

# DISCIPLESHIP SYSTEM AMONG THE PROPHETS OF THE OLD COVENANT TO THE APOSTLE PAUL OF THE NEW COVENANT

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## **DISCIPLESHIP SYSTEM AMONG THE PROPHETS OF THE OLD COVENANT TO THE APOSTLE PAUL OF THE NEW COVENANT**

### **Abstract**

This study aims to trace and analyse the development of the discipleship system in the biblical narrative, starting from <sup>34</sup>the prophetic tradition in the Old Testament to the formation of the early churches under the leadership of the apostles and the apostle Paul in the New Testament. Discipleship is understood as an intentional process of spiritual, theological, and ethical formation within the framework of the relationship between a spiritual mentor and his or her successor. In the Old Testament, discipleship is prophetic and symbolic, seen in the Moses-Joshua, Elijah-Elisha, Samuel and his band of disciples, and Isaiah and his band of followers, as well as the community of prophets that emerged in the historical context of Israel. This system emphasised the inheritance of charisma, prophetic authority, and the internalisation of God's law. Entering the New Testament, Jesus introduced an incarnational and relational discipleship paradigm, emphasising the transformation of the totality of life through direct engagement in the life of the Master. The Apostle Paul then institutionalised this discipleship practice in the context of the early Christian community, with structured patterns of teaching, multiplicative discipleship, and a focus on the reproduction of spiritual leaders. This paper utilises a theological-demonological and historical-critical approach to identify both continuities and conceptual transitions in the practice of discipleship, and offers implicative reflections for the development of a contemporary discipleship system that is contextualised and rooted in the biblical heritage.

Keywords: Discipleship, Prophet, Jesus Christ, Apostle Paul, Old Testament, New Testament, Spiritual Formation

### **INTRODUCTION**

Christians are followers of Jesus. A Christian may claim to be a Christian but not yet be a disciple. A disciple of Christ is a person who is committed to following the example of Christ which is seen through spiritual growth and changes in his/her life. Biblical living is only possible

to exist and grow in our lives as believers because we experience discipleship or formation. The discipleship aspect in the implementation of the Great Commission has not received serious attention from Christians. The Great Commission is usually associated with evangelising to all the nations of the world and then followed up with baptism and teaching which is summarised in the discipleship process. John Stott gives a definition in his book *Radical Discipleship* that, <sup>13</sup> Christian discipleship is the process by which disciples grow and develop in the Lord Jesus and are equipped by the Holy Spirit, who indwells our hearts, to overcome the pressures and sufferings of this life and increasingly resemble Christ. The discipleship process requires every believer to respond to the Holy Spirit who will analyse our thoughts, words, and behaviour, and push us to constantly transform into Christ-like persons. In busy ministry activities and many things that demand attention and focus, of course, the right method or way is needed to ease the burden and overcome problems. However, those found in churches, Christian organisations, or Bible schools do not take part in the task of discipleship. This is a problem because the Christians in them do not realise or understand their duties as believers. This relates to the condition and spiritual growth of each person in the church, Christian institution, or Bible school. Servants of God are busy with church ministry programmes, institutions are busy with programmes and goals, Bible school students are busy with class schedules and assignments, other Christians are busy with work, so discipleship and spiritual growth do not happen as they should. Examples of discipleship in the church are the pre-sidi study/confession process and worship services, in Christian institutions or organisations there are PA (Bible study) groups, but are these genuine and ongoing processes that bring people to a true knowledge of Jesus Christ? What should be done? There are many issues that arise, one issue is resolved, then other issues arise. Then when will they be resolved and can a minister, spiritual leader, shepherd, and pastor handle them alone?

## RESEARCH METHODS

<sup>35</sup> The method used in this paper is descriptive qualitative research method, namely by literature study, from journals and theological articles. Literature study is the process of collecting and analysing various literature sources related to the research topic. Through the literature study, the author identifies existing theories, results of previous research and various views related to the problem under study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- **Definition of Discipleship in General**

Discipleship generally refers to the process of learning and following a teacher or figure with the aim of becoming like that teacher. Discipleship is a process of learning and developing oneself as one actively learns and becomes more experienced and knowledgeable. Discipleship has a structured relationship and involves an intentional connection between a student and a mentor. The ultimate goal of discipleship is change in the disciple including in thinking, behaviour, and values. A disciple learns not only from the teachings of the teacher but also from the living example set by the teacher. Discipleship becomes a means of passing on values, knowledge, skills, and traditions from one generation to the next.

- **DEFINITION OF DISCIPLE AND DISCIPLESHIP ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE**

- **Definition of Student**

<sup>5</sup> A *disciple* (*disciple*, *mathetes*) is a learner or follower, usually someone committed to an authoritative person. <sup>15</sup> Michael Wilkins, a professor of New Testament, explains that *disciple* is a specific term used in the gospels to refer to the followers of Jesus and is a common designation for those who in the early church were called believers, Christians, brothers and sisters, fellow travellers, or saints. <sup>6</sup> However, each term focuses on different aspects of individual relationships with Jesus and others in the faith. The term is most often used in a specific sense: at least 230 times throughout the gospels and 28 times in the book of Acts. Disciple is also called a learner or one who receives or follows the doctrines or teachings of a particular teacher. Disciple is not a specific designation for the twelve apostles in the New Testament, but rather refers to a follower of a leader who has a movement.

Bill Hull asked one question, "Were the disciples born or made?" He argues <sup>5</sup> that they were born to be made. <sup>1</sup> The vision that Jesus set out to do was meant to seek out and educate more people like the eleven disciples, a lifelong experience where imperfect people would be moulded into the likeness of Jesus, characterised by progress not perfection.

