experiencing grace.”** - Josh Etter

## VII. God's HOLINESS

### Hebrews 12:14

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

*“People do not drift toward holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord. We drift toward compromise & call it tolerance; we drift toward disobedience and call it freedom; we drift toward superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated.” - D.A. Carson*

**VIDEO:** K. DeYoung - *“The Hole In Our Holiness”*

### Titus 2:11-12

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness & worldly passions, & to live self-controlled, upright, & godly lives...*

***The pursuit of holiness is not a pursuit of legalism...  
No. The true, biblical pursuit of holiness is, & will always  
be, a pursuit of love (and out of love) for the Lord! - JDP***

**\*\*\* Spurgeon \*\*\***

*"...the holier a man becomes, the more he mourns over the unholiness which remains in Him."*

## VIII. God's PURPOSE

**See Matthew 28:19 & Acts 1:8 again... & 2 Timothy 2:2**

## IX. God's PROMISE

**See Matthew 28:19 & Acts 1:8 again...**

## X. God's POWER

**See Matthew 28:19 & Acts 1:8 again...**

## XI. God's PRESENCE

**See Matthew 28:20 & Acts 1:8 again...**

## XII. God's PEOPLE

**VIDEO:** Chan - *"Miracles For Today"*

The called out, Spirit-empowered children of God; those set apart ambassadors that serve as the aroma & army of King Jesus. We are the sent, works-in-progress that have been captured by grace, who now love & live for the glory of the Lord.

*We exist to glorify God by, in part, finding & growing more glorifiers... as-&-into the supernaturally-unified family of God - no matter what! - JDP*

**See Matthew 28:19 & Acts 1:8 again...**

## **CLOSE:**

Listen to these words from John 15:8-11 and see how we have come full circle back to the wonder of God's Word and His inspiration of revelation.

**8**By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. **9**As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. **10**If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. **11**These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

# Let's Pray!



**Key Truth:** *Jesus sends us out as disciples...  
...to make disciples.*

**QUOTE:** "Making disciples is a COMMAND, not a suggestion... In the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20), Jesus sent out His disciples for a specific mission & purpose. He also gave them (and us) a comforting reminder: *'and remember, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, even to the end of the age.'* We don't carry out this God-given mission without the presence & power of Christ." – **DisciplesPath**

**REFLECT:** "In the last session, we explored the necessary practice of dying to self as a follower of Christ... We also learned that dying to self is BOTH a one-time event (salvation) AND a daily discipline (sanctification)." – DisciplesPath

**T/S:** In this session we will take a closer look at our mission as followers of Jesus.

**PRAY:**

A. Thank God that He has given you a mission & a purpose that impacts today & eternity!

B. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you eyes to see the world the

way He sees it

C. Proclaim your willingness to serve on mission as an Ambassador of Jesus Christ.

## ILLUSTRATION:

“The right mission can inspire people in amazing ways and motivate them to go above and beyond... President Kennedy’s mission sparked the imagination & perspiration of an entire country.” - DisciplesPath

“We choose to go to the moon... not because it is easy, but because it is hard, because that goal will serve to organize & measure the best of our energies & skills, because that goal is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and on which we intend to win.” - JFK

## KNOW THE STORY:

**QUOTE:** “The Bible records Jesus’ mission in several passages. In each case, it’s clear that Jesus’ mission offers a worthy & inspirational vision for His followers – one that will require enormous sacrifice, hard work, & courage on our part.

[A word by word walk through of Matthew 28:20:](#)

***"teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."***

1. **Teaching** (TRUTH & THEOLOGY)
  - A. Romans 12:1-2
  - B. "Fear of God is the beginning of wisdom"
  - C. VIDEO: "Why is theology important?"
  
2. **Them** (LISTENERS & LOVERS vs. LIARS)
  - A. Citizens of the nations... (Acts 1:8)
  - B. Citizens of the Kingdom...
  - C. The "disciples" now being made (v.19)
  
3. **To Obey** (SUBMIT, SURRENDER, SANCTIFY)
  - A. Faithful Obedience (John 3:36 & 14:15)
  - B. Follow ("I will make you fishers of men")
  - C. Fruit (both high QUALITY & QUANTITY)
  
4. **Everything** (ALL - NO EXCEPTIONS)

\*\*\* (see "Big Idea" AIT) \*\*\*

  - A. CREATION  
    Genesis 1:1 & John 1:1
  - B. CORRUPTION  
    Sin  
    Satan  
    Self (spiritual warfare)
    - The World
    - The Flesh
    - The Devil

## C. CHRIST

Genesis 3:15 fulfilled!

