

2: DISCIPLED BY THE WRONG SOURCES

By John
In Discipline, Faith, Mindset

5 Min Read



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Unequipped Series: When No One Showed You How to be a Man

OPENING THOUGHT

You are being discipled every day, whether you know it or not—either by Christ or something that wants to replace Him. Disciples are simply followers, learners. The question isn't *if* you're being shaped, but *by what*.

Let's face it. Most of us didn't decide one day, "*We're going to let the world tell us who we are.*" The discipling process was subtle, almost unnoticed.

Think back to some of your earliest lessons. Didn't we all learn from Saturday morning cartoons, jokes in the school locker rooms, song lyrics, our favorite superhero movies, and the unspoken rules we picked up from older guys? Some of us learned from our dads, while others learned life out on the streets. Some of those early lessons have never left us.

Today, we learn from a variety of sources, including podcasts, social media, influencers, news sites, and self-help gurus. They're all telling us we need to hustle harder, to grind it out. The information vehicles may be different, but the world has been running this discipleship scam since Adam's time. As we look around, it's disheartening to see that it's gaining more followers.

This culture's discipleship program prioritizes performance over character. Ambition over integrity. Image over substance. We have to ask ourselves if we're chasing what the world has to offer, is it moving us closer to Christ or further away?

SCRIPTURE

**"Do not conform to the pattern of this world,
but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."**
—Romans 12:2 (ESV)

Paul's message in Romans 12:2 is clear—resist the pull of this world. Paul's not talking about sin. He's warning us about what practices can shape our character, and values. He's urging us to reject what this world has to offer—it wants to shape us into the world's image, not Christ's.

Paul's alternative is transformation—the inner change of one's heart by the renewing of the mind. This happens when we intentionally look to God's Word, prayer, and the Spirit's leading. Renewal is an ongoing process. Each day, we decide which voice will shape us.

When our hearts and minds are renewed, we see things from God's perspective. We can better grasp His will for our lives. We're not to look for ways to avoid conformity, but to look more like Christ, inside and out.

APPLICATION

Most men think discipleship takes place when two men chat over a cup of coffee with their Bibles open. They don't realize that much of the world's noise is designed to distract them from hearing God's voice.

Let's understand, the world is not trying to entertain you—it's trying to recruit you. The deception comes in when its teachings do not resemble instructions—it's shaped to look more like entertainment, ambition, mission guidance.

Here's what you won't hear the world say:

- The obvious sins aren't the most dangerous ones—it's the ones that sound biblical.
- You don't need to put "surrender" before "self."
- Distraction is not spiritual warfare.
- If you stop listening, you'll suffer withdrawal, it will be unbearable.

Don't just remove the world's noise; it needs to be replaced. When we remove something, there's always something else waiting to take its place. That void needs to be filled with time with our Heavenly Father.

So, this week, take inventory of your inputs. What are you feeding your mind? Who's shaping your values? Which voices are louder in your life—God's or the world's?

Then take one practical step: fast from one source this week—social media, a sports show, talk radio, even a "harmless" YouTube channel. Replace that time with Scripture, prayer, or a conversation with a godly brother. Don't just detox—retrain your ears and heart to recognize the Shepherd's voice.

TODAY'S CHALLENGE: WHICH VOICE ARE YOU LISTENING TO?

Take 10-15 minutes a day this week to spend time with God rather than social media, catching up on past emails, or watching a YouTube video. Ask God to renew your mind in that space where the other voice used to be.

Then pray this:

"Lord, silence the voices that lead me away from You, and tune my heart to hear Yours. Shape my thoughts to match Your truth."

FINAL THOUGHT

You're going to be disciplined by something. The only question is whether it will lead you toward Christ or away from Him. The world will gladly shape you into its image if you let it—but Jesus will shape you into His, if you choose Him.

This week's step: Pick one voice that's been disciplining you in the wrong direction. Turn it off for 7 days. Use that time to read one chapter of the Gospels each day. Watch how Jesus leads, loves, and lives—and let Him be your teacher.

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