

DISCIPLE MAKING

A PODCAST WITH DR. JOHN TOLSON

Episode 5: The “D” Word

It's very interesting that in the Bible, in the New Testament, the word “Christian” is only mentioned three times (They are first called Christians at Antioch in the book of Acts). The word “disciple” is used 269 times. When something is used that many times, it must be pretty important.

It is possible to be a Christian - born again, Jesus living in your heart, ticket punched, going to heaven - but not be a disciple of Jesus Christ. Jesus' emphasis in the New Testament, especially in the Gospels, was on being a disciple.

We read in the gospel of John how Jesus laid out for his disciples in fine print what it meant to follow him, the demands of discipleship. Then in John 6:66 we read “At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him.” There were very few that wanted to take on the role of disciple when they learned that it meant following and obeying Jesus wholeheartedly.

George Barna, a great researcher in our country said this: “In one recent nationwide survey, we asked people to describe their goals in life. Almost nine out of ten adults described themselves as Christian. Four out of ten said they were personally committed to Jesus Christ, confessed their sins and believe they will go to heaven after they die because of God's grace provided through Jesus' death and resurrection. However, not one of the adults we interviewed said that their goal in life was to be a committed follower of Jesus Christ or to make disciples. The survey, by the way, included interviews with pastors and church leaders, as well as hundreds of people who regularly attended church services and programs every week.”

When we talk about the “D” word, it's not just about giving you more information about disciple-making, but also to give you some of the finer points about what it is to be disciples and to make disciples, as well as the rationale and Scripture behind those points.

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