

Seven Proofs of Discipleship

Roger Kendall—August 2014

The ending in Matt. 28 is the time just before Christ ascended to His Father, and He gave an edict to the disciples, and that is to *go forth and make disciples*.

Matthew 28:18: “And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go *and* make disciples in all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, *even* until the completion of the age.’ Amen” (vs 18-20). We see that they were to make disciples, but:

- What are the proofs of discipleship?
- What is the ‘litmus test’ of someone who is a true disciple to one who is a false disciple?

In the world today many claim that they are a disciple or a Christian, that they are a follower of Jesus Christ. Are they really? When you examine the evidence for their claim you find, first of all, that they follow the traditions of men! They don’t follow the Word of God, they come up with their own conniptions and ideas of how *they are* going to worship God, and they expect God to honor that.

Beyond that, they do not do what He tells them to do in the Scriptures. Yet, they claim that they are a follower of Christ and they are Christians.

Ezek. 33 is some background. In the Old Testament the prophets basically dealt with the same problem. We will see that Ezekiel makes a statement which is really apropos for today:

Ezekiel 33:30: “And you, son of man, the children of your people are still talking about you by the walls, and in the doors of the houses, and speaking to one another, each man to his brother, saying, ‘I pray you, come and hear what is the word, which comes forth from the LORD.’ And they come to you as the people come, and they sit before you *as* My people, and they hear your words. **But they will not do them.** For with their mouth they show much love, *but* their heart goes after their covetousness. And lo, you *are* to them as a singer of love songs *with* a beautiful voice, and able to play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them” (vs 30-32).

Here we see a factor. They claim that they’re coming to hear the Word of God and worship Him; but they don’t worship Him in the manner that God instructs.

Isaiah 29:13: “And the LORD said, ‘Because this people draws near *Me* with their mouth, and with their lips honor Me, **but their worship of Me is made up of the traditions of men learned by rote**, and their fear toward Me is *taught* by the commandments of men.’”

Some people may call Jesus *Lord*, they may attend their Sunday services, they may keep their traditions of Christmas and Easter, but they seek their own way. They are seeking a way that is not in the Scriptures. They seek a way that is according to their own thinking.

Jesus Christ addressed people like this, as well. We can see that Christ clearly point out that there are people out there who claim they’re ‘true’ Christians or disciples of His, yet, He claims that He ‘never knew them.’

Matthew 7:21: “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who *is* in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?’ And then **I will confess to them, ‘I never knew you.** Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness” (vs 21-23). A little bit reminiscent of what happened in Matt. 25 with the foolish virgins.

Verse 24: “Therefore, everyone who **hears these words of Mine and practices** them... [If we know the Truth and we don’t practice it, what good is it?] ...I will compare him to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock”—symbolic of a firm foundation. Our firm foundation is Christ! (1-Cor. 10—He is our Rock).

Verse 25: “and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not practice them shall be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it” (vs 25-27).

Here we see a comparison of a wise man *vs* a foolish man: one who knew the Truth and practiced it, seeking to do God’s will *and* the foolish one, thinking that they knew the Truth, but practiced ***their own way***, built upon sand.

What identifies a true disciple of Jesus Christ?

- will be doing the will of Jesus Christ
- will be obeying His Word
- will be learning Truth and practicing it
- will be following the teachings and examples of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

—because a disciple wants to become like his Master, truly in his heart wants to become like his Master Jesus Christ.

The key thing about hearing and doing is that we are fulfilling God's will, His plan and purpose. That is something that most Christianity in the world doesn't even come close to understanding or perceiving, *the true will and purpose of God!* Of course, we know why that is the case, because of the lack of faith and the Holy Spirit.

Romans 12:2: "Do not conform yourselves to this world... [a true disciple does not get bogged down with the things of this world] ...but be transformed by the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove what *is* well pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God."

This is an element that identifies a true follower of Jesus Christ: ***one who seeks the Truth, who keeps it because they want to do God's will and fulfill His purpose!*** When one makes themselves a follower of Jesus Christ—a true Christian, one who serves the Lord—it makes them an enemy of Satan the devil. Satan hates *true* Christians. He hates mankind, but he hates *true* Christians with a passion.

One of the things that he does to attack us is that he brings accusations right before God's throne about us; he accuses us, the true people of God—the saints of God—to being unfaithful and untrue. We can see that this is a tactic that Satan uses to undermine and to cause disruption in any way that he can in our lives.