John ch.1 & ch.3

Risen & Revelation!

## D. CHURCH

Children of God

Captured by Grace

Great COMMANDMENTS

Great COMMISSION

Great CONFLICT (spiritual warfare)

## E. COMING-Again

King

Closure

Completion

5. **I** (JESUS, LORD, GOD... & GOD's WORD)

6. **Commanded** (KING's MANDATES & "MUSTs")

7. **You** (BOTH UNIVERSAL... AND PERSONAL)

8. **And** (CONJUNCTION... THERE's MORE!)

9. **Behold!** (WAKE-UP! DON'T MISS THIS!)

10. **I** (JESUS, LORD, GOD... & HOLY SPIRIT)

11. **Am with** (PERSONAL, POWERFUL, Emanuel!)

12. **You** (BOTH PERSONAL... AND UNIVERSAL)

13. **Always** (24/7, 365... "always" = ALL-WAYS!)

14. (even) **To the End** (Gen.-Rev, Alpha-O, death)

15. **Of the Age**

**\*\*\* Connect the disciple's relationship to:**

➤ **John 3:16**

➤ **John 14:12!!!**

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.*

**\*\*\* So What? For What? Now What? \*\*\***

**\*\*\* Why were you created & why were you saved?**

A. That God would make much of you???

B. That you would make much of God!!!

**Titus 2:11-12** links grace with training in holiness!  
*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12training us to renounce ungodliness*

*and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled,  
upright, and godly lives in the present age*

***Both ignorance & arrogance are enemies of  
the faith!*** -JDP

\*\*\* Beware the dangers of syncretism that are born out of a  
professed commitment to contextualism!

\*\*\* **1 Thess. 4:3 & 4:7-8!!!** = ***"This is the will of God,  
your sanctification"*** (4:1ff)

***Sanctification means  
"to be separate from sin"***

\*\*\* **Link 1 Thess. 4:1-3,7-8 with Ez 36:22-27!!!** \*\*\*  
A Life Pleasing to God

1Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God, just as you are doing, that you **do so more and more.**2For you know what instructions we gave

you through the Lord Jesus. 3 **For this is the will of God, your sanctification...** 7For God has not called us for impurity, but **in holiness.** 8Therefore **whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God**, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

**\*\*\* 2 Corinthians 10:4-5**

*For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,*

**\*\*\* Contrast "habitual striving" v. "habitual sinning"**  
**(1 John 3)**

**\*\*\* Matthew 6:33 \*\*\***

*But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

***"Jesus became a Servant in order that the gentiles would glorify God for His mercy" – Rom. 15:8***

***I/we exist to glorify God by, in part, finding &***

*growing more glorifiers, as-and-into the supernaturally-unified family of God - no matter what!* - JDP

\*\*\* Explain Justification & Sanctification using the old "cart & the horse" analogy!!!

\*\*\* **The (LIFE Cycle's) Discipleship Process**

1. Engage.      Lost
2. Explain.     Lover
3. Equip.        Learner
4. Empower.    Leaders
5. Exemplify.   Lifers

\*\*\* **Ephesians 4:12 = equip (disciple) the saints...**

*"...equip the saints for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ."*

\*\*\* **2 Timothy 2:1ff = make disciple making disciples!**

*...be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach*



*others also. 3Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*

\*\*\* Interpersonal:

- A. Inter-Trinitarian
- B. Pods (Paul, Barnabas, Timothy)
- C. Koinonia
  - 1. Community
  - 2. Church
- D. Fields

**Connect Hebrews 10:14 & 12:14 on sanctification & holiness!!!**

**Hebrews 10:14**

*For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*

**Hebrews 12:14**

*Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*

***\*\*\* The priesthood of every believer is at the core of discipleship!***

**\*\*\* Why is theology & "truth" such a big deal?**

- A. God says so!
- B. Satan & his demons comes down disguised as angels of light... so don't be surprised that other evil doers are out there to deceive you
- C. Because people reproduce "their" truth...