Bobby Harrington and Josh Patrick give the definition of discipleship based on Jesus' words in Matthew 4:19 "And He said to them: Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." This verse can be divided into a three-part framework that corresponds to the main aspects of discipleship found throughout the New Testament. What are the three aspects that define a disciple? Following Jesus (head), being transformed by Jesus through the Holy Spirit (heart), committing to Jesus' mission, which is to be "fishers of men" (hands). Putting the three together, a disciple is someone who follows Jesus, is transformed by Jesus, and is committed to Jesus' mission. If people follow Jesus, are transformed by Jesus, and are committed to Jesus' mission, then they are biblical disciples, and if the goal is to make disciples, it is crucial to define success and know what it looks like when the mission is accomplished. Dallas Willard writes in his book that in the heart of a disciple there is a desire and a decision that is fixed and calculates the cost. The primary desire of a disciple of Christ is to be like Him. A disciple is one who intends to be like Christ and live out the faith and practice of Christ, and regularly and continually rearranges his or her affairs to that end. A disciple should have the desire to make other disciples as well.

So disciples are followers of Jesus who have been born again. The common teaching is that a Christian is someone who by faith accepts Jesus as Saviour, gains eternal life, and is safe and secure in God's family; a disciple is a Christian who takes spiritual disciplines more seriously and is involved in evangelising and training others.

- **Definition of Discipleship**

Disciple making comes from the verb *matheteusate*, which means to make or make disciples (Matthew 28:19). Bill Hull writes in his book that there are three dimensions to discipleship, namely: Rescue, the first step in making disciples is evangelism, part of the Great Commission which commands "baptise them" all disciples are actively involved in seeking out people who need Christ. Development, when a disciple makes a commitment to Christ, the next step is to build character and capacity. Sending, once a disciple is taught, the final step is to send.

Herdy in his book defines discipleship as a process of relationship between a more mature and experienced follower of Christ and some new believers, and then he shares his life (principles of the truth of God's word, conviction, commitment, time, energy, attention, and other things needed) in order to help these people to know Christ and eventually they will introduce Christ to others. More simply put, discipleship is someone sharing their life with other new believers in order to

help them come to know and introduce Christ. <sup>24</sup> Discipleship is at the heart of the church because discipleship is at the heart of the Great Commission. To be a growing spiritual family, it must develop a discipleship process. This process includes principles of Bible application that must be developed to help fulfil the purpose and fulfil the Great Commission of Christ. The next step is that a disciple has been able to disciple or mentor others and is growing in faith and lifestyle.

Ron Jenson defines discipleship as one of the foundational principles of the church, because discipleship lies at the centre of the church's purpose. Discipleship can be technical, that is, it can be through person-to-person relationships or one-to-one relationships with three or four people or small groups of those making disciples and those being disciplined. The focus of this technical discipleship is to develop the first generation of leadership, and it will continue into the next generation. Discipleship can also work in a corporate way, where the discipleship process must have a special place in a church and needs to focus special attention on the leadership in the church. The purpose of discipleship is to lead others to become followers of Christ, and fulfil the last command of Jesus Christ before ascending to heaven. Discipleship is not just about decisions and baptism. Discipleship is about equipping people to embrace a lifestyle of surrender and obedience to all the teachings of Jesus, here and now.

- **DISCIPLESHIP IN THE OLD TESTAMENT**

### **1.2.1 The Terms Disciple and <sup>12</sup>Discipleship in the Old Testament**

In the Semitic world of the Hebrews, the equivalent Hebrew word to μαθητης *mathetes* (*Yun*) is תלמיד *talmid*, which literally means "one who is taught." <sup>9</sup> The prophet Ezra used this word to describe a group of singers in the house of God (1 Chron 25:8). The prophet Isaiah uses a word closely related to לומד *limmud*, <sup>3</sup> to speak of disciples (Isa 8:16; 50:4; 54:14). "I must keep this testimony and seal this teaching among my disciples," says that the prophet Isaiah had several disciples (Isa 8:18). <sup>1</sup> The use of *talmid* and *limmud* indicates a personal relationship as the great teacher teaches and trains a student. Ancient Hebrew culture did not automatically lead to the kind of formalised discipleship relationship that exists today. <sup>1</sup> This was true within families, among the elders at the city gates, and among the wise men who served as custodians of Israel's wisdom and traditions.

The basic concept of group development began in the days of Noah. God used Noah's family of 8 to reveal to the world His will (Gen 7:1; Gen 9:8-9). In Exodus 18, Moses, at the suggestion of Jethro, divided the people into groups so that each person received better attention. Elsewhere in the Old Testament, the same method is demonstrated (see, Num 2:13; Joshua 4:12; Neh 3; Dan 1:3-7). Moses' relationship with Joshua is another illustration of the relationship of work and disciple. God gave Joshua to Moses in answer to Moses' prayer. One of the first things Moses did was to give Joshua his authority (Num 27:15-20). Moses shared his authority with Joshua. Moses in this context felt secure in God. He rejoiced to see Joshua begin to bear some of his burden. In their relationship, Joshua was there to help Moses in his ministry and continue his work after Moses was gone. He succeeded in his leadership a few years later (Joshua 1:1-2). The Old Testament provides many examples of how to train workers.

- **Definition of Prophet**

A prophet is someone who is called by God to be the conveyor of God's word to His people. A term applied to individuals both male and female who exhibit prophetic traits: "man of God" (*ish ha-elohim*), seer (*ro'eh*), one who sees visions (*hozeh*), and prophet (*navi*). The terms "seer" and "one who has visions" (*ro'eh* and *hozeh*) describe the person's experience, the former emphasising the extraordinary knowledge that comes to prophets, and the latter emphasising the reception through visions or dreams. The term prophet denotes one who has a special relationship with God as a "called one" and is entitled to speak or act on behalf of God. The prophet is referred to as Yahweh's spokesperson and views human activities from the perspective of God's interests. Moses is a prophet who is referred to as the opening of the prophetic stream. Moses had the position of fulfilling God's promise. Moses served Israel as the servant of God and was honoured by a special relationship with God (Num 12:6-8; Deut 34:10-12). When the Israelites were living away from God, there was immorality, tribal feuds, and syncretism, Samuel was sent to minister to them. There was also the prophet Elijah who had a special role in the history of redemption. Each prophet had a task and all of them were given by God.

