

## The Demands of Discipleship

John 8:31

You know, you and I sometimes get the mistaken idea—and it's tragic—that in following God's will, the choice is between doing what we want to do and being happy and doing what God wants us to do and being miserable. Somehow we've gotten the idea that God is a celestial scrooge who leans over the battlement of Heaven, trying to find people who are enjoying themselves, and He calls out and says, "Cut it out!" Only in doing God's will is there unalloyed joy.

In Psalm chapter 40 and verse 8, it says, *I delight to do thy will, O my God....* When we delight in God's will, it is a joy to serve Him. When our attitude is, "God I want to serve You more today than I served You yesterday," God will pour his blessings out upon us. But He's not a scrooge that sits around, and stands up there and watches us and says, "Cut it out down there. You shouldn't be having a good time."

I've often said this. God has a sense of humor. Billy Sunday once made the comment—and probably more than once—"God has a sense of humor. He made poll parrots in some of you people." Well, that holds true today. God wants us to be happy. He wants us to be filled with joy.

In just a few moments now, I want to share with you from John chapter 8 and verse 31 the seven demands of discipleship. First, let me invite you to view our website today, [www.LRWM.org](http://www.LRWM.org). On that website, you can actually go there and download a transcript of this program or any other program that has been on "It's a Good Life." It's absolutely free. Or you can write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731. You can also go on the website and find that address there, and you

can also find a place where you can email us and ask for a free transcript.

Now, in John chapter 8 and verse 31, the Bible says, *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed....* Now, let me clear something up immediately as we start studying this. The word *disciple* here does not mean "getting saved." It simply means that, after a person is saved, they become a learner, and as we live closer to Jesus, then the more we are going to learn. As we study His Word, the more we are going to learn. So, a disciple, we see here, is one who is saved, who is studying after Jesus.

The first demand of being a disciple is loving Christ more than relatives. Luke chapter 14 and verse 26 says, *If any [man] come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters ... he cannot be my disciple.* Now the word *hate* here means "love less" and means that we should love Christ more than our relatives. Some of these things are hard to take but it doesn't mean that we hate our family. It means that we need to put Jesus first. It means that we need to love Him more than our family.

And then we see that the second demand of discipleship is also found in that verse in Luke chapter 14 and verse 26. It says, *If any [man] come to me, and hate not....* Then down at the bottom of that verse it says....*his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.* Loving Christ more than self.

I don't know many people who hate themselves. And let me remind you, the word *hate* there does not mean that you hate yourself. It simply means that you put Christ first in your life, that

you are taking a back seat to the Lord. So the second demand of discipleship is loving Christ more than self.

And then we see the third mark here is bearing the cross. In Luke chapter 14 and verse 27, the Bible says, *And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.* Remember, we're speaking of learning. We're speaking of learning the things of God.

God doesn't expect all of us to give our lives, in other words, be killed for Him. Some have and some will die for the cause of Christ, but there are things that can come into our lives in everyday living that would point to the fact that we may suffer for the cause of Christ. Someone may look at us and ask us a question and say something like, "Oh, you're one of those Christians," something to that effect.

And what we need to do is we need to stand up straight and say, "Yes, I am. Wouldn't you like to know Jesus as your Savior and be on your way to Heaven?" So we see that the third demand of being a disciple is bearing the cross.

And then, in Luke chapter 14 and verse 33, we see the fourth demand is forsaking all. *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

One person has said, "Oh, Lord, take me from what keeps me from Thee. Give me what brings me to Thee, and take myself and give me Thyself." We need to forsake or be willing to forsake all for Jesus. If He calls you to the mission field, you need to go. If He calls you into His service in any way, you need to go. You need to forsake the things of this world and listen to the voice of Jesus. Now, God doesn't call everyone of us onto the mission field—into a foreign mission field—but as we stop to think, we are all on a foreign mission field, because

the Bible teaches us that we are ambassadors for Christ.

