



# DISCIPLESHIP

TOOL KIT FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

CALVARY CHAPEL MERIDIAN

# Discipleship Toolkit

The Discipleship Toolkit is a series of relevant pieces designed to help produce committed followers of Jesus Christ.

In this series, our goal is to present stimulating articles which will encourage, equip, and provoke believers into a deeper love for God and those whom He has brought into our lives.

The subjects introduced in this series deal with family life (Biblical husbands, wives, children, parents), stewardship, (managing the material and financial resources God provides for us), theology, (truth connected to learning more about God), etc.

We sincerely hope and pray that the Lord will use this Toolkit to strengthen His church and extend His kingdom.

In Christ,

Calvary Chapel Meridian Pastors



# What about discipleship?

You will hear a lot of talk around Calvary Chapel Meridian about our church's purpose—which is to make disciples. This purpose comes from the Bible, and more specifically, directly from our Lord Jesus Christ. He commanded His followers just before He went back to heaven:

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.  
(Matthew 28:19-20)*

## What is a disciple?

The question could be asked this way as well: what is a committed follower of Jesus Christ? Because that's what a disciple is: a disciple of Jesus Christ is a committed follower of His.

So, what is a disciple? To answer the question, three related questions must be answered:

- Who is Jesus Christ?
- How does one begin a relationship with Him?
- What does it mean to be one of His committed followers?

How does a committed follower of Jesus live his or her life?



# Who is Jesus Christ?

The initial followers of Jesus (aka His disciples) wondered the same thing. He was, in a word ... different. He was different from anyone they'd ever seen or heard.

Jesus did not come as a conquering king, but rather as a lowly, humble man. He was no ordinary man, but a man with great power and unique authority. In His teaching, He claimed that His doctrine was the doctrine of God the Father. He performed many signs that pointed to His own Divine nature; He raised the dead, He healed the sick, He cast out demons, He forgave sins, He gave the blind sight, and made the lame to walk. With regard to holiness, He lived a completely sinless life—even His enemies had no moral charge against Him.

So, one day Jesus asked His closest followers what the people were saying about Him. He asked, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” Their responses varied ... suggestions included Jeremiah, John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the [other] prophets. But then Jesus asked His close followers what they thought about who He was. Peter answered quickly and certainly— “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

This confession by Peter was affirmed by Jesus, who stated clearly that the heavenly Father had inspired Peter to say such things. For Peter and for all these men, the identity of Jesus was now clear in their minds. Because of who He was, they would follow Him for the rest of their lives.

How do we know that what Peter said about Jesus is true? The best historical answer is because Jesus rose from the dead.

After Jesus rose from the dead He showed Himself alive by “many infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3). In fact, more than 500 believers saw Him at once after He'd risen (1 Corinthians 15:6). They all came to one inescapable conclusion: Jesus is alive.



The most important Biblical answer is because of the hundreds of prophecies that predicted many amazing details about His first coming. And He fulfilled them all, with astonishing 100% accuracy.

The odds against Jesus fulfilling all of these prophecies are astronomical. Years ago, mathematician Peter Stoner wrote in his book *Science Speaks* that the odds of any one man fulfilling just eight of these ancient prophecies are 1 in 10<sup>17</sup> (one in 10 followed by 17 zeroes). Yet He fulfilled many more than that!

Our faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, Messiah, and Savior of the world is on very, very solid ground.

### **So, what exactly is a committed follower of Jesus Christ?**

A committed follower of Jesus is His pupil, His student, one who learns from Him. It's a person who pursues Him, believes in Him as God, and seeks to obey Him as Lord, and is continually instructed by Him as Teacher.

Followers of Jesus Christ today have a vast, infallible curriculum. It includes anything Jesus taught in the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) as well as what He taught the apostles by the Spirit following His ascension. These later teachings are found in the letters of the New Testament, from Romans-Revelation. This rich, God-inspired instruction provides Jesus' followers with a lifetime of growth and learning which never stops.

A follower of Jesus is someone who daily denies himself and who takes up his cross as he follows the Lord. He is someone who loses his own life for Jesus' sake, in order to gain the life that only Jesus can give.



*Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.” (Matthew 16:24-25)*

Obviously, it’s a radical commitment, but a very wise one. A disciple of Jesus gives up his own life, surrenders his will to the Savior, and thus finds the greatest life possible.

