

Introduction:

- A disciple is: 1) a person who has put their faith in Jesus Christ. 2) Governs their life by Jesus teaching, and 3) passionately pursues Jesus mandate of making disciples.
- People grow best when they know who they are, when they plan to grow, when they are in accountable relationships, and with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- I want to look at the foundation of discipleship from a Hebrew perspective today. What does the OT have to teach us about being a disciple or a discipler?
- Dt 6:4-9: *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶ "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.* NKJV

I. How Was Jesus Discipled? An overview for insight.

- A. He was Jewish and raised by Godly parents. Joseph and Mary.
- B. He was raised in a community that was known for its love of, and active relationship with, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- C. Like all Jewish boys he was circumcised on the 8th day and spent the next 8 years of his life close by Mary's side watching her as a committed follower of the One True God. He would watch quietly each Friday night as she welcomed the Sabbath/ Shabbat and Joseph would tell the stories of the their forefathers.
- D. At age six He most likely started school at the synagogue having already learned the aleph, bet, from Joseph at home.
- E. When He was 8, he would begin receiving intensive vocational instruction from His father.
- F. His life was laced with the Torah (first five books of the Bible) and the teaching of the wise ones.
- G. He celebrated every Biblical holiday/feast all of which pointed back to God.
- H. At 13 He may well have graduated from the synagogue school to a school of higher learning where He would have studied the writings of all the great Jewish teachers and debated with the teachers of the law.
- I. At 30 He went to the Mikvah (a place of ritual immersion) for ceremonial purification and then started His ministry.
- J. He called men of like history and heritage as himself into a vital committed relationship. He now became the discipler.
- K. They left all to follow him that they might learn from and live life like Him, Jesus.
 1. The most important skill of successful disciple was that of imitation.

2. He was not just to believe his master and gained some knowledge he was to become his master.
 3. We (you and I) are following Him too.
- L. Observations of Jesus and the Hebrew life:
1. It was God centered--life revolved around and was interpreted in light of knowing and inter-acting with God.
 2. It was Word oriented--to know and interact with God in the knowledge of the Word was given top priority and responding to that Word was the chief end. "To know God and be known by Him.
 3. Those two were life shaping--it was not enough to just understand God/Word--it demanded a response.

II. Our Jewish Roots--we have been grafted in, therefore we have the same roots now.

- A. We are one body with the Jews. Eph 3:6 *And this is God's plan: Both Gentiles and Jews who believe the Good News... are part of the same body, and both enjoy the promise of blessings because they belong to Christ Jesus.* NKJV This is one reason why it is important for us to understand Israel in light of the end time message. Their history is our history and their future is our future.
- B. The Jew are our ancestors. 1 Cor 10:1 *I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters,* about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago.* NKJV He is talking to Greek Corinthians.
- C. Abraham is our father. Romans 4:16-17 *So the promise is received by faith. ... if we have faith like Abraham's. For Abraham is the father of all who believe. ¹⁷ That is what the Scriptures mean when God told him, "I have made you the father of many nations." NKJV All who believe--1st part of definition of disciple.*
- D. All Jews consider Abraham their father. Isaiah 51:1-2 *"Listen to me, all who hope for deliverance-- all who seek the Lord! Consider the rock from which you were cut, the quarry from which you were mined. ²Yes, think about Abraham, your father, and Sarah, who gave birth to your nation. Abraham was only one man when I called him. But when I blessed him, he became a great nation."*
- E. Jewish roots are our heritage. Therefore we really need to consider how that affects us. Paul wanted to connect the Corinthians to that Jewish heritage and history because it would affect who they were in the present. He wanted to connect the Romans to that Jewish heritage and history because it would affect who they were in the present. He wanted to connect the Ephesians to that Jewish heritage and history because it would affect who they were in the present. Knowing our roots matters because it impacts our present life.

