

Back To School...Again

by Wayne Goff

You could probably check prior bulletin articles of mine and see this title repeatedly. Personally, I remember going back to school as a youth and the excitement that went with it. Then I remember going back to school for my own children and the fact that this signaled getting back into a routine for our family. Now I am watching my grandchildren and other families as they go back to school. Most children are excited about going back to school . . . for about a week . . . then the drudgery sets in: **studying!** Did you know that I have been preaching for forty-seven years and it's like "going back to school" every year for me, with no summer break.

Learner

Christians are "**disciples**" of Jesus Christ, which means they are to be learners. The term is used over 225 times in the Gospels alone! "**Disciple**" (mathētēs) means "a learner, pupil, disciple" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). Jesus is the Master Teacher and you and I, as Christians, are the pupils. Notice a few things Jesus said about us learners:

"A **disciple** is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40). **Perfection** is a goal of ours and until we attain perfection, we should always be studying as students!

"Then another of His **disciples** said to Him, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' But Jesus said to him, 'Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead'" (Matthew 8:21-22). Jesus demands **first place** in our hearts in order to be a true disciple. So many would-be disciples do not give Jesus first place in their hearts.

Disciples are family. "But He answered and said to the one who told Him, 'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, 'Here are My mother and My brothers!'" (Matthew 12:48-49). Jesus didn't mind letting His mother and brothers wait on Him while He was teaching His disciples, whom He considered "family." This is more than "going to school" isn't it?!

Jesus **quizzed** His disciples. "When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, 'Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?' So they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'" (Matthew 16:13-16). Not only did Jesus quiz His disciples, He expected them to know the answer!

Jesus is **the text book**. "Take My yoke upon you and **learn** from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:29). As **Luke 6:40** said, we are to be "**like**" our teacher. His "last will and testament" (text book) is the New Testament, **Hebrews 9:15-28**. You cannot disagree with the Teacher and be right!

Graduates?

The twelve **apostles** were the "graduated" twelve **disciples**. Unfortunately they were not always the best students, so Jesus made sure He sent them the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth, to remind them of what He had said, and to continue to teach them things they had not yet learned! **John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13**. **Talk about an inspired "cheat sheet"!** But then again, these disciples had to be perfectly correct in all that they taught. Not even the best pupil in the world can do that on his/her own. So Jesus made sure that what they taught others was exactly what was to be taught. "Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen" (Matthew 28:20).

So there you have it. Christians are permanent students – ever learning, ever improving, ever striving to reach that higher goal.

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