- **Discipleship Systems of Prophets and Prophets Who Had Disciple Groups**

- **Prophets Moses and Joshua**

Moses' discipleship of Joshua is an important example of leadership, transfer of authority, and the continuity of God's plan for His people. Joshua first appears in the biblical record as Moses'

faithful servant (Ex 17:9-13). Joshua became Moses' closest companion and was often Moses' partner in carrying out God's commands to him at Mount Sinai (Ex 24:13; 32:17) and guarding the tent of meeting (Ex 33:11).

Moses' relationship with Joshua is another illustration of the relationship between work and disciple. God gave Joshua to Moses in answer to Moses' prayer. One of the first things Moses did was to give Joshua his authority (Num 27:15-20). He rejoiced to see Joshua begin to bear some of his burden. In their relationship, Joshua was there to help Moses in his ministry and continue his work after Moses was gone. He succeeded in his leadership a few years later (Joshua 1:1-2). The result of Moses' discipleship with Joshua was the regeneration of leadership for the Israelites after Moses' death. Joshua was able to lead the Israelites effectively and enter the promised land according to God's will.

- **Prophet Elijah and Prophet Elisha**

God told Elijah to choose Elisha to help him and continue his work after he was gone. Elijah did not find Elisha studying and meditating in the school of the prophets, but out in the field working (1 Kings 19:15-16,19). LeRoy Eims writes in his book that Elijah did not beg Elisha to go with him or use his prophetic position to force him into service. Each person must weigh the costs and benefits and enter into discipleship training willingly. In fact, from the record of their conversation, Elijah did not mind if Elisha did not follow him. If he wanted to work with Elijah he had to learn from him willingly (1 Kings 19:19-21). Following Elijah was a sacrifice for Elisha. Because of the rampage of Queen Jezebel of Israel, it was an uncertain time for the prophet of God or anyone who came in contact with him. If Elisha had asked others first, he would have received advice to stay with his oxen in the field. It was safer and more profitable. But Elisha realised that he would be enriched spiritually if he spent time with the glorious prophet of God. So after he had rested and killed his oxen, or his means of subsistence-the final act of complete surrender-he went with Elijah (1 Kings 19:21). What did he do? Serving Elijah. It is true that those who will lead must learn to serve. Likewise, one who will train others must willingly spend time with them in hours-long conversations and relationships in everyday life.

The relationship between these two men was such that Elijah never encouraged Elisha to always accompany him in his work. Instead, three times Elijah encouraged Elisha to review their relationship and leave him if he wanted to, but three times Elisha refused. Elijah had chosen the

right man. At Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho Elisha was given the opportunity to quit, but he chose to stay by Elijah's side (2 Kings 2:1-6). When Elisha decided to follow Elijah and serve him, it was a fixed decision. He had weighed the pros and cons and chose this life as the best for him. In 2 Kings 2 it is called "the company of the prophets found Elisha," apparently centred in three places, Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho. The company of prophets is literally the sons of prophets or members of a group of prophets who live together to form a community and the prophet Elisha had a close relationship with them. This company of prophets appears in 1 Kings 20:35, which explains that they travelled and did things together. So it was not only Elisha who followed Elijah but there was also a group or entourage of prophets. Elijah's farewell to Elisha was also witnessed by the company of prophets.

- **Prophet Samuel**

Prophet Samuel obviously had a large following. He had a group of prophets in Ramah. There he mentored the young prophets. These prophets were considered Samuel's disciples in the context of prophetic education. He commanded Saul to meet with "a company of prophets" in preparation for Saul's appointment as king (1 Sam 10:5). These prophets seem to be under Samuel's control, knowing in advance what they will say and do. The prophets also seem to have a special relationship with the king just like Samuel's example with Saul. This group of prophets were regarded as people who were moved by the Spirit of God and who upheld the belief in God against all threats from the pagan religions.

This group of prophets belonged to a school of prophets established by Samuel to train young men. Some of the young Israelites who received training in the school of prophets were able to teach others and perform the duties of other prophetic vocations and had a different relationship with the Most High. These prophets were people who fully devoted themselves to religious study and practice, and helped each other in God's work. In this section, the relationship between the mentor and those who are mentored to do God's work is explained and they are fully devoted and have duties and responsibilities to perform, towards God and towards fellow human beings.

- **Prophet Isaiah**

The prophet Isaiah speaks of his disciples in (Isa 8:16; 50:4; 54:14). "I must keep this testimony and seal this teaching among my disciples" says that the prophet Isaiah had several disciples (Isa 8:16). "...among my disciples" To understand this passage, most Jewish

commentators are of the opinion that the disciples here are those who were taught by the prophet and who gathered around him as their spiritual guide, but there are others who say that the word "my disciples" refers directly to the Lord's disciples. However, Bill Hull says that the best evidence points to either the Lord's disciples directly or Isaiah's disciples. The distinctiveness of religious disciples is the dual discipleship of being a follower of God and a follower of the leader. Thus, a disciple can follow both God and God's prophet Isaiah. Although there are no organised records, Isaiah had a great influence in his community. There were probably people who were attracted to his prophetic messages and became his followers. These are considered Isaiah's disciples in the context of the influence of his teachings. The book of Isaiah is generally divided into three parts, viz: the first part (chapters 1-39), the second part (chapters 40-55), the third part (56-66). The first part contains the prophecies of the prophet Isaiah written by Isaiah himself. The first of these two supplements was most likely written by a disciple or disciples of Isaiah later around 500 BC, the second supplement is divided into two parts (chapters 33-35), which were written during or after the Babylonian exile. Deutero Isaiah and Trito Isaiah were written by members of Isaiah's "school" in Babylon: chapters 40-55 were written before and after the sack of Babylon in 539 BC by the great Persian king Cyrus II and chapters 56-66 were composed after the return from Babylonian captivity in 538 BC.

