



LEVEL 5

MARKS OF A TRUE DISCIPLE



CLASS 1

SURRENDER



INTRODUCTION

As followers of Jesus, our goal should be to become like Him. There would be a transformation in our hearts that would begin to manifest on the outside.

“And when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch” [Acts 11:26].

The disciples were first called Christians by the watching world. A true disciple does not have to introduce himself. He would be identified by others. There are some marks of the true follower of Jesus. Jesus is our standard for growth. When we look at Jesus carefully, we would see some obvious marks that make Him who He is.



SURRENDER

Jesus called His disciples to come and follow Him [Matthew 4:18–22]. To be a disciple is to be a follower. The disciples left all that they were doing to be able to follow Jesus. They had to leave what identified them to have a new identity: followers of Jesus. In following Jesus, we must know that those identities we had previously must be left behind. We cannot be true followers of Jesus when we have not surrendered.



***“To surrender to
Jesus is to yield to
the leadership of
Jesus”***



WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR JESUS TO BE LORD?

A Lord is a controller, master, director. It just does not end with a title. He must be Lord in reality. He must be Lord in our lives daily. Many profess Christianity but few really have Jesus as Lord, Master, Controller or Director.

Paul was a surrendered follower of Jesus.

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” [Galatians 2:20].

Paul said it is no longer I who live. God now lived through Paul. Jesus was his master.



***“If Jesus lives in
us, then we must
give control of our
lives to Him”***



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SURRENDER?

The first stage of surrender is when one gives up his old way of life to follow Jesus. This is when one forsakes the things of this world to follow Christ. It does not end there. The whole life of a disciple is a life of surrender. Every day a disciple lives, he must surrender to the leadership of Jesus.

“And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again” [2 Corinthians 5:15].



To Surrender to Jesus Is to Live for Him.

He must be the reason why we do what we do. Our plans and decisions must show that we are living for Him. We must not live for Jesus only during certain seasons of our lives. A disciple of Jesus lives for Him every day. Every day of our lives belongs to Jesus so we must live for Him every day. To live for Jesus is to have Jesus as our motive for everything we do.

No environment or condition must determine whether we live for Him or not. Our private and public lives must be surrendered to Jesus.

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him” [Colossians 3:17].



All we do must be done because of Him. All we do must have one goal – Jesus! Jesus must be the motivation for all we do.

“As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received” [Ephesians 4:1].

Paul identified himself as a prisoner of the Lord. He introduced himself this way. He chose to tell everyone that he was surrendered to Christ. If we are prisoners of God, every moment of our lives must belong to Jesus.



To Surrender is to Put Your Life at His Disposal.

“For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. 8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord” [Romans 14:7–8].

We belong to the Lord; we are His. If we are His, then He should be able to do with us anything He chooses to do with us. Placing our lives at His disposal is saying “YES” to God every single day. It is saying, Lord, you can do anything and everything you want to do with me today.

No matter our level of maturity, we must continue to surrender to Him. Surrender is not only for new believers or new disciples. Surrender is for every disciple of Jesus. To surrender is to yield to someone or something. We must yield to Jesus every day of our lives.





CLASS 2

FAITH TOWARDS GOD



SELF-DENIAL

One fruit of a surrendered life is self-denial. Self-denial is for all believers who have chosen to follow Jesus.

[Luke 9:23–24].

One mark of a true disciple is self-denial. Many people want to follow Jesus but do not want any form of commitment. Following Jesus would require us to leave our comfort zones. It would require us to do things He expects of us even when we do not feel like it. Jesus commands us in the above verse to deny ourselves daily. Self-denial is for every season of our lives.



***“To follow Jesus is to
deny ourselves of
who we are in the
flesh each day”***



We must die to who we are in the flesh each day. To be a disciple would mean a daily denial of who we are so we can look more like our master and standard – Jesus. The more we look like Jesus, the more it is required that we deny ourselves even when it is hard and it looks like we cannot bear the pain.

Self-denial is hard, but the more we deny ourselves, the easier it becomes to deny ourselves. We must deny ourselves so we can pray more, spend more time reading his word and also fast more. We must deny ourselves so we can obey God. To deny ourselves is to choose what the Spirit of God wants over what the flesh wants at each point in time.

A true disciple must beat his body and bring it under subjection (surrender) always. We must be able to deny our bodies pleasure so that we can obey God always.

[1 Corinthians 9:25–27].



CROSS BEARING

The call to discipleship is a call to carry a cross. Each believer has a cross to carry. There is no Christianity without the cross. "Then He said to them all:

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me" [Luke 9:23].

The cross speaks of persecution, labour or sufferings we have to bear because we are followers of Jesus. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, [2 Timothy 3:12]. Jesus carried His cross to fulfil His assignment. We must also carry our crosses individually if we are going to fulfil our assignments. [Matthew 10:38].



