



Inner Growth - Disciples 3

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had twelve disciples. Do you know them? The names of the chosen disciples begin in Matthew ten, verses two through four, or in Luke six, verses fourteen to sixteen. The names of the twelve disciples of Jesus are Simon Peter, Andrew, James (the Son of Zebedee), John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James (the Son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot. There was a purpose for the disciples that Jesus chose. There was a mission for the twelve. Jesus selected the twelve disciples, also known as apostles, for several reasons: They were to be His companions and would learn by being with him. He sent them out to do what He had been doing with preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. Jesus gave them authority and power to serve, cast out demons, and heal the sick. Matthew chapter ten is the foundation for the disciples. These twelve had a mission, and Jesus explains in four parts of this section how they should live and conduct themselves among others during their commission. The four areas are the mission of the twelve, beginning from verses five through sixteen, discipleship and suffering in verses seventeen to twenty-five, the worth of a disciple from verses twenty-six to thirty-six, and the cost of discipleship in verses thirty-seven to forty-two, respectively.

The Bible does not state why Jesus chose these twelve disciples. However, how much do we know about them? The Son of God had a reason besides the purpose that He would save humanity.

The first disciple is Simon, who is called Peter. He was the Son of Jonas, a fisherman who lived in Bethsaida and Capernaum. Peter did evangelistic and missionary work among the Jews, going as far as Babylon. He was a member of the Inner Circle and authored the two New Testament epistles that bear his name.

At the time of Christ, the common language was Greek, and the family language was Hebrew. So Peter's Greek name was Simon, as in Mark one, verse sixteen, and John one verses forty through forty-one. His Hebrew name was Cephas, as in First Corinthians one, verse twelve, chapter three, verse twenty-two, chapter nine, verse five, and Galatians two, verse nine, respectively. The Greek meaning of Simon is rock, and the Arabic meaning of Cephas is also rock.

Peter was a married man, and as in First Corinthians nine, verse five, his home was Capernaum. Jesus probably made His headquarters there when He visited Capernaum. Peter was also a Galilean. Among the twelve, Peter was the leader. He stands out as a spokesman for all the twelve disciples. Peter asked the meaning of the saying in Matthew fifteen, verse fifteen. Peter is the one who asked how often he must forgive.

Peter inquired about the reward for all of those who follow Jesus. Peter is the one who first confessed Jesus and declared Him as the Son of the Living God. It is he who was at the Mount of Transfiguration. Peter saw Jairus' daughter raised to life. Yet, it is he who denied Christ before a maiden. Peter was an Apostle and a missionary who laid down his life for his Lord. True, he had many faults and always had the saving grace of a loving heart. No matter how many Peter had fallen and

failed, he always recovered his courage and integrity.

The second disciple is Andrew, who was the brother of Peter and a son of Jonas. He lived in Bethsaida and Capernaum and was a fisherman before Jesus called him. Originally, he was a disciple of John the Baptist, as in Mark one, verses sixteen through eighteen. Andrew brought his brother, Peter, to Jesus in John one, verse forty. He is the first to have the title of Home and Foreign Missionary. Andrew receives claims from three countries as their Patron: Russia, Scotland, and Greece.

Andrew introduced others to Jesus. Although circumstances placed him in a position where it would have been easy for him to become jealous and resentful, he was optimistic and well-content in second place. His purpose in life was to bring others to the master.

The third disciple was James, the Elder, Boanerges, Son of Zebedee, and Salome, brother of John the Apostle. He was a fisherman who lived in Bethsaida, Capernaum, and Jerusalem. James preached in Jerusalem and Judea and was a member of the Inner Circle, so called because they received authorization for special privileges. The New Testament tells us very little about James. His name never appears apart from that of his brother, John. They were inseparable pairs of servants, as in Mark one, verses nineteen to twenty, Matthew four, verse twenty-one, and Luke five, one through eleven. He was a man of courage and forgiveness, without jealousy, living in the shadow of John, a man of extraordinary faith.

John Boanerges was the fourth disciple. He was the Son of Zebedee and Salome, brother of James, the Apostle. He was known as the Beloved Disciple. A fisherman who lived in Bethsaida, Capernaum, and Jerusalem, he was a member of the Inner Circle. He wrote the

Gospel of John, I John, II John, III John, and Revelation. He preached among the churches of Asia Minor. Banished to the Isle of Patmos and one of the prominent Apostles.

John is in many places in the New Testament. He was a man of action and was very ambitious. John was a man with an explosive temper and an intolerant heart. His second name was Boanerges, which means Son of Thunder. He and his brother, James, came from a more well-to-do family than the rest of the twelve Apostles.

Since his father had hired servants in his fishing business, as in Mark one, verse twenty, he may have felt himself above the rest. He was close to Peter. They were acting together in the ministry. Peter, however, was always the spokesman for the band. John mellowed with time. In the latter part of his life, he had forgotten everything, including his ambition and explosive temper, to only cling to his Lord's command of love.

The fifth disciple was Philip, who came from Bethsaida in the town from which Peter and Andrew came, as in John one, verse forty-four. The likelihood is that he, too, was a fisherman. Although the first three Gospels record his name as in Matthew ten, verse three, also Mark three, verse eighteen, Luke six, verse fourteen, and Acts one, verse thirteen, it is in the Gospel of John that Philip becomes a living personality. Philip was a man with a warm heart and a pessimistic head. He would like to do something for others who did not see how. Yet this simple Galilean gave all he had, and in return, God used him.