It is important to note that in the Old Testament, the relationship between a prophet and his followers is not always described as a formal teacher-student relationship. However, there is a strong element of learning, teaching, influencing in the interaction between them. Therefore, figures and groups can be considered disciples in the Old Testament context even though they are not always explicitly mentioned.

- **The Discipleship System of the Prophets and Other Formation in the Old Testament**

During the discipleship process, of course, there is a system applied in conducting discipleship or coaching and of course it has goals and things that are done to develop the person involved in it. The purpose of the relationship in discipleship or coaching is of course to grow and develop. Not only in the discipleship relationship, but there are also in the life of the people of Israel rules and teachings and habits in their family and social life.

- **Person-to-Person Relationship:** This is a relationship that is nurtured with one another. Moses needed a lot of support as he faced a huge and arduous task. With the help of Aaron, his imperfect brother, and his experienced father-in-law Jethro, Moses obeyed God and saved God's people from the cruelty of Egypt. When Moses went up the mountain to meet with God, he took Joshua as his helper (Ex 24:13). From then on, Joshua continued to accompany Moses in his ministry. Joshua learnt and observed how to lead in difficult and challenging situations from Moses. Moses' arduous task of bringing the people of Israel to the promised land, required organisation and organisation, and Joshua learnt from that part.
- **Family teaching between parents and children.** For the Israelites, children are a precious blessing from God (Ps 127:1,3). Among the blessings such as security, prosperity, and longevity, the most important one is a large number of offspring (Job 5:25) children are the main core and they are also honoured and considered the most important award in the family. Teaching the children in the family should be done repeatedly and instructing them (Deut 6:7), by teaching and educating the children in the family, it will bring joy to the family (Prov 29:17).
- **Prophets also have some followers or disciples.** For example, the prophet Isaiah with his disciples, the prophet Samuel with the company of prophets whom he mentored and worked with (1 Sam 10:5), the prophet Elijah who mentored Elisha (2 Kings 2), and Elisha who was with the company of prophets after Elijah was taken up into heaven. Prophets also seem to have special relationships with kings: Isaiah with King Hezekiah, Nathan with King David, and Samuel with King Saul.
- **Wise men and scribes.** The Israelites had three main sources for wisdom and spiritual authority: the high priest and the priestly clan known as the tribe of Levi who represented God's people, the prophet who represented God to His people, and the wise man who explained and protected the collection of wisdom. The wise men and teachers of wisdom taught voluntarily, in the midst of crowds, called to the palace to teach the children of the nobles. These men worked to pass on the writings of wisdom, orally from fathers to sons and eventually in writing. One of the best known was Ezra, the main teacher during Israel's return from exile to Jerusalem under Nehemiah.
- **DISCIPLESHIP IN THE NEW COVENANT**
- **Discipleship in the Time of Jesus Christ**  
In the Middle Eastern world where Jesus was born, there is a strong tradition of learning. Various schools of different views were enthusiastic, and each demanded a lot from their respective students. There were four groups that made disciples in the Middle Eastern world where Jesus was born and raised, namely: The Pharisees were a zealous non-priestly reform movement

that saw it as their duty to keep the law by maintaining the written and oral traditions. John the Baptist had many disciples, and only two left to follow Jesus in the early stages (John 1:35-50). Many of John's disciples, twelve in all (Acts 19:1-7), believed in Jesus at a later time. Disciples of the Secluded and Secessionist Groups They were educated people, their spirituality was not just about academic pursuits. Zealots. A messianic movement that developed in Palestine, the result of political unrest caused by poor economic conditions and occupation by the Roman army. Usually a group of followers gathered around the leader and called him king. Jesus attracted much attention from these Zealots, who wanted to make Him king. Discipleship in the ancient world was a common phenomenon, first involving the commitment of an individual to a great teacher or leader. In certain instances the prospective disciple chose their teacher or rabbi could accept or reject the request. Disciples in first century Judaism learnt all things from their teachers, learning from the stories and customs of their teachers' lives, how they kept the Sabbath according to their ways and their interpretations of the Torah. Memorising the teacher's words. Oral tradition provides a basic way to learn. Secondly, learning how the teacher served. A student learns how his teacher carries out God's commandments, including how he observes the Sabbath, fasts, prayers, and says blessings in formal settings. He also learns the rabbi's teaching methods and the various traditions he lives by. Thirdly, modelling the life and character of the teacher. The highest calling of a disciple is to imitate his teacher. Fourth, to educate their own students. When a disciple completes his training, he is expected to put what he has learnt into practice by finding and training his own disciples.

## 2.2 Jesus Called a Rabbi

In the New Testament, the word rabbi is applied to John once, while the word rabbi is applied to Jesus 12 times, meaning a title of honour and a sign of ordination. The word rabbi in Hebrew "rav" means great, usually used in honour of the rabbi as "my master." In the 2nd century CE, the word rav was applied to the rabbi as the official teacher, so rabbi became the official title for Jewish Torah teachers, while modern Judaism understands rabbi as a sign of ordination for teachers.

