

Every Sunday morning a special kind of shopper hits the streets. This shopper is not visiting the local stores and markets, but the churches. When asked the motive for the visit, this person replies, "Oh, I am just shopping around for a church." It seems that Americans have a renewed interest in spiritual things, which is good; but, it also seems that we want it on our own terms. We are shopping for that which pleases us, not necessarily for that which pleases God.

The truth is that we are not the shoppers at all, we are the merchandise. God is the one who is shopping. God is looking for a special kind of person to be numbered among His people. When Jesus left this earth, He gave instructions to His hand-picked apostles in Matthew 28:19. He said, "Go therefore and make DISCIPLES of all the nations." If "Disciples" is what these men were to go and make, then "Disciples" is what we are to be. If you have ever wondered what it is that God wants from you, here is the answer. God wants you to be a Disciple of Jesus Christ.

The word "Disciple" means: A Learner or a Follower. It is altogether possible for a person to be "Religious" or to "Go to church" without ever really finding out what Jesus actually taught and without ever really living like Jesus lived. In the gospel of John, chapter 8, verse 31, Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine" To be the kind of person that God is shopping for, we must have a fervent desire to Learn the word of Christ. We must "get into His word"; we must "abide" there; that is, make it our home. Let me ask you something. Do you really know what Jesus taught? How well would you do on a quiz? If you are not a learner who abides in the words of the master, then you are not a disciple.

The apostle Peter understood the concept of Discipleship. In I Peter 2:21 he wrote, "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to FOLLOW IN HIS STEPS." A Disciple is a Follower. Like a child following a parent's steps through the snow, so a Disciple carefully follows the footprints of the master. Jesus left us an example of how we are to live in this world. We should learn to treat people like He treated people. Our attitudes must be become like His attitudes. The way we look at life must become like His way of looking at life. We must develop the kind of relationship with God that He had. This is what Discipleship is all about. Jesus invited us to Discipleship when He said, "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and LEARN FROM ME" (Matthew 11:28-29). A Disciple is a Learner or a Follower.

Did you ever realize that the word "Christian" is found only three times in the New Testament? The word "Disciple" or "Disciples" is found 255 times in the New Testament. Acts 11:26 explains that the first time the disciples were ever called Christians was in Antioch. You see, those who came to be called "Christians" in the 11th chapter of Acts had previously been called, simply, "Disciples." You can't be a Christian without being a disciple.

This is what God wants from you. He wants you to learn and obey what Jesus taught. He wants you to follow how Jesus lived. This is what Bible Talk is all about. In the next message, # 102, we will learn what it costs to be a disciple of Jesus.

1. Attitude check: Are you more interested in pleasing God or Self?

2. Do you believe that God wants you to be a disciple of Jesus? (Matthew 28:19)

3. Complete this statement: "For me to be a disciple of Jesus, I would need to"

4. Does Jesus' definition of a disciple in John 8:31 describe you?

5. Does the idea of following in Jesus' steps appeal to you? (I Peter 2:21)

6. What changes would you need to make in your life if you accepted Jesus' invitation to "Learn from Me"? (Matthew 11:28-29)

7. If a person is not a Learner or Follower of Jesus -- do you believe that person is really a "Christian"? (Acts 11:26)

8. How does the concept of "Discipleship" expose fake Christians?