

## **We do not drift into discipleship.** Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, p.297

### **Lent - Intentional discipleship**

Becoming a disciple of Jesus involves taking some practical steps.

#### Scripture:

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by saying, ‘You will be made free?’” Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not have a permanent place in the household; the son has a place there forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. I know that you are descendants of Abraham; yet you look for an opportunity to kill me, because **there is no place in you for my word**. I declare what I have seen in the Father’s presence; as for you, **you should do what you have heard** from the Father.” John 8: 31-38, emphasis mine.

#### Voice of wisdom:

“...what are practical steps we can take to bring strongly before us the joyous vision of the kingdom? ...What we want to know is what I can do if I have come to suspect it would be best for me to apprentice myself to Jesus. How can we come to admire Jesus sufficiently to ‘sell everything we have and buy the pearl of great value’ with joy and excitement?

“**Ask** - The first thing we should do is emphatically and repeatedly express to Jesus our desire to see him more fully as he really is...We ask to see him, and not just as he is represented in the Gospels, but also as he has lived and lives through history and now, and in his reality as the one who literally holds the universe in existence. He will certainly be aware of our request, just as you would be aware of anyone expressing their desires to you in your house.

“**Dwell** - Second, we should use every means at our disposal to come to see him more fully....In John 8 (Jesus) said to those around him, ‘If you dwell in my word, you really are my apprentices. And you will know the truth, and the truth will liberate you’ (8:31-32). As the context makes clear, he is saying that we will be liberated from all of the bondage that is in human life through sin, and especially from that of self-righteous religion. Positively, we will be liberated into life in the kingdom of God....But dwelling in his word is not just intensive and continuous study of the Gospels, though it is that. It is also putting them into practice. To dwell in his word we must know it: know what it is and what it means. But we really *dwell* in it by putting it into practice.

**Decide** - But the final step in becoming a disciple is decision. We become a life student of Jesus by deciding. When we have achieved clarity on ‘the costs’ - on what is gained and what is lost by becoming or failing to become his apprentice - an effective decision is then possible. But still it must be made. It will not just happen. We do not drift into discipleship...in the last analysis we fail to be disciples only because we do not decide to be. We do not *intend* to be disciples. It is the power of the decision and the intention over our life that is missing. We should apprentice ourselves to Jesus in a solemn moment, and we should let those around us know that we have done so. (Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy*, pgs. 295-298).

## Study 16

### **Contemplation:**

What key words and ideas stand out to you? How do they help you take a deeper look at yourself as a follower of Jesus?

What are your reactions to the Ask-Dwell-Decide steps of becoming a disciple of Jesus? Are there steps you have skipped and need to go back to?

### **Practices:**

Write down one or two of the key phrases that are important to you. Hold them (literally) before God and wait silently on him. Record any further thoughts he may give you.

In explaining the “Ask” step of becoming a disciple, Willard states: “We should make our expression of desire a solemn occasion, giving at least a number of quiet hours or a day to it. It will also be good to write down our prayer for his help in seeing him. We should do this privately, of course, but then we should share what we have done with a knowledgeable minister or friend who could pray with us and talk with us about what we are doing.” (p. 295).

Take some time this week to do this - asking to really see Jesus, in his word and in reality around you.

©sharonracke These contemplative studies are the result of the thoughtful and transformative teaching I have received both at The Dwelling Place ([dwellingplaceindy.org](http://dwellingplaceindy.org)), and as a student of The Renovare Institute ([renovare.org](http://renovare.org)). I pray that as you use them, you will experience the presence and love of God, and learn more about living with Christ daily. Sharon Racke ([recess.racke@gmail.com](mailto:recess.racke@gmail.com))