

# DISCIPLE

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“Disciple:” noun; learner, pupil, follower. The English dictionary defines a disciple as “one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another: as **a:** one of the twelve in the inner circle of Christ’s followers according to the Gospel accounts **b:** a convinced adherent of a school or individual” (*Webster’s ninth*, p. 360). The word “disciple” appears 29 times in the New Testament; the word “disciples” 244.

## **A Disciple Is A Learner**

Jesus said, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matthew 11:29). A disciple is one who has accepted the Lord’s challenge to know more about Him and His will. The learning can only be accomplished through Bible reading and study and Bible teaching and preaching (1 Timothy 4:13; 2 Timothy 2:15). Jesus also said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me” (John 6:44-45). To Titus Paul wrote, “And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful” (Titus 3:14).

## **A Disciple Is A Follower**

Readers of the New Testament are initially impressed with the response to Jesus’ request by the fishermen at the Sea of Galilee. The apostle Matthew informs us, “And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him” (Matthew 4:18-22). Salvation is realized in following Jesus. Again, Matthew tells us, “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:24-26). Luke adds that taking up one’s cross is a *daily* matter (Luke 9:23).

## **A Disciple Is A Christian**

Did you know that in the eighth century B.C. Isaiah foretold the promises God made to David would be fulfilled in the church of Christ? (Background reading for this observation includes 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Acts 2:29-36; and Isaiah 62:1-2). When both the Jewish people and the Gentile people would be brought into the one body, the church, they would be “called by a new name the mouth of the Lord would name.” The passage which shows this and also shows that a disciple is a Christian is Acts 11:26, “And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church [*this was the first congregation made up of both Jews and Gentiles*], and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”