On Being a Disciple of Jesus

Edyta Jankiewicz

mathetes: to learn

A disciple is ***one who learns***

Christian discipleship is the process of learning to follow Jesus

Come, follow me
Abide with me
Remain in me

Spiritual

Pastors' Summit

"I'm increasingly unsure about how to navigate ministry and my own spiritual journey . . .

I find myself wondering if the two aren't mutually exclusive." (Burns, Chapman & Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry*)

Why is this?

- We live in a 'too-much' world

Georg Simmel (1858-1918)

Dresden, 1903

By some estimates, we're now exposed to more information **each day** than a person living in the Renaissance encountered in their **entire life**.

As of 2020, we produce ~2.5 billion bytes of data **per day**.

At that rate, ~90% of all the data in human history has been created in the last five years (Granneman and Solo, *Sensitive).*

- We equate spiritual ***tasks*** with spiritual ***life***

"One of the greatest inhibitors for a pastor in their walk with God is ministry – because we come to the Bible for the sake of other people" (Oswald Chambers).

Work ***for*** God that is not nourished by a deep interior life ***with*** God will eventually be contaminated by other things . . .

such as ego, power, needing approval of and from others, buying into the wrong ideas of success, and the mistaken belief that we can't fail. Peter Schazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality.*

- We've never learned to ***enjoy*** time with God.

The most important thing in your mind is your picture of God.
Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart.*

Satan knows this.

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but . . . against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

What is your picture of God?

What experiences have contributed to this and how has it changed across your life?

When God thinks about you, what expression comes over His face?

Does He smile or does He frown?

To enjoy time with God, we must ***behold the beauty*** of God (Psalm 27:4).

Be still and know that I am God. **Psalm 46:10**

Jesus went to a place where He could be alone to pray. **Mark 1:35**

Disconnecting: making ***more space*** for God.

Connecting: learning to ***commune with*** God.

What practices help you make ***more space*** for God?

What practices help you ***commune with*** God?

How is it with your soul?

Christian discipleship is the process of learning to follow Jesus
and **become more like Him.**

Transformed into his image
2 Cor. 3:18

Conformed to the image of his Son
Rom. 8:29

Until Christ is formed in you
Gal. 4:19

Formational

Formation is a lifelong process

i. Because being like God is not possible in this life

"Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, a day, but of a lifetime" (AA, 560-61).

"Godliness – godlikeness – is the goal . . . [a goal] that cannot be completed in this life, but that will be continued in the life to come" (Education, p. 18-19).

ii. Because life keeps changing

"We get married and learn that sexual temptation is about more than being sexually satisfied. It is also about ego, power, adventure and conquest.

"We also learn that having what we need is not enough; there is always a better job, a bigger house, and the latest electronic toy.

"And then there are the children. They give rise to some of the most commendable emotions; but children also bring out some of life's darkest and most evil thoughts, words and actions.

"Raising children can reveal just how much we need to become like Christ."

"Later, life surprises many of us with enlarged prostates, diabetes, aching backs, and breast cancer.

"Our married children divorce and move back home.

"Resentment, disappointment, and other negative emotions that we believed were gone return with a rage.

"What becomes so powerfully true is that all events and all circumstances form us into Christ.

"And that formation takes place throughout life." ***(Bill Hull, The Kingdom Life, p. 110-111).***

While we may want to speed it up, our formation in Christ-likeness cannot be hurried.

When discipleship is understood as a journey, our masks can come off, because there is no shame.

What does ***becoming more like Jesus*** look like?

"Love the Lord your God with all your **heart . . . soul . . . strength.**"
Deut. 6:5

"Love the Lord your God with all your **heart . . . soul . . . mind**."
Matthew 22:37

A renewed mind

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ
Phil 2:5

By beholding . . . we are being transformed into His image
2 Cor. 3:18

Be transformed by the renewing of your mind
Romans 12:2

The ultimate freedom we have as human beings is the power to choose what we will allow our mind to dwell upon
(Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*).

Brain-based research

- Taxi-drivers
- Musicians
- OCD patients

A renewed heart

Create in me a pure heart, O God
Psalm 51:10

I will give you a new heart
Ezekiel 36:26

Attitudes and values

A renewed will

Whoever claims to live in Him must live as Jesus did 1 John 2:6.

Train yourself to be godly 1 Tim. 4:7

How do we do that?
Training vs Trying

How much of this is God's work and how much is ours?

"Christ came to ransom and redeem us. We cannot purchase anything from God. It is only by grace, the free gift of God in Christ, that we are saved" (*That I May Know Him*, 83).

"It is only by the grace of God, combined with the utmost earnest efforts on our part, that we can gain the victory" (*God's Amazing Grace*, 341).

"Christ has made the way by dying our sacrifice, by living our example, by becoming our great high priest. He declares, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' If by any effort of our own we could advance one step toward the ladder, the words of Christ would not be true" (*R&H, Nov. 4, 1890*).

"The Christian must put forth strenuous exertions, and God will unite divine grace with his human effort" (*R&H, Oct. 30, 1888*).

Justifying grace vs. **Sanctifying grace**
(Tyner, *Searching for a God of Grace*)
Grace for **guilt** vs. Grace for **life**

"Grace is not opposed to **effort**, but to **earning**."
(Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*).

What does our ***effort*** entail?

Focus on the beauty of Jesus

As I am lifted up from the earth, I will attract everyone to me John 12:32

By beholding . . . we are being transformed into His image 2 Cor. 3:18

Embrace spiritual growth as a lifelong process

"The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes;

for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature" (Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, 64).

"We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged" (MS 31, 1890).

Separate spiritual growth from requirements for salvation

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works, so no one may boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

"Discipleship is merely the life that springs from faith" Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship.*

If spiritual growth is not salvific, then what's it for?

Who **benefits** when we become more like Jesus?

Matt. 4:19

Come

Discipleship begins with learning to ***be with*** Jesus

Follow me

As we spend time with Jesus, we learn to ***follow*** in His footsteps

And I will make you

As we follow Jesus, we learn to ***become more like Him***

Fishers of men

As we are changed by Him, we learn to be ***committed to His mission.***

Spiritual **Formational** **Missional**

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,

He has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners,

And recovery of sight for the blind,

To set the oppressed free" Luke 4:18