

Living as a Disciple

Life as a disciple of Jesus is not something one does all on ones' own. There is help. This help comes in two forms: help from God and help from fellow believers.

First, help from God.

Help from God also comes in two ways. First, you can receive help along the path of discipleship by reading His word – the Bible. There you will learn more about God. You will learn about His character, His plan for His creation, His love for us, how to live as a disciple, etc.

Help from God also comes through the Holy Spirit: God with you in every step of life.

Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the “Helper” and told His disciples this:

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.” John 14:16-17 ESV

The Helper that would come to His disciples (then and now) would work with Jesus' followers in at least two ways. First, to help Jesus' disciples remember the things He had taught.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” John 14:26 ESV

Second, the Helper would help disciples overcome sin – to avoid the things that are wrong and to do the things that are right.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. Galatians 5:16-17 ESV

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23 ESV

When we live as the Spirit leads, we will be able to live as disciples.

That does NOT mean, however, that Christians never sin. There will always be temptations in life. The Holy Spirit can help us overcome those temptations. If, however, we fall to one of those temptations, we can confess our sin and receive forgiveness.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 ESV

If you sincerely prayed to accept God's gift of eternal life, the Holy Spirit will come to you, God says, as a pledge (guarantee) that you will receive eternal life.

In him [Christ] you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance [eternal life] until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 1:13-14 ESV

And if you have received the Holy Spirit as a result of your sincere confession of faith, then you will be on a path of discipleship.

Sadly, you could be a disciple that exhibits some level of resistance to the leading of the Spirit.

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

Ephesians 4:30 ESV

You can embrace the path of a disciple or you can, to some extent, resist. Disciples are called to follow Jesus' teachings – His way of life.

The apostle Paul writing to his young associate Timothy said this:

Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called.... 1 Timothy 6:11b-12a ESV

And in the words of James:

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. James 4:7 ESV

Jesus faced temptations and, as His disciples, so will we.

Jesus also faced difficulties in life. And so as His disciples, we too will face difficulties.

"In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

John 16:33b ESV

Living as a disciple of Jesus does not mean that we will have nothing but smooth sailing through life. The promise to us, though, is this:

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28 ESV

Temptations and trials will come our way. The Holy Spirit can help us through them and God will not forsake us.

...for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Hebrews 13:5b ESV

To summarize, God has provided help for Jesus' disciple in two ways: He has provided His word (the Bible) which gives us the knowledge we need as disciples and He has provided the Holy Spirit who will help us remember and live what we have learned.

(Remember, being Jesus' disciple means learning His teachings and putting His teachings into practice. The Holy Spirit helps us with both.)

The second thing that can help us on the path of discipleship is other Christians. Here are some verses that tell what Christians can do for one another.

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up.... 1 Thessalonians 5:11a ESV

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25 ESV

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, James 5:16a ESV

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, Colossians 3:16a ESV

Fellow disciples can encourage you as you encounter trials and temptations, they can encourage you as you seek to do the good deeds God has prepared for you, they can pray for you, they can help you better understand Jesus' teachings. Each of these things can make the journey on the road of discipleship an easier one.

While, in this life, we may never reach a point where we are totally like Jesus, we can involve ourselves in things that will put us on the path to Christlikeness.

In summary, to learn what Jesus has taught, you can:

- Read the Bible and other books that help you understand what is in the Bible. You might start by looking up the verses that follow. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, Romans 15:4, Psalm 19:7-8, 1 Peter 2:2, Psalm 119:105)
- Go to a church where you will meet people who will help you understand what is in the Bible. (Nehemiah 8:7-8)
- Pray. God's promise as found in Scripture is that the Holy Spirit will remind Christians of the things Jesus taught and guide them into truth. (John 14:26, John 16:13)

To live out Jesus' teachings, you can:

- Announce your decision to others by being baptized. (Matthew 28:18-19)
- Turn away from things in life that you know are contrary to God's ways. (Repent – Luke 5:32, Romans 2:4)
- Go to a church where you can meet and be encouraged by people who, hopefully, are trying to live out Jesus' teachings. (Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- Tell others about the gift of salvation that God offers through Christ. (Mark 16:15, 2 Corinthians 5:20a, Matthew 28:18-19)

- Pray. God's promise is that the Holy Spirit will help you live a life pleasing to Him. (Galatians 5:16-17, 22-23, Philippians 4:6-7, Hebrews 4:16)

A couple of things to note:

In choosing a Bible to read, some good versions were listed in the section entitled Reliably Translated. Bibles that you might use include: NKJV, MEV, NASB, or the ESV used on this site. Bibles in which denominational distinctives may outweigh good translation practices and are best avoided include the New World Translation (Jehovah's Witnesses) and the Inspired Version (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon)). Also to be avoided are Bible versions created by a single individual. Included in this category are The Message (Eugene Peterson), The Living Bible (Kenneth Taylor, not a translation but a paraphrase based largely on the American Standard Version), and The New Testament in Modern English (J. B. Phillips). Each of these versions may have some value but more so as a commentary rather than a translation.

In choosing a church, carefully observe whether what is taught seems to be conforming to worldly opinions or to what is found in the Bible. The question always is: "Do Christians affect the world (in a good way of course) or does the world affect the church (in a way contrary to God's Word). Find a church where Scriptural teaching is not compromised by worldly opinions or modern cultural practices.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV

If, after reading this, you have for the first time made a commitment to Christ then I welcome you to the family of God.

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, John 1:12 ESV

And I encourage you to find other Christians to fellowship with ASAP.

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