According to the Hebrew "rav" is an honour to the teacher while modern Judaism understands it as a sign of ordination to the teaching staff so that they officially become teachers. The two syllables "honour" and "ordination" are inseparable from the rabbinate of Jesus. The beginning of

Jesus' ministry and learning as a rabbi was preceded by ordination through baptism in the Jordan River and marked by inauguration through the medium of a "dove". After that Jesus performed his rabbinic duties followed by *semica* as when Moses led God's chosen people out of Egypt often laying on hands as a sign of ordination. According to Judaism the meaning of "rabbi or teacher" is literally "the great one." The word rabbi is rooted in the word "rav" which means leading in the acquisition of knowledge. Jesus as a teacher (rabbi) performed a universal rabbinic task. This is because He did not teach only certain people or groups, but to all tribes and nations in the world. The reason is that the Rabbi entered the Pharisee's house together with another woman, there the Rabbi ate with the Pharisees and women and sinners (Mark 2: 15) which according to Jewish tradition was not allowed. The next reason is that the rabbi taught not only to the twelve disciples, not only to the Jews, but to the Greeks, even asking Christians to teach all the tribes in accordance with the Great Commission.

Several reasons are given for calling Jesus a teacher: firstly, His teaching is antique, meaning that it never goes out of date (1 Timothy 6:3) Jesus' teaching has been going on for two thousand years (Luke 3:23) generation after generation. Secondly, *up to date*, preaching that is relevant and in accordance with the times. Third, Jesus as a teacher is not limited by time and place, for example Jesus taught in the city (Luke 4:31), in the village (Luke 5:17), the synagogue (Matthew 9:35), in the streets (Luke 13:26), and others. Fourthly, the rabbinical study of Jesus is synergised between teaching and instruction. *Didaskalia* includes both the work of teaching and the content of the teaching (Mt 15:9; Mk 7:7). *Didache* refers to the teaching of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 7:28) that was delivered to the twelve disciples and declared to be from God (John 7:16-17). *Kerygma* as teaching has been given to certain people, namely the recipients of the proclamation of the Kingdom of God to develop the mission of the church such as discipleship and evangelism which is carried out continuously (Rom 6:17).

- **Jesus with His Disciples in the Gospels**

In New Testament times, the Gospels refer to the ongoing custom between Jesus and His disciples, giving and receiving teachings (Mt 9:14; Jn 1:35; Mt 10:42; Lk 6:17; Jn 6:66). In addition to the Gospels, there are also Acts of the Apostles that give the meaning of disciples as believers and confess Jesus as the Messiah (Acts 6:1, 2, 7; 9:36), the fellowship of believers (Acts 2:41-47), the relationship of spiritual father and son (1 Timothy 1:2, Titus 1:4) and also found in other

relationships such as between the apostles and the relationship of believers. Jesus' discipleship with His disciples was the core of Jesus' ministry while on earth. Jesus actively selected, trained, and mentored a small group to be His successors in carrying out His work without neglecting the larger group. Here are some important aspects of discipleship as follows: 1) Calling and selecting disciples, the Lord Jesus Himself took the initiative to select and call the disciples to disciple them and train them to make disciples again. Marulak Pasaribu wrote that there are many main themes contained in the Gospel of Matthew, one of which is discipleship which emphasises that the responsibility of the disciples is not only to hear what the teacher says, but also to do and practice His teaching in real life (Matthew 7: 24-27). The recognising of Jesus by His followers is the main part of discipleship. Matthew wants to explain that in the beginning the disciples did not know Jesus properly and it was only at the end of His ministry, when the disciples saw what happened in Jesus' life and after seeing what Jesus did, that they recognised that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God (Matthew 16). The Lord Jesus prepared Himself before starting His ministry and before calling the twelve apostles (Mt 4 and Mt 10). First, He prayed and fasted for forty days and forty nights (Mt 4:2). Fasting, νηστεύσας (*nēsteusas*) from the word νηστεύω (*nesteuo*) having fasted which means after fasting. Jesus fasted in preparation for his ministry, after he fasted he received water baptism from John the Baptist, after which Jesus chose the first disciples, Peter and Andrew (Matthew 4:18). Jesus said, "Come, follow me" to Simon and Andrew (Matthew 4:19), and James and John (Matthew 4:22). Sentence: "Come after me" (Matthew 4:22) is in Greek: Δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου (*Deute orisō mos*) come after me. This sentence means: the command to come and walk behind Jesus. Brian Byrne says the reason is that "in some areas of the Jewish community, Matthew was considered a criminal. He was disliked, hated, feared, and became rich because there was no limit to his greed. According to the Jews, it was almost impossible for a man like Matthew to repent." The key words of Jesus' call to them are δευτε (*deute*) (come here), ποιήσω (*poiso*) from the root ὀπισω (*opiso*) (with accusative and the infinitive) (meaning to cause someone to do something) to cause someone to do something, (to become) to γενεσθαι (*genesthai*) from the root γινομαι (*ginomai*). When Jesus entered into the lives of the disciples, Jesus wanted to revolutionise and reform them, to enter into repentance and become a radical disciple of the Lord Jesus, by no longer dwelling on whatever was in their past. 2) Life together, Jesus' followers learn and grow in their relationship with Jesus. They ask questions, make mistakes, and sometimes struggle to understand His teachings. Discipleship involves learning from and growing in relationship with Jesus. Jesus

