

61: DISCIPLESHIP WAS NEVER MEANT TO BE DONE ALONE

By John Leavy

In Week 13: Walking With Others

4 Min read



“And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach.” — *Mark 3:14*

Jesus never designed discipleship to happen from a distance. Before the Twelve preached a sermon, performed a miracle, or led anyone else, **“He appointed twelve, so that they might be with Him”** (Mark 3:14). That was their first assignment. Not ministry. Not leadership. Simply being with Jesus.

For nearly three years they walked the same roads, shared meals around the same fire, listened to His conversations, watched how He treated people, and learned by observing His life. Before Jesus asked them to carry His message, He invited them to share His life.

One of the things rarely talked about is that discipleship is caught long before it is taught. We often reduce it to a Bible study, a curriculum, or a weekly meeting. Those tools have

value, but they are not the heart of disciple-making. Information can fill a notebook without ever changing a man. Life change happens when truth is lived out in front of someone who is walking the same trail.

Anyone can hand another hiker a map. A guide does something different. He walks beside him. He knows when to slow down, where the footing is loose, and how to navigate the difficult stretches. Confidence isn't built by reading about the trail. It's built by walking it with someone who has already been there.

That is how Jesus disciplined. He didn't simply teach lessons; He shared His life. He invited ordinary men to walk with Him until His life became the pattern for theirs. The same is true today. Discipleship has never been about completing a study. It has always been about walking closely enough with another believer that the life of Christ becomes visible, practical, and worth following.

APPLICATION

One of the things rarely discussed is how easily we confuse personal devotion with discipleship. We read our Bible, pray faithfully, attend church, and assume spiritual growth is something we accomplish on our own. Those disciplines are essential, but they were never meant to replace walking alongside another believer. Throughout Scripture, God consistently shapes men in relationship. Moses had Joshua. Elijah had Elisha. Paul poured into Timothy. Even the Twelve learned by living life together with Jesus.

The trail was never meant to be walked alone.

Independence is one of the greatest obstacles to spiritual growth because it convinces us we don't need anyone else. We tell ourselves we're doing fine, when in reality we've simply become comfortable walking without accountability. The problem with hiking alone is that it's difficult to recognize when you've wandered off the trail. A fellow hiker often sees the washed-out path, the loose footing, or the wrong turn long before you do. The same is true spiritually. Another man notices what you've grown blind to. He asks the question you've been avoiding. He encourages you when you've become discouraged and challenges you when you've become complacent. That isn't weakness; it's one of God's primary ways of strengthening His people.

What often goes unmentioned is that discipleship changes both men on the trail. The one being disciplined grows in wisdom and maturity, while the one doing the discipling discovers how much God still has to teach him. Patience is refined. Pride is exposed. Expectations are adjusted. You learn that growth cannot be forced, only faithfully encouraged. People rarely mature according to your timetable. They grow as God works in their hearts.

Jesus understood this from the beginning. He didn't build disciples through occasional conversations or classroom instruction. He shared meals, walked dusty roads, answered questions, corrected mistakes, and lived before them day after day. He knew that

transformed lives are rarely produced from a distance. They are shaped one faithful step at a time as one man walks with another.

LIVE IT OUT

This week, don't just look for someone to encourage—look for someone to walk with. Invite a man to breakfast, grab a cup of coffee, or spend a couple of miles together on the trail. Resist the urge to have all the answers or solve all his problems. Instead, listen well, ask good questions, and simply be present. Most men don't need another lecture; they need another man willing to walk beside them. That's where discipleship begins—one faithful step at a time, as two men choose to follow Christ together.

Life's trail is no place for a Lone Ranger.

PRAY THIS...

“Lord, send someone my way, that we might explore life's trail together while learning from You.”

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***Information lays the foundation—
Practice builds the man.***

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