Revelation 12:10: "And I heard a great voice in heaven say, 'Now has come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ because the accuser of our brethren has been cast down, who accuses them day and night before our God.'"

When you read this Scripture it's kind of strange. Why would Satan even bother to accuse the true saints of God? But he does that; he's probably done that down all through time. What he does is that he tries to—in a hypothetical sense—put us on trial, to bring us into court before God and the heavenly angels and charge us with not being a *true* Christian, not being a *true* disciple.

He attempts to bring charges saying that we're not faithful, we're still sinning, we're not true to our covenant, we speak but do not do. In other

words he uses the same arguments that we see in the world to discredit us before the very throne of God.

I'd like you picture in your mind a trial scene. We are the accused that are on trial, and the charges that you're not a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Satan is the prosecuting attorney, Jesus Christ is our Defender and He is our High Priest in heaven Who defends us, and Who is the One Who is there to help us. God the Father is the Judge.

Satan makes his case coming forth, and it's straightforward that we are not true disciples of Jesus Christ because we still continue in sin, we basically do not fulfill our covenant pledge, we fall down and get mixed up with the world and we just are not doing it, we just don't meet the standards that we need to be meeting. We're just hypocrites, we're just speaking the words, but we're not living the life.

Of course, these words are false, but are they? Are there some elements that maybe he's hitting some sore spots? *We have to answer that!* But God has given us grace through Jesus Christ. But Satan puts that aside and attacks us vehemently, trying to undermine us before Jesus Christ and God the Father.

You know, it's not going to work! It is a ploy, a tactic that he uses, but he will claim that because we are unfaithful and not being loyal disciples of Jesus Christ that we have no claim to the Tree of Life or to eternal life.

So, he rests his case. He's done! He makes his claims! Now we must stand up and we must defend the fact that *we are* a true disciple of Jesus Christ, and be able to show that the allegations and the false claims of Satan the devil are but poppycock, they're just foolish illusions to a mind that's truly seeped in sin and in death.

Can we prove that we are a true disciple of Jesus Christ? Every one of us should be able to do that. So, we're going to go over seven basic truths/proofs that will establish and identify an individual as being a true disciple of Jesus Christ. If all are practicing and part of these proofs, then we have no worry or concern about Satan the devil and his accusations before God.

With the help of Jesus Christ and His Word—the Word of God—and we're going to see that Jesus Christ Himself identifies the traits and the characteristics of those who are His. If we go to those passages and read them, and if we can apply them to ourselves, brethren, then we will know that we are a *true* disciple of Jesus Christ.

Proof #1—A true disciple must be in covenant with God the Father and Jesus Christ

How we enter into covenant with God is through *repentance and baptism*, but that has to be true and done according to God's Word. There has to be true repentance before baptism.

Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

When we repent of our sins and when we accept Christ as our personal Savior, by whose death our sins are forgiven. But it has to be sincere and from the heart. That's why anyone who comes into our fellowship and desires baptism one of the things that we do is try to work with them to be sure that the repentance is authentic and that they accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and recognize the commitment they need to make. It's not just getting dunked in water and thinking that somehow all of your problems are solved.

Baptism, based upon repentance, then we are justified by faith. These are elements we need to understand.

Colossians 2:10: "And you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power... [referring to Jesus Christ] ...in Whom you have also been circumcised with *the* circumcision not made by hands..." (vs 10-11). In other words, this is *the circumcision of the heart!* {note Rom. 2}

"...in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been buried with Him in baptism, by which you have also been raised with *Him* through the inner working of God, Who raised Him from the dead" (vs 11-12).

In the baptism, when we go into the water it's symbolizing our co-death with Jesus Christ (Rom. 6). We rise up out of the water to walk in newness of life. In other words, there is a change in the way that we're going to live based upon repentance.

Each one of these points can be expanded upon into a complete message. As we go through this I do encourage you to expand on these points and look deeper into the Word of God.

Part of repenting is that we need to repent every day; we repent of our sins daily so that we can continue to be under the very grace of God and Jesus Christ.

1-John 1:9: "If we confess our own sins, He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

We can see here, brethren, that repentance is an ongoing process that we need to do every day and recognize that when Satan comes along and says that

we are still sinning, indeed he is correct. But we're not *practicing* sin. It's because of the weakness of the flesh, because we're not yet perfected in love and in Jesus Christ. But we're getting there; we're growing.

