DISCIPLED BY JESUS

By Hal Perkins

Is it possible to be discipled by Jesus? Yes! We will see how in this article. First, a review.

Jesus’ lifestyle (I believe) can best be summarized by one word: prayer. Jesus prayed continuously. Privately, He invested massive amounts of time in prayer with His Father. Publicly, though fully sensitive to people, Jesus was simultaneously always prayerful, communicating with and being governed by Father before acting, speaking, even judging. Jesus prayed continually, for all His works and words were the by-product of prayer.

Therefore, as Jesus’ disciple, my heart is set on praying continually:

- **Privately**: massive face-to-face dialogue with Jesus
- **Publicly**: sensitivity to Jesus preceding my words and works – following Jesus, instead of making Him follow me.

How? The more and better I face-to-face pray (dialogue with Jesus in public worship, small groups, and privately), the more and better I will pray (include Jesus) before speaking and acting publicly.

Being Jesus’ disciple is a very narrow way! It requires great help. Is help available? Yes, Jesus is truly with us to help us, to disciple us, all the time. How?

First, Jesus lovingly disciples us by His Holy Spirit. Jesus said it would be better for His Spirit to dwell in us than He be next to us. Since every good and perfect gift comes down from His Father, then every thought and idea, if truly good and perfect, comes from Jesus’ indwelling Spirit. We do hear Jesus’ voice but must be

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1 1 Samuel 16:7
2 John 16:7
3 James 1:17
better trained to recognize Him. How? One big help: being trained to pause and test our thoughts, clinging to the good and perfect. Whether in private or public, I must doggedly remember that Jesus’ Spirit indwells me, and Jesus promised He would speak. I can be trained to practice the conscious awareness of His Spirit’s presence, becoming “quick to listen,” testing for “good and perfect” thoughts, that is, the voice of God’s Spirit. Often, many times per day, because He loves everyone, Jesus speaks through His Spirit to disciple me: guiding, teaching, reminding, warning, revealing.

Second, Jesus disciples me through His Word. I can be trained to listen to Jesus speak to me through Scripture. Since all scripture is inspired by God, I know that if I am not changing the intended meaning, I can “hear” Jesus speak through Scripture. I can be trained and train others to do more and better than “Bible-study.” I can be discipled and disciple others to listen to Jesus speak personally to us through Scripture. We can turn most sentences or paragraphs or chapters into a personal message from Jesus to us by “personalizing” the passage, that is, have Jesus speak (as we write or type) directly to us, changing from third person communication (scripture-writer to recipients) to first and second person communication (take what scripture-writer was inspired to write and have Jesus say it directly to me.)

Example: “Hal, this is Jesus. You can know that you have come to know Me if you keep My commands. If you say, ‘I know You, Jesus,’ but you do not do what I command, you are a liar, and My truth is not in you.” 1 John 2:3-4

Then, based on what Jesus spoke to me, I speak back to Him, “Lord, this seems hard … maybe impossible. It also sounds very different than what I have heard about being saved by grace. I am confused, even fearful.” (Let the dialogue continue.)

Third, we can be discipled by Jesus through His Body. When a Christ-follower through faith and obedience to a specific Word from God does the will of God, observers see that specific “Word become flesh,” and Jesus, through His Body,

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4 Tests start with Scripture, include other Christians - historical and contemporary – understanding of Scripture, and reason.
5 2 Corinthians 10:5, 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21
6 John 14-16
7 John 5:37-40
disciples observers. Or, when Christ-followers report (tell stories, testify) of the good that the Lord has accomplished through them, once again, hearers can “see” Jesus working through His Body, and be discipled by Jesus. Or when Christ-followers speak Scripture or Spirit-originated words, Jesus disciples those who hear through His Body.

Thus, Jesus’ contemporary disciples, if trained to dialogue with Jesus, can be discipled by Jesus directly through His Word and Spirit, and indirectly through His Body.