

How this teaching about discipleship might affect the life

[Religion](#), [Christianity](#)



In the study of Mark's Gospel the word vocation relates to performing a task for God from the disciples. This is shown in 'The Call of the Four Fishermen' in that as soon as Jesus tells them to "Come Follow Me", they do so immediately without questioning the matter. The calling of Levi represents the first story from the way that Jesus chose his disciples.

He was questioned as to why he wanted sinners and not righteous men, as they were not particularly religious as would have been expected. Jesus chose these people as companions so that they would be with him always and go out to preach the gospel. Most of the people were chosen for their certain qualities they had in common such as they were all experienced with teamwork, they were all patient and brave. They were used to a hard way of life so they could easily deal with people that rejected the gospel.

Whatever Jesus' role was in your life was vital in terms of discipleship. They were willing to drop everything - take nothing with them and preach the gospel and of course they succeeded. The people learnt that there would be an effect either good or bad depending on whether you chose to accept or reject the gospel. The example of this is found in the story of Jesus telling them to spread the gospel and the disciples would be protected from the evil things of the world.

Not only in discipleship but in all things benefit comes at a cost so it was understandable for Jesus to expect great things to give great rewards. To be a true follower of Jesus you must have enough faith to give up everything just to have him in your life. It was not an easy thing to do but it proved each individuals faith in Christ. The perfect example of this was given by the

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widow at the treasury. She was extremely poor but she gave all she had willingly to the temple. Even though she gave the least amount of money, in terms of generosity she gave the highest.

Unlike the other people she put Christianity before herself. The widow in a way was giving up her life, this resembles to Jesus giving up his life, only in a different way. This was true discipleship. The false and selfish way of Christianity is putting wealth before Christ. It is wrong to call yourself a true Christian if you are not willing to do what Jesus asks of you. The rich young man who did this put pride first in his life. James and John are also similar in putting pride first. They wanted to be like Jesus for the physical reasons and not the spiritual reward that was expected. The widow in a way was giving up her life, because she gave all that she had. Jesus also gave his life although in a different way. This was true discipleship.

When something positive is done in life, a positive outcome is expected. This is a great example in relation to Jesus' reward of eternal life. If your life is spent as a true faithful Christian, where Jesus is put first throughout, then the greatest of all rewards is Jesus' promise of eternal life. If a righteous life is led, judged by Jesus, his promise will be fulfilled.

" Explain how this teaching about discipleship might affect the life of a Christian today"

Mark's Gospel plays a significant part in the lives of Christians today. Many Christians believe that following Christ in their everyday lives is a vocation. This sense of vocation leads many Christians to view their lives as serving

God. Christian beliefs affect all aspects of their daily lives, for example, marriage. A belief in marriage is part of modern day discipleship. Being married before God and bringing up children from that marriage is an important aspect of Christian life. Christians make a commitment to bring up their children to love and worship God and to teach them about the Christian way of life, which would include " love thy neighbour as thyself", as recorded by Mark.

Those serving in the ministry of the worldwide Christian Church are required to make many choices as they serve God. A Priest devotes his life to God, through putting the needs of those he serves before his own needs. Some sacrifice marriage and children in order to fulfil their duty to serve God.

Many Christians want to share the word of the gospel. This can be done in many ways, such as serving as priests, preachers, nuns or monks. Others can pass on the good news by word of mouth as they go about their daily lives. Yet others devote their lives to God as missionaries working in different parts of the world building facilities and communities in order to enable people to survive the struggles of life.

Christians believe it is right to put the needs of other people before their own. Some such as Mother Teresa lived amongst the poorest of the poor, trying to bring them some comfort and to help them feel God's love for them. Mother Teresa showed the power of her faith by her choice to give up all her possessions, family and friends in order to the poor and needy. She showed her love for God as she served those others may have turned away from.

She practiced the commandment which Jesus gave to " love thy neighbour as thyself". This was the love of God in action. Today, however, it can be difficult to live up to the standards of the Christian ideal. Marriage is becoming increasingly less common and motherhood is devalued. Youth are under pressure to follow their peers. However, the Christian way is also one of repentance and forgiveness

Modern day Christians are still being persecuted and sometimes killed for their beliefs, just as the twelve apostles were in the early Christian church. Christians who are fully committed to their religion believe they can overcome any battle, even death, as they believe in eternal life. The Corrymeela community in Northern Ireland is a community of both Protestants and Catholics, showing to the world it is possible for those of different religious beliefs to meet and work together. Volunteers at Corrymeela help those who have been affected by the troubles in Northern Ireland.

Sacrifice is an important part of the Christian way of life and is a crucial quality of discipleship. In Mark's Gospel we read of the widow's offering (Mark 12: 41) where we learn that a widow, together with many who were more wealthy than she was, made a donation. Although the widow did not give a lot, she was the only one giving a true sacrifice as she gave all she had. Martin Luther King was a modern day martyr who was assassinated. His political ideals were very much influenced by his Christian beliefs. He was a member of the Baptist Church and wanted all people to be treated with respect regardless of their race or colour.

Through Mark's Gospel we learn of the rewards of discipleship. Being a Christian does not mean that life will be easy. Mention has been made of sacrifice and suffering, but fully living a Christian life will bring its own rewards. Indeed when Peter questions Jesus about what the reward will be for following him, Jesus replies that the reward will be eternal life. (Mark 10: 28 - 31).

Mark's Gospel refers to many of the miracles Jesus performed when he was living on the earth two thousand years ago, for example, the healing of Jairus' daughter. That tradition of miracles carries on today through the faith and prayer of many Christians on behalf of those who are suffering. Some churches have healing services, offering the "laying on of hands" by a priest or preacher, symbolising Jesus' healing power.

"It is not possible to be a disciple of Jesus in the modern world"

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have thought of more than one point of view.

It can be difficult to be a Christian in the world today for numerous reasons. Not all people have been brought up in the Christian faith so this may make it difficult for Christians to form friendships, although a true Christian will be able to extend the hand of friendship to others not of his faith.

Some who consider themselves Christian may find it difficult to keep to their Christian ideals when their social position may be threatened. Many people cannot cope when friends and family may mock their Christian beliefs. Jesus

said, " If anyone is ashamed of me and my words The Son of Man will be ashamed of him..." They may let their pride and ambition get in the way of relationships. Some people are so caught up with surrounding themselves with material possessions, pursuing power and status that they put Jesus last in their lives.

Young Christians may have difficulty living Christian standards and may be tempted to take drugs and alcohol or engage in immorality. They can find it hard to cope with peer pressure.

However, it can be possible to be a disciple of Jesus in today's world. It is important for the Christian to have a clear understanding of the teachings of Jesus in order to be able to put them into practice each day. Jesus has asked those who are prepared to follow him to give up the things of the world. This does not mean they leave living in the world and lead a hermit like existence. It means living a Christian life in the modern world. Jesus has asked those who wish to be disciples to put others first. Christians can treat others as they would like to be treated. This can be done at work or school.

In Mark's Gospel it tells us that Christians can expect to suffer for their beliefs and this means that they may have to put up with hard times in their day to day living. Jesus has asked that believers should follow his teachings as closely as possible. He extended the invitation " follow me" to all people.

In conclusion, it is possible to live in today's world as a disciple of Jesus. A Christian who believes in Jesus, who has faith in him and in his teachings, who models their life on Jesus will be able to cope with the pressures of

modern day living. Such a disciple knows that one day he will be rewarded for the challenges of discipleship by having the opportunity of eternal life.