

ESSENTIALS OF DISCIPLESHIP PT. 1

JOHN 8:31

Text: John 8:31

John 8:31

³¹Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;

Introduction:

These essentials I will address in three different messages, beginning with John 8:31 and the subject: "The Essential Of A Learner Who Is Receptive."

Jesus is not looking for followers who can walk on water - He is looking followers who can walk on dry land in the manner that He did! That is a normal New Testament disciple. The normal Christian life, according to the New Testament, is a daily, deliberate and delightful application of the discipleship principles that Jesus Christ taught His disciples and modeled before them.

Contrary to the popular opinion of many, discipleship is not an above normal Christian life - It is the norm. It is not living a perfect life either, although that should be our aim. How then, do I live as Christ lived?

Notice:

1. THE TEACHER

John 8:31

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;

A. The Teacher Challenged

In John 8 the Lord confronts the Pharisees and they rejected His testimony saying,

John 8:25

²⁵ Then said they unto him, Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even *the same* that I said unto you from the beginning.

In other words they were asking where did You get the authority to speak to us such things?

Then in verse 33 they say:

John 8:33

³³ They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?

In answering the Pharisees the Lord says:

John 8:31

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;

2. THE TEXTBOOK – HIS WORD

John 8:31

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;

The Bible is the textbook for the disciple of Jesus Christ is without question. Other books may be helpful but none should take precedence over Holy Scripture.

Psalms 119:124

¹²⁴ Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes.

A. Its Author – The Word of God

1 Peter 1:23

²³ Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

The Word of God is not of human origin.

Someone once said:

“A good man could not have written the Bible, and a bad man would not have written it.”

In other words, man could not have written the Bible if he would, and would not have written it if he could. Why? There are two self evident propositions in those two statements: First, a good man could not have written the Bible, because it tells us over 2,000 times

that God is the Author! Therefore, if a mere man claimed that he wrote it, he would be a liar, and consequently could not be a good man! Second, a bad man would not have written the Bible if he could, because it tells how bad he is, and he would be unwilling to write the truth about himself!

B. Its Authority

The Holy Scriptures do not speculate, theorize or engage in supposition. They speak authoritatively upon every subject they address. The Bible is the only absolute and sufficient guide in all matters of faith and practice because it has God's authority upon it.

C. Its Agelessness

1 Peter 1:23

²³ Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

1 Peter 1:25

²⁵ But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

The books of men are for time – God's book is for eternity. Generally, a book is produced by a writer in their own generation – but God's Word took at least 1,500 years to write, spanning 30 generations of the world's history. Books that were a rage a few years ago are forgotten today. The older a book is, the smaller its chances of surviving.

However, the Bible, recorded by men who died two to three thousand years ago, is not only still in existence today but is the most widely circulated book even though century after century opponents have banned, burned and berated it. But against the attacks of cynics, critics and skeptics, the Bible endures!

The Bible's authorship, authority and agelessness reveal the nature of divine revelation in the book that we call the Bible. An anonymous writer wrote this about the Bible: "The holy scriptures are shallow enough for babes in Christ to swim in without drowning and deep enough for theologians to dive into without ever reaching bottom."

3. THE TEST

John 8:31-32

³¹ Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; ³² And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

Certainly the teacher does the testing and the grading, but let us consider some questions that can help us see how we will score on the test.

A. Question 1 – Do I Appropriate the Word of God?

To appropriate the Word of God is to take it in, receive it, ingest it, digest it.

Notice:

John 8:47

⁴⁷ He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God.

The authentic disciple “hears God’s words.

Eight times in the gospel records the Lord spoke the word, “ears to hear, and eight times in the book of Revelation very similar words “he that hath an ear let him hear.”

B. Question 2 – Do I Apply the Word of God?

Knowing the truth and living the truth are two different matters. Appropriating truth and applying truth requires two different attitudes and actions. The dictionary defines “knowing” as “Having information; awareness, understanding; to be acquainted with facts; to perceive with the mind; to be enlightened; to learn.”

Knowing should lead to doing. James writes:

James 1:22

²² But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

The Pharisees of Jesus day knew the Scriptures thoroughly, but what Jesus so severely condemned

them for was that they did not apply what they had appropriated and He called them “hypocrites.”

Illustration of different types of hearers:

Matthew 13:22-23

²² He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. ²³ But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

The test is this – a reception that replicates.

Close:

A young lady finished reading a book and remarked that it was not very interesting.

In the course of time, she became engaged to be married. One evening as they were walking together she said, “I read a very dull book one time written by a man with the very same name as yours. Isn’t that a coincidence?” “Not at all”, he replied. “I am the author of that book!

That night, the young lady sat up until the early hours of the morning reading the book again. This time it seemed the most interesting story she had ever read. The once dull book now held her fascinated because she knew and loved the author!

So it is with Jesus and His Word! If we know and love Him we will be receptive learners, reproducing in our lives the lifestyle of the Lover of our souls!