

What Does It Look Like to Be a Disciple of Jesus? Acts 2:36–47

Intro: Back-to-School & Spiritual Promotion

It's back-to-school season, and today is Promotion Sunday here at church. Kids and students move up to new classes based on age or grade. But here's my question: *What about our spiritual maturity?*

On your way in, you received a card showing the stages of spiritual formation: not curious, curious, believer, disciple, disciple maker, lifelong disciple maker.

Ask yourself: *Which one am I?* Now ask: *If my friends, family, or neighbors had to choose, what stage would they say I'm in?* Finally, ask: *If I stood before God today, the One who knows me best, what stage would He say describes me?*

What is a disciple?

Simply put, **A disciple is someone who is fully devoted to obeying the words of Jesus.** They trust and obey him.

Jesus called his first disciples in Matthew 4, and it said these fishermen left their nets and followed Jesus. They were all in.

During Jesus' three years of ministry, they followed Jesus as disciples, and they were growing as disciples. But it wasn't until Jesus ascended into heaven that we see the disciples' ministry truly begin.

Let's turn in our Bibles to Acts chapter 2:36-47, where we find a snapshot of what fully devoted followers of Jesus looked like.

Background on Acts

The book of Acts was written by Luke, a physician and companion of the apostles, as a continuation of the Gospel of Luke. He carefully recorded the life and ministry of Jesus, the birth of the church, and the movement of God changing the world.

Originally, Luke titled it with the Greek word **Πράξεις** (*PRAHK-sees*), the plural form of *praxis*, meaning "Acts" or "Actions." By the second century, it was widely called *The Acts of the Apostles*. Many have said it could just as well be called *The Acts of the Holy Spirit* or *The Continued Acts of Jesus through the Apostles* — because when Jesus ascended to heaven and promised to return, His work didn't stop. He sent the Holy Spirit to work in and through His disciples.

I want you to know that Jesus is still working today! He's still saving, He's still calling disciples, He's still building up His Church!

We're going to look at a passage today that shows us how this movement began and how we are invited to join.

Text: Acts 2:36–47 (ESV)

Acts 2:36-47

"Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

37 Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" **38** And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

40 And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." **41** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. **43** And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. **44** And all who believed were together and had all things in common. **45** And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. **46** And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, **47** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."

Main Idea

A disciple is *all in* with Jesus — 100% for Him, His mission, and His church.

1. All in for the Gospel (vv. 36–41)

Peter boldly declares:

"Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." (v. 36)

The same Peter who denied Jesus three times now fearlessly proclaims Him as Lord and Messiah. What changed?

- He was forgiven by Jesus.
- He was fervent in prayer.
- He was filled with the Holy Spirit.

The crowd was “cut to the heart” (v. 37) — deep conviction. They cried out, “*Brothers, what shall we do?*” Peter answered:

“Repent and be baptized... for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (v. 38)

That’s the gospel: Jesus died for sinners, rose again, and offers forgiveness to all who repent and believe.

Illustration – Hacksaw Ridge WWII medic, Desmond Doss, ran again and again into enemy fire to rescue wounded soldiers. Each time he lowered a man to safety, he prayed, “*Lord, help me get one more.*” Seventy-five men owed their lives to his relentless effort.

Friends — if you’ve been rescued, you go back for others. The gospel is only good news if it gets there in time.

Who’s your “one more”?

- A coworker?
- A family member?
- A neighbor?

2. All in for Disciple-Making (v. 42)

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.” (v. 42)

The Great Commission:

“Go therefore and make disciples... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19–20)

The apostles became disciple-makers — and so should we.

A Disciple Loves Christ, Learns from Christ, Lives for Christ, and Leads others to Christ.

1. **Loves** – *It all begins with the heart of a disciple.*

- “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37)
 - In Matthew 4, Jesus called His disciples to be fishers of men, but I don’t see too many Christians fishing. In Acts 1:8, Jesus called His disciples to be His witnesses, but I don’t see too many Christians witnessing. In 2 Corinthians 5:20, we are called to be Christ’s ambassadors to reconcile men to God, but I don’t see many ambassadors. Why is this? Why aren’t Christians sharing their faith, going on mission, and growing as disciples? I believe it’s because their love for other things has captivated them and taken their attention from loving Christ. In Revelation 2, Jesus warns the church in Ephesus, “You have forgotten your first love. Repent and do the things you did at first.”
 - “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” (John 14:15)
 - Disciples of Jesus love Him first, trust Him, and obey Him.
2. **Learns** – Devotes themselves to Scripture and the teaching of Christ.

3. **Lives** – Practices the way of Jesus in everyday life.
4. **Leads** – Helps others grow and take their next steps.
 - “...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:20)

3. All in for the Church (vv. 43–47)

The church is not a place, it's a people — the *ekklesia*, the gathered assembly.

They:

- Studied God's Word together.
- Shared baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- Prayed together.
- Gave generously.
- Gathered for worship.
- Connected in homes.

“And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” (v. 47)

The Principle of Exponential Disciple-Making

Jesus is still saving, He is still calling disciples, He is still growing His church. The only question is, “Are we going to be a part of it?”

THE PRINCIPLE OF Exponential Disciple Making

• If you were to witness for six months and reach one person, and then disciple him/her for the next six months, at the end of the first year there would be two of you. Then if both of you reached one person each and discipled them, at the end of year two there would be four growing, reproducing Christians. If the four of you each prayerfully continued this lifestyle of witness and follow-up, you could impact the world for Christ in one brief lifetime!

Year People reached and trained:

First year = 2

2 years = 4

4 years = 16

6 years = 64

8 years = 256

10 years = 1024

12 years = 4,096

13 years = 8,192

20 years = 1,048,576

30 years = 1,073,741,824

32 years = 4,294,967,296

33 years = 8,589,934,592

This is more than the current world population.

Can this be done? Yes!

“After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.” Revelation 7:9

The Great Commission will be fulfilled.

Takeaway

You will never experience your full purpose in Christ unless you are with Him 100%.

What steps can you take to grow as a disciple of Jesus? not a halfway disciple but a disciple who is all in 100% in joining Jesus in his mission.