**\*\*\* Spurgeon QUOTE \*\*\***

***"...the holier a man becomes, the more he mourns over the unholiness which remains in Him."***

***Hope & holiness live hand-in-hand.*** - JDP

***The pursuit of holiness is not a pursuit of legalism... No. The true, biblical pursuit of holiness is, and will always be, a pursuit of, and out of love - love for the Lord!*** - JDP

**\*\*\* ILLUSTRATION:**

Imagine if your family had the means to pay for & supply ALL that was needed to save dying people from their deadly

diseases... AND... having made the decision & commitment to extend that offer to ALL that were actively dying, (which was/is an extremely costly commitment), your Patriarch did three (3) things to kick things off & initiate this most generous & gracious of life-saving endeavors:

1. Your family bought & paid for EVERYTHING, in advance, that could or would be needed by anyone of the people dying. Think about it... In this scenario, your family holds every dying person's cure... guaranteed!

2. Your family wrote down & published invitations with any & all relevant, pertinent details (i.e. Only those who hear & respond to these invitations can receive the remedy...; there is literally no other hope in the world for the dying person's condition...; if the dying person is to be healed, it will involve their personal faith in the Medicine, coupled with a genuine commitment to turn away from the cause(s) of their disease...; and lastly, that acceptance of this healing gift will come with loving responsibilities.

NOTE: the invitations also explain that the price your family paid to be able to offer life to the dying... was the willing, selfless, sacrificial death of your beloved Jesus, who, for the joy of saving others, endured His own excruciating death.

Finally, imagine that in this scenario your Patriarch then said: "We have secured any & all authority needed - anywhere on the planet - to deliver these people from an

unimaginable death. Moreover, we have packaged the universal remedy & made it highly transportable & field-ready for application - wherever & whenever you meet one of the world's dying souls – engage, explain, and extend the offer to be healed!”

At this point, all that would be left to do is the third & final step in helping to save the world... Namely:

3. SEND ALL THE BROTHERS & SISTERS IN THE FAMILY OUT TO ENGAGE DYING PEOPLE WITH THE “GOOD NEWS” THAT IS THE GUARANTEE FOUND IN THEIR LIFE-SAVING INVITATIONS.

\*\*\* Now... imagine if... most everyone who claimed to be "in the family," "brothers & sisters," those who themselves claim an adoption that came through the grace & invitation that someone else hand delivered to them... just sat around looking at the invitations, talking about the invitations, maybe even admiring the invitations... but never really engaging any of the dying people... near or far.

Imagine those claiming to have been recipients of the miraculously graceful, redeeming remedy... never really extending or explaining the invitation(s) to many (or ANY) dying souls.

That seems to go far beyond tragic, it would be criminal. It would be akin to negligent man-slaughter (a situation where you had the means to save a life, with no

legitimate reason not to, yet you let the person die without even trying to help them).

Please note as well, while bringing dying people to your house, hoping someone there will offer & explain the invitation is not bad, that's not the ideal - for many dying souls actually die before they get to the house... that's why the remedy was designed for immediate, field based application.

***“Following’ Jesus did not end at the cross!”*** - JDP

***While some forms of "faith" are a leap in the dark... biblical faith is a leap into the Light!*** - JDP

**\*\*\* John 15:5, Romans 7:18, & Ephesians 2:1ff** are essential Scriptures to understanding discipleship, Christ's miraculous grace & every Christian's Gospel mission!

➤ **Ephesians 2:1ff** = *“You were DEAD in your trespasses and sins...”*

➤ **John 15:1-11 = I Am the True Vine** “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. **2**Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. **3**Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. **4**Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. **5**I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. **6**If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. **7**If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8**By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. **9**As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. **10**If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. **11**These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

**Do you see outreach & discipleship as a process in NEED of a miracle? Do you realize that justification is beyond making the lame**

walk, the deaf hear, or the blind to see... The conversion of a Christian is literally the spiritual raising of the spiritual dead! Think of it this way... How would you approach being sent by God to the cemetery across town, with the mission of raising the dead? Who would you bring? What would you do? Is there ANYTHING that YOU could do to make this happen???

- (paraphrase) **Francis Chan**

*Salvation & sanctification, redemption & representation of the LORD (a.k.a. Discipleship) have ALWAYS been an application of God's GRACE.* -JDP

(see [\*\*Ezekiel 36:22-27\*\*](#) )

## **I Will Put My Spirit Within You**

**22**“Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which

you have profaned among the nations to which you came. **23**And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. **24**I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. **25**I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. **26**And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. **27**And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

**DEFINITION**  
**of a New Testament**  
**DISCIPLE:**

**Background of Disciple** The term “disciple” comes to us in English from a Latin root. **Its basic meaning is “learner” or**



**“pupil.”** The term is virtually absent from the Old Testament, though there are two related references ([1 Chron. 25:8](#); [Isa. 8:16](#)).