*“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.” (Matthew 16:26-27)*

## **How does someone become a committed follower of Jesus Christ?**

Discipleship begins with a true and personal relationship with Him. Thankfully, He is the One who has invited us into this relationship.

*On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 “He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38)*

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus appeared on the scene at the Jordan river, where John the Baptist was baptizing. John’s message was basically, don’t follow me! There’s someone coming who is much greater than I. Follow Him! Of course, John was speaking about Jesus.

That’s where men like Peter, Andrew, Phillip, and Nathanael first



met Jesus (John 1:35-50). But it wasn't until months later that some of them became full-time disciples (Peter, Andrew, James and John).

So first, one must believe in Jesus and receive Him. After that comes really learning from Him and following Him.

Upon receiving Jesus Christ, a person is given the authority, the right, the power to become a child of God.

*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name... (John 1:12-13)*

A person receives Jesus Christ by faith. He believes that Jesus died for his sins and is alive today. He asks the Lord to take over and hands the steering wheel of his life to Him.

When that happens, a person is born from above, or born again. The Bible calls it regeneration. It is becoming a new person, with a brand-new life and a brand new approach to life.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

### **What does discipleship look like? How does a committed follower of Jesus live his or her life?**

A true follower of Christ will begin to reflect His nature. While growth continues throughout one's life, there is also an immediate effect upon the new believer.

Over time, true followers of Jesus become more and more like Him. This growth occurs during one's entire life.



*But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. (Proverbs 4:18)*

*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.  
(2 Corinthians 3:18)*

The fruit of the Spirit begins to show (Galatians 5:22-24). Love is evident, for example. Peace enters the heart. Joy begins, apart from life's circumstances. And so on.

Another characteristic of a disciple is that he begins to hear, and eventually recognize Jesus' voice as He speaks to him. A sermon by a Bible teaching pastor leaves him amazed ... how did that pastor know what I am going through? Did someone tell him about my life? Reading the Bible, verses will begin to pop out at him with brilliantly clear meaning and application. The voice of Jesus will start to sound like the Bible, and the Bible will sound more and more like Jesus.

*Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." (John 10:27)*

The committed follower of Jesus learns to value what Jesus values, love what He loves, and hate what He hates. The committed follower of Jesus lives for the kingdom of God, that is the priority.

*Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (John 14:23)*





## Where do I begin? What are my next steps to become a committed follower of Jesus Christ?

First, once you're convinced that Jesus is who He said He is, and you are willing to follow Him as His disciple, then you should ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will give you the power to follow Jesus. He is the one who enables you to want what God wants and to do what God wants you to do (Philippians 2:13).

It was the power of the Holy Spirit that helped all of the disciples live for Jesus. Jesus had commanded them to wait for the promise of the Father, which was the coming of the Holy Spirit upon their lives to give them spiritual power (Acts 1:8). This was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, and the change was dramatic. These men and women turned the world upside down; not by their own power, but by His power in them, the power of the Holy Spirit.

Secondly, make a determined commitment to a local Bible believing, Bible teaching church. Get involved by attending church services regularly, and by connecting with people. Here at Calvary Chapel Meridian, we encourage folks to join a House to House group in the Fall and in the Spring. It's a great way to get to know and learn from other serious believers. By being connected with others who are growing as committed followers of Jesus, we are strengthened as individuals. This is how spiritual gifts are discovered, by being in close relationship with other true believers.

Thirdly, learn to pray. Learn the importance of prayer, and how to speak with God. He has given us an amazing invitation, which is to enter into His very Presence by faith, in the authority of Jesus, at any time we want or need to.

*Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.  
(James 4:8a)*



*Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith... (Hebrews 10:19-22a)*

Fourthly, begin serving the Lord. Find a way to help others, to assist in the ministry of the church, and to tell others about Jesus. God has made you for this and is glorified when we bear fruit.

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10).*

*"By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples." (John 15:8)*

### **Final thoughts**

We believe that the purpose of the church is to join Jesus in His work of producing His committed followers. We invite you to join us in our pursuit. More importantly, Jesus Himself invites you.

God bless you!



## **What We Believe**

Calvary Chapel has been formed as a fellowship of believers in the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Our supreme desire is to know Christ and to be conformed into His image by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **What We Do**

Our purpose as a fellowship of believers is to make disciples. That is, to multiply ourselves into more believers that will be sacrificial followers of Jesus. We do this through a simple process of connecting people with God in our main services and special events, then growing together in small home groups, and then reaching out to others by serving our King Jesus.