We cannot call ourselves disciples if we do not carry our cross. The cross is a must for every believer. We must not stop following Jesus because of the cross. God would give us the grace to carry every cross that comes our way. There are some sufferings a believer is permitted to go through. This suffering comes about because we choose to obey God.

We do not suffer because we have sinned but because we are on the path of obedience. [1 Peter 2:19–20].



***“Christ Jesus
suffered leaving an
example for us”***



“To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.” [1 Peter 2:21]. The cross is never a pleasant thing to carry, but it has eternal rewards.

“If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us;” [2 Timothy 2:12].

One day Jesus would reward all believers who suffered for His namesake.





CLASS 3

OBEDIENCE



Jesus is our standard for growth. Jesus lived a life of obedience to His Father. If Jesus lived a life of obedience, then we also have to live a life of obedience. **[John 14:31].**

Jesus said that a proof of His love for His father was obedience to God. A proof of our love for God is seen in obedience. Obedience is however not possible when we are not surrendered totally to Him.

OBEDIENCE IS POSSIBLE!

It is possible to live a life of true obedience to Jesus.

The one who sent me is with me; He has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases Him [John 8:29].

Jesus always did those things that pleased His Father, we can also do those things that always please Him. Jesus did not obey the father only in some seasons, He obeyed Him in every season.



Noah and His Obedience to God

“Noah did everything just as God commanded him” [Genesis 6:22].

“And Noah did all that the Lord commanded him” [Genesis 7:5].

Obedience in Little Things

If we do not obey God in the little things He tells us to do, we cannot obey Him in the big things. We must never look down on any assignment God gives us, no matter how small the assignment is. We must learn to obey God daily and in the little things



***“Obedience is a
guarantee for
carrying His presence”***



Obedience ensures that we carry the presence of God.

The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him. [John 8:29].

Jesus said the father was with Him because he always did what pleased the Father. He always obeyed what His father told Him. If we want God to always be with us we must learn to do what He tells us always.

If you want to ensure that God's presence is with you always, then walk in continuous obedience



Difficulty of Obedience

Obedience is not easy, the closer we get to God the greater obedience He demands from us. It was not easy for Abraham to take Isaac and offer him as a sacrifice. **[Genesis 22:2]**. It was not easy for Jesus to be left alone by all the disciples and His father and also die on the cross.



Why Obedience Is Not Easy

1. Because God normally requires that which we are not able to give out easily. Abraham was asked to take his only son, whom he loved.
2. Because our flesh would always oppose what God has called us to do. A lot of things might have been on Abraham's mind when God asked him to give up his son. It is possible he did not sleep the whole night before setting off. There must have been a battle on his mind during the three-day journey.
3. Because God does not give all the details when He calls us. Abraham was asked to go to a place where God was going to show him. He had to wait for further details while following God daily.



Obedience is necessary for maturity:

I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go. [John 21:18].





CLASS 4

FELLOWSHIP AND INTIMACY WITH GOD



FELLOWSHIP

To have fellowship means to have something in common with others; to partake of something with others. The Christian life was never intended to be lived alone. The more we get to know God, the more we would want to have fellowship with other believers. True maturity is seen in our ability to live as a family with other believers. **[Acts 2:41–44]**.

The early church had all things in common and did things together. They had consistent fellowship with one another. We must never think we know enough to be on our own. **[Hebrews 10:25]**.

A true disciple with focus has fellowship with other disciples. God desires that all should be one. **[John 17:21]**.



What Happens When We Fellowship with Other Believers?

- We are strengthened by the testimonies of others
- We are also able to encourage other people
- We can care for each other through fellowship. [1 Corinthians 12:25]
- We can do more for the body of Christ and the kingdom of God through fellowship [Ephesians 4:16]
- We can bear the burdens of others and others are also able to bear our burdens with us. [1 Corinthians 12:26]
- We grow to a certain level only when we have fellowship with others. No matter how much one knows, he does not know everything. [Ephesians 4:15]



INTIMACY WITH GOD

God desires an intimate love relationship, which grows with time, with all His disciples. As disciples of Christ, we must know that God has called us into a love relationship with Him. The highest calling in life is to be called by God unto Himself. There is no better privilege than this.



***“To be loved by God is the
highest relationship; the
highest achievement and
the highest position in life”***



Intimacy ensures great service.

[Mark 3:14].

We would be His representatives when our love relationship with Him works.

Everything in our Christian life, everything about knowing Him and experiencing Him, everything about knowing His will depends on the quality of our love relationship with God. If that is not settled, nothing in our life will be right.

We would only be completely fulfilled in a relationship with God. God created us for eternity. Our lifetime on earth provides an opportunity to be acquainted with Him.



Knowing God's love for us helps our relationship with Him to flourish as it is supposed to be. We must know the extent of His love for us. In the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has forever convinced us that He loves us. We must look at situations against the backdrop of the cross. God's love for us was settled on the cross.

Every disciple must place a high value on his/her relationship with God. Nothing else must take the place of this relationship.



***A disciple's relationship
with God is the most
important in His life.***





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