In the covenant oath that you made at baptism it is based upon true repentance and justified by faith, but we make a oath, a pledge to God that we commit our lives completely to Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life by keeping His commandments, His laws, all of His Word. We pledge to keep His laws and love God with all of our heart, soul and being, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. More than that, to continue to grow in grace and knowledge and understanding of our Lord Jesus Christ in preparation for eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

You can see that this all hinges together. It has a purpose! God's plan is to raise up sons and daughters who are going to be instrumental in converting the world during the Millennium.

Proof #2—A true disciple must possess the Holy Spirit

Without the Holy Spirit there can be no growth, knowledge or understanding. The Holy Spirit shows that one has been begotten by God the Father and that they are *His* children, a child of the eternal God; not yet born, but still of a child of the Most High God (1-John 3).

The Holy Spirit is essential. The Holy Spirit is essential because it gives us the power, the very means to be able to overcome sin, to grow in the nature of God the Father and Jesus Christ, to become like Them. That's what growth is about. And to change our very nature from the carnal, selfish being that we are in the flesh to one who is a serving, loving, caring individual who has the love of God in them to serve others, to undergo conversion! ***The Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for conversion!***

Romans 8 is the key aspect of the importance of the Holy Spirit. It's essential for one who is a true disciple.

Romans 8:9: "However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, ***if*** *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you. But if anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him." The Holy Spirit is basically from the Father, but it is also from Jesus Christ. We understand the Holy Spirit be both from the Father and Christ *in us*, therefore, we are at one with both God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Verse 10: "But if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin; however, ***the Spirit is life because of righteousness***. Now, if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead is

dwelling within you, He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwells within you. So then, brethren, we are not debtors to the flesh, to live according to *the* flesh; because if you are living according to *the* flesh, you shall die; but if by *the* Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you shall live” (vs 10-13).

Indeed, it is by the power of the Spirit of God that we are able to overcome sin. That’s the only way we can do it. It’s possible! We can! God makes it possible!

Verse 14: “For as many as are led by *the* Spirit of God, these are *the* sons of God.” We see that we need to have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us to be called a *true disciple of Jesus Christ*.

To point out the need to have the Holy Spirit, to be able to have knowledge and understanding of Who and What God is, His plan, His purpose:

1-Corinthians 2:12: “Now, we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God, so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God; which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in *words* taught by *the* Holy Spirit *in order to* communicate spiritual things by spiritual *means*. But *the* natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand *them* because they are spiritually discerned. However, the one who is spiritual discerns all things, but he himself is discerned by no one. For who has known *the* mind of *the* Lord? Who shall instruct Him? But we have *the* mind of Christ” (vs 12-16).

Brethren, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit we have the potential to have the mind of Christ, to think like He did, to achieve the very things that He wants us to achieve. The Holy Spirit allows us to not only take on the mind of Christ, but to produce the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

A true disciple needs to possess the Holy Spirit. The question is, do you? *Yes, we do!* We are producing the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and we are faithful, loyal and dedicated.

Proof #3—A true disciple will become like his Master

The word *disciple* in the Greek refers to being a pupil or student. A student at the feet of a teacher or master who is teaching and instilling in them the very things that are being imparted.

In this case: Jesus Christ is our Lord and Master, and we are pupils or students at His feet—disciples—learning and growing in the Truth and

knowledge that He wants to impart to us so that we can be like *He is*.

A true disciple will become like his master, it’s essential to being a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ stated that in order to be a disciple one has to strive to become like his master:

Matthew 10:24: “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is sufficient for the disciple **that he become as his teacher** and **the servant as his master**...” (v 24-25). That is the proof that we are speaking about, to become like Jesus Christ.

The key thing is that as God calls us out of this world and gives us His Holy Spirit so that we can become like Christ, to become Christ-like in the way that we live and in the way that we deal with each other, as we love one another and serve and do God’s will. In so doing we are becoming perfected in salvation, being perfected in being converted. Conversion is a word that means *you’re changing from one state to another*. We’re being converted from that of the flesh to that of the spirit.

Luke 6:40: “A disciple is not above his teacher; but **everyone who is perfected shall be like his teacher**.”

