



LEVEL 1

UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLESHIP

CLASS ONE: INTRODUCTION

THE GOAL OF DISCIPLESHIP CLASS

The goal of the discipleship class is to raise Christ-like disciples. The aim is not to teach everything, but to set disciples on the path of learning. It takes one disciple to raise another disciple. The discipleship programme has five levels with each level having various classes.

INTRODUCTION

The main work Jesus gave to the church is to make Christ-like disciples. What we usually call the Great Commission, does not just deal with the sharing of the Gospel. The sharing of the Gospel is the first step to fulfilling the work of raising Christ-like disciples. In **Matthew 28:16**, Jesus gave the command to His disciples to also make disciples. It is important to note that, it takes someone who has been discipled to raise another disciple. If you have not been discipled, you cannot raise other disciples.

The Initial Call of Jesus

When Jesus was on earth, He preached about the kingdom and spent His life raising disciples. If Jesus used discipleship as a tool for kingdom expansion, we have no option but to also use the same tool. This is because, the initial call of Christ to the men He associated with, in His purpose of world evangelization, was a call to discipleship.

The call shows how Jesus wants us to be followers (disciples) of him, so He can make us into what He wants.

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men" [**Mark 1:16–17**].

His initial call was for men to come and follow Him. Before he ascended to heaven, Jesus gave these same men (and to us) the command "Go and make disciples of all nation" [**Matthew 28:19-20**].

Discipleship is a Format.

The reason many people cannot pass on their faith to other people is that, although they know some things about their faith, they have never been discipled and so it is difficult to pass on what they believe. Without being taken through the formal discipleship training, the informal disciple has a problem of passing on formats to another person. What we mean by format here is a systematic way of training people.

Example: Driving schools have a systematic way of training new drivers. Someone who has not been to a driving school can know how to drive, but there will be a problem when he or she has to teach another person how to drive. This is because he/she has not gone through a systematic training process. The same applies to other institutions or schools of learning. A look at universities



shows us that there is a systematic way of raising doctors, lawyers, nurses amongst others. This confirms that there is a need for systematic training of disciples in the Kingdom of God.

Let us always remember that a disciple is a **student** or an **apprentice**. If a disciple is an apprentice, then there should be formal training for him. We can conclude that if there is a format for raising teachers, nurses and doctors, then more importantly, there should be a system for training Christ-like disciples.

IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLESHIP

1. Jesus raised disciples [**Mark 1:16-20**]

When Jesus walked on earth, He raised disciples. Jesus' ministry is a model for us, and if He raised disciples then we also have to raise disciples [**Hebrews 12:2 & 1 John 2:6**]

2. Discipleship is a command from our Lord Jesus [**Matthew 28:18**]. If we are followers of Jesus and we love Him, we will be obedient to His commandments [**John 14:15**].
3. In the early churches, it was a common apostolic practice. The early church used discipleship – [**Acts 6:1 / 6:7 / 9:1 / 9:26**]. A look at these scriptures shows that the early church raised disciples and not just believers.
4. Discipleship expands the ministry. Every disciple has the same mind as the disciple-maker [**Luke 10:1**]. Disciples take the ministry beyond one generation. Moses had a Joshua, Elijah had Elisha and Paul had Timothy. Discipleship allows us to pass the torch to the next generation. One's ministry should not end when he is dead and gone. The Methodist church started by John Wesley was broken down into small cells which allowed for discipleship.

Today, these cells expanded to become branches of the Methodist Church. Therefore, discipleship is an added advantage. Although discipleship looks slow, it works. That is the method Jesus used and we are all here today. Doctors from different universities all over the world work with this same principle. Having a format for discipleship will therefore help us realize the goal of discipleship.

5. Discipleship ensures spiritual growth [**Ephesians 4:13**]. It makes you go deep in your faith. God desires that all His children grow and not remain the same.
6. Discipleship ensures that a believer becomes an effective witness of Jesus Christ [**Acts 11:26 | Acts 1:8**].

THE GOAL OF DISCIPLESHIP

The goal of all discipleship is to raise Christ-like disciples. Once somebody is born again, the person begins the journey of becoming more and more like Christ. People are not saved to become better versions of themselves or to become like pastors or other believers. They are saved to become more and more like Christ. The standard for our growth is Christ. He is the measure of Christianity [**Ephesians 4:13/15 | Romans 8:29 | 1 John 2:6 | Luke 6:40 | 2 Cor 3:18 | 1 Cor 11:1 | Col 1:28-29**].



If the standard of our growth or the goal of all discipleship is Christ-likeness, then we must note that all resources given to us (the body of Christ) must go into this project.

DISCIPLESHIP IS A PROCESS

Discipleship is the personal commitment to obey imitate and follow Jesus until you become like Him. This is an ever-increasing commitment. To become a convert is instantaneous but to become a disciple is a lifelong process. It is not a single-step process. One must commence a walk of discipleship in a moment, but the first step must lengthen into a lifelong walk.