**JESUS’ PURPOSE IN CALLING HIS DISCIPLES**

***(The Meaning and Purpose of Being with Jesus)***

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*“He appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons.” (Mk 3:14-15)*

**Objective**

To know what meaning and purpose Jesus has in calling disciples to be with him in order to build a Biblical view of discipleship.

**Introduction**

* Building a foundational understanding of Jesus’ purpose and intention in discipleship helps us avoid taking discipleship in a wrong direction, keeping us Jesus-centered or God’s kingdom-minded.
* In Mark 3:14-15, Jesus’ purpose in calling Twelve disciples was threefold: 1) To be with him, 2) to send them out to preach, and 3) to have authority to drive out demons. We want to focus on what meaning and purpose Jesus had in mind when he appointed the Twelve to be with him.
* Finding this meaning and purpose Jesus had in calling the Twelve will impact our view of discipleship today.

**God’s Desire To Be With His People In The Old Testament**

* Jesus’ purpose of calling disciples to be with him is the fulfilment of God’s desire to be with his people as promised in the Old Testament. We can trace God’s plan to reveal a way to be with him starting from the Garden of Eden, through his calling of the Patriarchs, shown in detail through the example of the Exodus, specifically the Tabernacle and later the Temple, and finally expressed through the promise of a new covenant.
* Jesus fulfilled this new covenant by becoming the “living tabernacle” (Jn 1:14). The tabernacle, sacrificial system and Levitical priesthood were only the shadow and patterns of the reality in heaven (Col 2:17). Jesus is our high priest (Heb 8:1-2). The tabernacle and Levitical sacrifices are fulfilled in Jesus’ dwelling with his people and death on the cross once for all (Heb 9:11-14).

* Through the blood of Jesus our sins are forgiven and we are enabled to serve God in fellowship on the basis of this new covenant. He dwells within us now through the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:13; Ga 3:14b).

**Jesus Called His Disciples To Be With Him…**

* Jesus is the fulfilment of God’s desire to be with his people, revealing all we need to know about who God is, and therefore how to have a relationship with Him (Heb 1:1-3).
* Wherever and whenever disciples are being called, the primary goal and purpose in discipleship applies. It is essential to understand the meaning and purpose of being with Jesus.

* **The Meaning of Being With Jesus:**
	+ Relationship with Jesus. The phrase: “Being with Jesus” means having a relationship with Jesus (Jn 15:5). From this relationship we grow to be like him by living together with Jesus: Following him, developing his value system, learning his heart. This relationship is ongoing and developing, as we grow in knowing him and becoming like him (Eph 4:13,15; 2Pe 3:18).
	+ Love relationship through obedience. This relationship should be a love relationship between Jesus and his disciples (Jn 15:9). His love for us is unconditional (Jn 3:16), sacrificial (Jn 15:13) and never fails (1Co 13). Based on his love, Jesus invites us to love him, responding to his love and developing this love relationship by obeying his word (Jn 14:15,23a; 15:10).
	+ Lifelong commitment. Our loving response to follow Jesus is not only for a short period of time, but requires lifelong commitment. To be Jesus’ disciples we need to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him (Mk 8:31-34). This is not easy to do, but his disciples kept a lifelong commitment to Jesus by the help of the Holy Spirit.
* **The Purpose of Being With Jesus:** Jesus’ purpose of being with his disciples is to give them life to the full (Jn 10:10). He does this by transforming them from a self-centered life to a Jesus-centered life, one that is vibrant, influential, and growing. We can understand this view based on the following three points: Jesus called his disciples to be with him: 1)...so that they may know him. 2)...so that they may have faith in him. 3)...so that they may witness to him. These three are foundational, interrelated and also interdependent.



1. **...so that they may know him**
	* Knowing him is to know who he is: his personality, character, thought world, desires, lifestyle. The goal of knowing Jesus to be like Jesus is in line with God’s eternal purpose for discipleship (Ro 8:29). This is the primary point of proclamation, admonishing, teaching: Jesus himself, so that we may grow up in maturity in him (Col 1:28).
	* A person who really knows Jesus as he intended will model his behavior based on first emulating his inner character: Love and forgiveness, humility and service.
2. **...so that they may have faith in him**
	* Knowing Jesus is related to faith in him as the Biblical Messiah: what he has done and is doing. Jesus the Messiah opened the only way to God (Jn 14:1,6). He is uniquely able to bring us to God because he is our mediator, between God and us (1Ti 2:5).
	* Faith in him as Lord and confessing faith in his resurrection leads to salvation (Ro 10:9-10). The result of believing in Jesus brings eternal life (Jn 3:16).
3. **...so that they may witness to him**
	* Content and basis of our witness: All that Jesus revealed to his disciples, what they came to know and believe through relationship with him, Jesus wanted them to share as his witnesses (Lk 24:48). Our witness to Jesus is not the biography of a dead man; rather we testify based on a living relationship with Jesus: who was raised from the dead, ascended to heaven, took his seat at God’s right hand (Heb 1:3b), and sent the Holy Spirit in answer to his promise to be with us always (Mt 28:20).
	* Source of power to witness: There would be opposition from within and without. So Jesus told them to wait for the power of the Holy Spirit to come on them (Ac 1:8). The Holy Spirit gives us courage, wisdom and strength to overcome difficulties and testify to Jesus.
	* Efficacy of our witness: Based on Jesus’ power and authority, the disciples’ witness to Jesus would make disciples of all nations down through the generations (Mt 28:18-20). Jesus continues to work with his disciples (Mk 16:20), sending us as his Father sent him, with authority to give the message of forgiveness of sins (Jn 20:21,23). Our witness is so important as the way Jesus is working to save people today (Ro 10:14-15).
	* Growing as witnesses: We learn more about Jesus as we witness to him, walking the direction he is going and doing the work he commanded. Our faith in him grows, as we experience the power of his gospel at work in our world (Ro 1:16), and this gives us more to witness to.

**Being with Jesus in the Context of Community**

* From the tabernacle to the temple, to the new covenant to the church, God’s will for relationship was to be in the context of a community. Individuals are to be united and built up together into a community, like stones built up into a spiritual house (1Pe 2:4-5). Raising Jesus’ disciples is to be done in a community where Jesus is at the center.
* Jesus gives unique gifts to each individual disciple, equipping them for their own works of service. He does this so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:11-13).

**Conclusion**

God’s ultimate plan is to have eternal fellowship with all his people, from all generations, in complete intimacy, for all eternity. Yet in each stage along the way, God is pleased to be with his people, who simply trust his plan and follow his instructions. We trust in God’s plan, revealed in Jesus, and obey Jesus’ instructions: be with him, make disciples, love one another.