appointed twelve men to be his closest disciples. He called them to be with him, to learn from him, and to be sent out to proclaim the good news. More than just an invitation to follow him physically, it was an invitation to live a new way of life focused on service to God and others. Jesus spent a lot of time with his disciples, the disciples observed Jesus' ministry firsthand and listened deeply, creating a bond between Jesus and the disciples and a bond among the disciples. The group of disciples had to be taught what Jesus himself had taught. This is the basic core of the apostles' teaching. This teaching is entirely dependent on the authoritative teaching of Jesus and the presence of Jesus throughout the ages is guaranteed. 3) Commitment and consistency, Leon Morris writes that Luke's Gospel expresses the need for determination when following Christ compared to the other Gospels. All three synoptic gospel writers tell the story of how Jesus called Matthew and how Matthew responded to the call by following Jesus. However, only Luke says that he "left everything" (Lk 5:28). According to Matthew and Mark's account, Simon and his brother left their nets and followed Jesus (Matt 4:20; Mark 1:18), whereas according to Luke's version, the story reaches its climax when Peter and the others "left everything" not just their nets (5:11). All three synoptic evangelists contain statements about self-denial and cross-bearing and only Luke emphasises "daily". The process begins with God's purpose, which is to proclaim the good news to others. A new believer is assisted and guided in their faith growth to understand the basics of the Christian faith. The next step is that a disciple has been able to disciple or mentor others and is growing in faith and lifestyle. 4) Being a witness to the gospel, in the Gospel of John, discipleship is associated with the importance of the role of witnessing and preaching the word of God. The Gospel of John emphasises the role of testimony as a way to form discipleship. The testimony given by John the Baptist about Jesus, encouraged several people to follow Jesus and become His disciples. The Gospel of John focuses its content on introducing Jesus who is God who appeared in human form on earth and sacrificed to atone for human sin. 5) Exemplifying Jesus, Bill Hull in his book explains the discipleship process that Jesus did in the Gospel of John has several stages, namely: the first stage, Jesus introduced himself and called people to become disciples of Jesus. John 1:24-51 records that John the Baptist preached and introduced people to who Jesus was. Jesus then invited the people who came to him to become his disciples. In the second stage, Jesus educated those who became his disciples. People who decide to become Jesus' disciples will be disciplined with the materials and methods mentioned in the discipleship component section of John's Gospel. The discipleship was high-intensity as the disciples followed Jesus

everywhere for about three years (Jn 7:3). In the third stage, Jesus sent out his disciples to continue his ministry. The Gospel narrative of John 21:15-19 records Jesus sending Peter to shepherd the sheep of God. The expected outcome of this commissioning was that more people would believe in Jesus and become disciples of Christ (John 1:12; 5:24). Jesus' discipleship is a relevant model for the church and every follower of Christ today. This process involves relationship, teaching, modelling with the aim of making disciples who make disciples.

- **Jesus with Disciples or Other Followers in the Gospels**

In the Gospels, apart from the twelve disciples who lived and were with Jesus, there was also another group of followers consisting of women from Galilee who followed and supported Jesus' journey and ministry. They supported financially, provided services and were witnesses to what Jesus was doing. In the gospels they served Jesus because they had experienced Jesus' love and salvation. In Luke 8:1-3 the names of <sup>11</sup> Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Susanna and other women who are not named but served Jesus' entourage with their wealth are mentioned. In Mark 15:40-41, another name appears, Salome. These were servants who provided their possessions to feed and support Jesus' ministry.

- **John the Baptist with his Disciples**

John the Baptist was born into an elderly family, his father Zachariah the priest and his mother Elisabeth. John grew up living in the wilderness of Judea (Luke 1:80). John the Baptist was a stern and simple man who lived in the Judean wilderness and wore only a camel's hair robe, <sup>28</sup> a leather belt, his food was locusts and wild honey (Mk 1:6). John the Baptist appeared in the Judean desert to preach repentance, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 3:1-2). <sup>36</sup> Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist (Mt 3:13-17), told his disciples to follow Jesus (Mt 11:2-6).

<sup>42</sup> John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus prompted some people to follow Jesus and become His disciples. <sup>29</sup> John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus as the Lamb of God has become the starting point for the discipleship process. As such, the discipleship process <sup>43</sup> in John's Gospel is not an instantaneous process but one that goes through stages. John the Baptist's testimony as an introduction and entrance into the discipleship framework, and Andrew's testimony as a reaction to John the Baptist's testimony, became the starting point for the two disciples to leave him and

follow Jesus. John the Baptist played an important role in discipleship because he prepared the way for Jesus and pointed to Him as the Messiah. He was not just a teacher, but a bridge that brought people to meet and become disciples of Jesus.

- **Disciples and Discipleship in the Early Church**

Discipleship played an important role in the growth and development of the early church. The promise of the coming of the Holy Spirit was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, which was ten days after the ascension of the Lord Jesus (Acts 2:1-4). On the day of Pentecost the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and were given the ability to communicate in foreign languages. People from other lands heard them speaking in their own languages (Acts 2:5-11). Then Peter stood up and delivered the first sermon recorded in the book of Acts. To answer the people who were swearing at them, he began by quoting a passage from the Word of God. Peter had learnt well and at that time quoted Joel 2:28-32. Then Peter went straight to the heart of the matter: the message of the gospel. He preached about the crucified and risen Christ and backed up what the Word of God said (Acts 2:22-24). The results were shocking: When they heard this, they were deeply moved, and they asked Peter and the other apostles: "What shall we do, brethren?" (Acts 2:41). This is followed by the most interesting statement in the Word of God. They persevered in the apostles' teaching and in fellowship. And they always came together to break bread and pray (Acts 2:42). After the Pentecost event and about 3000 people repenting and believing in Jesus, the apostles did not stop preaching the gospel.

