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DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus called twelve men to follow him. Others followed also, but these twelve spent many hours in his presence learning from him. They travelled with him, ate with him, ministered with him, and were prepared by him to be his followers. We often call them the twelve disciples.

Just what does disciple mean? The word disciple means a learner, a pupil. This means that they are willing to change what they think they know to learn what is the real truth.

The twelve were with Jesus three and a half years, asking many questions, and observing him in his ministry to others. Much of what he taught they did not understand. They thought he was going to set up an earthly kingdom then, but that wasn't Jesus' plan.

Sitting under the right teachers can make all the difference in the world. A pastor can lead a congregation, but without spiritual insight, the sheep in that congregation are often led astray and starve. The pastor, or shepherd must sit at the feet of Jesus and be taught himself in order to teach others.

Discipleship put simply is learning to be more like Jesus. It took three and a half years for Jesus' instructing his disciples before Pentecost, and he often had to rebuke them for not having faith. They were listening but not hearing. They had an agenda, but his was different. After Pentecost everything changed. They remembered the things he taught, and their understanding of spiritual things was enlightened. The discipleship training had paid off!

If you recall, on the day of the resurrection there were two disciples on the Road to Emmaus. Jesus joined them and quoted scripture to them, but they had no idea who he was, until he opened their eyes of understanding. Luke 24:31 says, ***"And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, 'Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?'"***

The apostle Paul, a religious leader, a Pharisee, received salvation and was taught for three years by revelation from God and learned the truth about Jesus. [Galatians 1:15-18.] He had to "unlearn" what he had been taught as the traditions of men to know the "truth" of God.

We each need to pray that God opens our eyes of understanding and be willing to learn through those that have already been disciplined. This will enable the body of Christ to mature and be what Jesus has called it to be. Disciples – disciplined ones, willing to learn.