

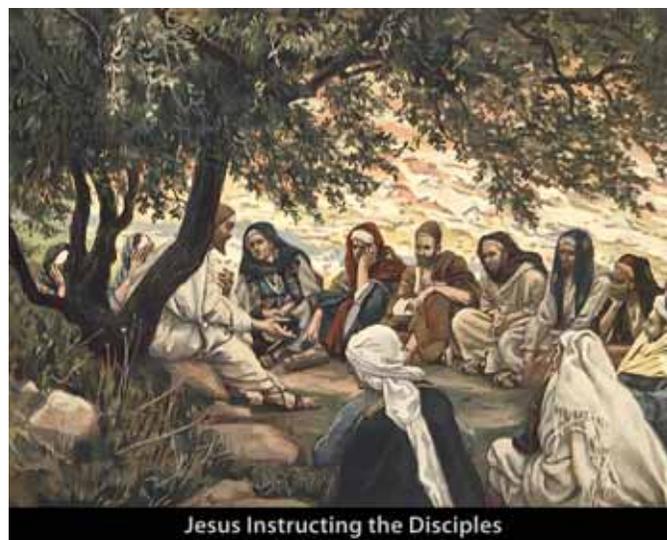
Discipleship Training - Part 1

Discipleship! What a curious word. It has the idea of training someone to become something that he or she is not. It implies that one needs help from another person in order to change. As God, Jesus was a master at discipleship; but yet one among His disciples never truly changed. A disciple maker cannot make one change. The discipleship that Jesus practiced was more than a study in a book and having someone listen to a series of sermons. Jesus was interested more in the character of a person and not just in his or her head knowledge. He had the disciples watch Him “do ministry.” They watched Him and heard Him. Then He let them engage in ministry under His watchful eye. He guided them and rebuked them. Today, few are willing to be rebuked, warned, or challenged to excel. Many believe the ministry experience should be a positive one, even the training. In this study (Matthew 10:1-23; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-5), we will discover some of Jesus’ discipleship training techniques. You may be surprised.

THE EMPOWERMENT. The opening verse of our study tells us that Jesus has just called or summoned the disciples to Himself.

Jesus summoned His twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. (NASB) Matt. 10:1

When the twelve arrived, He gave them authority to cast out demons and heal. This is more than book study and attendance at a meeting. Here we are told that they had power to cast out demons. The power was not their power; it was Jesus’ power. The Greek imperfect of “gave authority” reveals that Jesus was continuously empowering them throughout their ministry. He gave them a task and continued to help them accomplish their task. Just before Jesus left this world, He told His disciples in Matthew 28:20 that He would still be with them and help them in their ministry.



Jesus Instructing the Disciples

... and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. (NASB) Matt. 28:20b

It was a promise that He would also help them in their God-assigned ministry. He does the same today.

