



## Chapter 6

### Being a First-Century Disciple Reflections to Journal and Share

- We live in a culture that chafes under almost any concept of authority. “Do your own thing” is the mantra of the day. How might this cultural malaise impact our understanding and willingness to put ourselves under biblical authority? To what extent do we even have a desire to surrender to the authority of Jesus today in the same manner that first-century disciples had a willingness to surrender to their rabbi’s interpretive authority?
- Biblical discipling is a life shaping, life determining process. Who are the people, or what are the things that are shaping your life? Do we ever outgrow our need to be in some form of a discipling relationship?
- How would you describe your biblical understanding of making disciples to others? Do you see any cultural expectations that may have shaped our current view of discipleship (another non-biblical word)? How would you contrast the discipling of the first century with contemporary notions of discipleship today as you have experienced or observed them?
- Is there a meaningful difference today between what it means to be a believer in Jesus Christ and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?
- Is “believe” mostly a creedal statement to you, or an action verb to passionately live out each day?
- Contrast total surrender to the authority of Jesus with a partial surrender, or an occasional surrender, a convenient surrender, or even token surrender to Him. How would you assess your willingness factor in regards to surrendering all (not most) areas of your life to the authority of God’s Word? When you do surrender, is it a willing surrender, or a surrender that arises from some form of resentful, obligatory obedience?
- In today’s church culture, our facade of Sabbath piety, put on with the refined religious behavioral cosmetics of our day, is about the only thing that is observable about us by our pew mates. Thus, during the week, except perhaps by our family, our real (spiritual or secular) life is not observable by others in our respective communities of faith. As a result, others can’t really use God’s Word in our lives for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. How might this tendency towards Lone Rangerism constrain our spiritual growth and development in our maturing as disciples of Jesus Christ? How can we lean against these tendencies?
- To what extent do we wrestle today with life issues in relationship to the Scriptures? Are we willing to conform every issue in our life to the Word of God, or do we seem to avoid wrestling at all costs? When we do wrestle, are we prepared to place ourselves under the authority of His revealed response in His Word? Have you ever found yourself not bringing an issue to the Scriptures because you didn’t want to hear, or didn’t want to have to deal with God’s authoritative response regarding money, ego, sex, alcohol, career, and pride? What might you add to this list?
- On a scale of 1-10, how would you assess these distinctive qualities of being a disciple of Jesus in your life:
  - ◊ Desire, Passion, Submission and Emulation
  - ◊ Community of Intimacy and Transparency
  - ◊ Biblical Literacy and Wrestling with God’s Word?

Since we only have one life to live here on this earth, it behooves us to ask: How are we doing as disciples and discipling makers of Jesus in the Kingdom of God?

- Are there any areas of your life that are either off limits, or have limited accessibility to the Lordship Authority of Jesus Christ? What are they, and why are they off limits?
- What challenges you most in this chapter?

### A Point to Ponder

Jesus’ approach to remaking the Twelve brings to mind G. K. Chesterton’s profound observation that “All education is implication.” Much of the disciples’ education came from daily wrestling with the paradigm changing implications of what Jesus was doing that went far beyond the boundaries of their religious culture. A question for discipling makers today is: How best to utilize this all-education-is-really-implication reshaping reality as part of the process of making disciples today?