Important aspects and principles of discipleship in Acts 2:41-42 for the spiritual growth of the church Acts 2:47 This principle focuses on the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer as means to deepen the understanding of Christ's teachings. The discipleship principle used by the followers of Jesus Christ back then includes several important parts. The principle of discipleship according to Acts 2:42, "They persevered in the apostles' teaching and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayer." From this verse, we can understand some of the learning methods used by the apostles. Persevering in the apostles' teachings The apostles absorbed the teachings taught by Jesus Christ and used them as the basis for teaching. Persevering is one of the very important values in the teachings of the apostles in the scriptures, the apostles sent by God had key characteristics that reflected perseverance in proclaiming God's word and facing the challenges they faced. This gathering of believers began and became active after the

<sup>7</sup> descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1). The power of the Holy Spirit helped the apostles to perform the task of preaching the gospel.

The impact of discipleship and fellowship is found in Acts. 2:44-47. These verses are the result or positive impact of the discipleship principle applied by the apostles. The visible result of the discipleship principle in Acts 2:42 is that they praised God. They developed a strong worship life and gave thanks to God. Their life of praise reflected the spiritual transformation that took place in them. The next one is that they were favoured by everyone. The apostles' learning methods and lifestyle attracted the attention and sympathy of the people around them. This shows that they lived with integrity, love, and an attractive demeanour. The apostles not only conveyed teachings with words, but also used actions and daily behaviour and through honest, just and responsible living, the apostles demonstrated high integrity and established strong relationships with the surrounding community.

- **Apostle Paul's discipleship with Timothy (2 Timothy 2: 22)**

The apostle Paul's teaching and mentoring of Timothy was an example of intentional discipleship, meaning that Timothy was being groomed by the apostle Paul as his partner and successor in ministry. The apostle Paul met Timothy in the city of Lystra when the apostle Paul preached the gospel there. The apostle Paul himself was a disciple of his teacher Gamaliel (Acts 22: 3). The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy to help Timothy understand his duties as a church leader at a young age. Some aspects of the apostle Paul's discipleship with Timothy: election, Paul chose Timothy to go serve with him to help Timothy grow in faith. The next aspect was training, Paul trained Timothy to be a proper minister of the gospel. Another aspect is equipping, Paul equipped Timothy for his ministry task.

In his letter to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:8), the apostle Paul states that, "Remember this: Jesus Christ, who was raised from the dead, who was born a descendant of David, this is what I preach in my gospel." So, when viewed from the context of the text <sup>20</sup> 2 Timothy 2:2 "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to trustworthy men who are also able to teach others." Emphasises the essence of the message and nothing else. Those who know and enjoy Christ will live in holiness and consequently have a desire to disciple others. This or the essence of the message is the most fundamental to understand in discipleship. Starting from Paul's conversion led him to proclaim the One who had given him grace. ἤκουσας παρ' ἐμοῦ διὰ πολλῶν

μαρτύρων (you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses) The word "ekousas" in the form (*verb indicative aorist active second person singular*) comes from the root ἀκούω "akouo". This word means to hear, listen, know, obey, understand. "...entrust it" παράθου (*parathou*) convey (*verb imperative aorist middle second person singular*) παρατίθημι (*paratithemi*) means to put in front of, spread out in front of, hand over, prove. Expresses an action that will occur or materialise through the use of one's will in influencing the will of others or can be said to be a form of command. "To those who are trustworthy" trustworthy πιστοῖς (*pistois*) from πιστός (*pistos*) means trustworthy, faithful, believing, faithful, certain. Barclay explains that the Greek word for "trustworthy (*pistos*)" has such a rich meaning associated with it. A *pistos* person concerns all those who are trustworthy, faithful and reliable. "And able to teach others," ἱκανοὶ (*hikanoî*) *qualified* means fit, able, competent and capable. "Teaching others", teaching διδάξαι (*didsai*) (*verb aorist active infinitive*) from διδάσκω (*didasko*) which means *to teach*. The act of teaching is one-time (past tense) but ongoing. If you have heard the gospel, lived and grown in the true knowledge of God, then you must also be able to teach it to others. The apostle Paul's discipleship did not happen at certain times only, but discipleship can take place anywhere and anytime, when walking, sitting, eating, serving with Timothy, discipleship happened. Paul's discipleship with Timothy demonstrates the importance of investing in the lives of others, providing guidance, pursuit, and opportunities for growth and service.

### **2.8 Apostle Paul's Discipleship with Disciples, Spiritual Children and Other Co-workers**

In the Bible, in the book of Acts and Paul's letters, there are about a hundred names of first-century Christian congregation members who had a personal relationship with the "apostle to the nations" (Romans 11:13). Familiar among them are Paul's ministry activities with Apollos, Barnabas, and Silas. Other names not often found in the Bible are Arkhipus, Claudia, Damaris, Linus, Persis, Pudens, and Sopater. Over a period of time and under various circumstances, many played an active role in supporting Paul's ministry, such as Aristarchus, Luke, and Timothy who were called his spiritual sons. Some accompanied him during his imprisonment, travels, and gave him lifts. Of Paul's other companions such as Asinkritus, Hermes, Julia, or Philologus and others, little is known about them other than their names. In the case of Nereus' sister or Rufus' mother as well as those in Khloe's household whose names are unknown (Rom 16:13-15; 1 Cor 1:11). From the description of the apostle Paul's co-workers, we can learn that having a partner or a large

number of brothers and sisters, working together for the sake of the gospel, giving of themselves will have an impact on others.

The people who accompanied the apostle Paul could be his companions in his travels and ministry. Men like Sopater, Sekundus, Gaius, and Trophimus were instrumental in the success of his ministry (Acts 20:4). The help Paul received also came from people who provided lifts. They were Aquila and Priscilla, Gaius, Jason, Lydia, Manason, Philemon, and Philip (Acts 16:14-15; 17:7; 18:2-3; 21:8, 16; Rom 16:23; Phil 1-22). In Corinth, Titius Justus made his home available to the apostle Paul and supported him in preaching the gospel (Acts 18:7). Apostle Paul had many other friends and associates such as Mary, Phoebe, Tryphena, Tryphosa who had laboured hard for the gospel. There were Akhaikus, Fortunatus, and Stefanus who travelled to Corinth, Artemas, Tychicus travelled to join Titus who was ministering in Crete, and Zenas who was about to travel with Apollos (1 Corinthians 16: 17; Titus 3: 12-13).

