

The Marks of Discipleship

Involves a challenge

In the Gospel of John there are three things that the Lord Jesus said that would mark those who were His disciples. One of the things that the Lord Jesus said would mark those that were truly His disciples, was that if they continued in His Word; *“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed (truly)” (Jn. 8:31).*

This is one of the things that distinguishes those that are truly His disciples from those who are not. The word, *“continue”* conveys the thought of abiding. It is the sense of commitment to that which we began. It is also the thought of consistency and of persistence.

It is one thing to memorize the Word of God, it is another thing entirely to be so saturated with the Word of God that it affects everything we do and say. Let us not only receive it, let us also walk in it so that we become so sensitive to its teaching and leading that we would not do or say anything that would be contrary to its holy teachings.

Another thing that the Lord Jesus said should mark those that are His disciples and would be manifest to all, is found in John chapter 13, where the Lord Jesus said *“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another” (Jn. 13:35).* John wrote in his first epistle; *“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another” (4:11).* John also went as far as to say, *“because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (3:16).*

Love for one another is commanded in the Scriptures, but it is also an evidence, particularly to the world, that we are Christ’s disciples. The Lord Jesus said, *“This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you” (Jn. 15:12).*

To love one another as the Lord Jesus has loved us is a very high standard, but if we truly love Him, we can love those who belong to Him. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who dwells with in us (Rom. 5). To love one another as He has loved us is to serve one another (Gal. 5:13). The Lord Jesus said of Himself, *“For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister (serve) and to give my life a ransom for many” (Mk. 10:45).*

To love one another as He has loved is to be kindly affectioned toward one another (Rom. 12:10), and to show patience one toward another by forgiveness and forbearance (Eph. 4:2).

Another thing that the Lord Jesus mentioned as a mark of being one of His disciples, is found in verse 8 of John chapter 15; *“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples”.* In the chapter there seems to be a progression in bearing fruit. It begins with fruit, then more fruit in verse 2, until we get to verse 8 and there is much fruit.

Fruit in the life of Christ’s disciples is Christ likeness. In the Galatians chapter 5 verses 22-23, the fruit of the Spirit that should be manifest in the believer, can be

found in the Lord Jesus. According to Romans 8:29, one of the purposes of God in saving us is that we conformed to the image of His Son.

This is accomplished in at least two ways. One of the ways we are conformed to the image of Christ is found in the daily circumstances of life. All that happens in our lives is allowed by God in order that we might be shaped and molded into the image of His son.

We don't know the exact purpose why certain things happen, because God's ways are higher than our ways. But we can be sure that God never allows anything without having a purpose behind it and we can be sure also that all things are working together for our good and for His ultimate glory.

While we may not understand why we sometimes have to pass through difficulties, we can rest in the knowledge that we are by those very circumstances, being changed into the image of Christ.

Another way in which we are changed onto the image of Christ, is through the reading of God's Word. Paul wrote to the believers at Corinth, *"But we all with open (unveiled) face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord"* (2nd Cor. 3:18).

The "glass" is the Word of God and is a mirrored reflection of Christ. He is seen on every page. As we turn the pages of God's Word, we behold His glory and are changed into His image by the Holy Spirit.

We should so manifest Christ in our lives that the world will recognize that we belong to Him. Mr. Alex Dryburgh said at one time; *"In every Christian Christ is present; in some Christ is prominent; in a very few Christ is preeminent.* The Lord Jesus stated a principle in Matthew 7:20; *"By their fruits ye shall know them"*.

Another mark of His disciples is separation from the world, unto Himself. We are not to *love* the world (1st Jn. 2:15-16). We are not to become *like* the world (Rom. 12:2). We are not to become *linked* to the world (2nd Cor. 6:15-18).

Dear Child of God today, as His disciple, your love for Him will be seen in all of those things and will testify to the world around that you belong to Him. The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews wrote, *"Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach"* (Heb. 13:13).

Beloved, your love for Him is not unnoticed, and will not be unrewarded. Paul wrote to the saints at Corinth, *"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him"* (1st Cor. 2:9).