



Navigator Discipleship Tool

Four Marks of a Disciple

The word *Christian* is mentioned only 3 times in the Bible, the word *disciple* is mentioned over 260 times. *Discipleship* is one of the key themes of the New Testament. A lot of people talk about being followers of Christ—about being disciples. But what does a disciple look like? How can we ensure that we're still on the path of discipleship? Here are four identifying marks of a disciple of Jesus:



Takes up the cross of Christ

The first mark of a disciple is that he is someone who committed to the person of Jesus Christ — someone who takes up the cross of Christ. On one occasion Jesus said “*Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.*” (Luke 14:27. A disciple takes the opportunity to identify himself with Jesus Christ and to take up his cross daily, who loves Jesus Christ more than any other thing or person.

Obedient to the Word

A disciple is not only a believer who is identified with the person of Christ, she is also obedient to the Word of Christ—to the Scriptures. *So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”* (John 8:31-32) A disciple does more than attend meetings. She does more than take notes. She finds out what the Bible says and does it. We need to make up our minds that, God helping us with the power of the Holy Spirit, we are going to be obedient to the Word of Christ.



Fruitful for Christ

A disciple is bearing fruit in the work of Christ. *This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples* (John 15:8). There are three kinds of fruit here. First is *character* fruit, the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22,23). Second, there's the fruit of influencing others for Christ - people coming to faith (Colossians 1:6). Third, there is *systemic* fruit: places and systems are changed (Proverbs 11:10). *You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last* (John 15:16).

Loves as he loves

At the last supper gave final instructions to his disciples. He said, “*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*” (John 13:34-35) How did Jesus love his disciples? He served them, he love them sacrificially, he disclosed everything he could about his Father's will. We are to love as he loves.



Let's ask ourselves: Am I a true disciple? Have I taken up the cross of Jesus Christ? Am I seeking to be obedient to the Word of Christ in my everyday life? Am I bearing fruit in the work of Christ—by way of Christlike character and by influencing the lives of others? And do I love others as Jesus loved? Jesus calls us to be his disciples. And then he commissions us to help others become his disciples as well.

Let's rise to the challenge!