In other words, if you desire to be perfected in the Spirit, become like your teacher, become like our Savior Jesus Christ in mind and spirit. In so doing we will become perfected in righteousness. This all comes together. The goal, the perception that a disciple must have is that ‘I want to become like Jesus Christ in every way.’

How did Jesus Christ live His life? We could spend several sermons dealing with the Gospel and how Jesus lived and conducted His life so that we can become like Him. I’m pointing out one thing about the very nature of Jesus Christ here:

John 5:30: “I have no power to do anything of Myself; but as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father Who sent Me.”

Jesus Christ’s very focus was not on His power. He came and said, ‘I have no power, all power comes through God the Father; I seek to do His will not My own will.’ Brethren, that’s the attitude of every disciple of Jesus Christ; to do the will of Jesus Christ and to accomplish His purpose in our lives.

We’re to grow and study the Gospels, and through prayer and meditation look and study the life of Jesus Christ:

- how He lived His life
- how he dealt with different circumstances

So that we might grow in the grace and knowledge of Who and What Jesus Christ is.

2-Peter 3:18: "...be growing in *the* grace and *the* knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..." That's an on-going process, brethren, so that we can become like He is.

1-John 2:3: "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments." We see right away here that obeying God and keeping His commandments is a standard by which we can know if we're a disciple; if we're obeying our Lord and Master and become like He is.

Verse 4: "The one who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him. On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word, truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we are in Him. Anyone who claims to dwell in Him... [being a disciple of Jesus Christ] ...is **obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked**" (vs 4-6).

We are to overlap, absolutely copy and become like Jesus Christ in every way that we can. That's a challenge in the flesh. Christ was in the flesh and while He walked on the earth He set the example of what it was to be a servant of God and we, too, can look at His example.

There many more Scriptures I could turn to, but these are the key ones that point out an important attribute or character of Jesus Christ, *humility*. He was the Creator God and He came to his earth as a humble human being to lay down His life for the sins of the world—from Creator to a sacrifice.

Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus... [we are to grow in the mind of Christ] ...Who, although He existed in *the* form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, *and* was made in *the* likeness of men, *and* took the form of a servant; and being found in *the* manner of man, He humbled Himself, *and* became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross. Therefore, God has also highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him a name, which *is* above every name" (vs 5-9). The very element of humility:

- compassion
- loving kindness
- ready to serve
- lay down His life for His friends

These are just some of the attributes of Jesus Christ that we need to mimic and follow.

John 15:12: "This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for

his friends. You are My friends, if you do whatever I command you" (vs 12-14).

You could also call *friends* here *disciples*. A disciple is truly a friend. He's saying that a *true disciple* is going to be doing service and laying down one's life for others.

Verse 15: "No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father." The key here is to recognize that we are to become like Christ and develop His mind, character, attributes and be full of righteousness and truth.

Ephesians 4:17: "So then, I declare and testify this in *the* Lord that you are no longer to walk even as the rest of *the* Gentiles are walking, in *the* vanity of their minds, having *their* understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their hearts" (vs 17-18).

Brethren, this is where we came from. This is probably where we started. We were ignorant, sinning and against God in so many different ways. God called us and changed our whole focus and gave us His Spirit.

Verse 19: "They have cast off all feelings, *and* have given themselves up to licentiousness, to work every uncleanness with insatiable desire. But you have not so learned Christ; if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, according to *the Truth* in Jesus: That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth" (vs 19-24).

This is what a true disciple will be doing, transforming himself, changing, putting on the very likeness of Christ in all that he does. That's a challenge to all of us. We live in the flesh, yet, we're given the instructions to put off the old man and put on Jesus Christ, become like He is.

Proof #4—A true disciple will continue in His Word

John 8:30: "As He spoke these things, many believed in Him. Therefore, Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in Him, **'If you continue in My Word, you are truly My disciples.'**" (vs 30-31). Continuing in the Word means to *practice*, to *do*, to *obey* the commandments, laws, statutes, judgments that God gives us in His word, both from the Old Testament and the New Testament, and to recognize that the entire Bible is a manual on how to live, how

to conduct ourselves, how to be able to make the changes in our lives so that we can continue in His Word. Christ is *the Way, the Truth and the Life*.

