



# Jesus Defines Disciple Devotional

## **Meditations That Will Help You Live As A Disciple of Jesus Christ**

The Bible tells us many things to do and not do. But there are 6 statements that Jesus made that we need to let sink in especially since they tell us how to be a disciple. Below is a **21-day guide** to meditate on these words and see if God reveals more of His will to us or that we hear it new and fresh, but mostly that we are changed from the inside out.

Use this in your daily personal worship for the next three weeks. It is highly suggested that you journal your insights, thoughts and feelings so that you can reflect on them weekly and again so these seeds do not die (Matthew 13:1-9).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer gives this instruction: "In our meditation we ponder the chosen text on the strength of **the promise that it has something utterly personal to say to us today** and for our Christian life. We read God's word as God's word for us." Come with EXPECTATION.

**BEGIN** with... slowing down. Quiet your inner self and let go of distracting thoughts. This is important because there is "traffic" in our head that will keep us from hearing our Father's words. Focus on your breathing - in and out, deep and slow, even "over breathing". It helps to lower your gaze or close your eyes. As you breathe deep, scan your body. Where is there tension? Can you release that as you breathe? Can you let go any further? Is there tightness? In your shoulders? In your jaw? Your hands? Relax, but stay alert. Not trying to fall asleep :) Not setting aside your mind. You are redirecting your mind - away from busyness and traffic of thoughts that can consume. You are preparing yourself to talk and listen to the Lord.

**PRAY.** *Come Holy Spirit. I give You all my cares and concerns. Hold them for me while I spend this time with You. Help me to read this passage slowly and believe that these words are for me today. Help me to find one or more resting places in this passage, and linger there, repeat those words and stay with them as long as I need to. Help me to be with You as I would be with a dear friend who has come to visit. I invite You to reveal and communicate Yourself to me, to speak to me and teach me how to listen deeply to You. Help me to let You be with me... let You be for me what You want to be ... let You love me ... let You hold me, console me, forgive me, strengthen me... let You take me through dryness and darkness, if You prefer - but let You. Help me trust myself to You. Help me to respond to You in any way I want to or feel moved to respond. Help me speak what is in my heart, say what I feel, even when I feel like complaining. Help me remember that when I don't know what to say, the Holy Spirit prays in me and for me and that just speaking or whispering Your Name, Jesus, or repeating words of thanks or praise are profoundly prayerful responses. Help me to remember that this is more something that You do for me, God, than anything I do for You. It is consciously being with You and letting You be for me the loving God that You are, letting You fill me with Your Spirit and letting Jesus become more and more alive and real to me.*

**Statement 1:** To the Jews who had believed Him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you really are my disciples.” **John 8:31, NIV**

**Day 1:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Look up this statement in other translations and one or two commentaries. Study this sentence from Jesus to understand what he is really saying. **Write down what you learn.** Use a preferred translation of part of the statement “if you hold to my teaching, you really are my disciple” and apply the emphasis method and repeat during the day. Example: **IF** you hold to my teaching, you really are my disciple. If **YOU** hold to my teaching, you really are my disciple. If you **HOLD** to my teaching, you really are my disciple. Study deeply and expect that He will teach you something new.

**Day 2:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Close your eyes and envision Jesus sitting with you in your favorite part of the house. Talk with Him about this statement made by Jesus in John 8:31. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit and question this passage; consider below prompts and even more. **Write down your honest response.**

- Why is it important to You, Jesus, that I hold to, (NIV) live out, (Message) or abide, (Amplified) in Your teaching?
- Lord, why did you say “teaching” instead of “teachings”? What singular teaching are you referring to?
- Lord, are You pleased with me living out Your teaching?
- Jesus, am I really your disciple?
- What is it You want me to know regarding this statement You made?
- Why do I feel uncomfortable with this statement?

**Day 3:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Personalize this statement and repeat throughout the day. Ask God to show you where you are holding to His teachings and where you are not. **At the end of the day, write down your experience.** Examples of personalizing the statement:

Jesus, I hold to Your teaching and really am Your disciple.

Or

Jesus, I want to hold to Your teaching and really be your disciple.

Or

Jesus, I abide in Your Word, and I am Your disciple.

**Statement 2:** “By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” **John 13:35, NIV**

**Day 4:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. To understand John 13:35 we are going to look at another text about loving one another. Read John 21:15-17 several times. Read slowly and thoughtfully, discerning with the Lord what you need to understand about love. Study the verse, read in other translations, and use a commentary to understand why Jesus is saying this statement. **Write down what you learn** and understand about this text. Study deeply and expect that He will teach you something new.