Bartholomew Nathanael, Son of Talmai, the sixth disciple, lived in Cana of Galilee. His name means Son of Tolmai or Talmai, as in Second Samuel three, verse three. Talmai was king of Geshur, whose daughter, Maacah, was the wife of David, mother of Absalom. Bartholomew's name

appears with every list of the disciples, as in Matthew ten, verse three. Continued in Mark three, verse eighteen, then Luke six, verse fourteen, and Acts one, verse thirteen, respectively. Bartholomew was not his first name but his second name. His first name probably was Nathanael, whom Jesus called "An Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile," as in John one, verse forty-seven.

Thomas Didymus is the seventh disciple who lived in Galilee. Thomas was his Hebrew name, and Didymus was his Greek, sometimes called Judas. Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell us nothing about Thomas except his name. In Saint John of the New Testament, Thomas appeared in the raising of Lazarus as in John eleven, verses two through sixteen in the Upper Room, and in John fourteen, one to six, where he wanted to know how Jesus was doing. In John twenty, verse twenty-five, we see him saying unless he sees the nail prints in Jesus' hand and the gash of the spear in His side, he will not believe.

That's why Thomas became known as Doubting Thomas.

Matthew is the eighth disciple. Matthew, or Levi, Son of Alpheus, lived in Capernaum. He was a publican or tax collector. He wrote the gospel that bears his name. The call of Matthew to the apostolic band is mentioned in Mark two, verse fourteen, Matthew nine, verse nine, and Luke five, twenty-seven through twenty-eight, respectively. From these passages, we learn Matthew is also known as Levi. It was a common custom in the Middle East at the time of Christ for men to have two names.

Matthew's name means "a gift of God." The name Levi could have been given to him by Jesus. Although we know little about Matthew personally, the outstanding fact about him is that he was a tax collector. The King James Version calls him a publican, which in Latin is Publicanus, meaning engaged in public

service, a man who handled public money, or a tax-gatherer. Matthew was unlike the other Apostles, who were fishermen. He could use a pen, and by his pen, he became the first man to present to the world, in Hebrew language, an account of the teaching of Jesus. Matthew became the first man to write down the teachings of Jesus and a missionary of the gospel. The ninth disciple was James, the Lesser or Younger, Son of Alpheus, or Cleophas and Mary, who lived in Galilee. He was the brother of the Apostle Jude. According to tradition, he wrote the Epistle of James, preached in Palestine and Egypt. James was one of the little-known disciples. Some scholars believe he was the brother of Matthew, the tax collector. James was a man of strong character and one of the most fiery types.

The tenth disciple is Jude, Thaddeus, or Lebbeus, Son of Alpheus or Cleophas and Mary. He was a brother of James the Younger. He was one of the very little-known Apostles and lived in Galilee. "Trinomious" means "a man with three names was this servant." In Mark three, verse eighteen, he is called Thaddeus. In Matthew ten, verse three, he is called Lebbeus. His surname was Thaddeus. In Luke six, verse sixteen, and Acts one, verse thirteen, he is called Judas, the brother of James. Judas Thaddeus was also called Judas the Zealot.

By character, he was an intense and violent Nationalist with the dream of world power and domination by the Chosen People. In the New Testament records in John fourteen, verse twenty-two, he asked Jesus at the Last Supper, "But Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?" Judas Thaddeus was interested in making Christ known to the world. Not as a suffering Saviour, however, but as a ruling King. Jesus gave him so that the way of power can never substitute for the way of love. Jude went from there to preach in another place.

Simon, the Zealot, the eleventh disciple, is one of the little-known followers called the Canaanite or Zelotes, who lived in Galilee. In the King James Version, he is called a Canaanite, as in Matthew ten, verse four, and Mark three, verse eighteen. However, he is called Simon Zelotes, as in Luke six, verse fifteen, and Acts one, verse thirteen. The New Testament gives practically nothing on him except that it says he was a Zealot.

Judas Iscariot, the twelfth disciple, the traitor, was the Son of Simon who lived in Kerioth of Judah. He betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Judas, the man who became the traitor, is the supreme enigma of the New Testament because it is so hard to see how anyone so close to Jesus, who saw so many miracles and heard so many teachings, could ever betray him into the hands of his enemies. Judas' name appears in three lists of the twelve Apostles, as in Matthew ten, verse four. Other areas of scripture are Mark three, verse nineteen, and Luke six, verse nineteen, respectively. Judas was a Judean, and the rest of the disciples were Galileans.

Matthias was selected to replace Judas, as recorded in Acts one, verses fifteen through twenty-six. The other man in consideration was named Joseph or Barsabas and surnamed Justus. However, eventually, Matthias was chosen. The Bible is sparse on additional details relating to Matthias, but it does say that Matthias was with Jesus from His baptism until his resurrection. Besides the book of Acts, Matthias is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible.

The 12 disciples of Jesus were the foundation stones of His church, and several even wrote portions of the Bible. In Revelation twenty-one, verse fourteen, we are told that the twelve foundations of the wall of the New Jerusalem will have in them the names of the twelve disciples. It is evident, therefore, that God attaches

great importance to these twelve men. Jesus chose these men because He knew they would follow Him. However, He also knew there would be bumps along the way, ups and downs, and failure and fall into temptation, as did Judas the traitor. However, He also knew there would be bumps along the way, ups and downs, and failure and fall into temptation, as did Judas the traitor.

Jesus knew Judas would fail, and yet He chose Him. This example shows that even being a disciple of Jesus, we, as followers, can still fall into sin and fail. Every day, followers must arm themselves with the Word of God to avoid entangling with ungodly talk which tempts us to stray from God.