

For Calvary Chapel: Embracing True Discipleship

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1 Disclaimer:

As we journey through this exploration of discipleship, let us remember the words of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5:21, "Test everything; hold fast what is good." While we delve into God's word and its implications for our lives, let's ensure our understandings align with the heart of Scripture.

2 Introduction:

Discipleship is not a one time commitment but requires us to constantly walk in the footsteps of Christ. Paul admonished us against using liberty as a chance for the flesh (Galatians 5:13) and highlighted the role of works in fortifying our faith (James 2:22). Jesus, in His teachings, cautioned against mere lip service and practicing lawlessness (Matthew 7:22-23). The call to discipleship invites us to deny earthly desires, uphold God's commandments, and carry our cross daily. This cross, while symbolizing a pacifism even unto death as demonstrated by Jesus, is described as a light yoke — one of loving kindness (Matthew 11:29-30). Through our journey, it's not about attaining perfection, but about genuine commitment and seeking His grace, especially when we waver. "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up

his cross daily, and follow Me." (Luke 9:23)

3 Trusting in God's Provision:

"Consider the ravens... God feeds them. Of how much more value are you!" (Luke 12:24). Jesus emphasizes that as we actively serve with a compassionate heart, God ensures our needs. "Seek first the kingdom of God... and all these things shall be added" (Matthew 6:33). Our call? To "work heartily, as for the Lord" (Colossians 3:23), listening intently to our loving heart, guiding us in service. When we align with this divine mandate, actively pursuing God's will, His abundant provision follows.

4 Embracing the Divine Within and Beyond:

Recognizing God's indwelling presence (1 Cor 3:16) transforms our spiritual perspective. By understanding that we are temples of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 6:16), we are called to extend kindness to ourselves, allowing us to radiate that same kindness to others (Ephesians 4:32). The commandment to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31) reinforces this interconnectedness of self-love and love for others. Moreover, to truly love God with all our heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37), we must, by implication, cherish all of His creation, from fellow humans to every living being (Psalm 24:1; 1 John 4:7-8). This all-encompassing love is a testament to the profound relationship we share with the Creator and His creations.

5 Serving One Another with Humility:

Recognizing the divine in everyone, from spouses and family (Ephesians 5:25, 1 Timothy 5:8) to friends

(Proverbs 17:17) and strangers (Hebrews 13:2), we are called to serve with humility and love. Jesus taught us to treat others as we would like to be treated (Luke 6:31), implying that every relationship, no matter how close or distant, should be filled with love and kindness. These acts of service aren't merely good deeds but an embodiment of His teachings. "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, reflecting the love and compassion Christ showed us all." (1 Peter 4:10; Galatians 5:13)

6 Embracing Forgiveness, Love, and Acceptance:

Jesus teaches that true discipleship means boundless forgiveness: "Seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:22). He emphasizes this before prayer: "When praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them" (Mark 11:25). The reason? "If you don't forgive, neither will your Father" (Matthew 6:15). This commitment to forgiveness is also intertwined with love, for we're directed to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31). In this journey, both unwavering love and ceaseless forgiveness are crucial. Through them, our prayers ascend freely, connecting us deeper with God's heart.

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8 Closing:

Drawing from the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13), we're reminded of the essence of perpetual readiness. The wise virgins, with lamps filled with oil, highlight the importance of being rooted in God's enduring love (Romans 8:38-39). As the Scripture indicates that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:2), we recognize that death too can be sudden and unexpected. Awaiting that inevitable moment and the subsequent judgment (Hebrews 9:27), we lean into Paul's teachings on unwavering love and faith (1 Corinthians 16:14; Romans 12:9-10). By embracing these lessons, we aspire to stand before Jesus and hear: "Well done, good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your master." (Matthew 25:21)