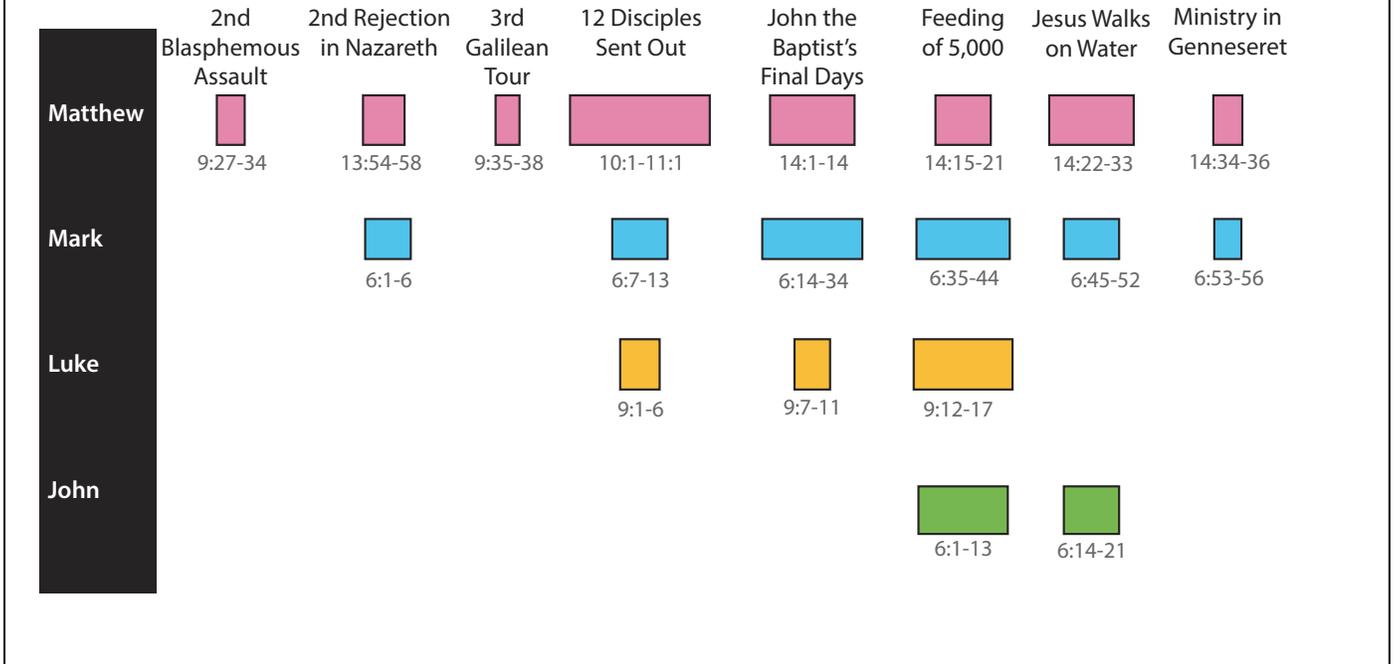
The first verse also reveals that the disciples could heal every type of disease as well as sickness. In our last study, we discovered that together both disease and sickness referred to all forms of illness.

THE TWELVE. Who were the twelve? The next three verses list them for us.

Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Him. (NASB) Matt. 10:2-4

Life and Heart of Jesus

Ministry Outside of Galilee - Mid A.D. 32



A quick comparison of this passage to Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:13-16, and Acts 1:13 reveals that the apostles are presented in three groups of four.

The first group of four apostles was Jesus' inner group. They were with Jesus shortly after the beginning of His ministry. John 1:35-42 records the occasion on which they responded to Jesus by believing in Him. That is, they believed He was the promised Messiah. Jesus asked them to follow Him three times. The first time was after they believed. The second time occurred when they were fishing (Mark 1:14-20), and the third time occurred after another time of fishing (Luke 5:1-11). On that occasion they finally left everything and followed Jesus. At least three of them were invited to join Jesus when He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead (Mark 5:37-43). Jesus also invited only Peter, James, and John to join Him on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-13). All four privately asked Jesus questions on the Mount of Olives (Mark 13:1-8). Peter, James, and John were asked to wait for Jesus while He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-37). Lastly, Peter and John were in discussion with Jesus prior to His departure to

heaven (John 21:12-23). John was the disciple Jesus asked to care for His mother (John 19:26-27). It should be noted that James and John had the same father, Zebedee (Matt. 10:2), and Peter and Andrew were brothers (Matt. 10:2). These men were part of Jesus' inner group.

The second group of four apostles included two men who were into details. That is, they appear to have been analytical men: Thomas and Matthew. Thomas is known as Didymus (John 21:2) and "Doubting Thomas" because He questioned that Jesus had actually returned to life (John 20:26-29). He wanted to place his finger into Jesus' wounds to confirm that the wounds were real. Matthew was a tax collector for the Roman Empire. These two men were probably analytically oriented. It appears from John 1:35-51 that Philip and Bartholomew believed in Jesus Christ as their Messiah on the same day that Peter, Andrew, James, and John did. Bartholomew was also known as Nathanael.

We know very little about the third group of four apostles. We know almost nothing about James the son of Alphaeus from the Bible other than that he was also called James the Less (Mark 15:40) and that Matthew was his brother (Matt.

9:9; Mark 2:14). Thaddaeus was also called Lebbaeus and was known as Judas, the son of James. Simon the Cananaean was also called Simon the Zealot. The Zealots were anti-Rome and were politically motivated. One wonders how Simon felt about Matthew, who would have been considered a traitor by the Jews because he was a tax-collector for Rome. The Bible reveals nothing significant about this apostle. Judas Iscariot was the traitor (Matt. 10:4) who later hung himself (Matt. 27:3-6) and was therefore not listed in the book of Acts.