When Paul was in prison and imprisoned several times, his co-workers and friends were instrumental in reducing Paul's dependence. Onesimus, Philemon's slave joined Paul in Rome, as did Tychicus who accompanied Onesimus on his journey back to his master. Epaphroditus made the long journey from Philippi with gifts from his congregation (Phil 2:25), and there are many more names mentioned by the apostle Paul. As friends and fellow travellers in the preaching of the gospel, they helped to develop and expand the apostle Paul's ministry and increase the number of people who believed in Jesus and followed Jesus. Support and sustain each other in ministry, learn to persevere and be faithful because every condition and difficulty brings each of them to experience God's help.

## CONCLUSIONS

Discipleship is God's work and He alone takes the initiative to do it, so the essence of the message in discipleship is also the message of God's work which only talks about <sup>23</sup>the gospel of Jesus Christ as the centre of Christianity or the centre of believers. God calls the church to be involved in that work. Discipleship originates from God Himself and must be orientated towards God Jesus Christ. Christ is the Great Teacher of discipleship itself. Discipleship is not new but has existed since biblical times. The person being discipled must be directed to give attention to Christ who can provide assurance of change and salvation or eternal life with God. The most important thing to know and pay attention to in discipleship is the essence of the message in discipleship itself, namely the message of the truth of the gospel. Servants of

God who do discipleship must be people who have confidence in their calling as servants of God and have obedience to learn God's word and faithfully serve God. The command to do discipleship is a very important command to be obeyed by every believer. The command in discipleship is to preach the gospel and entrust others who have been discipled or nurtured for the task of preaching the gospel.

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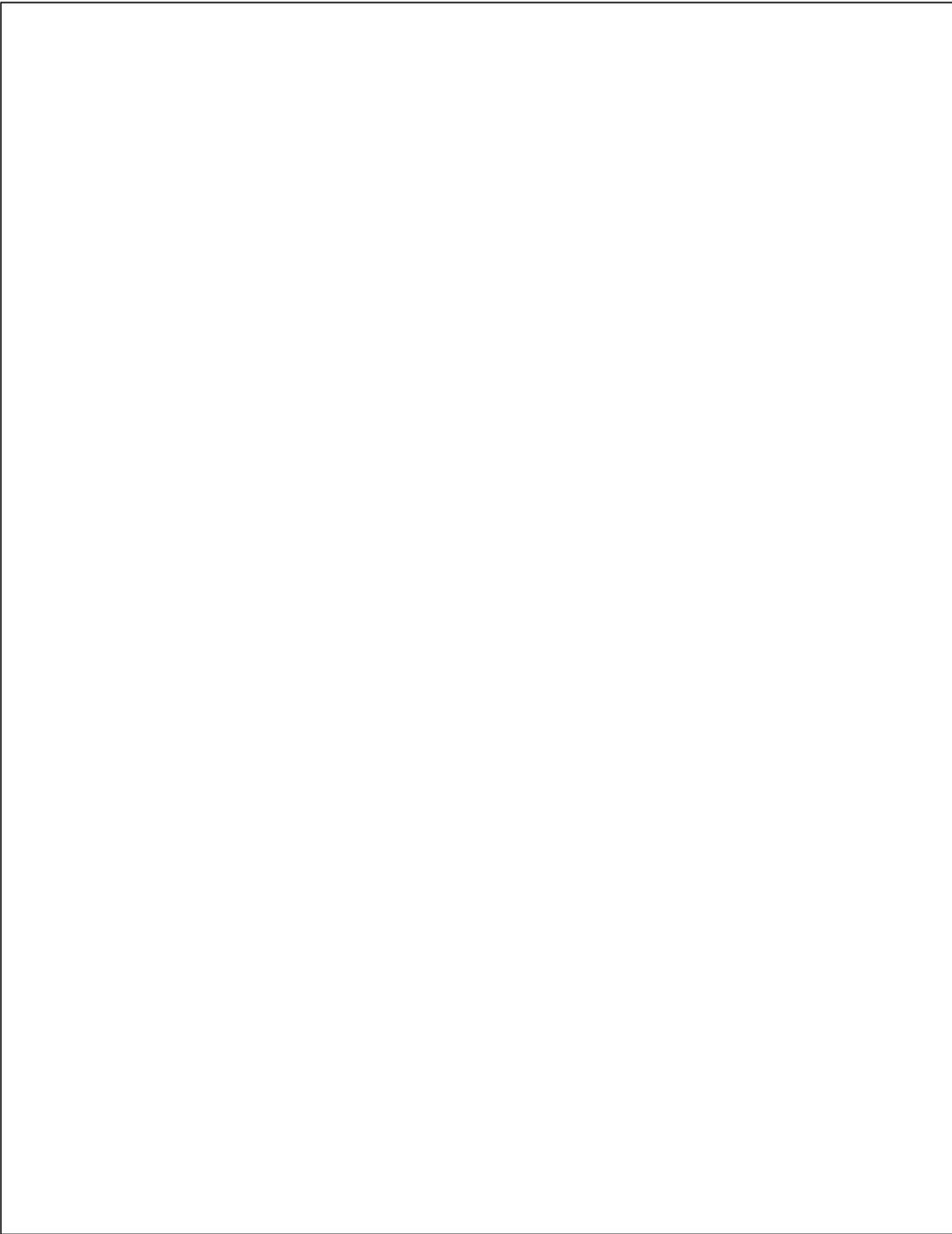
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