How To Become A Disciple Of Jesus Christ?

This Bible study series is based on Jesus’ Sermon on The mount (Matthew 5 – 7)

Matthew’s gospel paints a compelling background to Jesus famous’ ‘Sermon On The Mount’:

*“*5:1 *- Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, 2 and he began to teach them.”* With this ancient picture in mind: What is a disciple of Jesus; and what does Christian discipleship look like today?

A *disciple* is essentially a *student*. But there is a significant difference between the average teacher/student relationship today and the kind that Jesus shared with his disciples. While the goal of modern students is usually to get information from their teachers in order to pass a class, Jesus put forward the goal of discipleship like this, “*The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher”* (Luke 6:40).

Jesus’ definition of a disciple helps us understand why his original 1st century disciples didn’t just take notes in a classroom for an hour or so and then return home. Instead, Jesus’ disciples followed him around, day and night, observing his life and the way he worked, rested, and related to others. The aim of Jesus’s disciples was to grow spiritually and become more like Jesus – who was not just their teacher but also their Lord (e.g. Luke 6:46).

Today as we consider what is required for us to be Jesus’ disciples, it’s important to notice that the word *‘disciple’* is the root of the word *‘discipline’*. Everyone who has ever sought to excel in his or her studies or in sport or musically knows that any worthwhile pursuit requires regular training. The process of Christian discipleship begins with understanding who Jesus is and what he is all about. Studying Jesus’ famous ‘Sermon On The Mount’ will help us toward this end. However, Christian discipleship is more a spiritual pursuit than an academic exercise. Therefore, we can only grow as Christ’s disciples with the help of the risen Lord Jesus, through the daily guidance of his Holy Spirit and the assistance of our fellow-disciples: The Church.

As daunting as discipleship might sound, we should gain encouragement from the fact that it was a disciple named Matthew, a tax collector, who recorded Jesus’ life and teaching found in our first gospel. In Jesus’ day, tax collectors were often despised and likened to prostitutes and other notorious sinners. Therefore, becoming Jesus’ disciple isn’t an exercise for the very religious, but a vital pursuit for ordinary sinners like Matthew, and for us as well. This will become clearer in our very first study.