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Introduction

The Master of Discipleship

In the beginning God created a perfect, sinless world. Humans enjoyed honoring, worshiping, and following their Creator face to face. Life should have continued this way for eternity, but it has not.

This is because Satan deceived (tricked) our first earthly parents, Adam and Eve. He stole the true meaning and purpose of life from them. So, rebellion (war against God) spread all over the entire world.

Christ’s sacrifice gave us our only hope. This is because only the Cross offers us freedom. It offers us our only escape from a life without hope or meaning. Only Jesus offers sinful humans freedom, forgiveness, and the opportunity to return to the perfect world.

God encourages believers everywhere to become messengers who announce God’s grace to the world. They are to preach the good news of salvation to those enslaved by Satan. They also are to encourage others to follow, worship, and praise their Maker. In other words, Christ’s example of disciple-making must become the model (example) that believers follow when answering the command of Matthew 28:19, 20.

So, the topic of our quarter is discipleship. The word has many meanings. But, in this study, we will examine discipleship as a way of becoming followers of Jesus and better soul winners.

After all, Jesus is every Christian’s example for the work of soul winning. Does it make sense to think that successful evangelism is done with popular psychology or colorful advertisements? Or would it be better to follow the simple example of Christ?

How did Jesus attract His followers? What can we learn from Christ’s example that would help us to better lead others to Him? How can we better obey His great command (Matthew 28:19, 20)? How did Jesus interest such different groups: the rich and the poor, the religious and the nonreligious, and the politically powerful and the powerless? How did Jesus unlock hardened hearts? How did He inspire (create) hope among people who had lost that hope? How did He gently awaken the child’s tender heart? How did He overcome racial and social obstacles (things that block people from each other) so He could make disciples? How did He reach rich and powerful

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1. discipleship—the practice of accepting Jesus and following Him.
2. grace—God’s gift of mercy and forgiveness that He freely gives us to take away our sin.
3. disciple-making—the process of making believers follow and obey Jesus.
4. psychology—the study of the mind and the reasons for the ways that people think and act.
people? How did He wake up proud religious leaders? How did He give hope to those who were dying from diseases?

These are not just interesting discussion questions for curious people. Instead, they are serious study for Christians who want to follow Jesus' example of leading lost sheep to the loving Shepherd.

Paul also challenged believers to follow him in the same way that he followed Christ. It is difficult to think that today’s believers would not want to follow the principles (important rules) that Paul established (set up) in the first century.

In the end, following Jesus means more than just the opinion that discipleship is about correcting wrong behaviors and habits. These changes are important, but that is not all a follower of Christ should do. A full understanding of discipleship is not complete until a person desires to follow Jesus completely. As a result, this strong desire leads others to Christ, too.

Or, as Ellen G. White tells us so well: “As soon as a person gets to know Christ, there is born in his heart a desire to share with others what an important friend he has found in Jesus. This saving, holy truth cannot remain quiet in his heart. We are clothed with the robe of Christ’s righteousness. We are filled with the joy of His indwelling Spirit. Then we shall not be able to hold our peace. If we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, we shall have something to tell. . . . There will be a great desire to follow in the path that Jesus walked.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pages 78, 79.

This is our subject for this quarter.

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