Matthew 4:4: “But He answered *and* said, ‘It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of *the* mouth of God.”’” Clearly showing that we must be zealous and fulfill the words of God in our own lives. We must be truly obeying the commandments from the heart; not just in the letter, but in the spirit and recognizing that by doing so, it will begin to change us and mold us.

This was the same admonition that God gave to Israel. The children of Israel were called out by God to become a very special people. God made a covenant with them, not based upon the Holy Spirit, but based upon His grace and mercy through making them a special nation. Speaking to them and also speaking to us today:

Deuteronomy 30:15: “Behold, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil.” This points out that we have free moral choice. We can chose to do good or choose to do evil. We always have that choice before us; God never takes that away.

Verse 16: “In that **I command you**... [not a suggestion] ...this day to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments so that you may live and multiply...” The blessings that come from obedience. We know that. We’re living examples of that.

“...And the LORD your God shall bless you in the land where you go to possess it. But if your heart turn away so that you will not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods and serve them, I denounce to you this day that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days on the land where you pass over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, choose life, so that both you and your seed may live, that you may love the LORD your God, *and* may obey His voice, and may cleave to Him; for He is your life and the length of your days, so that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob—to give it to them” (vs 16-20).

Again, we can see the parallel of Israel of old and us today. The instruction here are still valid for us to be able to walk in the Truth and to keep His Word. That’s a sign that we are a *true disciple*.

(go to the next track)

As we study God’s Word, apply it and live it, we truly will be growing spiritually.

Psalms 119 reflects the very attitude that Jesus Christ had toward the Law of God. Of course, this should be the attitude of a disciple of Jesus Christ toward the Law of God. This is a key Psalm to study in order to understand deeply the importance in walking the Word of God and keeping His way of life; keeping God’s laws and commandments.

Psalms 119:1: “Blessed are the undefiled in the way...” The way of life that God gives us through His laws, commandments, love and grace.

“...who walk in the Law of the LORD. Blessed are they who keep His testimonies and who seek Him with the whole heart” (vs 1-2). This is not just some half-hearted effort. This has to be complete devotion and dedication.

Verse 3: “They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways. We walk in newness of life; we strive to practice righteousness and to flee the evil, and not to comply to the lusts of the flesh. You have commanded us to keep Your **precepts** diligently” (vs 3-4).

This word *precepts* actually means principles or thoughts; the principles and thoughts of God. We are to even go into that to keep *His* thoughts and *His* ways.

Verse 5: “O that my ways were directed to keep Your statutes! Then I shall not be ashamed when I have respect unto all Your commandments. I will praise You with uprightness of heart when I have learned Your righteous judgments” (vs 5-7)

You can go all through this Psalm and you just pick up more and more regarding the keeping of God’s laws and His ways.

Verse 105: “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” It’s like having a big spotlight. In other words, it shows your path so you know where to put your feet, so that you’re not going to walk into the swamp or quicksand; you’re going to walk on the solid path that leads to the Kingdom of God.

Verse 106: “I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep Your righteous ordinances.”

This whole attitude that David had truly is one of a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Proof #5—A true disciple of Christ will bear much fruit

We are aware that God expects us to use the Holy Spirit that He gives us to produce the fruit of righteousness, the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Let’s read what Christ tells us about bearing much fruit.

John 15:1: “I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit; but He cleanses each one that bears fruit, in order that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you. Dwell in Me, and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can* you bear fruit unless you are dwelling in Me” (vs 1-4).

How do we bear fruit? *By being connected to Jesus Christ*: our Master, Lord and Savior, King and Master. If we’re dwelling in Him and He is dwelling in us we have the potential to bear much fruit.

Verse 5: “I am the vine, *and* you *are* the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up; and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are burned. If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you. In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples” (vs 5-8).

We have to show proof in our lives that we truly are converted, that we have the Holy Spirit. The fruits of the Spirit are found in Gal. 5:22-23^[transcriber’s correction]. Are we continuing to grow:

- in love?
- in peace?
- in joy?
- in faith?
- in patience?
- in kindness?
- in goodness?
- in meekness?
- in self-control?

These are the fruits of the Spirit. Brethren, these are things that we can work on every day, every week, every year. Examine our garden and see if those fruits are being produced in our spiritual lives. If they’re not, we need to get to work. There’s so much to be said about this, but we just need to recognize that ***we will be known by our fruits whether we are a disciple or not a disciple!***

Matthew 7:17: “In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree produce good fruit” (vs 17-18).