Finally, Mark 6:7 reveals that Jesus sent the apostles out in pairs. These men were to become the future leaders

first. We know almost nothing about some of the men since the pages of scripture are quiet.

THEIR MISSION. After calling the men to Himself, Jesus told them what He wanted them to do.

These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (NASB) Matt. 10:5-6

They were instructed to avoid Samaria and those regions belonging to the Gentiles. That left only Galilee in the north

Lists of the Apostles in the New Testament

Matt. 10:2-4	Mark 3:16-19	Luke 6:13-16	Acts 1:13
Peter	Peter	Peter	Peter
Andrew	Andrew	Andrew	Andrew
James	James	James	James
John	John	John	John
Philip	Philip	Philip	Philip
Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew	Bartholomew
Thomas	Thomas	Thomas	Thomas
Matthew	Matthew	Matthew	Matthew
James, son of Alphaeus			
Thaddaeus	Thaddaeus	Judas, son of James	Judas, son of James
Simon, the Cananaean	Simon, the Cananaean	Simon the Zealot	Simon the Zealot
Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	Judas Iscariot	-

- Jesus’ apostles. It appears from scripture that Peter was impulsive and vocal, while Thomas was probably a very logical, thoughtful person. James and John were brothers who wanted to be first among the apostles. On one occasion later in His ministry, their mother asked Jesus if they could rule on His left and right. Matthew had been a tax-collector whom the Jews considered to be a traitor because he collected taxes for Rome, and Simon the Zealot was a radical who hated Rome. Judas was a traitor who stole money from the money bag. What a combination that must have been at

and Judea in the south. This was consistent with the directions that Jesus gave the apostles just before He returned to heaven (Acts 1:8). In Acts 1:8 Jesus told the apostles to witness first in Jerusalem, then in Judea, then in Samaria, and finally throughout the rest of the world. The biblical principle was to present the gospel to the Jews first and then to others (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 13:46; Rom. 1:16). Jesus called the Jews the lost sheep of Israel because their spiritual leaders, the Pharisees and Sadducees, were lost themselves and were leading the Jews astray.

As the disciples went on their mission, they were to preach and heal just as Jesus did. They were able to do so because Jesus empowered them for ministry. Their message and actions were simple. Jesus told them,

And as you go, preach, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (NASB) Matt. 10:7

In Mark 6:12 we discover that in addition to warning others that the kingdom of heaven was “at hand,” they were to call them to repent. The expression “at hand” comes from a Greek word that means the kingdom of heaven had been and was approaching. It had been coming nearer and it was now closer to them. The kingdom was approaching, and they were to get ready by repenting of their sins. That was their message. It is still the message today. Jesus is returning, and people need to repent and make their peace with God.

The disciples were to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cast out demons.

Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give. (NASB) Matt. 10:8

The disciples were in training, They were mimicking Jesus. They had been watching Him heal, raise the dead, cast out demons, and preach. Now it was their turn. This is true discipleship. They had reached a certain level of spiritual maturity. Discipleship always includes some form of instruction; it must include the opportunity to practice skills and use what one has learned. Discipleship making involves rebuke, admonition, praise, and encouragement. Unfortunately, some men and women will not accept admonition. This lack

of humility and submission makes true discipleship very difficult.

Just imagine the reports that the religious and political leaders must have heard. It was no longer just Jesus who was performing miracles, but now also His disciples. We will discover later that the news about their mission spread throughout Judea and Galilee like wild fire and was even heard by King Herod (Luke 9:7).

THEIR BELONGINGS. Jesus also told them what to take on their mission.



Do not acquire gold, or silver, or copper for your money belts, or a bag for your journey, or even two coats, or sandals, or a staff; for the worker is worthy of his support. (NASB) Matt. 10:9-10

By comparing Matthew 10:9-10 with Mark 6:8-9 and Luke 9:3, we discover that Jesus had directed them not to take any extra clothes. Mark and Luke tell us that Jesus told them not to take a bag, bread, or money. They could not take an extra pair of sandals, a second staff, or a set of underwear (also called

a tunic). Matthew makes it clear that they could not buy anything during their mission except bread.

