



**Discipleship 101  
New Believer Lesson #15  
Living As A Disciple Of  
Jesus**



Based on the Book,  
*The Divine Conspiracy*,  
by Dallas Willard

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**Introduction:**

Jesus  
Write me into Your story  
Whisper it to me  
And let me know I'm Yours  
**Rich Mullins, *Jesus from The Jesus Record***

“Discipleship is not limited to what you can comprehend – it must transcend all comprehension. Plunge into the deep waters beyond your own comprehension, and I will help you to comprehend even as I do. Bewilderment is the true comprehension. Not to know where you are going is the true knowledge. My comprehension transcends yours. Thus Abraham went forth from his father and not knowing whither he went (Hebrews 11:8). He trusted himself to my knowledge, and cared not for his own, and thus he took the right road and came to his journey’s end.”

**Martin Luther, paraphrasing Jesus and quoted in Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s, *The Cost of Discipleship***

**Apprenticeship:**

Following Jesus is not rocket science or brain surgery. It begins with the understanding that life with God – WITH GOD! – is available right here, right now. As you daily surrender your own will to Jesus, he will show you each step along the way as you pass through life with him. Simply choose to do what Jesus would do if he were in your place, alongside you every minute of every day.

Come and abide in him and with him, and so become a part of the divine conspiracy. ([John 15:1-8](#))

The call of Jesus is, first and foremost, to be his student, his apprentice. That is an opportunity available to us all, offered to us all, and the greatest opportunity we will ever receive. He is the maestro of the universe, not just the master. Nothing escapes his notice or exceeds his control.

Jesus is not just the Lord; he is a really smart guy. The apostle Paul tells us that in Jesus are found all of the wisdom and knowledge that exist ([Colossians 2:3](#)). The disciple John writes that if everything Jesus did were written down, all the books of the world would not be sufficient to document them ([John 21:25](#)). How can you resist becoming a disciple of someone like that?

**What Does “Discipleship” Look Like?**

In the diluted and distracted mentality of today, most of us admit that becoming a disciple means a few basic things: First, I need to get my spiritual life “in shape” – whatever that means. Then I need to be sure I become more consistent with church attendance. I certainly need to have a quiet time that is somewhat consistent. It becomes a “duty” like dieting or balancing your checkbook – tasks that we all know we need to do but are less than enthused about. It becomes a way of lessening the guilt we feel, nothing more.

The truth is far more rewarding, rich, and fulfilling.

For starters, you have to have heard about Jesus, and about the kingdom of God. Next, you must realize that God and his kingdom, are right here, close at hand, and available to his disciples, his apprentices. What does this mean? Simply that whatever it is that you’re engaged in, invite and expect God to become a part of it with you.

“Well Andy, I have been in church for decades, and I know the truths about kingdom of God backward and forward. I have it down pat, memorized and categorized. What more is there for me to know?” – This guy was the object of [John 5:39](#).

If you don’t put Jesus’ words into action, you are wasting your time.

Once you know about Jesus’ kingdom, the next step is to seek to live in it, to ask God to participate in it with you, and to ask his help and guidance in all things. For example, if you take a step in this world, and you are tempted to do what is wrong in God’s eyes, do what you know to be right in his eyes, and expect God to bail you out.



What is one situation you might face in the coming month where you will have an opportunity to try doing what you know is right - even if this action or decision is one you struggle with all the time?

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When the pastor or another church leader says “You should be a disciple of Jesus,” or “You need to grow as a disciple of Jesus,” what activities or traits are they talking about?

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### **Spiritual Disciplines**

One thing that fits with the word “disciple” is another word with the same root – “discipline.” Today, however, the word discipline doesn’t play well. It seems harsh and difficult and strict.

Simply put, discipline in our modern minds is associated with punishment. The truth is that without the practice of spiritual discipline, the act of becoming an apprentice of Jesus will fail – here’s why.

A discipline is anything you can do in your power that can enable you to do what you can’t do just by trying.

