

Date: January 12, 2014

Subject: My Disciples

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35

The word "disciple" comes from the Latin word, "discere" meaning, "to learn". The Greek word translated disciple is "mathētēs" and means "a learner, pupil, disciple." Properly, a disciple is "one who assists in spreading the teachings of another. be an active adherent, as of a movement."²

There are millions of disciples all around the world; in fact, because the basic meaning of disciple is a "learner," it's safe to say ^{that} everyone is a disciple of someone. The question is not if we learn, but what and by whom will we learn.

It seems that everybody has something to teach; a book can be found on nearly every topic imaginable. From Investing, sewing, cooking, and Mathematics; to Making bombs, picking locks, and growing drugs. Some things we learn can be good, while others are not only bad for

¹ "Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament", Joseph H. Thayer. © 1896, 9th printing - August 2009, "μαθητής".

² The American Heritage College Dictionary © 1997, "disciple".

us, but bad for others as well.

There is nothing good about street gangs: Latin Kings, Vice Lords, Black Stones, Latin Maniacs, Crips, Bloods, and many, many more. Street gangs are not "neutral," they are not just a bunch of kids hanging out. Instead, children are taught, they are made disciples; in fact, many gangs refer to their organization as some sort of disciples. There are Gangster Disciples, Black Disciples, Latin Disciples, even Satan's Disciples.

I was involved in one of these gangs at a young age; and now, after spending 19 years of my life in the State penitentiary for a gang related crime, my heart weeps for all those children being disciplined into a destructive way of life.

Children are taught to steal, lie, abuse women (pre-marital sex), disrespect their parents and family, quit school, and do drugs. Plus there's the literature that brainwashes the children's mentality and so they grow to hate everybody and everything; soon to follow are fightings, stabbings, & shootings.

Are they happy? They think they are, like the prodigal son in Luke 15 who ~~at~~ "would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate..." (vs. 16), but truthfully, they don't know what happiness is.

Many lead a double-life, they act one way around their family, and another around their fellow gang members. The Bible says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." (Prov. 14:12).

What is the "end" of street gangs? Imprisonment or death; what really do you gain? Continually looking over your shoulder, "friends" that will betray you, lose years of your life that you can never get back? What's so great about that? What's so great about pledging your allegiance to a man... who probably doesn't even know you. Would Larry Hoover, Gino, or Mr. Ford die for you? Then why would you die for them? The sad thing is - is that if you're in a gang - then you know it's true.

How do I know? Because I've been there, I know what it's like, "it's too late to change, I'm in it for life." What life!?! That's not life and you know it, there's nothing "life" about it. And if you think you can be a member of a gang and a Christian, you're wrong; stop fooling yourself. Deep in your heart of hearts you know you are living a lie - two of them!

The bottom line is, I don't want others to make the same mistakes I've made. I don't want to see children grow up in the prison system like I did.

Children are taught to believe that gangs are the answer to their problems and to be truly happy you must join a gang; but nothing could be further from the truth.

Big gold chains, loud sound systems, drugs, sex, money, and "real" friendship are thought to be ~~the~~ some of the benefits of ~~joining~~ joining a gang; but the Bible calls all these things "the pride of life."

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." 1 John 2:15-17

Occasionally, I hear the testimony of someone who became a Christian only to hear them boast about how much money they had, or how much they stole, or what positions they had in some gang, as if that's something to be proud of. What a shame to highly esteem what is an abomination to God, and ^{what} a terrible example to those outside the faith.

What is the answer for our children? Is there any hope at all? If everyone is disciplined by someone, who should children - and adults - be disciplined by?

By Jesus Christ who commanded,

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20

If you're going to pledge your allegiance to a man, make it to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is fully man and fully GOD! He promises to never leave you nor forsake you.

Parents

1. Know who your children are friends with.
2. Teach your children the Word of God (Deut. 6:7).
3. Read the Scriptures with your children regularly and ask them questions to reinforce and impress it upon their heart. Use examples from your own life.
4. Fellowship with other believers regularly.

5. Don't sit by idley while your childres perish

If anyone reading this letter is in a gang and needs help getting out, please contact me.

There is hope, there is help, there is Jesus - He changed my life and I know He can do the same for you. Don't wait another day!

Gangster Disciples are known for stealing, Jesus' disciples are known for giving. Gangster Disciples are known for murdering their friends, Jesus' disciples are known for loving their enemies. There is a world of difference between the disciples of street gangs and the disciples of Jesus Christ. Jesus said,

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:34-35

Wouldst you rather be one of His disciples?
May God help you.