CONTRADICTION? If one examines the three gospels closely, we discover what appears to be a contradiction between Mark and Luke about the staff. Luke seems to imply that Jesus told them that they could not take along a staff. But Mark says they could not take an extra. In fact, Mark says that the disciples could not take an extra pair of sandals, another staff, or extra underwear. Luke says nothing about the sandals and agrees that no extra underwear could be taken. Some have suggested that the staff Luke referred to was different from the one mentioned in Mark. It has been

reported that it was customary for two staffs to be taken on a trip - one was for walking and another was carried over the shoulder. However, there is insufficient information to resolve the issue either way. What is clear is that they were to travel with very little. They were to trust God and go!

BASE OF OPERATIONS. It should be noted that it was customary for the Jews to show hospitality to religious leaders such as priests and rabbis. The people had been taught that God grants a blessing upon those who show such kindness. So it was common for devout Jews to give religious leaders food, clothes, money, and a place to sleep. This helps us understand the following statement from Jesus,

And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city. (NASB) Matt. 10:11

The first part of Jesus' directions told them to enter

a village and stay in the home of one who was considered to be "worthy." Recently I was asked what does "worthy" mean in this passage. We can be sure that Jesus was not referring to a wealthy man, a politician, a Pharisee, or Sadducee. Jesus had strong words for most rich people and the religious leaders of the day. So it is doubtful that He was referring to either one. The worthy man was most likely someone who had a great reputation for being a godly, God-fearing, spiritually mature man. Having been told who was worthy, they were to approach the home and inquire about staying. If permitted, they were to stay in the home while they ministered in the village. They were not to seek better accommodations.

The home was the base of operations in the village as they were to go from home to home sharing the gospel.

As you enter the house, give it your greeting. If the house is

worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace. Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. (NASB) Matt. 10:12-14

Unfortunately, different people have different points of view about who is godly and spiritually mature. So Jesus directed the disciples to follow the recommendation and give the home a blessing as they enter. The common blessing for the Jews was, "Shalom." It means peace and implies God's blessing upon the home and those within. But if they discovered later that the homeowner rejected them and their ministry, then they were to take back their blessing of "Shalom." In

fact, they were to treat the homeowner as the Jews treated the Gentiles by "shaking the dust off" of their feet. This visible act of lifting one's shoe and shaking the dust off was performed by the Jews in

order to remove what they regarded as defilement - "Gentile dust" from their feet. The Jews believed that dust from Gentile territory defiled them. So the disciples were to treat those who treated them as Jews rejected Gentiles. An illustration of this can be found in Acts 13:51.

At first, this may seem to be wrong. But even the rest of the New Testament warns us to avoid and, if necessary, to confront those who reject the gospel. Jesus was not talking about those who have not heard about Jesus or those who simply reject the good news about Jesus. He was talking about those who actively opposed the apostles. For example, Jesus told us to not cast our pearls before swine in Matt. 7:6. That is, do not continue offering your best if the person will reject the message. Unfortunately, one does not know how a person will respond until multiple attempts have been made. There are some who will not accept the good news about

Item	Matt. 10:9-10	Mark 6:8-9	Luke 9:3
Bag	Cannot Buy	Not Take	Not Take
Bread	Can Buy	Not Take	Not Take
Money	Cannot Buy	Not Take	Not Take
Sandals	Cannot Buy	Not Extras	No Comment
Staff	Cannot Buy	Only a Staff	Not Take
Tunics	Cannot Buy	Not Extras	Not Extras

Jesus. Repeated attempts to share the gospel are a waste of time. Also, we have been warned not to give false teachers a greeting and not to allow them into our homes. If we do, we are helping them. Those who continuously reject the gospel are the enemies of Christ and the kingdom of God, and some day God will judge them.

Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. (NASB) Matt. 10:15

This will occur not because God hates them, but because they have actively rejected the only help that God has provided for them.

TROUBLE IS COMING. One would think that people would welcome the good news about Jesus, but many do not. Not only is Satan opposed to God, not only is he the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4) who has blinded the world, but the gospel appears to be foolishness to many (1 Cor. 1:18). So we should not be surprised that Jesus warned the disciples that trouble would follow them. The same is true for anyone who is seriously involved in ministry today.