**Day 5:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. We know God is love and we know love is how we are called to live. Reflect upon how you love. Personalize 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. Put your name in each line. \_\_\_\_\_ is patient, \_\_\_\_\_ is kind. \_\_\_\_\_ does not envy, (but is glad for another) \_\_\_\_\_ does not boast (but is modest), \_\_\_\_\_ is not proud (but is humble). \_\_\_\_\_ does not dishonor others (but respects others), \_\_\_\_\_ is not self-seeking (but is other focused), \_\_\_\_\_ is not easily angered (but is easy going), \_\_\_\_\_ keeps no record of wrongs (but forgives). \_\_\_\_\_ does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. \_\_\_\_\_ always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Say this several times a day. Think about people you easily love. What is the difference between how God loves them and how you love them? **Write a prayer** asking God to help you respond in love like this in all circumstances.

**Day 6:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Sit, relax, and take a few deep breaths. Close your eyes and envision Jesus sitting with you in your favorite part of the house. Talk with Him about this statement made by Him in John 13:35. Ask Jesus these questions and **write down your response. Write your responses to these questions:**

- Lord, what kind of love are You talking about?
- Where am I loving the way You want me to love?
- Who in my life is “one another”? Who am I excluding from this list?
- Do you see me as Your disciple because of my love?
- How or where am I lacking in loving others the way that You want?
- Take time to do an inventory of your daily life looking for ways to love. Ask God to bring opportunities into the light. This is not to condemn yourself but to see yourself fully and move toward the way Christ wishes you to live.

**Day 7:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Read your journal notes from Days 1-6. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit and question this passage; consider below prompts and even more. **Write down your responses to these questions:**

- What have you learned about being a disciple of Jesus?
- Is it harder than you originally thought?
- How do you hold to his teaching?
- Has your definition of a disciple changed?
- How can you live more fully as Jesus’ disciple?

If you feel guilt or shame, release that to the Lord. He is not condemning you, but helping you see places He would like to continue to mold you into His image. Spend time soaking in God’s love and forgiveness for you. Share your heart and desires with Him. Then write a prayer for how to live differently.

**Statement 3:** This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. **John 15:8, NIV**

**Day 8:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. To understand John 15:8 let's look at another text. Read and study Ephesians 5:8-10 with emphasis on fruit. Study the text, read in other translations, and use a commentary and understand what Paul is saying. Write down what you learn. Now, write Ephesians 5:9 on an index card. Keep it with you and read it throughout the day asking Jesus to give you more understanding of this verse in relation to your daily life. Study deeply and expect that He will teach you something new.

**Day 9:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Close your eyes and envision Jesus sitting with you in your favorite part of the house. Talk with Him about this statement made by Him in John 15:8. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit and question this passage; consider below prompts and even more. **Write down your response:**

- What does "bearing fruit" mean to you, Lord?
- Am I bearing the fruit You want?
- Is the only fruit You want me to bear found in Galatians 5:22-23?
- Where/How has my life glorified You with the fruit of the Spirit?
- Lord, do you really wish others to see me as your disciple? What does it look like?
- The word "disciple" is uncommon beyond the church. Is being a disciple only a concept?
- What would my life look like if I was bearing fruit and showing myself as your disciple?

**Day 10:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Close your eyes and envision Jesus sitting with you in your favorite part of the house. Visualize yourself planting and growing a "fruit of the Spirit" tree from Galatians 5:22-23. Visualization helps you to see new things as it engages other parts of your brain to be open to allow Jesus to reveal more to you. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit and question this passage; consider below prompts and even more. **Write down your responses to these questions:**

- Where do you plant this fruit tree?
- How do you take care of the fruit tree?
- Did the tree die despite your efforts to take care of it?
- Did it flourish because of your efforts?
- How often do you prune the tree?
- What needs pruning now?
- What kind of fruit is produced?
- What do you do with the good and bad fruit?
- Even with your best efforts to care for the tree there is a dependency on God to provide the rain and sunlight; have you asked God to provide what you need? If yes, what has he provided? If not, why not? Spend time soaking in ways God cares for you. Share your heart and desires with Him.