This world is not our home. We're looking for a home whose Builder and Maker is God, and that home for us is going to be Heaven someday. And by that, we are on a foreign mission field. We need to be serving Jesus today and telling others how to be saved.

And we see that the fifth demand of being a disciple is continuing in His Word. John 8:31 says, *If you continue in my word, [then] are ye my disciples indeed....*

*Continue* means "to stay with expectancy." It means "to stand." It means "to dwell." It means "to think upon." The Bible says that *the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword* [Hebrews 4:12].

The Bible says, *Study to shew thyself approved ... a workman that needeth not to be ashamed....* [2 Timothy 2:15].

We need to continue in the Word today in order to be a disciple of the Lord. Remember, a disciple is a learner, and unless you're in His Word, you're not going to learn. Why do some people remain as baby Christians? Because they do not get into His Word and study His Word and ask God to lead them.

And then we see something else. Loving others is a demand in order to be a disciple. John 13:35 says, *By this shall all [men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

We as the children of God should never turn on each other. We should never look on the other person with contempt. We should look at each other and say, "Thank God that I'm not the only one that He saved, but thank the Lord that I'm not going to Heaven by myself, but I have a

whole multitude of saved people who are going with me. And I love each one of them.”

And then, number seven, the seventh demand of being a disciple is bearing much fruit. In John 15 and verse 8, it says, *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*

Going to Heaven by yourself? Well, I know you're not going to Heaven by yourself, but how many are you going to take with you? How many have you told about the love of Christ in your Christian life? What you simply need to do is simply share Jesus. You need to let people know what happened to you, how you came to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. You don't need to know the Bible cover to cover. All you need to know is how you got saved, how that Jesus came into your heart one day because you said, “Lord, I know I can't save myself. I'm sorry for my sin. Please come into my heart. Forgive me so I can go to Heaven.” That's witnessing for the Lord. It's sharing Jesus with those around you.

“Jesus, I my cross have I taken  
All to leave and follow Thee.  
Destitute, despised, forsaken,  
Thou from hence my all shalt be.  
Perish every fond ambition,  
All I've sought and hoped and known.  
Yet how rich is my condition.  
God in heaven are still my own.”

That should be our prayer today. That's the way we should look at it. “Jesus, my cross, I have taken.”

Now, if you do not know the Lord today as your Savior, let me invite you to do so right now. Right where you're at, ask Him to come into your heart. You can pray something like this: “Lord, I know I can't save myself. I know I can't go to Heaven on my own. You've spoken

to my heart today. Forgive me of my sin. Come into my heart and save me. I believe that You died, You were buried, and You rose from the grave for me. Save me today. In Jesus' name.”

If you'll pray that prayer, God will save you. The Lord will come into your heart and make it possible for you to go to Heaven. And if you are a Christian today, you need to be a disciple. Now everyone is a disciple, but are you a good disciple? Are you a good learner? Are you doing and following these seven precepts to be a good disciple? Are you loving others? Are you witnessing to others? Do you let the love of Christ come through your life?

If you haven't been doing that, let me invite you right now to ask His forgiveness, not to be saved, but ask His forgiveness for not being a good disciple. “Lord, forgive me for letting You down. You saved me and I want to serve You daily. Lord, restore the fellowship that I know I can have through you for Jesus' sake. Amen.” If you'll pray that prayer, the Lord will use you today. He'll restore the joy of your salvation.

Let me invite you to join me again next week at this same time. But in the meantime, you can look at our website, [www.LRWM.org](http://www.LRWM.org). You'll find some interesting things on there, and you'll find a place where you can leave a prayer request. We want to share the needs you have with God for you and with you. You can also go there and get a free transcript of this program or any other program of “It's a Good Life.”

Thank you for joining me today and don't forget to write me: Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, FL 34731. And let me remind you once again, it's a good life serving the Lord. May the Lord bless you.