

# Essentials of Discipleship

## Chapter 1 – What is a Disciple?

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**Resource:** Essentials of Discipleship by Francis Cosgrove published by Roper Press in 1988.

*This short 12 chapter book outlines eleven essentials of what a disciple of Jesus Christ is and how each disciple should become a disciple-making disciple. These study guides offer an outline of the book with some questions to be used in reviewing and discussing the content. Each student will need to obtain and read the book as well. After the initial chapters titled: What is a Disciple? & The Disciple is a Learner; the author reviews the Lordship of Jesus Christ which is the umbrella for the remaining nine essentials or characteristics of a disciple.*

**FIRST STEP: Review the first document titled: *The Wheel (Navigator Discipleship Tool)*. Discuss how Christ is in the center and what it means to have Christ as the center of your life.**

- I. Introduction: A disciple is to become a disciple-making disciple which is the key to fulfillment of the Great Commission.

### **Topical Memory System (TMS) – Categories & Verses**

*We encourage scripture memory work with this discipleship training program. There are 12 verses (D1 –D12) from section D of the TMS (Be Christ's Disciple) offered by the Navigators. If your trainer doesn't give you a set of these cards, print each of the 12 sheets offered on the website on thick paper or even cardstock and cut into 2.75" x 4.25" cards. Use only 4 cuts to produce 8 sets of cards. Use one set for yourself and the others to give to your trainees, family or friends to encourage memory of God's Word. You will be doing them a great favor.*

### **TMS D1 – BE CHRIST'S DISCIPLE – Put Christ First for Chapter 1 (Matthew 6:33)**

1. The first requirement is to sign and submit the Essentials of Discipleship (EOD) Agreement.
2. This initial chapter is an overview of the remaining 11 sessions containing the qualifications or characteristics of a disciple – what we prefer to call a disciple-making disciple. The fact is God calls a person to himself and to become a disciple – a follower of Christ. We have the privilege and honor of making (training) to fulfill the Great Commission –  
*Matthew 28:19-20 New International Version (NIV) "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,<sup>and</sup> teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

### **II. A Biblical Profile of a Disciple (an overview of the eleven essentials / characteristics)**

1. A Disciple is a Learner  
A disciple is open and teachable by the Lord and others (even by new believers in the faith). He or she does not have all the answers and is open to rebuke when essential.
2. The Lordship of Jesus Christ  
The true disciple knows that Jesus Christ has the right of ownership over us.
3. Purity of Life  
If we yield to the Lordship of Christ, we seek to separate from sin as much as possible. Note that we will always be sinful as Jesus Christ was the only sinless person. We are not to behave as the world behaves.
4. Devotions and Prayer  
The true disciple develops in a commitment to regular devotions and a prayer life. Prayer is the voice of your life. Your prayers reveal where you are spiritually. Your prayers reflect your intimacy with God.

5. The Importance of the Bible  
The true test you are a disciple is being faithful (consistent) to the hearing, reading, studying, memorizing and meditation of Scriptures (God's Word). Don't just listen to the Word, write down what you are reading, hearing and seeking to apply to make changes in your life. Communicate to God, yourself and others what you are learning from your studies. (Yes, it is ok to talk to and with yourself or more appropriately to your spirit indwelt by the Holy Spirit).
6. The Primacy of Evangelism  
A disciple must know how to give her or his testimony (telling others what life was like prior to Jesus Christ and what life is like after accepting the Lordship of Christ). A disciple can explain the Gospel (Good News of God's saving Grace through redemption by the payment of our sins via the death of Christ on the Cross). A disciple confirms faith in Christ and shares his or her faith without hesitation with others, especially those not yet believers.
7. The Church and Body Life  
Starting with the early Church mentioned in the book of Acts, disciples formed churches to worship and fellowship and as a base for evangelism and service. Evangelism is the simple proclamation of the Good News. Disciples seek to strengthen, encourage and equip others to become disciples with some becoming disciple-making disciples. Disciples seek to plant and develop new churches by appointing approved trained responsible leaders. Christian fellowship via God's Church with worship and fellowship is part of God's Plan for His people whether we fully understand this or not. We need to go to Worship with the willingness to offer ourselves as a sacrifice of Praise. Unfortunately, many go to Worship Services to be entertained.
8. Christian Fellowship  
All Christians are called to maintain fellowship with other believers – not just those from the same church. Disciples work for the visible unity of all believers. We do this to move the cause or mission of Christ and His Church (people) forward.
9. The Disciple is a Servant  
The disciple is active in service to others. (Memorize Mark 10:45). Most of us seek to be served rather than serve others. We seek to serve with availability and a humble attitude with Jesus as our model.
10. The Ministry of Giving  
A disciple must be giving to the Lord's work (honoring God with our money which is a measurement of our priorities and our time). This is what it takes to build or advance God's Kingdom. The Church (those who are believers) seeks to proclaim the Gospel message and help the needy.
11. The Fruit of the Spirit  
The qualities of a disciple's growth in a personal relationship with Jesus will be evident in his or her life, actions and attitudes. These are mentioned as the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. These represent the inner working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. If present, they will be seen by everyone without any effort on your part. This is proof of one's status as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

### III. Conclusion

The goal of becoming a disciple of Christ with these and other Biblical characteristics is that we will attract others to the Lord our Savior by the way our lives look. People without peace and joy will want to know the reason for your peace and joy. Evangelism or inviting others to consider accepting the lordship of Jesus Christ will become much easier. The next eleven sessions will review the eleven essentials or characteristics of a disciple. We study next that a Disciple is a Learner and then the Lordship of Christ. After that, the remaining nine characteristics define what it means to be under the Lordship of Christ.