So Jesus cautioned them with these words,

Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves. (NASB) Matt. 10:16

Stop for a minute and think about Jesus' words. The disciples were to be like sheep among wolves. Wolves eat sheep. Anyone who has lived in the wilderness or desert long enough soon discovers that wolves usually attack their victims in packs. They are usually afraid to attack one-on-one. But they become bold when others join them. They attack their victim, grab its throat, and shred their victim. The same happens in churches and in the world. Christians are to be like lambs and not wolves. We are not to be wolves.

Then Jesus describes the type of vicious attacks that Christians will suffer, especially those who are fully engaged in the ministry.

But beware of men, for they will hand you over to the courts and

scourge you in their synagogues; and you will even be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they hand you over, do not worry about how or what you are to say; for it will be given you in that hour what you are to say. For it is not you who speak, but it is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved. (NASB) Matt. 10:17-22

The attacks will come from those outside one's family and from within the family. The attacks will occur at the national and local levels of government. The disciples would be betrayed and hated by those whom they would least expect. In verses 19-20, Jesus promised the disciples that the Holy Spirit will help them to know what to say when trouble comes. But the answer would not necessarily allow them to escape trouble. That was not the goal. The goal was to spread the good news about Jesus.

A TIME TO FIGHT. Jesus' next words makes this point very clear.

But whenever they persecute you in one city, flee to the next . . . (NASB) Matt. 10:23a

Eventually, they may have to flee in order to escape persecution. In Acts 4:19-20, 29-31 and in Acts 5:40-42, the disciples refused the request of the Jewish Sanhedrin Council to stop telling others about Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit helped them respond. They refused to obey and escaped. But later in Acts 8:1, persecution broke out and Christians fled from Jerusalem. This was a positive event because it resulted in the spread of the gospel. The gospels reveal that Jesus fled on one occasion (Luke 4:28-30). The apostle Paul did as well (Acts 9:30). There is nothing wrong in fleeing under these circumstances. A wise or shrewd servant will attempt to escape. Prov. 27:12 says that the prudent man sees trouble and hides himself. So Christians should too!

FINISH GOING THROUGHOUT ISRAEL. The last part of verse 23 has caused some confusion when Jesus said,

. . . for truly I say to you, you will not finish going through the cities of Israel until the Son of Man comes. (NASB) Matt. 10:23b

The key to understanding the passage is found in the Greek that is translated as “finish.” The Greek word is TELEO. It has the idea of “to complete, to finish, or to bring an activity to a successful end and or completion.” That is, the disciples would not bring the activity of going from village-to-village, city-to-city to a successful end or completion until the Son of Man comes. This is not a statement that says once the disciples had visited every city or village that Jesus would come. The emphasis is on the fact that their mission would not be completed until Jesus’ Second Coming!

CONCLUSION. Jesus called the disciples even though He knew that He was sending them into spiritual war. A majority of the verses have been about rejection and conflict. Yet, Jesus encouraged the disciples not to take anything personally. In verse 18, He told them that trouble would come for “My sake” and in verse 22 “because of My name.” Their mission was to preach Jesus Christ. They were to tell others about Jesus, and so should we. Trouble would come if they faithfully did as Jesus asked. Trouble would come because of their association with Jesus. That is the price for following Jesus. The disciples were to preach, heal, seek peace, fight for

the faith when necessary, and flee when they must.

The following true life account is a simple reminder that Jesus wants you and me to be in the battle for lost souls.

I decided one day I would present the gospel to a doctor friend as we had lunch together. I drew a simple little chart that had on one side of the page a circle-God-and wrote under it “holy.” Then on the other side of the page I drew a circle representing the world-mankind-and under it the word “unholy.” And then I built a bridge between God and mankind with a cross and wrote the name of Christ across the horizontal bar of the cross. I was so careful to keep it simple. After lunch I slid it across the table at that restaurant. My heart was just in my throat. I thought, He’s [going to] believe. He’s [going to] love this! He looked at that, studied it for a few seconds, and he smiled and he said, “In a thousand years I could never believe that.” Couldn’t have been more clear or simple, but he couldn’t have been further from interest in that truth. And I said, “Have you ever seen that before?” He said, “No. Never in my life. Never. Never seen it and I’m not interested.”¹

Are you ready and willing to tell others about Jesus? Remember, if you are faithful trouble will come!

1. Charles R. Swindoll. The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart. W. Publishing Group. 1998. p. 165.