



# The *Talmidim* life!

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‘As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” <sup>20</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James, son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, <sup>22</sup> and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him. (Matthew 4:18-22).

In Luke’s account he says, ‘So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him’ (Luke 5:11).

Why did these successful businessmen who were no doubt fully committed to their trade instantly up and leave everything to follow Jesus? The reason is that it was considered very prestigious and desirable to become a disciple of a well-known Rabbi. Jews in Galilea had a strong educational system starting age five for children to learn the scriptures. Boys would continue to study while learning a trade. The very best students would seek out a famous Rabbi to become a ‘full – time’ *Talmidim* – Hebrew for **disciple**. Few would be accepted though. And this meant leaving home and trade to travel with the Rabbi to study, learn and, most importantly, to become like the Rabbi. It was a great honour to a family for a son to be accepted by a Rabbi. Acceptance showed strong confidence in the new *Talmidim* that they had what it took to succeed and become like the Rabbi. So, when Jesus, a Rabbi who was growing in fame, called them.....!!! No wonder they jumped at the opportunity and left everything to follow him.

So, what about us? me? I am a Christian but am I a *Talmidim*. Is it the same thing? Well, ideally it is! When I become a Christian, I don’t just receive a ticket to heaven so to speak, and yes, I become a child of God, but I also step into the role of a disciple. **Jesus commissioned the church to ‘go and make disciples – *Talmidim* – of all peoples’** (Matthew 28; Mark 11).

Peter, Andrews, James, John, and others who Jesus called, embarked on their *Talmidim* journey. Little did they know at the time of their calling that this Jesus was no ordinary Rabbi. Nor did they know what this would mean for them and the life they were to live.

But let’s come back to you and me. How do we see ourselves in light of our relationship with Jesus? *Just pause for a moment and reflect on that.*

## Marks of a disciple:

- They left their old life and entered into a new life.
- They learned their master’s teaching, to apply it to their lives – to obey it.
- They were committed to becoming like their master.
- They walked with their master, in relationship, and remained loyal to him.
- They took on their master’s purpose and vision.

No doubt those first disciples hoped to succeed, to become respected members of their community, and to become revered Rabbis themselves. But much to their shock, Jesus showed a different way. They were to take up a cross! They were to die!

'If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine. If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it'. (Matthew 10:38).

Now, becoming a *Talmidim* had its sacrifices but this was taking it to a whole new level. Of course, Jesus modelled an extreme kind of loving sacrifice, even to the extent of loving enemies and those who hurt him. Yet, for God this is not extreme or unusual. It is only so to a selfish, sinful humanity. God is love and Jesus was sacrificial love manifest in the flesh.

So, when we think of being a disciple, it is not about becoming more religious or dour. No, it is becoming more and more loving, more selfless, and more sacrificial in the expression of love. **It is growing into Christlikeness** (2 Cor. 3:18).

'And this is my prayer: that your **love** may abound **more and more** in knowledge and depth of insight' (Phil 1:9) 'May the LORD make your **love** increase and overflow for each other **and** for everyone else, just as ours does for you' (1 The 3:12).

Have you ever wondered, **why you?** Why not so many, many others? Well, these questions may never be answered, yet, here we are: Called! Here I am, called!

And Jesus is still calling, "Follow me!"

Am I following Him today? now? Is Jesus my Rabbi? Am I His *Talmidim*?

Maybe you have been a Christian a long time. I implore you to renew your heart to follow him afresh today! Shake of the dust of the past. TODAY, he is calling!