**Statement 4:** If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters -- yes, even his own life -- he cannot be my disciple. **Luke 14:26, NIV**

**Day 11:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Ask the Lord to guide you in ways to research this statement in different translations and commentaries. Take time to study this Scripture. Journal what you learn. Study deeply and expect that He will teach you something new.

**Day 12:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit and question this passage in Luke 14:26; consider below prompts and even more. **Write down your response:**

- Lord, are you really saying I should hate my father and mother, wife (husband) and children, brothers and sisters and my own life?
- What does it look like to hate my mother, father, sister, brother, wife, children?
- What does the word "hate" mean?
- I hate my own self now. I've been trying to like/love myself. Do you want me to continue to hate myself too?
- Why does it take such a sacrifice to be Your disciple?
- Lord, I want to be your disciple, but I don't think I can do what you are asking. Help me to understand this statement. This doesn't seem like you.

**Day 13:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Envision what your life would be like to put God first and everyone else, including yourself, second. What would change in your family, workplace, and personally? Do not rush this. Really ponder living differently. **Write down your vision and ask God to help you live what He is asking.**

**Day 14:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Read your journal notes from Days 7-13. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit and question this passage; consider below prompts and even more. **Write down your responses to these questions:**

- What have you learned about bearing fruit?
- Can you see fruit in your life? Why or why not?
- What have you learned from loving God more than others?
- How much more do you need to love God to put Him above your loved ones?

Spend time soaking in God's love and forgiveness for you. Share your heart and desires with Him. **Then write a prayer for how to live differently.**

**Statement 5:** And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. [Luke 14:27, NIV](#)

**Day 15:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Ask the Lord to open the eyes of your heart as He guides you to resources for more information and understanding about Luke 14:27. Study this passage with commentaries and books. **Write what you learn in your journal.** Study deeply and expect that He will teach you something new.

**Day 16:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Ask the Lord to help you picture [Galatians 2:20, NIV](#) in your mind. *I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.* How does this scripture relate to Luke 14:27. **Write in your journal what you learn including a comparison of these two Scriptures.**

**Day 17:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Sit quietly and think about the above statement. Possible thoughts and questions to consider. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit and question this passage; consider below prompts and even more. **Write down your responses to these questions:**

- Lord, what type of cross are You talking about?
- Is dying to myself part of carrying my cross?
- Lord, you have given me some heavy crosses to carry in my life and I have still followed you. Does this mean I am Your disciple?
- You have given me these crosses, haven't you, Lord?
- I want to be Your disciple, but I need guidance, strength and understanding to be the type of disciple you seem to want.

**Statement 6:** In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be My disciple. **Luke 14:33, NIV**

**Day 18:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Ask the Lord to lead you to references for further meaning of this verse; meaning and understanding that will touch your heart. **Write what you learn in your journal.** Study deeply and expect that He will teach you something new.

**Day 19:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Find a quiet place to speak with the Lord about this verse. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit and question this passage in Luke 14:33; consider below prompts and even more. **Write down your response:**

- Lord, do you really mean for me to give up everything or just to be willing to give up everything?
- What do you want me to give up for You, Lord, that I haven't given up?
- I haven't ever counted the cost to be Your disciple. Do you want me to count the cost? What is the cost for me, Lord?
- What part of my identity do I need to relinquish to take on your identity?
- Lord, I will need your help to be willing to give up everything for you. I know you are worth it, but it is so hard. It brings fear. Share your fears with God.

**Day 20:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Picture what it would look like for you if you literally gave up everything for Christ? How does it feel? What fears arise? Is there freedom? Ask God for vision. **Write an image of that life in your journal and pray that God will help you live it.**

**Day 21:** Start with BEGIN and PRAY from page 1. Read your journal notes from Days 14-21. Cooperate with the Holy Spirit and question this passage; consider below prompts and even more. **Write down your responses to these questions:**

- What have you learned about carrying your cross?
- Have you picked up your cross? Started walking? Why or why not?
- What does it mean to follow Jesus with your cross?
- What have you decided to give up to follow Jesus?
- What kind of disciple would you be if you did give these up?
- What is stopping you from giving up everything and picking up your cross?

Spend time soaking in God's love and forgiveness for you. **Share your heart and desires with Him. Then write a prayer for how to live differently.**

## **Works Cited**

Written by Sandra Shaner (Spiritual Director) and Beth Laury (Spiritual Director). For further understanding or spiritual guidance with meditation, contact them through Mount Pisgah UMC, Johns Creek, GA. [Mountpisgah.org](http://Mountpisgah.org)