

# The Call to Discipleship

## John 1:35-51

What does it mean to follow Jesus Christ? What does it mean to be His disciple? In verse 43 Jesus told Philip to “follow me.” I want you to see the power and gravity of this statement to Philip from the Messiah. First you need to know the background behind being called to follow by a rabbi. During the period of silence between the Old Testament and the New Testament, there arose a group called the Great Assembly, this was a group of prominent Rabbis who salt to teach the Word of God and led by it. They established the Jewish portion of God’s Word. As a result of their influence in Isarel, the rabbinical system was established that was prevalent in Jesus’ day. The rabbi was the center of the community, their wisdom, their pursuit of God, and Biblical education were the envy of everyone in the community. Children dreamed of becoming a rabbi and parents wanted their children to be rabbis. Can you imagine this? Kids today look up to professional athletes, want their sports trading cards, wear their shoes, etc. Children beginning at the age of 5 years old memorized the Torah, the Old Testament. If they progressed well in their learning of the Old Testament, they could continue in their study to become a rabbi. Around the age of someone going into high school, the student would be questioned by a rabbi to see if they had what it took to continue in the program. If they didn’t the rabbi would pliantly say, “go apply your trade” or go fishermen, carpenter, etc. Often those told this felt like 2<sup>nd</sup> class followers of God because they couldn’t cut it in the rabbinical training system. If the rabbi said, “follow me,” it was an opportunity of a lifetime, to learn, mimic what the rabbi did in every area of their life. So the call to follow a rabbi was the highest calling a person could receive in Jewish culture.

We see this calling in the gospel of Mark, recorded in 1:16-17 *“Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Anderw the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”* How radical was it for God Himself to call a few teenage boys who had been rejected by the system to follow Him. That’s us! We may not make it according to the world’s standards, but God’s abilities to transform us is even greater! What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus Christ?

**1. A disciple sees the glory of Jesus Christ. (John 1:35-37)** When you see the glory of Jesus Christ, you point it out to others! John pointed it out to everyone he came in contact with and two others followed Jesus as a result of John pointing this fact out. Those who see the glory of God the most, do the most for the Kingdom of God.

**2. A disciple has been given spiritual sight by Jesus Christ. (John 1:38-39)** Look closely at verse 39, “Come and you will see.” Paul talks about being blinded by the world and Satan and not

seeing Christ for who He is. 2 Cor. 4:3-4 ***And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.***

**3. A disciple has found the Messiah. (John 1:40-41)**

**4. A disciple has been given a new identity. (John 1:42)** Paul states this in 1 Cor. 5:17 ***“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”*** Peter, which meant “rock” was to symbolize strength and stability. This would prove to be the case in which Christ would use Peter to help establish the New Testament Church. Peter was given a new identity through Christ, it didn’t mean that Peter wouldn’t mess up, but that he was new in Christ and becoming more Christ like. Only Christ can make us new. Our identity must not be found in what we do, in what we have, or what we are skilled in. Our identity is found in Christ alone.

**5. A disciple acknowledges that Jesus has all authority. (John 1:43)** Matt. 28:18 ***“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”***

**6. A disciple shares the truth about the Messiah. (John 1:44-46)** Mark 1:17 ***“And Jesus said to them, Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”***

Why do we share the truth in love? Because we love God and love people (The Great Commandment) and we are commanded to make disciples (The Great Commission). Love is the uniform that will identify true disciples. John 13:34-35 notes: ***“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”***

**7. A disciple acknowledges that Jesus knows the disciple and cares about them. (John 1:47-51)** This is clearly shown in John 10:3 “to him the gatekeeper opens, The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.” And also in John 10:14 “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.”