This is kind of obvious from a farming point of view, but on the other hand, Jesus is talking about what’s in the heart, the very core and being a of a person in terms of the fruit that they are producing.

Verse 19: “Every tree *that* is not producing good fruit is cut down and is cast into the fire. Therefore, you shall assuredly know them by their fruits” (vs 19-20). He was talking about *false* prophets, but we can apply it to true disciples of Jesus Christ. ***You will be known by the fruits of your life!***

That’s what people see. If you’re not showing the fruits then they’ll know that, but if you show the fruits of God’s Spirit they will recognize it. They may not necessarily apply it to God the Father, but they will see your fruits, and ***we are to give glory to God because of it!*** A true disciple of Jesus Christ will be known for producing abundant fruit.

Proof #6—A true disciple will give up all things for His Master and Lord

When we counsel people for baptism we go over a topic called *counting the cost*. What that means is that we make sure the individual understands that they are giving their lives to Jesus Christ and God the Father. They no longer own their own lives; they’re in the hands of God. That means that God is *first* in their life; that nothing should stand between them and their relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. They have to recognize that this is what they are covenanting with God:

Luke 14:26: “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.” What is this *hate* part? It means *to love less!* God is first, your life is second and... ***God is first!*** All these others are secondary to your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Verse 27: “And whoever does not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.” Here we see another factor; in giving up all things we have to carry the cross.

What these Scriptures show is that a servant of Jesus Christ puts God first in his life, above all things.

Matthew 6:33: “But *as for* you, **seek first the Kingdom of God**” and His righteousness...” That’s our first priority in life. But also everything that we have we need to forsake them for God. In other words, whatever we own, whatever we have, possess, we must dedicate and commit our lives totally to God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Luke 18:28: “Then Peter said, ‘Behold, we have left everything and have followed You.’” Peter is just responding to what we just talked about. The disciples did; they gave up their families, their occupations, everything that they possessed to follow Jesus Christ as His disciple. They went on

and served God after Christ ascended, preaching the Gospel and taking it to the world.

Verse 29: “And He said to them, ‘Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house, or parents, or brothers, or wife, or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, Who shall not receive manifold more in this time, and in the age that is coming—eternal life’” (vs 29-30).

This is truly an inspiring, very encouraging verse, because we know that God has blessed us in this life more than we would have ever accomplished if we were not in the Church. Do you ever think about that? I look at my own life and WOW what has God done to me? In recognizing me, He has

- protected me
- provided me physically
- provided me financially
- provided me with family

In other words, where would I be without God? *I know that I would not be anywhere near the successful person without Him!* That’s what Christ is saying here.

We see that when you give your life to God in service and in practicing the very way of God and totally putting Him first, there are blessings that come with that.

What about carrying the cross. People are kind of struggling with this. One of the aspects of carrying the cross are the trials and tribulations that we have put upon us because of the world. The world hates God and don’t know God. They will bring all kinds of trials and tribulations upon us, including Satan the devil. Of course, that comes upon us and is part of the cross that we have to bear.

There’s another aspect of carrying the cross deals with the *death of self!* That is self-centeredness, self-aggrandizement, self-importance, pride, arrogance, the idea of being #1, the idea of importance—*the death of self!*

Mathew explains this a little bit differently than what we read in Luke: Matthew 10:37: “The one who loves father or mother more than Me... [putting your father or mother *above* God] ...is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.” It doesn’t mean that we don’t want to love our parents or children. Obviously, we do and we will.

Verse 38: “And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me. The one who has found his life shall lose it; and the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it” (vs 38-39). In other words, we have to lose our self. We have to mortify the selfish desires, the carnality, the

things that we desire, the things that we want, and we put them all aside, we mortify those. We look to God and His will and His purpose.

- God, what should I do?
- What should I strive for?
- What will You have me accomplish in my life?

We give up our lives and if we do that, “...the one who has lost his life for My sake shall find it.” Rom. 6 ties this together and helps us appreciate the challenge that we have to mortify the flesh, to get rid of this carnal element that is self-centered and is focused on self. Paul explains that we are to mortify *the self* (Gal. 5:24^[transcriber’s correction]).

Romans 6:11: “In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be **dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord.**” This kind of puts it in proper context: dead to sin, but alive to Jesus Christ.

Verse 12: “Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof. Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law, but under grace” (vs 12-14).

