



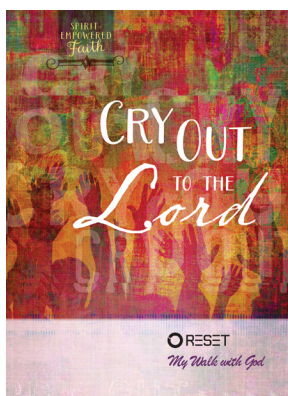
The Great Omission

This article is from *Cry Out to the Lord*. It is an excerpt from *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus' Essential Teachings on Discipleship* by **Dallas Willard**.

The Great Commission of making disciples gives us our destination, while the Great Commandment of loving the Lord and loving others provides the road map to get there. As we become great lovers of God and lovers of people, that “becoming” will draw others to Jesus. Becoming is the critical ingredient, the one we don’t want to omit in our spiritual journey. But it is also the ingredient that is easiest to lose sight of, the one that is often neglected without thinking about it. Discipleship is first about becoming then from who we have become, we will live a life that reflects the life of Christ.

A different model of life was instituted in the Great Commission Jesus left for His people. The first goal He set for the early church was to use His *all-encompassing* power and authority to make disciples without regard to ethnic distinctions—from all nations (Matthew 28:19). That made clear a world-historical project and set aside His earlier strategic directive to go only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (Matthew 10:6). Having made disciples, these alone were to be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Given this twofold preparation, they were then to be taught to treasure and keep “*all things whatsoever I have commanded you*” (Matthew 28:20). The Christian church of the first centuries resulted from following this plan for church growth—a result hard to improve upon.

The kind of life we see in the earliest church is that of a special type of person. All of the assurances and benefits offered to humankind in the gospel evidently presuppose such a life and do not make realistic sense apart from it. The disciple of Jesus is not the deluxe or heavy duty model of the Christian—especially padded, textured, streamlined, and empowered for the fast lane on the straight and narrow way. He or she stands on the pages of the New Testament as the first level of basic transportation in the kingdom of God.



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W4. Being a “living epistle” in reverence and awe as His Word becomes real in my life, vocation, and calling.



PRAY and Experience Scripture

“I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn’t confide in his slaves. Now you are My friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me” (John 15:15).

Jesus desires a deep friendship with you. He desires to share with you, as His disciple, what He has learned from the Father. You have chosen to follow Him, and He has chosen to share with you, reveal Himself to you, and then communicate the gospel through you.

Pause for a moment to consider this wonderful privilege. The God of the universe wants to reveal Himself to you. Because you are His disciple and His friend, Jesus wants to be vulnerable with you. How do you feel as you embrace the truth that Christ wants you to know the things that are on His heart? Respond to the Lord as His friend.

Lord Jesus, as I embrace the wonder of friendship with You, my heart responds with _____.

When I consider that You long to share Your heart with me, I am moved with feelings of _____.

*Jesus, because I am so grateful that You want this kind of friendship with me, I am motivated to _____.
(For example, spend more time reading the Bible; listen as well as talk to You in prayer; regularly ask You to reveal Yourself in me, especially when I am having a hard time, etc.)*

Discipleship Then

When Jesus walked among humankind there was a certain simplicity to being His disciple. Primarily it meant to go with Him, in an attitude of observation, study, obedience, and imitation. There were no correspondence courses. One knew what to do and what it would cost. Simon Peter exclaimed, *“Look, we have left everything and followed you”* (Mark 10:28). Family and occupations were deserted for long periods to go with Jesus as he walked from place to place announcing, showing, and explaining the **here and now** governance or action of God. Disciples had to be with Him to learn how to do what He did.

Imagine doing that today. How would family members, employers, and co-workers react to such abandonment? Probably they would conclude that we did not much care for them, or even for ourselves. Did not Zebedee think this as he watched his two sons desert the family business to keep company with Jesus (Mark 1:20)? Jesus stated a simple fact: It was the only possible doorway to discipleship.





Discipleship Now

Though costly, discipleship once had a very clear, straightforward meaning. The mechanics are not the same today. We cannot literally be with Him in the same way as His first disciples could. But the priorities and intentions—the heart or inner attitudes—of disciples are forever the same. In the heart of a disciple, there is a desire, and there is a decision or settled intent. Having come to some understanding of what it means, and thus having “counted up the costs,” the disciple of Christ desires above all else to be like Him.

The disciple is one who, intent upon becoming Christlike and so dwelling in his faith and practice, systematically and progressively rearranges his affairs to that end. By these decisions and actions, even today, one enrolls in Christ’s training, becomes His pupil or disciple. There is no other way. We must keep this in mind should we, as disciples, decide to make disciples.



W6. Encountering Jesus in the Word for deepened transformation in Christ-likeness.

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LEARN and Encounter Jesus

“The student who is fully trained will be like the teacher” (Luke 6:40).

Imagine Christ standing before you—the only, true Teacher (Matthew 23:10). Listen as He says: *“I am the One who is love”* (1 John 4:8). *“I am the God of all comfort”* (2 Corinthians 1:3–4). *“I am the One who is humble and gentle”* (Matthew 11:29–30). *“I am the One who is moved with compassion because of the needs of My people”* (Luke 15:20). *“I am the One who encourages you through Scripture”* (Romans 15:4). *“I bear your burdens daily and support you in life’s struggles”* (Galatians 6:2).

Now imagine that the Teacher invites you to become like Him. Jesus asks you to express His love and to extend the light of His presence in a dark world. He invites you to experience His transforming love so that you might be a reflection of His love to those around you.

Pause quietly to consider this question and ask it of the Lord:

Teacher, in what ways do You want me to change? Change me, Lord, because I want to become more like You. Speak, Holy Spirit, for I’m listening.

Wait as the Spirit gives a specific answer and then complete the following sentence: *“I sense it would be important for me to become more _____ (comforting, gentle, compassionate, encouraging, supportive, or attentive, etc.) to those in my life.”*

