

Acts 2:42 *They were continually devoting themselves  
to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship,  
to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*

## What Is a Disciple?

- The title “Christian,” while very common today, is not the normal descriptor used in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>
- The term Jesus Himself uses most often is “disciple.”
  - A disciple/Christian is becoming like Jesus (Matthew 10:24,25).
  - A disciple/Christian regards Jesus above family, possessions, and life (Mark 8:34; Luke 12:22; 14:26,27,33).
  - A disciple/Christian makes other disciples/Christians (Matthew 28:18-20; John 15:8).
  - A disciple/Christian keeps Jesus’ words (John 8:31; Acts 6:7).
  - A disciple/Christian loves all other disciples (John 13:35; Acts 11:29).
- The first step in being a disciple is following a Master, or Teacher.
  - Following Jesus involves a cross and a loss:  
*Matthew 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.  
16:25 For whoever wishes to save his life [τὴν ψυχὴν] will lose it; but whoever loses his life [τὴν ψυχὴν] for My sake will find it. 16:26 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul [τὴν δὲ ψυχὴν]? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul [τῆς ψυχῆς]?”*
  - We cannot walk our own way or the way of everyone else in the world and follow Christ. Following the way of the LORD (as described in the O.T.) or

<sup>1</sup> The title “Christian” occurs in Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16.

being a disciple of Christ (as described in the N.T.) means we have left following our own path or the path of the world and are now – with all the true Church – following Christ together.

- The language of the N.T. on obeying Christ’s commands is extensive and can’t be ignored: John 14:15,21; 15:14; Acts 5:32; 6:7; Romans 1:5; 6:16,17; 10:16; 15:18; 16:26; 2 Thessalonians 1:8; Hebrews 5:9; 1 Peter 1:2,22; 1 John 5:3.

## Discipleship Requires Teachers

- God Himself has ordained that there be teachers in the Church (1 Corinthians 12:27,28; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7). They are not teachers based upon their own knowledge or experience, but ONLY to the extent that they convey the teachings of the ONE TEACHER Jesus Christ (Matthew 23:8).
- One of the main responsibilities we have as the Church is to be a “school of Christ.” Fulfilling the Great Commission is to “*go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...teaching them to observe all that [Christ] commanded you*” (Matthew 28:19,20). Anything less than being disciples (learners and followers) of Christ and teaching others to be the same is to fail the Great Commission.
  - Ultimately every believer has some responsibility as a disciple-maker or teacher. The letter to the Hebrews, written to not just leaders but a group of believers, says, “*by this time you ought to be teachers*” (5:12). Why weren’t they? A failure in discipleship; they refused to grow deeper in Christ beyond the basics.
- *Luke 6:40* “*A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher.*” The ultimate goal of all teaching and discipleship in the Church is Christ-likeness. The primary and biblically-ordained way this is accomplished is through the

organized meeting of the Church  
(1 Corinthians 14:26-40).

## **The Seriousness of Forsaking the Assembly (Hebrews 10:9-39)**

### **The Nature of This Second Covenant (10:9-18)**

### **The Confidence of the New Covenant (10:19-24)**

### **The Warning of the New Covenant (10:25-39)**

- In this entire section there is warning against a single sin:  
“...not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some...” (10:25). Removing one’s self from the regular meeting of the Church for discipleship, observance of the Lord’s Supper, corporate praise, and prayer is regarded by God as much more serious than we ourselves regard it today.
- In 10:26, the writer speaks of those who “go on sinning willfully.” What is the only sin that has been mentioned (10:25)?
- When a person removes themselves from the regular meeting of the Church, it is a sign...
  - ...of a confession that is wavering (10:23).
  - ...of someone “who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace” (10:29).
  - ...of someone who has thrown away their confidence (10:35).
  - ...of someone who shrinks “back to destruction” (10:39).

### **Our Claims vs. the Truth of God’s Word**

- We will claim that a person can be a Christian and not be part of the Church. We will claim that a person can be a Christian and “take a break from Church.”
- This is contrary to the Word of God. We don’t attend the gathering of the Church to earn our salvation, but

those who are truly saved cannot help but be a present part of the Body of Christ.

- “Walking in fellowship with Jesus Christ, we covenant to engage in personal devotions. We will faithfully participate in worship experiences provided by the congregation. We recognize our need to grow in knowledge of God and to faithfully participate in opportunities of Christian development.”<sup>2</sup>

## **Our Challenge**

- Taken from the I.H.B.C. Covenant, we should make sure we are availing ourselves of every opportunity for discipleship:
  1. “...we covenant to engage in **personal devotions.**” We should make time every day for interaction with God’s Word through the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit.
  2. “We will faithfully participate in worship experiences provided by the congregation.” This **time together in Sunday’s gathering** reinforces our collective calling to unity, our identity as a single Body, and a re-setting of our collective “compass” to a single point – the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).
  3. “We recognize our need to grow in knowledge of God and to faithfully participate in opportunities of Christian development.” Our **small groups** (Sunday School classes and Bible Studies) are invaluable training times for us as disciples.
- Discipleship is not optional for the believer in Jesus Christ!

---

<sup>2</sup> I.H.B.C. Constitution (IV, “Covenant”).