The point is a true disciple of God will put God the Father and Jesus Christ *first* in their lives, will give up self, serve God in every way that they can to fulfill their very purpose of why they were born.

Proof #7—A true disciple will truly love one another as Christ loved us

John 13:34: “A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you, that *is how* you are to love one another.” We could spend some time talking about how God loves us; we are to do the same to our brother.

Verse 35: “By this shall everyone know that you are My disciples... [this is where Christ gives His stamp to this particular proof]: ...if you love one another.” Again, we are love God above all things, but to love one another as Christ loved us.

1-John 4:7: “Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God.” There is so much in that one Scripture it’s absolutely incredible.

In other words, when we love one another it’s not really our love, it’s the love of God that does it through the Holy Spirit. In other words, God gives

His love so that we in turn can love others. God is behind it. God's grace, His power, is allowing us to do that. It's not our power.

Verse 8: "The one who does not love does not know God because God is love." If we know God, recognizing the details of what God is, knowing that God is love is the greatest attribute of God.

Verse 9: "In this way the love of God was manifested toward us: that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God; rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the* propitiation for our sins. Beloved, **if God so loved us, we also are duty-bound to love one another**" (vs 9-11).

Brethren, we can see that love is the greatest attribute that God has. He wants that to be embedded in us so that we can show the proof that we are truly His, that we are a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Verse 16: "And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love, and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him." Reminiscent of John 17; *God is in us and we are in Him, and we are in Christ!*

Verse 17: "By this *spiritual indwelling*... [Christ in us, God in us; we in Christ] ...**the love of God is perfected within us**, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment because even as He is, so also are we in this world."

We are to truly be a disciples of Jesus Christ and be like He is. The greatest attribute that we can develop is the love of God in us so that we can truly serve, love God and do His will!

I thought this would be a good time to bring this to just help us to appreciate that Satan is accusing us. We can refute his claims that we can now claim these criteria that Christ has laid out for us today. ***We can truly claim to being a true disciple if we are:***

1. ***if*** we are in covenant with God through baptism
2. ***if*** we possess the Holy Spirit showing that we are the children of God
3. ***if*** we are becoming like our Master and Teacher in Holy righteous character
4. ***if*** we are continuing in the Word of our Savior, obeying and keeping His commandments faithfully
5. ***if*** we are bearing much fruit of the Holy Spirit, especially the love of God
6. ***if*** we are willing to give up all things for Christ, even our very lives in dedication to Him
7. ***if*** we are loving one another as God the

Father and Christ loves us

Pretty powerful things here, but yet, this for the Rock of Jesus Christ that we stand on. Brethren, we can have confidence in the day of judgment that ***if we are truly doing these things and fulfilling the very things that God is working in us, we will have no fear that we will not be welcome into the Kingdom of God!***

Scriptural references:

- 1) Matthew 28:11-20
- 2) Ezekiel 33:30-32
- 3) Isaiah 29:13
- 4) Matthew 7:21-27
- 5) Romans 12:2
- 6) Revelation 12:10
- 7) Acts 2:38
- 8) Colossians 2:10-12
- 9) 1 John 1:9
- 10) Romans 8:9-14
- 11) 1 Corinthians 2:12-16
- 12) Matthew 10:24-25
- 13) Luke 6:40
- 14) John 5:30
- 15) 2 Peter 3:18
- 16) 1 John 2:3-6
- 17) Philippians 2:5-9
- 18) John 15:12-15
- 19) Ephesians 4:17-24
- 20) John 8:30-31
- 21) Matthew 4:4
- 22) Deuteronomy 30:15-20
- 23) Psalm 119:1-7, 105-106
- 24) John 15:1-8
- 25) Matthew 7:17-20
- 26) Luke 14:26-27
- 27) Matthew 6:33
- 28) Luke 18:28-30
- 29) Matthew 10:37-39
- 30) Romans 6:11-14
- 31) John 13:34-35
- 32) 1 John 4:7-11, 16-17

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 25
- 1 Corinthians 10
- Romans 2; 6
- 1 John 3
- Galatians 5:22-24
- John 17

RK:bo
Transcribed: 12-3-14

Copyright 2014—All rights reserved. Except for brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the written permission of the

copyright owner. This includes electronic and mechanical photocopying or recording, as well as the use of information storage and retrieval systems.