In the Greek world the word “disciple” normally referred to an adherent of a particular teacher or religious/philosophical school. **It was the task of the disciple to learn, study, and pass along the sayings and teachings of the master.** In rabbinic Judaism the term “disciple” referred to one who was committed to the interpretations of Scripture and religious tradition given him by the master or rabbi. **Through a process of learning** which would include a set meeting time and such pedagogical methods as question and answer, instruction, repetition, and memorization, **the disciple would become increasingly devoted to the master and the master’s teachings. In time, the disciple would, likewise, pass on the traditions to others.**

**Jesus’ Disciples** In the New Testament **233** of the **261** instances of the word “disciple” occur in the Gospels, the other **28** being in Acts. Usually the word refers to disciples of **Jesus**, but there are also references to disciples of the Pharisees ([Matt. 22:16](#); [Mark 2:18](#)), disciples of John the Baptist ([Mark 2:18](#); [Luke 11:1](#); [John 1:35](#)), and even disciples of Moses ([John 9:28](#)).

The Gospels often refer to Jesus as “Rabbi” ([Matt. 26:25,49](#); [Mark 9:5](#); [10:51](#); [11:21](#); [John 1:38,49](#); [3:2,26](#); [6:25](#); [20:16](#) NIV). One can assume that Jesus used traditional rabbinic teaching techniques (question and answer, discussion, memorization) to

instruct His disciples. **In many respects Jesus differed from the rabbis. He called His disciples to “Follow me”** ([Luke 5:27](#)). Disciples of the rabbis could select their teachers. **Jesus oftentimes demanded extreme levels of personal renunciation** (loss of family, property, etc.; [Matt. 4:18-22](#); [10:24-42](#); [Luke 5:27-28](#); [14:25-27](#); [18:28-30](#)). **He asked for lifelong allegiance** ([Luke 9:57-62](#)) **as the essential means of doing the will of God** ([Matt. 12:49-50](#); [John 7:16-18](#)). He taught more as a bearer of divine revelation than a link in the chain of Jewish tradition ([Matt. 5:21-48](#); [7:28-29](#); [Mark 4:10-11](#)). In so doing Jesus announced the end of the age and the long-awaited reign of God ([Matt. 4:17](#); [Luke 4:14-21,42-44](#)).

**The Twelve** As the messianic Proclaimer of the reign of God, Jesus gathered about Himself a special circle of twelve disciples, clearly a symbolic representation of the twelve tribes ([Matt. 19:28](#)). He was reestablishing Jewish social identity based upon discipleship to Jesus. **The twelve represented a unique band, making the word “disciple” (as a reference to the twelve) an exact equivalent to “apostle” in those contexts where the latter word was also restricted to the twelve.** The four lists of the twelve in the New Testament ([Matt. 10:1-4](#); [Mark 3:16-19](#); [Luke 6:12-16](#); [Acts 1:13,26](#)) also imply from their contexts the synonymous use of the terms “disciples”/”apostles” when used to refer to the twelve.

**A Larger Group of Followers** **The Gospels clearly show that the word “disciple” can refer to others besides the twelve.**

**The verb “follow” became something of a technical term Jesus used to call His disciples, who were then called “followers,”** ([Mark 4:10](#)).

These “followers” included a larger company of people from whom He selected the twelve ([Mark 3:7-19](#); [Luke 6:13-17](#)). This larger group of **disciples/followers included men and women** ([Luke 8:1-3](#); [23:49](#)) **from all walks of life.** (Even the twelve included a variety: fishermen, a tax collector, a Zealot.) Jesus was no doubt especially popular among the socially outcast and religiously despised, but people of wealth and of theological training also followed ([Luke 8:1-3](#); [19:1-10](#); [John 3:1-3](#); [12:42](#); [19:38-39](#)).

**The twelve were sent out as representatives of Jesus, commissioned to preach the coming of the kingdom, to cast out demons, and to heal diseases** ([Matt. 10:1,5-15](#); [Mark 6:7-13](#); [Luke 9:1-6](#)). **Such tasks were not limited to the twelve** ([Luke 10:1-24](#)).