III. How Do You View Discipleship? What is your perspective?

- A. Dt 6:4-9: *"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶ "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. NKJV*
- B. There are basically two positions. One is from the Hebrew perspective which we have just been taking a glance at. The other is from the Greek worldview or perspective. The Hebrew perspective remained fairly intact until the time of Alexander the Great. He Hellenized the world. He majorly brought Greek thought/worldview to all of the middle east and parts of Asia and Europe. By the time Christianity arrived on the scene many Jews had embraced Greek thought. Add to that the number of Greeks/Gentiles being saved and you have a big mixture of world views taking place. The first school of Theology (study of God) was in Alexandria, Egypt and it was lead by Greek thinkers. This is where Greek philosophy began to be mixed with the scriptures both Old and New Testaments.
- C. It matters who is in the middle. God must be at the core of your life.
1. Hebrew-to the Hebrew, God was the beginning and ending of all things. Life was a gift from him. God was at the center of all things. Everything else revolved around that.
 2. Greek-to the Greek/Greek thought, man was at the center of all things. This is where the heart of 'humanism' comes from. Man is at the center. Everything is about man.
 3. You do not have to look to far or think to hard to see how this has affected the church today.
 - a. Many Christians view God as their servant to be on hand at any time to do their bidding.
 - b. The charismatic church got bogged down in the prosperity message because man moved to the center and pushed God out to be his servant.
 - c. Go to the Christian book store and note the number of self-help books that are on the shelves and compare that to the number of books lifting up Jesus or magnifying God.
 4. Who/what does your life revolve around?
- D. It matters that He is the only one in the middle. God is One God.
1. Deuteronomy 6:4 *Hear O' Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One."* To the Hebrew/Jew this is called the Shema. It is the very core of their belief. The centrality of their faith.

2. The Greeks had many Gods. In Abram's day, when he was called by God, to follow Him and Him only. Abram was surround by people who worshiped many gods. Because Abram heard God and chose to follow Him only he was called a friend of God and a man of great faith.
 3. The church struggles with this today because there are many believers who wrestle with the pressure of culture that says there are many ways to God. NO! There is just one, and His name is Jesus. That is what the Word says, and if that offends you, then you do not know God and He is definitely not in the center of your life and the way you live it. Therefore, it greatly affects how awesome a disciple you can become.
- E. It matters how you see yourself.
1. The Greeks exalted the human body because they understood man to be the center of his own world. Physical beauty was prized above all else. Nudity was common, athletics embraced in public venues because it displayed man.
 2. The Hebrew placed as much value on both the inner man as well as the outer man. Man was created to have lively, vibrant relationship with God and that relationship was expressed through a cared for body in community with others.
 3. It is as common in the church to have people struggle with beauty and acceptance as it is in the world. If you prize the outer man over the inner man you will never become the disciple you were meant to be.
- F. It matters what you know. I want to spend a little more time here--knowledge.
1. The Greek sought knowledge for the sake of knowledge itself. His desire was for information and understanding--not instruction leading to obedience. The more instruction and information he acquired the better man he became in the eyes of men because man is the center of his own world. Knowledge and information therefore became a powerful element of pride that allowed man to exalt himself over others and position himself in a place of control. The goal of knowledge was to know oneself (gnosticism). The better you know yourself the freer you can become from this world.
 2. The Hebrew had a totally different approach to knowledge. Jewish people have always had a quest for knowledge. And a sincere desire to pass that from one generation to the next. The purpose of learning was to prepare the whole person for a life of service and obedience to God.
 - a. The Torah (first 5 books of Bible) was given by God as instruction to His people on how to live their lives according to His plan.
 - b. It was up to the Jewish people to study it, learn it, embrace it and live it in every circumstance of life.
 - c. ***A mere understanding of it was not enough--learning required a response.*** The goal was to pass on to children the teaching and instruction

of God that they might revere and obey him.

- d. The object and aim of Hebrew teaching was knowledge of God while the Greek thought pursued knowledge of self. The Hebrew system starts with God, for God is the beginning of wisdom. Man can never know himself unless he comes to the knowledge of God. The Greek starts with knowledge of man and seeks to rise to understanding of the ways of God, through his 'higher nature.'

Conclusion:

- In a Hebrew world, belief and action cannot be separated. I.e. If you have ever asked, "What do you think of this scripture?" you have already revealed your man centered approach to the word. The Jew would ask, "How do you live this scripture?"
 - Christians tend to think of their relationship with God in terms of faith--intellectual/mental assent. The Hebrew does not so much have faith as he is faithful. In a Hebrew worldview belief and action cannot be separated. That is why James writing to a Jewish audience stresses the importance of not just hearing but doing.
- God is wanting to bring us into closer relationship with Him. A disciple is a person who has put their faith in Him/Jesus. As Lord He is now the center of your life or is to be quickly ushered to that place. Your life is no longer your own therefore it does not revolve around you. It now revolves around Him.
 - With God at the center of your life you live for an audience of One. You search His word for more knowledge of Him not so you can boast but so that you can respond better to a God who gave all to redeem you from your sin.
 - He is one God, and a jealous God. He does not want to share you with any other God, nor does he want to share you with yourself. He wants you.
- We have Hebrew roots. Abraham is our father. And we have responsibility to grow in the truth of the Word that we might influence our world--not to a system of think but to a living relationship with God.