

DISCIPLESHIP IN JESUS' DAY/IN 2007

Beit Sefer from ages 6 to 10. Beit Sefer – house of the book.

A local synagogue Torah teacher who would begin teaching the children the Torah.

Honey on slates – honey - sign of God's favor

Instructed to lick the honey - "May the words of God be sweet to your taste, sweeter than honey to your mouth" (Psalm 119:103).

From ages 6-10, Jewish boys would memorize the Torah.

Beit Talmud from ages 10-14. Beit Talmud – house of learning.

The best of the best students would continue on – memorizing the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures. By 14 years of age, the best of the best students had the entire Hebrew text memorized.

Students would also at this age begin learning the Jewish art of questions and answers.

Luke 2:46 – Jesus was in the Temple listening to the teachers and asking them questions.

Students learned "remez" which means "hint" in Hebrew. The Rabbis would call out a passage of Scripture and the student would have to give the Scripture before and after that passage. They lived in the text!

Beit Midrash - at the end of study at Beit Talmud, when a Jewish boy was 14 years old, if he was the best of the best, then he would present himself to a well-known respected, powerful rabbi.

He would say, "Rabbi, I want to become your disciple, your talmudim, your student. Please let me in your Beit Midrash, your house of study."

And so the rabbi examined and asked lots of questions, to find out if indeed this child was the best of the best. Because each rabbi wanted to teach his thinking, his philosophy, his interpretation of Scripture.

YOKE - the rabbi's teaching, philosophy, and interpretation of Scripture.

And if the rabbi believed that the student was the best of the best, that he was able to become a rabbi, he would say, "Lech Acharai – Come, follow me." The boy would leave his family, his family compound, his village. He would leave the local synagogue. He would leave everything and follow that rabbi. He would become a talmudim, a disciple, a student. He would devote his life to becoming exactly like that rabbi. He would follow him everywhere.

It would be said to such a student - "May you be covered in the dust of your rabbi." The disciples would follow their rabbi so closely that they would become covered with the dust of their rabbi. "May you follow him so closely that the dust of his sandals covers you." Talmud.

Are we walking so closely behind Jesus, with Jesus, that we're covered in His dust?

OR – are we covered by someone else's dust?

But for some Jewish boys when the rabbis quizzed them they did NOT say, “Lech Acharai – Come, follow me.” But instead they said “Ah, my son, you do know Torah. And you know Torah well. But you are not able to be my talmudim, my disciple, my student.” So the rabbi would say, “Go, home to your village. Make babies. Pray that they become rabbis. Go home and learn the family business - fishing, farming, carpentry. Because you won’t be studying to be a rabbi.”

Beit-Jesus

Jesus was a rabbi. 13 times in the New Testament Jesus is called a rabbi (Matthew 26:25,49; Mark 9:5; 11:21; 14:45; John 1:38,49; 3:2,26; 4:31; 6:25; 9:2; 11:8). 41 times He is called a teacher. Only one time is he called a carpenter (Mark 6:3). In Matthew 11:28 Jesus said, “Come unto Me all you who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

Jesus called disciples who had already failed the rabbi test, and He said, “Lech Acharai – Come, follow Me ... Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me.”

Matt. 4:18 – Jesus saw 2 brothers – Peter and Andrew.

They immediately dropped their nets. Here was a Rabbi Who believed they could be just like Him!

Peter denied Jesus!

God restores.

After Jesus’ resurrection, He appeared to the disciples who had returned to their fishing. Catching nothing, He told them to drop your net on this side of the boat. . . .

He told Peter to “Feed my lambs, take care of my sheep.”

What happens when we follow Jesus?

Amazing things. . . .

Acts 4:5

They realized these men were unschooled. . .

They realized that they had been with Jesus.

What does this mean to us?

What does discipleship look like today?

Simplify – reorder our lives.

God will not speed up to catch up with us.

He expects us to slow our pace in our walk with Him.

Ephesians 6:24/Rev. 2:4

The church at Ephesus – they had descended from the early heights of devotion to Jesus to the plains of mediocrity. In spite of their doctrinal purity, their love had cooled.

Simplify

Be still AND know He is God – Psalm 46:10

Cease/be still – “to let drop,” “to refrain from” – it’s a deliberate taking hands off

Surrender – Prov. 3:5-6

How can we be like the Rabbi? Like Jesus?

Phil. 2:5-6

Be lowly

Be unselfish

Fit into a plan that is not our preference

Fix our eyes on Him (Heb. 12:2)

The disciples walked so closely – they walked in the dust of the Rabbi.

He was in full view all the time.

This HAS to be by God’s grace. . .

When grace changes the heart, submission out of fear changes to submission out of love (II Cor. 5:14) – and, in the process, true humility is born.

“Consider” Him – “consider” means to weigh something over and against another. We need to “compare” ourselves with what He endured.

The next time we’re feeling sorry for ourselves – we need to compare ourselves with Him.

The next time we’re being criticized. . .

The next time we’re giving up something comfortable. . .something familiar. . . .

The next time we must surrender for a greater good. . .

The next time we’re asked to adjust to a plan. . . .

How do we surrender?

Possessions – put them in the proper perspective and release them one by one.

God is the Owner of our possessions and He will take better care of them than we ever could.

AW Tozier – “The blessedness of possessing nothing! I come trembling, but I do come. Please root from my heart all those things that I have cherished so long so that You may enter in without a rival.”

“Releasing things is as painful as pulling a jaw tooth.”

Swindoll – “I am not a judge of what you should possess and you should not be a judge of what I possess. I don’t have the time. I’m too busy handling the logs that are in my eye to investigate the splinters in your life.”

For one person, one level of life style is appropriate, for another person – a different level is appropriate.

We all have to hold what God lends us – loosely.

Position – let it go! Release your place in life. Stop wrapping your ego around your role. A position can become like a god!

God is up to something and it’s usually not what we’re up to.

Isaiah 55:6

“My ways are not your ways. . . .”

Plans – release them!

People in your life – children, parents, spouse, friends – hold them loosely.

God may have new people for you!

“Forgive us, Lord, for the doubting suspicion with which we regard the heart of God. We have faith in checks, banks, trains, airplanes, in cooks, and in strangers who drive us in cabs. We have faith in people we do not know and less faith in You Who knows us altogether. We are always striving to find a complicated way through life when You have a plan and we refuse to walk in it. So many of our troubles we bring on ourselves. How silly we are. Will You give to us that faith that we can deposit in the bank of Your love so that we may receive the dividends and interest that You are so willing to give us?” Peter Marshall.

Additional thoughts:

I Timothy 6:6 – “Godliness with contentment is great gain.”

Godliness:

- Living ones life with Christ in clear focus.
- Deliberately pursuing holiness.
- Arranging my private world so it fits the truth of Scripture.
- Hearing what the Bible says about life and then making my life congruent with its truth.

- Having pure motives.
- Having an attitude that delights in the things of God.
- Being teachable when the Spirit of God lightly touches my shoulder and says, “I’m talking to you.”

Benefits of Godliness:

- Ability to differentiate between the temporal and the eternal.
- Sensitivity toward God and other people.
- Willingness to live within circumstantial limits. So often we succumb to the lie: “When my circumstances get better, I will do better.”
 - The most significant changes occur within ourselves. That’s why the Apostle Paul could say that he learned to be content with little and with much – Phil. 4:11-12.

Contentment – “God, You gave it; You’re free to take it back”

Benefits of contentment:

- Current enjoyment of ones lot in life instead of constantly striving and longing.
- Freedom to recognize someone else’s achievements.
- Cultivation of a grateful spirit. Contented people are more grateful for simple things – for little things.