Apparently Jesus’ disciples first included “a great multitude of disciples” ([Luke 6:17](#)). He formed certain smaller and more specifically defined groups within that “great multitude.” These smaller groups would include a group of “seventy” ([Luke 10:1,17](#)), the “twelve” ([Matt. 11:1](#); [Mark 6:7](#); [Luke 9:1](#)), and perhaps an even smaller, inner group within the twelve, consisting especially of Peter, James, and John—whose names (with Andrew) always figure first in the lists of the twelve ([Matt. 10:2](#); [Mark 3:16-17](#); [Luke 6:14](#); [Acts 1:13](#)), whose stories of

calling are especially highlighted ([Matt. 4:18-22](#); [John 1:35-42](#) and the tradition that John is the “Other”/”Beloved Disciple” of the Gospel of [John—13:23](#); [19:26](#); [20:2](#); [21:20](#)), and who alone accompanied Jesus on certain significant occasions of healing and revelation ([Matt. 17:1](#); [Mark 13:3](#); [Luke 8:51](#)).

**All Followers of Jesus** **The Book of Acts frequently uses the term “disciple” to refer generally to all those who believe in the risen Lord** ([6:1-2,7](#); [9:1,10,19,26,38](#); [11:26,29](#)).

In addition, **the verb form “to disciple” as it appears in the final commissioning scene of Matthew’s Gospel ([28:19-20](#)) also suggests a use in the early church of the term “disciple” as a more generalized name for all those who come to Jesus in faith**, having heard and believed the gospel.

**Conclusion** We have seen that, as references to the twelve, the words “apostle” and “disciple” could be synonymous. However, just as the term “disciple” could mean other followers of Jesus than the twelve in the time of His ministry, so also **after His resurrection the term “disciple” had a wider meaning as well, being clearly applied to all His followers.**

Whereas the term “apostle” retained a more specific meaning, being tied to certain historical eyewitnesses of the resurrected Lord, the word “disciple” tended to lose its narrower associations with the twelve, and/or those who followed the historical Jesus,

or who saw the risen Lord, and **became a virtual equivalent to “Christian”** ([Acts 11:26](#)).

**In every case, the common bond of meaning for the various applications of the word “disciple” was allegiance to Jesus.** - Holman Bible Dictionary.

**“Hard work is not the opposite of grace. It is the result of experiencing grace.”** - Josh Etter (Desiring God)

*“People do not drift toward holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord. We drift toward compromise & call it tolerance; we drift toward disobedience and call it freedom; we drift toward superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated.”* - D.A. Carson

***“The Meaning of Faith”***

by

Martin Luther

**“Faith is not what some people think it is. Their human dream is a delusion... it is a human imagination and idea that never reaches the depths of the heart, and so nothing comes of it, and no betterment follows it.**

**(Genuine) Faith, however, is a divine work in us. It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God (John 1:13). It kills the old Adam and makes us completely different people. It changes our hearts, our spirits, our thoughts, and all our powers, and brings with it the Holy Spirit.**

Oh, it is a living, active, mighty thing, this faith, and so it is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly...

**Faith is a living, daring confidence on God’s grace... and this is the work of the Holy Spirit in faith.**

Because of faith, one freely, willingly, and joyfully does good to everyone, serves everyone, suffers everything, in love & praise to God, who has shown him this grace. **And thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, as it is to separate heat & light from fire.**

**Beware, therefore, of your own false notions and of idle talkers who think themselves wise enough to**

define faith and works, and yet are the greatest fools. Pray to God to work faith in you, else you will remain forever without faith, what you think or do.

- Martin Luther

*“Almost every natural man that hears of hell, flatters himself that he shall escape it. He depends upon himself for his own security.”*

- JONATHAN EDWARDS

“Edwards understood the nature of God’s holiness. He perceived that unholy people have much to fear from such a God... His consuming need was to preach about God’s holiness; to preach it vividly, emphatically, convincingly, and powerfully. He did this not out of a sadistic delight in frightening people but out of compassion. He loved his congregation enough to warn them of the dreadful consequences of facing the wrath of God. He was not concerned with laying a guilt trip on his people but with awakening them to the peril they faced if they remained unconverted.” - R. C. Sproul. “The Holiness of God.”

*“Our thinking goes like this: If there is a God at all, He is certainly not holy. If He is*

***perchance holy, He is not just. Even if He is both holy and just, we need not fear because His love and mercy override His holy justice.”***

R. C. Sproul. “The Holiness of God.”