Think of learning a language. You can’t, by sheer force of will and effort, start speaking Greek without ever having learned and studied and practiced it. But with discipline, you can learn Greek, and even master it with enough discipline. Music is the same, and so are athletics. If you can set a goal, a vision to be achieved, discipline can get you there eventually.

An apprentice of Jesus must decide to be an apprentice of Jesus. He/She must have a vision or goal of becoming an apprentice, and start down the road of spiritual disciplines in order to get there. Even the pain and effort of this discipline can be enjoyed by an apprentice of Jesus because of the vision he/she has and the understanding of what it will bring when it is achieved eventually ([2 Corinthians 4:17](#)).

Just as growing in skill as a running back or point guard or concert violinist takes great discipline, so too does growing in patience or love or humility as an apprentice of Jesus.

“OK Andy, how can I be more humble, since I’m so great and wonderful?”

Well for starters, you can stop pretending; that will do wonders for your humility. It will take practice, but you will gradually grow a more humble persona. For years I have told people that I have grown very comfortable with my general ignorance, and no longer feel intimidated by a lack of knowledge. Why I’m almost proud to say that.

One great advantage to growing closer to Jesus as an apprentice is the action of grace in assisting the formation and honing of spiritual disciplines. His great grace will be coupled with your practice of discipline and increase it’s effectiveness. Simply put, when you put yourself into a position, through practicing spiritual discipline, God’s grace has a conduit to flow into your life.

We are not waiting on God for all of the great things of the spiritual life; we are waiting on us.



Why is it wise to develop spiritual disciplines in your life?

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## **Obedience, Grace, & Effort**

Learning about being Jesus' apprentice isn't just "bible knowledge", critical as that is. The critical apprentice-like behavior is obeying what you have learned is the right thing to do, and watching how life proceeds after you obey.

Isn't that true in life, as we have come to know it? You teach a child to ride a bike, but then the critical moment comes when he sets off down the road on his own. He can study dynamics, power generation, and all the aspects of gyroscopic balance, but until he rides a bike solo, he doesn't know a thing about it. Would you feel more comfortable with a surgeon who has performed a procedure hundreds of times, or with one who has taught it hundreds of times but never actually done it?

When you obey is when you learn the reality!

Becoming a disciple and getting your life into spiritual shape have some of the same elements, but you need to do them to see the difference, and you don't do them as a means of earning something. When you practice solitude and silence and scripture meditation and fasting and worship and fellowship, you realize that all these things make a true and meaningful difference. You also eventually learn that God's grace is the glue that binds everything together. You aren't performing these important duties to earn righteousness; you are resting on the grace of God while you do them. Grace is not opposed to effort, but it is opposed to earning. In future lessons, we will spend some wonderful time in [Luke 15:11-32](#) learning about the father of two sons and how grace triumphs over, and is anathema to, earning the heavenly father's love. How the father's grace in this parable IS the gospel.

Jesus said that if an apprentice abides in his word, then that one is his apprentice indeed ([John 15:1-10](#)). As a bonus, that same abiding one also knows the truth that makes him free ([John 8:31-36](#)). The contact with reality is where obedience to Jesus comes into play.

When you put Jesus' words into practice then you truly abide in him. This is not a non-stop bible study, but an actual boots-on-the-ground action. When you put Jesus' words into practice, then you realize that God is up to something, and you are a participating member of the divine conspiracy along with him, and you can't imagine how big it is. The glimpses of how big it is are the "blesseds" of [Matthew 5](#). A Hebrew would state the Beatitudes like this – "Oh the blessedness of those who are . . . ,” in the kingdom of God.

Simply put, you are blessed because the kingdom of God is truly available – now! There is blessedness in being Jesus' disciple, becoming part of his story. Begin today to DO the gospel, and you will find you are in the gospel, and you will BE the gospel to this world.

See you in Lesson #16!

[Note – This lesson can be downloaded in PDF format for printing or sharing]